

SERVING GOD AND MAMMON: THE REFORMED CHURCH AND THE DUTCH  
WEST INDIA COMPANY IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1621-1674

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation asks how the Reformed Church informed and shaped the Dutch experience in the seventeenth-century Atlantic world. It challenges a common view that Dutch expansion was a uniquely commercial phenomenon, that Dutch trade and religion occupied separate, distinct spheres. While the West India Company (WIC) was certainly a business, designed to generate wealth, it bore the powers and responsibilities of a state. Political, religious, and economic goals were combined under the company. Favoring religion brings extra-commercial aims and activities into sharp focus, demonstrating the diversity of Dutch interests, contesting the stereotypes that sometimes divide the story of European expansion too neatly along lines of national difference. The broad framework of Atlantic history serves a similar purpose: By giving equal weight to Dutch activities in Europe, West Africa, and America, this study avoids drawing conclusions about the WIC and Dutch expansion based on one place.

The main body of the dissertation is divided into six chapters. They examine the religious life of company directors and merchants in cities like Amsterdam, the nature of worship at sea, religious rituals in times of war, efforts to convert indigenous peoples and reform colonial societies, the role of Reformed consistories as centers of opposition to

unpopular policies and rulers, and related matters. As the only colonial power with a Reformed Church, the Dutch provide a unique chance to study Calvinist expansion. The church's diffuse structure complicated the question of oversight, but its various councils found ways to work together on important issues. Reformed clergy embraced the WIC as a divine tool. Calvinist ideas about religious authority also allowed merchants to participate on major church councils, influence clerical views of their vocation, and conduct a great deal of business with the church as they strove to meet ecclesiastical needs abroad. Conversely, the church's inflexibility and fear that foreign influences might corrupt its doctrines and traditions were detrimental to planting Protestantism.

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To the *Golden Eagle* and her crew

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	Archief Admiraliteitscolleges (NA)
Aanw.	Aanwinsten (NA and ZA)
ABA	Archief Burgemeesters Amsterdam (SAA)
ABS	Archief Burgerlijke Stand (SAA)
ACA	Archief Classis Amsterdam (SAA)
ACALK	Archief Classis Alkmaar (NHA)
ACAM	Archief Classis Amersfoort (UA)
ACD	Archief Classis Dordrecht (NA)
ACDD	Archief Classis Delft en Delfland (NA)
ACE	Archief Classis Edam (NHA)
ACENK	Archief Classis Enkhuizen (WFA)
ACG	Archief Classis Groningen (GA)
ACH	Archief Classis Haarlem (NHA)
ACL	Archief Classis Leiden en Neder Rijnland (NA)
ACM	Archief Classis Middelstum (GA)
ACMA	Archief Classis Marne (GA)
ACR	Archief Classis Rhenenwijk (UA)
ACT	Archief Classis Tholen en Bergen op Zoom (ZA)
ACU	Archief Classis Utrecht (UA)
ACW	Archief Classis Walcheren (ZA)
ACWE	Archief Classis Westerkwartier (GA)
ACZ	Archief Classis Zierikzee (GASD)
ADA	Archief Diaconie Amsterdam (SAA)
AEKA	Archief Engelse Kerk Amsterdam (SAA)
AEKM	Archief Engelse Kerk Middelburg (ZA)
AHZ	Archief Huis Zuilen (UA)
AKD	Archief Hervormde Kerk Dordrecht (SADOR)
AKDE	Archief Hervormde Kerk Delft (GAD)
AKDEV	Archief Hervormde Kerk Deventer (SADEV)
AKA	Archief Kerkenraad Amsterdam (SAA)
AKAR	Archief Hervormde Kerk Arnhem (GEA)
AKE	Archief Hervormde Kerk Enkhuizen (WFA)
AKG	Archief Kerkenraad Groningen (GA)
AKGO	Archief Hervormde Kerk Gouda (SHM)
AKH	Archief Hervormde Kerk Hoorn (WFA)
AKHA	Archief Hervormde Kerk Haarlem (NHA)
AKL	Archief Hervormde Kerk Leiden (RAL)
AKO	Archief Hervormde Kerk Oostkapelle (ZA)
AKR	Archief Hervormde Kerk Rotterdam (GAR)
AKU	Archief Hervormde Kerk Utrecht (UA)
AKV	Archief Hervormde Kerk Vlissingen (GAV)
AKVE	Archief Hervormde Kerk Veere (ZA)
AKZ	Archief Kerkenraad Zutphen (RAZ)

ANK	Archief Nieuwe Kerk (SAA)
ANOK	Archief Noorderkerk (SAA)
ARK	Archief Remonstrantse Kerk Amsterdam (SAA)
AS	<i>Album Studiosorum</i> (university matriculation books: see bibliography)
ASG	Archief Staten-Generaal (NA)
ASNH	Archief Synode Noord Holland (NHA)
ASSL	Archief Synode Stad en Lande (GA)
ASU	Archief Synode Utrecht (UA)
ASV	Archief Stad Veere (ZA)
ATB	Archief Familie Teding van Berkhout (NA)
AWKA	Archief Waalsch Hervormde Kerk Amsterdam (SAA)
ERSNY	<i>Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York</i>
GA	Groninger Archief (Groningen)
GAD	Gemeentearchief Delft
GAR	Gemeentearchief Rotterdam
GASD	Gemeentearchief Schouwen-Duiveland (Zierikzee)
GAT	Gemeentearchief Tholen
GAV	Gemeentearchief Vlissingen
GEA	Gelders Archief (Arnhem)
HV	Handschriften Verzameling (ZA and GAR)
KB	Koninklijke Bibliotheek (The Hague)
LU	Leiden University
NA	Nationaal Archief (The Hague)
NBKG	Nederlands Bezittingen Kust van Guinea (NA)
NHA	Noord-Hollands Archief (Haarlem)
Not. Arch.	Notarieel Archief (SAA, NHA, and UA)
MRCA	<i>Manual of the Reformed Church in America</i>
OAR	Oud Archief Stad Rotterdam (GAR)
OSA	Oud Synodaal Archief (UA)
OWIC	Archief Oude Westindische Compagnie (NA)
RAL	Regionaal Archief Leiden
RAZ	Regionaal Archief Zutphen
SAA	Stadsarchief Amsterdam
SADEV	Stadsarchief Deventer
SADOR	Stadsarchief Dordrecht
SHM	Streekarchief Hollands Midden (Gouda)
SV	Stadsbestuur Vlissingen (GAV)
TWIC	Tweede Westindische Compagnie (NA)
UA	Utrechts Archief
VOC	Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (East India Company)
WD	Archief van Wassenaer van Duvencoorde (NA)
WFA	Westfries Archief (Hoorn)
WIC	Westindische Compagnie (West India Company)
XIX	De Heren Negentien (the Nineteen Lords/Gentlemen of the WIC)
ZA	Zeeuwsarchief (Middelburg)

## INTRODUCTION

Queen Elizabeth: “What in God’s name do we have in common with the Dutch?”

Robert Dudley: “Our religion, ma’am.”

Queen Elizabeth: “The Dutch have no religion, they have cheese.”

– Helen Mirren and Jeremy Irons in  
HBO’s miniseries *Elizabeth I* (2005)

Cable television is probably not the best source for accurate information about the past. In the epigraph above, however, Queen Elizabeth’s remark about Dutch religion and “cheese” very nearly echoes sentiments expressed by a number of people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Substitute the word cheese with “money” or some precious metal and the fictional line could be authentic. “Here is your religion,” King Charles X of Sweden once said to a Dutch envoy, exhibiting a large silver coin: “You serve only your Idol, which is Commerce.” “Gold is your god,” declared a trading partner in West Africa before the Dutch had even established a permanent post there.<sup>1</sup> Oliver Cromwell purportedly griped that the Dutch loved gold more than God (rendered in some accounts as “gain” and “godliness”) after they rejected an English alliance in 1651.<sup>2</sup> “Jesus Christ was good, but trade was better,” wrote Thomas Lynch of Jamaica, summarizing what he

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 128. Boxer only quotes the first half of the king’s remark (and in French; the translation is my own). The other half (also in French) is from E. Wrangel, *De Betrekkingen Tusschen Zweden en de Nederlanden* (Leiden: Brill, 1901), 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 126; George L. Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland: Dutch Origins and American Development* (London: Cornell University Press, 1973), introduction; C.H. Firth, “Secretary Thurloe on the Relations of England and Holland,” *English Historical Review* 21 (1906): 319-327. See also “Speech XVI,” in *Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches*, ed. Thomas Carlyle (New York: William Colyer, 1846), 313.

believed to be the Dutch worldview.<sup>3</sup> Again and again, frustrated or bemused friends and enemies suggested that Dutch devotion centered on profit rather than God, that commerce trumped religion in the Netherlands.

Contemporaries were baffled by the Dutch for several reasons, mostly for phenomena that had little to do with religion. The Dutch government and economy were unlike any at the time. A federation of provinces surrounded by monarchies, the Dutch Republic was the first major power to bear that title (“republic”). Genuine republicanism developed only gradually during and after the revolt against Spain (from the late 1560s to 1648); and, in fact, after discarding their Spanish king, the Dutch courted other potential sovereigns, including Queen Elizabeth. Theirs was, nevertheless, a unique state, ruled by a merchant oligarchy. Wealthy men—mostly men of business—dominated municipal and provincial governments, especially in the powerful western provinces. They then selected delegates from among themselves to send to national institutions like the States General. Relative social mobility, access to office, and the simplicity of political culture in general contrasted sharply with the growing pomp and spectacle of monarchical states.<sup>4</sup>

The Dutch economy was equally remarkable, in part because of special government interest and support. Some have argued that the Republic was the first of just

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<sup>3</sup> This quotation is a particular favorite among Dutch historians. It is cited in P.C. Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy, 1580-1800* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), 101; Cornelis Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast, 1580-1680* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1971), 369; J.H.J. Hamelberg, *De Nederlanders op de West-Indische Eilanden* (J.H. de Bussy, 1901), 96; G.V. Scammel, *The World Encompassed: The first European maritime empires, c. 800-1650* (New York: Methuen, 1981), 414.

<sup>4</sup> Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire*, Chaps. 1-2; Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2005); Marjolein C. ‘t Hart, *The Making of a Bourgeois State: War, Politics, and Finance During the Dutch Revolt* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), Part 1; Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), Chap. 13; Herbert Rowen, *The Princes of Orange: The Stadholders in the Dutch Republic* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

three “hegemonic” powers in a “capitalist world economy,” the first “modern” economy.<sup>5</sup> Whether one is willing to go so far, no one can deny that the Dutch flourished. Beginning in about 1590 and continuing through much of the seventeenth century, they dominated global trade and enjoyed high wages and employment rates. Location, geography, and a lack of feudal, collectivist traditions are among the explanations that scholars give. The Republic was well-placed to trade with England, France, and the Baltic states, situated at the mouth of rivers like the Rhine, which carried commerce to and from central Europe. The region’s soil was not the finest quality, but even that worked to Dutch advantage: In the Middle Ages nobles had taken less interest in the Low Countries or offered generous terms to peasants to colonize newly-drained lands. By the early modern era the peasantry owned much of the land outright and people bought and sold property with relative ease. Regular imports and a fluid land market, unencumbered by the commons, allowed them to specialize in particular commodities, for they could buy the grain and other needs that farmers elsewhere had to grow or make for themselves.<sup>6</sup>

Agricultural specialization and urbanization mirrored the rise of various industries, including (for example) dairy, textiles, paper, soap, beer, munitions, and shipbuilding. Dutch merchants brought gold and ivory from West Africa, silver from Spanish America and Japan, and tobacco, sugar, and other new goods to the Netherlands, then

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<sup>5</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, “Dutch hegemony in the seventeenth-century world economy,” in *Dutch capitalism and world capitalism: Capitalisme hollandais et capitalisme mondial*, ed. M. Aymard (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 95; Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge University Press, 1997). See also Jan de Vries, “On the Modernity of the Dutch Republic,” *The Journal of Economic History* 33, no. 1 (Mar. 1973): 191-202.

<sup>6</sup> For this and the next paragraph, see *ibid.*, as well as Jan de Vries, *The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age, 1500-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Marius van Nieuwkerk, *Hollands Gouden Glorie: De Financiële Kracht van Nederland door de Eeuwen Heen* (Haarlem: Becht, 2005); Richard Unger, “Dutch Herring, Technology, and International Trade in the Seventeenth Century,” *The Journal of Economic History* 40, no. 2 (June 1980): 253-280.

sold them or reexported them alongside Dutch manufactures throughout Europe. As a major trade entrepot, Amsterdam naturally became a financial center, as well, offering marine insurance and other products that diversified risk and lowered costs. At one of the world's first stock exchanges (1608), one could bet on the outcome of almost any event and buy shares in the East and West India Companies, recently described as the forebears of the modern corporation.<sup>7</sup> The city's exchange bank (1609) facilitated payments between merchants and issued the safest, most dependable money in Europe. The Dutch commanded high prices for quality goods, yet technological efficiency and cheap credit gave them extremely low freight rates. Whenever they chose, they could flood a market with reduced, inexpensive merchandise, undercutting and bankrupting rivals who simply could not compete at the same level.

Is it any wonder that even their allies sometimes regarded the Dutch with envy and contempt, that people questioned their commitment to everything but the almighty guilder? Who could believe that they cared for anything else? When it comes to Dutch religion, though, the views of outsiders—especially rivals and enemies—are nearly as useless as Helen Mirren's comment about cheese in her role as Elizabeth in the HBO miniseries. Like the Englishman who wrote during the first Anglo-Dutch war that the Dutch were “descended from a horse-turd, which was enclosed in a butter-box,” or the man who wrote irritably in his diary during the second war that “the Devil shits Dutchmen,” early modern people knew how to use metaphor, hyperbole, and similar

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<sup>7</sup> Henk den Heijer, *De Geotrooieerde Compagnie: de VOC en de WIC als voorlopers van de naamloze vennootschap* (Deventer: Stichting tot Bevordering der Notariele Wetenschap Amsterdam, 2005). For the exchange bank and stock exchange, see also Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 343-371.

devices as well as anyone today.<sup>8</sup> No one would believe that the Dutch literally sprang from the bowels of a diabolical pony just because a grumpy Englishman said it in the seventeenth century; nor should anyone accept figurative, half-serious ruminations on religion by those who did not understand the Dutch and even disliked them.

The relationship between faith, worship, and the emerging capitalist economy is no less puzzling today, more than four hundred years after people first accused Dutch traders of misplaced devotion. This project is about Dutch expansion in the seventeenth-century Atlantic world, not capitalism or modernity *per se*. But the projection of Dutch power to Africa and America under the West India Company was, of course, related to economic development, and questions about religion and affluence could and often did pertain to the company. Typically abbreviated “WIC,” it was created in a land of great religious diversity, founded after more than six decades of war, reformation, division, and an uneasy, ambiguous settlement between non-conformers and the public church, called the Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps suggesting that faith and trade are, in fact, strange bedfellows—or that modern scholars don’t always see a consequential relationship—the rich historiography on religion in the Dutch Republic is not matched by a similar body of work on religion under the major trading companies in America, Africa, and Asia. In this introduction I will review that limited literature and explain the benefit of Atlantic history

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<sup>8</sup> Anon., *The Dutch-mens pedigree or A relation, shewing how they were first bred, and descended from a horse-turd, which was enclosed in a butter-box* (London, 1653). For “the Devil,” see Samuel Pepys, as cited in Schama, *Embarrassment*, 234.

<sup>9</sup> A brief overview of Dutch religious history is provided in Chap. 1. For now, see Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk van Nierop, and Marc Venard, eds., *Reformation, Revolt, and Civil War in France and the Netherlands, 1555-1585* (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1999); Alastair C. Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2003); A. Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen: Kerk en Kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1998); A. Th. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular culture, religion, and society in seventeenth-century Holland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Israel, *Dutch Republic*, Chaps. 3, 5, 7, 16, 18-20, 27-28 .

in studying these matters. Together, Atlantic history and religion help us see Dutch activities in a new light. The first offers a wide-ranging, comparative viewpoint for contextualizing particular locations and recognizing broad movements and influences; the second illustrates the range and complexity of Dutch expansion. Faith and cheese, God and gold, commerce and evangelism—they were not separate, either/or-type choices: The Dutch could have their cheese and eat it too. To this point, no one has recognized the full scope of their religious mission overseas.<sup>10</sup>

The historiography on religion and economic development is an old one. Most famously and influentially, Max Weber argued in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) that Calvinist doctrines produced the mental conditions or frame of mind amenable to the new economic age, that a belief in predestination spurred people to work hard and save money as they searched for signs of God’s favor in earthly, secular “callings.”<sup>11</sup> Though the Weber theory has had a long, controversial life in the English-speaking world, Dutch scholars have never shown much interest in it. In a smattering of articles and chapters over the years they dismiss it because, for example, Weber confused later Protestant beliefs with early Calvinism. Dutch theologians did not teach much about what Weber called “the sign,” which is central to the psychological component of his argument. Perhaps most damning, the Reformed Church opposed lending, usury, and

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<sup>10</sup> For Atlantic history, see David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History,” in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, eds. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); and Alison Games, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006): 741-757.

<sup>11</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958). See also R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926). Weber and Tawney both wrote about English/American Protestantism and capitalism, not Dutch. For a good overview of the theory and its various supporters and critics, see Hartmut Lehmann, ed., *Weber’s Protestant Ethic: Origins, Evidence, Contexts* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 305-325. For the most recent relevant study in the New England context, see Mark Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize: How Religion Shaped Commerce in Puritan America* (Princeton University Press, 2010).



other practices that were important to capitalist growth. And some Calvinist ministers expressed discomfort with wealth. Like the English, Swedish, and African critics cited above, they taught that riches were potential spiritual dangers, threats to genuine godliness. According to the current consensus, the Dutch flourished *despite* the public church, not because of it.<sup>12</sup>

This dissertation, again, is about early Dutch expansion, not capitalism, but the two historiographies are connected in significant ways. In one of the only book-length treatments of the subject in a Dutch context, the influential *Religious Factors in Early Dutch Capitalism* (1967), Jelle Riemersma goes beyond a simple discomfort with trade and identifies a gradual, total separation of religion and business between about 1550 and 1650, as if the Dutch came to see business in neutral terms. In one regard he's probably right: Others have noted changing attitudes about trade and work in northwestern Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, if not resulting in neutrality, at least trending in a positive direction.<sup>13</sup> On expansion, Riemersma asserts (more problematically) that "commercial enterprise was no longer seen in relation to an ultimately religious purpose." Modernity meant a "divorce between the pursuit of commerce and that of wider political and religious aims." He contrasts state-sponsored Spanish and Portuguese expansion with the independence of private joint-stock companies, whose concerns were "strictly

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<sup>12</sup> Albert Hyma, "Calvinism and Capitalism in the Netherlands, 1555-1700," *The Journal of Modern History* 10, no. 3 (Sep. 1938): 321-343; W.F. Wertheim, "Religion, Bureaucracy, and Economic Growth," in *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization*, ed. S.N. Eisenstadt (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 259-270; J.H. van Stuijvenberg, "The Weber Thesis: An Attempt at Interpretation," *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae* 8 (1975): 50-66; Schama, *Embarrassment*, 124, 298, 322-340; De Vries, *First Modern Economy*, 165-172. For a related argument about Weber and science, see also Harold Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> On changing attitudes, see Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, and Tawney, *Religion*. For a more recent study, see Deirdre N. McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

commercial.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, one sometimes reads that the WIC “was organized strictly as a trading and commercial endeavor,” that the East India Company (VOC) was a “secular” institution “with no ecclesiastical ties or obligations.” Freed from so many burdens, the Dutch could make rational decisions in the interest of profit. Instead of losing money to “ecclesiastical or empirical purposes, as was often the case with the Spanish,” the Dutch could reinvest their earnings.<sup>15</sup>

Joint-stock companies were certainly a novel way to organize and oversee foreign activities and possessions, but they did not just trade, nor were they strictly private. They employed many sailors, soldiers, and other personnel, waged war on Dutch enemies, and administered some settlement societies. Within their spheres of influence, they bore the same powers and responsibilities of a state. Most scholars are aware of these functions, of course, but they often minimize them in favor of the simple commercial entities described in the previous paragraph, studying economic origins and pursuits.<sup>16</sup> The focus on trade sometimes leads to a kind of essentialist imperial identity that strips Dutch expansion of other elements and leaves the Dutch without any meaningful ideologies. For instance, in

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<sup>14</sup> Jelle C. Riemersma, *Religious Factors in Early Dutch Capitalism* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 6, 25-33.

<sup>15</sup> Charles H. Lippy, Robert Choquette, and Stafford Poole, *Christianity Comes to the Americas, 1492-1776* (New York: Paragon House, 1992), 306; Paul van Dyke, “How and Why the Dutch East India Company Became Competitive in intra-Asian Trade in East Asia in the 1630s,” *Itinerario* 21, no. 3 (1997): 41-56.

<sup>16</sup> For the WIC as trading company, see also Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 325-327; J.G. van Dillen, “De West-Indische Compagnie, het Calvinisme en de Politiek,” *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 74 (1961): 145-171; Thomas J. Condon, *New York Beginnings: The Commercial Origins of New Netherland* (New York University Press, 1968); Smith, *Religion and Trade*; Ernst v.d. Boogaart, “De Nederlandse expansie in het Atlantisch Gebied,” *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, eds. D.P. Blok, et al. (Haarlem, 1977-1983), 7:220-254; Wim Klooster, “The Place of New Netherland in the West India Company’s Grand Scheme,” in *Revisiting New Netherland: Perspectives on Early Dutch America*, ed. Joyce Goodfriend (Brill, 2005), 57-70. An alternative view is available in Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* (Cambridge University Press, 2001). In a sense, Schmidt’s whole book addresses this issue, but see, for example, 178. For modern business methods and joint-stock companies as new imperial instruments, see also Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (New York: Verso, 1997), 9, 129, 187; S. van Brakel, *De Hollandsche Handelscompagnieën der Zeventiende Eeuw: hun Ontstaan, hunne Inrichting* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1908); den Heijer, *Geotrooieerde Compagnie*; Niel Steensgaard, “The Dutch East India Company as institutional innovation,” in *Dutch Capitalism*, ed. Aymard.

her book *Ceremonies of Possession* (1995), Patricia Seed tries to identify the rituals and practices that distinguished each European power as they established their “right to rule” in America. She labels settlement, possession, and the rhetoric of “planting” as uniquely English. The Spanish and French were both ceremonial, she contends, the former proving their sovereign rights from God and the Pope with the infamous *Requirimiento*, the latter demonstrating in elaborate parades and processions that they had obtained native consent and forged a religious alliance with Indians. The Dutch, on the other hand, just sailed, discovered, traded, and made increasingly precise maps, allegedly eschewing possession and consent because theirs was a “commercial empire.”<sup>17</sup> Along the same lines, Donna Merwick argues in *The Shame and the Sorrow* (2006) that the Dutch were an “alongshore folk,” not given to the same “inland,” colonial impulses that motivated others. They were merchants, not conquerors, traders, not settlers. When they planted farms and colonies or waged war, it was not because they were a diverse people with divergent interests and competing, changing methods. Rather, *they were not acting Dutch*: They betrayed their “ideals and values,” their “deeply seeded cultural ways.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See Chap. 5 for the Dutch.

<sup>18</sup> Donna Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow: Dutch-Amerindian Encounters in New Netherland* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 3, 264, 267. See also Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France, c. 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 4. Pagden does not write about Dutch ideology, he says, because theirs was just a seaborne empire. The essentialist Dutch character that one finds in Merwick's work has a long history. The first New Netherland historian, Washington Irving, called them an “amphibious animal.” Others have written about the “maritime destiny of that people, whose ‘way is in the sea,’ and whose ‘paths are in many waters.’” They were “[a]ccustomed from childhood to play fearlessly with the waves.” The colony was a “salt-water civilization”; its people possessed a “commercial spirit.” “Clearly something in the New York environment brought out commercial talent and the inventive abilities of its citizens.” See Washington Irving, *A History of New York, From the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, in *Washington Irving: History, Tales and Sketches*, ed. James W. Tuttleton (New York: The Library of America, 1983), 478, 628; John Romeyn Brodhead, *History of the State of New York* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853), 20; J.A. Doyle, *The Middle Colonies* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), 3-4; David M. Ellis, James Frost, Harold Syrett, and Harry Carman, *A Short History of New York State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1957), 19, 28; David M. Ellis, *New York: State and City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

If Seed and Merwick oversimplify a complex, dynamic situation, their analysis reflects at least one important reality. Because the Republic was relatively stable and prosperous, Dutch colonies struggled to attract sufficient numbers of people. The WIC's late entry into the Atlantic world, its initial role as privateer, and the hostile, unhealthy climates that it encountered in many places also played a part in reducing Dutch influence and the Dutch presence in the long run. However, as I show below (and throughout the dissertation), at different times and places the Dutch engaged in activities and shared and borrowed ideas that are sloppily labeled English, Spanish, and French in other contexts. No one had a monopoly on any one plan or practice. Expansion was experimental and diverse. The experience itself could either create differences among Europeans or act as an equalizer, depending on specific conditions in each locale.<sup>19</sup>

Stemming from the heavy focus on trade and reflecting Riemersma's argument about a "divorce" between religion and business in the Netherlands, the following are five common claims regarding religion and Dutch expansion: One, company directors and merchants were indifferent to religious questions and, in the interest of profit, they neglected ecclesiastical needs abroad. Two, Dutch colonies, such as they were, lacked European institutions. Under company government, they were mostly glorified trading posts.<sup>20</sup> Three, to cut costs or find submissive, pliant clergy, the companies hired

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<sup>19</sup> On experimentation/adaption in the English world, see Alison Games, "Beyond the Atlantic: English Globetrotters and Transoceanic connections," *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (Oct 2006): 675-692. See also Pagden, *Lords*, who makes a case that the Spanish, French, and English (not Dutch) observed each other and borrowed rhetoric and ideas.

<sup>20</sup> Claims about disinterest and neglect are ubiquitous. See Chaps. 2 and 6, as well as Brodhead, *History*, 224; Johan E. Elias, *Het Voorspel van den Eersten Engelschen Oorlog* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1920), 122; van Dillen, "West-Indische Compagnie"; Smith, *Religion and Trade*; George L. Smith, "Guilders and Godliness: The Dutch Colonial Contribution to American Religious Pluralism," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 47 (Mar. 1969): 1-30; Condon, *New York*, 116-143; S.G. Nissenson, *The Patroon's Domain* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 156-160; Henri and Barbara van der Zee, *A Sweet and Alien Land: The Story of Dutch New York* (New York: The Viking Press, 1978), 9, 40-41, 494; Oliver Rink,

incompetent men: lazy, inefficient, uneducated, and drunk. Four, the clergy's purpose or duty was to serve company employees in Dutch forts and ships (i.e., they only worked with sailors and soldiers).<sup>21</sup> In the same vein, five, the Dutch showed little or no interest in the souls of indigenous people. Detached from the affairs of church and state in quasi-private institutions, they could ignore other distractions and concentrate on trade. Often contrasted with pious neighbors like the New England Puritans or Portuguese Jesuits in Asia, the "businesslike Dutchmen" begin to seem rather single-minded. They did not care about dogmatic differences nor spread their religion; they found the union of mission and commerce under the Portuguese "entirely strange."<sup>22</sup>

W.J. van Hoboken created a counter-narrative in a widely-read article in the 1960s, arguing that the WIC was a Calvinist institution, a company with significant religious and political aims because so many of its directors were migrants from the

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*Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 77, 92, 228-229; and Rink, "Private Interest and Godly Gain: The West India Company and the Dutch Reformed Church in New Netherland, 1624-1664," *New York History* 75, no. 3 (July 1994): 245-264. For "institutions," see, for example, Lippy, *Christianity*, 306-307; Scammel, *World Encompassed*, 373-393; Doyle, *Middle Colonies*; Milton Klein and Jacob Cooke, "Editor's Introduction," in *Colonial New York: A History*, by Michael Kammen (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975).

<sup>21</sup> One of the most problematic overviews of colonial clergy is found in Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 21-24. See also, for example, Goslinga, *Dutch in the Caribbean*, 368 ("laziness and inefficiency"); Scammel, *World Encompassed*, 414-415 ("of the poorest quality, often bibulous"); Ellis, *Short History*, 27 (quarrelsome; did not care much for communicants); Hamelberg, *Nederlanders*, 96 (on a specific minister, Rev. Specht, who is dealt with here in Chap. 6); Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 229 ("not among the best qualified, and in some cases ... clearly incompetent"); van der Zee, *Sweet and Alien Land*, 282 ("uneducated"/"illiterate").

<sup>22</sup> J.A. van Houtte, *Economische en Sociale Geschiedenis van de Lage Landen* (Zeist: W. de Haan N.V., 1964), 151-152; Anthony Reid, "Early Southeast Asian categorizations of Europeans," in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 287-292. See also Scammel, Lippy, Ellis, van der Zee, and Taylor from the previous fns., as well as Riemersma, *Religious Factors*; van Dyke, "How and Why," 42, 48; Michel Doortmont and Jinna Smit, *Sources for the Mutual History of Ghana and the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 285-286; and Ineke van Kessel, ed., *Merchants, Missionaries, and Migrants: 300 years of Dutch-Ghanaian Relations* (Amsterdam: KIT publishers, 2002), 11-15, 26. Though writing about just one location, some of these authors make broad generalizations about the Dutch and the Dutch empire. In that regard see also, for example, Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (Penguin Books, 2001), 253. Taylor writes an excellent overview of the Netherlands and Dutch expansion. Yet he mistakes the New Netherland experience for the rest of it when he compares the Dutch with the French, the Spanish, and "the Puritan English," writing that the Dutch had no interest in missions because they were "[f]undamentally commercial in outlook."

southern Netherlands, refugees of war. Prominent historians like Charles Boxer and Cornelis Goslinga agreed with his analysis, at least in their description of the company's founding.<sup>23</sup> But no one, including van Hoboken, explored the implications of his thesis afterward. And he is frequently criticized for reasons that I have described already: WIC directors were concerned primarily with profit; "their deeds testify more of greed than of a Calvinist philosophy of life." Every director loved silver, wrote van Hoboken's first critic, J.G. van Dillen, but they expended little effort on missionary work and most of them did not care about religious dogma.<sup>24</sup> Others have said that the directors, like the Dutch in general, were too tolerant to be strict Calvinists. They purportedly winked or connived at non-conformity in their territories whenever it suited their interests. George Smith popularized the term "connivance" in his influential work, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland* (1973). Siding with van Dillen, he divided the book between "The Church's Point of View" and "The Merchants' Point of View." WIC directors tolerated illicit worship because New Netherland was "first and foremost a commercial enterprise to which the Reformed faith was appended as a godly afterthought." Writing also briefly about Brazil, he claimed that the WIC was tolerant there for similar reasons.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For the van Hoboken debate, see Chap. 2. For the rest, see Goslinga, *Dutch in the Caribbean*, 89-115; Charles Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil* (Archon Books, 1973), 11.

<sup>24</sup> Van Dillen, "West-Indische Compagnie"; van Dillen, *Van Rijkdom en Regenten: Handboek tot de Economische en Sociale Geschiedenis van Nederland Tijdens de Republiek* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 151.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, *Religion and Trade*, Intro., p. 86, Chaps. 7-8, 15. Along the same lines, see Pieter Emmer, "The West India Company, 1621-1791: Dutch or Atlantic?" in *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), 65-90. See also Chap. 2 of this dissertation. Smith was not just responding to van Hoboken, but to Frederick J. Zwierlein, *Religion in New Netherland, 1623-1664* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971). First published in 1910, Zwierlein's book challenged the common notion that the Dutch were tolerant. For the continued use of tolerance after Zwierlein, see the following paragraph and fn., as well as Ellis Raesly, *Portrait of New Netherland* (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1945), 2-7, 77, 235-238; Ellis, *Short History*, 18, 27-28; Ellis, *New York*, 56; Michael Kammen, *Colonial New York: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 18, 62; Bruce Bliven, Jr., *New York: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1981), 18-19; and Mary K. Geiter and W.A. Speck, *Colonial America: From Jamestown to Yorktown* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 89. For tolerance in

Despite its shortcomings, *Religion and Trade* is still probably one of the finest treatments of the topic in print. Smith conceded that human actions and motivations are complicated. He provided a helpful overview of John Calvin's theology on church-state relations and many intriguing examples of the connivance tradition in Holland. As with Riemersma's "divorce" argument, however, one walks away from Smith, van Dillen, and some of the other writers cited above feeling that the lines are perhaps a bit too stark, that the unease that some clergy felt toward trade and wealth, the fervent pursuit of riches by Dutch merchants, and the relative independence of joint-stock companies do not merit an interpretation that always seems to diminish religion as a consequential force or influence in the Dutch world. Themes like indifference, neglect, and tolerance, when the latter is just the fruit of self-interest, underscore an *absence* of religion and perpetuate simplistic stereotypes about the Dutch and Dutch expansion.

Nowhere are these problems more apparent than in some of the recent scholarship on New Netherland, especially in the run-up to the quadricentennial of Henry Hudson's 1609 voyage and discoveries. In *Island at the Center of the World* (2005), Russell Shorto writes a welcome correction to much of the Anglocentrism that has shaped the colony's historiography since the early nineteenth century. He describes major political disputes and developments and identifies various long-term cultural contributions that the Dutch made to the region. But he reserves very few words for the public church and other religions, abdicating any serious discussion of the topic in favor of an old, mistaken view of Dutch tolerance and freedom. He draws comparisons between zealous, theocratic New England and permissive, diverse New Netherland—a kind of contrast that was only

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Brazil, see Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 123-125; Frans Schalkwijk, *The Reformed Church in Dutch Brazil, 1630-1654* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1998); Jonathan Israel and Stuart B. Schwartz, *The Expansion of Tolerance: Religion in Dutch Brazil (1624-1654)* (Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

Anglocentric when Puritan faith and community were positive historical ideals. American preferences and history writing having changed in recent decades, New Netherland is apparently the new cultural model, the place where Americans can really look to find their roots. “Clearly,” explains Shorto, its settlers “were quite unlike their fellow pioneers to the north. ... One might say the English and Dutch colonies represented the extreme conservative and liberal wings of the seventeenth-century social spectrum.” On tolerance at Manhattan, he claims that “[a] new kind of spirit hovered over the island, utterly alien to New England and Virginia.”<sup>26</sup> Probably taking their cues from Shorto, journalists and others associated with the quadricentennial adopted the same storyline. The Dutch were fundamentally commercial and tolerant (or just indifferent), making New York what it is today, setting the United States on the path to “the ethnic and racial diversity personified by President Obama.”<sup>27</sup> So entrenched are the tolerance and diversity memes, some hope to construct a full-scale replica of New Amsterdam and a “Tolerance Park” on Governors Island, where the first WIC settlers arrived in 1624. The New York State Legislature has designated the spot as New York’s birthplace, declaring that “the dynamic conception of tolerance as an individual right” was originally planted there by the Dutch.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 85, 96-97, 274-277, 301-311. See also Mak Geert and Russell Shorto, *1609: The forgotten history of Hudson, Amsterdam and New York* (Henry Hudson 400 Foundation, 2009); and Alice Kenney, *Stubborn for Liberty: The Dutch in New York* (Syracuse University Press, 1975), 257-267. Kenney writes about how the Dutch learned to cooperate and compromise, “balancing their diversities to achieve a common denominator of unity sufficient to sustain the survival of the community while respecting the liberties of all its members.” This “Dutch tradition” is “very much alive in America today,” she concludes.

<sup>27</sup> Sam Roberts, “Henry Hudson’s View of New York: When Trees Tipped the Sky,” *The New York Times*, Jan. 25, 2009, A29, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/25/nyregion/25manhattan.html> (Dec. 2010). See also Kenneth T. Jackson, “A Colony with a Conscience,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 27, 2007, Opinion, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/27/opinion/27jackson.html> (Dec. 2010).

<sup>28</sup> The resolution can be found at [www.tolerancepark.org](http://www.tolerancepark.org). See also [www.governorsislandtolerancepark.org](http://www.governorsislandtolerancepark.org); [www.historicnewamsterdam.com](http://www.historicnewamsterdam.com); [www.lifebloodofamericanliberty.com](http://www.lifebloodofamericanliberty.com) (Feb. 2011); and Joep de Koning, “Governor’s Island: A Place Where New York Began,” *Newsday*, May 24, 2001, City Edition.



This project is not the first to note these historiographical issues, nor is it unique in arguing for a more nuanced approach to Dutch expansion. Jaap Jacobs, Janny Venema, and Willem Frijhoff have all plowed new scholarly ground in recent years. Jacobs and Venema do not write strictly about religion, but it occupies a central place in their work because of their interest in colonial society. They deal with Dutch government, politics and social status, the Reformed Church, and related matters, emphasizing the successful plantation and growth of Dutch institutions in New Netherland.<sup>29</sup> Frijhoff argues that, too often, “commercial interest” and “religious concern” are portrayed as polar opposites. In his biography of Everardus Bogardus, who worked as a WIC minister in West Africa and New Netherland, Frijhoff provides a fine example of the opportunities available to those who are willing to look at Dutch expansion in fresh ways. He takes a former nobody, the “evidence” for some claims about inferior clergy, and writes a fascinating, nine-hundred-page tome on Bogardus’s life and thought, starting with his days as a mystical, visionary orphan in Holland. His later quarrels with two governors stemmed from an interpretation of piety and clerical authority that had roots in the Dutch Reformed past.<sup>30</sup>

In the region that scholars now call the Atlantic world, Frijhoff’s book is one of the few that ranges from one Dutch possession to another, from continent to continent

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<sup>29</sup> Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); published in paperback as *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); Janny Venema, “Poverty and Charity in Seventeenth-Century Beverwyck/Albany, 1652-1700,” *New York History* 80, no. 4 (Oct 1999): 369-390; Janny Venema, *Beverwyck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier, 1652-1664* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003). See also Martha Shattuck, “For the peace and welfare of the community’: Maintaining a Civil Society in New Netherland,” *De Halve Maen* 72, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 27-32; Adriana E. van Zwieten, “The Orphan Chamber of New Amsterdam,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (Apr. 1996): 319-340; Simon Middleton, “Order and Authority in New Netherland: The 1653 Remonstrance and Early Settlement Politics,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (Jan. 2010): 31-68.

<sup>30</sup> Willem Frijhoff, “The West India Company and the Reformed Church: Neglect or Concern?” *De Halve Maen* 70 (1997): 59-68; Frijhoff, *Wegen van Evert Willemsz. Een Hollands weeskind op zoek naar zichzelf, 1607-1647* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1995); translated as *Fulfilling God’s Mission: The Two Worlds of Dominie Everardus Bogardus, 1607-1647* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

and back again—though he simply follows Bogardus around, apparently not intending to write a work of Atlantic history. In fact, Dutch scholars have been reluctant to participate in the field for some time now. In an important *Itinerario* forum, Pieter Emmer and Wim Klooster argue that there was no Dutch empire, no Dutch Atlantic, concluding that Dutch possessions were not sufficiently integrated to justify the term. Nor did the Dutch have a big enough impact. “[A] real Dutch Atlantic empire ... only existed for a period of fifteen years,” they claim, “between 1630 and 1645.”<sup>31</sup> Benjamin Schmidt begins his own essay in a different forum by declaring, “There was no such thing as a Dutch Atlantic.” He is only half serious, it turns out, because he then identifies *three* Dutch Atlantics, separated not by space, but time: First, everything before the WIC, second, the “Exemplary Dutch Atlantic,” conforming approximately with Emmer’s and Klooster’s chronology (1621 to 1648, in this case), and third, a post-1648 “Un-Dutch Atlantic.” By the early eighteenth century, Schmidt maintains, the Dutch saw themselves as participants in a “non-national” project of general European interest.<sup>32</sup> Like other critics, Emmer and Klooster state that Atlantic history is best-suited to British topics. Schmidt nods to the same problem when he writes that the Dutch fit awkwardly in the field’s “prevailing paradigms,” meaning the British and Iberian systems.<sup>33</sup>

Frijhoff’s account of Reverend Bogardus, who moved and worked on three continents over the course of his career, suggests that the company imposed some sort of unity on Dutch possessions in Africa and America, even if, like Emmer stresses, the WIC

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<sup>31</sup> Pieter Emmer and Wim Klooster, “The Dutch Atlantic, 1600-1800: Expansion without Empire,” *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999): 48-49; and Emmer, “West India Company.”

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Schmidt, “The Dutch Atlantic: From Provincialism to Globalism,” in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, eds. Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan (Oxford University Press, 2009), 163-190.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* For “other critics,” see the other essays in the same volume, as well as the various articles in the forum, “Beyond the Atlantic,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (Oct 2006): 675-742.

was made up of separate, semi-autonomous chambers. No other European power organized itself in the same way. To write that Frijhoff is one of the only people to adopt such a broad viewpoint is not to ignore the few histories of the company: none in English and just two in Dutch.<sup>34</sup> But there is a difference between old-fashioned company history and Atlantic history, and that difference lies in the questions one asks. It is not enough to provide an overview of Dutch possessions and activities *in* the Atlantic world; one must be attentive to patterns, movement, connections among different places, and the effects of those connections on the development of each.

One finds those qualities to some degree in the literature on the Dutch slave trade in the Atlantic world, including, ironically, Emmer's own book on the subject.<sup>35</sup> They are also evident in Benjamin Schmidt's *Innocence Abroad* (2001), which shows how the Dutch exploited the image of the tyrannized Native American to foster a sense of "nation-ness" in the infant Republic during the Spanish war. Schmidt poses a major challenge to the pervasive reputation of conniving, indifferent Dutch traders. He argues that they took their imagined responsibilities toward Native Americans very seriously, believing that in places like Peru and Chile, which they tried on different occasions to conquer, oppressed Indians would happily flock to their banner, convert to Protestantism, and overthrow the Spanish. In a word, "the Dutch Republic showed itself willing to put its money where its rhetorical mouth was ... by investing substantial funds and effort into forging an 'alliance'

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<sup>34</sup> W.R. Menkman, *De West-Indische Compagnie* (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen en Zoon N.V., 1947); Henk den Heijer, *De geschiedenis van de WIC* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2002). One also finds overviews of the company in English in just about any book on a specific Dutch colony. For example, Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, or Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*. For political/military history: Goslinga, *Dutch in the Caribbean*.

<sup>35</sup> Johannes Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Pieter Emmer, *The Dutch Slave Trade, 1500-1850* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

with its American ‘brethren.’” Severe overreaching and a heavy dose of naïvety scuttled the desired Indian alliance in Chile and Peru.<sup>36</sup>

Alongside the more substantial but limited scholarship on Dutch missions and the Reformed Church in Asia, Jacobs, Venema, Frijhoff, and Schmidt paint a different picture of Dutch expansion than much of the literature evaluated here.<sup>37</sup> To their names one could add Frans Schalkwijk, whose book on the Reformed Church in Brazil (1986) is the sole monograph on a religious topic for any region or colony under the WIC besides New Netherland.<sup>38</sup> This project builds on their work. I decided to favor religion because its apparent insignificance is so often used to show the uniquely commercial character of Dutch pursuits. I chose the framework of Atlantic history for a number of reasons, first simply to set bounds on an otherwise massive undertaking, more importantly because the western hemisphere is the more neglected of the two in Dutch historiography.<sup>39</sup> Atlantic history also overcomes the problem of narrow scope. A broad, comparative analysis will

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<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Schmidt, “Exotic Allies: The Dutch-Chilean Encounter and the (Failed) Conquest of America,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 440-473; Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*. For other work in Dutch Atlantic history, see Mark Meuwese, “‘For the Peace and Well-being of the Country’: Intercultural Mediators and Dutch-Indian Relations in New Netherland and Dutch Brazil, 1600-1664” (Ph.D. Diss., Notre Dame, 2003); and James Homer Williams, “At Atlantic Perspective on the Jewish Struggle for Rights and Opportunities in Brazil, New Netherland, and New York,” in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800*, eds. Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> For the church in Asia under the VOC, see C.A.L. Van Troostenburg de Bruyn, *De Hervormde Kerk in Nederlandsch Oost-Indie onder de Oost-Indische Compagnie, 1602-1795* (H.A. Tjeenk Willink, 1884); G.M.J.M. Koolen, *Een Seer Bequaem Middel: Onderwijs en Kerk onder de 17e-Eeuwse VOC* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1993); J.J.A.M. Kuepers, *The Dutch Reformed Church in Formosa, 1627-1662: Mission in a Colonial Context* (Switzerland: Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire, 1978); Ad Biewenga, *De Kaap de Goede Hoop: Een Nederlandse vestigingskolonie, 1680-1730* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1999); Hendrik Niemeijer, *Batavia: Een Koloniale Samenleving in de 17de Eeuw* (Balans, 2005). For missions, see also L.J. Joosse, *Scoone Dingen Sijn Swaere Dingen': Een onderzoek naar de motieven en activiteiten in de Nederlanden tot verbreiding van de gereformeerde religie gedurende de eerste helft van de zeventiende eeuw* (Leiden: J.S. Groen en Zoon, 1992). They aren't strictly about religion, but one also gets a sense of Dutch mission in Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (Columbia University Press, 2008); and G.J. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen: De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de Bevolking van Ambon, 1656-1696* (Leiden, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*. For more on Schalkwijk's contribution, see Chap. 5 of this dissertation.

<sup>39</sup> For neglect, see Schmidt, “Dutch Atlantic,” and Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven, eds., *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585-1817* (Boston: Brill, 2003).

have wider appeal and, I hope, rescue the WIC from New Netherland, whose place in the seventeenth-century Dutch world did not justify its profound influence on nineteenth- and twentieth-century views of the company.<sup>40</sup>

On the issue of whether there was such a thing as an Atlantic world, whether it is an artificially imposed category that only works, at most, for the English or Iberians, the Dutch case offers much food for thought. Certainly there are problems and shortcomings whenever one employs names or borders that did not exist at the time of one's study, and in this dissertation I try to deal candidly with issues of international concern. For instance, I show that the Reformed Church at home saw the companies as very similar institutions, as participants in a kind of global mission. Some clergy moved from one hemisphere to another, working intermittently for the WIC and VOC over the course of their careers. And various people, including clergy, company directors, merchants, and other personnel, came from foreign countries and had familial and business ties in non-Dutch lands. For these reasons, even the word "Dutch" starts to seem inadequate, never mind the controversial "Dutch Atlantic."

Perhaps more than anything else, however, the Republic's division of the globe between a WIC and a VOC demonstrates that the Atlantic world did not just spring from the minds of modern scholars. The Dutch could have and did briefly consider combining the companies, but they did not.<sup>41</sup> They referred to Asia as the East Indies and everything else as the West Indies, often meaning the Caribbean or Brazil, but sometimes using the term even if they were clearly talking about someone who was headed to Africa or New

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<sup>40</sup> One reason that some studies do not influence larger narratives about European expansion is because they are only in Dutch, which few scholars can read. Jacobs and Frijhoff both published first in Dutch, then had their books translated. Of the eight studies on the VOC cited in fn. 37, six are not available in English. Of the remaining two, one is recent (T. Andrade) and the other (J.J.A.M. Kuepers) is a short, obscure book.

<sup>41</sup> Goslinga, *Dutch in the Caribbean*, 299-302.

Netherland. Likewise, the Reformed Church's Walcheren classis, which was one of two ecclesiastical councils most responsible for colonial affairs, had an East Indies committee and a separate West Indies committee that oversaw religious needs in Africa and the Americas. In one regard the Dutch were not alone: England and France also founded East India Companies. The fact that they did not do the same for their territories in the western hemisphere, leaving it open to multiple companies and private merchants, is a reminder that they, too, approached the world in two parts, probably because of distance and other pragmatic considerations. To make the same division today is no artificial, anachronistic imposition; and nowhere is that more clear than in the Dutch case.<sup>42</sup>

Rejecting the spiritual/secular dichotomy and essentialism of some Dutch history writing, I begin with the rather simple proposition that religion mattered to seventeenth-century peoples, then ask the following questions: How did Reformed Christianity, the public faith of the Netherlands, inform and shape the Dutch experience abroad? How did the Reformed Church and the West India Company interact in different settings? What effect did the major religious issues and divisions of the period have on the company and its directors, merchants, employees, and others? Conversely, what effect did expansion have on Dutch Calvinism? How did the connections and movement fostered by a single umbrella organization like the WIC influence individuals, colonies, and regions? If the dissertation's institutional approach seems rather conventional, it is laying a necessary foundation. No one has written about these issues on this scale. Based heavily in Dutch-language sources, including correspondence, diaries, meeting minutes, naval logs, and

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<sup>42</sup> For the Atlantic world as an artificially imposed category, see the forums in fn. 33, especially the articles by Paul Mapp and Peter Coclanis in the *William and Mary Quarterly*.

other seventeenth-century manuscripts and printed works, this is the first comprehensive study of the WIC and Reformed religion in the Dutch Atlantic world.

The first three chapters deal with questions and issues in the Netherlands. Chapter One explains how the Reformed Church responded to the many new demands associated with expansion and embraced the WIC with enthusiasm, construing it as a divine tool for destroying Catholicism and spreading Protestantism. At the same time, the church's diffuse structure caused fierce, long-lasting, expensive quarrels about which ecclesiastical bodies should control colonial religion. Most wanted to participate at some level. Chapter Two looks at the religious life of WIC directors in cities like Amsterdam. It demonstrates that many of them were active members of the public church. As elders and deacons they participated on major Reformed councils, which allowed them to influence clerical views of their vocation, participate in regular discussions about their territories, and conduct endless business with the church as they strove to meet colonial needs. Their commercial contacts and religious affiliations also involved the company in Europe's wider Calvinist community. The WIC's place in the "Protestant international" comes up again in Chapter Three, on the background and training of colonial clergy, many of whom came originally from England, Germany, or France. They found their way to the WIC in part through the directors' ties with Calvinist refugee congregations. Though the directors certainly had to balance ecclesiastical expenses against the general health of the business, they funded the education of future company clergy and demanded skilled, orthodox personnel.

The next three chapters explain religious affairs in Africa and America. Chapter Four considers the early decades of Dutch expansion and the nature of worship in settings where the church could not function normally—at sea, in company forts, and in war. The

clergy still played a vital role in sustaining WIC authority among sailors and soldiers and promoting a godly vision of the company's mission. Like Calvinists in Europe, they drew from the Old Testament to preach about their righteous cause and equate themselves with ancient Israel. In Brazil, the topic of Chapter Five, the Dutch established the church more completely. Converting Catholic colonists and Native Americans and making the colony a Protestant New Holland were among the WIC's major goals. Brazil was also supposed to serve as a base for conquering and transforming other Catholic possessions in America and Africa. I argue that religious tensions and the attempted "reformation" contributed to the Portuguese revolt and the company's eventual expulsion. A similar, more successful movement began in New Netherland in about the same period. Chapter Six unravels the religious rhetoric surrounding the colony's political transformation and compares church-company conflict there and in the Dutch Caribbean, usually attributed to WIC neglect or bad clergy. I show that discord was caused by unpopular rulers and policies that actually had little to do with faith. Opposition centered in the church because it was an alternative source of authority. Though it never organized itself beyond the basic level of consistory in New Netherland, its power was sufficient to repress non-conformers. Dutch colonies in general were not as tolerant—indeed, quite the opposite—as scholars have said.

One cannot understand the WIC without recognizing that its image, goals, and activities were fundamentally shaped by Reformed religion. Though it was, obviously, a business, it did not just engage in trade. This study challenges the notion of separate religious and commercial worlds, broadens the scope of the Protestant international, and demonstrates the value of studying each part of the Dutch Atlantic in connection with the rest. Clergy and other personnel moved from place to place; developments in one colony



were shaped by people and events elsewhere. The Reformed churches of the Netherlands kept a close eye on religion overseas and cared very much about what happened there. In fact, they were sometimes responsible for problems blamed on the company because they maintained an iron grip on colonial hires, publications, and organization. Ultimately their meticulous, worried management was an obstacle to the spread of Protestantism.

In this context “the church” does not just mean the clergy. In my own research I have found that Reformed ministers were more accepting of trade and treasure than the anti-Weber literature allows.<sup>43</sup> All the same, by focusing on clerical views of economic developments in a religious community that explicitly rejected authoritarian clergy and required lay participation even in the most important, powerful ecclesiastical bodies, one brings what might be called a Catholic mindset to a discussion about Protestantism. If the relationship between religion and commerce experienced a significant change in the early Dutch Republic, did it have something to do with the merchant voice and influence on the church from *within*? If so, the growth of a positive, even pious outlook on trade had some roots in Calvinist organization. Also relevant is the fact that many clergy now worked for a large business, placing them in a different category than ecclesiastical employees of the state in Holland, giving them a personal stake in the company’s success. This was a new relationship indeed: Not George L. Smith’s religion-as-afterthought or Jelle Riemersma’s “divorce,” but a clear marriage of religion, trade, and expansion.

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<sup>43</sup> See fn. 12.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Dutch Reformed Church and the World

In 1632 the Amsterdam bookseller Jacob Colom published his first atlas and navigation manual, *De Vyerighe Colom*. Inside, opposite the title page, he included an engraving of Petrus Plancius, the late minister, theologian, and cartographer. The image is a seamless combination of secular and sacred: Plancius stands at his pulpit, teaching navigation to a group of mariners below. Some listen intently or receive materials from his outstretched hand, while others, in the foreground, consult books and plot points on a large map and globe. Scattered on the floor are a compass, astrolabe, cross-staff, hour-glass, and other instruments, and at the center of the chapel, floating in the air, is a large undulating column, casting bright rays of light in every direction. A second column is visible through a window to the left, high above a ship at sea, and three observers on the shoreline gaze at it, one of them using it as a reference point to take some measurement. To Christian and Jewish contemporaries, the picture and the book's title, which was an obvious play on Colom's name, would have brought a familiar story to mind. Colom was promising to guide Dutch ships to their destinations as surely as God led the Israelites to their promised land "in a pillar of fire, to give them light."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 13:21, King James Version. Kees Zandvliet, *Mapping for Money: Maps, plans, and topographic paintings and their role in Dutch overseas expansion during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Amsterdam: Batavian Lion International, 1998), 38. The picture is reproduced in R.B. Evenhuis, *Ook Dat Was Amsterdam: De kerk der hervorming in de gouden eeuw* (Amsterdam: W. Ten Have N.V., 1965), vol. 1. See also Jacob Colom's entry in P.J. Blok and P.C. Molhuysen, eds., *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek* (Leiden, 1911-1937), vol. 9.

Though Plancius would have disapproved of Colom's marriage in an Anabaptist church, as well as his publication of Anabaptist and Arminian authors, the Calvinist minister's wide-ranging interests and talents made him the perfect choice for the message Colom was trying to convey. Exactly when or how Plancius acquired his particular skills is unclear. Born in 1552 in Flanders, he and his family probably converted to Reformed Christianity sometime in the 1560s, when it was still a prohibited, underground, minority religion, and when the relationship between the Dutch and their Spanish rulers had nearly reached a breaking point. Like most men of his generation, Plancius had to go abroad to prepare for the ministry, studying theology in Germany and England. He was ordained in 1576 and spent his early career founding and assisting fledgling congregations in his native province. Eventually called to preach in Brussels, he fled to the north, disguised as a soldier, when a Spanish army captured the city in 1585. By December of that year he was serving the Reformed Church in Amsterdam.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to his regular ecclesiastical duties, Plancius was soon involved with the burgeoning world of Dutch exploration, cartography, and trade, publishing his first known maps in Laurens Jacobszoon's Bible (1590). Though he was a respected minister and theologian, his passion for the world beyond Holland's shores also made him, on occasion, an unconventional preacher. His parishioners could learn about anything during his sermons, including India, the New World, and even the stars. He was a director of the *Oude Compagnie*, which would ultimately merge with other firms to form the East India Company, and some of the first Dutch ships that sailed to Asia in the 1590s relied on his maps and instructions. For more than two decades he collected their records when they

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<sup>2</sup> J. Keuning, *Petrus Plancius: Theoloog en Geograaf, 1552-1622* (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & Zoon, 1946).

returned to Holland, corrected his maps, taught lessons in navigation, examined potential captains and other officers, inspected naval equipment, and advised the States General on all matters related to expansion. His hope of finding a shorter, northern route to Asia lay behind famous voyages like those of Willem Barentsz and Henry Hudson. He supported early New Netherland traders and worked with Willem Usselinx, the so-called “father” of the West India Company, which was founded the year before Plancius died. For good reason, his biographer wrote that he was “the intellectual center of Holland’s expeditions to the East and West.”<sup>3</sup>

One could also argue that he played a critical role in the spread of Reformed religion, for many of the ships that he helped launch carried ministers that his church had called and charged to establish congregations in foreign lands. Admittedly, he was more involved with the East India Company than the West, but he championed the latter. With his southern, Calvinist roots, his educational and other foreign connections, and his keen interest in Dutch expansion, he was also a kind of archetype for many individuals who were involved with the WIC, the embodiment of a cosmopolitan Protestant worldview that was common at the time. War with Spain, the Catholic empires, the sudden increase in Dutch trade, and the ongoing Reformation bestowed a deeply political, international sense or purpose on Reformed religion in the Netherlands. To be sure, not everyone was Calvinist. Even in the church some harbored a vague, less demanding faith. Yet it was still Protestant and anti-Catholic. One did not need Calvinism to see the world through a

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 68. Keuning wrote in Dutch. The translation is my own. For the rest see 65-119, and Zandvliet, *Mapping for Money*, 33-49. Besides the Henry Hudson and Willem Usselinx connections, Plancius’s involvement with early New Netherland is uncertain and likely was not great. Keuning shows on p. 173 that Plancius petitioned the States General on behalf of New Netherland merchants attempting to extend a particular deadline that they had been given.

spiritual lens or interpret one's religion in the light of temporal events. Few contemporaries of Petrus Plancius would have known how to do otherwise.

This chapter is about the Dutch Reformed Church, its ministers, and the initial response to expansion. It provides, first, an overview of the Dutch Reformation and the ways in which the church was an international institution even before the large trading companies. It then examines the regional ecclesiastical bodies most responsible for colonial religion and how they organized themselves in new ways to meet imperial demands. It also looks at their relationship with the WIC and their early experience trying to manage religious affairs in the Atlantic world. The final section shows how churches in other cities and provinces were involved in less meaningful ways. They tried to obtain greater control, tried to create a national council to administer colonial religion, but their efforts foundered on the rock of Dutch federalism and the existing lack of hierarchy in their own presbyterian structure. Some "excluded" clergy still engaged with expansion through the printed word. On the whole, the church was intensely interested in what was happening in the rest of the world, the destruction of Catholic power, the planting of the true Reformed religion, and especially the role that they, the Dutch, were playing in this critical divine drama.

### *The Reformation in the Netherlands*

The Protestant Reformation was a long time coming to the Netherlands, and the sources of reform varied greatly. More urban and literate than much of Europe, the region exhibited a strain of religious innovation long before Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenberg chapel. For instance, a spiritual and educational

movement called the *Devotio Moderna* began in the late fourteenth century. Ultimately it produced thinkers like Thomas à Kempis, who wrote about private, inward devotion in his famous *Imitation of Christ*. The *Devotio* was not critical of the established church or its methods and was not, therefore, an early branch or omen of the Reformation, nor even Christian humanism. But the three did share one important characteristic: An increased attention to the individual experience. And the *Devotio* influenced major humanists like Rudolph Agricola and Erasmus of Rotterdam. Through its fresh educational approach it prepared the ground for the major literary, scholarly, religious innovations that appeared in the Netherlands with humanist learning in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Erasmus and his colleagues throughout northern Europe criticized the Catholic Church for its ponderous scholastic theology, corrupted Latin, monasticism, monopoly on scripture, and its support for relics, pilgrimages, and other lay “superstition.”<sup>4</sup>

As a neighbor to Germany, with close linguistic and commercial ties, it is no surprise that the Netherlands provided a ready home for Luther’s writings after 1517. More than thirty of his works were translated and published in Dutch in the 1520s. Evangelical gatherings sprung up in taverns and private homes, and many preachers took up Lutheran themes at the pulpit. Also appearing from Germany, Anabaptism first made its mark in the early 1530s, when thousands of Dutch men and women marched off to Münster and met their bloody end alongside other radicals. A pacifist Anabaptist branch called the Mennonites then emerged at home and thrived under the leadership of Menno Simons, a former priest who spent much of his life on the run, yet still managed to preach and write and shepherd an ever-growing flock. Other sources for new religious ideas

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 41-54.

eventually included Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, John à Lasco, and more. None of them ever resided in the Netherlands, but their ideas reached it indirectly through international channels, especially the printed word, travel and exile during the Revolt, and education and ecclesiastical training in foreign countries. Among so many reformers it is hard to characterize the exact nature of the Dutch Reformation, although some generalities are possible. Malcontents expressed real anger toward monks, priestly privileges, celibacy, and indulgences. They wanted better access to God's word through vernacular translations of the Bible and, related to that, they preferred sermons based in scripture. Many people who held these views could not have identified their ideological pedigree with any more precision than historians today. Humanist, Lutheran, Anabaptist, Reformed: They pooled at first into a muddled, eclectic Protestantism, which developed uncomfortably alongside the public Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup>

No single branch of Protestantism caught hold in the sixteenth-century Netherlands because of the amount of repression that non-conformers faced. The Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain and the Low Countries, Charles V, exercised much more control there than he did in the loosely-bound provinces of his German-speaking empire. He issued the first placard against heresy in 1520, followed later by others. More men and women were executed for their religious beliefs in the Netherlands between 1523 and 1566 than in any other part of Europe. While Charles failed to halt underground and even public activities, he did prevent any one movement from establishing itself as the dominant Protestant faith.

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<sup>5</sup> Alastair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London: Hambledon Press, 1990), 1-59; Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 173-201; Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 74-105; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Viking, 2004), 204, 362. See these same sources for much of the information in the following paragraphs.

Calvinism was a latecomer to the Reformation in Holland and other provinces of the northern Netherlands. In the south it arrived in Antwerp by the 1550s, in Vlissingen by 1557, and perhaps also then in Zierikzee. Huguenot influence spilled across the border from France into Wallonia in the 1560s, and by 1566 there were congregations in at least sixteen towns stretching from there to Zeeland. Holland boasted a number of congregations by that point, but they were short-lived, and they had only been formed in the wake of the *Beeldenstorm* (sometimes called the “Iconoclastic Fury”), which spread rapidly from south to north in the summer and fall of 1566. No Reformed church existed there before. It ultimately became the public faith of the Dutch Republic not because it had the most adherents, but because its supporters were the most outspoken, militant, and organized during the Revolt. They took advantage of the widespread antagonism toward the Inquisition and, by extension, the Catholic Church. In that sense King Charles and his heir, Philip II, prepared the ground more than anyone for the reformation they wanted so desperately to prevent.<sup>6</sup>

When Philip responded to the *Beeldenstorm* with an army, many people fled to London and Emden, and their churches in the Netherlands dissolved. They quickly regrouped, however, and at the synods of Wesel (1568) and Emden (1571) they aligned themselves with Calvin’s Geneva by adopting his ecclesiastical offices and a presbyterian model of organization: Every Dutch congregation, they decided, would be headed by a council called a consistory, which would then send ministers and elders to a regional “classis” (plural classes) to meet with representatives from other consistories and select

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. See also the remainder of Duke, *Reformation and Revolt*; Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 129-154, 169-178; and Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk van Nierop, and Marc Venard, eds., *Reformation, Revolt, and Civil War in France and the Netherlands, 1555-1585* (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1999).



envoys to infrequent provincial synods. They chose a restricted membership, refusing Communion to all but those who made a public profession of faith and accepted church discipline, and they adopted the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism as their official statements of doctrine.

The following year, when exiled pirates called “Sea Beggars” began freeing Dutch towns from Spanish control and expunging Catholic worship, Calvinists were best-placed to fill the void. Some towns only opened their gates to the Beggars on the promise that they would leave Catholic institutions alone, and William of Orange, who feared disunity, issued a decree of tolerance. But the Beggars would not forget what the Spanish had done to their lives and property. In revenge they commandeered churches, murdered priests and monks, and sacked cloisters. The Spanish counterattack of late 1572 raised concerns about a potential fifth column, which led to further anti-Catholic violence. The States of Holland outlawed public Catholic worship in 1573, and William finally joined the Reformed Church that year. Reformed congregations quickly emerged in towns and cities all over the north.

Yet the Calvinist victory was incomplete. There were still too many questions that had to be answered about the relationship between church and state. Rulers were wary of exchanging the unwanted power of Rome with the equally unwanted oversight of their private lives in powerful, sanctimonious consistories. Some believed that they, as civil guardians of the church, should have more control over it. They wanted an inclusive state church, with membership and Communion open to everyone in society simply because they were born there. Calvinists tended to oppose such measures, and ultimately they got their way on the membership question. However, the recent history of repression under

the Spanish fostered a limited kind of tolerance. The state supported the church by giving it former Catholic property, paying salaries, supplementing clerical education, and including church officers at official functions. But after the initial, bloody days of the Sea Beggars, no one in society faced any threat to person or property because of their beliefs. They could worship how they wanted in the privacy of their homes. Rulers sometimes even winked at public expressions of non-conformity, which was a never-ending source of tension with the church. On the divisive issue of callings and appointments, secular and ecclesiastical leaders made numerous proposals about power-sharing, and ultimately it was decided province-to-province and town-to-town, the church in one place retaining greater control than the church in another. In one common compromise, rulers selected church officers from a slate of candidates proposed by the consistory.<sup>7</sup>

Bolstered by 100,000 refugees from the southern Netherlands, the number of Reformed members in the north grew over time, though they always remained a sizeable minority. In 1587 perhaps 1 in 10 was a member in Holland; by 1600, between 12 and 18 percent, with the country as a whole reaching about 37 percent by 1650.<sup>8</sup> It is important to reiterate, however, that membership was difficult to come by. It might mean greater prestige as an elder or deacon, or better access to church funds, but it also involved public examination, confession, and subjection to discipline. The figures above do not include those who avoided such practices but who still attended worship services, baptized their children, and married in the church. One did not have to be a member to participate at that level, and many people, including rulers, were “members” in the sense that someone

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.; H.A. Enno van Gelder, “Nederland geprotestantiseerd?” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 81 (1968): 445-464.

<sup>8</sup> For 1 in 10, see Duke, *Reformation and Revolt*, 269; for 12 to 18 percent, see Benedict, 199; and for 37 percent, see Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 263-325.

today would use the term. The degree to which the state heeded the church's repeated calls to end non-Reformed worship, Sabbath-breaking, dancing, magic, prostitution, and other unwanted behaviors in each town or city was probably most dependent on whether its rulers fell more among the first or second kind of church-goer.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the young church was rocked by the Arminian controversy, which would have important repercussions not just in the Netherlands but in much of Reformed Europe and in Dutch territories overseas. Jacobus Arminius was an Amsterdam minister who espoused views on predestination and grace that contradicted the official doctrines laid out in the catechism and confession, leading to conflict between him and Reverend Plancius.<sup>9</sup> Later he was called to the University of Leiden, where his most outspoken opponent was Franciscus Gomarus, a fellow professor and a theologian of the same stripe as Plancius. Arminius and his followers believed that John Calvin's interpretation of predestination made God the author of sin and destroyed man's freedom. According to Calvin, all are saved or damned from the beginning of time according to God's unfathomable will, and there is nothing they can do about it, no way for anyone to resist God's grace once he offered it, no way to obtain it once someone was numbered among the unlucky damned. The gentler doctrine of the Arminians held instead that God, in his omniscience, foresaw that some people would have faith and some would not, and he predestined them accordingly. His foreknowledge did not destroy free will. People could reject God's mercy, Christ having died for all, and their choices affected their fate in the next life. Contrary to Calvinists, the Arminians did not want to impose their doctrines on the church; they simply wanted space within it: an inclusive organization where the answers to every mystery were not inscribed in stone and where

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<sup>9</sup> Scholars often use the title *domine* for Dutch clergy. More familiar in English, "reverend" is used here.

ministers of both kinds could work side by side. Their objectives were more in keeping with the open state church that many rulers wanted.<sup>10</sup>

If Arminians had the backing of rulers like Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, Advocate of Holland, Calvinists enjoyed greater numbers within the church and had the support of other rulers, like the regents of Amsterdam, who leaned toward Calvinism in these years. The Calvinist clergy tried to guarantee orthodoxy by requiring new ministers to sign their names to the confession or preach regularly from the catechism, both of which Arminians resisted because of the passages that conflicted with their beliefs. Under the leadership of Oldenbarnevelt, the States of Holland intervened, issuing a statement in 1614 that forbade either faction from preaching what the other found most objectionable. In an effort to increase the number of Arminian preachers, it also encouraged local rulers to take greater control of the appointment process or dismiss Calvinists who were too divisive. The church began to tear at the seams. Some consistories disciplined those who were married or had their children baptized before Arminian ministers. They discouraged parishioners from attending church when Arminians preached. The classis of Den Briel finally issued an ultimatum: Subject yourselves to our will or we can no longer work together—and the two sides never met again. In city after city the church divided into competing Arminian and Calvinist consistories. Finally, Amsterdam created committees of correspondence for Calvinists to meet and discuss mutual problems and work out strategies to resist the latest heresies. They even began forming a new, separate church.

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<sup>10</sup> For this and the next paragraph, see A. Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgruezuen: Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 227-274; Evenhuis, *Ook Dat was Amsterdam*, vol. 1, 216-250; and Carl Bangs, "Dutch Theology, Trade, and War, 1590-1610," *Church History* 39, no. 4 (Dec. 1970): 470-482. Because Arminians elaborated their views most famously in a remonstrance submitted to the States General, they were (and are) often called "Remonstrants" and their opponents "Contra-Remonstrants." However, for the sake of clarity, the two sets of terms being virtually the same in this context, only "Arminian" and "Calvinist" are used here.

In 1617 Oldenbarnevelt and the States of Holland skirted the power of the States General by raising a provincial army whose purpose was, ostensibly, to maintain peace. It was a fatal step, for it caused the Prince of Orange to cast his lot with the Calvinist faction. As the traditional head of the national army, he marched his troops through Holland to The Hague, meeting little resistance along the way. Oldenbarnevelt was arrested, imprisoned, tried, and beheaded, and his political party fell apart. His followers were replaced on town councils, his agenda discarded, including the temporary truce that he had brokered with Spain. Most important for the church, an international synod assembled in the city of Dordrecht in 1618, and there the Arminians were decisively defeated. They were heard and refuted, their doctrines condemned and banned. Afterward the church adopted the synod's published decisions and placed them beside the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism as the definitive declarations of true Reformed doctrine, and clergy in the future had to pledge their agreement with all three. Arminian ministers were outlawed, and many fled the country or went underground. They would soon return and operate illicitly alongside other non-conformers, sometimes with quiet approval. But Dordrecht was still a key Calvinist moment. No longer a faction within the church, Calvinists controlled public religion in the Netherlands.

The East and West India Companies added a degree of cosmopolitanism to a church that was clearly already internationally-oriented. That was the nature of a movement born in war and influenced by individuals like John Calvin, who was himself a refugee. Having fled to Geneva from France, Calvin had to supervise different reformations from across national boundaries. His direct influence on the Netherlands was never great—unlike the role he played among the Huguenots in France—but his

ideas found their way there eventually by more circuitous means. Already mentioned above were Huguenot impacts on the southern Netherlands, the immigration of many southerners to the north because of the war, Wesel and Emden as sites of major Reformed synods, the presence of foreign delegates at the Synod of Dordrecht, and the general importance of cities like Emden and London during the Revolt. They fostered the Dutch Reformed Church during its difficult early years, providing a base for the Sea Beggars, a center for illegal printing, a source for alms and other monetary aid, and a sanctuary for Dutch congregations and Calvinist clergy who came and went according to the ebb and flow of their fortunes in the Netherlands.

When their own troubles ended, Dutch cities provided the same help to English Puritans, Separatists, and others. The best-known of these groups was the Pilgrims, who migrated to America, but they were only one among many. At least thirty English and Scottish congregations operated in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, and unlike the French-speaking churches, which were organized into their own synod, they were more carefully incorporated in the public one: “the English-language wing of the Dutch Reformed Church.” They were a “factory” for Puritan experimentation and printing, just as London and Emden had been for Dutch Calvinists before. English, Dutch, and German theologians translated and printed each other’s works at home, and they formed lasting international bonds at Dutch universities, which had many foreign students preparing for the ministry and some foreign professors.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Keith Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 91. For the Protestant international and ties among English, German, and French Calvinists, see Graeme Murdock, *Beyond Calvin: The Intellectual, Political, and Cultural World of Europe’s Reformed Churches, c. 1540-1620* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 31-53; J.F. Bosher, “Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (Jan. 1995): 77-102; W. van ‘t Spijker, “De Nadere Reformatie,” in *De Nadere Reformatie: Beschrijving van haar Voornaamste Vertegenwoordigers*,

### *Amsterdam and Zeeland Take Charge*

The rise of the Reformed Church and the Arminian controversy coincided with early Dutch activity overseas. At least by the 1590s Dutch merchants began sending ships to Africa, America, and Asia in search of ivory, salt, sugar, cloves, cinnamon, and other foreign commodities that they could no longer obtain from Antwerp or the Iberian peninsula because of the war. At first they worked individually or organized small companies that competed with each another. Then six rivals merged in 1602 to create the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which would eventually ravage Portuguese interests in Asia and dominate the global spice trade. Some people called for a similar joint-stock company for the Atlantic region, but their plans were sacrificed as part of the 1609 truce with Spain. The West India Company (WIC) did not get off the ground, therefore, until the war resumed in 1621. Together the VOC and WIC imposed significant strains on the church because so many clergy were suddenly needed abroad. Moreover, the church's relative youth and diffuse, presbyterian organization raised controversial questions about colonial oversight. How could an organization without permanent national institutions, a church designed to operate first at the local level, supervise a project of such widespread interest and scope? Who was in charge and where did they get their authority? Issues like these were unique to Protestant expansion.

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by T. Brienens, K. Exalto, et al. ('s-Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekcentrum B.V., 1986), 5-16; W.J. op 't Hof, "Piety in the Wake of Trade: The North Sea as an intermediary of reformed piety up to 1700," in *The North Sea and Culture, 1550-1800* (Hilversum: 1996), eds. J. Roding and L. Heerma van Voss; Frank Lestringant and Ann Blair, "Geneva and America in the Renaissance: The Dream of the Huguenot Refuge, 1555-1600," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 285-295; A. Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt: Exile and the Development of Reformed Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); A. Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth Century London* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Keith Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower: English Puritan Printing in the Netherlands, 1600-1640* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994). See also the introduction of Benedict, et al., *Reformation, Revolt, and Civil War*, 1-21.

Petrus Plancius was the first to inform the church in Amsterdam about new personnel needs. On March 5, 1598, four years before the VOC was organized, he approached his consistory in the *Oude Kerk* and said that certain ship owners had spoken with the *burgemeesters* (similar to English mayors) about obtaining Reformed ministers to preach God's word during the journey to Asia and "there on land." The *burgemeesters* had then approached Plancius with an idea: Would he visit those who were studying at the city's cost and encourage them to accept the assignment? The consistory agreed and asked him to speak to three students whom the *burgemeesters* had named.<sup>12</sup>

So began more than four hundred years of Dutch Reformed activity in the non-European world. Plancius acted as the mouthpiece of the company in his consistory, and the consistory often used him as its representative back to the company. He was not the only one to receive such assignments, nor was Amsterdam's the only interested church. In the same period, merchants in Delft, Hoorn, and other cities with company chambers began working with their own consistories and classes for personnel and other needs. Amsterdam's response was common: Choose deputies to look into the matter and report back to the larger body. Then they received its instructions and completed the task under its direction, whether that meant finding new clergy, writing letters, seeing the company about books or salaries, and a myriad of other issues. There were no "Indies" committees yet. Eventually, because of the way the companies were organized, the churches in Amsterdam and Zeeland bore the heaviest burden. The VOC and WIC charters both gave the greatest power to the Amsterdam and Zeeland chambers, who invested the most money, sent the most ships, and were the most active in general. It was perhaps natural

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<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 5 March 1598, AKA 3:22, SAA. None of the three went to Asia.



that the churches in those places would also be most involved in sending personnel and supervising the new churches that were established abroad.<sup>13</sup>

Until 1612, most colonial clergy were stationed in Asia, rarely in Africa or the Americas. Some worked in the western hemisphere aboard the ships of the Dutch Admiralty or the odd merchant ship, but few if any ministers were stationed permanently at one of the short-lived forts or colonies that Dutchmen established on the Amazon River or the Wild Coast (the northern coast of South America) before 1612. By that point the growing trade to West Africa needed protection, so the Admiralty built Fort Nassau on the Gold Coast, creating the first permanent post for Reformed ministers in what would one day be WIC territory. It arranged for supplies and ships of war, officers, sailors and soldiers, then in April began looking for someone to serve as “exhorter or reader”—not an ordained minister, but a lay preacher to read published sermons and offer prayers. The lords of the Admiralty heard of a man from Haarlem who might be interested, Meynert Assuerus. The church examined him, and Plancius finally issued his instructions in early July. The Admiralty wrote to Fort Nassau, “You will let him teach and exhort the people on water and on land, and respect him in his office.”<sup>14</sup>

Amsterdam’s early experience in the Atlantic world was discouraging. It soon learned, if it did not already know from its short time in the East, that there were special

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<sup>13</sup> For company organization, see Henk den Heijer, *De geschiedenis van de WIC* (Walburg Pers, 1994); Henk den Heijer, *De Geotrooieerde Compagnie: de VOC en de WIC als voorlopers van de naamloze vennootschap* (Kluwer/Deventer: Stichting tot Bevordering der Notariele Wetenschap Amsterdam, 2005); Wim Klooster, *The Dutch in the Americas, 1600-1800* (Providence: John Carter Brown Library, 1997). See also L.J. Joosse, *'Scoone Dingen Sijn Swaere Dingen': Een onderzoek naar de motieven en activiteiten in de Nederlanden tot verbreiding van de gereformeerde religie gedurende de eerste helft van de zeventiende eeuw* (Leiden: J.S. Groen en Zoon, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> For “exhorter,” see 5 April, AAC 1358, NA. For the Admiralty letter, see 5 July 1612 in the same. For the rest, see 31 Aug 1611, and 5 May 1612, AAC 1357 and 1358; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 28 June and 5 July 1612, AKA 4:18-19, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 2 July 1612, ACA 2:77, SAA; copy book of the Amsterdam classis, 3 July 1612, ACA 19:17. All translations from MSS in this dissertation are my own unless otherwise noted.

challenges in managing ecclesiastical affairs in distant colonial settings. Assuerus returned from Fort Nassau followed by rumors of immoral behavior, and the Amsterdam consistory then received a letter from his replacement, Jan Arentss, who wrote about Assuerus's gambling, drunkenness, and frivolity.<sup>15</sup> Arentss's successor, the Reverend Jan Hermans, also proved problematic. The Admiralty sent Hermans to Fort Nassau in the summer or fall of 1617 on a three-year contract. He returned after a stay of only about six weeks, complaining about noise and drinking at sea and an "atheist" captain who would not let him offer prayers. His quarters on land were inadequate, "above the prison, among the soldiers," with no quiet place for study. He heard vulgar conversation and singing, he reported, which sometimes forced him from the barracks; and the general treated him like a common soldier. Having determined that the "peace of the Lord" did not exist at Fort Nassau, he decided to return. The consistory and classis were not happy about his short stay, though they did admit, his experience was bad. The classis promised to speak with the Admiralty, which then wrote to its general about these and other issues, including the soldiers "mixing" and committing adultery with indigenous women. He was to prevent such abominations in the future. Through exhortation, fear of punishment, and Christian teaching he could help his subordinates abandon evil and live pious lives, the Admiralty wrote. It promised the classis that conditions at the fort would improve.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 1 and 8 Oct 1615, AKA 4:151, SAA. See also 22 Sep 1616, AKA 4:179. The consistory would not accept Assuerus for a different position because of his behavior in Africa.

<sup>16</sup> For "atheist," see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 17 and 29 Oct, 1618, ACA 2:124-125, SAA. For "prison" and "peace," see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 21 June 1618, AKA 4:284-285, SAA. And for the rest, see 8 Aug, AKA 4:290; 17 and 31 Jan 1619, AKA 4:312-314; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 4 and 18 Feb 1619, ACA 2:125-126; resolutions of the Admiralty, 15 Nov 1618, AAC 1364, NA; the Admiralty to General Galantius, 24 Nov 1618, AAC 1541. See also Samuel Brun, "Samuel Brun's Voyages of 1611 to 1620," in *German Sources for West African History, 1559-1669*, tr. and ed. Adam Jones (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1983), 80.

This bad beginning persisted after the founding of the WIC in 1621, at least as far as Fort Nassau was concerned. There were no other problems with church personnel, nor did the church complain any more, for the time being, about the situation there. Yet there was a lot of confusion surrounding the transition from Admiralty to company. When the Amsterdam consistory called Jacob van der Meulen to Africa, for example, the Admiralty and WIC could not agree on the necessity of sending a minister at all: Could they not get by with a simple lay preacher? Also, which of them was now responsible for hiring and sending personnel? Six months later the church finally released van der Meulen from his commitment. He was running out of money, there was no resolution in sight, and he had an opportunity to teach at a school in Friesland. The consistory sent Reverend Sylvius to the Admiralty to seek financial support for van der Meulen and protest the current state of affairs. It was not through lack of effort on the church's part, he stated, that things had broken down. A year later, according to an agreement brokered by the States General, the WIC took control of Fort Nassau at last.<sup>17</sup>

The situation improved markedly during preparations for the company's first fleet, whose main goal was to capture Bahia, the capital of Portuguese Brazil. Amsterdam consistory members watched these "West Indies" ships as they were provisioned in the summer and fall of 1623, and at least twice they sent representatives to the WIC to ensure that it provided for the ecclesiastical needs of sailors and soldiers. The directors promised that they were doing everything possible, and they thanked the consistory for its concern. Later they announced plans to hire one minister and three *ziekentroosters* (Comforters of the Sick), and the church began looking at candidates. It also made arrangements with the

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<sup>17</sup> Resolutions of the Admiralty, 24 July 1621, AAC 1367, NA; 28 July, 1 and 9 Aug, 9 Nov 1623, 15 Aug 1624, AAC 1369; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 21 May and 24 Aug 1623, AKA 5:107, 129, SAA; minutes of the XIX, 3-17 Aug 1623, OWIC 1:16, NA.

directors for books and other supplies, and they agreed to pay some salaries early, months before the fleet sailed. The consistory had asked for the extra time and money to train the new *ziekentroosters* in their different responsibilities.<sup>18</sup>

The Walcheren classis in Zeeland went through a similar process in the same period. It had been very involved with the VOC and the training of VOC ministers in the past, and it had recently formed a permanent committee to deal with Asian affairs. Now in December 1623 the directors of the WIC's Zeeland chamber came to the classis and said that they needed someone to preach in Brazil. No one at the meeting volunteered his services, but a few days later Enoch Sterthenius, minister at Middelburg, stepped forward to fill the position. The classis authorized him to preach God's word, administer the sacraments of baptism and Communion, comfort the sick, offer prayers, and oversee the church in general—exactly as it was done at home, his instructions stressed. The classis also talked about an upcoming day of prayer that the States General had proclaimed. It resolved that ministers would now pray in all public services for the spread of the gospel among the “blind heathens” and a blessing on both companies. Just a few months later the Portuguese surrendered to the Dutch fleet at Bahia, and Reverend Sterthenius went ashore to deliver the first Reformed sermon in Catholic Brazil.<sup>19</sup>

To deal with the new issues and demands of expansion, the Amsterdam and Zeeland churches organized themselves differently in these years. The Amsterdam classis first delegated the responsibility for Indies affairs to the Amsterdam consistory, while the

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<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 27 July, 24 Aug, 14 and 21 Sep 1623, AKA 5:126-136, SAA; minutes of the XIX, 3-17 Aug 1623, OWIC 1:5-17, NA; minutes of the North Holland synod, 8 Aug 1623, ASNH 3, NHA.

<sup>19</sup> Minutes of the Walcheren classis, 18 and 22 Dec 1623, ACW 2:10, ZA; instructions of Enoch Sterthenius, 22 Dec 1623, ACW 73. For Sterthenius and the first Reformed service in Bahia, Brazil, on 11 May 1624, see Frans L. Schalkwijk, *The Reformed Church in Dutch Brazil, 1630-1654* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1998), 77.

Walcheren classis created different committees for East and West consisting of ministers from multiple consistories. Thus Walcheren, based in Middelburg but with ministers and elders also representing Vlissingen, Veere, and other towns, divided control among all its members. Amsterdam, with representatives from villages like Weesp and Diemen, only gave it to the ministers and elders inside the city. They outnumbered the rest because of Amsterdam's huge population, and they tended to be the better-educated, higher-quality clergy. It was also more convenient to give time-consuming assignments to the consistory because the classis often did not meet in the cold winter months. Although the consistory did not represent the classis in the same way as Walcheren's Indies committees, it was at least empowered by the classis and conducted business in its name.<sup>20</sup>

Discontent with this arrangement sometimes originated from within the classis. In 1633 Reverend Anthonides, minister at Naarden, proposed that they create a new, more inclusive body, but the matter was postponed and died. Two years later the classis took it up again, yet a plurality of voices resolved that everything would "remain on the old footing." The delegates from outside the city were dissatisfied, the scribe recorded. They continued to make their case, however, and the next year, April 7, 1636, the Amsterdam consistory finally relinquished control. The classis created a new committee, charging it to draft articles of government for colonial churches and to regulate them afterward. The

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<sup>20</sup> For the Amsterdam classis delegating power over Africa and Asia to the consistory, see the minutes of the classis, 8 April and 18 Nov 1619, ACA 2:128, 133, SAA. For Walcheren, see the minutes of the East Indies committee, 12 Nov 1620, ACW 65:1; and minutes of the classis, 18 Dec 1623, ACW 2:10, ZA. See also Jooisse, *Scoone Dingen*, 365-417. For the Amsterdam consistory's relationship with the classis, see Evenhuis, *Ook Dat was Amsterdam*, 182-185.

consistory retained a special role only when time and weather did not permit the classis to come together to examine new ministers.<sup>21</sup>

While Walcheren had separate committees for East and West, Amsterdam's one committee always dealt with the VOC and WIC both. Also, Walcheren's West Indies committee had seven ministers, while Amsterdam's only had four—two from the city and two from other consistories. Committee members from the Walcheren classis tended to serve a lot longer. They were supposed to serve for six years, half of them rotated out every three; but often they chose to stay and were sometimes only removed by death. Not until 1646 did the classis require that every minister take a turn on both committees, now three years on each instead of six years on one. Amsterdam ministers only served two-year terms, half of them rotated out every year as well. Responsibilities were basically the same in both classes: Find ministers who were interested in going abroad, introduce them to the classis and WIC, issue instructions, read incoming correspondence, summarize it and make an extract of other committee business, and finally, when the will of the classis was obtained, write the outgoing correspondence. The classis was clearly in control. It conducted examinations, decided sticky theological questions about heathen baptism or the efficacy of baptism by lay leaders, for example, and at least in Amsterdam would not allow its committee members to meet with WIC directors on most matters without first having learned the opinion of the classis. The WIC had ecclesiastical committees of its

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<sup>21</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 3 Oct 1633, 7 May 1635, 7 April 1636, ACA 4:33 and 77, SAA; and extracts from the minutes, 5 May 1636, ACA 163:1, SAA. The latter is also translated and published in *ERSNY* 1:89-92.

own, with certain directors in each chamber acting as liaisons to the church in the same way that the Indies committees worked with the company.<sup>22</sup>

Both classes also sometimes asked those who had recently returned from the East or West to deliver reports, serve on committees, or treat with company directors and civic rulers. Of those who served the WIC, for example, Reverends Kessler, Gribius, and Selyns were members of Indies committees after they came home. Kessler and Gribius had been to Brazil, Selyns to New Netherland. Kessler was involved in WIC affairs for more than a year, working with the committee to draw up a report on Brazil and taking advantage of his membership in the classis to discuss Brazilian problems and offer advice on a variety of topics. Six years later he was officially called to the committee and served on it until his death. Gribius reported to his own classis and church, then announced to the congregation that he was departing for Amsterdam to give an accounting of the Brazil churches to the WIC there. Later he was called to work in Amsterdam and in the 1660s served on the Indies committee, corresponding with colleagues in New Netherland and Curaçao, including Reverend Polhemus, whom he had known in Brazil. Selyns delivered similar reports after arriving from New Netherland, then joined Amsterdam's committee during the difficult period when the colony switched back and forth between Dutch and

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<sup>22</sup> For Walcheren, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 5 Feb 1624, ACW 2:12, ZA, and 1 Aug 1646, AKV 363, GAV. For Amsterdam, see the previous fn., especially 5 May 1636, and minutes of the deputies, 5 March and 23 April 1640, ACA 157:29, 32-33, SAA. On differences, see also Joosse, *Scoone Dingen*, 365-417. Other examples of committee duties are in the minutes of both classes, Amsterdam's extracts, ACA 163-165, and the minutes of the deputies, ACA 157-158. For the company's ecclesiastical committees, see, for example, the extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 8 May 1640 and 10 March 1643, ACA 157:33 and 105, SAA. Or see other examples located throughout the surviving minutes of the Zeeland and Amsterdam chambers of the WIC in OWIC 14-16, 20-32, NA.

English rule. Each of these ministers drew upon personal stores of knowledge to give the church and company a better idea of what was happening abroad.<sup>23</sup>

Even without a larger, national institution to coordinate their efforts, the Amsterdam and Walcheren classes often worked together, separated by about a hundred miles. They had no need to communicate about day-to-day operations, for their similarities were greater than their differences. They were branches of the same Reformed Church; their traditions and practices were much the same. They often faced issues of great importance, though, that brought them together more literally. As early as 1624, when the Dutch took Bahia, Walcheren wrote to the Amsterdam consistory about preventing Catholics and Jews from worshipping publicly there. By the time the letter arrived in Amsterdam the consistory had already acted, but now it accepted Walcheren's suggestion to take the matter to the *Heren Negentien* (usually called the XIX). They were the WIC's highest governing body, with delegates from every chamber, and they were then meeting in Amsterdam.<sup>24</sup> The same issue came up a few years later when another

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<sup>23</sup> For Kessler, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 27 July and 3 Aug 1643, 23 May, 4 July, 7 Nov, and 8 Aug 1644, ACA 4:292, 296, 309, 312, 316, 334, SAA; minutes of the deputies, 30 Oct 1645, 13 April 1649, 4 Oct 1650, ACA 157:146, 214, 257. For Gribius, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 2 Sep 1648, AKV 363, GAV; minutes of the English consistory in Middelburg, 4 Sep to 11 Oct 1648, AEKM 1:146, ZA; minutes of the *Haags Besoigne*, 15 Sep 1648, OWIC 3:102, NA; minutes of the deputies, 1660 to 1663, ACA 157. For Selyns, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 29 Sep 1664, ACA 6:354; minutes of the deputies, 5 April 1672 to 10 April 1674, ACA 158:123-146. For other examples, see the note on Sterthenius reporting to the States General about Bahia in the incoming letters to the States General, 31 Oct 1625, ASG II, 5751, NA; or Dapper as deputy to the Zeeland directors and the Prince of Orange in the Brazil letters, 25 May 1639, OWIC 54:132; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 23 July 1639, OWIC 23:161; minutes of the Zierikzee classis, 17 Aug and 26 Oct 1639, 26 April 1645, ACZ 2:70, 72, 311, GASD; or Doornick reporting to the Zeeland directors in the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 3 Aug 1643, OWIC 25:102; or Eduardus continuing to translate Brazilian materials for the company in Holland in the minutes of the Middelburg *hoofdparticipanten*, 13 July 1646, OWIC 37:21; or the Amsterdam classis sending Bachiler and Vogelius as deputies to the WIC in the minutes of the *Haags Besoigne*, 1 and 3 Oct 1647, OWIC 3:8-9, 14-15; or Rochefort acting as representative of the French synod for WIC matters in *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1978-2006), vol. 5, 432; or Ongena reporting to the WIC in the minutes of the *Haags Besoigne*, 2 Sep 1654, OWIC 5. All these people were former WIC ministers, most of them only recently returned from overseas.

<sup>24</sup> Minutes of the Walcheren classis, 17 Oct 1624, ACW 2:17, ZA; the Walcheren classis to the Amsterdam consistory, Nov 1624, ACW 73; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 28 Nov 1624, AKA 5:232, SAA.



part of Brazil fell to the Dutch. This time two Walcheren ministers traveled personally to Amsterdam, where the classis immediately appointed representatives to strategize with them. Together they ironed out a message and brought it to the XIX, obtaining a promise that the WIC would not sanction non-Reformed worship.<sup>25</sup>

Two other issues that brought Amsterdam and Walcheren together were closely related: The reorganization of Brazil's churches into two classes and the imposition of company officers on ecclesiastical gatherings. The first was upsetting because organizational decisions were the responsibility of the whole church. They required wide input to ensure uniformity and orthodoxy and prevent dogmatic or political schisms. The second touched a raw nerve because of an old debate about the role of secular officials in the church. The restructuring in Brazil allowed the WIC to begin sending representatives to the yearly, colony-wide classes—now labeled “synods”—because synods were one of the few occasions where, even at home, the government imposed itself directly, sending envoys to observe and offer advice.<sup>26</sup>

When Walcheren learned about the changes it sent a minister to Amsterdam to solicit support in reversing them. Both classes began haranguing the company, and soon they added a new complaint, having learned that the WIC wanted the clergy in Brazil to correspond with all the churches at home by sending meeting minutes to the XIX, who would then distribute them. This would cause disorder and grant the company too much power, the classes said, perhaps leading to outright control of the church. When the XIX moved their meeting to Middelburg, Amsterdam now had to approach Walcheren in the same way that Walcheren had always come to Amsterdam, sending its remonstrations to

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<sup>25</sup> Minutes of the deputies, 2 Feb and 30 March 1643, ACA 157:101, 106-109, SAA; minutes of the Walcheren classis, 8 Jan 1643, ACW 3:43, ZA, and 8 April 1643, AKV 363, GAV.

<sup>26</sup> For the church's fears/reasons, see the following fn. See also Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*.

Middelburg and asking the clergy there to second them. Eventually, applying pressure in these ways, they were able to move both the Brazil church and the WIC to their point of view. The XIX ordered their governor and council to allow only one classis. Without a second there could be no synod, and without a synod, there was no reason to send officers to ecclesiastical gatherings, the church argued—and the XIX agreed. They also conceded the other issue, resolving that Brazil would continue to correspond with Amsterdam and Walcheren. Although the Portuguese revolt and the subsequent contraction of the church in Brazil would have ended the first two disputes anyway, and while decisions at home were often contested overseas, it was still a cooperative victory for the classes. They got what they wanted in all three instances.<sup>27</sup>

Questions about non-conformity and/or Brazil were most likely to bring Walcheren and Amsterdam together. Brazil was the face of the Catholic enemy and the foundation of Reformed hopes in America, and it was starting to emerge as a center for the Dutch Atlantic. As such, it was the only colony that, by itself, could provoke such controversies and require major cooperation. The two classes sometimes communicated on matters that concerned other colonies collectively, like getting each WIC chamber to

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<sup>27</sup> Minutes of the Walcheren classis, 5 June and 14 Aug 1642, ACW 3:33, 36, ZA; minutes of the Tholen classis, 1 July 1642, ACT 3:48, ZA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 7 Nov and 5 Dec 1644, 8 Oct 1647, ACA 4:334, 336 and 5:54-56, SAA; minutes of the deputies, 19 Aug, 8 and 22 Sep 1642, 16 Sep 1647, ACA 157:80, 89, 93, 185; extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 21 Oct 1642, Sep 1644, 14 Dec 1646, Nov 1647, ACA 163:113-116, 124-125, 148-151, 174-176; remonstrations of the Amsterdam classis to the XIX in the same minutes, 9 July 1646, ACA 163:141; extracts of Walcheren minutes, 29 July and 5 Aug 1642, ACZ 20-24, GASD; the XIX to the president and *hoge raden* of Brazil, 1 Aug 1646, OWIC 10:12-13, NA; minutes of the *Haags Besoigne*, 1 and 3 Oct 1647, OWIC 3:8-9, 14-15. The final decision of the XIX is in the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 8 Oct 1647. The president of Brazil and his council at first resisted the resolution about their representative in the classis, arguing that the classis, as the highest level of organization in Brazil, could still be seen as a synod. The churches at home and the XIX insisted that they obey, however, and the revolt eventually made it a moot point. See the minutes of the Brazil council, 6-11 May 1648, OWIC 72, NA; minutes of the Brazil classis, 7-11 May 1648, OWIC 64:27; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 5 Oct and 7 Dec 1648, ACA 5:100, 108-110, SAA; minutes of the deputies, 26 Oct 1648, 157:208; extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, Dec 1648, 164:24-28; and Pres. Schonenborch and *raden* to the Zeeland chamber, 10 Mar 1649, OWIC 65:41. In the latter they tried to justify their position. Then the issue mostly went away because the colony was in total disarray.

contribute its share of ecclesiastical personnel, having new ministers sign their names to the confession, warning each other about unsuitable lay clergy, and the like. Again, they usually took the lead because their chambers were far and away the most active and powerful. But other Dutch classes and synods were interested in foreign affairs too. They followed these issues and events, got involved however they could, and mounted a large-scale campaign to obtain an official, permanent role for themselves.<sup>28</sup>

### *The Role of Other Reformed Churches*

The Dutch churches directly concerned with expansion were located in cities or provinces with WIC chambers. Besides Amsterdam and Zeeland, those were the *Maas* chamber, encompassing Rotterdam, Delft, and Dordrecht; the *Noorderkwartier*, including Enkhuizen and Hoorn; and the chamber of *Stad en Lande*, based in Groningen. They too sent personnel. However, of the roughly 360 men known to have served the company as minister or lay preacher from 1621 to 1674, the three minor chambers only sent about 10 percent. Amsterdam and Zeeland sent 70 percent (Amsterdam 48, Zeeland 22), with about 10 percent appointed in Brazil, New Netherland, or Curaçao, and the remaining 10 unknown. Even if the minor chambers sent every one of the “unknowns,” they fell well below the ratio of investment and participation that was their responsibility according to the WIC’s charter: 4/9 for Amsterdam, 2/9 for Zeeland, and 1/9 for each of the rest. They were most active in the early years, when the company sent regular fleets and focused its

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<sup>28</sup> For Brazil as an emerging center of the Dutch Atlantic, see Chap. 5. The other issues mentioned in the paragraph will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. They are included here only as additional examples of cooperation between Walcheren and Amsterdam. See the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 5 June, 14 Aug 1642, 2 Dec 1660, ACW 3:33-36, 4:157, ZA; minutes of the deputies, 19 Aug 1642, 9 March 1643, 29 June 1648, 30 Nov 1648, ACA 157:80, 195, 200, 209-210, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 17 March 1653, ACA 5:283.

energy on Brazil, both of which required many ministers, *ziekentroosters*, or schoolmasters. When the days of the major fleets came to an end, and when Brazil took a turn for the worse, their activity declined accordingly. Their churches still sent clergy to Africa and Asia, but Zeeland and Amsterdam oversaw religious activity in the remaining colonies of the North Atlantic mostly alone. The churches from the minor chambers took a back seat even in the early period because WIC ministers from Zeeland and Amsterdam outnumbered their ecclesiastical colleagues overseas and directed their correspondence to the classes that had called them.<sup>29</sup>

The dispersion of power in the Dutch Reformed system did not lend itself to the management of widespread concerns like global expansion, which seemed to demand some kind of central direction. Church councils with limited control over foreign affairs grumbled about the situation and tried to change it. In the mean time they found other ways to be involved. The consistory in Enkhuizen corresponded with Amsterdam about clergy signing the Belgic Confession, for example, and different ecclesiastical bodies took an interest in the controversies discussed to this point, even if it just meant writing a letter to express an opinion. Amsterdam wrote to all the classes of North Holland when it needed permission to send the minutes of the provincial synod to Brazil, and occasionally it shared colonial correspondence with them in return. In one case, a minister whom the Utrecht classis had temporarily loaned to the WIC misbehaved, and the classis needed to know the details of his conduct, which Amsterdam provided. Usually having someone

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<sup>29</sup> Numbers and percentages are from my own research and calculations. See Appendix A. Also, 360 is a low-end estimation based on confirmed names from various church and company sources. Because of spotty records from some times and places, unknown colonial appointments, or because some chambers sent *ziekentroosters* without always going through the church, the total number was probably upwards of 400. See Chap. 3 for more on these kinds of issues. For the company's minor chambers and ratios of responsibility, see P.J. van Winter, *De West Indische Compagnie ter Kamer Stad en Lande* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978); Den Heijer, *De Geschiedenis van de West Indische Compagnie*, especially pp. 28-34; and Den Heijer, *Geotroieerde Compagnie*, Chaps. 3-6.

work for the company meant greater involvement for a time. Jacobus Dapper, a minister at Haamstede, served in Brazil from 1636 to 1639, and in those years his classis wrote to Walcheren to obtain information and complain about not participating as much as it would like. Dapper was then writing to his old friends and asking sticky questions: Was it bad to sell African slaves to Catholic planters? Even cities without WIC chambers faced colonial issues when their ministers worked abroad.<sup>30</sup>

A more significant confluence of Reformed churches occurred in the 1640s, when word reached the Netherlands about the Portuguese uprising in Brazil and the plight of Christian Tupi Indians who were allied with the Dutch. Driven from their villages, they were in a bad state: impoverished and hungry, the Brazil church claimed. Over the next few years, congregations in Enkhuizen, Amsterdam, Zeeland, Alkmaar, Edam, and other places collected thousands of guilders. They then purchased linen and sent it to America on the WIC's tab. People at home and in Brazil, including some Tupi, viewed it as an effort by one branch of Christ's kingdom to assist another branch in the same way that the Dutch raised money and provisions for needy Protestants in Europe. It was a major movement that concerned "the church" rather than just "a" church.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For Enkhuizen, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 23 Sep 1630, ACA 3:120, SAA. For "permission," see the extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 5 Oct 1637, ACA 163:34. For Utrecht, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 16 Nov 1637, ACA 4:111. For Dapper, see Dapper to the Schouwen classis and Udemans, 20 March 1637, ACZ 20-24, GASD; minutes of the Zierikzee classis, 29 July, 18 Sep 1637, ACZ, 2:36-37, GASD.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of the deputies, 3 and 24 Sep, 26 Nov 1646, 7 Jan, 16 Sep, 26 Nov, 11 Dec 1647, 26 Oct 1648, 13 April, 29 Aug 1650, ACA 157:160-167, 185, 192, 208, 214, 244, SAA; extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 25 Sep, 14 Dec 1646, Nov 1647, 5 Dec 1647, Dec 1648, ACA 163:146, 148-151, 174-177, 164:24-28; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 1 Oct, 20 Nov 1646, 2/3 Sep 1647, 5 Oct 1648, ACA 5:6, 10, 48, 100; minutes of the Edam classis, 5 Aug 1647, ACE 4:385, NHA; minutes of the Walcheren classis, 22 Aug, 4 and 26 Sep 1647, AKV 363, GAV; minutes of the Brazil classis, 7-11 May 1648, OWIC 64:27, NA; minutes of the Brazil council, 1 May 1649, OWIC 73; the Brazil consistory to the Amsterdam classis, 23 Nov 1649, ACA 212:188-190, SAA. Total money collected is unclear. Amsterdam had 500 guilders at the end of 1646, but that did not include amounts received by Alkmaar and Edam later, nor monies still arriving from various as late as 1650. Nor did it include the money from Zeeland's churches. Walcheren once also received 400 guilders from the States of Zeeland (see 26 Sep 1647 in AKV, GAV,

Another forum for participating in colonial affairs, regardless of location, was the synod, which consisted of ministers and elders from every classis within a province and non-voting representatives from several synods outside it. As the highest level of church organization, usually representing classes with company chambers, synods took up Indies business regularly. Anything of significance ended up before them eventually, though they met too infrequently (once per year in Holland, less often in Zeeland) to be highly involved in Asia and the Atlantic world. Their use lay mostly in answering theological questions that were too complicated or important for individual classes or in throwing their weight behind the classes when there was some critical issue before the company. For example, the South Holland synod sent deputies to the XIX in 1641 about a shortage of ministers. At other times it introduced candidates to the WIC or corresponded directly with the church in Brazil. It was perhaps more active than other synods because it had three different classes trying to work with two VOC chambers and the WIC's scattered *Maas* chamber. But again, the infrequency of synodal meetings made it impracticable to deal with things very efficiently at that level. The deputies that synods assigned lacked true supervision for a year or more at a time. Reformed synods mostly provided a forum for the wider church to learn about the latest developments overseas, confirm classical decisions, and give advice and assistance when it was needed. The direct contributions that North and South Holland sometimes made were less common.<sup>32</sup>

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above). The Prince of Orange donated too. The total was likely about 2,000 guilders. For needy Reformed churches in Europe, see Chap. 2. See also Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 208-210.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the South Holland synod, 4-12 July 1623, ACD 81:194, and 1 July to 3 Aug 1641, ACD 83, Article 13, NA; minutes of the North Holland synod, 8 Aug 1623, ASNH 3, NHA; and Joosse, *Scoone Dingen*, 406-409. For examples of Indies business that came before synods, see *ERSNY*, which has North Holland extracts throughout.

Finally, some people engaged with Dutch expansion through publishing, even if they never worked abroad and did not come from Amsterdam or Zeeland. Prominent clergy like Gisbertus Voetius, Willem Teellinck, and Godefridus Udemans wrote about the WIC, Native Americans, the religious responsibilities of merchants and sailors, and the company's role in the ongoing war with Spain. All of them had intellectual or family connections in the international Protestant community, which helps explain their interest in the destruction of Spanish power. Teellinck, the "father" of the *nadere reformatie* (the most important religious movement of the period), wrote a short work in 1624 about the conquest of Bahia, likening the company's work with the work of God. Udemans wrote enthusiastically to others in the Netherlands about WIC successes and corresponded with a colleague in Brazil. In 1638 he published *'t Geestelick Roer van 't Coopmans Schip*, or "The Spiritual Rudder of the Merchant's Ship," dedicated to the directors of both companies. Among other topics and arguments, he stressed the importance of Dutch trade in spreading Christ's kingdom. He donated an unknown number of copies of *'t Geestelick Roer* to the WIC's Zeeland chamber in 1639, and the book was then utilized in Brazil and probably elsewhere in the Dutch Atlantic.<sup>33</sup>

Sporadic correspondence, annual synodal updates, and writing and publishing about the trading companies were meager substitutes for direct access. Many people

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<sup>33</sup> For Teellinck, see K. Exalto, "Willem Teellinck," in *De Nadere Reformatie*, Brienen, et al., 17-47; *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 1, 373-375; Willem Teellinck, *Davids Danckbaerheit voor Gods weldadicheyt* (Middelburg, 1624). For Udemans, see *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 1, 385-386; *'t Geestelick Roer van 't Coopmans Schip*, 3rd edit. (Dordrecht, 1655). For correspondence with others at home about the WIC, see Petrus Dodijs to Godefridus Udemans, 2 Sep 1624, ACZ 70, GASD. Dodijs was replying to an earlier letter from Udemans. For his Brazil correspondent, see his work with Reverend Dapper before Dapper left for Brazil: minutes of the Zeeland synod, 19 Feb 1630, 27 Sep 1634, HV 241:81, 179, ZA; minutes of the Zierikzee classis, 30 April 1636, ACZ 2:13, GASD; Jacobus Dapper to the Schouwen classis, 20 March 1637, ACZ 20-24, GASD. For Udemans and the WIC, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 27 Jan and 31 Aug 1639, OWIC 23:128, 180, NA; and the booklist of 9 June 1645, OWIC 60:80. *'t Geestelick Roer* was also used by the VOC. See the minutes of the Hoorn consistory, 6 and 13 Nov 1642, AKH 584, WFA.

within the church wanted a permanent Indies body with representatives from several classes or synods to oversee colonial religion. Paradoxically, because they were later the greatest obstacle to a national, synodal federation, the Amsterdam and Walcheren classes had considered a limited version of it in the 1620s. Though they worked for a few years to obtain the necessary permissions and funding, their proposal never got off the ground. Other synods were not happy about being excluded, and they began promoting a widespread, all-inclusive council. The Utrecht synod resolved in 1624 that power over Indies religion belonged to all the Dutch churches, and the following year it sent Cornelis Leoninus, a future WIC minister, to share its views at the South Holland synod. He proposed that all the synods appoint deputies to meet and supervise the colonial churches together, and he encouraged South Holland to assign one or two men immediately to get things started. No one opposed him on the larger issue of jurisdiction, but they asked him and his colleagues in Utrecht to be patient.<sup>34</sup>

That was easy for South Holland to say because it had VOC and WIC chambers within its boundaries (at Rotterdam, Dordrecht, and Delft) and its classes were already somewhat involved. At the North Holland synod two weeks later, delegates from Utrecht, Overijssel, and Gelderland—none of which had chambers—expressed discontent with the synod’s resolution to leave Indies business in the hands of those who did, and they repeated themselves in coming years. Not until the late 1630s and 1640s, though, did they begin communicating and working more intently to do something about it. Then the correspondence among them increased; then their remonstrations at the other synods took on a decidedly rigorous, organized tenor. Why? The WIC was rethinking its policies and

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<sup>34</sup> For Amsterdam and Walcheren, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 14 Nov 1622, 2 Oct 1623, ACA 3:37, 48, SAA. See also Joosse, *Scoone Dingen*, 500-504; minutes of the Utrecht synod, 31 Aug to 3 Sep 1624, ACU 346, UA; minutes of the South Holland synod, 22-26 July 1625, ACD 81:242-243, NA.



reorganizing its possessions. The VOC had recently closed its seminary and ministers in Asia complained about problems with intrusive officers. Perhaps most relevant to the question of timing, the charters of both companies were set to expire in coming years. The unhappy synods knew that if there was ever a chance to obtain power, it was during negotiations to renew the charters. At the 1639 synods of North and South Holland they objected vehemently: Gelderland had not been receiving news about what was going in the Indies and it would seek a remedy with the States General, if it came to that. The other synods agreed. Indies business belonged to “the Netherland churches in general.” Utrecht said it would keep an eye on the East and West Indies churches regardless of anyone else and insisted on receiving Brazil’s ecclesiastical minutes annually. At the very least, they all wanted regular updates. The representatives from Amsterdam claimed that they never intended to exclude anyone, and they recounted their attempt to form a broad council for these matters before. There were sound reasons the plan failed, they declared. No one knew who would pay the costs of the gathering, day-to-day company needs were inconsequential, and the weighty concerns that arose from time to time could not wait for deputies to communicate with distant churches.<sup>35</sup>

Their explanation did not satisfy the others, who began moving ahead with their political plans. South Holland threw its weight behind the opposition, and they decided to visit the directors of both companies, the provincial States, and the States General. They insisted that Indies matters belonged to everyone because the States General had chartered the companies and was supposed to represent all provinces, not just one or two. Each synod should be the equal of every other one, they said, yet they were not treated

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<sup>35</sup> Minutes of the North Holland synod, 12 Aug 1625, ASNH 3, NHA; minutes of the Utrecht synod, 6 Sep 1636, ACU 346, UA; minutes of the South Holland synod, 5-23 July 1639, ACD 83, Article 14, NA; and *ERSNY* 1:123-126.

the same in this instance. Their discontent would only grow; there could be no harmony in the church until the problem was resolved. Most importantly, they worried about the purity of Reformed doctrines and practices, which were threatened, they claimed, by the confusion and disorder that now reigned, with significant problems in both hemispheres and clergy sent from different cities, corresponding with different churches. They argued that the best way to remedy the situation was to put Indies affairs in the hands of all the synods, a national ecclesiastical partnership that would be funded with a combination of synodal, company, and government monies.<sup>36</sup>

The prominent part that the Utrecht synod played in this dispute might have had something to do with Reverend Voetius, a university professor and theologian who was just emerging as a major figure on the Dutch political scene. His career provides further insight into the interests and fears of those who opposed Amsterdam's and Zeeland's control. According to one historian, he was the first Protestant theologian to formulate a "comprehensive theology of mission." He read widely, he was influenced by Reformed thinkers outside the Netherlands, and he had many friends in other countries. During his lifetime (1589-1676) he witnessed the founding of the VOC, the rise and fall of the first WIC, the spread of Dutch power throughout the world, and the proliferation of Catholic missions under a newly-established institution in Rome, the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. For him, the struggle against Catholics in Europe, America, Africa, and Asia was the same: a global religious contest. His definition of mission was broad, having anything to do with "reformation" and the survival and growth of Reformed Christianity. Planting

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<sup>36</sup> Minutes of the South Holland synod, 3 July to 3 Aug 1640, ACD 83, Article 9, NA. This contains a summary of the synods' early "project" and arguments. For the latter, see also especially "The meeting of the deputies of the four corresponding synods regarding East and West Indies matters in The Hague," 3-8 May 1642, OSA 321:29-40, UA.

new churches on other continents was a vital part of that. Similar to Utrecht's position on supervising religion overseas, he wrote that planting was not the privilege of individuals and secular institutions, but that of the entire church through its synods. Interestingly, the centralized council that the Dutch considered in the 1630s and 1640s was not unlike the *Propaganda Fide*, which oversaw Catholic growth in non-Catholic areas, including (most famously in the Netherlands) Utrecht.<sup>37</sup>

As the four synods expounded their views to municipal and provincial rulers and prepared to approach the States General, a situation arose that lent credence to their fears about orthodoxy—or the lack thereof—in the colonies. It began quietly enough, when a minister named David à Doreslaer, working as a missionary among the Tupi, shipped a manuscript to be published in Holland, where it arrived in early 1641. It was a trilingual catechism for use in the mission field, written in Dutch, Portuguese, and Tupi, containing also the formularies for baptism and Communion. Doreslaer likely sent it to the WIC in Amsterdam, which then distributed it to the local church for inspection and to Doreslaer's father, Abraham à Doreslaer, who oversaw its publication.<sup>38</sup>

At first the catechism did not incite much controversy. Doreslaer the elder, a long-established minister who had been a delegate at the Synod of Dordrecht more than twenty years before, found nothing wrong with it, and the XIX noted its pending publication in a letter to David in July, commending him for the progress that he and other missionaries were making among the Tupi. The Amsterdam classis expressed alarm upon first learning about it, but the initial report was not totally damning. Classis deputies said it diverged

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<sup>37</sup> Jongeneel, "Missiology," 51. See also W. van 't Spijker, "Gisbertus Voetius," in *De Nadere Reformatie*, Brienens, et al., 49-84; *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 2, 442-449.

<sup>38</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 25 Feb 1641, ACA 4, SAA; minutes of the deputies, 24 June 1641, ACA 157:46; Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 218-219. See 218-229 for the Tupi catechism.

too much from the Heidelberg Catechism. The questions were too long and the answers too short, and the formularies were somewhat changed. They did not say it could never be published, however; they just wanted continued correspondence with the company and the church in Brazil. Later reports were more frantic, especially when people realized that the book had already gone to press. They were also concerned that it omitted at least one essential doctrine—namely, that sinners were justified not only through Christ’s suffering and death, but through his obedience and righteous life, which God mercifully imputed to them through no action of their own.<sup>39</sup>

Other churches learned about the catechism as they made preparations for their meeting in The Hague and their appeal to the States General on the general problem of supervising colonial churches. In July the South Holland synod resolved that the book should not have been published without widespread review and consent. In fact, colonial churches should not do anything of importance, the synod argued, without advice from home. It complained to the States General, the company, and the church in Brazil, and it insisted on obtaining its own copies of the catechism. The synod of North Holland also asked for copies, and over the next months the two worked in vain to stop the WIC from shipping it. The company had some ecclesiastical support, and the directors did not want to abandon a needed publication that represented a significant investment of time and money on their part.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 8 April and 1 July 1641, ACA 4:230, SAA; [the XIX to the Brazil classis], July 1641, OWIC 8:368, NA. For concerns about doctrinal issues, see the minutes of the deputies, 22 Sep 1642, ACA 157:90-92.

<sup>40</sup> Minutes of the South Holland synod, 1 July to 3 Aug 1641, ACD 83, Article 13, NA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 29 July and 2 Dec 1641, ACA 4:231, 245, SAA; extracts from the minutes, 6 Aug and 10 Dec 1641, ACA 163:91, 96-99; minutes of the North Holland synod, 13 Aug 1641, ASNH 4, NHA; and minutes of the deputies, 10 and 29 Oct 1641, 25 Feb 1642, ACA 157:59, 61, 67, when the company finally asked Amsterdam just to drop the issue.

The four synods who hoped to create a national Indies council made full use of this controversy before the States General in May 1642. During the previous year they had complained to their provincial States, maintained a regular correspondence with each other, shared information about whom they were each going to deputize, then sent those delegates to meet in The Hague and draw up the joint message that they finally presented to the States General. As evidence of the alleged disorder and the great peril to Reformed doctrine and practice they hammered on the matter of the Tupi catechism, which the WIC had shipped to Brazil, they said, contrary to the wish of the South Holland synod and the order of the States General itself. They also cited the problem of VOC officials, for political reasons, interfering with consistorial discipline and moving clergy from place to place against their will. In their eagerness they were somewhat disingenuous, for North Holland and the Amsterdam classis had worked just as hard to stop the catechism, and it was not true that so few people managed Indies affairs: no synod, no classis, nor even a consistory. Rather, they argued that everything was done by *two ministers*. They ignored Walcheren's role, as well as the minor role that other churches with company chambers played, and their description was weakly based on Amsterdam's old arrangement. It had been six years since the classis created its Indies committee, with two additional ministers from non-Amsterdam consistories, and the classis had retained control of the consistory and committee anyway. It selected new committee members, examined ministers, settled debates, and when something really seemed to matter, it cooperated with Walcheren and other classes and consistories.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Minutes of the North Holland synod, 21 Aug 1640, ASNH 4, NHA, and *ERSNY* 1:130-134; minutes of the Utrecht synod, 1-4 Sep 1641, ACU 347, UA; the Overijssel synod to the South Holland synod, OSA 151:197, UA; various letters, *attestatie*, and other materials, late 1641 and early 1642, OSA 321:17-27, 45-48; various churches to the States General, 1642, ATB 121, NA; and "The meeting of the deputies of the

Ultimately Amsterdam won the day, but not until seven years after the first States General meeting, and not until Zeeland joined the debate. With its infrequent synodal meetings, Zeeland had not taken much part until 1642. Then in July, a Reformed minister and major participant in the WIC, Maximiliaen Teellinck, informed the Walcheren classis that other synods were trying to establish a “college” for the East and West Indies. The classis investigated, and when it learned that the States General was really considering the matter, it resolved to cast its lot with Amsterdam. Zeeland clergy like Teellinck were active in opposing the four discontented synods, even offending them on one occasion with the harsh tone of their correspondence. They met with their local WIC chamber and the XIX, kept in regular contact with Amsterdam, and the two classes sent delegates at different times to meet and discuss their opponents. Like Amsterdam, Walcheren thought it was a bad idea, perilous, unnecessary, and “useless” for scattered church organizations to oversee day-to-day company affairs.<sup>42</sup>

The Amsterdam and Walcheren classes probably opposed the national plan in part because it meant a diminution of their power. Presumably, the regular donations that they received from both companies (a topic for the next chapter) would have been dispersed among a much wider group of churches as well. If power and money were among their concerns, however, they never said so. Instead they continued to focus on the hassles and obstacles that the proposed plan would impose on colonial oversight. One gets a sense of

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four corresponding synods regarding East and West Indies matters in The Hague,” 3-8 May 1642, OSA 321:29-40. The latter contains the resolutions of the deputies and the details of their remonstrance to the States General.

<sup>42</sup> For Teellinck, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 3 and 28 July 1642, ACW 3:33, 35, ZA. For Walcheren’s giving offense, see the minutes of the North Holland synod, 12 Aug 1642, ASNH 4, NHA. For the rest, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 10 July 1642, AKV 363, GAV; extracts of Walcheren minutes (and possibly extracts from Walcheren’s missing West Indies book), 29 July and 5 Aug 1642, ACZ 20-24, GASD; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 4 Aug 1642, OWIC 25:33, NA; and minutes of the Walcheren classis, 2 Oct 1642, AKV 363.

the problem, as they saw it, in a request that the WIC in Zeeland had recently made to the church in Middelburg. The directors asked the church to replace any clergy on the West Indies committee who were not from Middelburg with those who were; in short, to create a committee that only represented one city and consistory, as was the case in Amsterdam before 1636. Why did they want that? To help the church-company relationship operate more efficiently. Committee members from other places were no use because they lived too far away, the directors explained.<sup>43</sup> If that were true in a single classis, surely a committee including members from all over the Netherlands would have exacerbated the problem considerably. They would have to travel regularly between their homes and The Hague and await counsel from their classes and synods when some new issue arose; they could not act with the speed of the current system.

The worries of Utrecht, Gelderland, South Holland, and Overijssel about theological purity were perhaps not wholly justified. Whenever important matters like the Tupi catechism came along, they all learned about them and even came together in some way. More important, they did not often differ on doctrinal questions. If they had, it could have posed a problem. But Dutch churches were uniformly Calvinist since the Synod of Dordrecht, and when North Holland or Walcheren and others made up their minds about the theology at the center of these controversies, they almost always agreed. They all said the catechism was flawed, for example, because of the changes it made and the doctrines it omitted. And ultimately, by working together, they got what they wanted. Brazil clergy tried to distance themselves from it, even if they had been on the classis when it was sent. Doreslaer returned home early to defend his reputation and prove his orthodoxy, which some had questioned. And the catechisms, though shipped to Brazil, probably rotted in a

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<sup>43</sup> Minutes of the Walcheren chamber, 3 Sep 1640, OWIC 24:48, NA.

warehouse, rarely used by those who feared for their careers. The States General visit is especially ironic given the way things turned out. The catechism would eventually prove to be a fine example of the Amsterdam-Walcheren axis working with the same power as a national council, without the inconveniences.<sup>44</sup>

As much as it echoed complaints about the slow-moving States General, this debate was not just the ecclesiastical counterpart of federalist problems and tensions within Dutch politics at large, reflecting provincial jealousies. Rather, the young church was suffering growing pains of the kind that all Protestants experienced, naturally struggling toward an understanding of rights and power in a relatively new and loosely-organized presbyterian structure, which the Dutch had not adopted lightly. In using Calvin's model of church government they inverted the hierarchy and "spiritual tyranny" of bishops and popes, ruled instead by ministers and elders from local congregations who, together, retained many of the traditional, necessary powers and responsibilities of the church in society, like baptism and preaching. Thus the Dutch and other Reformed believers tried to have their cake and eat it too, rejecting top-down rule, yet avoiding the apparent disorder and anarchy found among radical Protestants, who often separated themselves from society. How could the decentralized structure of the new Reformed Church handle issues of widespread, national concern?

To be clear, the hopes of Utrecht, Gelderland, and Overijssel were not foiled by anxieties about religious hierarchy, though that might have contributed to resistance in

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<sup>44</sup> For "distancing," see the minutes of the deputies, 16 Feb, 5 and 15 June 1642, ACA 157:79, 90-92 SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 4 Aug 1642, ACA 4:268. For Doreslaer's return, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 26 Nov 1642, OWIC 69, NA. See also the minutes of the South Holland synod, 6-25 July 1643, ACD 83, Article 12, NA. For the catechisms' fate, see the booklist of 9 June 1645 in OWIC 60:80, and Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 223. Doreslaer's early return and the "distancing" of others reinforce Schalkwijk's interpretation of the list.



Zeeland. The Dutch had made their organizational decisions already, and they were now just trying to cope with them at a practical level, dealing with a situation to which their system did not seem particularly well-suited. A new council for the East and West Indies would have been a type of national synod, a limited version of a long-accepted level of church organization (however rare it had become). Again, though, the debate was not just about jealousy. The Dutch were coming to terms with the special problems of Reformed Christianity in a nascent empire. Excluding the Church of England, which was not really Reformed, their case was the only one of its kind. Their loose structure and preference for local control, rooted in basic Protestant beliefs and a disjointed political past, created real difficulties in managing expansion. Catholics had related difficulties, to be sure, but from very different conditions: An independent, international, hierarchical institution growing uneasily within several competing empires—as opposed to the internationally-connected but nationally-based Dutch Reformed Church, working in one empire, but with no central authority or direction and few useful traditions to draw upon.

Eventually the churches of the Netherlands devised a solution that each synod could accept, though grudgingly in some cases. North and South Holland created the original proposal in the summer of 1642. For a long time the others resisted, persisting in their political efforts. But as the Amersfoort classis wrote in 1645, the campaign required “great costs and difficulties,” and they began to wear down. One of the first to adopt the new plan was the Groningen synod, which had not been very involved because it had a WIC chamber. Between 1646 and 1649 the other synods yielded one by one: Gelderland, Overijssel, and even Friesland, which had thrown its support belatedly behind the others. The last holdout was Utrecht, the most politically active of the bunch. North and South

Holland both reported in their 1648 gatherings that Utrecht would not consent, and North Holland informed Utrecht shortly thereafter that time was up; it needed to conform to the general will. It was still resisting one year later, still writing to other synods in a last-ditch effort. Then in September it accepted the plan at last.<sup>45</sup>

The new arrangement was not especially new. It left the care of foreign churches in the hands of those whose bounds corresponded with WIC and VOC chambers, which effectually meant that Amsterdam and Walcheren retained the influence that they always had. They promised to ensure that colonial religion functioned correctly, according to the doctrine, organization, and methods accepted in the Netherlands. They promised to report each year in their synods on the general state of things, provide the names of ministers and lay leaders whom they had sent in the past year, and allow representatives from other synods to copy letters, minutes, and other materials that arrived from abroad. Amsterdam usually came to the yearly North Holland synod with a detailed report, including extracts of the minutes of the Brazil classis and extracts of letters from Africa, Curaçao, and New Netherland about personnel needs, a shortage of Bibles or catechisms, and so forth. North Holland sent these reports to other classes and synods, who then recorded them faithfully into their own minutes. The Zeeland churches did not meet often enough in synod for the same arrangement, but similarly, from 1643, Walcheren asked its Indies deputies to report to the other classes once per year. According to the new plan, those with company chambers also promised to communicate about difficult, important questions. If there was

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<sup>45</sup> For “great costs,” see the minutes of the Amersfoort classis, 19 and 20 Aug 1645, ACAM 2:140, UA. For the rest, see the minutes of the North Holland synod, 12 Aug 1642, 16 Aug 1644, 8 Aug 1645, 7 Aug 1646, 12 Aug 1647, 11 Aug 1648, 9 Aug 1649, 16 Aug 1650, ASNH 4, NHA; minutes of the Utrecht synod, 30 Aug to 2 Sep 1642, 29 Aug to 2 Sep 1643, 29 Aug to 2 Sep 1648, 4-8 Sep 1649, ACU 347, UA; States General resolutions, 7 Oct 1642, ASG I, 4845, NA; minutes of the Groningen synod, 1-6 May 1643, ASSL 2, GA; minutes of the South Holland synod, 4-28 July 1644, ACD 83, Article 6, and 7-25 July 1648, ACD 84, Article 38, NA. These are not the only times the synods dealt with this issue. See the minutes for every synod during every year in question (throughout the 1640s).

a concern that could not wait, they would act on it and report later. Finally, they agreed to accept any clergy for company service, no matter his classis or synod.<sup>46</sup>

Again, much of this was not new. They were simply formalizing an arrangement that had emerged gradually over the years. Churches with company chambers *had* always supervised the colonies. If Amsterdam and Walcheren had long had the greatest power, it was because they sent the most clergy. As much as possible they saw that newly-planted churches emulated the church at home. If they sometimes failed because of the magnitude of their task, with so many diverse, distant regions under their control, other classes and synods almost always heard about it, and they had never been shy about communicating their opinions. Nor had Amsterdam and Walcheren opposed cooperation. If anything was really different, reports were now regular and required. Dutch churches learned what was happening overseas with greater speed and detail than before. They now knew the names of clergy whom the WIC and VOC hired. They no longer relied on sporadic, reluctant reports and correspondence from colleagues in better-connected cities or from their own ministers, temporarily employed by a company. As a member of a synod, anyone could monitor Reformed progress on other continents.

As a key player in the Protestant international, the Dutch Reformed Church had long been outward-looking. It relied on Calvinist neighbors during its early struggles to establish itself and supported them during their own difficulties. English, German, and

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<sup>46</sup> For the original plan worked out between North and South Holland, see the minutes of the North Holland synod, 12 Aug 1642, ASNH 4, NHA. For an example of the reports that Amsterdam brought yearly to its synod, see the minutes of the North Holland synod from almost any year, but also August 1648, ASNH 4, NHA: on Brazil minutes and Brazil needs, personnel returning from New Netherland, the need for a new schoolmaster, etc. For Amsterdam and other churches sending their reports to other synods and classes, see, for example, the minutes of the South Holland synod, July 1649, ACD 84, Article 41, NA; or the incoming letters to the Rhenenwijk classis, 1650 and 1651, ACR 17, UA; or the minutes of the Utrecht synod, 6-10 Sep 1659, ACU 347, UA. For Walcheren's decision to have its Indies deputies report to the other Zeeland classes, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 24 Sep 1643, AKV 363, GAV. For an example of such a report, see the minutes of the Zierikzee classis, 26 April 1645, ACZ 2:311, GASD.

Huguenot immigration, the quantity and freedom of Dutch printing, the success of Dutch trade, and several Dutch universities with foreign students and professors helped sustain this cosmopolitan worldview. Naturally, interest in the two major trading companies was widespread within the church. The clergy prayed for their success and viewed them as vehicles to spread the gospel. Classes and synods without company chambers tried to use political means to obtain greater influence over colonial affairs and establish a national council to administer religion in Asia and the Atlantic world. Their costly efforts lasted many years. Regardless of where they lived, individual clergy could write about international concerns, and after their hopes for a new council were frustrated, they still monitored developments abroad and influenced debates in their synods. Because of their powerful company chambers, Indies matters were a day-to-day responsibility only for the Amsterdam and Walcheren classes. Meeting the needs of large companies and dealing with questions from their counterparts in the colonies was a constant concern, at times dominating all other business in the most influential Reformed bodies in the seventeenth-century Netherlands.

## CHAPTER 2

### Faith and Worship in a Merchant Community

If the Dutch Reformed Church had Petrus Plancius, the map-making minister and clerical champion of exploration and trade, the West India Company had Johannes de Laet, an active and influential director for almost thirty years, a geographer, botanist, and linguist, and a devoted Calvinist. The two make a wonderful contrast in their different but complementary roles: Reverend Plancius, the scholarly man of God, and Director de Laet, the godly scholar. In his wide-ranging intellectual and commercial pursuits and his consistent support of the church, De Laet exemplified the other half of the cosmopolitan Protestant worldview considered partially in the last chapter. He and Plancius had much in common. Both were from the south, De Laet born to a Protestant, merchant family in Antwerp in 1582, and both migrated to the northern Netherlands shortly after the Spanish victories of 1585. Unlike Plancius, who went abroad for his education, De Laet studied at the newly-founded university in Leiden. Yet he had similar foreign connections because of his profession and because he married women from England and Germany. Eventually he chose to remain in Leiden, purchasing his home from Franciscus Gomarus, the famed Calvinist theologian and chief opponent of Jacobus Arminius during the religious dispute that divided the Netherlands in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.

De Laet expressed his religious devotion and loyalties first and foremost as a lay member of his Reformed consistory. In that capacity he went before the city's magistrates with three other men in 1616 to protest the Arminian presence at Communion. When the

consistory split the next year, he followed the Gomarist-Calvinist faction, even publishing a work on sin, free will, and the many errors of the Arminians. In 1618 he was also a delegate to the Synod of Dordrecht, where the Arminians and their doctrines were quashed. He was not a passive observer, but accepted various assignments, helping write a history of the controversy, for example. Appointed by the States General, he was later on the committee that edited and prepared the synod's *Acts* for publication, and he probably penned the preface. At the South Holland synod in 1619 he helped question and depose Arminian ministers who would not subject themselves to Dordrecht's decisions. He then remained active on the Leiden consistory, serving consistent two-year stints as elder, punctuated by two-year breaks, until his death thirty years later. He was one of the consistory's regular delegates to the Leiden classis in the same years, and at least twice after Dordrecht he was selected to attend his provincial synod. In each case he received time-consuming ecclesiastical responsibilities of one kind or another.<sup>1</sup>

De Laet was a founding director of the WIC and a regular member of its most powerful body, the XIX. Leiden never had its own company chamber, but he and others invested enough money in Amsterdam's to earn a permanent seat for their city. He took advantage of his position to examine ships' journals and other colonial records, and he used them to write his famous description of the New World in 1625. He also published a

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<sup>1</sup> There is no biography of Johannes de Laet. See Jaap Jacobs, "Johannes de Laet en de Nieuwe Wereld," *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie* 50 (1996): 109-130; Henk Florijn, "Johannes de Laet (1581-1649) and the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619," *Lias* 25, no. 2 (1998): 165-176. De Laet's wives were Jacobmijntje van Loor and Maria Boudewijns van Berlicum. See Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr., "The Correspondence of Johannes de Laet (1581-1649) as a Mirror of His Life," *LIAS* 25, no. 2 (1998): 139-164. For Maria Boudewijns van Berlicum's birth in Hamburg, Germany, see De Laet's brief genealogical overview at the website of the Verre Verwanten TV and radio program: <http://www.20eeuwnederland.nl/> (accessed June 2010). For De Laet's service on the consistory and classis from the 1620s to the 1640s, see the election of elders and deacons every year in December in the minutes of the Leiden consistory, AKL 2-4, RAL, as well as the selection of classical deputies in the same minutes every January. For his attending the South Holland synod, see the minutes of the same, July 1619 and July 1648, ACD 81:27, ACD 84, NA.

long history of the company in 1636, a yearly, blow-by-blow account of almost all WIC voyages and battles to that point. Though it is not a theological work in any sense, it does echo beliefs about the WIC that were common among the Reformed clergy. He wrote at the very start, for example, that the company was established for the “maintenance of the True Religion and the protection of our freedom,” later advising readers to give the glory for WIC success to God. He heeded his own advice, thanking God for victory throughout the book and blaming misfortune on sin or divine will. As the battles that he described were fought against the Spanish and Portuguese, he naturally stressed the destruction of Catholic property and Catholicism, as well.<sup>2</sup>

Did De Laet’s religion have a discernable impact on the WIC? Was he unique among its merchants and directors or was it a “Calvinist” organization? Limited attempts to answer such questions in the past have focused mostly on the timing and political circumstances of the company’s birth, founded shortly after the Synod of Dordrecht, after the Calvinist victory in the public church. It was born the same year (1621) that the Dutch resumed their war with Catholic Spain after an unpopular truce, overtly designed to carry the battle overseas. (The church usually supported the war faction in Dutch politics.) One historian, W.J. van Hoboken, also studied the list of directors that De Laet included in his *Historie* and tried to identify their roots. If they came from the south, he wrote, they were more likely to be Calvinist because Reformed worship was first established there. And indeed, there were many southerners among the directors and others associated with the company, including Johannes de Laet and the WIC’s original promoter, Willem

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. For “maintenance,” see Johannes de Laet, *Historie ofte jaerlijck verhael van de verrichtinghen der geocroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie, zedert haer begin tot het eynde van 't jaer sestien-hondert ses-en-dertich* (Leiden, 1644), 3-4. For thanks, sin, and God’s will, see, for example, 41, 54, 68, 70, 89, 143, 170, 222, 289, 290, 297, 387, 425, 461, 482. See also Chap. 4 of this dissertation, which deals with Dutch warfare and De Laet’s *Historie* in greater detail.

Usselinx. The debate that van Hoboken sparked, however, was never settled, primarily because surviving sources do not provide a complete picture of WIC investors and other participants. De Laet's own list of directors ended in 1636, almost four decades before the WIC collapsed (1674). To this point historians have simply not known the names of many directors, never mind their religion and politics.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the events surrounding the company's birth, claims about Calvinism and the directors tend to provoke serious skepticism. Since van Hoboken's time, the question of their religion has mostly come up in debates about religious pluralism and tolerance in Dutch colonies, where church and company, minister and merchant, are sometimes juxtaposed as polar opposites. To contextualize the WIC's purported tolerance in Dutch Brazil and New Netherland, historians often describe conditions in Amsterdam, whose rulers famously winked or "connived" at non-Reformed worship even after the Synod of Dordrecht. They then draw parallels between Amsterdam and the company, the directors apparently engaging in the same behavior. They could not have been real Calvinists, the

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<sup>3</sup> W.J. van Hoboken, "The Dutch West India Company, the Political Background of its Rise and Decline," in *Britain and the Netherlands: Papers Delivered to the Oxford-Netherlands Historical Conference, 1959*, eds. J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossman (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), 41-61. Responding to him was J.G. van Dillen, "De West-Indische Compagnie, het Calvinisme en de Politiek," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 74 (1961): 145-171. See also van Hoboken, "Een wederwoord inzake de West-Indische Compagnie," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 75 (1962): 49-53; and van Dillen's reply in the same issue, 53-56. Van Dillen admitted that there were probably more southerners in the WIC than there had been at the VOC's founding, though he did rightly defend his argument that the major divisions in the company in the 1640s and 1650s were political and economic, not religious. A number of historians have commented on the debate since. See, for example, Pieter Emmer, "The West India Company, 1621-1791: Dutch or Atlantic?" in *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), 65-90 (especially 68-70). Emmer took sides with van Dillen, arguing that he "surrendered" too quickly because, among other things, the directors adopted liberal religious policies overseas. Some historians lean toward the Calvinist view: Cornelis Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast* (University of Florida Press, 1971), 89-115; Charles Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil* (Archon Books, 1973), 11; Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 144; Janny Venema, *Beverwijck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier, 1652-1664* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 133.



argument goes, because they sacrificed religious preferences at the altar of profits.<sup>4</sup> They were “selfish traders,” “greedy, profit-seeking businessmen who only pursued their own gain,” commercial “moneyhounds” who placed private interests above “religion, country, and just about everything else.” With both eyes on the bottom line and both hands in the till, they allegedly neglected ecclesiastical needs overseas.<sup>5</sup>

Given the important place that the directors have had in debates about colonial life and the general character of the WIC, it is perhaps surprising that no one has studied their religious affiliations. Using the most comprehensive list of names to date, filling in the gaps left by De Laet after 1636, this chapter examines church and consistory membership and the impact of both on the company in the Netherlands. It shows that the directors were overwhelmingly Dutch Reformed.<sup>6</sup> Most were full members of the public

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<sup>4</sup> George L. Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland: Dutch Origins and American Development* (London: Cornell University Press, 1973). He draws a stark line between church and company, writing first about “The Merchant’s Point of View,” then the “The Church’s Point of View.” He equates Amsterdam with the WIC and downplays the directors’ religion for the same reasons as Emmer. (See the previous fn.) For connivance he draws on Albert Eekhof, *De Hervormde Kerk in Noord-Amerika, 1624-1664* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1913). Others who have reflected on the word include Jaap Jacobs, “Between Repression and Approval: Connivance and Tolerance in the Dutch Republic and in New Netherland,” *De Halve Maen* 71, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 51-58; James Homer Williams, “‘Abominable Religion’ and Dutch (In)tolerance: The Jews and Petrus Stuyvesant,” *De Halve Maen* 71, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 85-91. For tolerance, connivance, and Brazil, see Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 123-125; Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*; Jonathan Israel and Stuart B. Schwartz, *The Expansion of Tolerance: Religion in Dutch Brazil (1624-1654)* (Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Brodhead, *History*, 224 (see also 137, 286, 746); Johan E. Elias, *Het Voorspel van den Eersten Engelschen Oorlog* (‘s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1920), 122 (see also 152); van Dillen, “De West-Indische Compagnie,” 157; Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 86. Elias’s diagnosis (“greedy, profit-seeking businessmen”) is cited approvingly in Henri and Barbara van der Zee, *A Sweet and Alien Land: The Story of Dutch New York* (New York: The Viking Press, 1978), 9, 40-41, 494. Claims of religious indifference and/or neglect are ubiquitous. See also, for example, George L. Smith, “Guilders and Godliness: The Dutch Colonial Contribution to American Religious Pluralism,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 47 (Mar. 1969): 1-30; Thomas J. Condon, *New York Beginnings: The Commercial Origins of New Netherland* (New York University Press, 1968), 116-143; S.G. Nissenson, *The Patroon’s Domain* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 156-160; Oliver Rink, *Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 77, 92, 228-229; Rink, “Private Interest and Godly Gain: The West India Company and the Dutch Reformed Church in New Netherland, 1624-1664,” *New York History* 75, no. 3 (July 1994): 245-264.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendices B and C. The 192 directors were identified for this project and cover the entire life of the first WIC (1621-1674). Sources for names included De Laet’s list, as a start, and the surviving minutes of the Amsterdam and Zeeland chambers, the XIX, the *Haags Besoigne*, and the *hoofdparticipanten*, all in the

church. Many of them participated on ecclesiastical councils and exhibited a meaningful commitment to Reformed doctrine and politics at home, especially during the first half of the century. After 1650 the Calvinist influence in the WIC began to dissipate.

The directors did not have as much control over their territories as the tolerance/connivance debate suggests, but their religion matters for several reasons. They sat on the same ecclesiastical bodies that, with the WIC, oversaw colonial religion. Their faith shaped their views of the company's aims and achievements and involved them (and the WIC) in the "Protestant international" in ways that historians have never recognized.<sup>7</sup>

When De Laet wrote that the WIC was established "for the maintenance of the True Religion and the protection of our freedom," he was probably thinking of its capacity to attack Spain in America, take its silver and other sources of wealth, and thus strike at the root of Spanish power, which was still a threat to the Dutch in the Netherlands. Yet the "maintenance of the True Religion" held other meanings for contemporaries. The Dutch Reformed Church and other Protestants looked to the WIC for more immediate assistance. The company existed in a wide Reformed community, and the lines between

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OWIC collection at the NA. Also useful for identifying names were the WIC's letters to the States General at the NA (ASG II); and less important, the WIC's correspondence to Brazil and other places, now in the "Brazil letters" (also in OWIC). Also helpful was the Not. Arch. at the SAA, which often confirmed individuals as directors and sometimes identified previously-unknown names with whom the former were trading, readying WIC ships and fleets, etc. As much as possible an effort has been made to identify directors (and their religious affiliations) in Leiden, Gouda, Utrecht, Deventer, Haarlem, and Gelderland, all of which sent representatives to the Amsterdam chamber. Finding names in Zeeland was more problematic because so many records were destroyed in Middelburg during World War II. However, the WIC minutes, letters to the States General, and various sources from Veere, Vlissingen, and even Tholen still provided a fairly comprehensive list. It is quite possible that some names have been missed, especially from the less important cities listed above. If so, however, they could not have been very influential, active directors. The lists in Appendices B and C include everyone who was active enough in the company to at least have his name appear in its minutes, on its correspondence, in the records of the notaries, and so on.

<sup>7</sup> Graeme Murdock, *Beyond Calvin: The Intellectual, Political, and Cultural World of Europe's Reformed Churches, c. 1540-1620* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 31-53; Robert M. Kingdon, "International Calvinism," in *Handbook of European History, 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation*, eds. Thomas A. Brady, Jr., et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 2:229-247; J.F. Bosher, "Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (Jan. 1995): 77-102.

WIC concerns, the affairs of the church at home, and Protestant neighbors were easily blurred. Forged in periods of exile and strengthened through trade, international networks may have encouraged a cosmopolitan worldview that was amenable to empire. Expansion also benefited from Reformed ideas about religious authority, which allowed merchants like De Laet to participate on church councils and influence ecclesiastical interpretations of Dutch imperial activity.

### *The Religious Life of WIC Directors*

The consistory or *kerkeraad* (“church council”) was the most basic level of organization in the Reformed Church. Made up of ministers, elders, and deacons, it was the nucleus of the Reformed community, with extensive influence in the lives of individual members. Its purpose and theological justification came from the Protestant Reformation’s “Priesthood of All Believers,” which held that the people of God were a collective priesthood, living in and through Jesus Christ, the only true priest. Together they were “the body of Christ.” The ministry should not be dominated by clergy with special, mysterious powers and access to God, Calvin and other reformers taught, but shared according to one’s gifts of proclaiming the word (pastors or ministers), governing the church (elders), and serving others (deacons). Ideally, all ecclesiastical decisions were corporate, made by ministers and male lay officers from the congregation. The word “presbyterian,” usually used to describe this kind of organization, comes from the Greek *presbyteros* (elder), and means to be governed by elders. Ministers, elders, and deacons looked after the Christian community at the local level. In Amsterdam, sitting consistory

members chose new members, often giving a vote to anyone who had served in the past. Municipal rulers then had to approve their selections.<sup>8</sup>

In light of their reputation, a surprising number of directors served on Reformed consistories: Almost half of the directors in Amsterdam (about 45%) and considerably more in the province of Zeeland, which was known as a stronghold of Calvinism.<sup>9</sup> From 1620 to 1650 Amsterdam directors were especially active in their consistories, reaching peak involvement in 1635, when eleven of them were serving at the same time (including past and future directors). Three of them served in Haarlem and Leiden, who also sent delegates to the Amsterdam chamber. The other eight comprised more than a quarter of the lay members in Amsterdam's Dutch-speaking consistory that year. They numbered ten in 1639 and nine in 1636, 1638, 1641, and 1642, with considerable representation at other times. Church activity declined until 1669, when, for the first time, no Amsterdam

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<sup>8</sup> Donald K. McKim, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology* (London: John Knox Press, 2001), 53, 66-67, 173-175, 182. For "the body of Christ," see also 1 Cor. 12, KJV. On the *kerkeraad*, see A. Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen: Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), Chap. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Directors from Appendices B and C were compared against the lists of elders and deacons (or the yearly elections for elders and deacons) in the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, AKA 3-10, SAA; minutes of the Haarlem consistory, AKHA 19-25, NHA; minutes of the Leiden consistory, AKL 2-6, RAL; minutes of the Utrecht consistory, AKU 1-10, UA; minutes of the Gouda consistory, AKGO 3-4, SHM; minutes of the Deventer consistory, AKDEV 1-5, SADEV. In an effort to learn if the directors from Gelderland served on their consistories, I checked church records in Arnhem and Zutphen: minutes of the Arnhem consistory, AKAR 1-2, GEA (though the records are spotty); and minutes of the Zutphen consistory, AKZ 1-2, RAZ. Finding Zeeland consistory members was more difficult for various reasons. Most problematic, the records of the Middelburg church were destroyed in World War II. Lists of elders and deacons survived, however, in the two "synodalia" collections, 231 and 235, ZA. Also used for the Zeeland chamber was the list of ministers, elders, and deacons in Middelburg's English consistory, 1623-1847, AEKM 32, ZA; minutes of the Veere consistory, AKVE 5-6, ZA; and the list of elders and deacons of the Vlissingen consistory, 1615-1718, which was uninventoried as of summer 2009 (GAV). Tholen's consistory records do not begin until the eighteenth century. For that city's directors, therefore, I used the resolution book of the *baljuw, burgemeesters, and schepenen* of the city Tholen, 1579-1623, 1624-1692, 1612-1657, *Archief van de Stad en Gemeente Tholen, Archief van het Stadsbestuur, 1330-1810*, 1-2 and 17, GAT. The city did not record elder and deacon elections in its minutes very faithfully, but I found consistory information for two of five Tholen/WIC directors. Other gaps in the Zeeland records include Veere's minutes not beginning until 1630 and missing Walloon or French-speaking minutes—though a few names of Walloon elders/deacons were found in *Livre Synodal contenant les articles resolués dans les Synodes des Eglises wallonnes des Pays-Bas, 1563-1685* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1896). Between 45% and 55% of Zeeland directors are known to have served on their consistories. With the missing Veere, Tholen, and Walloon minutes, the total would likely be greater than 55%.

director was on any consistory anywhere. At least one or two served in each of the next three years, from 1670 to 1672.<sup>10</sup>

Consistory members served two-year terms. Most directors served more than once in their lives, some as many as twelve times (i.e., twenty-four years). Their main duty as deacons was to care for the needy. They collected and dispensed alms and oversaw other fiscal matters, like church rental property and bonds. They met regularly as a body in the *Oude* or *Nieuwe Kerk* with one or two ministers, apart from the other ministers and elders unless a question of particular importance brought them together.<sup>11</sup> As elders the directors helped examine those who wanted to become members, heard their professions of faith, participated in disciplinary hearings when someone violated the church's moral conventions, and arbitrated disputes. A few times every year they went with a minister to visit members in their homes and prepare them for Communion, asking questions about their faith and recent conduct. A list of visitation assignments from the mid-1630s shows seven directors working with ministers in neighborhoods all over Amsterdam: Rombout Jacobsen, Hendrick Broen, Samuel Becker, Kiliaen van Rensselaer, Willem Bruyn, Jacob Quina, and Marcus van Valkenburch.<sup>12</sup>

As consistory members, the directors also belonged to church bodies that worked with the WIC on all colonial religious matters, including the consistories themselves, the classes of Amsterdam and Walcheren, and the synod of North Holland. Having joined a consistory, one might then be selected to attend the classis or synod. Three or four future directors were at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618, where the church first discussed

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<sup>10</sup> The same analysis is not possible for the Zeeland chamber because of the nature of the surviving records.

<sup>11</sup> Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, Chap. 6; Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 454-455; Charles Parker, *The Reformation of Community: Social Welfare and Calvinist Charity in Holland, 1572-1620* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* For the visitation list, see AKA 736, SAA.

“heathen” baptism. After the WIC was founded, many were members of consistories or classes when those began working with the company, sometimes acting as directors simultaneously. The Indies committees only had ministers, no elders, but Amsterdam’s was not formed until 1636, the consistory serving as the committee before then. And the classis remained involved in colonial affairs afterward, examining all candidates for the foreign ministry, hearing reports from committee members, and deciding questions that arose overseas. Directors who participated in classes thus dealt regularly with such things, even after the committees were formed. Before 1636 there was never a year when at least two of them were not sitting on Amsterdam’s Indies committee (the consistory, in this case). Afterward, one or more directors were members of the classis and synod in at least twenty-four of the WIC’s remaining thirty-eight years, giving them vast experience and representation on the church bodies that handled foreign affairs.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately the surviving minutes usually do not reveal how individual members of church councils contributed to particular discussions, but the directors would have taken part in weekly and monthly debates about missionary work, the nature and boundaries of the Christian community in diverse colonies, and the responsibilities of their own company. The Amsterdam consistory met in the *Oude or Nieuwe Kerk* around a large wooden table, the president at the head and the other members taking turns to raise business or address something that someone else had raised. The classis and synod were

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<sup>13</sup> For the organization of the church with regard to the Indies, see Chap. 1. The three or four directors at Dort were, from the future Zeeland chamber, Symon Schotte and, from the Amsterdam chamber, Johannes de Laet, Johan van Hemert, and (maybe) Everhard Becker. Schotte and van Hemert were representing the States General from Middelburg and Deventer, respectively. De Laet was from Leiden. Then there was “Euerardus Becker” of Middelburg. The WIC’s director Everhard Becker was a director in the Amsterdam chamber, though he does not turn up in the Not. Arch., SAA, until the 1620s, so he could have lived in Middelburg at the time of the synod. That seems a strong possibility when one considers that there was another Becker (Steven Becker) who was a Zeeland director in the 1630s. See J.H. Donner and S.A. van der Hoorn, eds., *Acta of Handelingen der Nationale Synode* (Leiden, 1883-1886), 6-7, 43, 263.

probably larger gatherings, but they also offered ample opportunity for members to participate. The classis met at 8:30 AM, selected a scribe, and offered a prayer. Anyone who came after the prayer paid a small fine. Then they read the minutes of the previous meeting and asked what each participant had brought from his consistory. Elders sat next to ministers from their congregations. When their turn came, Indies deputies delivered their report and asked for advice. According to the rules, answers were to be concise and clear. The classis would hear the issue or problem, decide how to approach the company or what to write in an outgoing letter, then hand the matter back to the committee, which carried out the orders of the classis and reported its progress at the next meeting. Every classis member had to pledge his commitment to the catechism and other statements of Reformed doctrine.<sup>14</sup>

Sometimes WIC directors appear in the minutes in mundane roles. Kiliaen van Rensselaer was once sent to Amsterdam's English consistory, for example, in search of a new minister for the local German-speaking congregation, which had just lost Reverend Kessler to Brazil. Another director, Nicolaas van Damme, asked his Haarlem consistory to report to him if they knew of any clergy willing to serve the WIC. He was also guardian to the children of Reverend Samuel Ampzing, author of a famous celebratory tract about the company (*West-Indische Triumph Basuyn*). In the South Holland synod in 1639, an elder and director from Rotterdam named Jacob Velthuysen explained the WIC's history of supporting clerical educations, and one week later, as South Holland's envoy to North Holland, he asked the other delegates to contact him if they learned of ministers who wanted to serve abroad. In general, the directors acted as liaisons to the

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<sup>14</sup> ACA 2-3, SAA. Classis rules and order of business are found at the start of each volume. See the extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis for examples of Indies business: ACA 163-165.

WIC in finding and educating clergy and providing Bibles and other literature for ships and colonies. Conversely, the company sometimes deputized directors who were also elders or deacons to visit the church: At a meeting in 1657, after learning that Reverend Westerwyck had died in West Africa, the XIX chose Abraham Wilmerdonx to see the Amsterdam classis about a replacement. Wilmerdonx was a two-time deacon, six-time elder, and regular classis member.<sup>15</sup>

In Zeeland, at least one WIC director was a permanent member of his consistory and classis because he was also a Reformed minister: Pieter Duvelaer. Crossover between church and company was even greater there than it was in Amsterdam because the consistory in Middelburg, where many Zeeland directors lived, invested enough money in the WIC to send its own representative to a group of investors and merchants called the *hoofdparticipanten*. They resolved on July 1, 1625, that the local “ministers” could name one person to attend all future gatherings. The clergy (“as one”) had invested *f* 4,000, and the church was now “in the Company.”<sup>16</sup> Perhaps because of additional investment, the consistory eventually sent more representatives. At least two were present at a meeting in 1646, for instance, and three were attending by the 1660s: In July 1662 they all traveled to The Hague to convey the WIC’s thanks for the care that the States General exercised on its behalf and to discuss upcoming negotiations with Portugal. The *hoofdparticipanten*

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<sup>15</sup> For van Rensselaer, see the minutes of the English consistory, 8 Sep 1639, AEKA 27, SAA. For Van Damme, see the minutes of the Haarlem consistory, 22 Nov 1639, AKHA 22, NHA. For him and Ampzing, see the same, 30 Oct and 18 Dec 1640, 14 June 1644, 27 Aug 1647. For Velthuysen, see the minutes of the South Holland synod, 5-23 July 1639, ACD 83, Article 14, NA; minutes of the North Holland synod, 1 Aug 1639, ASNH 3, NHA. He does not appear in Appendices B and C because he was from Rotterdam: See De Laet’s Rotterdam list in *Historie*. (For another example of a *Maas* elder/WIC director at the South Holland synod, see its minutes, July 1671, ACD 85.) For Wilmerdonx’s assignment to the classis, see the minutes of the XIX, 15 June 1657, ASG V 12564.42, NA.

<sup>16</sup> The symbols *f* and *fl.* are usually used for Dutch currency, signifying “guilder” (the florin/florijn guilder).



did not have the same authority as directors, but they helped select new ones, nominating Duvelaer for a term in the late 1660s.<sup>17</sup>

Consistory membership was not necessarily evidence of principled, orthodox Calvinism. The Reformed Church was the public church, and being on the consistory had its perks, including status in the Reformed community, control over individual lives, and access to church funds. Membership also opened doors to advantageous marriages and better trading opportunities (through family connections). Serving as elder or deacon in Amsterdam revealed at least some measure of religious commitment, however, because government and consistory were so divided there. During the Arminian controversy the city had been a national Calvinist haven, a headquarters for believers to meet and discuss mutual problems and work out strategies to resist the latest heresies. Then in the 1620s they lost the municipal government. Often labeled “Libertine,” the new rulers were more tolerant, preferring a flexible, non-dogmatic church, with small influence in the public sphere. Historians describe Amsterdam’s political factions from that point as Libertine versus “consistorial,” “ecclesiastical,” or just “Calvinist.” The latter decried any form of public, non-Reformed worship, which Libertines quietly allowed. Calvinists also tended to support the noble House of Orange and oppose peace with Spain. The combination of religion and politics leaves the interpretation of consistory membership in question, but

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<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the Zeeland *hoofdparticipanten*, 1 July 1625, OWIC 34:29, NA. (For the 4,000 guilders, see also p. 131.) For Duvelaer, see the nominations of 1666 in the same minutes, as well as P.J. Blok and P.C. Molhuysen, eds., *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* (Leiden, 1911-1937), 8:447; M.P. de Bruin and P.J. van der Feen, eds., *Encyclopedie van Zeeland* (Middelburg: Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen, 1982-1984), 1:374. For the rest, see the same minutes, 30 Oct 1625, 5 Jan 1636, 3 June 1639, 30 Oct 1646, 3 July 1656, 4 July 1659, 12 July 1662, OWIC 34:32, 56, 62, 106; 37:31-33, 92-93; 38:5, 13; and the *hoofdparticipanten* minutes from Vlissingen, SV 193:80-97, GAV.

because of the divide between church and government in Amsterdam, the consistory is a guide to the allegiances of wealthy men during the first half of the century.<sup>18</sup>

The directors threw the weight of the WIC behind the church and its political agenda at a few critical moments, first during conflicts with Libertines over the question of illegal Arminian gatherings in 1626 and 1627. When Prince Frederik Hendrik arrived in Amsterdam to mediate the situation, he met with the town council and representatives from the consistory. Also there to support the consistory were a number of directors from the local WIC chamber. They boasted that they were “mostly” Reformed members.

Echoing De Laet’s claims about the company’s purposes at the start of his *Historie*, they argued that it was founded for the honor of God, the promotion of the true religion, the well-being of the country, and the destruction of the enemy. They were doing their part in the Atlantic world, they said; they asked that the city do its part by maintaining Reformed worship and preventing illegal conventicles at home. Their speaking for the company as a whole suggests that they were then the dominant group within it.<sup>19</sup> A few years later, at the request of the prince, they “employed all their people in the service of the Country” during a Spanish invasion. To do so they had to redirect troops intended for the conquest of Brazil, which was delayed. Though they likely could not have refused, given the heavy subsidies that the WIC received from the States General, incidents like these were among

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<sup>18</sup> R.B. Evenhuis, *Ook Dat Was Amsterdam: De kerk der hervorming in de gouden eeuw* (Amsterdam: W. Ten Have N.V., 1965), 1:216-250; Carl Bangs, “Dutch Theology, Trade, and War, 1590-1610,” *Church History* 39, no. 4 (Dec. 1970): 470-482; S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse burgers tot Europese aristocraten* (’s-Gravenhage: Koninklijk Nederlandsch Genootschap voor Geslacht- en Wapenkunde, 2008), Chap. 5. See also Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, 91; and Johan E. Elias, *Geschiedenis van het Amsterdamsche Regentenpatriciaat* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1923).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* For the WIC’s arguments in the *vroedschap*, see Evenhuis, *Ook Dat Was Amsterdam*, 304-305; Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 494-495; Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 121-122.

the reasons that the poet Joost van den Vondel and other people who were not associated with the company described it as a southern, Calvinist institution.<sup>20</sup>

Calvinists enjoyed a strong presence in the company during its first thirty to forty years, but they did not exercise exclusive control over it. Some directors were openly Libertine. They were nominated by the *hoofdparticipanten*, then appointed by rulers, who made their selection from a triple slate of candidates. No one controlled the company's political makeup with certainty because it was dependent on too many groups. Known Libertines in the first generation in Amsterdam, where rulers opposed the Calvinist agenda so plainly, included Cornelis Bicker and Albert Burgh, possibly Reynier Reael. Bicker's brother was the long-time head of the Libertine party, and both men served as watchdogs in the consistory after the city began appointing secular delegates to prevent the election of divisive ministers, elders, and deacons. Reael did the same. During the years of Calvinist rule in Amsterdam, Burgh encouraged Vondel to write critically of the Calvinist faction, then paid Vondel's fine.<sup>21</sup> Yet most directors were still members of the Reformed Church, which they had to join to be eligible for major civic positions. Almost all of them married and baptized their children in one of Amsterdam's public facilities. Only Hans Bontemantel is known to have had his children baptized by Arminians, and no director served on the Lutheran and Arminian consistories.<sup>22</sup> Even without membership

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<sup>20</sup> Johannes Baers, *Olinda* (Amsterdam, 1630), 4. Baers wrote that part of the invasion force was postponed, joining the rest of the fleet months after it left Holland. See also Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 507; and Klooster, "Place," 66. For Vondel, see van Hoboken, "Dutch West India Company."

<sup>21</sup> For the selection of WIC directors, see Den Heijer, *Geoctrooieerde Compagnie*, 109-145. These and other examples of individual politics come from Evenhuis, *Ook Dat was Amsterdam*, Van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse Burgers*, and Elias, *Geschiedenis*. None of the authors identify the individuals in question as WIC directors.

<sup>22</sup> In *Religion and Trade*, George Smith (p. 138) lists some directors whom he thinks had Arminian or Lutheran sympathies: Hans Bontemantel, Albert Bas, Albert Pater, Cornelis Cloeck, Jean and Henry Gras, Abraham de Visscher, and Paulus Timmerman. Again, however, only Bontemantel appears in the Arminian

records one can show that, at a minimum, two-thirds of the directors in Amsterdam were full members, compared to about one-third of the general population in 1650.<sup>23</sup>

How many were Calvinist and how many Libertine? The segregation of consistory members from municipal office holders in the company was even more stark than it was in the city generally, suggesting that membership was not just a path to civic power. Of the 86 directors who came from Amsterdam (excluding Leiden and other participating cities), about 20 percent held one of three significant offices at some point in their careers: *burgemeester*, *vroedschap* member, and *schepen*. By contrast, about 40 percent were on the consistory. Only five directors overlapped, working for church and government both, and of those, four came to power in the city's Calvinist years or were known members of the consistorial party afterward. The one exception was *burgemeester* Cornelis Witsen, who served a single term as deacon in the 1650s.<sup>24</sup> Of the directors who

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baptismal registers. Most of the rest appear in the Dutch Reformed registers and none as elders and deacons in the surviving Arminian/Lutheran consistory records.

<sup>23</sup> Marriage and baptismal data are my own. Each director from Amsterdam (86 of 110) was checked against the records in ABS (5001) at the SAA. The baptismal records are now available online through the SAA's website. Eduard Man had his children baptized in the English church and David van Baerle, Toussain Blanche, Jacques Boursse, Symon van der Does, Samuel Godyn, Arnout H. Hooft, Daniel van Liebergen, Jacque de la Myne, Jacob Pergens, Johan Ray, and Johan le Thor all baptized children in the French-speaking church or a mixture of the French church and the Dutch Reformed Church. Since marriages and baptisms reveal nothing about membership, "two thirds" was determined by ecclesiastical office-holding (elders, deacons, *kerkmeesters*, etc.), political commissioners in the consistory, which required membership (thus Bicker and Reael, the latter also having been a *kerkmeester*), and by the list of members from the 1630s and 40s who had collection boxes at their homes: ADA 64:17-20, 144-148; 65:225-235, SAA. Collection boxes will be dealt with further in the following section. For "one third," see Chap. 1 of this dissertation, as well as Jacobs, *New Netherland*, Chap. 5. For the Lutheran and Arminian consistories, see the minutes of the Lutheran consistory in the archive of the Lutheran *gemeente*, 13, 20, and 21, SAA; and the *capitaalboek* of the *Remonstrant gemeente te Amsterdam*, SAA. Lutherans kept records starting in 1608, Arminians in 1631. A Jan van Erpecum and a Nicolaas van Damme were Lutheran elders, but they were ruled out as the WIC directors of the same names using the Not. Arch., SAA (van Erpecum), and the minutes of the Haarlem consistory, NKHA, NHA (van Damme).

<sup>24</sup> The other four were Jacob Geritsz Hoyng, *burgemeester* in 1618 and 1620, Jan Gysbertsz de Vries and Jacob Pietersz Hoochcamer, who joined the *vroedschap* in 1611 and 1618, respectively, and Jonas Witsen, *burgemeester* in 1619, 1623-1624—all before the Libertine takeover of the late 1620s. See the other seventeen who held secular office (as well as those on the Amsterdam consistory) in Appendix B. Little is known about the allegiance of the remaining directors, meaning those who were never in government and never served on the consistory. But one should not just assume that they sided with Libertines. Director Guillelmo Bartolotti, for example, "belonged to the more militantly Calvinist group within the city." See

came from other places, almost two-thirds were on their own consistories, most of them from Leiden, Utrecht, or Haarlem, whose churches were also Calvinist bastions. Add to their number the numerous Zeeland directors who were consistory members in the most orthodox province in the Netherlands, and Calvinists clearly enjoyed a major presence in the West India Company.<sup>25</sup>

*“I will pay my vows unto the Lord ...”*

Religious affiliations had important repercussions for the company in terms of its financial relationship with the Dutch Reformed Church and with foreign Protestant churches. That the WIC had close ties to Reformed charity is not especially remarkable because, as one of the primary care-givers in the Netherlands, the deaconries enjoyed the support of many institutions, including the East India Company, whose success allowed greater and more consistent contributions than the WIC could give. Still, fiscal ties were central to the image of the WIC as a defender of the true religion. They are also necessary for explaining company relations with the international Protestant community.

Dutch theologians tried to instruct the directors about the proper use of their new commercial treasure. In *Davids Danckbaerheyt* (1624), Reverend Willem Teellinck drew a distinction between spiritual and earthly goods, not criticizing the latter, but explaining how to consecrate them—“that the affairs of this company” become “the affairs of God.” In the Old Testament, he said, God asked his people to give the “firstlings” of their flocks

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Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 314.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. For Leiden, Utrecht, and Haarlem, see Israel, *Dutch Republic*, Chaps. 16, 19, 20, pp. 499-505, and p. 637. All were divided in the 1610s or were known for Arminianism, but they were purged after Dordrecht. Leiden became one of the “fiercest persecutors” of non-conformers; Haarlem’s government was Calvinist until the 1650s, its consistory longer; and Utrecht was the seat of Reverend Voetius, the famed theologian and defender of Calvinist orthodoxy.

to him. He has given us a “whole new world.” Is it too much for us to give our first fruits to the Lord? Similarly, in *Trivmphe* (1629), Reverend Spranckhuysen sought to persuade directors to share the wealth recently acquired by Admiral Piet Heyn, who had captured the Spanish silver fleet. As gifts of God, riches were not necessarily bad, Spranckhuysen wrote; they became so only when used for “whoredom” and debauchery. Some wealthy individuals in the Netherlands were transforming the country from a simple, austere place to an “academy for godlessness.” Young people wasted their days singing, dancing, and gambling. More properly, Spranckhuysen taught, treasure fleet monies ought to be spent only partly on oneself, partly on one’s “neighbor,” and partly on God. The directors had duties toward the poor both in and outside of the company: “through alms the merchant’s goods are insured.” He prayed for the continued prosperity of the WIC and even printed a five-page prayer of thanks, praising God for making the Dutch rich.<sup>26</sup>

Like Teellinck and Spranckhuysen, Reverend Udemans explained how trade was “sanctified” by the Lord. A long section of his *Geestelick Roer* (“Spiritual Rudder”) was about the merchant’s duties to God. In addition to loving his word, putting their trust in him, and being honest in all their dealings, they needed to show mercy to the poor. It was especially important for merchants to pay alms, he argued, for in driving such great trade they owed the Lord the honor of their goods and firstlings of their flocks (employing the same expression as Teellinck). He echoed Spranckhuysen, too, when he encouraged them to eat, drink, and dress with moderation. Though many writers expressed a certain discomfort with money, they often celebrated it, when used correctly. Company directors

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<sup>26</sup> The title of this section is taken from Psalms 116:14, KJV. It is also quoted in Teellinck,  *Davids Danckbaerheyt*. See p. 58 for “affairs” and “whole new world.” For Spranckhuysen, see Dionysium Spranckhuysen, *Trivmphe van wegghen de geluckighe ende over-rijcke victorie* (Delft, 1629), 9-25, 49-54.

and merchants should feel no special qualms about their fortunes, as long as they avoided unnecessary pomp and gave liberally to the church and poor.<sup>27</sup>

Whether many WIC directors were sufficiently moderate in their dress and other expenditures to satisfy the strictly devout is unlikely, at least in Amsterdam, where the general public did not view ostentatious displays of wealth with the same disapproval as the people of Middelburg. In fact, one of the grandest, most lavish homes of seventeenth-century Amsterdam was owned by WIC director Guillelmo Bartolotti, or Willem van den Heuvel, who adopted his Italian, Calvinist father-in-law's name in exchange for a large legacy. His entrance hall boasted two West Indies maps, as well as thirteen paintings and various furnishings. The rest of the house was packed with art and wall-hangings, chairs and cabinets, couches, Turkish rugs, mirrors, ebony tables and buffets, oak chests, a bird cage, and an interior fountain. The tax value alone on the tapestries in one room was 900 guilders: "about the cost of purchasing an entire house for a small tradesman."<sup>28</sup>

Bartolotti had earned his fortune trading in Europe and the Atlantic world. If other directors did not have quite the same wealth, many of them were very successful too, and they were not afraid to show it. As a dealer in brazilwood and American furs, Samuel Godyn had many valuable possessions. He was also one of the more active participants in the church, serving as elder three times in the French-speaking consistory and twice at the French synod. He left money to the poor and for the education of new ministers when he died. Among his books were Bibles both in Dutch and French, John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, an anthology of Calvin's sermons, and Calvin's commentaries on

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<sup>27</sup> Udemans, *Geestelick Roer*, 14-61. See also Book 4, 92-319, specifically addressed to the WIC and VOC. On the topic of wealth and discomfort see Schama, *Embarrassment*, Chap. 5. Calvinist clergy preferred simplicity to pomp. The city began to become more outwardly wealthy especially in the second half of the century. On discomfort with American resources, see Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, Chaps. 4-5.

<sup>28</sup> Schama, *Embarrassment*, 312-314.

Psalms, Jeremiah, Daniel, Paul, and the five books of Moses. Other WIC directors were equally wealthy and, as their own involvement on their consistories shows, equally active in church life. Even Bartolotti—never elder or deacon—“belonged to the more militantly Calvinist group within the city,” according to one scholar. He baptized his children in the *Oude* and *Nieuwe Kerk*, he was a full member of the Reformed Church, and outside his opulent home he hung a plaque inscribed “*Religione et Probitate*,” as well as a collection box for the deaconry. He and any visitors could donate to the city’s poor there.<sup>29</sup>

Most donations were private, collected by deacons at church or dropped in boxes hanging all over the city: outside member homes and in public places like the orphanage and *wisselbank* (exchange bank). A list of boxes from the 1630s and 1640s shows them hanging at the homes of twenty-four WIC directors. One was also at the company’s warehouse on the waterfront and two at the “West Indies House,” including one outside and another in the *rekenkamer*, or the accounting office, where employees picked up their pay. Deacons emptied the boxes once per month, collecting various amounts. Soon after Piet Heyn’s victory, in June 1629, they brought *f* 1,227 from the boxes at the West Indies House. The next month they brought *f* 496. Though they also collected *f* 1,061 in June 1634, *f* 456 in January 1635, and *f* 405 in November of the same year, monies from WIC boxes were more often between *f* 100 and *f* 200 per month. Amounts from the homes of individual WIC directors were less, ranging from *f* 14 on the one end to *f* 130 per month

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 314. Baptism, membership, and consistorial information are my own: see above. For the collection box, see the following fn. For Godyn’s wealth and books, see his “inventory,” Not. Arch. 694B, *omslag* 59, 384-405, SAA. See also his will in Not. Arch. 178:39-41, and for his trade, see 126:3 (brazilwood) and 739:144-145 (the *Noordse Compagnie*). For other directors with religious literature and mementos, see the inventories of Toussain Blanche, Not. Arch. 1066:139-166; Henry Gras, 1914:725-742 (with a “Gold penny from the Synod of Dordrecht”); Johan van Harynchouck, 1134:159; and Johan le Thor, 1303:213-229. A complete study of wills and inventories was not attempted.



on the other. Adults needed about *f* 80 per year to meet basic needs, children *f* 40. Thus a family of five could survive on *f* 280.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to these anonymous monies, which could have come from employees or directors or visitors to their homes and offices, people sometimes gave more openly, as did the WIC as an institution. Jacques Specx, who was the governor-general of the Dutch East Indies before returning to Holland and becoming WIC director, donated *f* 1,500 to the deacons, who called it a “legacy” for the poor. Directors Jan Bartringh, Johan le Thor, and Hendrick Broen all donated *f* 1,000 at their deaths, and others gave lesser amounts. In addition to the *f* 1,000 that he gave to the Dutch Reformed deaconry, Le Thor left *f* 3,000 to be divided amongst the French churches of Amsterdam and Leiden and (he being an agent of a Swedish copper company) the poor of Northoppinghen, Sweden. Others gave while they were living, ranging from Jan van Geel’s “voluntary gift” of *f* 200 to Charles Loten’s larger donation of *f* 600, made shortly after the Heyn victory. Symon van der Does, Isaack van Beeck, and other directors made similar donations over the years, often labeled “gift” by the deaconry. Some brought in large amounts on behalf of spouses: As legacies from their late wives, Maria de Hem and Marritje Gerrits, Loten and Bartringh once handed the deacons *f* 2000 and *f* 1000 on the same day. Presumably such donations were too large to entrust to the deaconry boxes. Over one twenty-four year stretch, they

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<sup>30</sup> For the lists of members and institutions with boxes in the 1630s and 40s, see the deaconry’s *renteboek*, ADA 64:17-20, 144-148; 65:225-35. No lists from other periods exist. See all other pages of the *renteboek* for the amounts collected. It covers only March 1629 through Feb 1654. No totals from the director’s boxes are possible because all member boxes were usually collected and listed together, without any individual names. (They brought in *f* 1,200 to *f* 1,600 per month.) A few exceptions are from May 1631 (Abraham Oyens), Sep 1631 (Charles Loten), and Oct 1634 (Samuel Becker). No total amounts from WIC and other boxes are possible either because often they were simply lumped together as part of a city-wide gathering. Deacons began doing this sometimes in Feb 1632, near the start of the book. For the financial needs of the average family, see A. Th. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion, and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), Part I.

added up to about *f* 23,000, not including money from the boxes at the director's homes or WIC facilities and other anonymous giving.<sup>31</sup>

The WIC also donated to the church, sometimes in minor ways. When a visiting minister requested assistance for the construction of a new chapel in his home town, the Zeeland chamber contributed *f* 25, the directors implying that they had submitted to such requests before, as had the WIC in Holland. Somewhat grudgingly, they once also divided an unknown quantity of sugar among the clergy of Middelburg, Vlissingen, and Veere. And in December 1643, they resolved to sell "some old supplies" from the ship *Noord Holland* and give the proceeds to the poor.<sup>32</sup>

More significantly and regularly, the Zeeland and Amsterdam chambers gave one penny per thousand to the deaconries from all goods that arrived in the Netherlands from overseas. In providing these "poor monies," as they were called, the directors effectively tithed their own income, since they were compensated from the same imports (one penny per hundred). In Amsterdam they divided the money among Dutch-, French-, and English-speaking churches, the Dutch receiving the largest portion. In Zeeland they were allotted to Dutch- and French-speaking churches (probably English, too) in all cities with directors, including Tholen, whose deacons received a 1/12 part. Anyone who sailed and sold under the auspices of the WIC had to pay, the company imposing fines on those who were tardy. It collected from merchants and kept a running tab for the deacons, who came calling from time to time. The sums could grow quite large: In January 1634 the

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<sup>31</sup> Most donations were recorded in the *renteboek*, ADA 64, SAA (1629-1653). WIC directors are found throughout. For Specx, see 2 Nov 1652; for Broen, 21 Feb 1640; for Barteringh, 4 Mar 1649; for Le Thor, 5 Aug 1653; for van Geel, 25 Feb 1648; for Loten, 3 Jan 1630; for Loten, Barteringh, and spouses, 29 Feb 1644. These and other directors often appear more than once in the *renteboek*. The dates given here are only examples. For Le Thor's contributions to the French churches and Northoppinghen, see his inventory, 26 July 1653, Not. Arch. 1303:213-229, SAA. For his work for the Swedish copper company, see 954:206.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 16 Oct 1634, 5 Sep 1641, 17 and 31 Dec 1643, OWIC 22:46, 24:129, 25:147, 150.

Amsterdam directors reported that their poor monies had reached *f* 6,920. They then gave a portion to each of the Reformed consistories and some to the “*Aelmoesseniers*” (a civil charity). The Dutch consistory’s share was *f* 2,400, which was unusually high. On other occasions it was between *f* 1,000 and *f* 1,770.<sup>33</sup> The WIC paid poor monies even after it fell on hard times, though it did stop paying interest on a number of company bonds that had been given to the deaconry. In that case the deacons sold them for less than a quarter of their original value and used the money to help fund a new orphanage.<sup>34</sup>

WIC employees often gave part of their earnings to the poor too. Sometimes they had no choice, for the directors fined them for infractions of company policy and outright misconduct, like drunkenness, then donated the money to the church. (Poor monies and fines were lumped together on the deaconry’s tab in Amsterdam.) Many employees gave more willingly, however. In addition to money dropped anonymously in WIC and other deaconry boxes, they sometimes donated openly. When the deacons went to collect at the West Indies House on one occasion, they were handed an extra *f* 15 by Jeronimus Lacroix, who was working there in an unknown capacity. Admiral Hendrick Lonck, who led the attack against Brazil in 1629 and 1630, donated *f* 600 before his departure. And a *ziekentrooster* and soon-to-be New Netherland minister named Eduardus Bogardus gave *f* 40 to the deacons upon his return from Guinea (more than one month’s wages). Higher-ranking officers in West Africa donated considerable amounts of gold to the poor at least three times: In 1631, the gold donated to the Amsterdam church by General Jacobs, who

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<sup>33</sup> For Amsterdam, see, for example, the *renteboeck*, ADA 64:182, 184, 192, 198, 210, 219, 233, SAA; and minutes of the Amsterdam deacons, 12 Jan 1634, ADA 1:11. For Zeeland, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 21 Dec 1628, 25 Jan 1629 (Tholen), 16 Jan (Tholen) and 23 Oct 1631 (fines), 5 Jan 1632 (fines), and 8 Sep 1661 (Tholen), OWIC 20:102, 106; 21:54, 80, 90; 27:91. See also the same chamber’s minutes of 4 Dec 1651 in Aanw. 992, NA.

<sup>34</sup> The company was still paying poor monies as late as 1669: See the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 18 Oct 1669, OWIC 15:140, NA. For WIC bonds, see the *renteboeck*, ADA 64:44, 65:31, SAA; minutes of the deaconry, 22 Feb 1656, ADA 1:94.

had just arrived home, was valued at *f*2,447. In 1661, General Valckenburg brought back a whole “chest” of it, which the directors divided among the churches of every company chamber. One of his successors, Director Wilree, collected about three-and-a-half pounds of gold from the employees under his command, shipping it to his wife for distribution to the poor of a few, specified cities, probably selected by those who contributed.<sup>35</sup>

Employees also gave to the poor in their wills. As premature death was a common occurrence in WIC ships, forts, and colonies, deacons often had to go to the West Indies House to collect these monies, which were almost always smaller than the legacies left by directors. Together they usually totaled *f* 100-300 at each visit. The intended recipient was sometimes clear, sometimes not: A minister and deacons from the Walloon church in Middelburg once came to the Zeeland chamber to ask that money donated in the wills of French-speaking employees be used only for the “French poor.” Confusion only grew when the colonial population expanded and everyone began to ask if wills should be paid at home or abroad. The WIC finally told its governor in Brazil to instruct employees to be specific in their wills about the cities and institutions they intended to support, whether in Holland, Brazil, or even Luanda, where the company was building a hospital.<sup>36</sup>

The salaries of many employees were so low that giving to the poor meant giving to their own peers, in a sense. The *f* 8-14 per month that sailors and soldiers earned, or even the *f* 12-18 of the corporals, sergeants, sail makers, coopers, and others, was enough

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<sup>35</sup> For a fine, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 9 and 23 Mar 1628, OWIC 20:71-72, NA. See also the *renteboeck*, 18 Nov 1630, ADA 64:184, SAA. For Lonck, Bogardus, and Lacroix, see the same, 16 May 1629, 8 June 1632, and 6 Jan 1633, 181, 188-189. For wages, see the following chap. For Guinea gold, see the *renteboeck*, 26 June 1631, ADA 64:185; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 8 Dec 1661, 23 Mar, 24 Aug, and 7 Sep 1662, OWIC 27:98, 105, 118; and minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 24-31 Oct 1669, OWIC 15:141-143. The directors were not pleased that the gold was sent to Wilree’s wife, not them.

<sup>36</sup> For “French poor,” see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 21 Dec 1628, OWIC 20:102, NA. For confusion, see Maurits and council to the XIX, 6 May 1637 and 15 Jan 1638, OWIC 52:59, 53:3; the XIX to the Brazil council, 15 Apr 1645, OWIC 9:229; the council to the XIX, 10 Dec 1645, OWIC 61:57. For Amsterdam wills, see various entries in the *renteboeck*, ADA 64, SAA. For example: 4 July 1630, 205.

to support themselves and perhaps one or two others, but not a family of any considerable size. Church and company at home were closely bound in part because the deaconry was a support system for the families of Reformed members who worked for the WIC in the Atlantic world. Deacons picked up and managed employee wages whenever the church was assisting their parents, wives, or children, like the *f*24 they once received at the West Indies House for the mother of Dirck Andries, WIC carpenter, or the *f*93 they took from the wages of Artus Beck, crediting it to the account of his daughter “Hekena” at the local orphanage. Deacons also visited the directors now and then to request remuneration for those who had been injured or maimed in the company’s service. Unless the individual in question had been wounded in battle, however, or unless the deaconry and hospital could be repaid from a surplus on his account, directors were reluctant to acquiesce.<sup>37</sup>

The directors’ reluctance to treat with disadvantaged employees one-on-one, even when the company was partly at fault for someone’s bad situation, perhaps stemmed from the fact that they were already contributing to the institutions that were responsible for social problems. They were maintaining a hazy boundary: The WIC was a business, not a charity, and it was arguably fulfilling its obligations to society on at least two levels. On the one hand, it employed numerous Dutch and immigrant men. It put thousands to work every year in its warehouses and other facilities at home, aboard its ships, and in many forts and colonies. If the opportunities that it provided paid poorly or were dangerous and

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<sup>37</sup> For the wages of WIC employees, see Charles Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1965), Appendix II. For “*f*24” and “*f*93,” see the *renteboeck*, 17 July 1636 and 21 Oct 1649, ADA 64:198, 246, SAA. Other good examples are found on pp. 197, 201, 212-213, 228, and scattered entries throughout the book. For Zeeland, see, for example, the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 19 Sep 1650, Aanw. 992, NA. For deacons, directors, and injuries, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 13 Aug 1626, OWIC 20:14, NA, when the directors (reluctantly) paid the costs of a boy whose legs were frozen; or 2 July 1629, p. 128, when they agreed to pay for a broken leg (though at “the most profit to the company”); or 7 Jan 1641, 24:72, when they paid the deaconry for the bills of a dead soldier (from his own account); or 17 Mar 1642, 25:10, when they paid an indemnity to a soldier who had recently been blinded.

deadly, so were comparable situations with the Dutch navy, army, and East India Company. By giving to the deaconry (and some civic charities) the directors and the WIC ostensibly compensated for the poverty, disability, and other difficulties often associated with employment in Africa and America, sustaining the organizations that cared for the company's own sick and injured, widows and orphans. In doing so some directors were also probably trying to fulfill the duties that ministers like Teellinck, Spranckhuysen, and Udemans said they owed to the poor.<sup>38</sup>

As consistory members, merchants, and bankers, WIC directors were especially well-placed to assist needy Protestants in other countries. Most of them traded not only in the Atlantic world, but the Mediterranean, Baltic, Russia, and many other places, forming commercial connections all over the continent. With the Thirty Years War in Germany, Catholic-Huguenot conflict in France, and the English Civil War across the Channel, the first half of the seventeenth century saw many people driven from their homes by enemy armies, pouring into the Netherlands as refugees, sometimes just writing or sending envoys to request food and monetary aid. The States General and provincial States had the power to institute widespread public collections, yet fearing that the country would be overwhelmed by supplicants, or fearing the impact on Dutch foreign policy, they did not grant every request. The church often collected alms regardless. As a vital trade entrepot in Europe, Amsterdam and its church operated naturally also as a go-between or clearing-house for donations from all over the Netherlands to other countries, passing money to Protestants in France, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Poland, Hungary, and even Italy.

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<sup>38</sup> For WIC employment needs, see Emmer and Klooster, "Dutch Atlantic," 48-69; Victor Enthoven, "Dutch Crossings: Migration between the Netherlands and the New World, 1600-1800," *Atlantic Studies* 2, no. 2 (Oct 2005): 153-176. The yearly figures for employees in the two articles do not agree, but they both number them in the thousands.

Calvinist territories in western Germany received special attention because of their close proximity to Holland and the many historic ties between the two regions.<sup>39</sup>

The directors participated in these efforts because of their consistory and general church membership. Isaack van Beeck, Johan le Thor, Frederick van Geel, and Hendrick Broen did so as sitting elders and deacons. Others, like Rombout Jacobsen, handled funds for the church even when they were not on the consistory (although he had been an elder and deacon before). Marcus Broen, who never held office, once remitted *f* 550 to Anhalt, Germany. Most often they assisted German Calvinists in Jülich, Anhalt, Kleve, and the Rhineland-Palatinate, working with thousands of guilders from sources like the Enkhuizen classis and Friesland synod. (The prince of Anhalt was a major investor in the WIC.) During the Irish Rebellion (1641), when Catholics in Ireland rose up against the Protestant, English minority, the church in Amsterdam instituted days of prayer for the English, gathering a large sum. It was a “work of love” for “our brethren in the faith,” the classis wrote, giving the money to an elder and WIC director, Isaack van Beeck. He had been charged with two ministers to oversee the collection. He purchased grain, cheese, butter, peas, salt, beans, and other supplies, which were then carried to London aboard various ships by the one-time deacon and director Charles Loten, among others. One of Loten’s companions on the voyage to England was a member of Amsterdam’s English-speaking consistory with a third director, Eduard Man, a regular trading partner of van

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<sup>39</sup> Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*, Chap. 2; Evenhuis, *Ook Dat was Amsterdam*, 185-189. For WIC directors who were also bankers, see the same. Their trading connections in Europe were determined by running each name through the Not. Arch. at the SAA. Directors often appeared there readying ships for non-American or African locales, sometimes with other directors. For example, Abraham de Visscher sent fish to Italy (see Not. Arch. 668:78); Guillelmo Bartolotti, who was the head of a major banking firm, carried grain to Italy or traded fish from the New World to France (152:40v); Samuel Becker traded to the Mediterranean (144:48v); Isaack van Beeck traded wine to Nantes (218:32); Marcus Broen traded to Stockholm (686:54); and so on. Sweden, Russia, and the Mediterranean were common destinations for WIC directors and merchants; fish, wine, and various grains were common trade items.

Beeck's in the Atlantic world. Commercial connections like theirs facilitated the flow of people and goods within the Protestant international.<sup>40</sup>

The financial relationship between church and company was considerable, to say the least. Deaconry boxes at WIC facilities, donations from employees and directors to the church at home and Protestants in other countries, the company's poor monies, and the role that deacons played on behalf of employees and their families added a great deal to the traffic between the chapel and the West Indies House. Of course the Reformed Church also received regular bequests from local and provincial governments and the VOC, among others. WIC money was one part of the whole. But it was not trivial. Over the company's fifty-three years it totaled hundreds of thousands of guilders.

### *Practicing Piety Within the Company*

In addition to consistory membership and alms-giving, WIC directors expressed and observed certain religious beliefs and practices in their day-to-day management of colonial affairs. The Zeeland *hoofdparticipanten* once resolved that no one should hold any position of importance within the company unless he first professed "the true Christian Reformed Religion." That probably never became a wider policy, and certainly there were some non-Reformed officers who served the WIC in time—but the XIX at least agreed that they should call the most capable and "god-fearing" men available. They

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<sup>40</sup> Most examples of director involvement with foreign churches come from the Income and Expenditures Book, AKA 149, SAA. See 19 July 1639 (Jacobsen), 6 Aug 1639 (H. Broen), 30 Jan 1641 (van Beeck), 24 Jan 1642 (van Geel), 22 Aug 1642 (Le Thor), 13 June 1643 (Van Geel), 5 Apr 1647 (van Geel), and 6 Oct 1650 (M. Broen). For Ireland, van Beeck, Loten, and Cave, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 23 Nov 1643, ACA 4:300, SAA; *ERSNY* 1:169-183; and Not. Arch. 848:807, SAA. The latter has the list of food items. For "love" and "brethren," see *ERSNY* 1:177-179. For the relations of Cave/Loten/Man, see Man's will, Not. Arch. 1114:246. For Cave and Man serving on the English consistory, see the membership registers of the English church, AEKA 318, 84-94, SAA. Elders and deacons are listed on the inside covers. For the Prince of Anhalt as a major investor, see the list of shareholders/Amsterdam chamber, OWIC 18\*.



saw victory as a blessing from “God Almighty,” who granted success and failure, power and poverty, life and death. When they selected Boudewijn Hendricks to command their fleets in late 1624, they asked the clergy in his home town to visit his wife and tell her to “be at peace.” “[L]ike everyone in his office,” her husband was “called of God.” During the next years, as they readied ships and arranged for ministers and other necessities, they claimed that nothing was “more dear to [their] hearts than Religion.”<sup>41</sup>

Company and church were co-dependent. If the former helped bring the latter to new continents and maintained it politically and financially at home, Reformed religion returned the favor by giving merchants an ideology or validation for their way of life. The pious expressions found in WIC letters and minutes were few and far between compared against the magnitude of daily business. But sugar, gold, fur, tobacco, and other common topics of discussion were not just secular concerns. Prosperity was a blessing that God bestowed on the faithful, perhaps the reason that the directors began company gatherings “in the name of the Lord,” dedicated to “the King of Kings, Immortal and Invisible.” To “God alone be the wisdom, honor, and glory,” they wrote on one occasion. “Praise God Almighty.” Borrowing from Psalms 146, they wrote that “[o]ur help is in ... the Lord, who created and made the Heaven, Earth, and Sea, with everything in them, Amen.”<sup>42</sup> “Everything” necessarily included the commodities that they were then taking from the earth and trading with the peoples of the Atlantic world. According to clergy like

Teellinck, Spranckhuysen, and Udemans, material goods were God’s gifts to man. They

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<sup>41</sup> For the *hoofdparticipanten*, see their minutes, 25 April 1624, OWIC 34:18, NA. For “god-fearing,” see the minutes of the XIX, 5 Aug 1623, OWIC 1:9-10. For “God Almighty,” see 10 Sep 1624, p. 98. For Hendricks, see 27 Dec 1624, 183-184. And for “nothing,” see the letter of the XIX to Brazil, 30 May 1631, OWIC 2 (no page numbers).

<sup>42</sup> See the minutes of the XIX, 12 Sep 1624, OWIC 1:104; 2 (no page numbers: 30 Aug 1630), NA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 2 Jan 1634, 1 Jan 1637, 22:1, 23:1; 24 (no page numbers: 2 Jan 1640); minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 1 Jan 1635, OWIC 14:1; and minutes of the *hoofdparticipanten*, 14 Mar 1646, OWIC 17:2-3. These are just examples. Others can be found throughout the minutes of all WIC chambers.

taught appreciation for the wonder of creation, taken from the “good land” that God had given the Dutch in America. The merchant profession prospered the nation and helped spread the kingdom of Christ throughout the world. There was no natural discrepancy in declaring a love of religion on the one hand and pursuing profit on the other.<sup>43</sup>

If WIC dedications sounded rather like prayers, that is because they were. Just as written minutes began with statements of piety, so meetings at every level began with an invocation. They were likely just longer versions of the dedications. Generally they were not recorded, except to note that they had taken place. In the XIX: “the lord Goch read the usual prayer,” “the lord Van der Meer called upon the name of the Lord,” or often, we “call[ed] on God’s holy name.” Other WIC bodies used similar expressions. The Zeeland *hoofdparticipanten* set the prayer as a kind of marker, forbidding anyone who showed up afterward to vote on new directors. Because at least one of them was always a Reformed minister, he must have offered it for them. In other meetings the president just read a prayer, probably from an orthodox work like the catechism. In their minutes, in the place where they usually mentioned their own prayer, the Amsterdam *hoofdparticipanten* once wrote that “God will bless [our] consultations and good decisions, amen.”<sup>44</sup>

The Zeeland directors often requested sermons for employees who worked for the WIC at home, including sailors and soldiers aboard local company yachts and those who were about to depart for distant shores. Usually they asked for Dutch sermons, sometimes French. The *Bracke* was likely a ship that remained in the Netherlands, for the directors

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<sup>43</sup> On Teellinck, Spranckhuysen, and Udemans, see the previous section (as well as Chap. 1).

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, the minutes of the *Haags Besoigne*, 3 Aug 1623, 16 March 1624, 18 Sep 1660, OWIC 1:5, 43; 6:1, NA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 13 July 1626, 15 Nov 1627, 11 Nov 1658, 2 Jan 1673, OWIC 20:10, 56; 27:23; 32:1; minutes of the Zeeland *hoofdparticipanten*, 22 Jan 1624, 18 Jan 1630, OWIC 34:12, 46; 9 Oct 1635, SV 193:10, GAV; and the minutes of the Amsterdam *hoofdparticipanten*, 14 Mar 1646, 3 Nov 1650, 19 Aug 1651, and 11 Sep 1651, OWIC 17:2-3, 26, 38, 41.

were often looking for ministers to preach on it, once even to perform a marriage. In late 1633 they resolved that from that time forward, every Sunday, there would also be a sermon aboard the *Domburch*; and they ordered the same for the *Walcheren* in 1642. All employees from other yachts would come and listen, they declared. Preachers were often from the Middelburg, Vlissingen, and Veere consistories, and in their sermons they told employees to do their duty, be honest, and honor their oaths—a necessary reminder in the face of widespread smuggling.<sup>45</sup>

The directors demonstrated their piety and kinship with the church in other minor ways. For example, they scheduled their Wednesday meetings later than others so they could attend Reformed services that were often held that day. When a WIC minister was about to depart for America, they claimed to place extra cannon on the ship for his and his large family's protection. Once they also offered to carry envoys from the *Walcheren classis* to Amsterdam in their yacht when the *classis* wanted to share its concerns about Brazil with the XIX. Echoing the XIX's declaration about love of religion, the Zeeland *hoofdparticipanten* and directors said that planting the gospel was one of their "principal objectives." In talks with Portugal, the "weightiest matter [for Dutch merchants visiting there] is religion and worship."<sup>46</sup>

Whether the directors really made "the gospel" a major concern in their sphere of influence is a topic much too big for this chapter alone. Future critics of the WIC would have certainly scoffed at the claim. Even if the critics sometimes stood on solid ground, it

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<sup>45</sup> Minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 25 Aug and 5 Sep 1633, 16 Mar and 7 Dec 1634, 9 Jan 1640, 11 Sep 1642, 17 Nov 1670, OWIC 21:175, 278; 22:13, 52; 24 (no page number: 9 Jan 1640); 25:44; 30:79-80, NA. See also 20 Nov 1670.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 Nov 1635, 23 Aug 1640, 19 Feb 1643, OWIC 22:119, 24:47, 25:64, NA. For the two "principal" quotations, both concerning Portugal and Portuguese trade, see *ibid.*, 14 May 1641, OWIC 24:104, and the minutes of the *hoofdparticipanten*, 15 May 1641, OWIC 35:10.

does not necessarily follow that the directors were disingenuous. Their rhetoric was often recorded in places that public eyes would never go. They seemed to believe that by increasing Dutch influence abroad they also spread Christ's kingdom, partnered with the public church. At home they came to the church's defense in Amsterdam when it tried to suppress Arminian worship. Many of them served on consistories, classes, and synods and held other ecclesiastical positions. They gave money to Reformed deaconries, both individually and as an institution. They worked closely with the church to supply their ships, forts, and colonies with clergy and related needs. And they demonstrated their faith and piety in company prayers, employee sermons, and other ways. With limited resources and imperfect control over remote territories, there was only so much a relatively small group of merchants could do to advance a religious agenda that was, at best, ambiguously connected to their main commercial purpose. More notable than the WIC's shortcomings as an advocate and defender of the "true religion" was the fact that a quasi-private, profit-seeking joint-stock company had any religious mission at all.

One final example of religious devotion and the integration of secular and sacred in the West India Company's Calvinist community: The merchant Hendrik Haecx lived in Dutch Brazil in the early 1640s, serving on the consistory as a deacon and sometimes speaking on behalf of the church when there was an important issue before the colony's government. Upon reaching home he began keeping a diary, and he soon reported rumors that the WIC was going to ask him to return to Brazil. On July 5, 1645, he indeed received notification from the XIX. When he met with a small group of directors the next day, including Charles Loten, a former Amsterdam deacon, they informed him that they had chosen him for Brazil's *hoge raad* (the governor's council), one of the most powerful

positions in any Dutch colony. He expressed some hesitation, saying that he wanted time to consider, and in a message perhaps calculated to resonate with his particular history of service in the church—coming from one deacon to another—they asked him to remember the “planting of God’s honor” and “the many widows and orphans” whose fates were tied to the company’s. He was reluctant to leave his home, family, friends and “business,” he wrote; but after spending an “entire day and night” in “fiery” prayer, he decided to accept the assignment. When he informed the directors of his choice the next day, they wished him joy. At that point they gave him just two charges: not to favor any company chamber over another, and again, to always seek the “honor of God” in America.<sup>47</sup>

The directors’ advice to Haecx resembled rhetoric about their godly purposes and desires on other occasions. The consequences of WIC success were not just temporal or economic, not limited to directors and their employees. His was no simple job offer, but a meaningful opportunity to serve God and the poor by supporting the company. Even if it was also attractive in terms of personal advancement and power, Haecx’s reply was that of a devout merchant in pursuit of God’s will. In May 1646 he traveled from Amsterdam to Vlissingen, where he boarded a ship bound for Brazil. Among those who came to see him off were a number of Zeeland directors and “numerous” Reformed ministers from Middelburg and “other places,” he wrote, adding that the ship set sail “in God’s name.” When he met with a few clergy on a brief return visit the next year, they talked about the church in Amsterdam and Brazil, and they thanked him for his attentions.<sup>48</sup>

Consistory membership, Calvinist beliefs among the directors and merchants like Hendrik Haecx, ecclesiastical investment, participation, and support for the WIC, and the

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<sup>47</sup> Hendrik Haecx diary, 29 June to 6 July 1645, Aanw. 644, NA. For his being on the deaconry in Brazil previously and his defending the church, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 2 Sep 1642, OWIC 69, NA.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Sep 1645-May 1646. For his return, see Nov 1647-Jan 1648. His visit with the clergy: 4 Dec 1647.

close cooperation that existed between church and company in general all belie the strict dichotomy implied in that very expression—“church and company”—however necessary and useful it can be. Even though the two disagreed from time to time, drawing a stark division between them is especially problematic in this case because of the history and doctrine of the church in question. With its Priesthood of All Believers and presbyterian organization, the Dutch Reformed Church was ruled, at least in principle, by elders and deacons. The clergy came to play the dominant role in the church, but lay leaders had a strong voice, and their participation was critical to its day-to-day operation. Many WIC directors were intimately familiar with the major religious issues and problems of the day because they held positions of ecclesiastical authority and worked with Protestants in other countries. As elders they supported the church in debates that also took place in their colonies and addressed WIC needs and theological questions on Reformed councils. As deacons they collected money from the company and cared for the widows and orphans of their own employees. In general, their positions and experience facilitated an endless stream of business as the church and WIC worked literally as one to administer religious matters in the Dutch Atlantic world.

## CHAPTER 3

### Calling and Controlling Company Clergy

In 1628 the directors of the WIC's *Maas* chamber told the Reformed consistory in Dordrecht that they were looking for a minister to serve the company in the West Indies. The consistory then wrote to Leiden University asking for a "capable student" who could plant "the Name and saving knowledge of God among the peoples who sit in the darkness of ignorance." A young man named Jacobus Edelwaert was interested, and he soon came to Dordrecht with written testimonials from the university's regents about his studies and virtuous conduct and, from the Leiden classis, about his recent clerical examination. The consistory introduced him to the directors, who liked him and agreed to hire him. He was surprised to learn, however, that he first had to pass Dordrecht's own exam. This he later did to everyone's satisfaction, including a number of directors who had been delegated by their chamber to observe and report. Afterward the consistory also invited the directors to attend his ordination, set for the next Sunday. When all the parishioners went home after the usual service, Edelwaert and the elders, deacons, ministers, and directors stayed for a discourse from Isaiah 65 on his call to labor among "heathens": "I am sought of them that asked not for me." Finally, he was ordained by the laying on of hands.<sup>1</sup>

Finding and calling ministers and other church officers to Dutch colonies was the activity that brought church and company together at home more than any other. It was also one of the more important. Though ecclesiastical personnel were relatively few, they

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Dordrecht consistory, 17 Dec 1628, AKD 4:80-81, SADOR. See also *AS Leiden*, 109.

were responsible for all public worship overseas. The WIC's rapid expansion, untimely deaths among the clergy, and their short, temporary contracts produced a constant search for replacements. Colonial governors were always writing to request more clergy and the directors were always on the hunt. Franciscus Plante, who served eight years as chaplain of Governor Maurits in Brazil, explained what the WIC should look for: Experience and education were helpful, but a good reputation and good life were essential. Otherwise, in those "far-flung lands, with a lack of constant and necessary supervision," unruly conduct might grow worse than it had been at home.<sup>2</sup>

The WIC sometimes fell short of this ideal. Like Edelwaert, straight from the university, many company clergy lacked experience. Others lacked his education. Most at least had good reputations, and the church and company worked hard to ensure that those who founded and administered the colonial churches were qualified to do so. This chapter explains how they accomplished that goal and when and why they occasionally failed. It explores the methods that they used to find ministers and other officers, ways of training and supporting them before departure, and the exams and other hurdles that they created to screen candidates for talent and orthodoxy, which was a major concern. It also looks at motivations for service, places of origin, former occupations, age, and other factors that furnish a general picture of WIC clergy—younger, less experienced, more dependent on lay ministers than the church at home. Still, because of the thorough vetting process, they were a fairly capable group, in the end. Exceptions were the result of weak appointments overseas and WIC chambers that were less careful in choosing their lay preachers. Some troublesome individuals simply slipped through the cracks from time to time. WIC directors also had to balance ecclesiastical needs with their main responsibility of making

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<sup>2</sup> Plante's report on the state of the churches in Brazil, 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:40, NA.



the company profitable, which inevitably led to tough choices regarding hiring and pay. Generally speaking, though, the directors were just as eager as the church to employ good clergy. From a purely financial perspective, ministers and *ziekentroosters* were a serious investment, and their happiness and cooperation were critical to the smooth operation of colonial affairs. Probably also moved by a desire to see the Reformed Church established throughout the world, as they often claimed, directors were actively involved in acquiring the best people for the job, attracting a diverse group from the Netherlands and Calvinist Europe. In that sense, “Calvinist” or “Reformed” are more fitting than “Dutch Reformed” as labels for the WIC’s clergy, who provide yet another example of the cosmopolitan life and the company’s place in the Protestant international.

#### *Recruitment, Preparation, Patronage*

More than 360 clergy served the West India Company between 1621 and 1674. Of those whose origins are known, about one third were foreigners, with approximately equal numbers of German and French-Walloon clergy and slightly fewer English. Some of them were Dutchmen living in foreign, expatriate communities. Seven or eight were from Flanders in the Spanish Netherlands, and a few *ziekentroosters* and schoolmasters were indigenous Brazilians. The remaining WIC clergy came from Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, with only a handful from other Dutch provinces and territories.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for the full list of WIC ministers and lay preachers. Taking into account missing and other problematic records, the total number of ecclesiastical personnel was probably upwards of 400. The most important sources for names and other information include the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, ACA, SAA; minutes of the Walcheren classis, ACW, ZA; minutes of the company’s various governing bodies, NA; and *AS Leiden, AS Utrecht, AS Groningen, AS Franeker*. The four indigenous Brazilians were João de Gonsalves, Alvaro Jaco, Bento de Costa, and Belchior de Francisco.

Whenever WIC chambers needed ecclesiastical personnel they notified their local Reformed consistory or classis—though their need was common enough that there were never really lapses in recruitment. It was one long, ongoing search, utilizing many modes of communication, including announcements from the pulpit at church, formal requests in classes and synods, letter-writing, and simple word of mouth. The church in Amsterdam began using the pulpit to find Comforters of the Sick and other lay officers for Asia (and later Africa) as early as 1606, before the WIC was founded. The consistory kept an eye on the harbor, and when the Indies ships were getting ready to depart, ministers in weekly services announced to the congregation that personnel would soon be needed; those who were interested should make it known and begin to prepare. Similarly, delegates from churches with VOC and WIC chambers made regular announcements in their classes and synods about clerical needs abroad. Those who wanted to go should write or come to the cities with openings. Indies deputies corresponded with candidates, often responding to a direct inquiry, sometimes following up on mere rumors of interest. In those cases it was not unusual to meet with rejection. In 1624 someone named Reverend Bosschart wrote to the Walcheren deputies to give all the reasons that he could not possibly serve the WIC as they had hoped. His talents were not great, he was old, his congregation would not want him to leave, and so on. Soon afterward they heard from Albrecht Horstinks, a potential *ziekentrooster*, who also explained that he could not go. The journey was only about six months, and he was concerned that his current job would no longer be available when he returned. Besides, he said, there were more applicants than opportunities to sail.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For “1606” and the pulpit, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 16 Nov 1606, 10 Nov 1609, 22 Sep 1616, AKA 3:153, 222, and 4:179, SAA. For the rest, see Cornelis Bosschart to Jacobus Burs, 12 Oct 1624, ACW 73, ZA; Albrecht Horstinks to the West Indies committee, 27 Jan 1625, ACW 73; minutes of the deputies, 23 Jan 1640, ACA 157:25, SAA.

Horstinks was right. As word spread, applicants began to line up, often not caring exactly where they went. They simply wanted to travel abroad. The XIX learned about interested men and gave their names to local WIC chambers for follow-up. A consistory received a letter about a wayward child: Would a stint as *ziekentrooster* in the West Indies set him straight? Ministers from distant towns and cities traveled to Amsterdam to introduce congregants who hoped to go to the colonies. More often, those who wished to be considered wrote letters and showed up alone at the regular meetings of the consistory or classis. When they made specific location requests, Asia was the preferred destination. In the Atlantic world they asked to go to Brazil, sometimes also to Guinea, and increasingly after 1650, New Netherland. Usually, though, they appeared in meetings and said that they hoped to work for the East or West India Company in some capacity, and the Indies committee then tried to decide who was best-qualified among them, only later handing out individual assignments. Bastiaen Jansz Krol, who went to New Netherland as *ziekentrooster* in 1624, was first assigned to the fleet that captured Bahia the year before. But a last-minute illness prevented his departure and he accepted the next opportunity to come along. Thus one of the better-known figures from early New Netherland/New York only ended up in that colony because of a bug.<sup>5</sup>

WIC recruitment also benefitted from the many religious divisions and conflicts of seventeenth-century Europe, including tensions between Huguenots and Catholics in France, the English Civil War, and the Thirty Years War in Germany. To provide a better picture of WIC clergy and their path to employment in Africa and America, I will

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<sup>5</sup> See the XIX to the Amsterdam chamber, 13 Aug 1629, OWIC 8:6-7, NA. For the “wayward child,” see Festus Hommius (Leiden) to the Amsterdam consistory, 8 May 1634, AKA 243:38, SAA. For an example of a traveling minister, see the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 28 June 1635, OWIC 14:44. For Krol, see the copy book of the Amsterdam classis, 7 Dec 1623 and 25 Jan 1624, ACA 19, SAA. For the rest, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, classis, and deputies, AKA 3-7, ACA 3-7, 157-158, and 163-165.

consider each nationality or language group in turn, beginning with German clergy. They often worked in Dutch towns anyway because of dynastic, educational, and commercial attachments between the Netherlands and its neighbor. Linguistic differences were much less pronounced then, making it easy to learn Dutch if one knew German, especially Low German, spoken in the eastern Netherlands and the northern regions of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>6</sup> Spanning more than half the WIC's existence, the Thirty Years War increased the flow of Germans to the Netherlands and the number of unemployed Calvinist clergy. They came to the company especially after Frederick V, an exiled German prince, made a personal appeal on their behalf (1628). He first turned to the South Holland synod, which agreed to employ two "driven brothers" and encouraged other churches to do the same. The synod also asked the government to approve a provincial collection, and it visited the East and West India Companies to solicit their support. Everyone was asked to show "generosity" to these "sad persons."<sup>7</sup>

Some WIC directors were already involved in alms-raising campaigns because of their membership on Reformed consistories. Now their ecclesiastical and secular duties merged: Over the years they assisted and employed many refugee ministers. Hermanus Wisman was their first German, hired for Brazil in 1623. The first person they supported before his actual term of service was Wilhelmus Layrelius, born in Hanau, Germany, sent to Fort Nassau on the Gold Coast in 1628. Because he was a "foreigner" with no means of his own, the WIC put him on half wages until his departure. As clergy trickled in from Frederick's conquered lands in the Palatinate, the directors recognized an opportunity.

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<sup>6</sup> F. van Lieburg, *Profeten en hun vaderland: De geografische herkomst van de gereformeerde predikanten in Nederland van 1572 tot 1816* (Zoetermeer, 1996). On Germany, see Chap. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the South Holland synod, 1626-1628, ACD 81:269-270; 82:26-27, 82-86, 131-132, NA. See also the Kessler discussion, below, on how these events played out in the North Holland synod.

The Zeeland chamber resolved to grant three of them a regular income in exchange for a commitment to serve the company “in time,” writing to the XIX to ask what they thought of the plan. The XIX likely gave their blessing, for Zeeland was soon funding the training of Jodocus à Stetten and two others—possibly Marcus Meynhart and Johannes Mijlijsjer. Meynhart’s origins are unclear, but he was hired the same day that the directors decided to utilize German clergy. Reverend Mijlijsjer was a refugee from the Palatinate who was sent to Tobago two years later.<sup>8</sup>

Despite similarities in the German and Dutch languages, ministers sometimes needed practice before they were fit for service, and the company’s support allowed them that time. Stetten came from Rodenbach in western Germany, obtaining assistance from consistories in Leiden and The Hague before finding the WIC. Upon first hearing him preach, the Zeeland directors decided that his Dutch was not strong enough. He needed to train for another four to six weeks, they thought.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, when Reynhardus Kebelius from Hesse came to the Amsterdam classis and said that he wanted to work in the East or West Indies, the classis decided that his German was too “high” (as opposed to *nederduits* or Low German). They were pleased with him, nevertheless, and the WIC’s Amsterdam directors agreed to give him *f* 150 to study for six months at the university in Utrecht. He returned to Amsterdam every six weeks to demonstrate his progress. When his time had expired he was not quite ready, so they gave him another half-year’s salary.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1629-1630, ACD 82:159-160, 187-188, NA. For Wisman, see *AS Franeker*, 65; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 5 Oct, 2 and 7 Nov, 4 Dec 1623, AKA 5:140, 150-151, 156, SAA. For Layrelius, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 24 July 1628, OWIC 20:85, NA. For the chamber’s decision about German clergy, see 16 and 20 Nov 1628, OWIC 20:97-98. For Stetten, see below. For Meynhart, see 16 Nov 1628, as well as 8 Jan 1629, OWIC 20:103. For Mijlijsjer, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 16 May 1630 and 6 May 1632, ACW 2:88, 120, ZA. Layrelius may have died because Meynhart was hired for West Africa too. It was unusual to have two ministers there.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Leiden consistory, 26 Jan 1629, AKL 3, RAL; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 5 and 12 Mar, 19 and 23 Apr 1629, 19 Dec 1630, 9 Jan 1631, 4 and 7 Oct 1632, OWIC 20:110-111, 119-120; 21:51, 53, 126-127, NA. For Stetten’s service in Brazil, see Chap. 6. See him also in Appendix A.

Kebelius was ultimately a let-down, the company forced to release him from his commitment because of poor health. Its investment in Stetten was a better one, however. The directors finally agreed that he was ready, and from 1629 to 1632 he worked in the Atlantic aboard three different ships. He was also sent to Brazil and served there until the Portuguese captured him fifteen years later.<sup>10</sup>

The company sometimes supported German students even longer than it took to learn Dutch. Conrad Cleve of Hesse arrived in the Netherlands with the same group of refugees in the 1620s, first having gone to Switzerland. He received aid from consistories in Dordrecht and Hoorn and was enrolled at Leiden University. Eighteen months later he traveled to Middelburg to see the Zeeland directors and give them his thesis, dedicated to them. They noted that he had been studying at their cost and paid him *f*50 for his current needs, plus *f*25 “as honor for the thesis.” He then returned to Leiden for another eighteen months, finally sailing for the Amsterdam chamber, which wanted him particularly for his languages (German, Dutch, and French). But in the end he, too, was a bad investment. Less than ten months after he departed for Brazil the company received word that he was dead, probably from disease.<sup>11</sup>

Two other German ministers are notable for their connections to the Thirty Years War and their service to the company: Fredricus Kessler and Johannes Polhemus. Kessler came to Amsterdam in 1626 from Stolberg in the Duchy of Jülich as one of four

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<sup>10</sup> For Stetten’s fate, see *ibid.* For Kebelius, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 23 and 30 June, 4 Aug 1642, 6 July 1643, ACA 4:259, 263, 268, 291, SAA; minutes of the deputies, 1 July, 19 Aug, and 16 Oct 1642, 2 Feb 1643, ACA 157:77, 81, 94-95, 102. (His illness is mentioned on 6 July 1643, ACA 4:291.)

<sup>11</sup> *AS Leiden*, 219; minutes of the Dordrecht consistory, 2 Aug 1629, 21 Nov 1630, AKD 4:92, 112, SADOR; minutes of the Hoorn consistory, 6 Sep 1629, AKH 584, WFA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 19 Dec 1630 (thesis) and 3 Mar 1631, OWIC 21:51, 58, NA; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 3 June and 9 Sep 1632, AKA 6:322, 344, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 7 and 14 June 1632, ACA 4:22; copy book of the Amsterdam classis, 9 Sep 1632, ACA 19 (French/languages). For Rev. Cleve’s death, see the XIX to their directors in Brazil, 8 July 1633, OWIC 8:141-142, NA.

candidates who hoped to lead the city's growing German congregation. He finally won the position and was actively involved in future efforts to assist German Calvinists. In 1627 he brought a visiting minister from his former duchy to the North Holland synod and together they explained Jülich's desolation, the "tyranny" of the enemy, and the woes of Reformed believers. The next year, as money for the Palatinate and German refugees were pouring in—more than *f*23,000—the synod put Amsterdam in charge of distribution. As a consistory member and *the* German minister in the city, Kessler must have been more involved than others. His first known contact with the company was in February 1635, when he introduced Fredricus Vittaeus as a candidate for the ministry on Curaçao. The directors seem to have liked them both, for Vittaeus went to Curaçao (later Brazil, then Luanda), and the following year they asked Kessler to sail to Brazil. Having considered the matter "in the fear of the Lord and with fiery prayers to God," he decided to accept, eventually working seven years.<sup>12</sup>

Polhemus sailed the same year as Kessler and was the longest-serving minister in the WIC's history: eighteen years in Brazil, twenty-two in New Netherland (about half of those under the English in New York). He was born in a small town called Bickenbach in the Palatinate and studied at Heidelberg University. After his ordination he returned to his native province and worked there until the war forced him out, probably in the 1620s like the others. He was then minister at Gieten and Meppel (in the eastern Netherlands) for ten years, laboring among fellow exiles and serving as rector of a Latin school. There he also made the acquaintance of Amsterdam merchants and entrepreneurs who harvested peat in

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<sup>12</sup> The minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 24 Feb, 19 and 26 Mar, 7 and 14 July, 27 Aug, 24 Sep 1626, AKA 5:327, 334-335, 354-355, 363, 366; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 27 July 1626 and 22 Sep 1636 ("fiery prayers"), ACA 3:74 and 4:82; minutes of the North Holland synod, 10 Aug 1627 and 15 Aug 1628, ASNH 3, NHA; minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 1 Feb 1635 (Vittaeus), 2 Sep 1636, 14:9, 182, NA.

the region. In 1634 he returned home but, as he later wrote, war-related “persecutions” forced him away again. Perhaps because of his former connections, he traveled this time to Amsterdam, where the WIC immediately snatched him up for Brazil. Originally hired on a four-year contract, he fulfilled that and more.<sup>13</sup>

Stetten, Cleve, Kessler, Polhemus, and the other clergy whose backgrounds were given here were not the only Germans to serve the WIC. At least four other ministers and a number of German lay preachers worked in the seventeenth-century Dutch Atlantic.<sup>14</sup> Most were born in Germany and ended up in the Netherlands because of the war. Others were born in the Netherlands to refugees, like Jonas Aertss, a minister at Curaçao in the 1640s. Conversely, some clergy came from Germany but might have had Dutch ties: The *ziekentrooster* Pieter Douwensz was from Emden. Given the city’s role as a haven during the Revolt a generation before, he was likely from the Dutch community there.<sup>15</sup>

French- and English-speaking clergy often came to the company with similar stories of conflict and exile, if not in their own lives than in the lives of their parents and grandparents. Yet they differed from their German colleagues in at least one respect: The company recruited them more directly. WIC sailors, soldiers, and other employees were a diverse, polyglot group from all over Europe. To meet their religious needs, the directors had to find clergy who preached in their languages. The foreign Reformed congregations

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<sup>13</sup> *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 6, 232-233. For “persecutions,” see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 3 Dec 1635, ACA 4:66, SAA.

<sup>14</sup> Other Germans include Henricus Hermannius, born in Bremen and hired by the Groningen chamber for Brazil; Wilhelmus Pistorius from Wassenberg in Jülich, sent by the *Maas* chamber to Brazil; Casperus Durerus from Magdeburg, a Curaçao *ziekentrooster*, possibly a survivor of a 1631 massacre that took place in Magdeburg; Johannes Engman of Hornburg, a WIC and VOC *ziekentrooster*; and Hans Melchior Reyer, a soldier from Baesweiler who was appointed *ziekentrooster* after he arrived in Brazil. See *Biografisch Woordenboek*, vol. 3, 745-746 (Hermannus); *AS Leiden*, 161 (Pistorius). See also his letter of 31 Mar 1632, AKA 243:20, SAA: His father was in Jülich. For the rest, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 4 Apr, 2 May 1639, ACA 4:145, 149, SAA (Durerus); minutes of the deputies, 12 Oct 1637, ACA 157:8 (Engman); minutes of the Brazil council, 8 June 1637, OWIC 68, NA (Reyer).

<sup>15</sup> For Aertss, see *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 5, 14. For Douwensz, see the minutes of the deputies, 7 Sep 1637, ACA 157:9 and Not. Arch. 581A:334, SAA.



that already existed in the Netherlands facilitated that task. Most cities of any significance had English, Scots, and Walloon (French-speaking) churches, and the directors sometimes served on their consistories and had business ties with their members. Tasked with finding WIC clergy, ministers on church Indies committees had similar ties, for they were all from the same public church, despite linguistic differences.<sup>16</sup> Probably the best-known “French” minister who worked for the WIC was actually Spanish, though he was recruited because he spoke both languages. Born in Valencia, Spain, Vincent Soler was an Augustinian monk before converting to Protestantism and moving to France, where he served the Huguenots as pastor in Saint-Lô and Condé-Sur-Noireau. The directors heard about Soler through André Rivet, a theologian and professor at Leiden University and a former Huguenot minister. When Soler came to the Amsterdam classis in 1636, Director Matthys van Ceullen introduced him and explained that the WIC had had their eye on him “for a number of years.” Unfortunately he did not have testimonials and other usual credentials because his ship was stopped by the enemy and, to avoid complications, he had tossed them overboard. The classis decided to let this slide, and the company hired him to preach in French and Spanish in Brazil.<sup>17</sup>

Other French speakers who worked in Brazil were Gilbertus de Vaux, who also knew Portuguese, a *ziekentrooster*-turned-minister named Daniel Neveux, and at least eight other lay clergy (probably more). Some were Walloons, others French: Elias Fouwe was from Cambrai and Marcus de Four from Calais, both near the French-Flemish border. They were recruited specially because of their origins, a few of them when they

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<sup>16</sup> See Chap. 1 for foreign churches in the Netherlands. For the directors, see Chap. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 5, 479-480; minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 29 Nov 1635, OWIC 14:97, NA; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 3 Jan 1636, AKA 7:133-134, SAA; and for Soler’s credentials and “number of years,” see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 7 Jan 1636, ACA 4:68, SAA.

were already in Brazil working in a different capacity. Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking personnel also included Reverend Dionisius Biscaretto, born in Castile, the lay preacher Hendrick Arentssen, and the soldier Jan Perkins, who was likely Dutch. The company in Brazil appointed him schoolmaster to the “negros” because he had studied in Utrecht and could speak Portuguese (like most of the colony’s inhabitants and slaves). Arentssen was also Dutch, but he had lived five years in Seville and was hired for his Spanish.<sup>18</sup>

The greatest number of Walloon-French clergy were sent by the Zeeland chamber to the Caribbean and Wild Coast to minister to Walloon and Dutch migrants in Zeeland’s various colonies there, including the island St. Martin, divided down the middle and shared by France, on the one side, and the WIC on the other. Typical of this group were Carolus de Rochefort and Daniel Gravius. De Rochefort was born in France, Gravius in the Netherlands to a French schoolmaster. He traveled in Walloon circles in Zeeland and thus came in contact with the Lampsins brothers: merchants and WIC directors who were very active in the Caribbean. They snatched him up soon after his graduation from Leiden University and sent him to the small island of St. Eustatius. Most likely they met De Rochefort through Huguenot commercial connections in La Rochelle, France. He had been a Carmelite monk before his conversion, afterward serving as Reformed minister on a number of Dutch islands, including a brief visit to Curaçao to perform baptisms when it had been without a minister for a time. He returned to work in La Rochelle, eventually in Vlissingen and Rotterdam. Other French-speaking, Caribbean ministers included Jean de

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<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 12 Feb 1641, 13 Mar 1642, OWIC 69, NA (De Vaux); and the XIX to the Brazil consistory, 16 Dec 1634, OWIC 8:153-154 (Neveux). The eight French lay clergy are Fouwe, De Four, Pieter Hoestert, Jean le Hono, Alexander Lerons, Theophilus Lunes, Daniel Hesta Belhombre, and Jan Frison. See Appendix A and the minutes of the Brazil council, 4 Oct 1635, OWIC 68 (Fouwe); minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 21 Jan 1636, OWIC 22:131 (De Four). See Biscaretto in Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*. See the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 26 Sep 1624, AKA 5:224, SAA (Arentssen); and the minutes of the Brazil council, 15 Feb 1645, OWIC 70 (Perkins and “negros”). See also the *attestatie* of Sadrach Hautain, 10 Jan 1625, ACW 73, ZA. There were likely other French and Iberian clergy in Brazil.

Camps, Francois Chaillou, Servatius Clavius, Carolus de la Laine, and Johannes de Mey. In most cases the company worked through the church's Walloon synod to find them. De Mey was supposed to go to Asia, but when his ship touched in England he learned that someone had been spreading false rumors about him at home and he returned to defend his name. Much like Bastiaen Jansz Krol, who was supposed to sail to Brazil but ended up in New Netherland, De Mey went instead to St. Eustatius.<sup>19</sup>

The demand for English-speaking clergy in Dutch colonies was almost as great as the demand for French because of the many Englishmen (and probably Scots) among the WIC's sailors and soldiers. The very first company minister, Enoch Sterthenius, was entered as "Anglus"—Englishman—when he studied at Leiden University, maybe raised in one of the Dutch communities in London or elsewhere in England. He worked twenty years in Zeeland and was then hired for Brazil, where he preached in Dutch, English, and French. In his case the directors simply showed up in the Walcheren classis and asked for volunteers. Other English-speaking clergy included Petrus Gribius, who served the English church in Middelburg before Brazil; Thomas Kemp, a former schoolmaster who also spoke Portuguese; and Johannes Apricius, who administered the Anglican service on St. Kitts for a time after leaving Brazil. (He claimed later in the Netherlands that he did not participate in certain objectionable Anglican practices.) Reverend Cornelis Willemsz van der Poel, originally just a *ziekentrooster*, was hired to teach in Dutch and English as well. Other English-speaking lay clergy were Willem Appel, Robert Bradshaw, Samson

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<sup>19</sup> For Rochefort, see *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 5, 431-433; and for his visit to Curaçao, see J. Walreven to the Amsterdam classis, ACA 224:8-10, SAA; minutes of the deputies, ACA 157:249-250. See also his French *attestatie* in ACA 224:6. For Gravius, see *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 5, 218-219. Most of the other individuals listed here can be found in *Livre Synodal* and this dissertation's Appendix A. See De Mey in *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 5, 367-369, and for his return to Zeeland, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, Nov 1642 to Jan 1643, ACW 3, ZA. See 5 March 1643, ACW 3, for De Mey's call to St. Eustatius.

Calvert, Jan Lodewycks, Richard Heins, Thomas Higby, Dirck Janss Watsen, and Arthur Leeck, a member of the English church in Amsterdam before the WIC. Some names, like Bradshaw, Calvert, and Higby, were definitely English. Others might have been changed to conform to Dutch spelling, which was not uncommon, or their owners just had English family and/or ties to the expatriate communities on both sides of the Channel.<sup>20</sup>

Like the Thirty Years War, religious division in seventeenth-century England pushed some people to the WIC. Consider Samuel Bachiler's career: He came to the Netherlands first as the pastor of an English regiment during the former conflict. He also served English congregations in the Dutch towns of Heusden and Gorinchem and filled in now and then for a Scottish minister in Dordrecht. Bachiler was a staunch Puritan and outspoken enemy of Anglican rites, and he supported a campaign to change the English-speaking service in Delft from Anglican to Congregationalist. When Archbishop Laud and his network of spies began putting pressure on English Puritans in the Netherlands in the 1630s, Bachiler was one of their targets. He was called to England in 1633 to answer to a judge for "crimes" against his country's church, but recognizing that a sudden disappearance might be better for his health, he answered the WIC's call for clergy with his particular language skills. In August 1633 someone in the Zeeland chamber reported that an English minister had presented himself for Brazil, and the directors began looking into his "doctrine and life." Bachiler was hired and served the company for about twelve

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<sup>20</sup> For Sterthenius, see *AS Leiden*, 46; minutes of the Walcheren classis, 18 and 22 Dec 1623, ACW 2:10, ZA; the Walcheren classis to Sterthenius, 9 Nov 1624, ACW 73. For Gribius, see *AS Franeker*, 74; *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 1, 371, 373; minutes of the Middelburg English consistory, Feb to Aug 1642, May to Sep 1646, AEKM 1:91-97, 134-138, ZA. For Kemp, see the minutes of the Brazil classis, 21 Nov 1640, OWIC 55:116, NA. For Apricius, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 25 June 1657, 9 March 1665, ACA 6:59, 366, SAA; Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*. For Leeck, see the minutes of the deputies, 25 Feb and 18 Mar 1642, 157:66, 69. For van der Poel, see the copy book of the Amsterdam classis, 1633, ACA 19:34, SAA. Schalkwijk lists van der Poel the *ziekentrooster* and van der Poel the minister as separate people. I believe they are the same: Both have the middle name "Willemsz" and the timing works perfectly.

years, preaching in English and Dutch; then he returned to the Netherlands and, after his fellow Puritans came to power, finally to England.<sup>21</sup>

The WIC needed English clergy in New Netherland not just for English employees but because of ever-expanding Puritan neighbors who had a habit of founding settlements on Long Island and elsewhere within the boundaries of the Dutch colony. They usually obtained permission to select their own ministers, but newcomers were not confined to one location, and that meant an increased number of Englishmen in New Netherland in general. Looking for someone to preach in their language, the WIC found Samuel Drisius, also a refugee of sorts. He was born to Dutch parents but was minister of an English congregation (in England) for many years. Because of “perturbances” there during the Civil War, he returned to Holland and studied medicine in Leiden. When the company informed the Amsterdam classis of its English-language need in 1652, at least one classis member had already heard of Drisius, and the Indies committee was asked to approach him. Two weeks later he appeared in Amsterdam to say that he was indeed interested in going to New Netherland. He brought testimonials about his career from the local English church, and after demonstrating that he could preach in both languages, he was hired. Having arrived in America he learned that his English would be useful in more ways than one: The Dutch governor soon commissioned him as ambassador to Virginia to finalize a commercial treaty between the colonies.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 3, 28. For “doctrine and life,” see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 18 Aug 1633, OWIC 21:174, NA. Bachiler appears in Stetten’s “Jurnael der Kercken in Paraiba,” 12 Oct 1635, *verspreide stukken* 1408, NA. For the English military presence in Holland, see Charles Wilson, *Queen Elizabeth and the Revolt of the Netherlands* (London: MacMillan, 1970), Chaps. 4- 5. For Bachiler in Dordrecht, see Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 183. See also Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower*, Chaps. 2-4.

<sup>22</sup> The minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 12 Feb and 18 Mar 1652, ACA 5:235-236, SAA; minutes of the deputies, 26 Feb and 11 Mar 1652, ACA 157:291, 293; *ERSNY* 1:307. For Drisius’s Virginia commission, see *ERSNY* 1:319-320. See also his entry in *MRCA*, 314-315.

English needs in New Netherland could not be met by a single minister, and the WIC continued to ask the church for another preacher in that language. They found one in the person of Samuel Megapolensis, son of another company minister. He was raised on the Hudson after his father first traveled there in 1642. He must have learned at least some English in his youth, for when he was old enough he was sent to the newly-founded Harvard College in Massachusetts, where he studied for three years. When he traveled to the Netherlands to continue his education in Utrecht, his father informed the Amsterdam classis that his son “speaks the English well.” Five years later, after Samuel had finished his studies, he was hired to preach in both languages in New Netherland, sailing there just before the colony fell to the English in 1664. He remained for four years before returning to Holland to serve various churches, including the Scots church in Dordrecht.<sup>23</sup>

Clearly the WIC profited from the Republic’s role as crossroads in the Protestant international. It employed German, French, Walloon, and English clergy who were there either by choice or, in many cases, forced from their homelands in various political and religious conflicts. Foreigners at Dutch universities, French-Walloon churches stemming back to Spain’s occupation of the southern Netherlands, German Calvinists running from Catholic armies, English Puritans using the Netherlands to publish their propaganda and avoid angry authorities—all of these forged bonds between the Dutch and their Protestant neighbors and a pool from which the company could draw for personnel needs. Seeing or appreciating the foreign clergy helps one situate the WIC properly in a wider European community. The company was international not only because its directors had many ties outside the Netherlands or because its martial aims in Africa and America complemented

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<sup>23</sup> *ERSNY* 1:153; *MRCA*, 421-423; *AS Utrecht*, 51; *ERSNY* 1:434-436 (“speaks the English”); minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 21 Aug, 2 Oct 1662, 2 July 1663, *ACA* 6:276, 279, 308, *SAA*.

the work of German princes and others who opposed the Hapsburgs in Europe. The WIC expanded on Holland's place in the Protestant international; it was a crossroads in its own right, a kind of Netherlands-writ-small: a refuge for exiles, a second chance when their homes and work were destroyed, a way to participate overseas in the very conflicts that disrupted their lives in the first place.

Did the WIC assist future Dutch clergy in the same way it sometimes sponsored foreigners? To different degrees, yes. In the case of *ziekentroosters* and other lay clergy it sometimes paid salaries months in advance so they could spend time with local ministers learning the tricks of the trade. Ministers announced in church that they would train those who wished to sail with the East or West India Companies, and candidates then accompanied them on their customary visits to the sick, for example. They also instructed them in Reformed doctrine and psalm-singing.<sup>24</sup> For future ministers the WIC considered creating a seminary like the one that the VOC operated for twelve years. The Amsterdam consistory suggested it to the directors at one of their first meetings, but they said it was too early. The Walcheren classis and the Zeeland *hoofdparticipanten* also supported the idea, and the company was soon looking into the possibility. The XIX tasked a number of directors to examine the VOC's school and costs. In the meantime they helped clergy on a case-by-case basis, beginning with the German refugees and soon including others. For example, Anthony Godyn informed fellow directors in Zeeland in 1630 about Johannes Loosvelt, a schoolmaster in the local Latin school. He committed to the WIC in exchange for *f* 200 per year, which let him study theology at a higher level. In the same period the

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<sup>24</sup> See, for example, the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 16 Nov 1606, 10 Nov 1609, 21 and 28 Sep 1623, AKA 3:153, 222; 5:136, 138, SAA; minutes of the Walcheren classis, 13 Nov 1623, ACW 65:18-19, ZA; minutes of the Enkhuizen consistory, 12 Aug 1630, AKE 3:87-88, WFA; minutes of the deputies, 13 Aug 1640, ACA 157:38, SAA. For the early salaries see the 21 and 28 Sep entries in AKA.

company funded the Fleming Franciscus Plante's education in Groningen and the training of another, unnamed individual.<sup>25</sup>

The seminary never got off the ground partly because the company enjoyed little benefit even from these less costly efforts. Plante served for more than seven years, but Loosvelt proved a major disappointment—even more so, perhaps, than those mentioned above: Reverend Kebelius, whose illness ended his obligation to the WIC, and Reverend Cleve, who died soon after his departure. After paying Loosvelt *f* 200 per year for five years, the directors inquired to see if he would soon be ready. They learned that he did not want to go and that he had not even been preparing. He had simply been living off company charity, in a sense (which he then had to repay). After the Walcheren classis began campaigning again for a seminary in 1638, a director and elder from the Rotterdam consistory explained at the South Holland synod why the company was now reluctant to invest a great deal in education: The directors had learned from experience that when they “keep” or “raise” students for “the service of the church and visitation of the sick in the West Indies,” neither the WIC nor the church was helped much. “[W]hen great costs have already been spent on them,” he continued, “they are incapable or unwilling to go.” The VOC gave a similar explanation to the Amsterdam classis when the latter asked it to reopen its seminary a few years later. VOC directors claimed that they had enjoyed little

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<sup>25</sup> For the seminary, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 27 July, 24 Aug 1623, AKA 5:126, 129, SAA; minutes of the XIX, 3-17 Aug 1623, 10 and 16 Sep 1624, OWIC 1:16, 98, 111, NA; minutes of the East Indies committee, 13 Nov 1623, ACW 65:18-19, ZA; minutes of the Middelburg *hoofdparticipanten*, 25 Apr 1624, OWIC 34:18. For Loosvelt, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 8 Aug 1630, OWIC 21:38a. For Plante and the unnamed individual, see *AS Groningen*, 25 and the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 9 June 1636, OWIC 14:145.



“fruit” from their school. They did say, however, that they would subsidize educations on a one-on-one basis, like the WIC.<sup>26</sup>

The WIC’s educational troubles continued, though that failed to silence the critics who, for centuries, have used the seminary as proof that the large trading companies did not care sufficiently for ecclesiastical needs in their territories.<sup>27</sup> The WIC never opened a seminary because it had the VOC’s experience to reflect upon—and its own, to a lesser degree. Still, it continued its selective patronage. When the Amsterdam directors learned in 1639 about a promising young man named Bartholomeus Cole, who spoke (in addition to the classical languages) Italian, Spanish, and English, they agreed to pay him *f* 50 per month for nine months to study theology and practice oratory. They now required that someone guarantee their investment should he quit or lose interest, as others had before. His friends complied, and Cole was soon studying with Professor Voetius in Utrecht. Yet the company’s caution proved wise. Time and again he came to Amsterdam unprepared to preach or simply did not show up after making an appointment with the classis. It tried to work through his friends, reminding them that they would have to pay, but it was no use. A year after the WIC began supporting him, the classis resolved that he was not fit to be minister. When he insisted on going abroad, the directors agreed to use him in the only way they could, as master at a Latin school that they were planning for Recife.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For Loosvelt, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 9, 13, and 16 Aug 1635, OWIC 22:95, NA. For Walcheren, see its minutes, 25 Mar 1638, ACW 2:242, ZA; minutes of the Zeeland synod, 8 Apr 1638, HV 237:262, ZA. For the Rotterdam directors, see the minutes of the South Holland synod, 5-23 July 1639, ACD 83, Article 14, NA. For “fruit,” see the minutes of the deputies, 16 Oct 1642, ACA 157:95, SAA.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, J.A.B. Jongeneel, “The Missiology of Gisbertus Voetius,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 26 (1991): 50. See also the Introduction and Chap. 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>28</sup> The minutes of the deputies, 18 and 31 Oct, 11 and 13 Dec 1639, 2 and 23 Jan, 14 Feb, 23 Apr, 8 and 28 May, 16 July, 13 Aug 1640, 26 Feb, 8 Oct, 19 Nov 1641, 18 Mar 1642, ACA 157:13-67, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 7 Nov 1639, 2 July, 6 Aug, 10 Sep, 1 Oct 1640, 18 Nov 1641, ACA 4:187, 208-210, 243; extracts from the minutes, 25 Jan 1640, 8 Apr 1641, ACA 163:67-68, 83.

With mixed results, the company also supported the students Florentius Strerarius and Johannes Stuperus. The former had first obtained assistance from the VOC, but after a year the Amsterdam classis dismissed him as a “great drunk.” Two years later he turned up in Zeeland and was hired to work as minister in Africa. The WIC discovered the truth about him, though, and he had to remain in the Netherlands and pay the directors back for a large amount of money that they, too, had given him. Having been *ziekentrooster* in the West Indies before, Stuperus’s case was rather better. In 1641 the WIC began paying him small amounts to study in Groningen. The Amsterdam church (and probably others) also contributed. Three years later, when the Walcheren classis told the Zeeland chamber that his finances were “sober,” the directors agreed to increase their support to *f* 50 a year for two more years. He likely he sailed to the Caribbean in 1646.<sup>29</sup>

There is no evidence that the company continued this practice after 1650. By that point it was in great financial trouble and the country had a glut of unemployed clergy anyway. Among the early generations of Dutch ministers in the Netherlands there had been many former Catholic priests and uneducated teachers, and the church struggled to meet needs especially outside the bigger cities. Over time, however, universities began churning out young men for the ministry, and historians have identified post-1650 as the period in which there were finally enough. The typical student graduated and found a position as *proponent*—a kind of on-call, transitory, apprentice minister—in one of the Reformed classes, often remaining a long time before receiving his first permanent call.

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<sup>29</sup> For Strerarius, see the minutes of the deputies, May to July 1640, ACA 157:34-36, SAA; extracts from the minutes of the classis, 1 July 1641, ACA 163:85 (“great drunk”); minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 3 Dec 1643, 7 Jan, 11-18 Feb, 22 Aug to 12 Sep 1644, OWIC 25:135-136, 154, 162-164; 26:22-27, NA; minutes of the Walcheren classis, 7 Jan, 18 Feb, 1 Mar 1644, ACW 3:66-69, ZA. For Stuperus, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 29 July 1641, 7 Nov 1644, 12 Jan 1645, OWIC 24:120; 26:47, 59. For Amsterdam supporting him, see the income and expenditures book, 18 Dec 1642, AKA 149:59, SAA.

When the Amsterdam classis and others with Indies responsibilities needed ministers after mid-century, therefore, they looked first to their own *proponents*, which increased the number of young clergy in Africa and America. The effects of that phenomenon are explored in Chapter 6.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Quest for Quality and Orthodoxy*

Colonial clergy had to leap many hurdles that tested their character, abilities, and knowledge. When anyone showed up in the Amsterdam classis asking to work for one of the Indies companies, he was not permitted to the exams unless he carried written testimonials from ministers, elders, deacons, and others who had known him before. If he had them, he could proceed to an oral exam. Lay ministers like *ziekentroosters*, who were responsible not just for comforting the WIC's sick, but for prayers, singing, and sermons in the absence of ordained ministers, had to prove their knowledge of Reformed doctrine and a familiarity with the psalms. Ministers needed a more profound knowledge and they had to deliver a good sermon. How hard was it to please the classis?

Those who failed or had special difficulties provide the best evidence for what the church and the WIC were looking for in a candidate. For every three individuals who were approved by the Amsterdam classis or chamber for colonial service, there was more than one who tried and did not qualify. The most common reasons for rejection among lay clergy had to do with reading and singing. Before the classis tested one's theological knowledge, it first had him read aloud from the scriptures and sing, and many men never made it past that point. Karel van Hartsteen was an Amsterdam schoolmaster who wanted to go to the West Indies. He could read, of course, but he was a "very incapable" singer.

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<sup>30</sup> Lieburg, *Profeten*, Chap. 2.

The classis told him to practice, and between 1639 and 1645 he returned four times, each time rejected for his voice. After the fifth exam the classis suggested that he simply stick with his current occupation. Dirck Hendrix's voice was also "very bad" and "unpleasant" to hear, the classis said. He was an Amsterdam tailor who wanted to go East or West. At his second attempt the classis explained that he was simply unsuitable and discouraged him from coming again. We tried to destroy his hopes last time, the scribe recorded at his third appearance, and again they sent him away. Even though his minister presented him for service, Jan Schoon from Alkmaar was told that his singing was "naturally deficient." Again and again the classis turned men away because they could not sing, could not read well enough, or because their voices were too weak to carry to large crowds.<sup>31</sup>

Potential ministers were also rejected for weak voices and because they could not preach adequately. Jan Pietersz, an elder from Sunderdorp, once expressed interest in being advanced to the ministry on Curaçao. According to a reference, he was a pious man with no hidden, ulterior motive, no financial reason to seek the post. His first sermon was shoddy, however. The classis told him to practice and gave him a text from Matthew to prepare for the following month. Again they were displeased and said they would be in touch. When he failed to meet their expectations a third time, they asked if he was willing to be lay minister instead, which he was not: I have not sung very much, he explained. At least two other candidates were discarded for similar reasons. Johannes Frederici was the

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<sup>31</sup> For Hartsteen, see the minutes of the deputies, 5 Aug and 4 Oct 1639, 6 Aug 1641, 5 Apr and 30 Oct 1645, ACA 157, SAA. For Hendrix, see the same, 8 Oct 1641, 25 Feb and 19 Aug 1642. For Schoon, see the same, 13 Aug 1640. All examples are from those wanting to go West or who did not care: East or West.

rector of a school in IJsselstein and a *proponent*, Johannes Nicolai already a minister. But their sermons were not good, and the classis opted for stronger candidates.<sup>32</sup>

Only after satisfying the classis in these ways were men tested for their familiarity with Reformed doctrine, probably with questions from the catechism and other accepted works. They sometimes failed that portion of the exam, but not often. No one was eligible for colonial service unless he was a member of the church, and to become such he would have already made a profession of faith and demonstrated an understanding of the basics. Non-members sometimes tried to become *ziekentroosters*, but they were rejected out of hand. Others were rejected for age, disability, deficient Dutch, and unwilling spouses. In addition to testimonials, they had to bring the classis written permission to go abroad from their wives; or the latter appeared in the classis with them (which was rare). At least two men's plans with the company were scuttled because their wives would not give their consent—or the candidates changed their minds and used that as an excuse.<sup>33</sup>

The church also rejected men for troubled, controversial pasts. Examples include Carel de Groote, an Amsterdam schoolmaster with a penchant for drink and (probably not unconnected) a poorly-run school; Francoys Lamberts, a lace maker who cheated a customer and spent six weeks in jail; Jacob Lucasz, a weaver who could read and sing but was known for “immorality in word and deed,” according to his master; Johannes Oly, a *proponent* from Hoorn who was suspended by his classis for drinking too much, among other scandals; and Baerent Pieterss, an Amsterdam tailor with a surplus of problems. At

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<sup>32</sup> For Pietersz, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis and the minutes of the deputies, 3 Oct, 11 and 13 Dec 1639, 2 Jan, 19 Mar, 23 Apr 1640, 8 Oct 1641, ACA 4 and 157, SAA; see also Jacob Adriaensz to the Amsterdam classis, 12 Dec 1639, ACA 185:52. For Frederici, see the minutes of the classis, 3 Sep 1635, ACA 4:62. For Nicolai, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 27 Sep 1624, AKA 5:224, SAA.

<sup>33</sup> For spouses, see Hermannus Noldius in the minutes of the deputies, Jan 1648, ACA 157:193, SAA; and Casparus Staphorstius in the same minutes, 28 Nov 1639, ACA 157:20. He said his wife was pregnant.

his second appearance before the classis he admitted to being a thief, but denied adultery. The classis did not believe him and condemned him for a dissolute life. It sometimes also hired people, then let them go: Adolphus Empenius was a minister from Emden who was accepted for Luanda; but then the church discovered that during his visit to Amsterdam he stayed at a “famous brothel.” He too denied it, repeatedly refusing invitations to return to the city to defend himself.<sup>34</sup>

The church went to great lengths to stop people with controversial histories from leaving the country. Wilhelmus Grasmeer was minister in Graftdijk, Holland, stepson of Reverend Megapolensis in New Netherland. In the late 1640s Grasmeer quarreled seriously with his wife, who left him and accused him of using hard words against her. He was also accused of drunkenness. The Alkmaar classis tried to reconcile them, but she would not return home until he demonstrated a “proper heart,” even suggesting that he needed to go as minister to the East Indies until he learned to behave. When the classis came down on her side, condemning Grasmeer’s conduct before his own congregation and threatening him with suspension, the situation deteriorated. His consistory tried to defend him (he drinks no more than any other minister) and said that *she* was the source of discord, even violent now and then. The classis continued its investigation, informing Grasmeer that he was not allowed to preach in the mean time, finally scolding the entire

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<sup>34</sup> For De Groote, see the minutes of the deputies, 18 Mar 1642, ACA 157:69, SAA. For Lamberts, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 27 May 1627, AKA 6:26, SAA. For Lucasz, see the minutes of the deputies, 8, 10, and 29 Oct 1641. For Oly, see the same, 26 Feb and 11 Mar 1652, as well as the minutes of the classis, 18 Mar 1652, ACA 5. See him also in the minutes of the Hoorn consistory, 23 June, 7 July, and 27 Oct 1650, AKH 584, WFA. For Pieterss, see the minutes of the deputies, 25 Feb and 18 Mar 1642. For Empenius, see the minutes of the deputies and classis, 9 and 16 Mar, 29 June, 27 July, 10 and 31 Aug, 28 Sep 1648. See the 10 Aug entry for the famous brothel (*hoerenhuys*).

consistory. No matter: The classis learned shortly afterward that he had left Graftdijk to join his mother in New Netherland.<sup>35</sup>

Grasmeer's old classis, the Alkmaar classis, did not know that he had already left for America with testimonials from supporters in Holland when it wrote to the church in Amsterdam to warn that he might try to travel abroad. Not having obtained all the proper dismissals, his departure was a violation of clerical custom and duty—not to mention the unresolved problems with his wife. Amsterdam was concerned to learn that he had already sailed and immediately wrote to the New Netherland church: Grasmeer is under censure, he “abandoned” his congregation, he and his wife are still at odds, and he left without our permission. Do not let him officiate in any office, the classis instructed. It sent similar warnings from the WIC's directors (*patroons*). At the next gathering of the North Holland synod Alkmaar reported on the situation and the synod approved the steps taken against Grasmeer. But by then it was too late. He arrived in the colony before their missives, and on the basis of his testimonials alone the congregation in Rensselaerswyck accepted him as their minister.<sup>36</sup>

The church did not drop the matter, however. It began working even closer with Alkmaar to remove such a “scandalous” man from his new post, compiling his history and sending new letters to New Netherland, ordering Grasmeer home. Amsterdam wrote not just to the governor and consistory, but to the people of Rensselaerswyck, imploring them not to tolerate his presence any longer. Despite four of Grasmeer's supporters

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<sup>35</sup> The minutes of the Alkmaar classis, 27 Nov 1647 to 14 Dec 1650, ACALK 4, NHA. For “proper heart,” see 12 Oct 1649. For her suggestion about the Indies, see the next day. For the consistory's defense of him, see its letter to the Alkmaar classis, 23 Nov 1649, ACALK 20.

<sup>36</sup> The minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 4 Apr 1650, ACA 5:151, SAA; the Amsterdam classis to the New Netherland church, 4 Apr 1650, ACA 164:64-65 (*ERSNY* 1:272-273); minutes of the deputies, 11 Apr 1650, ACA 157:134; extracts from the minutes, 28 Nov 1650, ACA 164:93-94; and minutes of the North Holland synod, 16 Aug 1650, ASNH 4, NHA.

appearing to defend him at North Holland's next synod, the church maintained a united front. Finally, almost two years after his departure, he succumbed to pressure and returned to the Netherlands. After ten months of meetings, apologies, a reunion with his wife, and on the strength of new testimonials (the colonists appear to have liked him), he was able to clear his name. By that point, though, the Republic was at war with England in America, and fearing for his safety, he chose not to risk a third crossing.<sup>37</sup>

The Grasmeer affair, which was hardly unique, demonstrates the church's serious concern regarding the quality of WIC ministers. It also shows the lengths that the church would go to maintain its grip on colonial religion. Though Grasmeer had the support of his old consistory in the Netherlands, that was not enough. The division between him and his wife and classis—and his evading the usual channels of authority—were violations of such magnitude that Amsterdam could not ignore them, even though he had established himself in America and his new congregation was happy. The church would not tolerate those who flouted policies that were created to exclude men with his very past, no matter their talents and no matter the distance.<sup>38</sup>

The final reason that church or company sometimes rejected candidates was their lack of education, though that was not the case from the beginning. Just as there had been uneducated clergy in the first generation of the church at home, so it was in the VOC and

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<sup>37</sup> Extracts of the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 28 Nov 1650, ACA 164:93-94, SAA (“scandalous”); the minutes of the classis, 2 Jan 1651 and 12 Feb 1652, ACA 5:198, 235; the classis to Grasmeer, 20 Feb 1651, ACA 164:97-98 (*ERSNY* 1:288-289); the classis to the church and people of Rensselaerswyck, 20 Feb 1651, ACA 164:99-101 (*ERSNY* 1:289-293); the classis to the consistory at Manhattan, 20 Feb 1651, ACA 164:102-104 (*ERSNY* 1:293-295); minutes of the North Holland synod, 15 Aug 1651, 12 Aug 1652, ASNH 4, NHA; minutes of the Alkmaar classis, 21 Nov 1651 to 9 Jan 1652, 16 Apr 1652, ACALK 4, NHA; *ERSNY* 1:307; Grasmeer to the Enkhuizen classis, 28 July 1652, ACENK 2, WFA.

<sup>38</sup> For other examples see Reverend Zyperus in Chap. 6 and the church's investigations into Petrus Wachtendorp on the Wild Coast in Conginsvelt to the Amsterdam classis, 1661, ACA 213, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 1 May and 5 June 1662, 4 June 1663, 7 July 1664, 4 May 1665, ACA 6:265, 268, 301-302, 345, 371; minutes of the deputies, 2 May 1662, 25 June 1663, ACA 157:435 and 158:4-5. See also Reverend Doreslaer in Chap. 5, Reverend Kessler in Chap. 6, and the Conclusion.



WIC. Called *idioten* or “idiots,” which was derived from the Latin *idiotae*, meaning uneducated and ignorant, they were ordained reluctantly and usually only in cases of exceptional talent. One of the early *idiotae* was Dirck Pietersz Drijstrang, who worked in West Africa from 1620 to 1624. He had been an East Indies *ziekentrooster* and had strong testimonials from the Dutch commander in Japan, among others. After he explained that he wished to be minister, the Amsterdam consistory examined him and made him preach twice before granting its consent. Such hesitation was also apparent with the WIC’s next *idiotae*, former schoolmaster Valentius Artopaeus. He wanted to serve and the company also wanted him, and thus “no better way” presenting itself, the Middelstum classis (near Groningen) agreed to his ordination. Similarly, when Amsterdam ordained *ziekentrooster* Willem Derrixen to the ministry in April 1629, it did so “with this express condition: that he only serve in the fleet in the West Indies or Guinea and in those places” (meaning that he was not allowed to preach at home). He must have had some skills, however, because in the same period it refused to ordain Melchior Bouville, a two-time WIC *ziekentrooster* who spoke Latin and wanted to be minister, but could never pass the exams.<sup>39</sup>

A number of other *idiotae* served the WIC in coming years, sometimes appointed overseas because of a special need or death. But the church at home did not like colonial appointments, and they did not happen often, just as uneducated clergy became more rare in general as the years went on. When Antoni Claesz asked to travel to the East Indies in August 1638, Amsterdam delayed his case because he had not studied and the question of

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<sup>39</sup> For Drijstrang, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 16 Aug 1618, 25 Apr, 21 and 28 Nov, 2 Dec 1619, AKA 4:290, 335, 375-377, SAA. For Artopaeus, see the minutes of the Middelstum classis, 1 Nov 1624, ACM 1:21, GA. For Derrixen, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 15 Mar 1629, AKA 6:157, and the minutes of the classis, 2 and 9 Apr 1629, ACA 3:96-97. For Bouville, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 12 Oct 1623, 12 Nov, 10 and 17 Dec 1626, 5 July 1629, AKA 5:142, 380, 386; 6:195. Bouville may have gone East years later: see ACA 4:67 (3 Dec 1635).

*idiotae* in the Indies was going to be discussed at the upcoming synod, which determined that a university education was indeed essential; exceptions could only be made “in some great need.” Amsterdam agreed to conform itself to the decision but sent Claesz to Brazil anyway. (He died *en route*.) Months later it turned a candidate down, informing him that the VOC no longer accepted *idiotae*, and that occurred increasingly often. In March 1640 the church rejected someone for Curaçao, for example, because WIC directors did not want *idiotae* either. The classis accepted the uneducated Jonas Aertss for Curaçao shortly afterward, but he had been minister in Asia for years. The few *idiotae* who worked for the WIC after 1640 were appointed abroad or, like Aertss, they were already ministers. Their usefulness probably declined with the increasing availability of *proponents*.<sup>40</sup>

Johannes Backerus and Gelaude van Beverhout were two exceptions, and neither was employed lightly. Backerus was a young man from Barsingerhorn who wanted to be minister in the East Indies in 1640. But because he “has not studied,” the matter was “set aside.” He persisted, explaining that he had “exercised himself ... two years” in Christian doctrine, and the Amsterdam classis eventually agreed to hear him. He preached seven or eight times over the course of an entire year, the classis telling him in each case that he was improving but not quite ready. He also had to obtain the blessing of his own classis in Alkmaar by delivering a satisfactory sermon there. Finally, “the Assembly [in Amsterdam] was ... greatly pleased,” and having passed the theological exam, Backerus replaced Aertss on Curaçao. The other exception, van Beverhout, was examined in the

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<sup>40</sup> For Claesz, see the extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 2 Aug, 4 and 5 Oct 1638, ACA 163:43, 46, SAA; Maurits and council to the XIX, 10 Apr 1639, OWIC 54:79, NA. See also the minutes of the North Holland synod, 16 Aug 1638, ASNH 3, NHA and *ERSNY* 1:120 (“great need”); minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 28 Feb (VOC), 17 Oct 1639, 19 Mar 1640 (WIC), ACA 4:143, 171, 194. For Aertss, see the extracts from the classis, 1 May 1640, ACA 163:73-74. At the WIC’s request Meindert Hendricks was ordained overseas at about the same time. See Chap. 5. Another uneducated minister who was hired anyway—because he had many years of experience—was Gideon Schaats of New Netherland.

Walcheren classis, which also expressed its preference for “a learned individual.” Like Amsterdam, though, the classis was at least willing to hear his ability, and he proved it in two sermons over four months. A WIC director was present for his doctrinal exam, which he passed, and he then served in the Caribbean until his death thirteen years later. Aside from one long-established minister, neither Amsterdam nor Walcheren is known to have appointed other *idiotae* during the WIC’s final thirty-five years.<sup>41</sup> Of the ninety-seven company ministers whose early histories are known, twenty were *idiotae*, including about twelve former VOC/WIC *ziekentroosters* or schoolmasters. The other *idiotae* had already become ministers before they worked for the WIC.<sup>42</sup>

In short, about three-fourths of ordained clergy were highly educated and a large majority of colonial candidates had no problems of the kind outlined here. They could read, sing, preach, comfort the sick, and explain Reformed doctrines without difficulty. Some laymen did not pass the exams right away because they did not know the melodies of all the psalms, for example, or because (related to that) they had not been members of the church long enough and required additional practice and training in some critical skill. Jacob Steendam, a *ziekentrooster* in West Africa, almost did not go because he was “deformed in his feet”—and because he had made his confession of faith only eighteen months before. Such concerns were more common among potential lay preachers. Most ministers and even a majority of laymen breezed through the exams and were accepted without much headache. The former had years of experience or, in the case of students or

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<sup>41</sup> For Backerus, see the minutes of the deputies, 16 July, 15 Oct 1640, 26 Feb, 25 Mar, 3 Sep, 8 Oct, 19 Nov 1641, ACA 157:36, 41-45, 52, 58, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 6 May, 1 July, 2 Sep, 7 Oct, 18 Nov 1641, ACA 4; *ERSNY* 1:136-142 (quotations/translations are from here); and minutes of the Alkmaar classis, 1 Oct 1641, ACALK 3:23, NHA. For Beverhout, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 13 Jan and 29 Apr 1650, ACW 3:176, 180, ZA.

<sup>42</sup> For minister educations, see *AS Leiden*, *AS Utrecht*, *AS Franeker*, and *AS Groningen*.

*proponents*, they had recently undergone intensive preparation at a university. They were very familiar with these kinds of hurdles.<sup>43</sup>

After the church cleared candidates for service the company sometimes rejected them for old age, disability, excessive demands, poor Dutch, and once probably because the minister, Jonas Michaelius, had fought a lot with the governor in New Netherland on a previous outing. (He now went to serve a Dutch church in England.) The directors also turned away one man for what was probably adultery.<sup>44</sup> They did not have to refuse many candidates because the church was already their filter; and WIC representatives were usually involved in the process long before a new minister's final presentation at the West Indies House. Some directors attended examinations because, as elders, they were members of the ecclesiastical bodies where those took place or because the WIC sent them as envoys to listen and learn the results. They insisted on attending the applicants' sermons, too. When a recent graduate of the university in Groningen and soon-to-be Brazil minister, Christianus Wachtelo, was introduced to the directors in 1630, they said that they first wanted to hear him preach. The Amsterdam consistory set up a special meeting for later that week, after the morning service, and a number of directors attended. "Many" also came to the sermon of Jan Michielsen in 1635 and were "often inclined" to do so, Indies deputies reported. In 1640 the directors listened to Reverends Offeringa and Ongena with "great pleasure." After they asked to hear an "example of [Reverend van der Burch's] gift of preaching," church deputies complained: The WIC ought to be content

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<sup>43</sup> For Steendam and his feet, see the minutes of the deputies, 25 June 1640 and into 1641, ACA 157, SAA.

<sup>44</sup> For age, see Mr. Hartong in the minutes of the deputies, 28 Nov and 11 Dec 1639, 2 Jan 1640, ACA 157, SAA. For disability, see the same minutes, 11 Dec 1639; minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 12 July 1635, OWIC 14:48, NA. For "demands," see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 27 Sep 1632, OWIC 21:124. For Michaelius, see *ERSNY* 1:116. For adultery, see Abraham Middelhovius in the same. See him also in the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 16 Nov 1637, 29 Mar, 7 June, and 5 July 1638, ACA 4.

with a simple recommendation. But the directors insisted, so the church arranged another meeting in the *Nieuwe Zijds Kapel*. A bad minister could cause serious problems in their forts and colonies, so the directors had to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears before they would hire someone.<sup>45</sup>

The directors also helped secure the release of clergy who already held positions at home, even traveling to do so. A minister from Middelburg and one WIC director only had to go about fifteen miles to the neighboring island of Zuid Beveland to ask the local classis to release Reverend Dapper from his calling at the village of Ellewoutsdijk; two directors went from Amsterdam to Rhenen, a ninety mile round trip, to speak on behalf of Reverend Leoninus, minister at Wijk bij Duurstede in Utrecht. When someone already had a calling and wanted to leave it, it was not just a matter of walking away. Permissions had to be obtained from his classis and from municipal or provincial rulers, depending on who paid his salary. He had to go before his classis with the directors and usually a spokesman from Amsterdam or Walcheren and explain where he was going, why he was needed, why he wanted to serve abroad, and so on. If the WIC's call was temporary and the minister hoped to return to his former post afterward, church and company had to find someone to fill his place, usually a *proponent*. When employees decided to extend their contracts, directors then went through the whole process again, writing and in some cases traveling to his old classis to explain the situation and ask permission for him to remain away from his church. One classis grew so tired of extensions and all the problems they

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<sup>45</sup> For Wachtelo, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 22 and 29 Aug 1630, AKA 6:265-267, SAA. For Michielsen, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 26 Nov 1635, OWIC 22:122, NA. For "inclined," see the minutes of the deputies, 14 Feb 1640, ACA 157:28, SAA. For "great pleasure" (or satisfaction), see the same minutes, 13 Aug 1640, ACA 157:38. For Van der Burch, see the same, 27 July 1643, ACA 157:111-112. Other examples are found in the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 16 May 1630, ACW 2:88; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 3 June 1632, AKA 6:322; minutes of the Groningen consistory, 15 May 1639, AKG 2:28, GA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 23 Nov 1643, 7 Nov 1644, OWIC 25:135, 26:47.

caused at home, it decided not to reserve any post in the future. These arrangements also sometimes included wives. The directors had many “tiresome conferences” with Machtelt Steengen, wife of Reverend Megapolensis, when they were trying to convince the two of them to remain in New Netherland. She had lived there for about five years and had only recently returned to Holland.<sup>46</sup>

Once an applicant had shown his testimonials, passed his exams, and secured his release, if needed, from his former classis and employers, he finally signed his name to the *formulierboek*, received his written instructions, and was ordained (or confirmed) to work overseas. The ordination sometimes took place in a special service attended by WIC directors and representatives from the classis and consistory. Each step was calculated to ensure that men were orthodox believers and followers of official Reformed practices. The *formulierboek* contained the confession, catechism, and canons of Dort, followed by a paragraph confirming, in short, that each of the aforementioned works was in complete harmony with God’s word, that he who signed would teach the doctrine faithfully, never saying or writing anything against it, and oppose all “errors,” especially those condemned

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<sup>46</sup> For Dapper, see the extract from the minutes of the Zuid Beveland classis, 18 Oct 1624, in ACW 73, ZA. For Leoninus, see the minutes of the Rhenenwijk classis, 17 Nov 1630, ACR 1:171, UA. See also the WIC directors working to secure the release of Rev. Sterthenius with his classis and the local magistrates and provincial States in the credentials and instructions of Sterthenius, 22 Dec 1623, ACW 73. See one director going to Utrecht for Rev. Baers, minutes of the Utrecht classis, 22 Sep 1629, ACU 1:285, UA. See the directors coming to the Walcheren classis to secure the release of a minister who would ultimately not be hired, minutes of the Walcheren classis, 16 Sep 1632, ACW 2:127. See all the work the directors had to do for Rev. Schagen, trying to extend his employment, even dealing with his debts, in the minutes of the Utrecht classis, 5 Dec 1633, 4 and 5 Mar 1634, 3 and 4 Nov 1634, 1 and 2 Mar 1636, 6 June 1637, ACU 2:112, 122, 186, 226. (The decision about not reserving posts any more is on 6 June 1637, ACU 2:226.) See also his letters to the Utrecht classis in ACU 257, and the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 19 Nov 1635, 4 Feb, 17 Mar, 3 Apr, 23 and 30 June, 20 Oct 1636, OWIC 14:93, 116, 124, 126, 150, 154, 195, NA. See this process as it involved Rev. Kessler in the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 22 Sep 1636, OWIC 14:132; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 22 Sep, 6 and 20 Oct 1636, ACA 4:82, 84-85, SAA; minutes of the consistory, 25 Sep, 9-16 and 23 Oct 1636, AKA 7:176, 180-184, SAA. For the same with Rev. van Laer, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 12, 19, and 29 Dec 1639, OWIC 23:204-208. For Rev. Doornick (and three WIC directors traveling on his behalf), see the minutes of the Tholen classis, 2 Aug 1640, ACT 3:33, ZA. For the same with Rev. Coninck, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 9 Aug 1640, OWIC 24:42-44. For “tiresome conferences,” see *ERSNY* 1:244-45, 248-249.

at Dordrecht (i.e., Arminian teachings). The signatories also promised that if they ever developed feelings contrary to the creed they would not teach or write them, but reveal them to their classis or synod for judgment. If a consistory, classis, or synod demanded at any time in the future to hear their thoughts on a particular article or point of Reformed doctrine, they would willingly divulge them immediately.<sup>47</sup>

Clearly, orthodoxy was a key concern especially for the church from the very start of the process. This is seen in testimonials, exams, the *formulierboek*, and the degree to which classes at home continued to monitor and control foreign ministers even after they sailed. Previous chapters have demonstrated that the church kept tabs on all colonial developments and vociferously opposed those it deemed contrary to Reformed custom or practice, like the division of Brazil's classis without church-wide input, the imposition of company officers in ecclesiastical meetings, rumors of public, non-Calvinist worship, and the changes and omissions in Doerslaer's Tupi catechism, which caused such an uproar in churches all over the Netherlands. Other colonial publications were also condemned and quashed. Before Doerslaer, Reverend Soler shipped his *Short Summary of the Christian Religion* to be published at home and used among American Indians, African slaves, and Portuguese. Amsterdam balked, saying that Soler, for the sake of "unity," should use the standard catechism and confession, although the latter had not even been translated in the languages that he needed. Like Doerslaer's book, Soler's was too short, omitting certain doctrines, and Amsterdam would not let it see the light of day. Likewise, when Reverend

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<sup>47</sup> See the Amsterdam *formulierboek*, including the signatures of many WIC ministers, in ACA 32, SAA. See Walcheren book in ACW 45, ZA—though Walcheren did not ask Indies ministers to sign until the 1650s. The North Holland synod thought that even the *ziekentroosters* should sign: *ERSNY* 1:79-81; and the church in Rotterdam did make them sign. See AKR 1a and 1d (both at the back of the book), GAR. Enkhuizen might have done the same, because it once asked Amsterdam about having all Indies ministers and lay clergy sign their names. See the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 23 Sep 1630, ACA 3:120, SAA.

Megapolensis sent a manuscript for a catechism of his own creation, the church refused to publish it: Though his “diligence” was admirable, it would not be wise to use anything for the youth of New Netherland that was not also used in schools at home. The accepted catechism had been tried and tested for years, and a divergence might lead to schism and confusion. In doctrine and liturgy, let us live in “unity,” the church repeated.<sup>48</sup>

Some evidence exists that the less important, less active company chambers were not as conscientious as Amsterdam and Zeeland in sending their (few) ecclesiastical personnel. Amsterdam once wrote to the Hoorn consistory to complain that its local WIC chamber had recently hired a *ziekentrooster* who taught false doctrine aboard the *Wapen van Hoorn*: young children did not need baptism and the correct day for the Sabbath was Saturday, he said. The fleet’s admiral had dismissed him, but Amsterdam asked Hoorn to visit the local directors and instruct them not to send anyone who wasn’t examined and cleared in the usual way. A few years later the *ziekentrooster* Cornelis Jacobsen, sent via Amsterdam, complained about colleagues hired in Groningen and Delft. He wrote that they did not know which consistory or classis had called them or even whether they were Calvinist, Arminian, or Anabaptist. Criticism of *ziekentroosters* was common especially in the 1620s and 1630s, during the years of the company’s major fleets, which required more personnel.<sup>49</sup> But again, the lesser WIC chambers did not hire many clergy and they

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<sup>48</sup> For Soler, see the extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 8 June (“unity”), 6 July, 4 Aug 1637, ACA 163:28, 30-33, SAA. For Megapolensis, see the minutes of the deputies, 18 Apr, 13 June (“unity” #2) 1656, ACA 157:353, 357; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 1 May 1656, ACA 6:13.

<sup>49</sup> For Hoorn, see the minutes of its consistory, 3 May 1629, AKH 584, WFA. For Jacobsen, see his letter to the Amsterdam consistory, 28 Jan 1634, AKA 243:25, SAA: “Jacoby Hermanus” = Jacob Harmensz, the birth name of Jacobus Arminius. Other complaints about *ziekentroosters* are found in Pistorius to the XIX, 4 Nov 1631, OWIC 49:139c, NA; the Brazil council to the XIX, 6 Nov 1631, OWIC 40:135 (probably referring to the same personnel); Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 9 Aug 1635, OWIC 50:124; and the Amsterdam classis to the Brazil classis, 25 Jan 1640, ACA 163:67-68. On fewer *ziekentroosters* being sent after about 1640 because of ships/fleets, see the Amsterdam classis to the Brazil classis, 10 Dec 1641, ACA 163:96-99: The WIC was beginning to hire ships from others and not send as many personnel aboard them.



usually set things straight eventually. The Dutch Reformed Church was fairly uniform in doctrine and practice; because it had no centralized power it just took time after the WIC was founded for each part to get on the same page. And some complaints had little to do with learning or skill. Rather, people in secluded forts and other areas condemned laymen who assumed duties like baptism in the absence of an ordained minister.<sup>50</sup>

Ultimately, company clergy were a competent bunch. The number of truly bad clergy—meaning those who flouted Calvinist morality or just could not do the job—were relatively few: about 25 of the 360 known ministers and laymen probably belong in that category. Examples include the *ziekentrooster* Christoffel Cornelisz, who bore an illegitimate child with his slave in Angola, sold them both, then established a tavern, and Gilbertus de Vaux, who fought with other ministers and company officers everywhere he went. The governor of Brazil said that his conduct ranged from “bad to worse,” and he speculated that De Vaux was insane. Clergy like him simply slipped through the cracks of an otherwise careful vetting process, having shown no signs that they could be trouble. A few were also sent by the WIC without input from the church or they were appointed abroad. Some who were charged with corruption and other transgressions were actually fine ministers in terms of their abilities and knowledge; they just made political enemies by involving themselves in colonial controversies.<sup>51</sup>

Were Indies ministers somehow “inferior” to those at home? That appears to have been a common belief at the time. Remember that Grasmeer’s wife thought that a period in the East might set him straight, not unlike the man who quarreled with Petrus Doornick

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<sup>50</sup> For a story similar to Hoorn’s, see the minutes of the Dordrecht consistory, 14 Oct 1627, AKD 4:50, SADOR. Rotterdam and Enkhuizen even made their lay clergy sign the *formulierboek*. See fn. 47.

<sup>51</sup> For Cornelisz, see the minutes of the deputies, 30 Nov 1649, ACA 157:228, SAA. For De Vaux, see especially Maurits and council to the XIX, 29 Apr 1643, OWIC 58:268, NA. See him also in Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*. For ministers involved in colonial politics, see Chap. 6.

in the Tholen classis and said that Doornick must be a rogue or he would not have been sent to Brazil. Such attitudes perhaps developed because of the greater number of laymen overseas, colonial ordinations (about 10% of WIC clergy) and, early on, the *idiotae*, who had begun to disappear in the Netherlands by the company's founding. Reverend Voetius wrote that *idiotae* were only suitable among "barbarians" in the "uncivilized" corners of the globe. The church was certainly less strict in accepting them for colonial use, telling Willem Derrixen and Jan Backes, for example, that they could not preach at home before they left. Dirck Drijstrang asked to be *ziekentrooster* in Holland *or* minister abroad. And because of these and overseas appointments there were concerns in the churches at home about ministers who returned from the colonies. Can they take up posts here if they were ordained there? What if they were ordained only of necessity? The North Holland synod decided that they could work at home as long as they came and proved their abilities and knowledge like everyone else. Many a minister worked in the Netherlands after the West India Company, including some *idiotae* and colonial appointments.<sup>52</sup>

### *The Material Rewards of WIC Service*

Company clergy chose to serve for many reasons, some lofty, some not. Reverend Kessler considered the WIC's needs "with fiery prayers" and decided that the magnitude or gravity (*gewichtigheyt*) of the situation in Brazil was such that he had to go there.

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<sup>52</sup> For Doornick, see the minutes of the Tholen classis, July 1653 to early 1654, ACT 3:157-167, ZA. For Voetius, see Jongeneel, "Missiology," 69. For Backes (going to Asia), see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 4 and 5 Oct 1638, ACA 4:139-140, SAA. (Antoni Claesz received similar instructions then.) For Drijstrang, see the minutes of the consistory, Nov 1619, AKA 4:375, SAA. For questions about returning ministers, see the minutes of the classis, 25 July 1639, ACA 4:160; *ERSNY* 1:123-126. Meindert Hendricks (Africa and Brazil), Johannes Backerus (Curaçao, New Netherland, Asia), and Jacobus Beth van der Burch (Angola) were *idiotae* or returning ministers who had to prove themselves to the synod: see the minutes of the Edam classis, 21 June 1646, ACE 4:372, NHA; minutes of the North Holland synod, 7 Aug 1646, ASNH 4, NHA (Hendricks); 16 Aug 1650, ASNH 4 (Backerus/Van der Burch). Van der Burch was no *idiotae* but had not served at home.

Soler declared that he was moved by “Christian zeal” to plant the kingdom of Christ and bring his own “nation” (the Spanish) to the truth. And Megapolensis had a “great desire” to work in America, he told his classis, claiming also to have prayed long and hard about it, hoping to “spread the holy gospel of Jesus Christ among the blind heathens.”<sup>53</sup>

Many did not give exalted, altruistic explanations. Wilhelmus Volckering wrote that he had long wanted to behold “a strange land.” Others went for reasons that should be obvious by this point: The WIC was a sanctuary to those who fled from Germany and England because of war and religious turmoil. It was a job opportunity when they had no other. This was especially true for those whom the company sponsored in the months and even years before their colonial tenures began. It helped them subsist and improve their knowledge and skills—and thus their future opportunities—and they were then bound to the company for a time. Some *idiotae* worked abroad and then, having proven themselves and gained experience, found jobs in the Netherlands that they likely could not have had otherwise, which might have been a consideration in the first place. Similarly, *proponents* fresh from school could find work overseas more quickly than they could at home, where they had to compete with so many peers, and Reformed laymen could use the company as an alternative when they lost their income or other means of support. Cornelis Aertss was an orphan from Texel who had grown too old for the orphanage, Pieter Fransen an elderly instrument maker who had fallen on hard times and went finally as *ziekentrooster* to “the

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<sup>53</sup> For Kessler, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 22 Sep 1636, ACA 4:82, SAA. For Soler, see the same, 7 Jan 1636, 4:68. For Megapolensis, see *ERSNY* 1:146 (“desire”); minutes of the Alkmaar classis, 2 Apr 1642, ACALK 3:42, NHA. His longer explanation (“prayer” and “spread”) is not in *ERSNY*.

coast of Guinea.” (Aertss sailed to Brazil, then to Asia.) If one was a church member with the necessary skills, the WIC could be a refuge or fallback in these ways, too.<sup>54</sup>

Former occupations are known for about sixty-five lay ministers. Frequently they were already WIC employees. About twenty of them had worked as a soldier, sailor, or as one of the lesser WIC officers, like corporal. One had been a company surgeon and one a professor in Lithuania, which had also undergone some Protestantization. There were six who had been schoolmasters in the Netherlands and six VOC *ziekentroosters*, most of the rest having been some kind of tradesman or laborer: often shoemakers or tailors, then a range of others, including lace-, ribbon-, rope-, and sailmakers, and a hatter, a furrier, a mason, and a coppersmith, just to name a few. The only common thread among them was their Reformed membership. They were perhaps looking for better opportunities, wanting to serve the Protestant cause, or hoping to see something of the wider world.<sup>55</sup>

The salaries of ministers and *ziekentroosters* were better than those of sailors and soldiers. Both contracted to work usually from one to four years, although they could and often did extend afterward. *Ziekentrooster* pay was about *f* 30 per month, sometimes less if they were inexperienced or if they were just readers (*voorlezers*), sometimes more on a second or third contract or if they took on additional duties, like teaching school. The lay ministers also enjoyed free food, lodging, and a seat at the governor’s table with the other officers, which carried a standing that they might have lacked before. By contrast, sailors and soldiers earned between *f* 8 and *f* 14 per month and were typically treated harshly. In

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<sup>54</sup> For Volckering, see his letter of 9 June 1664 in ACA 224:24-25, SAA. For Aertss, see the minutes of the deputies, 18 Mar, 19 Aug 1642, ACA 157:68, 81, SAA. For Fransen, April to May 1640, ACA 157:32-34.

<sup>55</sup> Church and company scribes often noted former employment. For Lithuania, see *ERSNY* 1:442 and Benedict, *Christ’s Churches*, 257-271. The professor was Alexander Carolus Curtius, rector of the Latin school in New Netherland. For the rest see Appendix A. See a similar breakdown for former occupations of VOC *ziekentroosters* in C.A.L. van Troostenburg de Bruyn, *De Hervormde Kerk in Nederlandsch Oost Indie onder de Oost-Indische Compagnie, 1602-1795* (Arnhem, 1884), 335-76.

1640, when returning *ziekentroosters* reported that some captains denied them access to the officers' cabin, the directors quickly issued orders to end the problem, and there were no other complaints. Overall, the position of lay ministers was ambiguous. On paper they were part of the officer corps, sometimes bearing the honorific title “reverend” (*domine*). But they lacked the training of an ordained minister, and with their plebeian backgrounds they kindled resentment among the other officers.<sup>56</sup>

Some lay ministers performed double duty, serving the church yet serving in other positions at the same time. In a few cases the Zeeland directors hired *ziekentroosters* and appointed them also as factors, master's mates, and so on. Many accepted additional jobs once overseas—if not simultaneously then at least after their original contracts. After his Latin school in Brazil failed to attract enough students, Bartholomeus Cole became WIC clerk. Curaçao schoolmaster Jan Galjaert was also “overseer” of company goats. And Jan Huygen, an early *ziekentrooster* in New Netherland, was the WIC's storekeeper. Fellow *ziekentrooster* Bastiaen Jansz Krol was heavily involved in the fur trade there, eventually becoming commander at Fort Orange and the colony's provisional governor.<sup>57</sup> Because of widespread disapproval, and because they already had a better income, ministers rarely sought extra work. They usually earned about *f* 100 per month, with some *proponents* and non-Amsterdam ministers earning less. Complaints about differences in pay led to more uniformity in 1642, when the Zeeland directors instructed the governor in Brazil to put all

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<sup>56</sup> Basic pay rates are given in Boxer, *Dutch Seaborne Empire*, Appendix II. For the cabin incident, see the minutes of the deputies, 21 Nov 1640, 29 Oct, 19 Nov 1641, ACA 157:46, 61-62, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 8 Oct 1641, ACA 4:242. See also “Instructions for ministers and *ziekentroosters*,” 12 Dec 1635, ASG II, 5755, NA.

<sup>57</sup> For Zeeland's double appointments, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 30 Dec 1627, 27 Apr 1628, 23 June 1632, 17 Mar 1633, 29 Oct 1640, 18 Feb 1641, 6 Feb, 19 Oct 1645, OWIC 20:65, 77; 21:109, 151; 24:59, 86; 26:66, 117, NA. For Cole, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 28 Nov 1642, OWIC 69. For Galjaert, see Charles Gehring, ed., *Curaçao Papers, 1640-1665* (Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1987), 80. For Huygen and Krol, see *ERSNY* 1:45-48, 53; and A. Eekhof, *Bastiaen Janszoon Krol* (The Hague, 1910).

company clergy on equal footing. Like *ziekentroosters*, ministers received food, lodging, and a place at the governor's table. They also received a servant or slave. Starting in 1640 the company paid all ministers with children an extra *f* 6 per month, per child.<sup>58</sup>

On the face of it, WIC compensation was strong, even greater than clerical pay in the Netherlands, where ministers also enjoyed benefits like housing but earned between *f* 500 and *f* 1,000 per year, depending on location. The *f* 1,200 that the company paid was thus competitive, higher than the wages of most employees and lesser officers, placing clergy somewhere in the upper middle class. The fact that they lived in smaller, confined communities also gave them a greater voice or prominence than ecclesiastical colleagues at home. But wages could be deceptive because of massive inflation and higher costs of living in colonial settings, which was the cause of relentless complaining over the years. Also, some ministers had to contribute a portion of their pay to the support of temporary replacements in their churches in the Netherlands.<sup>59</sup>

Because of issues like these the Walcheren classis suggested that both companies be more generous with salaries. But ministers were not unique in suffering from inflation and related financial difficulties, and again, they were among the more affluent members of society. When New Amsterdam colonists contributed to the defense of the city during

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<sup>58</sup> For the equal pay controversy and decision, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 31 Jan 1641, 10 Nov 1642, OWIC 24:79; 25:51, NA. For "children," see the same, 14 June 1640, OWIC 24:33; minutes of the Brazil classis, 21 Nov 1640, OWIC 55:116; minutes of the Brazil council, 23 Nov 1640, OWIC 68. See also "Instructions for ministers and *ziekentroosters*," 12 Dec 1635, ASG II, 5755, NA.

<sup>59</sup> For clergy at home, including pay and social standing, see G. Groenhuis, *De Sociale Positie van de Gereformeerde Predikanten in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden voor 1700* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1977). Willem Frijhoff suggests that confined spaces gave ministers added power. See his book *Wegen van Evert Willemsz: Een Hollands weeskind op zoek naar zichzelf, 1607-1647* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1995), 491-539. Examples of cost-of-living complaints are in the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 30 Dec 1638, 13 July 1645, OWIC 23:123; 26:92, NA. The topic of high living costs is handled in J.A.G. de Mello, *Nederlanders in Brazilië, 1624-1654: De Invloed van de Hollandse Bezittingen op het Leven en de Cultuur in Noord-Brazilië* (Zutphen: Walburg, 2001), Chap. 2. For ministers supporting their own replacements, see the extract from the Zuid Beveland classis, 18 Oct 1624, in ACW 73, ZA; or the minutes of the English consistory, 1646, AEKM 1:134-38, ZA (Dapper and Gribius, respectively).

the Anglo-Dutch wars, Megapolensis and Drisius were two of the greatest donors at *f* 600 and *f* 500: an entire year's salary for rural clergy in Holland. Even in Brazil, which had the worst inflation, complaints centered on the food and housing allowance, *not* one's primary pay, which was usually credited to his name in an ever-increasing total, collected sometimes overseas and sometimes only when he reached home. Reverends Kemp and Apricius both lived through the worst of Brazil and had a credit of greater than *f* 4,000 when they returned. Reverend Hermannius, a German minister who was in Brazil at the same time, was owed *f* 8,000 after nine years, meaning that he had "borrowed" little more than a third of his salary in that period. Perhaps using any of it was contrary to custom or WIC promises, but it hardly meant poverty. With just *f* 1,000 one could purchase a small home in the Netherlands, and Dutch laborers (without a family) could meet their basic or indispensable needs on *f* 80 per year.<sup>60</sup>

The company tried to cut ecclesiastical costs at one point by deducting a small percentage from the wages of sailors and soldiers, just as people at home paid taxes to support the church. But it was a very unpopular decision, and it did not last long. The Amsterdam chamber began the practice in October 1636 with new hires. The first sign of trouble appeared three years later, when men returned to the Netherlands to collect their earnings. One *ziekentrooster* reported to the classis that he had heard lots of grumbling at the West Indies House. Colonial ministers were soon writing about resentment among employees overseas, which undermined clerical standing and the work of the church in general. The deduction must have been a company-wide practice, for Zeeland directors

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<sup>60</sup> For Megapolensis and Drisius, see *ERSNY* 1:541. For Kemp and Apricius, see the minutes of the XIX, Sep 1659, ASG V, 12564.42, NA, which also shows more than *f* 1,000 owed to a schoolmaster (Samuel Engelaer) and hundreds to some lay ministers. For Hermannius, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 2 Oct 1657, ACA 6:78, SAA. Because of the company's financial woes, these debts were only slowly paid. See the Conclusion. For the costs of a house and basic needs laborers in the Netherlands, see Chap 2.

also mentioned it in 1641, writing that it was in fact causing discontent and “contempt” for the ministers. The Amsterdam classis had been working with its own chamber about the problem, and the XIX resolved in November to end it.<sup>61</sup>

As the costs of conquest piled up and the directors failed year after year to recoup the WIC’s losses, the lesser chambers increasingly shirked their ecclesiastical obligations and Zeeland and Amsterdam were left holding the bag. In the early to mid-1640s, when it became clear that a military approach was unsustainable, the two major chambers filled their own quotas (and a bit more), but they also sometimes turned the church away empty handed, explaining that other chambers needed to contribute personnel too. The church pressured the lesser chambers, and the XIX issued directives in 1645 and 1647 about how many clergy each of them would send in the future. For about five years before that some WIC possessions did not have sufficient clergy or relied only on lay preachers.<sup>62</sup> At least one returning minister suggested that the church address the problem by letting colonial consistories and classes examine and call their own personnel from local populations, but the Amsterdam classis still would not relinquish control. The States General helped out by sending two ministers to Brazil in 1647 and funding additional personnel as part of a large subsidy (ƒ 310,000) that it gave the WIC in 1653. After the Portuguese conquered Brazil (1654) the question of responsibility mostly died away because West Africa was

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<sup>61</sup> The minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 13 Oct 1636, OWIC 14:196, NA; minutes of the deputies, 5 and 26 Mar, 23 Apr 1640, 10 and 29 Oct, 19 Nov 1641, ACA 157:28, 33, 59, 61-63, SAA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 31 Jan 1641, OWIC 24:79; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 8 Oct 1641, ACA 4:242. A report from Brazil that the problem was fixed: minutes of the deputies, 31 July 1643, ACA 157:114-115.

<sup>62</sup> On quota issues, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 24 Mar 1644, OWIC 25:169, NA; minutes of the deputies, 2 May and 26 June 1645, 30 Nov 1648, ACA 157:139-140, 209-210, SAA; *ERSNY* 1:191, 193-194; the Amsterdam classis to the Brazil churches, 14 Dec 1646, ACA 163:148-151; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 8 Oct 1647, ACA 5:54-56.



the only place the chambers still “shared,” and it did not need many clergy. Amsterdam and Zeeland continued to supply the North American/Caribbean colonies.<sup>63</sup>

Average time served with the WIC was between five and six years, including a number of very early deaths—before their arrival in America or Africa—and a number of ministers who served for considerably longer periods: more than forty years in the case of Schaats and Polhemus, more than twenty years for Megapolensis, Selyns, Drisius, and Basseliers (the first five in New Netherland/New York and the latter in Suriname). Others would have probably surpassed twenty years if Brazil had not fallen; and Stetten did so if one counts his time sitting in a Portuguese prison, having worked aboard three ships and fifteen years in Brazil prior to his capture. Having the healthiest climate and a society that was somewhat recognizably Dutch by 1650, New Netherland had the highest average at about twelve years. West Africa and the Wild Coast (excluding Basseliers) had the lowest at only two to three years each. Average time served in the Caribbean was between three and four years, almost five in Brazil. If they did not die first, many clergy then returned to the Netherlands or went to Asia with the East India Company.<sup>64</sup>

As a group the clergy were highly mobile, and in that sense they were not strictly “WIC” or even “Atlantic.” Laymen were especially active: career *ziekentroosters* with no company and hemispheric borders. A number of them had served Dutch ships or outposts

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<sup>63</sup> The “returning minister” was Reverend Ketel. See the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 3 July 1645, ACA 4:347-349, SAA. The two ministers sent to Brazil with the States General fleet in 1647 were Theodorus Brassicanus and Wilhelmus Cammius. For the States General in 1653, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 13 Feb 1653, AKV 363, GAV; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 17 Mar and 7 Apr 1653, ACA 5:283, 287, SAA; extracts from the minutes, 20 Mar 1653, ACA 164:138; resolutions of the States General, 20 Mar 1653, ASG I, 4846, NA. Schoolmaster Jan Engelaer was sent with this subsidy. Whether other clergy were called and sent with the States General money before Brazil fell is unknown.

<sup>64</sup> Total time served in an area can be tricky for many WIC clergy. I often have the date that one began his service or ended it—or a even date from the middle, not knowing the beginning or end—so these averages are based on only 130 of the 360 clergy: the greatest number (85) for Brazil, around 16 each for Africa, New Netherland, and the Caribbean, and only 7 for the Wild Coast (with some overlap). The total average declines from about 5.5 years to just over 5 if one does not include three ministers who died on the voyage to America (and thus never really served any time) and the three longest-serving ministers.

in Greenland and in the northern fisheries before finding the company; a few had served the Dutch merchant community in Muscovy (Russia). Again, at least six worked for the VOC before and more than sixty afterward (including thirteen ministers). A few sandwiched the Atlantic between Asian trips, and some likewise served the WIC, then the VOC, then the WIC again. About 165 of 360 worked at some point in Brazil. About 56 are known to have served in West Africa, and for the rest: 42 in the Caribbean and Wild Coast, 35 in New Netherland. Of course everyone served at sea in the sense that they at least had to journey to these places; but many were permanently ship-bound, particularly lay officers. In that role they spent time both in Africa and America. And even those who were not ship-bound worked sometimes in more than one location: two assignments was common, three and even four not unheard of. For example, Fredericus Vittaeus went as *proponent* first to Brazil, where he served for a few years before returning home, then to Curaçao, then home again, back to Brazil, and from there to Luanda. The *ziekentrooster* Cornelis Jacobsen worked aboard the *Amersfoort*, then in Brazil, Guinea, and Asia. Jan Lodewycks went to Asia first, then worked aboard the WIC's *Hollandse Tuin*, then in Brazil and Goeree, an island off the coast of Senegal. Mobility was only partly a choice. Johannes Polhemus probably would have never gone to New Netherland if the company had not lost Brazil, nor would Machiel Zyperus have gone from Brazil to Curaçao, New Netherland, and ultimately Virginia.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> See Appendix A for the locations that everyone served. Many who are listed there with one location probably also served in others. They often appear briefly in some record but never again, their fates simply unknown. Vittaeus's and Zyperus's first assignments in Brazil may come as a surprise to students of the Dutch Atlantic and New Netherland. For Vittaeus, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 7 Apr 1631, ACA 3:3, SAA, when he asks to go to the West Indies. That he went at that time is confirmed in the letter of Johannes van Walbeek to the Zeeland directors, 27 June 1635, OWIC 50:28, NA. Walbeek wrote that he was happy to receive Vittaeus at Curaçao because he had known his "good doctrine and walk" in Brazil before. For Zyperus, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 17 Nov 1651, 5 Mar, 23 Apr 1652, OWIC 75. His mobility was not just from war: Because of his lousy reputation he was not wanted in New Netherland.

Death was often the reason behind short WIC careers. Clergy died of disease and other causes, including shipwreck, battle, and suicide. Jacobus Martini was found among the dead on a battlefield in Brazil in 1630; Everardus Bogardus drowned when his ship went down off the coast of England in 1647. Reverends Claesz and Hassinck both died before reaching their destinations, probably both from disease. Illness was so common for Europeans in Africa that at one point in the 1650s, after three ministers died in less than four years, the church asked the directors to send two at a time so employees would not be without a shepherd when someone passed away. Disease was, of course, not limited to Africa. It was also a problem in tropical climates like Brazil's, on the Wild Coast, and many places in the East. Reverend Backerus spent five years at Curaçao and two in New Netherland before sailing to Formosa. Five years later he grew so ill, he was placed on a ship for Batavia, where he died shortly after his arrival.<sup>66</sup>

In summary, company clergy were a diverse, mobile group from all over Calvinist Europe. The WIC supported the educations of future clergy and the directors worked with the church to make sure that ministers and lay leaders were qualified. For the most part they succeeded at that task, but there were still differences between colonial clergy and clergy at home. WIC possessions were more dependent on laymen, for example.

Increasingly after 1650, ministers were younger, less experienced, and fresh from school after only a brief period as *proponent* (if at all). Though ministers in the Netherlands were very interested in developments overseas (see Chapter 1), they were less willing to serve there: fewer than thirty gave up posts at home to go to Africa and America between 1621

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<sup>66</sup> For the request about Africa, see the minutes of the XIX, 25 Aug 1659, ASG V, 12564.42, NA. The XIX said no: there were too few employees there. The three dead ministers were Steenlandt, Westerwyck, and Schulperoort, all between 1655 and 1659. For Backerus's death, see the minutes of the North Holland synod, 12 Aug 1652, 12 Aug 1658, ASNH 4 and 5, NHA. For "suicide," see Chap. 4. For ailments and the troubles they caused for the Dutch in Brazil, see De Mello, *Nederlanders in Brazilië*, Chap. 1.

and 1674. And many only quit their old positions temporarily. Again, other experienced clergy came from outside the Netherlands, especially England, Germany, and France. For them the WIC offered a new beginning and a chance to serve the Reformed cause on new continents after losing their careers to war. The religious ideas and rituals that buttressed the company's own violent activities in the Atlantic world are topics for the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### Planting Christ's Kingdom in Stony Ground

For all their reputation as a seafaring, commercial people, farm imagery and the language of the soil sprang easily to Dutch minds when they talked and wrote about expansion. Whether it was the WIC colonel who, having participated in the invasion of Brazil, compared his exertions to planting seeds and spreading “God’s holy name,” or the Zeeland directors who sought God’s blessing by planting his “word” in America, many Protestants associated the work of the company with a metaphorical harvest: reaping, sowing, extending the boundaries of the Lord’s vineyard. More specifically and perhaps most frequently, “planting” was a favorite simile in ecclesiastical circles for establishing Reformed Christianity by calling a minister and forming a consistory in any place where they had not been before.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately for the church, the West India Company’s mode of expansion often did not lend itself to stable religious life. It did not provide fertile ground for the kind of planting that ministers and missionaries were called to do, so suddenly and violently had the Dutch Atlantic burst into view. If the Dutch adopted the language of rustic, pastoral cultivation from the New Testament, they preferred to filch the crops of others using the militant tools of the Old. The original, primary purpose of the WIC was to wage war on the Republic’s enemies and seize Iberian possessions, and between 1623 and 1642 it

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<sup>1</sup> For the colonel, see D. van Waerdenburch to the XIX, OWIC 49:17, NA. For the directors, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 17 Sep 1637, OWIC 23:50. See also, for example, the minutes of the Groningen classis, 10 June 1639, ACG 1:122-123, GA; Staphorstius to the Amsterdam classis, 9 Sep 1639, ACA 185:41-42, SAA; and Jongeneel, “The Missiology of Gisbertus Voetius,” 52, 66. Other examples will be found in this and both of the following chapters.

made good on its commitments. In addition to hundreds of Spanish ships, it captured Elmina, Axim, Luanda, and São Tomé in West Africa; and in America: Olinda, Recife, Curaçao, and other Caribbean islands. In the words of the prophet Joel, the Dutch “[b]eat [their] plowshares into swords, and [their] pruninghooks into spears”; the vineyard became a battlefield, and in place of water, the company poured fire, blood, and death on its rivals, impatiently reaping an empire that it had not sown.<sup>2</sup> Such tactics were inspired in part by religious sentiment—by Calvinist zeal and anti-Catholicism—but in the long run the never-ending state of war was antithetical to stable society, and the regular work of the ministry could not proceed while it lasted, nor arguably flourish in occupied enemy territory. The large number of new possessions, combined with growing responsibilities in Asia, also made it difficult to meet every ecclesiastical need.

If Calvinists even recognized the true cause of their challenges, they had no one to blame but themselves. The Dutch Reformed Church was fully committed to the Orangist “war” party in the Netherlands, often dismissing peace attempts as secret papist conspiracies to lull the country into complacency in order to subject it again. The church and its supporters usually saw the WIC as a vital weapon in this wider conflict. Johannes de Laet, for example, claimed that the company was created for the “maintenance of the True Religion and the protection of our freedom,” suggesting that, by going on the offensive, the Dutch were really acting defensively. The XIX called theirs a “righteous war,” as did Reverend Stetten in Brazil.<sup>3</sup> The clergy at home were no less certain of the cause, and often just as eager to promote an aggressive agenda: Samuel Ampzing placed

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<sup>2</sup> Joel 3:10, KJV. The opposite (“swords into plowshares”) is from Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3.

<sup>3</sup> De Laet, *Historie*, 3-4. For “righteous war,” see the XIX’s instructions to Hendrick Cornelissen Lonck, 13 Aug 1629, OWIC 2:11-19, NA; and Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 23 July 1644, OWIC 59:93. For the WIC, the war against Spain, and conspiracy theories about peace efforts, see *Consideratien ende Redenen der E. Heeren Bewind-hebberen vande Geoctroieerde West-Indische Compagnie* (Haarlem, 1629).

company activities in the context of a “holy war” that the Devil had waged against God since the beginning of time. The WIC’s was a “great work” that would destroy the pride of Antichrist and, interestingly, the “violence” of Spain. Similarly, Spranckhuysen said the company was God’s instrument for punishing the Spanish in America. In his advice to merchants, Udemans dismissed claims that Christians could not, in good conscience, participate in war, writing that bloodshed was necessary in the face of evil, pointing out that God himself was sometimes called “warrior.” All three authors drew heavily on Old Testament examples, especially stories about Joshua, who destroyed Jericho, and David, who slew Goliath and expanded the kingdom of Israel by the sword. They cited scriptures about taking “the spoil of thine enemies” and the Lord fighting Israel’s battles. In these formulations, the Dutch were the *new* Israel. WIC officers were Bible heroes; Spain was Egypt, Canaan, and other traditional enemies of God’s people.<sup>4</sup>

Early advocates of Dutch expansion had promoted a more peaceful role for the WIC. Willem Usselinx (1567-1647) envisioned agricultural colonies peopled by Dutch citizens, trading with the Republic, allied with Native Americans who would convert to Protestantism and learn Dutch ways. His Utopian model was rejected, but historians need to be careful about *how*, exactly, WIC schemes differed from his. As the story usually goes, immigration, agriculture, and evangelism were sacrificed at the altar of piracy, war, trade, and profits, as if the two sets of aims were mutually exclusive. While the company certainly chose the latter, it was not necessarily rejecting the former, nor were the hopes

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<sup>4</sup> For Ampzing, see *West-Indische Triumph Basuyne*, introductory material, 44. The two scriptures also come from him: Deuteronomy 20:14; 2 Chronicles 20:24-29, KJV. For Spranckhuysen, see *Triumphe*, 65. For Udemans, see *Geestelick Roer*, Book 6. See all three in their entirety for the use of Old Testament figures like David, Joshua, and others. In making comparisons with Israel, they drew on a widespread Reformed tradition: See Groenhuis, *De Predikanten*, 77-107; and Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*, 118-124. Simon Schama and Benjamin Schmidt deal with national myths and scriptural themes in *Embarrassment of Riches* and *Innocence Abroad*, respectively.

of Usselinx a mirror image of WIC pursuits. He was also a merchant; his plans also centered on trade and, of course, profits. The disagreement was partly just a question of speed and location, the directors choosing to hurry things along. Conquest would afford a lucrative sugar colony immediately. Yet it was still “agricultural,” and once established in Brazil the company did encourage immigration and work with Native Americans, as Usselinx had wanted. It also experimented with settlement and agriculture on the Wild Coast, in the Caribbean, and even New Netherland. If monopolistic, bellicose practices ultimately proved detrimental to immigration and stable societies—and by extension the church—that was not the intent. In other words, WIC directors did not choose profits over piety, as critics of the company later claimed. Indeed, they clearly believed that they were doing God’s work by attacking Catholic Spain, cutting off the resources that fed its war chest, and ending its reign of tyranny. And the church typically supported them in such beliefs. When it was necessary, WIC partisans found ideological reinforcements in Biblical examples and Protestant resistance theory, which fellow believers in Germany, France, England, and Scotland had developed over the past century to justify violence against would-be Catholic oppressors. Partnered with the church, the WIC’s more active brand of “resistance” would result not just in profits, but the containment of Catholicism and growth of Protestantism.<sup>5</sup>

This arrangement was not effective in the long run, either for the company or the church, which could not take root on a battlefield. The church struggled also in many places because of conditions beyond anyone’s control, including inhospitable climates,

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<sup>5</sup> For Usselinx vs. the WIC, see Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, Chap. 2; Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 176-184, 193; Den Heijer, *Geschiedenis*, 21-28; Jacobs, *New Netherland*, Chap. 1; and most importantly, J. Franklin Jameson, *Willem Usselinx: Founder of the Dutch and Swedish West India Companies* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1887). For resistance theory, see Benedict, *Christ’s Churches*, 46, 88-89, 147, 158-159, 187-188; Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*, Chap. 3.



disease, death, and indigenous peoples who could not be supplanted and did not want to change. Because these circumstances existed in most areas where the Dutch first tried to establish themselves, the failure to do so, or the failure to create flourishing Protestant societies, was inevitable. The WIC founded colonies that quickly disappeared. Some that survived were mere outposts, the Dutch presence marked by a fort and perhaps a few huts and other slovenly, primitive facilities. Populations were disproportionately male: sailors and soldiers with a greater propensity to revolt than to settle or farm. The company was partly to blame for the lack of growth because it feared competition, but its most stifling policies did not last beyond the 1630s. Warfare and the adverse physical conditions of each location were usually the true culprits behind the sorry state of affairs. According to Reformed thought, the church was not officially established before calling a minister and forming a consistory, and the latter was often impossible among the meager pickings of a sickly, dwindling, transient population, many of whom were not members. In that case religion might be administered by a lay leader who did not have the authority to create a consistory had the circumstances allowed it anyway.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter considers the place of Reformed Christianity in the early, turbulent days of Dutch expansion. It examines life at sea, the culture of war, and the small forts and outposts that were simply not amenable to practices that the public church deemed necessary for a full religious life and civil society, including consistorial discipline and sometimes the sacraments, when there was no ordained minister. If people often went without those practices, Reformed religion still permeated life under the WIC. Calvinist

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<sup>6</sup> Because it is most relevant to New Netherland historiography, the question of monopolistic policies and their effect on the church is handled in Chapter 6. For Reformed beliefs about when the church was officially established, compare the instructions of ministers and *ziekentroosters* in ACA 19, SAA. Only a minister could organize a church. To do so he had to call a consistory and begin exercising discipline.

prayers, psalms, and sermons were part of daily and weekly routines. Ministers and lay leaders comforted the sick and taught them how to die as pious, godly men, whether by disease or at the point of a sword. They preached about their righteous cause, prepared men spiritually for battle, and led regular days of fasting, prayer, and thanks. Sailors and soldiers were not known as a particularly devout or refined group, but the clergy upheld WIC authority through exhortation and chastisement. By situating the company's violent work in the context of Biblical and Protestant history, they provided a way for people to understand what was happening in the Atlantic world.

### *The World in a Small Wooden Shoe*

The young *ziekentrooster* Jacob Steendam sailed to Africa aboard the WIC's *Goude Ree* in 1641, about a ten-week voyage. In a poem written by himself and "sung on the Atlantic Sea," he compared the ship to a "home," a "house that runs steadily through the flood," never resting, always alive: There people sleep, cook, eat and drink, sing and laugh, work and play. Revealing the wonder and excitement at what was probably his first time leaving Holland, he noted that everything moved and that everything, even the smallest fish, had a name. The ship was not just a means of transport or an instrument of destruction; to those who lived there it was a "church," a "court," and a "city." It was an entire "World ... in a small wooden shoe."<sup>7</sup>

Steendam was not the only clergyman to remark upon the multiple functions that ships had to fill in order to meet the needs of those who spent so much of their lives afloat. Praising the consistency and quality of religious observance under Admiral Heyn

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<sup>7</sup> Jacob Steendam, *Den Distelvink* (3 vols., Amsterdam, 1649-50), II:176-178. For the length of his journey, compare his departure poem, II:172-176, to his arrival poem, III:71-73.

during his 1628 voyage, Spranckhuysen also claimed that each vessel “appeared to be a church.” Most of the company’s major fleets had a minister, and many individual ships had a lay leader: a reader (*voorlezer*) or Comforter of the Sick (*ziekentrooster*). They led the crew in prayers and psalms, and they delivered sermons or read aloud from the scriptures and other works. Steendam used the opportunity of his shoe poem to remind his listeners about the wonders of creation and the brevity of life. To put it in terms that they would appreciate, he warned of a spiritual “shipwreck” if they wasted what little time they had. Using his own poetry was perhaps unique, but the duty to teach, exhort, and rebuke sin was the same for all, no matter the medium. It was common enough in naval life that, even when ships did not have clergy, captains called men from among the crew to act as temporary readers.<sup>8</sup>

The idea that any ship could really be an adequate house of worship was, of course, wishful thinking. The “congregation” was packed tightly on deck, and the preacher or reader had to raise his voice to be heard above the wind and waves, perhaps sometimes competing with the screech of birds. Even the most optimistic Reformed commentator also had to be aware that sailors, as a group, were not typical church-goers. Most were probably believers in at least some vague sense, but their actual religious affiliations varied greatly, and they were never known for piety. Udemans wrote that they lacked a profound knowledge of God, blaming it on their parents and teachers. Among their many sins he listed blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, fighting, gambling, prostitution,

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<sup>8</sup> For Spranckhuysen, see *Triumphe*, 56. For “shipwreck,” see the previous fn. For captains calling temporary readers, see, for example, Arent Jansen Bloemendael in the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 6 Oct 1642, ACA 4:271, SAA; Abraham Caspersz in the minutes of the deputies, 4 Sep 1640, ACA 157:39; Rocus Cluisen in the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 12 Nov 1627, OWIC 20:56, NA; Thomas Fletcher in the same minutes, 10 Sep 1643, OWIC 25:113. See also J. van Walbeeck to the XIX, 27 Aug 1634, OWIC 50:80. Van Walbeeck wrote that his fleet of three ships, sent from Brazil to conquer Curaçao, did not have any readers/clergy, so he had to call the most capable men available. The WIC soon sent him Rev. Vittaeus.

disobedience, and drunkenness. They could be controlled, he said, through punishment and exposure to the word of God. Clergy should teach them to pray in earnest, to know why they were called “Christian,” and to behave like true disciples.<sup>9</sup>

To facilitate that task, company ships carried religious literature, including prayer and psalm books, catechisms, collections of sermons, and the Bible. They also sometimes carried Udemans’s *Geestelick Roer* or theological works like John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Andre Rivet’s *Treasure Trove of Papist Errors*, and the popular *Boetveerdicheyt des Levens*, by the minister Jean Taffin, who wrote about one’s religious duties and urged readers to live lives of repentance. So common were these small naval libraries that, in one instance, when the Brazil clergy complained about a lack of books in company forts, the colonial council told them to visit the harbor and take whatever they wanted from the ships, provided they leave enough for those who worked there. If there were still too few the council promised to order more from home.<sup>10</sup>

The most regular religious activity at sea was prayer, offered at meal times and at the start and close of each day. Judging from the length of prayers in a collection that was used in the Dutch Atlantic, it would have taken about five minutes to read them aloud. As one might expect, typical selections were full of praise for God and his wonders, thanking him for blessings and asking for protection. There were also specific prayers about false

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<sup>9</sup> For WIC ships, see Remmelt Daalder and E.K. Spits, eds., *Schepen van de Gouden Eeuw* (Walburg Pers, 2005), 91-98. For Udemans and sailors, see his *Geestelick Roer*, 62-91. See also Willem Teellinck, *Ecce Homo*. And for similar criticisms of soldiers, see Heinrich Bullinger, *Huys-boeck* (Dordrecht, 1582), 66-67. *Huys-boeck* contained sermons and was used in the Dutch Atlantic. See below.

<sup>10</sup> For Udemans’s book see Chap. 1 of this dissertation. For other books, including Calvin’s, Rivet’s, and Taffin’s, see the lists of books in West African forts and ships, K. Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters van het Kasteel Sao Jorge da Mina* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1953), 367-384. The title of Rivet’s book is my own translation of *Schatboek der Roomse dwalingen* (1617). Also on Taffin, see Pieter J.J. van Theel, “‘Poor Parents, Rich Children’ and ‘Family Grace’: Two Related Aspects of the Iconography of Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Domestic Morality,” *Simiolus* 17, no. 2/3 (1987): 96-97; Wayne Franits, “The Family Saying Grace: A Theme in Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century,” *Simiolus* 16, no.1 (1986), fn. 14. For the Brazil incident, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 23 Feb 1638, OWIC 68, NA.

doctrine, the kingdom of Satan, and resisting temptation. The author (Johan Havermans) included one for the traveling man, asking God to make his dealings profitable and to bring him safely home again. The choice of prayer was up to the clergyman. He could read one from the Reformed catechism, which was also used by the WIC. In deference to his audience, he might have picked Teellinck's prayer for "seafaring Christians," printed in *Ecce Homo* (1622). Teellinck's was more like a long confession, listing and lamenting common sins and, in true Calvinist fashion, opining about unworthiness. He asked God to lead them as he did Israel and to grant such order aboard the ship that it could be named "here is the Lord." Prayers were not just a chance to offer thanks or supplicate God for blessings, but a time of instruction and warning, a kind of daily mini-sermon for a captive audience that needed real reform, according to the church. The prayer was rarely recorded in log books and journals but was at least mentioned there on occasion, usually when something bad happened: WIC officer Willem Cunyngham once noted an evening prayer because the ship caught fire in the middle of it. Nine months later he was "sitting in the prayer" when the wind carried away part of a mast.<sup>11</sup>

The clergy offered additional, irregular prayers when the need arose, like during storms. The Dutch believed that, as the creator, God controlled the weather, that he gave good winds and bad, that they could hear his voice—usually his "wrath"—in the thunder

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<sup>11</sup> For the time and place of prayers, see the instructions of clergy and others, including those of 12 Dec 1635, ASG II, 5755, NA; 2 June 1636, ACA 163:13-16, SAA; 1641, ASG II, 5759, 209-224; 1647, ASG II, 5759, 225-236; 24 Nov 1647, *Groot Placaet Boeck, vervattende de Placaeten, Ordonnantien ende Edicten van de Doorluchtige, Hoogh Mog. Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden* (The Hague, 1658), 626-654; 11 May 1650, ACA 212:170-176, SAA. For the use of Havermans, see the 1624 booklist in ACW 73, ZA. The full title is *Christelijcke Gebeden en Danck-seggingen* (Amsterdam, 1634). See also *Catechismus ofte Onderwijsinghe in de Christelicke Leere, alsoo die in de Kercken ende Scholen der Keurvorstelicken Paltz ende der Nederlanden gheleert wort* (Middelburg, 1611). For Teellinck, see *Ecce Homo*, 4-12. For Cunyngham, see his journal of 1625-1626 in OWIC 43, NA. The fire account is from 18 June 1625 and the other is from 24 Mar 1626. Most journals mention prayers now and then. See other examples below, as well as 27 Sep 1647 in Hendrik Haecx's journal, Aanw. 644, NA.

and lightning. When faced with shipwreck, people naturally turned to him. Cunyngham recounted an incident when his ship was driven close to the African shore, and they could not bring it out again, pushed closer and closer to destruction as the hours passed. Yet they called on God, he wrote, and God heard them, giving them just enough wind to save themselves. Another officer, Galein van Stapels, described a storm in the Caribbean that seemed to shake the earth. Lightning damaged the ship and killed one of the crew. Once again, God heard their prayer: van Stapels wrote that they would remember divine mercy and change their “sinful lives.”<sup>12</sup>

Psalm-singing was another common activity, deeply rooted in Protestant traditions of communal worship. Recall that Steendam’s poem about the *Goude Ree* was “sung on the Atlantic sea,” as were some of his others. He wrote two about a storm that took place on October 17, 1641, describing the crashing waves and his own fear of drowning. God was the “director of the winds” and “waters,” he declared. Evoking the Old Testament story of the Israelites in the wilderness, he asked God to be the ship’s cloud, light, and fire. In his next poem he gave thanks for their survival, sung to the tune of Psalm 50. By assigning it a melody from the psalm book he made it accessible to anyone who was familiar with Protestant services. In addition to church members, that probably included most seasoned sailors, since psalm books appear in great numbers on company book lists and singing was a regular part of worship at sea. A song sometimes filled the same purpose as a prayer: When it became apparent that pirates were about to attack his ship off the coast of Spain, the merchant David de Vries said that he asked

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<sup>12</sup> For general wind and weather, see Havermans, *Christelicke Gebeden*, 315-319; and the cargo receipt of 1 Feb 1646, OWIC 11, NA. For Cunyngham, see his journal, 16 June 1625, OWIC 43, NA. For van Stapels, see the journal of his voyage to Guyana, 1629-1630, HV 182, ZA (26 July 1629). See also the storm/prayer in Jan D. Lam, *Expeditie naar de Goudkust* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2006), 90.

someone to offer a prayer, then “we sang the 140<sup>th</sup> Psalm,” which contains King David’s plea for protection. Henricus Selyns’s ship, bound for New Netherland in 1660, did not neglect religious worship either, he reported, but offered prayers and sang psalms every morning and evening. They read the “Holy Gospel” on Sundays and holidays.<sup>13</sup>

Sermons and scripture reading occurred each Sunday and usually once during the week, as well. According to clergy instructions, it was a time to teach, comfort, or rebuke the crew, depending on the needs of the ship. Because laymen were not allowed to write their own sermons, the company used large printed collections, like Heinrich Bullinger’s *Huys-boeck* (1582) and Abraham Schultetus’s *Postille* (1621). They were decidedly Reformed, with sermons on the value of Bible study, for example, or justification by faith (not works). Perhaps especially suitable for sailors, they also contained sermons about respecting one’s rulers and about adultery and the other sexual sins that clergy so often lamented. Of course the quality of preaching would have depended on the skills of the reader. Overall, it probably left something to be desired. The more polished, experienced ministers and *proponents* often worked only on land, though they preached at sea coming and going. Reading an hour-long sermon from a book, straining to see the small, tightly-packed print while moving up and down with the ocean on a slanted deck, must have been difficult for unpracticed laymen in particular. It could not have been any less painful

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<sup>13</sup> Steendam, *Den Distelvink*, III:63-67. For “book lists,” see, for example, Elmina’s list in *Ratelband, Vijf Dagregisters*, 367-369 (72 psalm books); the 1624 list in ACW 73, ZA (no total numbers); and the Brazil list of 9 June 1645, OWIC 60:80, NA (hundreds of psalm books). For De Vries, see *Korte historiael ende journaels aenteyckeninge van verscheyden voyagiens in de vier deelen des wereldts-ronde* (Hoorn, 1655), 17-18. For Selyns, see *ERSNY* 1:487-489. See also Spranckhuysen, *Triumphe*, 56; Teellinck, *Ecce Homo*, 4-12; Chap. 3 of this dissertation: only hiring lay leaders with strong voices and knowledge of the psalms.

for listeners. The alleged advantage that Protestants had over Catholics as preachers, if it existed at all, must have been lost at sea.<sup>14</sup>

The clergy offered other prayers, sermons, and scripture readings on holidays and special fast and prayer days or days of thanks, designated intermittently by WIC admirals and captains. Because God's blessing could only be obtained "through prayer," Admiral Thyssen named every Wednesday a "general prayer day" in the fleet: The crew would abstain from any task that was not absolutely necessary. Admiral Jol and others did the same, hoping that "God almighty" would grant them a "prosperous journey and a good wind." Fast and prayer days probably took the place of Catholic holidays that Protestants had abandoned during the Reformation. On the holidays that they kept, like Easter and Pentecost, they sometimes went ashore for sermons and other activities, if there was a suitable location. A crew in 1626 searched an island in the Caribbean for needed supplies and, finding sheep there, decided to stay and celebrate Easter. Many sailors must have looked forward to these times more for the rest and feasting than for the worship, though the latter was still an important part of naval ritual.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the clergy had to comfort and instruct sick crew members. That was the activity for which *ziekentroosters*—Comforters of the Sick—were named, though they bore all other ecclesiastical responsibilities as well. Their handbooks contained short

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<sup>14</sup> See the instructions of 7 June 1636, ACA 163:13-16, SAA (also in *ERSNY* 1:103-106), and the other clergy instructions listed above. Bullinger and Schultetus both appear on the book lists cited above as well. For Bullinger used in the Dutch Atlantic even before the WIC was founded, see the Admiralty to Ft. Nassau, 24 Nov 1618, AAC 1541, NA. Examples of sermons are all taken from Bullinger. See also the Haecx journal, 13 May 1646, Aanw. 644, NA: Rev. Gribius delivers sermons at sea.

<sup>15</sup> For Thyssen, see his resolution and instruction book, 1631-1632, OWIC 45, NA (2 Aug 1632). For Jol, see the description of his voyage to Angola, 30 May to 25 Aug 1641, OWIC 56:264 (July 16). See also the Cunyngham journal, 26 May 1625, OWIC 43; the van Stapels journal, 16 Feb 1630, HV 182, ZA, p. 32. For the Easter incident, see De Laet, *Historie*, 78. De Laet mentions fast and prayer days or days of thanks many times: see 62, 127, 175, 189, 190, 201, 211, 213, 246, 249, 416, 424. Some of these were on land, some on sea. For other examples of going ashore to worship, see Jan, *Expeditie*, 118; or the Herckmans journal, 27 May 1640, OWIC 55:51.



lessons about death and other topics to teach the unfortunate person in need of their services. Most lessons were not cheerful. They taught about the depravity and misery of man since the Fall of Adam and submitting to the will of the Lord, allowing him to inflict punishment as he saw fit. More comforting, perhaps, they also taught about resurrection and eternal life in Christ. The sick were told to desire death, which would free them from earthly trouble. They were also reminded to avoid behavior that may or may not have had anything to do with their illness, like drunkenness and other sins. In their sorry condition they should not lose faith, but strive patiently against the Devil until the final hour.

*Ziekentroosters* were encouraged to read comforting passages from the Bible, especially the book of Psalms. They also sang and prayed with their charges. Prayers for the sick in Reformed literature asked for forgiveness and sometimes taught that one's illness was a direct consequence of his transgressions. According to the catechism, he deserved much worse than he was then suffering.<sup>16</sup>

Hendrik Haecx recorded an instance of guiding or comforting the sick aboard a WIC ship that he took from Brazil to Amsterdam in 1647, part of Admiral Bauckert's fleet. When the admiral came down with a harsh fever, Haecx sent for a surgeon to bleed him. He then sat beside him and began to ask questions: Was he at peace? Did he trust that he would find a merciful God when he died? The admiral said yes, but he worried that he was not sorry enough, "for I am a great sinner." Haecx wrote, "I comforted him according to my ability from God's word." He then told him that he was going on deck for the "usual prayer." He would be sure to ask "God the Lord Jesus" to restore

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<sup>16</sup> Cornelis van Hille, *De Ziekentroost: een korte onderwijzing in het ware geloof en in de weg der zaligheid, om gewillig te sterven*, first published in 1571 (Barendrecht: Lectori Salutem, 1998). For prayers, see Havermans, *Christelijcke Gebeden*, 144-147, 319-323, 354-363; and *Catechismus*.

Bauckert's health. When Haecx returned to his cabin later, however, he found him much worse, and the admiral died shortly afterward.<sup>17</sup>

During prayers, sermons, and other readings sailors had to sit quietly and listen. If anyone laughed, clapped, or interrupted in some other way, he was punished. He could not taunt the minister nor hinder him in his duties. Those who missed religious services without permission forfeited their alcohol ration and had to pay increasingly larger fines at each subsequent infraction. The company was especially concerned about preventing division. Any sailor who raised questions or started "Religious disputes" was confined in the hold for three days on bread and water. If his question led to violence, the captain was supposed to inflict a harsher punishment. Cursing and blasphemy were also illegal, fined ten *stuivers* (pennies). Every WIC employee took an oath to abide by these and other articles, which an officer read aloud at the start of the voyage and again every four to six weeks. Sometimes they only read select passages. They also affixed the articles to the mast and other public places so "the People" would remember them. The company gave all the fines to the church at home for the poor.<sup>18</sup>

Officers and clergy were under strict instructions to show each other the respect that was necessary for maintaining order. According to Reformed theology, every ruler was divinely appointed. Captains commanded their vessels "with God." Company admirals were "called of God," "like everyone in his office." Clergy were never supposed to reprimand officers in public, never single them out by name during the sermon, which might diminish them in the eyes of the crew and, in such "rough" company, have a bad

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<sup>17</sup> Hendrik Haecx journal, 12 Sep 1647, Aanw. 644, NA. See Haecx also in Chap. 2, final section.

<sup>18</sup> For "disputes" and "arbitrary," see the Articles and Ordinances of 1641, ASG II, 5759, 209-224. For "the People," see *Groot Placaet Boeck*, 626-654. See also ASG II, 5759, 225-236. For the payment of fines to the church at home, see Chap. 2.

effect on religion in general. As leaders and examples, officers must live especially good lives: If they violated the moral code, reproof should happen quietly and privately, the company ordered. For the same reason, captains were asked to be discreet if they had to reproach the minister or *ziekentrooster*. They should support them in their duties, provide a quiet spot for study and meditation, and reserve a place for them at the officers' table. The WIC even made a seating arrangement, with the minister in the fourth position, after the captain, skipper, and merchant (*commies*).<sup>19</sup>

Of course harmony and the nature of worship on any ship depended a lot on the personalities of officers and clergy. According to Charles Boxer, some of the greatest WIC admirals were “earnest and God-fearing Calvinists whose favourite reading was the Bible.” Whether that was true or not, no single person could preclude problems on every ship in the fleet. The church at home had to intervene, for example, when it learned that captains in Brazil were treating *ziekentroosters* harshly, keeping them out of the officers' cabin. Simon Claesz complained in 1628 that when he tried to chastise certain unnamed “abuses” on his ship, he was prevented, and the captain even stopped the morning and evening prayers. It is difficult to know who was at fault. Claesz may have overstepped his bounds, ignoring orders to tread lightly around the faults of officers and to avoid involvement in purely secular matters. Or the captain may have simply not cared about the company's orders. The directors at home sometimes had to adjudicate disputes, and they did not automatically side with their captains. They once overturned Michiel van

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<sup>19</sup> WIC instructions, 12 Dec 1635, ASG II, 5755, NA; 11 May 1650, ACA 212:170-176, SAA. For Calvinist ideas about rulers, see Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 23-39. For “with God,” see the “cognossement” of Jacob Barten, 11 Feb 1631, OWIC 49:38, NA; and the cargo receipt from J. Ruychaver to Barent Janssen, 1 Feb 1646, OWIC 11. For WIC admirals, see the minutes of the XIX, 27 Dec 1624, OWIC 1:183-184. For an example of the WIC arranging a minister's place on a ship, see the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 3 Dec 1635, OWIC 14:99; or the extract from the resolutions of the president and his councilors, 22 Oct 1646, ACA 185:86, SAA.

Lunenburg's sentence against the *ziekentrooster* Jacobus Dincklagen, who had gotten drunk during the voyage. They reproached Dincklagen but restored his pay and censured van Lunenburg for acting alone in "incriminating an officer."<sup>20</sup>

*Baptized by Fire: Calvinists at War*

As WIC vessels searched for prey, often hugging the coastline to find unknown Spanish or Portuguese settlements, the Dutch were reminded again and again that their enemy was Catholic. They came across churches and monasteries most often in the larger towns and colonies, sometimes even in places with few Europeans, with towers and steeples visible from the sea before anything else. In sketching pictures and recording locations for future voyages, they found that churches were convenient landmarks for logging a particular place. Iberians also helpfully planted crosses atop hills and at the mouths of rivers and bays. Trying to navigate the tricky approach to Curaçao in order to take it from the Spanish in 1634, the Dutch were assisted by the large cross that marked the proper entrance. For all their uses to navigators, crosses and churches also served as symbols of the ancient adversary, the righteous war, and the conquest and transformation of a Catholic landscape into a Protestant one.<sup>21</sup>

In the rituals they performed before and after battles, in the letters and books they wrote to describe and celebrate them, the Dutch exuded confidence that their fight was

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<sup>20</sup> Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire*, 128. For the Brazil incident, see Chap. 3 of this dissertation. For Claesz, see the minutes of the Dordrecht consistory, 19 Oct 1628, AKD 4:76-77, SADOR. For Dincklagen, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 3 and 7 Nov 1633, OWIC 21:188-189, NA. (This is not the same Dincklagen of New Netherland fame.) See also Rev. Michaelius's complaints about the tyrannical officer aboard his ship during his voyage to America: *ERSNY* 1:50-1. He also wrote to Director Godyn about it.

<sup>21</sup> See some of the descriptions, maps, and pictures in De Laet, *Historie*: 16, 36, 39-40 (a cross atop a hill in Africa), 58-59 (Puerto Rico), 60, 107, 184-185 (Recife), 190-191 (Olinda), 207, 229 (Cape Verdes), 290, 309 (the city of St. Francisco de Campeche is recognizable especially because of its white monastery), 352-354 (Trucillo), 432-436 (Curaçao), 478. See also the descriptions in the van Stapels journal, HV 182, ZA.

moral, that God was with them. Their self-righteousness was exemplified in Piet Heyn's purported battle cry during his assault on the Spanish fleet at Cuba in 1628: "Good War!" he called, according to Spranckhuysen, who wrote that theirs was indeed a good war, a "Glorious, Holy work." "Her work is your work," Johannes Baers prayed, speaking about the WIC after it captured Olinda in 1630. The governor of Brazil, Johan Maurits, likewise described his military operations as "God's work," and on another occasion, following a battle, he wrote that "the victory comes from God," listing piety as one of the qualities of a good soldier, trusting that God would continue to "bless our weapons."<sup>22</sup>

In some ways this manner of speaking was standard among seventeenth-century peoples and probably does not reveal much. Enthusiastic writers may have tossed around familiar religious expressions without much thought. And they were perfectly aware that many soldiers (like sailors) were not especially devout. Often they were not even Protestant, recruited from wherever the WIC could find them. Yet that does not appear to have altered visions of the company's godly purposes, nor did it stop anyone from seeking divine assistance. Their words became rather more meaningful as they translated them into specific religious practices, which were an integral part of life at war for everyone who worked for the company, no matter his beliefs. Many of the rituals and traditions listed before, including prayer and the special days of worship, were explicitly war-related. As the clergy prepared men mentally and spiritually to fight, they tried to change them, turn them away from sin through constant reminders and exhortation. Though they failed to effect a widescale reformation, which is hardly surprising, given the army's diversity, their efforts were important to some individuals, and, in the very

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<sup>22</sup> Spranckhuysen, *Triumphe*, 57, 71; Baers, *Olinda*, 37; Maurits to the XIX, 8 Mar 1637, OWIC 52:15, NA; Maurits to the XIX, 10 July 1639, OWIC 54:164.

least, they helped maintain order. Reformed beliefs about proper behavior, sin, God's wrath, and just warfare provided an intellectual basis for the WIC's bellicose activities and one way for participants to make sense of what they were doing.

The XIX instructed their officers to have the clergy offer a "fiery, thoughtful, and penetrating prayer" before going into battle, to encourage the soldiers and teach them to "trust God and our righteous war." If there was enough time, officers often designated a whole day of rest and worship, then gathered the crew prior to attack and asked the minister to pray once more. If it was a large fleet, an admiral coordinated a widespread prayer with flag signals; or sometimes they waited until everyone had gone ashore. At the Portuguese town of Benguela in West Central Africa in 1641 they first landed the men and cannon, and then, "having gotten everything in order, we called upon God and so advanced along the beach." When the Dutch took Luanda the following year, they also first placed the men and guns before Reverend Vittaeus prayed. At least once in Brazil they did so "within earshot of the enemy."<sup>23</sup> They asked God to fight with them as he did for Israel, to forgive their sins and protect and direct them. They prayed for his assistance in "planting the Holy Gospel," for the welfare of the WIC and its directors, for a blessing on their weapons, and of course for victory.<sup>24</sup>

Religious rituals and discourse could be very important in preparing the hearts and minds of sailors and soldiers to fight. The colonel in Brazil who offered a prayer so

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<sup>23</sup> Instructions of the XIX for Hendrick Lonck, 18 Aug 1629, OWIC 2:11-19, NA. See also the instructions of the same date, OWIC 2 (no page numbers). For Benguela, see the journal of P. Zegers, 22 Dec 1641, OWIC 57:121. For Luanda, see Pieter Mortamer's report, 14 Oct 1642, OWIC 58:266. For "earshot," see De Laet, *Historie*, 504. See other examples on 62, 175, 185, 249, and 503; as well as the account of General Pater's loss, April 1632, ASG II, 5753, NA; secret instructions of the XIX to Commander Lichthart, 16 Dec 1634, OWIC 2 (no page numbers); minutes of the Brazil council, 9 Mar 1638, OWIC 68; and Gehring, ed., *Curaçao Papers*, 31.

<sup>24</sup> Journal of the expedition to Rio Grande, 5 Dec 1633, OWIC 50:18, NA; the minutes of the Brazil council, 2 Feb 1637, OWIC 68; Udemans, *Geestelijck Roer*, Book 6 (especially the prayer at the end).

near the enemy's lines had spent the previous nights visiting his troops in an attempt to bolster their nervous, lagging spirits. Exactly what he said is unknown, but in the prayers that he ordered more than once throughout the campaign, he must have intended to instill them with a measure of spiritual confidence.<sup>25</sup> That is the sense one gets from the similar story of Pieter Constant, captain of the *Princesse Aemilia*. When he spied sails in the distance and realized that they belonged to the Dunkirkers, he directed his ship away from them long enough to speak to the crew. Borrowing from the Old Testament story of Elisha, who was once encircled by a large Syrian army, he told them that, though their enemies were many, "God is more than all of them." He promised that not a hair of their heads would be lost unless the Lord willed it, reminding them of the "manly" deeds of Biblical warriors like Jonathan, David, and Gideon, as well as the "pious" Dutch Captain Groenveldt, who had conducted himself honorably in defending England against Spain's attempted invasion in the previous century. After a "fiery Prayer to God," Constant turned the ship directly into the oncoming privateers, eventually defeating them in a long, bloody engagement. Victory was evidence of God's "Fatherly care" for his children. And again the Old Testament language: "It was JEHOVA who gave us a manly heart to fight courageously," Jehovah who discouraged the enemy and caused him to flee.<sup>26</sup>

The author of the Constant account, Gideon Moris, may have exaggerated in his depiction of enemy numbers and other details, as celebratory tracts often did. But the story was lifted from his diary, and its basic elements ring true with other accounts and with clergy instructions. Reverend Udemans taught that soldiers always needed spiritual comfort and strength before battle, that anyone with a troubled conscience should go to

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<sup>25</sup> De Laet, *Historie*, 503-505.

<sup>26</sup> Gedeon Moris, *Coppye van 't Journael gehouden by Gedeon Moris, koopman op het Schip van de West Indische Compagnie genaemt de Princesse* (Amsterdam, 1640).

the clergy for direction and reconcile himself with his neighbors and Christ. He should also avoid unorthodox teachers, which was perhaps intended for the many Catholics, Lutherans, and others in Dutch crews and military companies. In these ways the believer could face the enemy without fear. Like the sick man working with the *ziekentrooster*, he could die in peace, having lived in the Lord.<sup>27</sup> The principal divergence from official instructions in the Moris story was that the captain, not the minister, offered spiritual guidance before the fight. The *Princesse* may not have had a clergyman, or Constant might have had little confidence in the rhetorical skills of his lay minister. The conduct of the colonel in Brazil also suggests that military and naval leaders liked to encourage their men themselves, fusing secular and spiritual duties, if they chose, by adopting the mantle of religious instructor, which was supposed to be reserved for the ministry.

Ministers still had a public role in the prayers and, if there was time before the fight began—as there was on fast and prayer days—the sermons. They also offered private, one-on-one instruction to Reformed crew members and officers. In his book *Olinda*, Reverend Baers described his consultations with Colonel Diederick van Waerdenburch before the invasion of Brazil in 1630. Baers recorded the usual religious traditions, like regular sermons and a day of prayer that was held throughout the fleet when the voyage first began. But Waerdenburch went even further: On January 13 the colonel took the unusual step (on a ship) of celebrating Communion, to “prepare like Christians for the fight,” to arm himself “with God and with a clear Conscience.” He prepared for Communion by reading a book about it, written by Baers’s father, a well-known minister in Holland. He read other works of theology, politics, and history and discussed them at dinner with his officers. Before sermons, Baers wrote, Waerdenburch

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<sup>27</sup> Udemans, *Geestelijck Roer*, Book 6.



encouraged everyone to listen attentively. Like “pious” and “godly” military men had done with their clergy before, he spoke frequently with Baers about his personal fears of failure in the fight to come. With his own quarters just below the colonel’s, and with the lack of privacy common on ships, Baers also claimed to have heard him pray on several occasions, usually in the morning and evening and sometimes with servants.<sup>28</sup>

On the day before the attack (a fleet-wide day of prayer), Baers preached about Moses, Joshua, and the Israelites defeating an Arab people called the Amalekites. The crew sang Psalm 140 and they closed with a “penetrating Prayer to God.” That evening the colonel asked the minister to come to his cabin, where they took turns praying, talking, and praying again. According to Baers, Waerdenburch was preparing his conscience for the task ahead. When Baers went to his own cabin and tried to sleep, he could hear Waerdenburch still moving about, so he returned, and again they kneeled together and prayed. Baers told Waerdenburch to keep God in his heart and a prayer on his lips as he fought, to take his sword in the name of the Lord and slay the enemy. God would strengthen his limbs to fight like David and go before him with a “bare sword,” as Jehovah did for Joshua at Jericho. He would guide him and bring him safely home again. Addressing his men the next morning, the colonel told them to behave as “pious” soldiers, not doubting that the Lord would help and strengthen them if they kept him in their hearts throughout the struggle. He prayed for power to fight like David and asked God to forgive their sins.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Johannes Baers, *Olinda, ghelegen int landt van Brasil, inde capitania van Phernambuco, met mannelijcke dapperheyt ende groote couragie inghenomen, ende veroverd op den 16. Februarij A. 1630* (Amsterdam, 1630), 1-12. See Baers and his father in *Biographisch Woordenboek*, 291.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-23. The Moses/Amalekites story that Baers preached about is found in Exodus 17.

Baers wrote his account for the public, and he probably took some liberties in describing these events. He could not have known the exact words that the colonel spoke to his men, for example, because those were delivered on the beach, and Baers, by his own admission, remained on the ship until the battle was won. (Perhaps someone shared them with him.) Waerdenburch did have a wider reputation for religious devotion, and he revealed that fervor or enthusiasm in his letters home. Later, as governor of Brazil, he was also an active elder in the colony's Reformed consistory.<sup>30</sup> Baers's description is significant for more than what it may or may not say about Waerdenburch, however. In addition to the constant association between the Dutch and ancient Israel, it reveals an interesting link between courage, manliness, and piety that is echoed in other war-time accounts. Reverend Baers more than once counseled Waerdenburch to fight "manfully." The colonel assured his soldiers that he might fall, but he would never run away. They must fight with him or die with shame in the sea. He reminded them of "brave men" like Moses, David, and the Prince of Orange and asked them to behave the same: "If you want to be known by all the world as pious and faithful soldiers, act manfully and follow me." In his prayer he purportedly asked God to grant them "manly," courageous hearts, just as the captain of the *Princesse* encouraged his crew with stories of manly Bible heroes and credited Jehovah for their manly hearts during the fight with the Dunkirkers.<sup>31</sup>

Johannes de Laet also connected piety and war-time behaviors. In his *Historie* he sometimes singled out particular WIC officers as devout men, including Commander Jan Lichthart, Captain Philbert du Busson, and Admiral Adriaen Pater, whose death during a battle with the Spanish fleet was especially lamented because of his piety and "manly

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<sup>30</sup> Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 38-39 (fn. 6), 240; Colonel D. van Waerdenburch to the XIX, 23 July 1630, OWIC 49:17, NA.

<sup>31</sup> Baers, *Olinda*, 7, 13-20; Moris, *Copie van 't Journael*, 2, 4.

courage.”<sup>32</sup> When De Laet first introduced Lichthart, he promised readers that they would be learning more about his “pious deeds” throughout the book. De Laet then told of Lichthart’s leading his men in battle, refusing to strike his flag for the Spanish king, burning ships and sugar mills, looting the Portuguese on land and at sea, seizing entire cargoes of sugar, brazilwood, and wine. Almost two hundred pages after his initial promise, De Laet finally described something that one usually associates with piety, when Lichthart asked someone to offer a prayer before a battle in Brazil and ordered sermons in Dutch, French, and English afterward. His eventual death at the hands of the Portuguese might suggest that death was enough to confer a certain sacred aura on the memory of the victim, a kind of martyrdom: Du Busson (the third pious officer) was killed in battle too. But Lichthart did not die until two years after De Laet’s book was published. The way that Dutch authors used the word “piety” suggests that the act of war itself—fighting or dying in a righteous cause—was its own kind of godliness.<sup>33</sup>

Another writer who embraced this idea was the WIC *ziekentrooster* and amateur poet Jacob Steendam, who arrived in West Africa in 1641. He accompanied General Jacob Ruychaver in an attack against the Portuguese and their African allies at Fort Axim the following year, again writing a poem that the crew sang “as [they] prepared to fight.” In another poem he described the battle and heralded the “Brave Soldiers” who scaled the walls and burned the village. But he reserved his greatest praise for the “Noble, Manly” Ruychaver, situating his deeds in a long chain of scriptural history and spiritual conflict between God, the Devil, and their intermediaries on earth. “God’s People” would have no place in the world without “Manly Sons,” he observed. First offering a prayer, the general

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<sup>32</sup> De Laet, *Historie*, 243 (Pater), 322 (Du Busson). See Pater’s death also in Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 47-48.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 221-222 (“initial promise”), 322, 325, 330, 336, 344, 350, 364, 366, 375, 380, 410, 411, 416-424 (prayer and sermon), 426-427, 466-469, 482. For Lichthart’s death, see Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 184.

purportedly led his soldiers into enemy fire without fear. In doing so he joined the likes of David and, more recently, the admirals Piet Heyn and Cornelis “peg-legged” Jol. Steendam concluded that, just as songs were sung about David, so believers now would sing about Ruychaver and the great, holy work that he accomplished at Fort Axim. Given Steendam’s talents, that was of course a self-fulfilling prophecy.<sup>34</sup>

Epic depictions of WIC officers tell us less about their actual religion than about the heroic “type” that they were supposed to emulate—though Ruychaver did maintain a good reputation in ecclesiastical circles in the long run. During his tenure in West Africa he supported the church’s efforts to found a school, pressed the directors at home for clergy and other needs, and helped build a Reformed community among employees. Most high-ranking officers were probably Reformed, and if they wanted a place in the annals of national legend, they had to embody the values that writers like Steendam celebrated. In the very least they had to avoid public scandal, maintain the usual religious rituals in the fleets and military companies under their command, and display “manly” courage in battle. Victory did not hurt one’s reputation either, just as WIC success was evidence that the Dutch, like ancient Israel, were God’s people.<sup>35</sup>

If the Dutch were good at turning their ships into churches, they also transformed more traditional sacred space into a bloody combat zone. The XIX ordered their officers to plan attacks for Sundays or Catholic holidays, when they would have the most effect: “when the people from the ships are mostly ashore for Mass.” It was difficult to make such precise arrangements at sea, when a fleet’s arrival depended on favorable winds and other circumstances, but it was possible on land. Four companies under Lieutenant

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<sup>34</sup> Steendam, *Den Distelvink*, II:115-128.

<sup>35</sup> For Ruychaver, see the minutes of the deputies, 7 July 1641 and 1 Jan 1642, ACA 157:63, 78-79, SAA; the XIX to Ruychaver, 1 Jan 1644, OWIC 9:159-161, NA; Ruychaver to the XIX, 19 Jan 1645, OWIC 11.

Balthasar van Bijma once captured the Brazilian village of Moriwere “unforeseen” because it was a holiday and the inhabitants were “mostly at Mass.”<sup>36</sup> As the most substantial edifice in many locales, a church or monastery was also a potential fort, which is one reason that the Dutch took such great interest in them. As they sailed the Atlantic coastline they did not just record a church’s location, but the number of soldiers who guarded it, if any. With enough warning the enemy could gather food and other supplies there, secure themselves within, and fire on the Dutch from behind stone walls. In most of the towns and cities captured in Africa and America the WIC fortified former Catholic churches. Like Protestants everywhere, they destroyed Catholic images and other décor “underfoot.” They burnt trees and buildings that might provide shelter for attackers, dug trenches, and built other works. The Dutch also used churches and monasteries to gather loot, secure prisoners, and make peace agreements with Portuguese rulers.<sup>37</sup>

The militarization of sacred space was best illustrated in the capture and loss of Porto Calvo, Brazil, in 1635. The town was taken by Commander Lichthart, who was ordered to subject its “rebellious” inhabitants by force. Lichthart had difficulty at first because a number of Portuguese made a stand in one of Porto Calvo’s two churches. After the Dutch finally drove them out, they found stores of bullets and powder inside. They secured the building with their own guns and raised the flag of the Prince of Orange. Left in the charge of Major Alexander Picard, Porto Calvo was soon attacked again, this time by the Portuguese General Mathias de Albuquerque. In the meantime the

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<sup>36</sup> Secret instructions of the XIX, 16 Dec 1634, OWIC 2 (no page numbers), NA. De Laet, *Historie*, 348. See also p. 343, when the Dutch break open a church in the middle of Mass and take the priest prisoner.

<sup>37</sup> See the instructions of the XIX to Hendrick Lonck, 18 Aug 1629, OWIC 2:11-19, NA. See also Jacque Osiel’s 1637 report on Trinidad, etc., in OWIC 46; Elias Herckman’s description of Paraiba, 1639, OWIC 46; the minutes of Nieuwland and Mols (Angola), 15 Apr 1643, ASG V, 12564.12, NA; De Laet, *Historie*, 16, 51, 53, 60 (“underfoot”), 187, 190, 193, 196, 202, 290, 356, 412, 438, and 478.

Dutch had improved the defenses around both houses of worship, but when Picard went to inspect the enemy's position, he was cut off, leaving the most important church weakly defended. The Portuguese attacked, tore down the palisades, scaled the moat, and entered. They purportedly slaughtered those who secured themselves in the magazine and hid under the bunks. The remaining Dutch troops took refuge in a large home and in the second church. Both sides brought their guns to bear, destroying the town and its chapels before the Dutch surrendered, days after the fight began.<sup>38</sup>

Just as Catholic buildings became forts, Catholic vestments and décor became booty. The Dutch only destroyed that which was not valuable. Among the items that they sometimes collected from churches or off the bodies of the dead were silver and gold chains and crosses.<sup>39</sup> When a WIC fleet in the Caribbean stumbled upon the town of Santa Marta in modern-day Columbia, the Spanish did not have the means to protect themselves. The Dutch must have gone ashore to inspect because one officer reported that the three churches were well-decorated “in their manner.” The Spanish agreed to pay a ransom to avoid destruction. Local priests then carried clocks, pearls, coins, a cross, and other silver relics (“hellich dom”) from the churches to the ships.<sup>40</sup>

The Dutch were aware that an overly heavy hand might be a problem for them in the long run because peace was necessary for regular agricultural and commercial life in places where they wanted to establish control. Some looting and killing happened despite orders to prevent it. The XIX and others in high command ordered officers to maintain control over their soldiers, to stop indiscriminate plunder and the unnecessary abuse of

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<sup>38</sup> De Laet, *Historie*, 468-469 (though numbered incorrectly as “478-479”); 472-477. See also Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 58-63.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 64, 201, 452.

<sup>40</sup> Van Stapels journal, HV 182, ZA.

Portuguese inhabitants.<sup>41</sup> When the Dutch in Brazil addressed enemy armies, they said that they did not love violence nor enjoy what they were doing. They had “compassion” on them and invited them to be friends: the Portuguese just needed to surrender. The Dutch felt love for “fellow Christians” and did not want to shed “Christian blood.” The Portuguese had to accept that it was God who made the Dutch mighty and submit to his will.<sup>42</sup> And in peace agreements, the company usually showed a degree of restraint, even allowing priests to carry away church décor and “images.”<sup>43</sup> The ability to contain the passions of war was one of the skills of the pious officer. When Spranckhuysen wrote about Admiral Heyn, a “Christian captain,” he did not just honor the victory, but Heyn’s moderation and “sweetness” (*zoetigheid*). He celebrated Heyn’s purported pity for the enemy, just as God tempers the sword of justice with the oil of mercy. Victims of WIC aggression in places like Porto Calvo probably would have wondered at Spranckhuysen’s claim that Reformed religion tended to prevent the usual atrocities of war.<sup>44</sup>

In stark contrast to their heroic depictions of high-ranking officers, the Dutch (and especially the clergy) condemned sailors and soldiers as great sinners and unstable, fickle employees. Religion was part of the problem because many were Catholic, and their allegiances were suspect because of it. Dutch rulers both at Curaçao and Brazil asked the directors to stop hiring French soldiers. Governor Walbeeck explained that the “diversity” of religions among his men increased the likelihood of mutiny. And he did

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<sup>41</sup> For orders and “aware,” see the minutes of the XIX, 3 Nov 1623, OWIC 1:32, NA; the XIX to Hugo Anthony, et al., 24 Sep 1624, OWIC 1:126-128; James Henderson’s description of Angola, 1642, OWIC 57:84 (peace a prerequisite to profits); Pieter Mortamer’s report about the capture of Angola, 14 Oct 1642, OWIC 58:266: They were under orders not to plunder Luanda but the soldiers did anyway. On soldier excesses in battle, see also Udemans, *Geestelijck Roer*, Book 6; and Bullinger, *Huys-boeck*, 64-68.

<sup>42</sup> Pieter de Vroe to Mathias van Albuquerque, 30 Aug 1630, OWIC 2, NA; De Laet, *Historie*, 296-298.

<sup>43</sup> Agreement reached with the Portuguese at Elmina, 30 Aug 1637, OWIC 52:127, NA; De Laet, *Historie*, 331, 335, 454, 464 (“images”).

<sup>44</sup> Spranckhuysen, *Triumphe*, 71-72.

have reason to fear, for the French in both places sometimes defected to the enemy. The Portuguese sowed division among them using pamphlets and other means, “recognising them as fellow members of their church.” “God willing,” no “French Papist” would ever set foot on Brazilian soil again, wrote Reverend Soler after a number of soldiers were tried and executed as conspirators.<sup>45</sup> Clergy also lamented blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, and prostitution, perhaps the reasons that they prayed for forgiveness before battle or, if they lost, blamed it on their “multitudinous sins” and the wrath of God, who “wanted to punish [them].” Ideas about cause and effect were conveniently flexible: Though success was a blessing from God and evidence of their special standing, failure had more limited connotations. God allowed an occasional loss to remind them of their unworthiness and reprove them. It was a corrective measure specific to that moment or incident, apparently never signifying that perhaps they were not God’s people after all.<sup>46</sup>

For the first twenty to thirty years of Dutch activity in the Atlantic world, victory was the more common experience in war. The company usually celebrated with the same religious rituals that preceded attack, now to give thanks. If they had bombarded the enemy from their ships, they would go ashore following the surrender and, after the usual negotiations and treaties, have the minister pray and preach, sometimes more than once in multiple languages. A colonel in Brazil once saw to the needs of the wounded and buried the dead, then formed his troops into battalions and had them kneel together in “thanksgiving.” For particularly important victories the Dutch observed widespread days

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<sup>45</sup> Walbeeck to the Zeeland chamber, 24 Mar 1636, OWIC 51:31, NA; the president and his councilors to the Zeeland chamber, 26 Feb 1647, OWIC 63:15. For French defectors, see De Laet, *Historie*, 198, 200. See also p. 486 and, for later French defectors on Curaçao, the journal of the attack against Curaçao, March 1673, ASG II, 5758, NA. See also the “Pamflet in het Frans,” 1645, OWIC 60:1. For the rest, see Reverend Soler to Andre Rivet, 2 Apr 1639, in B.N. Teensma, tr. and ed., *Vincent Joachim Soler’s Seventeen Letters, 1636-1643* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Index, 1999), 57-60.

<sup>46</sup> Lam, *Expeditie*, 111. See also 95, 110, 125; the Cunyngham journal, 24 Oct 1625, OWIC 43, NA; and De Laet, *Historie*, 54, 68.



of gratitude, similar to the days of prayer before. In addition to rest and worship (and probably drinking), soldiers and freemen discharged their muskets, coordinated with cannon fire from the forts and ships. In doing so they intended to honor their triumph and send a frightening message to unconquered enemies at the same time. After defeating a Spanish fleet in 1639, the Dutch thanked the Lord for protecting them, despite their sins. God visited the Spanish with his “destroying angel,” making them sick and “cutting down not just a few hundred, but a few thousand.” The council in Brazil prayed for a continued blessing on Dutch weapons and the destruction of the kingdom of Satan.<sup>47</sup>

### *Manliness and Sin in Company Forts*

However much the Dutch celebrated their holy war, the church could never really be transplanted to new locales until conflict came to an end. Prayers, songs, and sermons were important to Reformed services, but in some ways they were just window dressing to the weightier practices of baptism, Communion, and ecclesiastical discipline in a fully-formed consistory. Without these there was no real church, no “body of Christ.” Unfortunately the clergy usually found when they arrived in West Africa or America that conditions still did not suit the full implementation of church traditions and government. Often they still had to serve as army chaplains, following the troops from battlefield to battlefield, living in tents or forts. They complained of the inconveniences common to

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<sup>47</sup> For the colonel, see De Laet, *Historie*, 507. For the Spanish fleet, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 11 May 1639, OWIC 68, NA, as well as Maurits’s account of the victory and aftermath, 28 Feb 1640, ASG II, 5755, c. 1022-1030, NA; and Maurits to the Zeeland and Maas chambers, 2 Mar 1640, OWIC 55:1. For other examples of days of thanks, see De Laet, *Historie*, 189-190, 335, 369, 424; Baers, *Olinda*, 23-28; Spranckhuysen, *Triumphe*, 72; journal of the expedition to Rio Grande, 5-21 Dec 1633, OWIC 50:18; M. van Ceullen and Johan Gijsseling to the WIC, 5 Jan 1634, ASG II, 5753; J. Lichthart and N. de Ridder to the WIC or States General, 19 Mar 1635, ASG II, 5754 (though they did not have a minister); the Recife *dagregister*, 12 June 1635, OWIC 50:91; Joris Calf to the Zeeland chamber, 28 Feb 1636, OWIC 51:45; Daniel Schagen, et al., to Cornelis van der Poel, 7 Mar 1637, OWIC 52:14 (near the end); Rev. Dapper to the Schouwen classis, 20 Mar 1637, ACZ 20-24, GASD; journal of P. Zegers, 25 Dec 1641, OWIC 57:121.

that life: the incessant marching, the sins of some soldiers and officers, foul weather, the loss of their books and other possessions when the enemy overran Dutch lines and they had to beat a hasty retreat. Communion was only held in the army after the WIC was better established. Even then, of course, it was only celebrated among the minority of soldiers who were Reformed believers.<sup>48</sup>

Conditions in most outposts and settlements in the Atlantic world remained primitive for a long time, even where there were immigrants. The Dutch made numerous attempts to establish themselves on the Wild Coast, for example. In addition to the few colonies that survived—Essequibo, Berbice, Demerara, and eventually Suriname—there were fifteen that did not, including at least one group of Reformed Walloons with ties to English Separatists in North America. Most attempts lasted only between six months and a few years, though one lasted eight. The WIC also tried and failed to found settlements on various Caribbean islands, succeeding only at Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, St. Eustatius, St. Martin, and Saba, which were all relatively small and infertile. Settlers struggled on the Wild Coast mostly because of its harsh tropical climate, sometimes also because of indigenous and European enemies.<sup>49</sup> Visitors reported scattered populations, poverty, and death, all of which hindered the work of the church and dampened the enthusiasm of the clergy. They had to hold services in forts and individual homes, traveling sometimes by canoe or overland with Indian guides to visit distant towns and plantations. All efforts to build a Reformed community and establish a consistory might suddenly come to naught

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<sup>48</sup> For clergy correspondence from the army, see Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 9 Aug 1635, OWIC 50:124, NA; 12 Dec 1635, OWIC 50:150; Willem Appel to the same chamber, June 1636, OWIC 51:87. For Communion, see Chap. 5: The Brazil classis arranged for personnel, sermons, Communion, etc.

<sup>49</sup> Henk den Heijer, “‘Over warme en koude landen’: Mislukte Nederlandse volksplantinge op de Wilde Kust in de zeventiende eeuw,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 21, no. 1 (2005): 79-90. See also L.J. Joosse, “De Westindische vaart en de kerk in West-Afrika en de Caraïben (1594-1674): de positie van predikanten overzee en hun werk,” *Documentatieblad voor de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse zending en overzeese kerken* 3, no. 1 (1996): 2-37. For the Walloon group, see Chap. 6.

because of a devastating epidemic, an enemy fleet, or because warfare choked what had been a flourishing trade, causing people to scatter in search of other opportunities. Time and again ministers reported growing congregations, a larger pool from which to choose elders and deacons, then starting over because of the latest emergency.<sup>50</sup>

The absence of women was a surprising obstacle to the establishment of churches. On the face of it, a lack of women should not have posed a problem because, to be fully functional, the church only needed ministers, elders, and deacons. At home it sometimes utilized female deaconesses, but their sole purpose was to visit widows and other single women, acting as a kind of buffer to prevent improper contact with married men. They did not sit on the consistory or have any control over church funds. Women were not part of church government and, in that sense, should not have been necessary in places that did not have to worry about European widows, like most early WIC forts and outposts. There was no apparent reason that the church could not function without them. Yet their absence posed constant problems. For all the clergy's celebration of manliness and manly piety in the context of war, they were less enthusiastic about the prospects of forming a Reformed community with nothing but a large group of men, even if the men in question had no choice but to listen to their sermons and suffer their chastisement.<sup>51</sup>

The best place to examine the nature of religious life without European society is West Africa. After the early, contested decades of expansion the Dutch presence finally

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<sup>50</sup> See the van Stapels journal, HV 182, ZA, for services held in a home and fort. For a minister traveling by canoe and with Indian guides, see Adriaan van Berkel, *Amerikaansche Voyagien, Behelzende en Reis na Rio de Berbice, Gelegen op het vaste Land van Guiana, aande Wilde-kust van Amerika* (Amsterdam, 1695). See also *Livre Synodal*, 10-13 Apr 1658, Art. 2, on the church's inability to enact the synod's plans for St. Martin because of the island's poverty. Or see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 12 Aug 1660, ACW 4:152, ZA, on disease, death, and the disbursement of settlers. Examples of congregations and consistories being wiped out are too numerous to list here. See, for example, Jan Walreven to the Amsterdam classis, 8 July 1649, ACA 224:8-10, SAA. Disease left only seven Dutch members (and some English) on Curaçao.

<sup>51</sup> For deaconesses, see Parker, *The Reformation of Community*, 120.

became permanent in most other places. Populations always remained smaller than they did in English and Iberian colonies, but they were more stable than before, and the church grew accordingly. The situation was rather different in Africa, however. In America the Dutch faced weakened indigenous societies, terribly susceptible to Old World diseases, sometimes already subjugated or destroyed by previous waves of Spanish or Portuguese. In Africa the Dutch had to cope with more powerful, organized states. Many diseases did not affect Africans in the same way that they did American Indians because of long contact and exposure, yet the Dutch still suffered high mortality rates in Africa's tropical climates. Deadly pathogens and African power limited the Dutch to a skeletal, male, commercial-military presence at locations like Fort Nassau, Axim, and Elmina on the Gold Coast. The WIC also held Luanda and São Tomé in the 1640s.<sup>52</sup>

The Dutch observed the same traditions in their forts as they did at sea: daily prayers, psalm-singing, twice-weekly sermons, and the occasional days of supplication and thanks. The WIC always maintained a number of *ziekentroosters* in Africa, usually also ordained ministers at Elmina and Luanda. As the most imposing fort or castle on the Gold Coast, Elmina was the company's headquarters. Sometimes employees traveled from other forts to worship there.<sup>53</sup> It boasted one of the few chapels in the region, built by the Portuguese inside the castle walls, used by the WIC "for buying or trading." Michael Hemmersam, a Lutheran soldier, reported instead that "[w]e held our Sunday

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<sup>52</sup> The classic work on disease in America is Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Greenwood Press, 1972). See also Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For Africa, see Philip Curtin, "Epidemiology and the Slave Trade," *Political Science Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (June 1968): 190-216. See also Klaas Rattelband, *Nederlanders in West Afrika, 1600-1650: Angola, Kongo en São Tomé* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> The minutes of the XIX, 25 Aug 1659, ASG V, 12564.42, NA. For worship in general, see Cornelis Jacobsen to the Amsterdam church, 28 Jan 1634, AKA 243:25, SAA, and numerous references in *Vijf Dagregisters*. For example, pp. 2, 4, 25, 27, 44, 45, 50, and so on. Prayers and sermons are mentioned throughout. See also Frijhoff, *Wegen*, Chap. 13.

with prayer, reading and singing in the great hall of the general's quarters, which was hung with pikes, muskets, and similar weapons and was more like an arsenal than a church." The Dutch built their own chapel at Elmina in the 1660s. At other forts they probably worshipped in whatever space was large enough, like "the general's quarters" or "Commander's hall," perhaps outdoors when the weather allowed it.<sup>54</sup>

Hemmersam's presence at Sunday services is a reminder that many employees were not Reformed, nor even Dutch. Still, the clergy were under instructions to plant a church by calling elders, exercising discipline, and holding Communion with those who were members. In doing so they divided the European population. Hemmersam wrote, for example, that missing Communion was "[t]he greatest loss and cause of regret for me and others attached to the Evangelical [i.e. Lutheran] religion." He also said the clergy "knew quite well what each man's religious affiliation was."<sup>55</sup> Of the 200 to 300 employees that the company usually kept on the Gold Coast, only a small number were members. After almost six years of labor Reverend Hendricks reported just 30. Reverend Ketel reported 36 in Luanda in the same period, all Dutch soldiers.<sup>56</sup> Bartholomeus IJsebout enjoyed the greatest success, finding 12 members when he arrived at Elmina in late 1666, leaving 70 about five years later. Some were former Catholics and Lutherans, whom he catechized each Thursday in preparation for their public professions of faith. He called a number of elders and even corresponded with Reformed believers in Danish and English forts, who

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<sup>54</sup> Michael Hemmersam, "Michael Hemmersam's Description of the Gold Coast, 1639-1645," *German Sources for West African History, 1559-1669*, tr. and ed. Adam Jones (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1983), 127, 130. On WIC forts and churches, see A.W. Lawrence, *Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa* (Stanford University Press, 1964), Part 2, Chap. 3; Part 4, Chaps. 1-2.

<sup>55</sup> Hemmersam, "Description," 130-131. See also Frijhoff, *Wegen*, Chap. 13.

<sup>56</sup> For Hendricks, see his report to the Amsterdam classis, 7 May 1646, ACA 4:378, SAA; General Ruychaver to the XIX, 19 Jan 1645, OWIC 11, NA. For Ketel, see his letter to Godefridus de Pauw, 15 Sep 1642, ASU 279, UA.

occasionally traveled to celebrate Communion with the Dutch at Elmina. The church had never bloomed or flourished in Guinea as it did in those years, he boasted.<sup>57</sup>

The fluctuating number of members in Africa was probably due in part to the personalities and enthusiasm of individual clergy. Mostly it had to do with disease and mobility, though. Few employees remained in one place, transferring to other WIC outposts or just returning to the Netherlands at intervals. Many also died, including ministers and *ziekentroosters*, struck down by malaria and yellow fever, immobilized by the infamous Guinea worm, which entered the body in contaminated drinking water and grew to about a meter, emerging usually through the skin of the legs and feet.<sup>58</sup> After his third illness in less than a year, one *ziekentrooster* committed suicide: hardly an example to those he was supposed to comfort and instruct about proper Christian attitudes toward death.<sup>59</sup> So “continual” was the specter of death among employees that Cornelis Jacobsen could write, with only some exaggeration, that *ziekentroosters* were more necessary than ships in Africa. He was the schoolmaster at Fort Nassau with Reverend Benderius, who was so afraid of “land sickness” (probably malaria or yellow fever) that he spent most of his days aboard one of the ships on the coast, leaving the fort for weeks at a time without

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<sup>57</sup> IJsebout to the Amsterdam classis, 28 Feb 1668, 10 Feb 1669, 14 July 1670, ACA 210:214-217, SAA; the minutes of the deputies, 3 Aug 1670, ACA 158:92. The next minister, Reverend Oudewater, confirmed the number of members. See Oudewater to the Amsterdam classis, 14 Aug 1671, ACA 210:221-222. See also IJsebout’s correspondence with the Danes, 6 and 8 Apr 1669, ACA 210:219-220.

<sup>58</sup> Donald R. Hopkins, “Dracunculiasis,” *Cambridge World History of Human Disease*, pp. 687-689.

<sup>59</sup> The *ziekentrooster* was Adriaen Louwerens. See *Vijf Dagregisters*, 89, 133, and for the suicide, 174-175. See also Jan Claessen Cock to the governor and councilors in Brazil, 16 Dec 1641, OWIC 58:207, NA. Cock wrote that all his *ziekentroosters* at São Tomé were dead, just three months after the island had been conquered. Ministers who died prematurely in Africa include Fredericus Vittaeus (1642), Johannes van Steenlandt (1655), Martinus Westerwyck (1656 or 1657), Joannes Schulperoort (1659), Henricus Benningh (1666), and Abraham Oudewater (1672).

a sermon. Disease discouraged ministers from serving in Africa, thinned congregations in Dutch forts, and killed members.<sup>60</sup>

Also problematic for ministers was the lack of interest and sometimes the outright challenge from bored, isolated employees who often did not care for efforts to keep them from their few amusements: gambling, alcohol, and sex with indigenous women. More than one minister was scorned when he tried to prevent such behaviors. Certain “pious persons” once warned IJsebout about “whoredoms” among soldiers, for example. When he went to the soldiers’ quarters to rebuke them, they mocked him. After he complained to the general, they were punished severely; then, “to scare the others,” the general sent the chief offenders to a smaller, even more isolated outpost—probably as much for their treatment of IJsebout as for their original transgression.<sup>61</sup> Officers were in a double bind. They had to support the clergy, but they also worried about the needs of soldiers and tended to be more forgiving than ministers. One general, after learning from home about a minister’s complaints, defended his men, acknowledging that they led rough lives. They were not “kerkmeesters,” he said, but they rarely committed wanton harm. Officers somehow had to strike a balance between piety and popularity, with the clergy usually encouraging them to be more strict. They supported the clergy by punishing soldiers for blatant misconduct, which was in their own interest, and by attending prayers and

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<sup>60</sup> Cornelis Jacobsen to the Amsterdam church, 28 Jan 1634, AKA 243:25, SAA; Jan Jochems Sticker to the XIX, 3 Feb 1634, OWIC 11, NA. For “discouraged,” see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 5 Aug 1647, ACA 5:37, SAA, when Jacobsen asked to go somewhere else because he had been so sick the first time. See also IJsebout to the Amsterdam classis, 14 July 1670, ACA 210:217. He wanted to come home because illness had weakened him. For thinned congregations, see Oudewater to the Amsterdam classis, 14 Aug 1671, ACA 210:221-222. He would have had more hearers at his first sermon, he wrote, if so many had not been sick.

<sup>61</sup> For ministers being mocked, see the experience of Jan Hermansz, 17-29 Oct 1618, ACA 2:124-125, SAA; Samuel Brun, “Samuel Brun’s Voyages of 1611-1620,” *German Sources*, 80. For IJsebout, see his letter to the Amsterdam classis, 28 Feb 1668, ACA 210:215.

sermons and making their subordinates do the same. Some officers were also members of the consistory, when there was one.<sup>62</sup>

The consistory might have been a good tool for keeping order if more employees had been members of the church. Only members were subject to church discipline, and the consistory probably, therefore, had little influence in company forts. Most of the time there were not enough members to justify one anyway. Represented only by the clergy in that case, “the church” still played an important role in maintaining WIC authority over a rather motley crew. There was a fine line between the behaviors that the company simply could not tolerate—fighting, murder, insubordination, dereliction of duty—and those that were sometimes connected to them, like drunkenness and sexual sin. Either of the latter might lead to the former. In Luanda, drunken soldiers harassed Portuguese inhabitants and stole or destroyed property, finally causing WIC authorities to close all the taverns for a time. Alcohol also led to fights among sailors and soldiers at Elmina and other forts. Sexual misconduct caused problems for the company only when it somehow disturbed relations with local traders, like the Dutchman who provoked a controversy at Axim by hiding or abducting a “whore,” perhaps his lover. Whether someone strove to end these problems because he was concerned about sin and the wrath of God or for more practical reasons, the interests of ecclesiastical and secular officers were often the same.<sup>63</sup>

WIC punishments ranged from monetary fines and loss of alcohol for minor infractions, like missing the prayer, to harsh physical penalties for drunkenness and

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<sup>62</sup> Jan Jochems Sticker to the XIX, 3 Feb 1634, OWIC 11, NA. For officers on the consistory, see IJsebut to the Amsterdam classis, 28 Feb 1668, 14 July 1670, ACA 210:215, 217, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 29 Aug 1672, ACA 7:39. The three elders held positions of general, *oppercommies* (senior merchant), and head *boekhouder* (book-keeper) for the Gold Coast.

<sup>63</sup> For Luanda, see the minutes of Nieuwland and Mols, 18 May 1643, ASG V, 12564.12, p. 22. For alcohol at Elmina, see *Vijf Dagregisters*, 225, 228, 247, and other. For the incident with the “whore,” see 265-266.



fighting. Lashings were common. Sometimes employees were confined in a pit with little or no food and water. Also utilized by the WIC in West Africa was the infamous wooden horse. When Thymen Jansz quarreled with and injured another soldier at Fort Nassau, he had to straddle the “horse”—a narrow, raised wooden plank—for two hours per day for two days, his hands bound and twenty-five pound weights strapped to each foot. It was a cruel punishment because it could injure the genitals and dislocate the joints of one’s thighs and legs. (It must have been especially horrible on the second day.) Punishments were public affairs, a warning to everyone to avoid trouble and do his duty.<sup>64</sup> Religion facilitated that task. Just as at sea, prayers and sermons were a convenient time to remind soldiers about sin, God’s wrath, and their oath to the company. Following the prayer an officer extracted a promise from everyone present to behave themselves that day or, after the sermon, questioned those suspected of misconduct. Sermons were also used to bolster authority, delivered at the transfer of power to a new general.<sup>65</sup>

Some of the biggest dilemmas for clergy were fornication and adultery because they did not usually interfere with company business, which made them more difficult targets. Also complicating the situation, both were probably common among soldiers and officers alike. Most men, including the most powerful, did not have European wives in Africa. The only two Dutch women on São Tomé in 1647, both from Luanda (and before that probably Brazil), were dead by the end of the year. Ketel was excited for his wife to join him in Brazil, he wrote, but after being transferred to Luanda and witnessing the

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<sup>64</sup> For missing prayer, see *Vijf Dagregisters*, 53. Punishments are meted out numerous times throughout the registers. For an example of whipping, see 153; thrown in a pit, 247; the wooden horse, 248, 298, 354. For the wooden horse, see also Sylvia R. Frey, “Courts and Cats: British Military Justice in the Eighteenth Century,” *Military Affairs* 43, no. 1 (Feb 1979): 5-11; John S. Hare, “Military Punishments in the War of 1812,” *The Journal of the American Military Institute* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1940): 225-239.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 45, 90, 266.

terrible consequences of warfare and disease, which killed a fellow minister, he decided that he no longer wanted her to come. The few marriages mentioned in Elmina's journals were likely between soldiers and indigenous women and mulatto women of Portuguese-African descent. All other relations were illicit.<sup>66</sup> IJsebout tried to remedy the situation by asking the directors to send the wives of married men and single, marriageable women for everyone else. Hoping to end the "abominable sins of this place," he was supported in his campaign by the general. But nothing ever came of it. IJsebout's successor, Abraham Oudewater, lamented that even some church members had "close friendships and peculiar associations" with "black women."<sup>67</sup>

What happened to the children from these relationships? Most of them remained with their mothers as members of indigenous societies; some worked eventually for the company.<sup>68</sup> The Dutch sometimes expressed concern for them, wondering how or if they could be incorporated into the Christian community, as sparse as it was. Before the WIC was founded the admiralty inquired about the fate of children at Fort Nassau. Company generals later pledged that they would be taught the rudiments of the Reformed religion.<sup>69</sup> There is evidence that the clergy baptized and taught mulatto children from time to time. Ministers in Africa joined a chorus of colleagues from America and Asia in the seventeenth century asking the churches of the Netherlands about how to deal with non-

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<sup>66</sup> For São Tomé, see Reynier Doeckens to the XIX, 18 Mar-18 Nov 1647, OWIC 11, NA (especially 3 May). For Ketel, see his letter to Godefridus de Pauw, 15 Sep 1642, ASU 279, UA. For marriages at Elmina, see *Vijf Dagregisters*, 14, 216, 256-257, 263. (A number of mulattos are mentioned.) For complaints about fornication and adultery, see the minutes of the admiralty, 15 Nov 1618, AAC 1364, NA; minutes of the Edam classis, 27 July 1626, ACE 3:411, NHA; and any of IJsebout's letters in ACA 210:214-217, SAA.

<sup>67</sup> For IJsebout, see his letters in ACA 210:214-217, SAA. For his successor, see Oudewater to the Amsterdam classis, 14 Aug 1671, ACA 210:221-222.

<sup>68</sup> Harvey Feinberg, "Africans and Europeans in West Africa: Elminans and Dutchmen on the Gold Coast During the Eighteenth Century," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 79, no. 7 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1989), 89.

<sup>69</sup> Minutes of the admiralty, 15 Nov 1618, AAC 1364, NA; the admiralty to the general in Guinea, 24 Nov 1618, AAC 1541; minutes of the Edam classis, 27 July 1626, ACE 3:411, NHA.

European children, the offspring of Christian fathers and pagan mothers. Churches at home usually resolved that they could not be baptized unless they were taught and raised among Christians, which was highly unlikely in West Africa, without colonial society. Attempts to start schools at Fort Nassau and Elmina failed because so few chose to send their children. Those who did attend spoke no Dutch, which only highlights the fact that the children of European fathers were rarely raised among Europeans.<sup>70</sup>

Consider the effects of climate, disease, and illicit conduct in the poems of Jacob Steendam, who worked for eight years on the Gold Coast and spent time at all three major forts. Like other writers, he noted West Africa's great heat. He contracted a terrible illness soon after his arrival and began calling Africa "poisonous," perhaps inspired also by his vocation as Comforter of the Sick. He also called it "wormy" or "worm-ridden."<sup>71</sup> Disease was not the only poison in Steendam's work, however. He wrote about a second kind, more dangerous than the first, for it flowed from the Devil and destroyed souls. Rather nebulous, he called it hate, sin, malice, wickedness, and any number of negative words. Sometimes when he condemned sin he targeted Africans; on other occasions he seemed to target Europeans. He once wrote about a European shepherd named Akome and a mulatto girl called Abroba, for example: Akome walked upon the "barren" shores of "gold-rich Africa." There he met Abroba, a lovely and graceful lady. "Oh! Flower of

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<sup>70</sup> For baptizing mulatto and African children, see Ketel to Godefridus de Pauw, 15 Sep 1642, ASU 279, UA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 7 Nov 1644, ACA 4:335, SAA; Overney to the Amsterdam classis, 9 Oct 1679, ACA 158:208. See also Backerus to the Amsterdam classis, 1 May 1644, OWIC 224:4-5, NA. For official responses from home, see, for example, Donner and Hoorn, eds., *Acta*, Sessions 17-19, pp. 44-46; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 20 Dec 1618, AKA 4:309, SAA; the Amsterdam classis to Adriaen Beaumont, 9 July 1661, ACA 157:425; *ERSNY* 1:76-78. For teaching and schools, see Cornelis Jacobsen to the Amsterdam church, 28 Jan 1634, AKA 243:25; Sticker to the XIX, 3 Feb 1634, OWIC 11; minutes of the deputies, 1 Jan 1642, ACA 157:78-79, SAA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 8 Sep 1642, OWIC 25:44; the XIX to General Ruychaver, 1 Jan 1644, 3 Dec 1644, OWIC 9:159-161, 212.

<sup>71</sup> For heat, see *Den Distelvink*, I:62-65, III:67-70, 84-85. For Steendam's own sickness, see II:194, III:73-79. For "wormy," see III:84-85.

mine elect, / What Woman has born you in this Barbaric land?" Akome asked. But she already had a husband, she told him. Momentarily forgetting his "Conscience" and his "Reason," he offered himself to her nonetheless. Moments later he changed his mind. "Am I ... a Christian?" Such an act would not be bad for someone like her, he decided, for "in these lands," "Deprived of the marriage pact," there would be no shame in it. Yet "I [know] the Lord's laws." He concluded that Abroba had much to teach him. Born in an evil land where "Monsters" sullied her with their "poisonous spittle," she was still full of honesty and "reason," superior to many who called themselves Christians.<sup>72</sup>

Because Steendam's job was to instruct fellow Europeans, he probably intended the poem as a fictional morality tale or reminder to his charges of what they should and should not be doing. Many of his poems celebrated marriage and virtue. Contrasting the land of his birth with Africa's spiritual and physical corruption, he often pined for the former, writing about the "cool" spring months, the flowers, and the sun shining on the river Amstel. Though it had no application on the Gold Coast, he even dated his poems according to the Dutch garden calendar, using "Blossom Month" in place of May, "Harvest Month" instead of August.<sup>73</sup> He contrasted "poisonous, Gold-rich Africa" with "people-rich" Europe: "the best part of the World," the place that God decided to gather his "congregation."<sup>74</sup> God's people were blessed with reason, knowledge, learning, and poetry, which was the best way to communicate truth. They were also blessed with marriage, an institution that Steendam situated at the heart of civilization, the antecedent of all other godly institutions. Marriage produced families, who together formed cities, which enabled the "rights of citizenship." Citizenship and "morals" created a "Spiritual

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., I:72-79.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., I:76-79, 91-94, II:188-189. For his use of the Dutch garden calendar, see any poems with dates.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., II:72, III:76-79.

right” against which “the Devil continually fights.”<sup>75</sup> Steendam’s was an embattled community of the faithful, and its champions, the protectors of marriage, family, city, and Republic, the guardians of God’s elect, were men like the Prince of Orange, Admiral Piet Heyn, and other WIC officers. Again, he equated them with Bible heroes.<sup>76</sup>

Steendam’s beliefs about all the things Africa lacked were, in reality, less about Africa than they were about the limited existence that he experienced in company forts. Of course Africa had many people, yet he could not call it “people-rich” because those whom he associated with the most—Europeans—died so quickly and were not numerous to begin with. Of course Africans married; but there were few Christian women to form the only bonds that he deemed legitimate. The kernel of truth at the heart of his complaint was that Africa was not a home to the community that he so enthusiastically celebrated. Because of restraints on WIC power, the Gold Coast did indeed lack Christian families and cities. In “wormy old Guinea” the Dutch were like Israel in Egypt, “many hundreds of miles from home.” Steendam was merely an “exile,” a traveler in a “Strange land,” a shepherd wandering far from his “own field.” Africa was a place for Dutch “Strongholds and Castles,” not Dutch cities, a place where “God ... has planted / Our Trade,” not society.<sup>77</sup> At times he held out hope that it could be more, writing after the battle of Axim that all the world was “submissive,” or that Africa was a corner of God’s “Vineyard.”<sup>78</sup> But he decided that it was a lousy vineyard for his purposes. The poisons of disease and sin ruined the soil. The first rotted the body, the second corrupted the soul. Africa was

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., II:55-59.

<sup>76</sup> See Steendam’s long introduction to Book II, the only prose of *Den Distelvink*, as well as Ibid., II:55-59, 72, 77-99, 117-128; III:76-79. These are only examples of a way of thinking found throughout the book.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., I:72-76, 98-101; II:139, 176-178; III:71-73, 84-85.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., II:129, 132.

“contrary to our nature,” he wrote. “There Christ’s true church / Has neither place nor bed,” as in flowerbed.<sup>79</sup>

Using the same metaphor, Reverend Hendricks claimed that among the few fruits of his labor—the “fruits of Guinea”—was the worm that was sprouting in his foot as he prepared to leave. IJsebout likewise wrote about the worms that were “gnawing and eating [his] living body,” concluding that he would never “thrive” in Africa: “I am as meager as a stick.”<sup>80</sup> If the clergy could not thrive, neither could the church that they were called to plant. Reformed religion may have influenced the ways that the Dutch thought about expansion, making them the new Israel and helping justify their aggressive approach; it may have been at the heart of public ritual in the Dutch Atlantic, helping maintain order, providing a high standard of conduct. But in WIC forts it never grew much beyond the limited, half-formed customs that existed aboard company ships and in military companies. The number of members rose and fell, sometimes celebrating Communion, rarely forming consistories, always passing or scattering and forcing clergy to start the planting anew.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., I:76-79, II:99-103.

<sup>80</sup> Hendricks to the Amsterdam consistory, 20 Mar 1644, AKA 245:66, SAA; IJsebout to the Amsterdam classis, 14 July 1670, ACA 210:217, SAA.

## CHAPTER 5

### Dutch Brazil: A Harvest of Thorns and Weeds

By 1636 the colony of Brazil was in a sorry state. More than a decade of warfare had damaged its productive capacity. The Dutch were struggling against a Portuguese enemy whose knowledge of the local terrain and guerilla tactics created huge problems for the WIC's more traditionally organized armies. To make matters worse, no one seemed to be in charge. Company directors had divided power among five members of a High Council, each with different responsibilities, rarely meeting and agreeing on a strategy for the future. As the need for change became more and more apparent, rumors began to spread in Holland about problems in the colonial church, as well: Some clergy lacked the temperament and sobriety that their station required; some had been promoted to their positions unlawfully. Secular and ecclesiastical authorities on both sides of the ocean began to call for a reformation of the church and of Brazil generally. The directors responded by reorganizing the Brazilian government and appointing the nobleman Johan Maurits to the new, powerful position of governor-general. During his seven-year tenure he put an end to the chaos of the previous years, finally establishing and spreading Dutch control in the northeast and overseeing WIC conquests in West Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The word "reformation" had deep, enduring meanings for Protestants, evoking the memory of their attempted reformation of the Catholic Church in previous centuries, then

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<sup>1</sup> Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 32-158. For chaos before Maurits, see 64-66. For problems in the church, see the XIX to the Brazil church, 16 Dec 1634, 31 July 1635, OWIC 8:153-154, 175-176, NA; "Rapport ... van Brazil," 1636, Archive of the States of Holland and West Friesland, 1358C, NA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 5/7 June 1636, OWIC 22:154-155; minutes of the South Holland synod, 26 Aug 1636, ACD 82:583-584, NA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 1 and 22 Sep, 6 Oct 1636, ACA 4:80, 82, 84, SAA.

their struggles to change the beliefs and behavior of people in cities like Geneva, most famously, after they founded churches of their own. In the Dutch context this impulse was reflected in an influential religious movement called the *nadere reformatie*, usually translated as “further reformation.” As the name suggests, reformers were not content with their early institutional successes. Replacing the old church with a Protestant one was a crucial first step, of course, but they demanded deeper, more meaningful change. By flooding Dutch churches, homes, and families with God’s word, spreading Reformed teachings as widely as possible, they hoped to increase individual faith and holiness and expunge sin in a way that Catholics had failed to do.<sup>2</sup>

When company directors talked about reforming Brazil in 1636, obviously their concerns were more broad than those of Calvinist ministers who wanted to convert and reform individual members of society. The word could have many meanings. Religious and secular projects occurred simultaneously in the colony because it was so recently conquered. Yet the religious mission was a key component of the general one: Brazil could not be subjected without imposing a new religious order; reformation followed naturally from conquest. In an age of religious warfare,<sup>2</sup> few people could have imagined an alternative. In that sense the extension of the Dutch-Spanish conflict into the Atlantic world was the extension of the Protestant Reformation. Brazil was only the first step in an ambitious plan to commandeer the Catholic empires and redirect their treasures to the Netherlands. A strong religious program was necessary, for example, to win indigenous allies and bind colonial subjects to the new state.

Reforming Brazil would not be an easy task. Ruled by the Portuguese crown for more than a century by the 1630s, it was a vast, diverse place—a legitimate military

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<sup>2</sup> T. Brienens, et al., *De Nadere Reformatie*. See also Chap. 1 of this dissertation.



target because Spain and Portugal were then united. About 60,000 colonists lived there in the early seventeenth century, almost half of them in provinces taken by the WIC (mainly Pernambuco). The rest were concentrated around Bahia, the Portuguese capital in the south. The company had captured it in 1624, six years before Pernambuco, but quickly lost it again. Complicating the situation further, the colony was home to many Native Americans and African slaves, all with their own religious traditions. When the Dutch arrived in Brazil, thousands of Tupi Indians lived in Christian villages administered by Jesuit missionaries. Another indigenous people, the Tapuya, had never been subjected. Also numbering in the thousands, Africans provided labor for sugar plantations. At its peak, the zone of Dutch control stretched 900 miles along the coast, incorporating parts of seven provinces and many Catholic towns and villages.<sup>3</sup>

If the Dutch thought their own Catholic past and recent religious alteration could provide a model for Brazil, they did not think things through very carefully. Despite controlling the church in the Netherlands, Calvinists struggled to effect a widespread reformation even there. The Spanish at least provided a common enemy, casting a stigma on Catholicism. In Brazil the shoe was on the other foot. Not only was it more diverse than Holland, now the Dutch were the enemy, the foreign power trying to impose its faith on a people who, for the most part, did not want to change. Clergy had to sift through added layers of authority, including local colonial officers, the directors and churches at home, and Dutch municipal, provincial, and national rulers to whom the directors were

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<sup>3</sup> Stuart Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1-72; John Hemmings, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (University of California Press, 1995), Chap. 3; C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825* (New York: Knopf, 1969), Chap. 5; Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 17-20.

supposedly still subject. Operating in occupied territory also meant that the power of the state had to be shared on some level with prominent Catholics who cared nothing for Calvinist aims and opposed them outright. Because of the never-ending war and Brazil's economic woes, the Dutch population (including WIC employees) reached only 7,000 or 8,000 people, never coming close to the tens-of-thousands of Portuguese. And some of the recent immigrants were Jewish. The ministers who served in Brazil complained that their work was unusually challenging. Appraising the many peoples and religions, they declared that the soil was full of "weeds," yielding only a "thorny harvest." Indeed, one can imagine few more difficult settings for the young Calvinist church to begin its work of supplanting non-Reformed worship and eradicating sin and error.<sup>4</sup>

Historians have written much about the golden years of Dutch Brazil under Johan Maurits.<sup>5</sup> They have paid less attention to the church and its attempts to reform society in the same years. Frans Schalkwijk's *The Reformed Church in Dutch Brazil* asserts that the Dutch made a gradual transition from "military church" or "church of the conquerors" to "colonial church," but he does not chart the change nor deal explicitly with the reformation.<sup>6</sup> This chapter offers the first serious examination of that movement in all its manifestations: the internal, institutional cleansing of 1636 and 1637, evangelical work that began in the same period, and Calvinist efforts to eradicate sinful behavior—not just among Reformed members, but everywhere that the company exercised control. During

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<sup>4</sup> Vincent Soler, *Seventeen Letters*, 11-12; Jan Michielsen to the Walcheren classis, 18 May 1636, ACW 73, ZA. See also Samuel de Coninck to the Zeeland chamber, 6 Apr 1641, OWIC 56:125, NA; the Recife consistory to the XIX, 2 Aug 1645, OWIC 60:164. For the Dutch population at its peak, see Enthoven, "Dutch Crossings."

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, Chap. 4; Klooster, *Dutch in the Americas*, Chap. 3; E. van den Boogaart, ed., *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, 1604-1679: A Humanist Prince in Europe and Brazil* (The Hague: The Johan Maurits van Nassau Stichting, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 67, 82. His is the only meaningful treatment of the topic, though the clergy and church are also prominent in Meuwese, "For the Peace and Well-being of the Country."

the Maurits years the church grew in members, congregations, and consistories, finally emerging as a center of religious activity in the South Atlantic. The nature and scope of its ventures naturally created extra tensions between conqueror and conquered. Though Dutch Brazil is often remembered for its religious tolerance, I argue that anti-Catholicism and the attempted reformation were major contributing factors to the Portuguese uprising of 1645 and the eventual failure of the WIC in its most prized possession.<sup>7</sup>

### *From Military Church to Public Church*

Before beginning the overwhelming work of transforming Catholic Brazil into a Protestant “New Holland,” as the colony was sometimes called, the Dutch Reformed Church had to clean house, which was ultimately the work of ecclesiastical and secular officials in Brazil and the Netherlands, including company directors. What kinds of problems existed before 1636? Some complaints were probably unjust, arising from a general atmosphere of discontent, not appreciating the difficulties that the clergy faced in trying to establish the church while still often having to follow the army. Not all reports in the early period were negative, in fact. Political councilor Servatius Carpentier wrote in June 1636 that the gospel was preached at least among the Dutch, French, and English in “great congregations.” The clergy had formed more than one consistory, they practiced church discipline, and they celebrated Communion. Carpentier asserted that, if anything, more ministers were needed.<sup>8</sup> There were only six at the time, many places in Brazil still

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<sup>7</sup> For tolerance in Brazil, see Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 123-125; Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 231-300; Israel and Schwartz, *Expansion of Tolerance*; Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 117, 123-124; James Homer Williams, “An Atlantic Perspective on the Jewish Struggle for Rights and Opportunities in Brazil, New Netherland, and New York,” in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450-1800*, eds. Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 369-393.

<sup>8</sup> “Rapport van Servaes Carpentier,” 11 June 1636, OWIC 51:25, NA. See also the report of 2 July 1636 in ASG II, 5754, NA.

guided by *ziekentroosters*. At least eight other ministers had served there since 1630, but two died unexpectedly, some had gone home with injuries and illnesses, and the rest served just a few years, in keeping with their contracts. Carpentier had nothing but praise for those who remained. Jodocus à Stetten blamed negative rumors about him on a man and woman who wanted to tarnish his name, he maintained, because he condemned their adulterous relationship. His journal of 1635 and 1636 reveals an active, growing colonial church, busy with teaching, baptism, Communion, and the like.<sup>9</sup>

The bad reports were not just fabricated, however. They were widespread, often from fellow clergy. Specific accusations included levity, drunkenness, and participating in trade, which clerics were generally not supposed to do. Company directors gently admonished the Brazil church twice in the years before the reformation, acknowledging progress, yet suggesting that, when invited to other people's homes, ministers not drink very much or behave in other unseemly ways. Their conduct could inspire imitation; the clergy might become a "great stumbling block" for Catholics and Indians. If ministers neglected their primary responsibilities, the directors continued, their authority would be lost.<sup>10</sup> Though some accusations were likely baseless, as Stetten claimed, the High Council agreed that "[t]he complaints about certain ministers have been great."<sup>11</sup> Some troublemakers had been appointed in Brazil, and their very ordinations were potentially damning for the others. Subject to the synod, the classis was responsible for callings and ordinations in the Reformed Church, yet Brazil had no classis or synod at the time that most local calls were made. The churches there fell under the authority of the Amsterdam

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<sup>9</sup> Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 9 Aug 1635, 5 Nov 1636, 28 July 1638, OWIC 50:124; 51, 117; 53:116, NA. "Jurnael der Kercken in Paraiba," *Verspreide Stukken* 1408, NA.

<sup>10</sup> The XIX to the Brazil church, 16 Dec 1634, 31 July 1635, OWIC 8:153-154, 175-176, NA. For other bad reports see fn. 1, above, as well as the following discussion.

<sup>11</sup> "Rapport ... van Brazil," 1636, Archive of the States of Holland and West Friesland, 1358C, NA.

and Walcheren classes in the Netherlands, as did every WIC church. Flouting tradition, Daniel Schagen decided to call three men to the ministry of his own accord. He did so to meet real needs, but it did not please his colleagues. His decision contributed a great deal to the cries for change that were echoing everywhere by 1636.<sup>12</sup>

During the summer and fall of that year more than one ecclesiastical body in the Netherlands communicated with the directors about these problems, which the directors clearly recognized already. They had been corresponding about them with the church in Brazil and with their political officers for more than a year by that point. When the Amsterdam classis called for a reformation, beginning with new personnel, the directors agreed. They were a step ahead, having just asked Fredricus Kessler, pastor of the local German-speaking congregation, to go to Brazil. A number of other ministers were called in the same period, for the same purpose, sent mostly by the Amsterdam and Zeeland chambers.<sup>13</sup> To ensure that they had the support of the new governor, the churches at home wrote or sent delegations to Maurits in the months before his departure. They asked him to dismiss bad ministers and to watch over the colonial church.<sup>14</sup>

Though he was not the only minister called in 1636 and 1637, Kessler quickly emerged as the most powerful figure in the Brazil church. Arriving at the same time as Maurits, his role and place of authority have never been recognized, perhaps because he

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<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 13 Oct 1635, ACA 4:66, SAA; the Recife consistory to the XIX, 19 Aug 1637, OWIC 52:99, NA. The three ordinations were Daniel Neveux, Johannes Hartmann Osterdag van Appellen, and Samuel Folckerius. Neveux was a *ziekentrooster*: See the XIX to the Recife consistory, 16 Dec 1634, OWIC 8:153-154, NA. He was back in the Netherlands by June 1636 and so was not one of the six mentioned above. See the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 5/7 June 1636, OWIC 22:154-155. See also Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 130-131.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 22 Sep 1636, ACA 4:82, SAA. The other ministers called in the same period (1635-1638) were Jacobus Dapper, David à Doreslaer, Johannes Eduardus, Jan Michielsen (only as a proponent at first), Franciscus Plante (as Maurits's personal chaplain), Johannes Polhemus, Vincent Soler.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 Oct 1636, p. 84; minutes of the Zierikzee classis, 29 Oct 1636, ACZ 2:22, GASD; minutes of the South Holland Synod, 26 Aug 1636, ACD 82:583-584, NA.

left no surviving correspondence.<sup>15</sup> A kind of Calvin figure in the failed reformation of Dutch Brazil, Recife was his Geneva: the WIC's capital and (not surprisingly) the center of Calvinist efforts to reform the colony. Located at the mouth of two rivers in Pernambuco, Recife was a small, inconsequential town before the Dutch came, a port for the sugar-producing hinterland. Under the WIC it grew rapidly. The Dutch built homes and public buildings; they created a fish market, divided the city into districts for fighting fires and collecting garbage, laid the streets in stone, erected palisades and forts around the perimeter, and established Dutch political and other institutions. On an island across the river Maurits constructed two palaces, planted an orchard, and made other improvements, connecting the island to the mainland with a bridge.<sup>16</sup> When Kessler arrived Recife had not yet undergone all of these changes, of course, but they were well underway. A fellow reformer named Jacobus Dapper described the city just one year later, expressing his amazement at the large "assortment" of people and shops. He felt as though he were strolling upon "the Dam" (the main square) in Amsterdam. When he preached his first sermon, the chapel was full of merchant families, including women and children, whom he had apparently not expected to find there already. Kessler's tenure in Brazil was unique because he served all six-and-a-half years in Recife. Other ministers at least took turns serving in the army or among the Tupi Indians.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> There are extant summaries of his letters in the various church collections at the SAA, and he appears in many other sources, including the minutes of the Brazil council. Many or most of the surviving letters from the Brazil consistory during his years were likely also written by him or under his direction.

<sup>16</sup> De Mello, *Nederlanders in Brazilie*, 35-135.

<sup>17</sup> For Dapper, see his letter to the Schouwen classis, 20 Mar 1637, ACZ 20-24, GASD. The two ministers besides Kessler who spent the majority of their time in Recife in the same years were Plante and Soler. Being Maurits's chaplain, Plante followed the army a lot, though, and Soler worked often in nearby Indian villages (*aldeias*). Most ministers did one or the other or were more mobile than Kessler also in the number of towns and congregations they served, if they were in the colony for a substantial amount of time.

Kessler made his elevated position known at the very first gathering of the Brazil churches (only recently formed into a classis) after his arrival. In March 1637 most of the colony's twelve ministers and a number of elders came to Recife to discuss the current state of affairs and begin the work of reform. Before anything else, Kessler handed over his commission and the classis accepted him. Called to "found and build" the church, he was immediately selected as classis president. Then they read letters from the classes of Amsterdam and Walcheren about the "bad comportment" of certain ministers, with a plea to remedy the situation. After resolving that they would not call clergy locally, leaving that to the churches at home except in "great need," they gave the reins to Kessler, who examined the church point by point: the state of preaching, Communion, visiting members, consistory meetings and church discipline, keeping accurate records, and other matters. In each case the classis resolved to do better. Then they reread the letters from Amsterdam and Walcheren and began an "examination" of individual ministers. In the fervor of reform, almost everyone was censured in some way, including Stetten and the recently arrived Johannes Polhemus, who had been quarreling with a WIC officer. They also discussed how they could prevent common problems like adultery, blasphemy, and Sabbath-breaking among the general population.<sup>18</sup>

It quickly became apparent, if it was not already clear, that Schagen and the small group of clergy that he had called in recent years were the main cause of Brazil's ecclesiastical difficulties. One of Schagen's appointments had left before the reformation even began. Another did not have the skills or knowledge to be minister, and Schagen later admitted to ordaining him with some discomfort at the behest of a WIC officer. One

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<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 3 March 1637, ASU 212:5-16, UA. Most Brazil classis minutes are also found in the OWIC at the NA and copied into various synodal minutes, like the North Holland synod.

of his appointments was allowed to stay for a time, but he was dismissed when it was discovered that he had been cheating people in an investment scam. As for Schagen, he was not present at the classis meeting in March 1637, perhaps sensing that it would not go well for him. The other clergy accused him of conspiring to prevent the classis in the first place, and when he finally went on trial in the summer, the great extent of his indiscretions came to light. In short, he was a “Worldly Minister” who tried to lord over his colleagues. He wore inappropriately showy apparel, they alleged. He attended every party, witnessed dancing and “lighthearted” conversation without condemning it, and drank too much, once falling asleep and wetting himself. He neglected his duties, did not visit the sick, did not visit the members before Communion, and spent far too much time working his sugar plantation, even occasionally on Sunday. He owned three horses and a number of “negros,” which he did not find excessive. (The WIC gave every minister one slave or servant.) Some charges he denied or tried to justify, but many he did not. Despite the company’s desire to increase the number of Dutch planters and the Dutch population in the countryside, he was not even allowed to stay in Brazil as a sugar planter.<sup>19</sup>

The government’s role was simply to affix its stamp of approval on the proceedings of the classis, which it did. Maurits was away with the army at the time, but his council permitted the firings and declared their “great contentment” with the “ardor and diligence” of the ministers in regulating God’s church in Brazil. They also requested that the classis send a copy of its minutes to the XIX. Secular support was of course also

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid. The minister who left before the reformation began was Neveux. The one without the proper skills or knowledge was Folkerius. For the investment scam (Reverend Oosterdag), see the minutes of the Brazil council, 16 and 26 Mar 1639, OWIC 68, NA; minutes of the Brazil classis, 25 Mar 1639, ASU 212:33-36, UA. For Schagen, see Schagen, et al., to Cornelis van der Poel, 7 Mar 1637, OWIC 52:14; the Brazil church to the Amsterdam classis, 8 June 1637, ACA 163:28, SAA; and especially the Recife consistory to the XIX, 19 Aug 1637, OWIC 52:99 (also in ACW 73, ZA). For ministers and slaves, see Gerald De Jong, “The Dutch Reformed Church and Negro Slavery in Colonial America,” *Church History* 40, no. 4 (Dec 1971): 423-436.



necessary to prevent Schagen's returning to Brazil to become a planter: Maurits asked the directors not to allow it, should he try. The new governor described the changes that had been made in the church and expressed his happiness with the new ministers.<sup>20</sup>

The clergy, in turn, were pleased with Maurits. The son of a zealous Calvinist, he was a member of the Reformed Church, committed to the general Protestant cause. He was more moderate than his father and in time proved to be very adept at the kind of political maneuvering and quiet "connivance" that the regents of Amsterdam had made famous in allowing non-Reformed worship in their sphere of influence. Yet he did so with so much skill that even the ministers tended to like and support him. The otherwise cantankerous Reverend Soler, after knowing Maurits for more than a year, wrote that he was "wise, virtuous, strong and religious," an "instrument in the hand of our Lord." With the exception of Paulus van Serooskercke, Soler despised the old councilors as "rats without decency," men who cared more for their own gain than for the WIC.<sup>21</sup> Though the clergy continued to moan about religious diversity and other woes, by the summer of 1637 the first step in the reformation of Dutch Brazil, beginning with its ecclesiastical and secular rulers, was complete.<sup>22</sup>

How radical was the change? On the one hand, accusations like Soler's must be taken with a large grain of salt. Just as some long-standing ministers were caught up in the general atmosphere of discontent, damned more for having served in a period of special difficulty for the company and church, harsh feelings about old rulers among the

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<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 9 and 17 Mar, 9 and 20 Apr 1637, OWIC 68, NA; Maurits and council to the XIX, August 1637, OWIC 52:87.

<sup>21</sup> For Maurits's background, see Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 67. His political skill and connivance will be dealt with later in this chapter. For Soler, see *Seventeen Letters*, 11-12, 17-18, 39-40, 51-53.

<sup>22</sup> See Reverend Dapper's various letters on the reformation: 20 Mar 1637, ACZ 20-24, GASD; 30 May 1637, OWIC 52:70, NA; 20 Mar 1638, OWIC 53:46; minutes of the Zierikzee classis, 17 Aug 1639, ACZ 2:70, GASD. See also the Brazil classis to the XIX, 4 Mar 1638, OWIC 53:4. Everyone agreed that the reformation was well underway, despite continuing problems.

clergy likely had similar roots, having as much to do with their failures as leaders as with purported sins. Often ministers also had unrealistic expectations. One of Soler's more specific complaints, for example, was that the old councilors—in the few months since his arrival—had not heeded his advice to force 500 Indians and slaves to start attending his “Spanish” (probably Portuguese) sermons in Recife. His judgment about the WIC's support for the church tended to fluctuate between praise and criticism according to his personal misery meter, which rose and fell in the wake of circumstances that were not directly related to religion, like the arrival of the Spanish fleet, the chaos it caused, and the colony's high inflation. Similarly, one could credit praise for the new rulers to their victories in battle and the sense of direction that Maurits brought to Brazil. The expansion of WIC power inevitably meant the expansion of the church; greater stability allowed a concerted missionary effort among Indians.<sup>23</sup>

Schagen and his clerical cohort had caused real problems, however, and there was undoubtedly some corruption among WIC officers. (How much that changed under the new government is another matter.) The arrival of Maurits, Kessler, Soler, and others in 1636 and 1637 marked a major turning point. The number of ordained clergy grew within a few years to twenty-one, which even Soler said was enough. Four early deaths, various departures, and divisions at home about the future of the company, which temporarily halted most new hires in the early 1640s, caused the number to fluctuate during Maurits's governorship. It once returned to nine, which caused real problems for those who had to meet ecclesiastical needs in the WIC's rapidly growing sphere of influence; but it reached eighteen before he left. (The consistory agreed on thirteen as a minimum.) Ministers were also assisted by lay preachers and schoolmasters, whose numbers fluctuated as well but

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<sup>23</sup> Soler, *Seventeen Letters*, 11-12.

who totaled almost thirty in 1642, for example.<sup>24</sup> The number of Reformed congregations eventually reached twenty-two, twelve of which had consistories. Just five years after the reformation began they set up a second classis in Paraiba and, at the same time, a colony-wide synod. The scaffolding of the new religious order was in place; the public church in northeastern Brazil was no longer Catholic.<sup>25</sup>

### *Reforming the Land of the Holy Cross*

Having taken care of its own internal problems after the arrival of Kessler and Maurits, the church could set its sights on Protestantization and other reforms, which required company support. According to official policy, the Dutch Reformed Church was the public church, the only faith allowed to operate openly, perform marriages and other public rites, and enjoy the WIC's financial backing. All employees were supposed to attend services and officers had to respect ministers and prevent blasphemy and other scandals.<sup>26</sup> Although the church grew and even prospered in some of the ways outlined above, it was never able to fully shed its identity as military church or "church of the conquerors," which hindered the reformation in various ways. Rapid expansion spread the clergy too thin, forcing them to deal with an increasing number of towns and cities and the forts and military companies that protected them. The Dutch also had to grant religious freedoms to Catholics in many regions as a condition of their surrender. Foreign

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<sup>24</sup> For the number of ministers in Brazil in any given year, see Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 109. For Soler, see *Seventeen Letters*, 90. For Recife and "thirteen," see the minutes of the Brazil council, 15 Feb 1645, OWIC 70, NA. For twenty-nine *ziekentroosters*, teachers, and other laymen in Brazil in 1642, see the muster list of military and other personnel, 24 July 1642, OWIC 57:38. Clergy who died prematurely in the Maurits years were Antoni Claesz, Rabirious Eeckholt, Pieter Jansz Lantman, and Lambertus Ritsma.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-74, 88-94.

<sup>26</sup> Extract from the resolution book of the XIX, 4 Apr 1634, ASG II, 5753, NA; *Groot Placaet Boeck*, 622; instructions for Maurits and council, 9 Aug 1636, OWIC 2, NA; "Articles and Ordinances," 1641, ASG II, 5759, f. 209-224.

occupation and religious diversity complicated what was a difficult enough undertaking for clergy even in the Netherlands.<sup>27</sup>

In the competition for souls, the Reformed Church at least enjoyed the prestige and other practical advantages that accompanied official exposure. At the most basic level the company supported the church by including it at all public functions. More than just permitting the clergy's presence, inclusion meant inviting them to offer prayers and deliver sermons at military parades and at the festivities surrounding the institution of a new government, for example. When the governor and his councilors took their place in city hall for the first time, representatives from each major body were presented to them one by one, including the *schepenen*, WIC admirals and other high-ranking officers, the Recife ministers and elders, and important figures from the Jewish community. Everyone except the latter attended a worship service at the church, also sharing a meal provided by the outgoing administration.<sup>28</sup> Company officials and officers were present at church as a matter course, if not because they were devout believers, at least because it was expected of those who held elevated positions. In that way they lent their authority to the church and provided an example to everyone else. For the same reason, the High Council sent representatives to attend special ecclesiastical events, like the start of Reformed worship in a town where it had not existed before. The government also declared regular days of prayer and thanks, stating their purpose in official, public pronouncements and outlining messages that the minister should include in his sermon. Such exposure probably would

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<sup>27</sup> For "church of the conquerors," see fn. 6. For the rest, see the discussion on the reformation below.

<sup>28</sup> Baers, *Olinda*, 33; minutes of the Brazil council, 13 Sep 1645, OWIC 71, NA (parades); and the Haecx journal, 12-16 Aug 1646, Aanw. 644, NA, pp. 50-52.

have drawn many colonists to Protestantism in the long run simply because of the social advantages of belonging to the public church.<sup>29</sup>

These forms of secular support provided a crucial foundation for the reformation of Brazil. To effect the larger changes that the clergy wanted, however, they needed more direct, active assistance, for the church obviously had no way to enforce its will alone. Its influence was small without the arm of the state. Ecclesiastical power was enhanced when secular officials served on the consistory, which facilitated relations with the WIC and gave the church a voice in government. Although Maurits was a member of the church, he never became elder or deacon in Brazil. Other important figures did, including merchants, planters, and WIC officers of various rankings: Colonel Waerdenburch and the political councilors Willem Schotte, Paulus van Serooskercke, Hendrik Haecx, and Mathias Beck, future governor of Curaçao. After the church formed a synod the colonial council also began sending one of its number as a secular delegate to the meeting, which was controversial but common in the Netherlands, too. In these ways each kept tabs on the other, the clergy often appearing before the council with an elder or deacon to deliver their minutes and discuss ecclesiastical needs and concerns.<sup>30</sup>

The governor and his council were generally sympathetic to the church's efforts to reform the city and colony. Among the first orders of business in Recife was creating a good atmosphere for "God's word," which was preached Sundays and Wednesdays. The

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<sup>29</sup> For days of prayer and thanks, see the last chapter. For the rest, see examples in the Carpentier report, 11 June 1636, OWIC 51:25, NA (passage on Rev. Bachiler and Jan Goedlad); minutes of the Brazil council, 27 July 1636, OWIC 68 (Col. Arciszewki or Artischau); 1 July 1644, OWIC 70; 13 Feb 1647, OWIC 71; 5 and 25 Dec 1649, OWIC 73.

<sup>30</sup> For officers on the consistory, see Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 117-122, 239-240, as well as the various minutes of the Brazil classis at NA, UA, and ZA. Elders are usually listed with their ministers at the start of the minutes. They and the deacons also sometimes appear in the minutes of the Brazil council on matters of concern to the church. See, for example, the minutes of 13 Feb 1637, OWIC 68, NA, when Soler and the elder Paulus van Serooskercke appear on behalf of the consistory about Catholic priests.

Dutch had commandeered the main chapel, but the clergy complained about noise in the streets during the sermons. The council agreed to put a stop to it, issuing a placard against all “disorder ... around the church,” appointing a person to see to its enforcement, even moving the market from the square outside the church to another location.<sup>31</sup> Because the clergy believed that drinking contributed to the chaos, the council also prohibited taverns from serving alcohol during the hours of church service (and after 9:00 PM), imposing fines on establishments that violated the law and giving the money to the hospital, which was administered by the deacons. These measures must have had some effect, for the 1638 classis reported that the Sabbath was now being honored in Recife, though not yet in other places. To maintain the quiet that was needed for church services, Kessler and others visited the council again in coming years about ships firing their cannon during the sermon or about criminals being punished on Sunday, for example.<sup>32</sup> They also tried to increase attendance by reminding negligent officers of their responsibility to bring their subordinates to church. The WIC could not control private persons in the same way, but by closing taverns and ending public executions the consistory did at least limit people’s options, perhaps hoping to force them to church through sheer boredom. For that reason it once asked the council to prohibit the committees of justice and finance, the militia, and the *schepenen* from meeting during Wednesday services, which were poorly attended. The council told the consistory just to move the sermon to 7:00 AM, when people could come without disrupting other necessary business.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 3 Mar 1637, ASU 212:5-16, UA; minutes of the Brazil council, 19 Mar 1637, OWIC 68, NA.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:4, NA; minutes of the Brazil council, 16 Apr and 7 Nov 1637, 17 Oct 1640, OWIC 68; 14 Mar 1643, OWIC 69.

<sup>33</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 9-18 Jan 1646, OWIC 61:7, NA; minutes of the Brazil council, 4 June 1643, OWIC 70; 23 Feb 1646, OWIC 71; 5 June 1648, OWIC 72.

The Dutch knew that the colony would never become Protestant without a serious evangelical effort. They could not hope to win many people to the Reformed faith just by making sermons available in Dutch, English, and French, which a majority of inhabitants could not understand. Church and company tried, therefore, to provide services also in Portuguese. At the center of these endeavors was Reverend Soler, a Spaniard and former Catholic priest who preached every week in Portuguese at Recife and Olinda, a few miles upriver from the capital. Over the years the company employed other Portuguese speakers, including some who learned on the job. The council encouraged all ministers to study the language, although the knowledge that they might be returning to Europe soon because of their temporary contracts must have deterred them. Reverend Stetten claimed a degree of proficiency. He taught regularly in Portuguese, according to a member of the High Council, and his wife Margarita once presented a number of Portuguese children for baptism. In addition to Soler and Stetten, seven ministers and various *ziekentroosters* and teachers are known to have spoken the language.<sup>34</sup>

The company provided the necessary literature: Bibles, catechisms, *The Reformed Catholic*, and other accessible writings that targeted “papist” ideas and practices. At first the directors sent literature in Spanish, which the church said was ineffectual; later they arranged for translations and publications in Portuguese. The new works were probably distributed among the Catholic population at Portuguese sermons and other public events. The clergy complained that they were not having an impact, that the Portuguese despised the newcomers as heretics, shunned Reformed preaching, and refused to send their

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<sup>34</sup> Jodocus à Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 16 July and 5 Nov 1636, OWIC 51:85, 51:117, NA; Servaes Carpentier’s report, 11 June 1636, OWIC 51:25. The other seven ministers were Johannes Apricius, Dionisius Biscaretto, David à Doreslaer, Johannes Eduardus, Thomas Kemp, Johannes Osterdag, and Vincent de Vaux.

children to Dutch schools. And indeed, there were few converts. Many Portuguese colonists, when they accepted the WIC's anti-Catholic propaganda at all, must have taken it home and thrown it into the fire. Yet their priests took a different view of things. They witnessed the proliferation of Protestant teachings and claimed that heterodox ideas were growing among their parishioners. Reverend Soler reported in 1639 that some Catholics were becoming receptive. Kessler and the XIX wrote the same two years later. With all the advantages that they enjoyed, *time* was what the invaders needed most.<sup>35</sup>

Tupi Indians were much more responsive to the Protestant message, and for good reason: They had suffered a great deal under the Portuguese. Through disease and hard labor their population had declined drastically in the past century. Under the Jesuits they found some security against mistreatment, but did not enjoy much autonomy. The Tupi who chose to resist recognized a potential ally when they first encountered Dutch ships along the coast before the invasion. Thirteen of them traveled to the Netherlands, where they spent five years learning Dutch (1625-1630) and providing valuable information about Brazil. Some also joined the Reformed Church while they were there. They were "reared and instructed" at "great cost" to the company, the council later noted. And the investment paid off tenfold.<sup>36</sup> When the WIC returned to Brazil with a large fleet and army in 1630, the Tupi came along, helping to establish contacts with other indigenous peoples, acting as messengers and interpreters, fighting beside Dutch troops against the Portuguese, and providing other indispensable services. Victory would not have been possible without their knowledge and skills; nor could they hope to win autonomy from

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<sup>35</sup> Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 152-167. See also the report of 14 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:22, NA; minutes of the Brazil council, 16 May 1639, OWIC 68; Adriaen van der Dussen's report, 4 Apr 1640, OWIC 46; and Vincent Soler, *Cort and sonderlingh Verhael*, 7.

<sup>36</sup> The council to the XIX, 6 Nov 1631, OWIC 49:135, NA. See also the council to the Zeeland chamber, 10 May 1644, OWIC 59:142.



the Portuguese without Dutch assistance. It was a useful alliance for both parties, each using the other to achieve different but complementary goals.<sup>37</sup>

Religion bound the partners more closely together. The Dutch had long insisted that the “tyrannized” peoples of the Americas would happily embrace them. Indians, they said, would recognize the superiority of Protestant civilization and join in the global fight against Iberian oppression. With their large print industry, the Dutch had done more than anyone else to create and promulgate the Black Legend of Spanish Cruelty, including the notion that Native Americans were seeking Protestant saviors. While the Dutch and other propagandists of the time were certainly naïve, the Tupi demonstrated that they were not completely off the mark. In Brazil the Dutch found a people that met many of their basic expectations, even if the Tupi had their own agenda and did not favor Protestantism on its merits. They probably just hoped to improve their lot.<sup>38</sup>

Turning Catholic Indians into loyal Protestant allies was central to the reformation of Brazil. The WIC’s anti-Catholic literature was intended not just for the Portuguese, but for Indians. Early in the Brazil campaigns the directors told their officers to support the Tupi mission and asked advice on how to help it succeed.<sup>39</sup> They did not have to wait long: Where the company did not forcibly expel priests, the Tupi did it on their own, then asked for Dutch replacements. Reverend Schagen was the first to work with them. Some time in the early 1630s he went on a tour of their villages (*aldeias*) with a member of the High Council. He tried to teach them the Lord’s Prayer, along with “other short lessons in

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<sup>37</sup> Meuwese, “For the Peace and Well-being of the Country,” especially Chaps. 1-2; Meuwese, “Dutch Calvinism and Native Americans: A Comparative Study of the Motivations for Protestant Conversion among the Tupis in Northeastern Brazil (1630-1654) and the Mohawks in Central New York (1690-1710),” *The Spiritual Conversion of the Americas*, ed. James Muldoon (University Press of Florida, 2004), 118-141.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* For the Black Legend and Dutch printing, see Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*.

<sup>39</sup> The XIX to Hugo Anthony, 24 Sep 1624, OWIC 1:126-128, NA; the XIX to the council, 4 June 1630, OWIC 8:19; 1 Aug 1635, OWIC 8:160-172.

our religion,” and they requested further instruction. However, because of the war and the sheer magnitude of the task, without any Reformed precedent to draw upon, a consistent missionary program was not implemented for a few years.<sup>40</sup> WIC ministers instructed the Tupi only haphazardly during the first half of the decade, reporting limited progress and the occasional baptism. Most contacts took place during military campaigns and irregular visits to the *aldeias*.<sup>41</sup>

Only in 1635 is the church known to have proposed a concrete plan, and the WIC instigated nothing serious until after the cleansing of 1636/37. The first plan called for Dutch schoolmasters with their wives and children to be installed in each *aldeia*, along with apprentice ministers (*proponents*) to learn the Tupi language. The church also asked that the company send twenty or thirty Tupi children to the Netherlands to learn Dutch and be catechized. The directors liked the proposals and promised to look for qualified individuals, meaning schoolmasters and *proponents*. They wrote that the Tupi mission “concerns us deeply.” They did not, however, agree to support children in Holland. They explained that those who spent too many years away from home sometimes forgot their native tongue, suggesting that it had occurred before, perhaps with some of the original thirteen Tupi. The directors asked the church instead to develop a strategy for achieving the same goals in Brazil, then to inform them of what was needed.<sup>42</sup>

After Kessler, Soler, and the other new ministers arrived in 1637, the Reformed mission began in earnest, basically by adopting the same system that the Jesuits had used

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<sup>40</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 2 July 1636, OWIC 68, NA. For the Indians expelling the priests on their own, see the report of Maurits and council, 14 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:22.

<sup>41</sup> Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 9 Aug 1635, OWIC 50:124, NA.

<sup>42</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 15 Oct 1635, ACA 4:65, SAA; the XIX to the Brazil consistory, 9 Nov 1635, OWIC 8:189-190, NA. See also the instructions of the High Council for Servatius Carpentier, 20 Feb 1636, OWIC 51:23.

before. Until that point the only Dutch clergy stationed permanently in Tupi villages were *ziekentroosters*. But in January 1638 the Brazil classis decided to “establish a minister in the *aldeias*, to live among them, to preach the word of God, to administer the Holy Sacrament, and to practice church discipline.” Some of the Tupi had formally requested ministers. The classis therefore nominated David Doerslaer, who knew Portuguese, and he accepted the assignment. From the main Tupi village of Mauritia he traveled regularly to six or seven others. The company appointed two Portuguese-speaking schoolmasters to assist him.<sup>43</sup> One of them, Dionisius Biscaretto, would later be ordained to the ministry and worked almost two decades as a missionary. Over the years the full-time ministers in the *aldeias* reached as high as four or five (simultaneously), and they were assisted by lay preachers and teachers, including a few indigenous Brazilians. Other ministers who spoke Portuguese, like Soler, visited the *aldeias* on an itinerant basis.<sup>44</sup> At least by 1641 Doerslaer was preaching and writing in Tupi. The directors wrote enthusiastically about the church’s progress and encouraged Governor Maurits and the High Council to employ as many clergy in the *aldeias* as necessary.<sup>45</sup>

In the mean time no one forgot the original plan to instruct Tupi children in Dutch schools. Missionaries constantly complained that conversion was only shallow, that the adult Tupi were too set in their ways to ever be good Protestant subjects. Only by starting young could Indians really change, clergy believed. In December 1641 the Amsterdam churches wrote to the Brazil classis about a new attempt to implement the plan proposed

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<sup>43</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 5 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:4, NA; minutes of the High Council, 9 Jan 1638, OWIC 68; Soler, *Seventeen Letters*, 51-53.

<sup>44</sup> Soler, *Cort Verhael*; minutes of the Brazil classis, 29 Oct 1638, ASU 212:25-32, UA (Kemp); 20 Apr 1640, ASU 212:37-42 (Eduardus); minutes of the High Council, 16 May 1639, 26 Nov 1640, 30 July 1644, OWIC 68-70, NA; Maurits and Council to the XIX, 20 Dec 1641, OWIC 56:303.

<sup>45</sup> The XIX to Maurits and Council, 10 July 1641, OWIC 8:359, 366-367, NA; the XIX to the Brazil classis, July 1641, OWIC 8:368. For Doerslaer, see Doornick to the Zeeland chamber, 24 Aug 1641, OWIC 56:197.

six years before. At the company's behest, they had hired two schoolmasters to live in the *aldeias*: Hendrik van Diever, a tailor, and Dirck van Lochem, a shoemaker, both of whom had lived exemplary lives. Van Diever even showed promise as a preacher. Most importantly, both were married with children, which would provide the "blind" Tupi with fine examples of "Christian housekeeping" (also possibly translated simply as Christian households or families). A few months later the directors announced that they would hire nine more schoolmaster families for the same purpose, and over the course of the year the first of them arrived and received their assignments in the various *aldeias*.<sup>46</sup> Church and WIC in Brazil recognized the directors' good intent, as well as the "great costs" involved in the undertaking, but they were less sanguine about the prospect of success. Concerned that traditional Tupi culture would continue to inhibit major reform, the High Council and the clergy called a special meeting to discuss the problem.<sup>47</sup>

The strategy that they came up with ultimately foundered on the shoals of Tupi resistance. To make Reformed teachings as efficacious as possible, the clergy proposed removing children from their families and raising them with Dutch children in a special school outside the *aldeias*. The High Council liked the idea and suggested a number of former Catholic cloisters that might serve the purpose. The directors wrote that in such schools, away from the influence of their parents, children could learn the Dutch language, the true religion, and a useful trade. Amazingly, they only informed the Tupi about their plans after they had expended a great deal of energy and money: selecting a cloister, arranging funds, constructing new barracks for the soldiers who used to inhabit

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<sup>46</sup> The Amsterdam classis to the Brazil classis, 10 Dec 1641, ACA 163:96-99, SAA; the XIX to Maurits and council, 18 Apr 1642, OWIC 9:1-25, NA; minutes of the Brazil council, 12 May, 6 July, and 1 Aug 1642, OWIC 69.

<sup>47</sup> Minutes of the High Council, 11 June and 11 July 1642, OWIC 69, NA; Maurits and council to the Zeeland chamber, 25 June 1642, OWIC 57:8.

the cloister, and so on. Company coffers could hardly bear it, the governor wrote. Only then did the council ask the ministers and schoolmasters to meet with parents and draw up a list of potential students. Only then did they discover that the Tupi had no intention of relinquishing their children. The “civilizing” of the Brazilian youth could not move forward without upsetting their elders, a despondent council reported to the directors in May 1644. The timing was especially bad because Indians in the province of Siara had just rioted over a different issue. Not wanting to anger “these Brazilians” by “separating them from their children,” the council resolved just to have the *aldeia* ministers continue their work as before. The directors expressed their disappointment but agreed that it was probably best to abandon the cloister proposal.<sup>48</sup>

From Brazil the WIC launched its plans to make the rest of the Catholic empires Protestant. The Recife church increasingly oversaw ecclesiastical affairs in other company possessions because the city became integrated with them generally: Maurits’s responsibilities stretched to the Caribbean and Africa. The expedition that conquered Curaçao in 1634, before he arrived, departed from Brazil, as did the fleets that captured Elmina (1637), Luanda (1641), São Tomé (1641), and the one that tried and failed to take Chile from the Spanish in 1643. Curaçao was officially under Maurits’s government. The directors resolved not to place their African possessions on the same footing, but the burgeoning slave trade helped maintain strong bonds between that continent and Brazil.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Minutes of the High Council, 5 Feb, 11 June, 11 July 1642, 4 Feb and 5 Oct 1643, OWIC 69-70, NA; Maurits and council to the XIX, 28 Feb 1642, OWIC 57:123; 9 Sep 1642, OWIC 52: 32; 29 Apr 1643, OWIC 58:268; the XIX to Maurits and Council, 14 June 1642, OWIC 9:39-41; Maurits and council to the Zeeland chamber, 25 June 1642, OWIC 57:8; the High Council to the Zeeland chamber, 10 May 1644, OWIC 59:142; Hamel and Bullestrate to the XIX, 13 Feb 1645, OWIC 60:10; the XIX to the High Council, 17 Sep 1644, OWIC 9:180, 187.

<sup>49</sup> For the integration of the Dutch Atlantic during the Maurits years (but not beyond, the authors argue), see Pieter Emmer and Wim Klooster, “The Dutch Atlantic, 1600-1800: Expansion Without Empire,” *Itinerario* 23:2 (1999): 48-69. For Brazil’s early connections to Curaçao, see Wim Klooster, *Illicit Riches: Dutch*

Even the Amsterdam and Walcheren classes, who tended to guard their colonial oversight powers jealously, recognized the growing place of Recife. For example, when they wrote to its consistory or classis they reported on matters in Africa and Curaçao.<sup>50</sup> Somewhat grudgingly they once also allowed a *ziekentrooster* at Elmina to travel to Recife for his examination and ordination, preferring that he come to the Netherlands. Recife became an ecclesiastical clearinghouse of sorts, sending books and clergy to Africa at different times during the Kessler-Maurits years. The *proponent* Fredericus Vittaeus, who had also served at Curaçao, went from Brazil to Luanda with the fleet in 1641, followed a few months later by Reverend Ketel and two *ziekentroosters*, all called and sent by the Brazil classis. *Ziekentroosters* were also sent from Recife to São Tomé or, when Brazil had too few personnel, the colonial government wrote to the directors in the Netherlands about São Tomé's clerical needs.<sup>51</sup> One of the justifications for dividing the Brazil classis and creating a synod, according to the clergy, was for the better regulation of the churches in

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*Trade in the Caribbean, 1648-1795* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998), Chap. 3. See also the Brazil government's sending captive monks to the West Indies in the minutes of the Brazil council, 17 Jan 1639, OWIC 68, NA; Maurits and council to the XIX, 7 May 1640, OWIC 55:25. Or the traffic in Indian slaves, salt, and Indigo between Brazil and the Caribbean: the governor and council to the governor of Curaçao, 26 Jan 1644, OWIC 59:139; Gilles Venant and Jehan Jobsz to the Zeeland chamber, 10 Mar 1644, OWIC 59:149. For Brazil and Africa, see Ratelband, *Nederlanders*, Chap. 8; Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 98-99. See also the many letters between the two regions in OWIC 49-67.

<sup>50</sup> The Amsterdam classis to the Brazil classis, 25 Jan 1640, ACA 163:67-68, SAA.

<sup>51</sup> The Elmina *ziekentrooster* was Meindert Hendricks. See *ibid.*, as well as the minutes of the deputies, 23 Apr 1640, 24 June 1641, ACA 157:32, 45-46, SAA; the Amsterdam classis to Hendricks and to the Brazil classis, 1 May 1640, ACA 163:72-74; Geurt Adriaen Jacobsen to Maurits and council, 12 Dec 1640, OWIC 56:15, NA. For books, see Maurits and council to the directors in Angola, 19 June 1642, OWIC 57:158. For Vittaeus, Ketel, and the *ziekentroosters* who went to Luanda, see the minutes of the Brazil classis, 17 Oct 1641, ACW 73, ZA; minutes of the deputies, 19 May 1642, ACA 157:75. For São Tomé, see Maurits and council to the XIX, 28 Feb 1642, OWIC 57:123; minutes of the Brazil council, 17 Apr 1642, OWIC 69. See also Jan Claessen Cock to Maurits and council, 16 Dec 1641, 10 Feb 1642, OWIC 57:103, 58:207. For other examples of personnel moving between Brazil and Africa, see the minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 7 Aug 1625, AKA 5:280, SAA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 9 Apr 1643, OWIC 25:79 (the man in question, Anthony Kien, went to Guinea, then to Brazil); and Chap. 3 of this dissertation.

other WIC conquests. They hoped that the new synod would supervise religious affairs in Africa until “the churches there ... could form their own proper gatherings.”<sup>52</sup>

Of course they never formed their own classis or synod because local conditions made it impossible or, in the case of Luanda and São Tomé, the Portuguese soon took them back. Likewise, the WIC failed dismally in Chile. In each place, however, it tried to implement the same program that it did in Brazil. In Chile the Indians quickly rejected a Dutch alliance when they learned that the company was after gold.<sup>53</sup> In Luanda, where the WIC at least had more time (1641-1648), it also tried to convert local inhabitants. The officers who captured the town assessed its population and called immediately for two or three ministers, a *proponent* to assist each of them, and a schoolmaster. That was the only way to draw the people to “our Religion,” they declared, the only way to turn them into “faithful servants” of the Dutch state. For the same reasons they suggested that the WIC try to convert the King of Congo and his court, which had been Catholic for more than a century by that point. The directors agreed to send two ministers, four *proponents*, and three teachers for Luanda and Congo together, though there is no evidence that they sent more than two ministers and a handful of lay preachers (not including those who traveled to Luanda from Brazil). The need was not as great after the King of Congo rejected their offer anyway. The WIC sent Reverend Ketel as a representative to his court, but the king soon informed Governor Maurits that he had no interest in Reformed religion.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 17 Oct 1641, ACW 73, ZA; minutes of the Brazil council, 23 Oct 1641, OWIC 69, NA.

<sup>53</sup> Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 204-210.

<sup>54</sup> Nieulant and Moorthamer to Maurits and council, 11 and 17 Sep 1641, OWIC 56:272, NA; letter from Luanda, 12 Feb 1642, Collectie Radermacher, 1.10.69, 545, NA; Report of the Heeren Gecommitteert, 18 Feb and 4 Mar 1642, ASG II, 5755, d. 145-147, NA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 24 Feb 1642, ACA 4:246, SAA; report to the States General, 28 Mar 1642, AHZ 922:41, UA; Dom Garcia to Johan Maurits, 12 May 1642, OWIC 58:242; the XIX to the director of the coast of Africa, 19 June 1642, OWIC 9:47-48; report of Pieter Mortamer, 14 Oct 1642, OWIC 58:266.

The Dutch bestowed more attention on missionary endeavors than the historiography currently admits; Reformed clergy were not hired simply to administer to company employees.<sup>55</sup> Conversion, of course, meant stronger alliances and increased trade opportunities in some places. Very few religious activities under the WIC were not related in some way to economic goals. But that is precisely the point: The purported divide between commerce and religion, minister and merchant, is inconsistent with Dutch practices, however “modern” they may have been. The Reformed Church and the WIC worked closely together to achieve material and spiritual ends that they did not usually label as one or the other. The company even went beyond what was required to maintain a simple alliance, spending money that it did not have on Tupi schools and the cloister plan. To be sure, the WIC sometimes weighed the needs of the religious mission against other goals and made cuts accordingly. That was the reality of being both a business and a state. The reformation was not so easy to command and control, however; it depended on the choices of individual colonial rulers and local peoples. After the directors learned that Maurits had included hundreds of Tupi in the attack on Luanda—and that only about one in five had returned—they reproved him sharply. They had told him more than once not to use the Tupi except in great need, not to take them away from their agriculture nor interfere with their religious instruction. Their “upbringing” and salvation were extremely important, the XIX wrote. It mattered as much as any “temporary profits.”<sup>56</sup>

Ultimately it was not the Dutch who scuttled the reformation, but the agency of those they were trying to change: the Portuguese, the Tupi, the King of Congo, and the people of Chile. They either rejected Dutch overtures outright or set significant limits on

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<sup>55</sup> For these historiographical issues, see the introduction.

<sup>56</sup> The XIX to Maurits and council, 18 Apr 1642, OWIC 9:1-25, NA.



becoming “Protestant.” The Tupi were happy to exchange Catholic liturgy for Reformed and make a political-military alliance, but they refused to discard all beliefs and practices that their new clergy labeled heterodox. Perhaps the Dutch could have made greater progress in time, both among the Tupi and the Portuguese. The revolt of the latter in 1645 ended whatever hopes the WIC had, though. The final section of this chapter considers other components of the Dutch religious mission and the ways that anti-Catholicism and religious tensions in general contributed to the revolt.

### *The Failed Reformation and the Revolt*

Turning Catholics into Protestants was only one of the church’s goals in Brazil. Reforming the population also meant stopping behaviors like cursing, blasphemy, and the sexual sins of incest, fornication, adultery, and prostitution. Increasingly, marriage and sex had become public concerns in Europe during the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. Mainstream churches had developed institutions like the consistory and other ecclesiastical courts in part to regulate and punish unlawful sexual conduct.<sup>57</sup> The church in Brazil was no exception. It checked the papers of new arrivals in the colony to ascertain their marriage status, recorded engagements, and reported dubious relationships to the proper authorities. Consistent with Dutch law, all impending marriages had to be announced three times in the church or city hall in the weeks before the ceremony. The consistory instructed engaged couples to abstain from sex and pressured them to marry

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<sup>57</sup> Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York: Viking, 2004), Chap. 16.

quickly to avoid temptation. Those who ignored these and other strictures were referred to the *schout* (sheriff) for investigation and prosecution.<sup>58</sup>

The church's power was greater in Brazil than in the Netherlands, which aroused resentment among Catholics and probably others who did not belong to the Reformed faith. At home, Dutch rulers appointed secular commissioners to oversee the day-to-day minutiae that occupied the church in Brazil. WIC clergy thus wore two hats, condemning common sins from the pulpit and visiting the High Council when they had clear evidence of misconduct, yet acting for the government, too, by checking papers and recording the names of all those who wished to marry, whether they planned to do so in the chapel or before a magistrate. How long they performed the first task is uncertain. At least by 1646 the council was having an officer do it.<sup>59</sup> But they always recorded and kept the lists of engaged, enabling them to monitor those who planned to marry legally and identify those who did not. For the WIC it was just a convenient allocation of authority to a group that cared deeply about the matter anyway. For the clergy, despite the added power, it became a nuisance, and they tried to pass it back to the company, arguing that their marital duties were a source of "displeasure" among the "sundry nations" that inhabited Brazil. Though the XIX agreed that a secular official should take over, it never happened.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 3 March 1637, ASU 212:5-16, UA; 5 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:4, NA; 20 Apr 1640, ASU 212:37-42; 21 Nov 1640, OWIC 55:116; 17 Oct 1641, ACW 73, ZA; 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:43; 9 Jan 1646, OWIC 61:7; minutes of the Brazil council, 11 Sep 1638, 18 Jan 1641, 20 May and 23 July 1642, OWIC 68, 69; the XIX to the governor and council in Brazil, 10 July 1641, OWIC 8:359, 366-367. See also the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 23 Apr 1635, 15 May 1636, OWIC 14:26, 136, NA; the classis of Amsterdam to the Brazil classis, 17 Oct 1639, ACA 163:56-58, SAA; minutes of the *Haags Besoigne*, 15 Sep 1648, OWIC 3:102, 108; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 7 Dec 1648, ACA 5:108-10.

<sup>59</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 15 Feb 1646, OWIC 71, NA.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 Sep 1644, OWIC 70; the XIX to the Brazil council, 15 Apr 1645, OWIC 9:226, 229; the council to the XIX, 10 Dec 1645, OWIC 61:57. See also the council minutes of 23 Feb, 25 June, and 11 Sep 1638, OWIC 68. Schalkwijk (*Reformed Church*, 284) claims incorrectly that the church got what it wanted.

Calvinists maintained that sexual sin would bring “God’s vengeance” or “wrath” upon the colony and, along with their other efforts to reform society, sought vehemently to eradicate it.<sup>61</sup> They did not turn automatically to the state, however. Their first tool was the pulpit and their first responsibility was to errant members of the church. That was one purpose of the consistory, after all: to hear, judge, and ultimately, by withholding Communion and applying other, similar pressures, reform the men and women who had willingly joined the community of Christ. In the province of Paraíba, about seventy-five miles north of Recife, the local consistory once accused a woman named Elcken or Elsie Groenewalts of prostitution. Five witnesses spoke against her. She being a member of the church, the consistory questioned her, trying to obtain a confession. But she refused to cooperate and they wanted to excommunicate her. When her case came before the classis in Recife, the other members decided that she deserved another chance; they would give her six more months. At the next classis meeting the Paraíba delegation stated that, after much exhortation (and perhaps facing the threat of exportation), she had finally confessed her sins and had done her penance in the consistory, meaning that she had demonstrated the requisite humility and sorrow that they had failed to obtain before. Only after a period of close observation did they readmit her to the Communion table.<sup>62</sup>

The High Council also worried that sexual sin would provoke God’s anger, once telling the *schepenen* of Rio Grande to prevent “whoredom” in their province. “Through [prostitution] the Wrath of God falls over the land.” The council intended to “root out

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<sup>61</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 5 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:4, NA; the Plante report, 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:40.

<sup>62</sup> The Paraíba/Frederickstad and other consistory minutes have not survived, but the Groenewalts case appears in the classis minutes. See those of 5 Jan 1638, *ibid.*, as well as 29 Oct 1638 and 20 Apr 1640, ASU 212:25-32, 37-42, UA.

such sins.”<sup>63</sup> If the interests and responsibilities that they had to juggle did not allow them to be as rigid as the ministers, they accommodated the church when they could. When the classis complained that some married women were living apart from their husbands, the council created a special garrison for married soldiers and officers, claiming that the WIC also hoped to do away with “disorder.” The original complaint of the classis suggests that its concern was not just about employees and their wives, for it objected to women living alone even when their husbands were in “fixed” locales. The council’s solution evidently solved the problem without meddling in the affairs of men and women whose separation probably had more to do with marital discord or economic opportunity than with the kind of misconduct that the clergy suspected when they encountered single women.<sup>64</sup>

Church and WIC did not limit themselves to regulating the lives of members and employees. When there were clear violations of the law they could and did act against anyone, no matter the person’s nationality or status. During the Kessler-Maurits years many women were investigated, arrested, and deported for dubious relationships, illegal marriages, or prostitution. The church interpreted those as much the same. Consistory members watched for possible transgressions and investigated them on their own, calling couples before them or the classis to determine whether they were behaving illegally. If through questioning it appeared that someone had broken the law, the clergy went to the council, who turned it over to the WIC’s *schout* or *fiscaal* for further investigation and finally to the *schepenen* for prosecution.<sup>65</sup> Having a different partner in the Netherlands

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<sup>63</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 9 Nov 1638, OWIC 68, NA.

<sup>64</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 20 Apr 1640, ASU 212:37-42, UA; 21 Nov 1640, OWIC 55:16, NA; minutes of the Brazil council, 18 Jan 1641, OWIC 69.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, the minutes of the classis, 16 Dec 1636, ASU 212:1-4, UA; the minutes of the Brazil council, 11 and 19 Mar, 28 Dec 1637, 15 Jan, 22 Nov 1638, OWIC 68, NA; the minutes of the classis, 3 Mar 1637, ASU 212:5-16; 5 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:4; 29 Oct 1638, ASU 212:25-32; the Recife consistory to the XIX, 19 Aug 1637, OWIC 52:99.

was a common allegation. The church also investigated “very bad” housekeeping, girls with bad reputations marrying boys from respectable families, one man purchasing his wife from another, someone sleeping with his slave or servant, and women working in taverns in unambiguous cases of prostitution. The consistory even tried to stop otherwise lawful marriages when the couple in question had lived together before. Reformed clergy were very patient: When their suspects were Dutch, they wrote to colleagues in Holland to ask for help in identifying them and determining their marital status, waiting upwards of nine months for the answer before moving forward.<sup>66</sup>

The High Council responded to the church with wary support. It often sent women home or to other provinces (more rarely men) when there was sufficient evidence against them.<sup>67</sup> But it sometimes had to remind consistory members to remain within the proper channels, telling them in the case of the couple who had lived together (and now wanted to marry) that nothing could be done unless the accusations were “legally proven true.”<sup>68</sup> Despite the church’s influence, ultimate authority lay with the WIC, including the *schout* and *fiscaal* who collected evidence and the *schepenen* who handed down a verdict. The council and other WIC bodies filled those roles as Dutch institutions were first taking root. The consistory’s investigative duties may have reflected that early uncertainty or it may be evidence that secular officials were shirking their responsibilities, not wanting to crack down hard on illicit conduct. The church certainly believed that officials sometimes chose not to enforce the marriage laws or laws against cursing, Sabbath-breaking, and

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<sup>66</sup> For “very badly,” see the minutes of the Brazil council, 11 Dec 1642, OWIC 69, NA. For the rest, see the same minutes, 15 Sep 1637, 23 Feb 1638, 8 Dec 1642, 4 June 1643, OWIC 68-70; minutes of the Haarlem consistory, 8 Oct 1638, AKHA 22, NHA; minutes of the Brazil classis, 9 Jan 1646, OWIC 61:7.

<sup>67</sup> For other examples of deportations (in a few cases only to other provinces), see *ibid.*, 19 Apr 1638, 1 and 24 Aug 1639, 9 Dec 1640, 3 Jan, 21 Aug, and 8 Sep 1641, 14 Mar and 5 Aug 1643, 13 Sep 1644, 15 Feb 1646, OWIC 68-71; Samuel de Coninck to the Zeeland chamber, 28 Feb 1642, OWIC 57:139.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 June 1643, OWIC 70.

non-Reformed worship. The first accusations of WIC complicity appeared about a year after the reformation began, when Kessler and two other delegates from the consistory complained that the *fiscaal* was not conducting an “inquisition” (*inquisitie*) against those who violated the placards. Two years later Kessler reported that sin was commonplace. Through the “connivance” (*conniventie*) of officers who were supposed to execute the law, sin was actually growing.<sup>69</sup> Similar charges were made in the future, usually about lower-ranking officials, less often against the High Council.<sup>70</sup>

The church condemned council members on at least one occasion, after the *fiscaal* blamed them for releasing twelve of seventeen women who were then sitting in custody. When the church accused the council of winking at prostitution and other sexual sins, the council denied the charges vehemently. Further investigation revealed that Pieter Bas had approved the release as president of the Council of Justice, someone later having changed the date of the written order to make it appear that he had issued it after joining the High Council. Having discovered this “abuse,” the council then summoned the *schout* Paulo Daems, who had previously said that he would no longer arrest prostitutes because they were not punished afterward. As evidence he reminded everyone of a similar case from a few years before, when Maurits freed some women at the behest of their “creditors.” The church had not complained at the time, however, and the *fiscaal* and *schout* testified that the council had never freed anyone else, nor had they ever arrested anyone without a proper investigation, just because the consistory wanted it. Less than two weeks later the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 11 Sep 1638, 17 Oct 1640, OWIC 68.

<sup>70</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 27 Mar 1641, 27 Oct 1642, OWIC 69, NA; Samuel de Coninck to the Zeeland chamber, OWIC 56:125; Petrus Doornick to Maximilian Teellinck and Cornelis Beuckelaer, 4 Nov 1641, ACW 73, ZA; minutes of the deputies, 31 May 1644, ACA 157:128, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 4 July 1644, ACA 4:312; Franciscus Plante report, 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:40.

council reported that it had renewed the placards and charged the *fiscaal* to execute them with rigor. The consistory should inform him if it learned of any violations.<sup>71</sup>

The council's reply may have been an example of "protest[ing] too much," in the words of the Bard. Council members did sometimes exhibit a more lenient attitude than the clergy, telling them, for example, to use Christian exhortation before resorting to legal action when unmarried couples were living together: They had the lists of engaged; they could try to change people first through God's word. Whether the council really practiced connivance is a strong probability. It was a well-known device of indifferent or tolerant rulers in the Netherlands, and Maurits left written advice for his successors that explicitly heralded its benefits, at least in the case of religious pluralism. It is not a stretch to think that he operated the same in other matters, especially given the many groups and interests that he had to juggle.<sup>72</sup>

But connivance was not a uniform policy. The council consisted of men of varying views, and examples of WIC compliance with the church's wishes are many. As noted before, council members also fretted about sin and God's wrath. They asked their underlings to prevent prostitution and to execute the laws faithfully even when there were no clergy present. When officials failed to perform their duties, the council threatened to appoint men who would.<sup>73</sup> Some of the criticism that clergy leveled against WIC officers revealed an extraordinary lack of sympathy for an impossible situation. One gets a sense of the council's exasperation in a 1645 letter to the directors, claiming that many critiques were unjust. They admitted that blasphemy, cursing, Sabbath-breaking, prostitution, and

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<sup>71</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 3 and 15 Feb 1646, OWIC 71, NA. See also 18 Jan 1641 and 27 Feb 1645, OWIC 69-70.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 May 1642, OWIC 69, NA. For Maurits and his feelings about connivance, see below.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 Dec 1639, 17 Oct 1642, 30 June 1645, OWIC 68-70, NA.

adultery were common in Brazil. They had outlawed them, though, and company officers were trying to eradicate them. Brazil was inhabited by a “rough, indecent heap of people from every nation.” No one could expect them to establish law and order so quickly, they wrote, no matter what they did or how vigorously they did it.<sup>74</sup>

Perhaps the clergy should have been more sympathetic. After all, the church had supported the war party, the WIC, and the aggressive approach that the company adopted in the Atlantic world. They were reaping the rewards of being a military church in an occupied land. If women sometimes caused scandals by living alone, it was in large part because their husbands were so mobile—at least until the company created the married garrison. Mobility also destroyed consistories, with newly-called elders suddenly moved from one province to another. The impact of the military presence was great: According to the clergy, some officers were as “rough” as their men, committing the very sins they were supposed to prevent, like “misusing God’s name.” Brazil was a “conquered land” with “few devout,” one minister lamented.<sup>75</sup> The colony suffered from a high number of murders and, of course, deaths in battle, which quickly filled the graveyard at Recife’s chapel and forced the WIC to designate a different plot for burials. Religious facilities in general bore the signs of occupation. If they were not damaged or destroyed during the initial invasion the company sometimes used them now as garrisons or storage for gun powder and other supplies. As the population of Mauritsstad grew (across the river from Recife), ministers asked that the chapel of a monastery there be emptied in the interests of worship. Everyone was traveling to Recife on Sundays, and its chapel could not hold

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<sup>74</sup> Hamel and Bullestrate to the XIX, 13 Feb 1645, OWIC 60:10, NA.

<sup>75</sup> Samuel de Coninck to the Zeeland chamber, 6 Apr 1641, OWIC 56:125, NA. See also the minutes of the Brazil council, 27 Mar 1641, OWIC 69. For a consistory destroyed when its elders were transferred, see the case of Itamaraca (Rev. Polhemus) in the minutes of the Brazil classis, 20 Apr 1640, ASU 212:37-42, UA.



them anymore. The High Council agreed but asked for patience, suggesting that they use the “hall” in Maurits’s palace in the mean time. Because a different magazine had to be constructed, it was eight months before the council gave the order to empty the church, a few more before it was ready for Reformed services.<sup>76</sup>

A more serious consequence of conquest was having to live and labor among the conquered. The council’s “heap of people” included tens-of-thousands of Portuguese who were not happy with the regime change, nor with Protestant and Jewish newcomers who took their churches and property. The Portuguese contributed to the difficulties described already: marriage issues, Sabbath-breaking, and complicit rulers. Though the WIC was blamed for those, they must be placed in the context of occupation. Dutch and Portuguese traditions, laws, and authority were instantly thrown together. Even if the High Council had consisted solely of unbending Calvinist zealots, it could never have imposed its will. Secular and ecclesiastical power had to be shared on some level or the Dutch would not have lasted more than a few years in Brazil. Though Jesuits were quickly banished, other priests were allowed to remain as a condition of surrender, especially in the countryside. Similarly, secular offices had to be shared with Catholics. In some places it could not have been otherwise, since the Dutch population was relatively small. Yet Catholics held office even in the capital—from lowly orphan masters to powerful *schepenen* who took the clergy’s evidence against wrong-doers and determined their fate. *Schepenen* in most towns were a mix of Dutch and Portuguese. Would they support the church’s campaign to stop sugar mills from operating on Sunday when most mills were run by Portuguese? Would they rule against Catholic suspects when the Reformed consistory was involved?

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<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 2 Nov 1640, 17 Jan, 12 Apr, 7 June, 5 Dec 1641, OWIC 68-69. For the graveyard, see *ibid.*, 19 Aug 1648, OWIC 72. For murders, see the minutes of the Brazil classis, 21 Nov 1640, OWIC 55:116.

Portuguese *schepenen* hindered justice at a more basic level by celebrating their Catholic holidays, regularly halting the business of the courts through their absence.<sup>77</sup>

To be clear, Catholic definitions of sin and deviant behavior probably did not differ much from Calvinist views. At least one of the women who was convicted and deported for prostitution was identified and captured with the assistance of a Portuguese planter.<sup>78</sup> The problems that arose from power-sharing had more to do with the natural antagonism of occupation and conflicting legal traditions than with theology. Reverend Petrus Doornick condemned legal customs in Paraíba, where he lived. He worried about relations with rulers because half of them were “papists” and the other half were Dutch merchants who had never held office before.<sup>79</sup> His outspoken, combative manner made him many enemies, including some in the Recife church, which he criticized for wielding too much power in the classis. Still, in his struggles one sees how religion divided the occupier from the occupied and muddied what should have been secular issues in local courts: The High Council first received word that something was not right in Paraíba when its *schepenen* wrote that Doornick was “seeking to take their authority.” When he came to Recife to defend himself, he blamed his problems on the *schepenen*, describing a recent incident in which one of his parishioners had traveled to the provincial capital with a large entourage to celebrate Communion. The *schepenen* chose that time, Doornick stated, to seize one of the man’s slaves, who was at the center of a legal dispute. Theirs

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<sup>77</sup> For power sharing and Portuguese orphan masters and *schepenen*, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 4 June 1641, 7 Oct 1642, 30 June 1644, OWIC 69-70; instructions of the States General concerning the rule of Brazil, 23 Aug 1636, Article 46, OWIC 48; the XIX to Maurits and council, 14 June 1642, OWIC 9:39-41; Maurits and council to the XIX, 29 Apr 1643, OWIC 58:268; 9 Sep 1642, OWIC 57:32. The operation of sugar mills on Sunday was a regular problem for the clergy. The High Council outlawed it, but it seems to have continued. See the minutes of the classis, 17 Oct 1641, ACW 73, ZA; and the minutes of the Brazil council, 22 Nov 1638, 20 May 1642, OWIC 68-69.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 8 Sep 1641, OWIC 69, NA.

<sup>79</sup> Petrus Doornick to the Zeeland chamber, 25 Sep 1642, OWIC 57:50, NA.

was no act of convenience, but a calculated plot to “disturb the members of the church” and detract from Reformed services. The same did not happen to Catholics, he claimed. When they went to “idolatrous Mass,” no one molested them. Yet those of the “holy, true religion” suffered abuses that were not allowed in other lands. He blamed the disapproval of his Dutch critics on the fact that he had rebuked their sins. Some of them purportedly boasted that they were Catholic or Lutheran. Unfortunately for Doornick, his dispute with his colleagues in Recife had not won him many friends, and he was eventually sent home because of the divisions in Paraíba.<sup>80</sup>

Doornick’s interpretation of events echoed other complaints about Catholics at that time. The nature of Catholic worship and Portuguese power differed from place to place. If the Portuguese in one region refused to give up arms unless they were first promised religious freedoms, Maurits allowed it. If their compatriots elsewhere neglected to raise the issue during negotiations, or if they had to be subjected by force, their rights were more ambiguous. The result was a patchwork of conflicting policies, with priests free to conduct services in one place but not another. Even where they operated legally they were supposed to worship only inside their chapels, never outdoors, and they could not perform marriages. At first the WIC allowed them to marry if they made the proper announcements three times in the Reformed church or city hall beforehand, but the XIX soon resolved not to recognize any marriages that were not actually solemnized in the public church or city hall.<sup>81</sup> Priests had to take an oath to the Dutch government and were

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<sup>80</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 29 Sep, 9 Oct, 15 Oct, 25-26 Nov 1642, 2 Jan 1643, OWIC 69, NA; minutes of the deputies, 31 July 1643, ACA 157:116, SAA.

<sup>81</sup> The XIX to the Brazil council, 1 Aug 1635, OWIC 8:160-172, NA; report of Maurits and council, 14 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:22; minutes of the Brazil council, 11 June 1641, OWIC 69; “capitulation terms,” 30 Nov 1641, OWIC 55:118; Lichthart, Koin, and Bar to Maurits, 12 Dec 1641, ASG II, 5756, d. 204-213, NA. For Dutch marriage laws, Catholic priests, and Catholic marriages, see the following paragraph and its fns.

carefully watched as a potential fifth column. Cut off from contact with the Portuguese bishop in Bahia, sometimes communicating with Rome via the Netherlands, they were organized locally under provincial vicars and a “vicar general,” who resided in Paraíba.<sup>82</sup> The Dutch deported individual priests and larger groups at various times to the Caribbean and the Netherlands because they violated laws or plotted insurrection. The directors at home and the High Council in Brazil both wanted to rid the colony of them entirely, but fearing the Portuguese reaction, they could never do so.<sup>83</sup>

Catholics constantly pushed at the boundaries that the Dutch placed around them. Reformed ministers who blamed the WIC for not doing enough about it maybe forgot the church’s original support for the invasion: War and occupation created the conditions that they despised. The presence of so many priests complicated matters that they struggled with anyway, like marriage. They could not control it when the Portuguese outnumbered the Dutch and priests outnumbered ministers. Even Dutch colonists asked Catholic priests to marry them sometimes, probably just when it was convenient but also when Reformed consistories refused to approve unions for some of the reasons discussed already. In other words, the clergy’s own strict standards drove people into Catholic arms.<sup>84</sup> In normal circumstances Catholics likely did not care any less about sexual misconduct, but being out of power, they were not privy to the same individual histories as ministers. Perhaps

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid. Minutes of the Brazil council, 4 May 1637, OWIC 68; report of Maurits and council, 14 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:22. See also Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 268-300.

<sup>83</sup> The High Council to the XIX, 22 Feb 1636, OWIC 52:42, NA; Servaes Carpentier’s report, 11 June 1636, OWIC 51:25; instructions of the States General, 23 Aug 1636, Articles 33-34, OWIC 48; minutes of the Brazil council, 17 Jan 1639, 7 Dec 1643, OWIC 69-70; the XIX to Maurits and council, 24 June 1639, OWIC 8:222-223; Maurits and council to the Zeeland and Maas chambers, 2 Mar 1640, OWIC 55:1; Maurits and council to the XIX, 7 May 1640, OWIC 55:25; the XIX to Maurits and council, 1 July 1640, OWIC 8:313, 317-318, 330.

<sup>84</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 13 Feb, 16 Apr 1637, 15 Jan 1636, 22 July 1641, 29 Oct 1643, OWIC 68-70; minutes of the Brazil classis, 5 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:4; 29 Oct 1638, ASU 212:25-32, UA; the XIX to Maurits and council, 10 July 1641, OWIC 8:359, 366-367.

marrying people illicitly was also a way to show their contempt for the new regime. For its part, the High Council dealt with Catholic marriages the same as other violations. By their very nature, though, secret ceremonies were difficult to prove.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to marriage, Catholic priests visited the sick, performed last rites, and used censure and excommunication to intimidate any Portuguese who grew too close to the Dutch. Reformed clergy blamed the lack of converts on the power of the vicar general and his ability to inspire awe and fear in the Catholic community.<sup>86</sup> In places where they had greater influence, like Olinda and Paraíba, Catholics sometimes violated peace agreements by taking their religion outdoors, most frequently in parades or processions to venerate a saint or mark a holiday. They also participated in street theater, which was less obviously criminal. Calvinists objected to it for a number of reasons, first because the content was usually religious in nature, recounting Bible stories, and the ministry was supposed to have custody over public religious instruction. They also interpreted physical representations of holy, divine figures as idolatry; they worried that Catholics were subtly, cleverly planting their “superstitions” through street performances, and they told Reformed members not to watch. Ministers uncovered supposed Catholic plots in other activities, too, saying that Catholics used funerals to disguise processions, for example, or that they did the same when they walked to church together. The High Council was rather more understanding, once instructing the *schout* in Rio Grande not to permit any obvious cases of illegal behavior but to give Catholics leeway at least during the hours that they

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<sup>85</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 29 Oct 1638, ASU 212:25-32, UA; minutes of the Brazil council, 22 July, 6 Aug 1641, 23 July 1642, 29 Oct 1643, 11 Dec 1643, OWIC 69-70.

<sup>86</sup> Petrus Doornick to the Zeeland chamber, 24 Aug 1641, OWIC 56:197, NA; Doornick to Maximilian Teellinck and Cornelis Beuckelaer, 4 Nov 1641, ACW 73, ZA; minutes of the Brazil classis, 17 Oct 1641, ACW 73; Maurits and council to the XIX, 10 Nov 1641, OWIC 56:259; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 14 May 1642, OWIC 25:20; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 2 June 1642, ACA 4:258, SAA.

went to and from their chapel.<sup>87</sup> Otherwise the council issued placards, threatened to take away freedoms, summoned more serious offenders, and imposed fines.<sup>88</sup>

Public displays of devotion led to physical altercations and violence, though not as often as the clergy claimed. They first alleged that Catholics were striking Protestants in 1641, when bystanders in Sirinhaém did not reverence an “idol” (statue of Mary) that was carried through the street. The story spread from there to the classis and finally to the Netherlands, where the church complained to company directors. Eventually it became a general truth: Catholics in Brazil persecuted those who would not participate in false worship. As late as 1645 the High Council had to defend itself to the XIX, explaining that there had only been one incident and that they had taken steps to prevent it from ever happening again. Truth be told, they continued, Dutch “insolence” during the Sirinhaém affair—“and on other occasions”—was “many times as great.” The Portuguese could not help responding the way they did.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, it would have been foolhardy to behave too belligerently, knowing what they stood to lose in terms of rights and freedoms. Even the most tolerant governor could not have protected those who violated the law and bullied others as much as Reformed ministers claimed. The council kept a close eye on religious tensions, once prosecuting a man for the murder of a Catholic priest at a sugar plantation.

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<sup>87</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 5 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:4, NA; 29 Oct 1638, 20 Apr 1640, ASU 212:25-32, 37-42, UA; 21 Nov 1640, OWIC 55:116; 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:43; minutes of the Brazil council, 15 Jan, 22 Nov 1638, 5 June 1641, 27 Jan 1642, 3 Mar 1643, 6 Mar 1645, OWIC 68-70; the XIX to Maurits and council, 10 July 1641, OWIC 8:359, 366-367.

<sup>88</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 15 Jan, 14 Sep, 22 Nov 1638, 5 June, 9 Sep 1641, 27 Jan 1642, 3 Mar 1643, OWIC 68-69, NA.

<sup>89</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 11 June 1641, OWIC 69, NA; minutes of the Brazil classis, 17 Oct 1641, ACW 73, ZA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 14 May 1642, OWIC 25:20; the council to the XIX, 13 Feb 1645, OWIC 60:10.

In a less extreme case it fined some Dutchmen for going “by night” to Olinda, where they harassed a priest at his home, mimicking and mocking “Papist ceremonies.”<sup>90</sup>

If the clergy exaggerated Catholic misconduct, Reverend Soler proved it with his over-the-top allegations against the vicar general, Gaspar Ferreira, in 1641. On the day before Ferreira traveled to Recife to answer charges of illegal activity, Soler visited the council to ensure that it had the relevant information. To his list of transgressions Soler reported that Ferreira was involved in an incestuous relationship and fathered an illegitimate child. The council ought to throw him in prison, Soler declared. The next day when the vicar arrived in the city Soler ran ahead of him to council chambers to report that Ferreira was causing problems in the street, “intimidating” bystanders who, in Dutch Recife, could not possibly have been intimidated by the small group (three men total). As in Sirinhaém, Protestants were probably the source of any real unrest, blaming it on their enemies because it suited their agenda. Only by convincing people that Catholic conduct was beyond the pale could the clergy hope to outlaw the Catholic priesthood and Catholic worship. Only then could they hope to bring about a serious reformation.<sup>91</sup>

Questions about ecclesiastical property and income caused similar tensions. The Dutch and Portuguese of Olinda, Igarapé, and other towns quarreled constantly about church facilities. The High Council usually forced the Portuguese to give up one of their own buildings, sometimes placing financial burdens on them too. The WIC had largely destroyed and abandoned Olinda at the start of the occupation, but many Portuguese still lived there. As the city was rebuilt and some Dutch took up residence, the council asked the Recife clergy to requisition a chapel for Protestant worship—a chapel that Catholics

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 27 Jan 1642, OWIC 69. For the murder, see Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 294.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 8-9 Sep 1641.

had already begun to repair. Because the small Dutch population did not use the church very much, the company eventually gave it back to the Portuguese and the Dutch had to worship in the monastery chapel with the soldiers. That only led to another dispute two years later over the graves at the first location. Facing a growing Dutch population, the council again forced Catholics to hand over one of the churches that they had repaired.<sup>92</sup> The story in Igarau was the same: The council made the Portuguese give one chapel to the Dutch, but they were not many and the building fell into disuse. The council moved the Dutch to a monastery chapel where, again, WIC soldiers were already lodged. Three years later, after the Dutch had grown tired of sharing the building with the military (and enjoying greater numbers now, probably), the council told Catholics either to give up one of their chapels or construct new barracks. They opted to relinquish a chapel.<sup>93</sup>

More generally the company did not permit new Catholic construction and, as had happened so often in Europe before, it took for its own use the ecclesiastical property that generated money for the poor and supported the Catholic priesthood. Reformed clergy sometimes worried that Catholics were building new chapels, though the WIC prevented it where it had sufficient power. The High Council rejected a request to build a church on the island of Itamaracà in 1639, stating that “instead of building the Gospel, we would again be introducing the Papacy.”<sup>94</sup> It allowed Catholic orders that had not been kicked out of the colony (Franciscans, Benedictines, Carmelites) to retain some property, though the Franciscans had only their monasteries anyway, living mostly from alms. Members of the secular clergy (i.e., individual priests who had not taken orders) had to live from the

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 15 Jan, 11 Sep, 22 Nov 1638, 6 and 16 May 1639, 7 Nov 1640, 23 and 27 June, 1 July 1644, OWIC 68-70; 29 Oct 1638, ASU 212:25-32, UA.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 6 May 1639, 2 Nov 1640, 5 Feb, 23 June 1643, OWIC 68-69.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 20 May 1639, OWIC 68. For clerical worries about new construction, see *ibid.*, 15 Jan 1638, 27 Sep 1644; minutes of the Brazil classis, 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:43.



money they collected at Mass or from the small services they provided to Catholics, like visiting the sick and performing last rites. Needing an income was perhaps another reason that they married people illicitly. Before the Dutch arrived they obtained money mostly from state-sponsored tithes. They began to grow desperate after the old system collapsed and the WIC did not provide any new means of support.<sup>95</sup>

Because of priestly deportations and deaths, few replacements, little contact with the wider Catholic world, and the loss of their financial base, the Portuguese accused the Dutch of trying to destroy their religion by gradual suffocation. They viewed freedom of “conscience”—by which the Dutch allowed private worship within one’s home—as no freedom at all, and they were not content even with the greater rights that they enjoyed in their churches in most places. More than once they requested full autonomy, including the right to communicate with the bishop at Bahia, receive new priests, and recover their financial base. Catholic *schepenen* once even asked permission to build a church in Mauritstad, at the center of WIC power.<sup>96</sup> Though Maurits’s purported compassion likely inspired their boldness, they did have reason to fear: He, his councilors, the directors, and the Reformed clergy all expressed at one time or another a great aversion for priests and the Catholic faith in general, as well as a desire to expunge them from Brazil. Most Dutch saw it as a question of when it would happen, not if. Zeeland directors spoke of allowing Catholic priesthood to “die out.” Maurits said that “in time” he would “erase the memory of the Portuguese language, nation, and religion.” When forced to justify his moderate

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<sup>95</sup> The instructions of Hendrick Lonck, 18 Aug 1629, OWIC 2:11-19, NA; the XIX to the Brazil council, 1 Aug 1635, OWIC 8:160-172; Servaes Carpentier’s report, 11 June 1636, OWIC 51:25; Maurits’s report, 14 Jan 1638, OWIC 53:22; Adriaen van der Dussen’s report, 4 Apr 1640, OWIC 46; minutes of the Brazil council, 4 May 1637, OWIC 68. For lands/monies for the poor, see the Conclusion. See also Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 278-279.

<sup>96</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 2 July 1637, OWIC 68, NA; “Propositions and Requests,” 1 Sep 1640, *ibid.*; “Remonstrantie,” 20 Aug 1641, OWIC 56:283. See also the following fns.

side to unhappy Reformed clergy, he always explained that he had to consider the current political reality and what the colony could then bear, implying that he would proceed differently when circumstances changed.<sup>97</sup> His secretary, Johan Toner, claimed that many of the priests who stayed in Brazil after the deportations were “old” and “drunk.” When they died, there was no one to replace them. Giving Catholics some freedoms was simply a means of drawing them to the WIC for its better security, Toner wrote.<sup>98</sup>

If the Dutch could not transform Brazil through God’s word, they would effect a reformation by more subtle means, as the Portuguese feared. When Maurits spoke harshly about Catholics he may have just been saying what he knew the clergy or his employers wanted to hear. His true opinions and intentions are difficult to ascertain because of the interests he had to juggle. But the directors were less ambiguous. They asked him not to proceed too strictly against Catholics “at first.” When he acquiesced to Portuguese demands for some kind of priestly income, provisionally returning two small plantations that were not producing much anyway, the directors were not happy. They told Maurits to take the plantations back, along with any other property still used for the upkeep of the Catholic priesthood.<sup>99</sup> When Maurits recommended that the directors allow Catholics to build a chapel in Mauritstad and enjoy a more regular income, they said no. In 1642, in response to the growing concerns about Catholic boldness, they finally issued orders that they said would please even the church. But Maurits defied them, refusing to make the orders public or even show them to the consistory, informing the clergy once more that

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<sup>97</sup> Minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 30 June 1635, OWIC 22:87, NA; the Brazil council to the XIX, 22 Feb 1636, OWIC 51:42; Servaes Carpentier’s report, 11 June 1636, OWIC 51:25; Maurits and council to the XIX, 31 May 1641, OWIC 56:157. For what the colony can “bear,” see the minutes of the Brazil classis, 20 Apr 1640, ASU 212:37-42; minutes of the Brazil council, 18 Jan 1641, OWIC 69.

<sup>98</sup> Johan Carl Toner to WIC directors and/or the States General, July 1642, ASG II, 5756, d. 244-249, NA.

<sup>99</sup> For “at first,” see Maurits and council to the XIX, 20 Dec 1641, OWIC 56:303, NA. For plantations, see also “Propositions and Requests,” 1 Sep 1640, OWIC 68; minutes of the Brazil council, 3 Oct 1640, OWIC 68; the XIX to Maurits and council, 10 July 1641, OWIC 8:359, 366-367.

he would implement only those changes that the colony could bear. At the same time he told the directors that “the constitution of this state will not yet permit us to practice your orders in full.” The company must help the ministers “draw [Catholic] souls away from Papist superstition and reclaim them for Christ,” he continued; but those who were most familiar with Brazil knew that it was unwise to undertake “such a great reformation” so soon after the conquest. It could only lead to unrest and resistance. The WIC should not “force” the new articles on the Portuguese all at once, but “gently diminish their religious freedoms from time to time,” consistent with the colony’s security needs.<sup>100</sup>

Even in his farewell advice to the High Council in 1644, when Maurits explained his shrewd, tolerant approach to religious matters, he revealed that it was just a temporary necessity—and that “connivance” worked both ways. The Portuguese ought to be treated with “benevolence and courtesy,” he wrote. “[N]othing embitters them more” than the “abolition” of their rituals and ceremonies, nor did they like the company to meddle with their ecclesiastical personnel. The council should keep an eye on Dutch effrontery and disrespect for Catholic ritual, reproaching offenders not for “an error of religion,” but for their “discourtesy.” When complaints of a religious nature came before them, councilors should promise to look into the matter and then, for the sake of peace, forget about it. On the other hand, if their “zeal” for the true religion inspired a more severe approach, they should still proceed as quietly as possible. He held out the possibility that circumstances would change, writing that Reformed religion could “not yet” be implemented among the Portuguese. Heavy interference in Catholic affairs was “premature.” Quiet acceptance of

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<sup>100</sup> Maurits and council to the XIX, 9 Sep 1642, OWIC 57:32, NA. The directors’ orders have unfortunately not survived. See also the XIX to the Brazil classis, July 1641, OWIC 8:368; minutes of the deputies, 19 Nov 1641, 25 Feb, 3 June 1642, ACA 157:63, 67, 75-76, SAA; extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 10 Dec 1641, ACA 163:96-99; the XIX to Maurits and council, 18 Apr 1642, OWIC 9:1-25.

illicit activity was better than an “inquisition” *at this time*. Once the company committed itself to the latter course, it would have to “purify” the land of Catholic priests, leading to “universal ruin.” It would mean the “beginning of great unrest and rebellion.”<sup>101</sup>

Unless he was just crafting his message for his audience, the governor’s advice shows that even he viewed Catholic worship as a necessary but mutable problem. The colony could and would become Reformed, if handled with caution. His recommendation about bridling Protestant passions suggests that the men who harassed the priest in Olinda were not atypical, that Dutch “insolence” toward Catholic religion really was “many times as great” as any Portuguese insolence, as the council wrote to the directors after the Sirinhaém affair. A loathing for Catholicism, of course, does not necessarily reflect a corresponding, positive commitment to another tradition. Yet the thought of the Dutch as the instigators of religious tension in Brazil does contrast starkly with their usual image as indifferent, business-minded pragmatists, supposedly so unlike the intolerant ministers and the fervent, zealous Portuguese. Maurits was clearly concerned about a strong anti-Catholic element within the Dutch community, fostered by a smaller but strong Reformed contingent that preferred a direct approach to reformation. In his advice to his councilors he conceded that they, too, sometimes favored that approach. Unfortunately for him, WIC directors sided with Calvinists, honoring agreements made on the battlefield, recognizing that they had to proceed carefully, but resisting efforts to expand Catholic freedom even when their own governor believed that doing so was vital to Dutch success. His refusal to

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<sup>101</sup> “Advice,” 6 May 1644, OWIC 59:131, NA. See also the Hamel, van Bullestrate, and Bas report, Special Collections, 76 A 16, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague.

implement their orders in 1642 (a sign of his broader independence) was probably among the reasons that they soon asked him to return to the Netherlands.<sup>102</sup>

What did the 1642 orders contain? Unfortunately no copies survived, attesting to the governor's fear about the possible Portuguese reaction and his success in burying the particulars. The likely answer is that the directors tried to adopt the religious provisions from the recent treaty between Portugal and the Netherlands, Portugal finally having won its independence from Spain. The Treaty of The Hague (1641) stipulated that Dutch diplomats in Portugal could worship how they wanted only in their own homes.<sup>103</sup> The company was well aware of the treaty because the Zeeland chamber sent envoys to the provincial States during the negotiation process to ensure that Dutch merchants stationed in Portugal would enjoy some religious freedoms. The Zeeland *hoofdparticipanten* even proposed that the WIC grant only those freedoms in its colonial possessions that Portugal reciprocated.<sup>104</sup> If that is what the directors now told the High Council to implement in Brazil, as their discussions about the treaty suggest, it would indeed have been a "great reformation." Catholics in Brazil would have lost their churches and priests. Forbidden to worship outside their homes, they would have had the same questionable legal status as Catholics in Holland. The directors perhaps felt that they could be so bold because, after the Treaty of The Hague, the colony was finally and officially theirs.<sup>105</sup>

If Calvinists won the agenda in Brazil, Maurits proved the better prophet. Though he probably convinced the directors that it was still unwise to adopt the severe measures

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<sup>102</sup> Historians usually state only that the directors recalled Maurits because of the high costs of maintaining him. See Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 155-158; Den Heijer, *Geschiedenis*, 49.

<sup>103</sup> Carlos Calvo, ed., *Coleccion Completa de los Tratados: Convenciones, Capitulaciones, Armisticios y Otros Actos Diplomaticos* (Paris, 1862), 63-64 (Article 26).

<sup>104</sup> Minutes of the *hoofdparticipanten*, 8 and 15 May 1641, OWIC 35:6-7, 10, NA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 14 May 1641, OWIC 24:104. See also the XIX to Maurits and council, 18 Apr 1642, OWIC 9:1-25: The directors specifically mention the 26th article of the treaty.

<sup>105</sup> For "great reformation," see above.

that they wanted, the clergy were aware that something significant had occurred in 1642 because the directors told them: Even you will be pleased with our orders.<sup>106</sup> Given their bold, combative style, it is unlikely that the clergy did not spread what they knew, even if Maurits kept the details hidden. Shortly after his departure (May 1644) the High Council began to adopt a harder line toward Catholics. It informed them that the plantations for the upkeep of their priests were only granted provisionally, that the directors wanted them back. The directors had continued to insist that ecclesiastical properties be taken for the company and the council finally sold the plantations.<sup>107</sup> At the same time, in keeping with the directors' orders to "purify our conquests of them and their kind," it actively sought and exported priests who traveled from Bahia, recognizing that they might be spies. But the WIC's new position (Maurits had once admitted French clergy into the colony) was not just about security. The council repeatedly refused requests for new priests "to serve the inhabitants ... in their religion," whether from Bahia or anywhere else.<sup>108</sup>

In July 1645 the Portuguese revolted, just as Maurits had said they would. While they had many reasons to loathe the Dutch, including major financial trouble and growing indebtedness to Jewish merchants, religious concerns after his departure were responsible for the timing of the uprising, and in fact, the monks from whom the WIC had taken the plantations were among those who traveled the countryside preaching and provoking the inhabitants in the months before. The Portuguese said theirs was a religious war, a revolt

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<sup>106</sup> Minutes of the deputies, 3 June 1642, ACA 157:75-76, SAA.

<sup>107</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 10 Apr 1645, 15 Feb 1646, OWIC 70-71, NA; the council to the XIX, 27 June 1645, OWIC 60:79; the XIX to the council, 16 Oct 1645, OWIC 9:261.

<sup>108</sup> The XIX to the council, 16 Oct 1645, OWIC 9:261, NA; the council to the XIX, 13 Feb 1645, OWIC 60:10. See also the minutes of the Brazil council, 7 Dec 1643, 10 Apr, 24 and 25 Apr, 1 May 1645, OWIC 70; minutes of the Brazil synod, 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:40; the council to the XIX, 27 June 1645, OWIC 60:79.

undertaken “in the name of Godly freedom.”<sup>109</sup> In their “Manifest,” published in Antwerp in 1646, they objected to cruel treatment and high taxes. They claimed that, according to agreements with the WIC, they were supposed to enjoy “full freedom and exercise of our Roman Catholic Religion.” At first that promise was honored, they wrote; “but afterward [the Dutch] took away our Churches, keeping some for themselves.” Also, “because of the hate that they feel toward our Clergy,” they “banished and exported from the Land all Religious and Spiritual persons.” We chose to discard “the heavy and insupportable yoke of such an unreasonable and Tyrannical Regime,” the rebels concluded.<sup>110</sup> A cryptic note about Dutch sins and the judgment bar of God, nailed to the door of the Reformed chapel in Paraíba the same year, captured the tenor of Dutch-Portuguese relations perfectly. The chapel in question used to be Catholic, seized and converted just as the Dutch were trying to reform the entire colony.<sup>111</sup>

The Reformed Church attributed the sudden swing in Dutch fortunes to different causes, mostly divine. Never mind Portuguese explanations for their behavior; never mind their (correct) fears about the gradual death of their religion and the warnings that Maurits had given. Rather, the church claimed that God had removed his blessing from the company because of its failure to destroy Catholicism and eliminate cursing, Sabbath-breaking, and sexual sin. God was angry, and the rod of his chastisement now hung over the land. The classis even tried to use the opportunity of the revolt to further the agenda that had done so much to foment Portuguese resentment in the first place, believing that a more determined, hard-nosed drive for reform was the only way to obtain a blessing on

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<sup>109</sup> The council to the XIX, 2 Aug 1645, OWIC 60:164, NA; “Remonstrantie,” 14 Dec 1645, ASV 1784, ZA. See also Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 298-299.

<sup>110</sup> *Manifest Door d'Inwoonders van Parnambuco uytgegeven tot hun verantwoordinge op't aennemen der wapenen tegens de West-Indische Compagnie* (Antwerp, 1646), 2, 9.

<sup>111</sup> “Biljet,” 13 Aug 1646, OWIC 62:119, NA.

their weapons again.<sup>112</sup> Reverend Kessler, who had gone home before Maurits, and who was later part of a committee that reported to the Amsterdam classis on the difficulties of the church in Brazil, listed all the usual suspects, including sin, illicit worship, and WIC apathy. Missing from his list—ironically, though not surprisingly—was the inflexibility of his own Calvinist faction: ironic both because the church was so responsible for its troubles, including the revolt, and because that same intransigence had forced him to give up his post. The churches of the Netherlands were very unhappy that Brazil had formed a synod, which threatened their control of colonial religion and opened the door for secular delegates in ecclesiastical gatherings. They thus condemned their Brazilian counterparts for reorganizing without their input. Like Reverend Doerslaer, who went home to defend his orthodoxy during the Tupi catechism controversy (described in Chapter 1), Kessler returned to Holland to save his reputation and, rather disingenuously, deny his role in the reorganization. The church itself robbed Brazil of two important, gifted ministers exactly when the colony was struggling most to maintain sufficient numbers of them.<sup>113</sup>

The Dutch were not especially tolerant towards Catholics in Brazil. As the WIC juggled its conflicting duties and interests, leaders like Johan Maurits had to consider the realities of occupation and religious diversity and rule accordingly. But the church, the directors, and some of the Dutch population resented it and did everything they could to reverse the liberal conditions imposed on them by war. Calvinists had helped create those unwanted circumstances with their pious belligerence and anti-Catholicism. The quest to

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<sup>112</sup> Minutes of the Brazil classis, 9 Jan 1646, OWIC 61:7, NA; 15 Jan 1647, OWIC 63:4; 7 May 1648, OWIC 64:27; the Brazil church to the Amsterdam classis, 23 Nov 1649, ACA 212:188-190, SAA.

<sup>113</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 4 July 1644, ACA 4:312, SAA. For Kessler and the synod, see *ibid.*, as well as the minutes of the Brazil council, 2 Feb 1643, OWIC 69, NA; Maurits and council to the XIX, 29 Apr 1643, OWIC 58:268. Maurits said that he could have persuaded Kessler to remain in Brazil if not for the controversy.



reform the colony and make it a Protestant New Holland founded on the very religious antagonisms that validated invasion in the first place. Hostilities continued for almost a decade (1645-1654) before the West India Company was expelled from Brazil for good.

## CHAPTER 6

### From the Garden of Eden to the Isles of the Sea

On November 14, 1624, the members of the Amsterdam consistory gathered around a large table in the *Nieuwe Kerk* to discuss the affairs of the church at home and in the growing territories of the East and West India Companies overseas. Midway through the meeting they were surprised by a visit from Bastiaen Jansz Krol, whom they had sent as *ziekentrooster* to “Virginia” (New Netherland) only ten months before. Why had he returned so soon? Krol declared that the colony’s inhabitants “demand[ed] a minister.” There were a number of “pregnant women” among them, and they wanted their children baptized. As an unordained lay preacher, he did not have the authority to perform the sacrament. The consistory recognized the problem, yet it also fretted that “there are few households there,” perhaps too few to justify a minister at a time when qualified clergy were in such great demand. After considering the issue for a week, the consistory simply decided to give Krol permission to baptize, sending a second *ziekentrooster* to assist him in 1626, calling Reverend Jonas Michaelius to the colony in 1628.<sup>1</sup>

New Netherland was one of many places that fit uncomfortably in the West India Company’s “Great Designs” against the Spanish and Portuguese in the South Atlantic. If Krol’s request caught the consistory off guard, it was because most people who paid attention to what was happening in America had their eyes on Brazil at the moment, as

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 14 and 21 Nov 1624, AKA 5:231, SAA; also published as “Copie-Boek van den Kerkeraad van Amsterdam, 1589-1635,” Appendix A of Albert Eekhof, *Bastiaen Jansz. Krol: Krankenbezoeker, Kommies en Kommandeur van Nieu-Nederland, 1595-1645* (‘s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1910), xxiii.

they would for some time.<sup>2</sup> Using a *ziekentrooster* to perform the duties of an ordained minister was not uncommon, however. Although the church frowned on lay baptism in general, it had permitted the practice in Africa and Asia before and would do so again on the islands of Fernando de Noronha (Brazil) and St. Martin—places with small European populations and some prospect of children or converts, approved from the Netherlands at the time of the clergy’s call.<sup>3</sup> In 1639 the church began to hear from Curaçao, as it had from New Netherland, that “our Nation here is beginning to increase greatly.” Already two “sons” and a “daughter” were born. Expecting additional children from Europeans and Native Americans both, the island’s inhabitants “earnestly requested the service of baptism and the complete administration of the true religion.” Again the Amsterdam church considered authorizing a lay preacher, but chose instead to send Jonas Aertss, an ordained minister.<sup>4</sup> The company had just conquered Curaçao, and the reports about its indefensible bays and lousy soil were disheartening. It was a better fit for the WIC’s schemes than New Netherland because the island had once belonged to Spain, but the company had not yet decided even to keep it.<sup>5</sup>

New Netherland’s future was equally uncertain. For about fifteen years after they first began to meet as a body (1623), WIC directors could not agree on a consistent policy for the region: whether to exploit it only for its furs or colonize it, whether to retain their

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<sup>2</sup> Wim Klooster, “The Place of New Netherland in the West India Company’s Grand Scheme,” in *Revisiting New Netherland: Perspectives on Early Dutch America*, ed. Joyce Goodfriend (Brill, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 2 July 1612, ACA 2:77, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam consistory, 6 Nov 1614, 25 Nov 1615, 24 Nov 1616, AKA 4:124, 154, 187, SAA; copybook of the Amsterdam classis, 12 Aug and 25 Sep 1632, ACA 19:35-36.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 24 July and 6 Sep 1639, ACA 4:159, 169, SAA; Commander Jacob Pieterssen Tolck to the XIX, 6 Sep 1639, OWIC 54:197, NA; minutes of the deputies, Nov/Dec 1639, ACA 157:21-23.

<sup>5</sup> For the hesitation about keeping Curaçao, see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 18 June 1636, OWIC 22:157, NA; minutes of the deputies, 22 Sep 1642, ACA 157:92, SAA. For Curaçao as a base against Spanish colonies, see Wim Klooster, *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648-1795* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998), Chap. 3.

monopoly or open the trade to everyone. It soon became apparent that colonization would help establish a better legal claim against European competitors like the English, and the directors sent hundreds of settlers between 1624 and 1626. The two opposing camps compromised further in 1628, allowing wealthy individuals to found settlements at their own expense in exchange for large swathes of land and significant legal powers in those areas. The *patroonships*, as they were called, mostly struggled and died because the WIC retained too much control over shipping and trade, which was the truly divisive issue. People would not go to America if they could not make a living, so New Netherland did not really grow until the company finally relinquished its monopoly between 1638 and 1640. Tensions between the WIC and settlers persisted in the following decades as the latter sought the same political rights and power as their fellow citizens (*burghers*) in the Netherlands. Those who favored free trade and opposed company government accused the WIC of “neglect.” If they voiced some legitimate grievances, specific charges must nevertheless be weighed against political and financial motives, for they stood to gain a great deal from the changes they sought in the colony.<sup>6</sup>

By contrasting New Netherland with New England or dismissing religion as unimportant to the Dutch imperial project, historians sometimes embrace accusations of neglect and run with them in whole new directions, trampling Reformed beliefs and traditions in the process. Ignoring or misunderstanding the role of lay clergy like Bastiaen Jansz Krol, for example, or knowing nothing about Reverend Michaelius, they claim that New Netherland’s original colonists waited years for clergy. They argue that Kiliaen van

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<sup>6</sup> Jacobs, *New Netherland*, Chap. 3; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, Chaps. 4-5; Shorto, *Island*; Dennis J. Maika, “Securing the Burgher Right in New Amsterdam: The Struggle for Municipal Citizenship in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World,” in *Revisiting*, ed. Goodfriend, 93-128. See an older debate about the transition to colony in Condon, *New York Beginnings*, and Bachman, *Peltries or Plantations*.

Rensselaer cared little for the people of his *patroonship* because he did not hire a minister until 1642. Yet there was no need before that time. The *patroonship* grew beyond a handful of adults only after the company lifted its monopoly. Similarly, some have suggested that by turning to the Amsterdam classis for clergy, company directors shirked their responsibilities (as if they could have obtained them anywhere else). Scholars often attribute New Netherland's ecclesiastical difficulties to religious apathy, greed, defective clergy, and/or the commercial, mercantile nature of Dutch expansion. Without European institutions, the colony was a rowdy, permissive place; in the interest of profit, the Dutch supposedly tolerated non-Reformed worship.<sup>7</sup>

The very presence of the Reformed Church in WIC colonies belies many of the stereotypes about Dutch expansion, for there can be no church without some semblance of society. This chapter examines religious life and church-company relations in places that were left to the WIC in America after the loss of Brazil—Curaçao, New Netherland, and various small colonies on the Wild Coast. I first look at the reformation of New Netherland. Though different in many ways from the reformation of Brazil (the topic of the last chapter), both movements began, not coincidentally, just a few years apart. New Netherland can only be understood in the context in which it existed: Not merely as the neighbor of Puritan New England or a half-formed ancestor to one of the original thirteen colonies of the United States, but as a remote corner of the Dutch Atlantic. The church's history and unique characteristics are inexplicable otherwise. That its consistories never

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<sup>7</sup> For an in-depth discussion about these historiographical issues, see the Introduction. For neglect and the lack of early clergy, see, for example, Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 37-42; Collins, *Money Town*, 17-20; Broadhead, *History*, 223; Lossing, *Empire State*, 32; Lippy, et al., *Christianity*, 306; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 92. (See p. 229 for the WIC handing its responsibilities to the church.) For van Rensselaer, see Nissenson, *Patroon's Domain*, 156-160; Condon, *New York Beginnings*, Chap. 5. For the latest in a long line of "tolerance" claims, see Shorto, *Island*. For a more nuanced overview of New Netherland's religious history, see Jacobs, *New Netherland*; Venema, *Beverwyck*; and Frijhoff, *Wegen*.

formed a classis and synod, but remained dependent on the churches at home, had to do with the autonomy of the Brazil clergy and the fear they inspired about heterodoxy and loss of control. Consequently, New Netherland never became an ecclesiastical center like Brazil, though it did show signs before the English conquest that it might. Even without a synod the church was able to suppress non-conformers; Dutch colonies were not in fact very tolerant, especially where rulers supported the church's mission of reform. Conflict between ecclesiastical and secular rulers, no matter where it occurred, usually had less to do with religion than with the heightened clash of individual personalities in divided colonial settings and, in the company's later years, the increased number of young clergy who refused to check their righteous zeal in the interest of peace. With fewer outlets to resolve grievances, Reformed churches and consistories overseas easily became alternate centers of power, natural hubs of opposition to unpopular policies and rulers.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Reformation of the Dutch Atlantic*

Some of the earliest settlers in the Dutch Caribbean and New Netherland were not Dutch. Many foreign Protestants lived in Holland in the seventeenth century because of religious upheavals in their own lands or just for trading opportunities, including French-speaking Walloons from the southern Netherlands and Huguenots from France. One common gathering place was the city of Leiden, where the Huguenot merchant Jesse de Forest established himself at about the same time as a group of English Separatists known today as the Pilgrims. As members of Leiden's diverse Reformed community, De Forest and his French-speaking colleagues would have witnessed English preparations to travel to North America, and they were perhaps inspired by them to organize a similar

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<sup>8</sup> On individual personalities in cramped colonial settings, see Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 149-150.

undertaking. Just one year after the *Mayflower* set sail in 1620, De Forest had enlisted between fifty and sixty Walloon and French families, about 230 people. Like the Pilgrims they decided first to approach the Virginia Company in England, but the company only agreed to sponsor them on the condition that they disperse among a number of different pre-existing English towns when they arrived. So De Forest turned instead to the Dutch West India Company, which had not yet existed when he first made his plans. Interestingly, the English had also flirted briefly with Dutch sponsorship. If things had gone a bit differently, the two might have traded places, with the Pilgrims settled on the Hudson River and the Walloons in Virginia or New England.<sup>9</sup>

De Forest wrote that his people were “all of the Reformed religion,” though the difficult conditions that they faced when they first arrived in America did not usually permit the full, developed practice that they had enjoyed in Holland. After coming to an agreement with the WIC they split in two, some of them going to the Wild Coast, the rest later to New Netherland. The Wild Coast contingent sent an advance party of ten to twelve men under De Forest to find a suitable location in July 1623. Going ashore a few months later in the region of today’s northern Brazil and French Guyana, they offered “many prayers.” Then they wandered from one location to the next, finding occasional European settlers, trading with various indigenous groups, and finally purchasing a field for tobacco. But they were “very much inconvenienced by mosquitoes,” and De Forest came down with a “severe fever” and died in October 1624. By December the rest were almost out of stores. Seeing that “we should be obliged to force the Indians to give us

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<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Robert W. de Forest, *A Walloon Family in America: Lockwood de Forest and His Forebears, 1500-1840* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1914); John Peters, “Volunteers for the Wilderness: the Walloon petitioners of 1621 and the voyage of the *Nieu Nederlandt* to the Hudson River in 1624,” *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 24, no. 5 (1987): 421-433.

food,” they decided to quit their adventure and, after going to war against indigenous neighbors and slaughtering (by their own count) 120 people, they returned to Holland aboard a newly-arrived company ship.<sup>10</sup>

The New Netherland contingent that Bastiaen Jansz Krol served as *ziekentrooster* was more successful than De Forest’s group. In March 1624 they assembled on the docks in Amsterdam, where two magistrates read the WIC’s terms and conditions aloud. Though the company required that they use the Dutch language and hired Krol to meet their religious needs, they may have enjoyed some kind of church service from one of their own: The original petition to the Virginia Company listed a “P. Gantois,” “Theology student.” Whether he was among those who traveled to New Netherland or survived the early period, he could not have been much help, however, for immediately upon arrival the Walloons were divided and established at four different locations, hundreds of miles apart. After two arduous years, Governor Peter Minuit (also of Walloon origin) purchased Manhattan and reassembled those who had survived or not gone home. In the mean time the company was sending hundreds of additional colonists.<sup>11</sup> Jonas Michaelius, the first Dutch minister, organized a consistory after his arrival in 1628, calling Minuit, Krol, and the second *ziekentrooster*, Jan Huyghens, as elders. “Through the Lord’s mercy we have begun to establish a church here,” he wrote to a colleague in Holland. His congregation was “pretty large ... in proportion to the place and population, and the Church ... [grows] in number and piety.”<sup>12</sup> At the first Communion he had fifty participants, both Dutch and

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<sup>10</sup> “A Voyage to Guyana,” in *ibid.*, vol. 2, 169-279. For the quotations see 233, 245, 247, 251. “[A]ll of the Reformed religion” was written in De Forest’s original application to the Virginia Company and is cited in De Forest, *A Walloon Family*, and Peters, “Volunteers.”

<sup>11</sup> Peters, “Volunteers.” (See the appendix for P. Gantois.) Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 79-87.

<sup>12</sup> Jonas Michaelius to Joannes van Foreest, 8 Aug 1628 and 13 Sep 1630, published in Albert Eekhof, *Jonas Michaelius, Founder of the Church in New Netherland* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1926), 66-70, 99-114.



Walloon. They held Communion every four months (instead of the usual three) because of their small numbers and the distances that some had to travel. Michaelius administered the sacrament in Dutch and French, but only preached in Dutch during the regular weekly meetings. “[T]hose who understand no Dutch are very few,” he explained.<sup>13</sup>

Michaelius (labeled “the moodiest, bitchiest resident of New Amsterdam” in one recent history)<sup>14</sup> was under no illusions about the “desolate” colony, reporting that the people were “rough and unrestrained.” Yet he was quick to add that most of them showed “both love and respect towards me.” More generally he complained about a lack of farm animals, laborers, and basic supplies like butter.<sup>15</sup> Starting a pattern that would eventually emerge in other cramped, divided settings, Michaelius soon had a falling out with Minuit. He claimed that the governor was “unworthy of his leadership,” a “most cruel oppressor of the innocent,” likely referring to a disagreement between Minuit and a miller named Francois Fesaert. When things got heated, Minuit refused Fesaert and his family access to WIC provisions, which probably forced the miller to turn to the church for support and involved Michaelius in the affair, if he was not involved already. He quickly became the center of opposition to Minuit, accusing him of fornication and illicit trade: common and sometimes unjust allegations in the East and West India Companies both, just as secular rulers accused ministers of being alcoholics whenever it was convenient. Both men were eventually recalled to the Netherlands.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *ERSNY* 1:51-67.

<sup>14</sup> Shorto, *Island*, 64.

<sup>15</sup> *ERSNY* 1:51-67. The letter is published in Dutch and English. All quotations are from the translated English version except “desolate,” which is rendered as “wild” in *ERSNY*. The former seems more appropriate in context: Michaelius was complaining to Reverend Smoutius about not having any Reformed ministers to keep him company.

<sup>16</sup> “Unworthy” and “cruel” are cited in Jacobs, *Colony*, 149. (See also 150.) For Fesaert, see Not. Arch. 943:583, SAA. See also Eekhof, *Jonas Michaelius*.

Curaçao's early ecclesiastical history was surprisingly peaceful, perhaps because there was little expectation yet that it should become a significant colony. The island was mostly a military outpost from its capture in 1634 until 1648, when the Dutch made peace with Spain. The WIC sent some farmers and settlers during that period and experimented with tobacco and other crops, but for the most part it remained undeveloped. The first minister, Fredericus Vittaeus, arrived in 1635 with the first colonists. Governor Johannes van Walbeeck was happy with the hire because the two men had known each other before in Brazil.<sup>17</sup> Vittaeus's successor (Reverend Aertss) reported a few years later that the new governor was also suitable: Jacob Pietersz Tolck maintained order and, through exhortation and his personal presence, encouraged everyone to attend Reformed services. Despite Aertss's satisfaction with the situation, he did find Curaçao lacking in certain respects. Most importantly, he had not yet received his promised books, without which he could not study. Also, one could not buy any strong alcohol on the island, which pleased him because his wife, Maria Forteau, was "much inclined to drink."<sup>18</sup> Reverend Johannes Backerus was less sanguine about the place when he arrived in 1643, writing from Fort Amsterdam a year later that he had waited until then to hold Communion. When he did so, there were only ten participants. He was instructing them in Protestant doctrines and the church was growing daily, he reported, but he did not yet have a strong enough base to call elders and form a consistory, and they did not need deacons because they were still not collecting alms at Curaçao.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For early colonists, see the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 1 Feb and 16 Apr 1635, OWIC 14:9, 24, NA. For Vittaeus, see Johannes van Walbeeck to the Zeeland chamber, 27 June 1635, OWIC 50:28. For soldiers, tobacco, and so on, see especially the journal of Director van Walbeeck and his council, 28 Nov 1635 to 23 Mar 1636, OWIC 50:22.

<sup>18</sup> Jonas Aertss to the Amsterdam classis, Aug 1640, ACA 224:1-2, SAA.

<sup>19</sup> Reverend Backerus to the Amsterdam classis, 1 May 1644, ACA 224:4-5, SAA.

The lack of books, alcohol, butter, farm animals, laborers, and institutions like the deaconry and consistory at New Netherland and Curaçao reflected their immaturity. Planting churches went hand in hand with planting European society. Neither could exist without the other, which posed a problem especially on Curaçao not just because it was new but because, again, its future was undecided: Would it even be a settlement? By the very nature of their callings and instructions, clergy had to proceed as if the question was already answered in the affirmative. In the Brazilian context, “reformation” meant transforming a Catholic colony into a Protestant one and, more broadly, turning Brazil into a stable, productive place—a project that ultimately failed because of the religious mission, in part. The Dutch did not speak as explicitly about reformation in other milieus. Most WIC outposts and settlements were too raw at first, with no preexisting European institutions to seize and change. Nor could one really speak of reform when there were few people to call to repentance and even fewer to fill positions on the consistories and other bodies that would have targeted sinners.

The wave of change that swept Brazil beginning in 1636 was not restricted to that colony, though. Within two years New Netherland and its church also began a kind of reformation, born during discussions about the company’s larger failures and domination of trade in the Dutch Atlantic. Events in Brazil contributed to changes in New Netherland in the sense that displeasure with the company was general; it made no difference at home where it originated. Military and economic difficulties in Brazil strengthened those who sought change elsewhere. One sees the connection between the two in a resolution of 1638, when the States General lectured the WIC about its religious duties in Brazil and

the peopling of New Netherland in the very same breath.<sup>20</sup> Company directors were a bit sensitive about such things, and for good reason: They had always provided the necessary clergy and, in New Netherland, they spent *f* 100,000 on the settlers of 1624-1626. By the early 1640s they were more than half a million guilders in the red for a colony that they inherited at the WIC's founding, never part of their original Great Designs. Religion was really only related to these company-wide debates insofar as flourishing societies were necessary for planting Christian churches, and free trade ultimately proved the best route to that end. When the Amsterdam merchants and their political allies in New Netherland and Brazil attacked the company with religious rhetoric and claims of neglect (and a large measure of hindsight), they were seizing the moral high ground from Calvinist cousins in the Zeeland chamber, the most outspoken defenders of WIC monopoly.<sup>21</sup>

New Netherland's church began to change and grow in 1638, just two years after Brazil's and while Brazil was still in the midst of its own reformation. The period 1638 to 1640 was significant both for the liberalization of trade in the Dutch Atlantic and because the company adopted a new strategy for New Netherland, a plan to expand the colony and a concrete arrangement for funding the church.<sup>22</sup> Contained in the "Articles and Conditions" of 1638 and 1639, the WIC declared that it was of "the highest importance" that "in the first commencement and settlement of this population, proper arrangement be made for divine worship." Accordingly, another article stated that "[e]ach householder and inhabitant shall bear such tax and public charge as shall hereafter be considered

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<sup>20</sup> "Extract uyt het Register der Resolutien," 26 Apr 1638, WD 2052, NA. See the WIC's response, also 26 Apr 1638, WD 2048, NA.

<sup>21</sup> For free trade and New Netherland, see fn. 6. For the same debates on a wider scale, see Goslinga, *Dutch in the Caribbean*, Chap. 12; Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 75-82. For 100,000, see Den Heijer, *Geschiedenis van de WIC*, 83. For "half a million," see O'Callaghan, *History*, 350; Brodhead, *History*, 405; Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 40.

<sup>22</sup> In *Religion and Trade*, Chap. 11, Smith gives 1647 and the arrival of Governor Stuyvesant as the turning point. He writes incorrectly that 1647 was when WIC directors began to think of the colony in a new way.

proper for the maintenance of Clergymen, Comforters of the Sick, Schoolmasters and such like necessary officers.”<sup>23</sup> Earlier settlers were also expected to contribute to social institutions, but the taxes or tithes on property that traditionally supported the church in Europe were not possible until the company allowed outright land ownership, which it did at this time too. 1638 also saw the first-known criminal laws and policies designed to create a buffer between sailors and the general population. It was no coincidence that the consistory started its baptismal register in 1639.<sup>24</sup>

In the same period the WIC began to think about new church facilities. Originally the New Amsterdam congregation had met in the attic of the mill, a rather large building inside the fort. Then in 1633 the WIC built a wooden structure for religious services near the river, with a house and stable for the minister. In 1640, as the company’s new policies went into effect, the governor and council ordered that a portion of the fines imposed on lawbreakers be set aside for a more lasting house of worship. Despite the colony’s more recent reputation as a Wild West, this was a slow way to raise the necessary funds, and in 1642 the merchant David de Vries spoke with Governor Kieft about alternatives, gently chiding him for building a stone inn to accommodate visitors when permanent residents had only a “mean barn” to attend church. All the materials for a better facility were close at hand, he said, including timber, stone, and lime. He reminded Kieft that the West India Company was a tool for “defending the Reformed Religion against the Tyranny of Spain.” When Kieft asked who would undertake such a work, De Vries replied, “Friends of the Reformed Religion.” De Vries was a self-professed Calvinist and Orangist, and at

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<sup>23</sup> *ERSNY* 1:53, 120-121. On ministers and the *patroonships*, see *Ibid.*, 1:75.

<sup>24</sup> Morton Wagman, “Liberty in New Amsterdam: A Sailor’s Life in Early New York,” *New York History* 64, no. 2 (Apr. 1983):101-119; Scott Christianson, “Criminal Punishment in New Netherland,” in *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers*, ed. Nancy Anne McClure Zeller (New Netherland Publishing, 1991), 83-90. For the baptismal register, see *ERSNY* 1:123.

Kieft's urging he pledged *f* 100 to the project. Kieft committed "some thousands of guilders" on behalf of the WIC, then took other subscriptions at a wedding party for the minister's daughter. He called the colony's first *kerkmeesters* to oversee the facility and contracted with two English masons from the nearby colony of New Haven (modern-day Connecticut). The building was no Sistine Chapel, but it was substantial, measuring 72 X 52 feet and, most importantly, made of stone. Built inside the fort to guard against Indian attack, the message was clear: Now we are here to stay.<sup>25</sup>

The *patroon* and former WIC director Kiliaen van Rensselaer finally established a lasting presence at Rensselaerswijck at the same time, sending farmers and a minister and building another, smaller stone church on his own lands just one year after the work on New Amsterdam's began.<sup>26</sup> With the WIC's monopoly lifted, the colony could now truly become a colony, giving free rein to an impulse that had existed within the WIC from the start. Naturally, migrants would try to recreate the lives they had known before, bringing to America the institutions that existed in their old societies. The Reformed Church had operated in some form for a long time in New Netherland, of course, but in the absence of indigenous converts, only a regular influx of Christians would permit the consistories to do their work in earnest: teaching and preaching, founding new churches, organizing deaconries for the needy, and eradicating sin. Obviously there could be no reform without a pre-existing, errant (i.e., human) population.

The reformation of New Netherland quickly stalled, however. In an effort to meet new building and other expenses, Governor Kieft and his council demanded tribute from local indigenous groups, most of whom refused to pay. As an example to others, Kieft

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<sup>25</sup> De Vries, *Korte Historiael*, 163-164; *ERSNY* 1:85-86, 119, 163-166, 216, 254-260, 266-267.

<sup>26</sup> *ERSNY* 1:156-157, 168-169. See also Nissenson, *Patroon's Domain*, Chap. 3, for post-1640 settlers.

organized an expedition against the Raritans, burning their harvest, slaughtering many of them, taking captives, and sparking a devastating war. Kieft's reputation among New Netherland's inhabitants declined rapidly as their property was destroyed and as he tried to impose new taxes to pay for the conflict. To that point the company had not allowed traditional government in the capital; the WIC's council held executive, legislative, and judicial control. In desperation Kieft now called together some of the colony's leading *burghers* for advice: the Twelve Men and (later) the Eight Men. These bodies refused to remain within the limited bounds that Kieft set for them. They met illicitly, wrote letters to the company and States General at home, expressed grievances, asked for Kieft to be replaced, and demanded local government. The Indian wars and political divisions of the 1640s hampered immigration and hindered the work of the church.<sup>27</sup>

Adopting the language of the Dutch Revolt, Kieft's enemies labeled him a second Duke of Alva, the Spanish governor of the Low Countries who, in the last century, killed thousands of Protestant heretics and rebels. Far from defending the true religion against Spanish tyrannies, they said, the WIC under Kieft was a sponsor of tyranny, an imitator of the worst Catholic atrocities. A key spokesman of the opposition party was Reverend Everardus Bogardus, who questioned Kieft's authority and tried to defend those whom the governor prosecuted, including a failed assassin. He condemned Kieft from the pulpit and in the members' homes during his usual visits before Communion. In a 1645 sermon he tried to enlighten his listeners by drawing on his experience in West Africa, claiming that its "excessive heat" made "different wild animals copulate together, whereby many monsters are generated." Because the North American climate was temperate, he "knew

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<sup>27</sup> Jacobs, *Colony*, 76-81. See also Shorto, *Island*. For the Indian wars, see Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, 133-180; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 216-221; Allen W. Trelease, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), Chap. 3.

not ... whence these monsters of men proceeded,” meaning Kieft and his followers.<sup>28</sup> The governor (understandably) stopped attending church, and he encouraged other employees to do the same. The quarrel soon bordered on the ludicrous: Kieft ordered his men to beat their drums and fire the cannon just outside the chapel during services. Finally freed from the obligation to attend, soldiers harassed those who did. Though their main differences originally had little if anything to do with faith, church attendance had become a mark of one’s political views. The governor and his friends (or those employees who submitted to his pressures) temporarily remained outside it; his critics had an ally and spokesman in a legitimate public role within. At a time when Kieft’s war was destroying their homes and livelihoods, causing many to leave, threatening to crush the fragile society before it could take root, malcontents naturally found a home in that society’s only public institution, the one place that proved that New Netherland was a genuine community.<sup>29</sup>

When the war finally ended (1645) Kieft ordered a colony-wide day of prayer and thanks. In his sermon, however, Reverend Bogardus did not celebrate the peace, choosing not to honor even the conclusion of something so destructive and divisive. Both men were soon asked to return to the Netherlands, and both drowned when their ship went down in a storm. Their recall was part of a larger WIC reorganization, which removed the management of Curaçao and other Caribbean islands from Brazil’s government and placed them under New Netherland’s. Fittingly, the new governor, Pieter Stuyvesant, and the new minister, Reverend Backerus, had worked together on Curaçao before. Backerus had not planned on serving the New Amsterdam church but agreed to stay when he

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<sup>28</sup> *ERSNY* 1:198.

<sup>29</sup> Frijhoff, *Wegen*, Chap. 17; Jacobs, *Colony*, 151-152; Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 169-173. For tyranny, see Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 179-181. See also *ERSNY* 1:196-200. For Kieft and his officers on one side of the division in the church and Bogardus/community on the other, see also p. 230.



stopped there briefly on his way to Holland (from Curaçao) and saw that the city needed him. “Necessity compelled me not to leave the congregation without a pastor,” he wrote. Despite his initial assessment that many people were “ignorant in regard to true religion” and “very much given to drink,” his comparison with Curaçao demonstrates just how far New Netherland had come: While he left only a few members on Curaçao, here he found 170 in the capital alone; where Curaçao’s growth was sluggish, New Netherland’s “daily increase” of people meant that “the harvest will be much greater.”<sup>30</sup>

Unfortunately the war’s end and the new governor did not mend all the colony’s political rifts, which still ran partly through the church. The company now allowed some popular representation on the council, but the inhabitants of New Amsterdam continued to demand Dutch government, with *burgemeesters*, *schepenen*, and other traditional functionaries selected from among the private citizens. The newly-formed Nine Men met without consent, addressed the council on matters that were not pre-approved, and visited house to house to solicit the community’s views. Like his predecessor, Reverend Backerus made “common cause” with them against the WIC when, in 1649, they took their case to the States General in Holland. Hoping to avoid the public scandals of the Kieft-Bogardus years, Stuyvesant visited Backerus in his home and ordered him not to read anything of a political nature from the pulpit without authorization. Backerus was only free to speak his mind on ecclesiastical matters, the governor said.<sup>31</sup>

The remonstrance that came before the States General in 1649 is a shopping list for the modern-day historian who chooses to describe the WIC’s attitude toward religion in the simplest terms. The directors cared only for their own profits, colonists alleged.

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<sup>30</sup> *ERSNY* 1:233-237. For the reorganization, see Charles T. Gehring and J.A. Schiltkamp, eds., *Curaçao Papers, 1640-1665* (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1987), xiv-xv; Jacobs, *Colony*, 63-64.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:252; Jacobs, *Colony*, 80-83, 152-154.

Kieft purportedly built the chapel in New Amsterdam only because Rensselaerswijck was about to do the same and he refused to be outdone; he was concerned about his own reputation, about leaving a great name. Besides, they claimed, “the people ... paid for the church.” They also complained that the company had not provided the church with a permanent source of revenue, giving it funds only as the need arose. They used a great deal of ink on ecclesiastical property: Money was collected for a schoolhouse that was never built. There was no orphanage, no hospital. Implying outright theft, the authors of the remonstrance declared that the company had taken money from the deaconry and never paid it back. In addition to religious matters they criticized the monopoly (now ten years in the past), the high cost of basic supplies, and of course the war. In short, the WIC needed reform and New Netherland needed better rulers.<sup>32</sup>

In their rejoinder the directors tried to bring a bit of perspective to each of these issues, explaining, for example, that the chapel cost upwards of *f* 8,000, mostly paid by the company. The people had not given more than *f* 800, and some who first promised to contribute had never done so. The WIC had designated certain taxes for church property and personnel, but each inhabitant could only pay “according to his means,” the directors said, implying that those were not very great. As for deaconry money, they acknowledged that the governor had borrowed about *f* 900. Yet he did so with the deacons’ consent, and he drew up a contract for paying it back with interest. The first payment, according to the agreement, was not even due yet. The company simply could not afford an orphanage and hospital, neither being “very necessary” at this point anyway. They admitted that the schoolhouse was still not built, but the governor had set aside a plot of land and collected materials. They had also sent schoolmasters. The latter “keep school in hired houses, so

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 1:254-260.

that the youth are furnished with the means of education, *according to the circumstances of the country.*” If the inhabitants wanted something more, like a Latin school, they could supply the funds themselves. The directors accused the people of ingratitude, of seeking to rid New Netherland of the WIC after it laid a crucial, costly foundation. Privately they complained to Stuyvesant about “how much trouble we have had and how dangerous it is to draw upon yourself the wrath of a growing community.”<sup>33</sup>

While the colonists were justifiably angry about the Indian war and the dearth of civic government in the capital, the directors were correct about many specific charges. They could not easily have misled the States General on things like the cost of the church or the governor’s business with the deaconry because of the divisions in their own ranks and because one of the directors (one of the XIX) was designated by the States General. In emphasizing the difficulty of collecting taxes and establishing schools, they were just reminding people of the “New” in the colony’s name: Amsterdam wasn’t built in a day. It had only been a decade since the WIC turned whole-heartedly to colonization, and half of that time it was fighting an expensive war. Probably deliberately, settlers demanded too much too soon, using religion and other hot-button issues to achieve political ends that would profit them no less than the directors allegedly profited from “neglect.” In a civic government they would control all civil and criminal suits, taxes and public works, and enjoy the prestige and patronage power that accompanied them. As the only lawyer in the colony, for example, the leader of the Nine Men and author of the remonstrance, Adriaen van der Donck, would have certainly become a *schepen* and *burgemeester*.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 1:266-268, 275-276 (emphasis mine).

<sup>34</sup> For van der Donck, see Shorto, *Island*.

Unfortunately for the directors, the Nine Men timed their attack perfectly. The Portuguese inhabitants of Dutch Brazil had only recently revolted, just as the Indian war in New Netherland came to a close. The WIC's reputation and financial outlook were bad, depressing its value on the stock market and requiring endless subsidies from the States General and provinces. When the States General released its findings about New Netherland in 1650, it took sides with the colonists, therefore, recommending (though not requiring) drastic changes in the colony's government, including Stuyvesant's recall. His enemies returned triumphant to America and demanded the immediate implementation of the States General plan. When he refused, not having received any direct orders, they continued their vocal, public opposition to his rule as before. Exasperated, Stuyvesant went to the church and removed a pew that the consistory had designated for the Nine Men, accomplishing symbolically what he could not do in actuality: eliminating those who challenged his authority. The pew was the perfect way to convey his frustrations because, before he took it away, it demonstrated to everyone else the elevated status of the Nine Men, which was the very thing that divided people. Once more, because of its place at the center of society, representing traditional Dutch community, the Reformed Church was a magnet for controversy about power within that community.<sup>35</sup>

Recognizing the inevitable, Stuyvesant recommended to the directors that they finally allow the changes that colonists wanted, and by 1653 the WIC had instituted a civic government in the capital.<sup>36</sup> (Other towns in New Netherland already enjoyed some local control.) Political peace brought an end to religious controversies in the colony as well, at least as far as they involved claims about neglecting the church, which probably

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<sup>35</sup> *ERSNY* 1:278.

<sup>36</sup> Maika, "Securing the Burgher Right."

shows how little substance there was to such claims. The directors continued to send personnel, books, and other needs as they always had. If there was no grand cathedral in New Netherland in the early years, no stone schoolhouse, if the church did not enjoy a regular, dedicated income, a steady stream of cash to deaconry coffers, it was because of warfare, death, return migration, inflation, a lack of specie and basic foodstuffs, and other problems common to new colonies—not because anyone deliberately turned a blind eye to ecclesiastical needs or because of the innate seafaring spirit of the Dutch, uninterested in the more permanent social planting that excited other Europeans. WIC monopoly also stood in the way of growth, but only for fifteen years after the company became active in the Atlantic world. And even in those years the directors flirted with colonization. They were willing to let New Netherland become a colony, in other words; they just wanted to secure the health of the business by retaining some privileges. Ultimately it was a useless endeavor. A relatively small group of merchants and investors with limited capital could never bear all the necessary expenses and still turn a profit. New Netherland could thrive only by opening it to the full force of the Dutch economic machine.<sup>37</sup>

As the population grew to somewhere between 7,000 and 9,000 Europeans (about the same as Brazil's non-Portuguese population at its peak), the church naturally grew with it. Before the English conquest, eleven Reformed congregations were organized in towns along the Hudson and Delaware Rivers and on Long Island, not including English towns in Dutch territory. There were never more than six ordained ministers at one time

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<sup>37</sup> “Flirted with colonization” refers to the settlers of the 1620s and the *patroonship* plan. The former is usually represented as a simple legal move to claim territory, with no commitment to further growth. The instructions sent to New Netherland at the time tell a different story, though. See “Special Instructions for Cryn Fredericksz,” in *Documents Relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626*, ed. A.J.F. van Laer (San Marino, CA: The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1624), 132-170. The directors sent detailed plans for laying out farms, a hospital, school, church, and so on. They specifically referred to “the time the population shall increase,” showing that they were anticipating growth. Probably the huge expense and difficulties of these endeavors frightened many directors and led them soon to adopt the *patroonship* plan.

in the colony, stationed in large towns and serving small congregations around the capital on an itinerant basis. They were also assisted by an unknown number of lay clergy and teachers.<sup>38</sup> Though the ministers still bemoaned the shortcomings of communicants, they reported much progress: education, catechization, new consistories, greater numbers of members and large congregations at weekly services, and regular Communion. It was a far cry from the meager beginnings that Michaelius described in the 1620s. Clearly, New Netherland and its church had turned a corner.<sup>39</sup>

How had the reformation of the church in New Netherland differed from that of Brazil? To portray them as completely separate movements would be mistaken. From the vantage point of Amsterdam, as the church there sent ministers and corresponded with colleagues about problems and developments in both places simultaneously, its efforts would have seemed much the same—an American project, not limited to one place. Yet there were important differences. While the Brazil church suffered from internal problems caused by a few bad ministers and changed swiftly after a widespread outcry from secular and ecclesiastical officials on both sides of the ocean, New Netherland's problems and fissures excited less comment at first. Even more than Brazil's, its religious transformation was incidental to political, economic changes in the colony. In keeping with the greater interest in Brazil generally, there wasn't the same intensity of concern for New Netherland's church: no visits to the new governor before he left Holland to ask him to monitor its progress—as the Amsterdam consistory did to Johan Maurits—no frequent letters from the directors to the colonial consistory, offering advice and recommending

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<sup>38</sup> For Dutch congregations, see De Jong, *Dutch Reformed Church*, Chaps. 2-3; Charles E. Corwin, *A Manual of the Reformed Church in America, 1628-1922* (New York, 1922), 17.

<sup>39</sup> *ERSNY* 1:382-386, 393-400, 457-458, 487-489, 534-535, 547-550. Minutes of the deputies, 28 Oct 1647 and 23 May 1661, ACA 157:190, 421, SAA; the Amsterdam classis to the New Netherland consistory, 13 June 1656, ACA 157:357 (*ERSNY* 1:348-351); minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 3 Nov 1659, ACA 6:168.

improvements (in Brazil) before anyone else. Rather, New Netherland was more isolated. Its reformation was gradual, in part because it had to build European institutions (and a European population) from scratch, which Brazil did not. Complaints about the state of religion came from colonists who used the issue sometimes misleadingly, wielding it as a cudgel to beat the WIC when it helped achieve other aims, like civil government.

The lack of communication between company directors and the New Netherland church also reflected the fact that the colony had no classis or synod. For many years it had only one or two ministers. Even with two they often lived a hundred and fifty miles apart, which was hardly conducive to the collaboration and planning that was possible in Recife, with several clergy to serve the large population. Without many ministers and consistories there was no classis, which was one of the more active, influential bodies in the Reformed Church, responsible for religious matters on a regional scale. The Brazil classis was formed in 1636, at which point the church's contact with Holland intensified dramatically. New Netherland could not have justified a classis at least until 1652, when it had three ministers for the first time, or 1654, when it obtained a fourth. Yet the Brazil experience, which came to a disastrous close that very year, had soured Reformed clergy at home on the idea of colonial classes. Already wary of foreign appointments and losing control of religion overseas, their fears seemed vindicated in Brazilian episodes like the Daniel Schagen trial, the formation of the synod (which led to the controversy about WIC officers in church meetings), and the heterodox ideas found in Reverend Doerslaer's Tupi catechism. They could not slacken their grip on the colonial church lest it become impure. Accordingly, a classis was never organized in New Netherland, even after it had enough clergy and congregations. WIC directors complained in 1658 and 1659 that the

church there did not write to them enough. The only New Netherland minister who noted the problem (more than once) was Polhemus, who had traveled to North America from Brazil after it fell to the Portuguese. Probably because of his earlier experience, he said that communication among clergy even *in* the colony was wanting, that hundreds of miles separated some ministers. They needed a classis, he asserted. The clergy in Amsterdam ignored his recommendation, simply instructing him and his colleagues to write to each other more. They would not allow the first American classis (since Brazil's) until the late eighteenth century, more than one hundred years after the English conquest.<sup>40</sup>

### *Defending the Garden Before the Fall*

Influenced by his years as *ziekentrooster* in West Africa, the poet Jacob Steendam described New Netherland in 1661 in glowing terms. It was a “a pleasure garden,” “the masterpiece of nature’s hand,” “the promised land,” “the noblest of all lands,” a garden of Eden. In his earlier work he had criticized Africa for its heat and debilitating diseases, its lack of Christian, European institutions. The temperature on the Hudson, by contrast, was “warm and pure.” The benefit of fine air was fine health, Steendam wrote: “No deadly pest its purity assails, / To spread infection o’er your hills and vales.” The Dutch were not “aliens,” no longer Israel in Egypt. In New Netherland they could “flourish” and establish a “Seat,” an “inheritance fore’er.” One could build a “house,” “community,” “city,” and “commonwealth,” and one’s neighbors were “freem[e]n” and “countrymen.” While the

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<sup>40</sup> Minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 6 May 1658, 24 Feb 1659, 7 Apr 1664, ACA 6:97, 135, 336, SAA; ERSNY 1:525-526, 533-534; minutes of the deputies, 12 May, 23 June 1664, ACA 158:14-15. On all the reasons that the clergy in Amsterdam feared a classis, see also De Jong, *Reformed Church*, Chap. 11.



soil of Africa was not fertile enough for the true religion, the church would bloom like a lily in New Netherland.<sup>41</sup>

If Steendam got carried away in his portrayal of the colony, it was because he was trying to attract potential immigrants, writing for a promotional tract. He must have known about New Netherland's troubled political past and Indian wars. As a farm owner and trader, he also knew that the region was still rather underdeveloped, which caused various monetary and other problems. The Reformed clergy constantly had difficulties obtaining their pay and still complained about the quality of their congregants. Writing at about the same time as Steendam, for example, Reverend Schaats claimed that he had "many hearers, but not much saving fruit." Some members had been suspended from the Communion table; many colonists frequented taverns, gambled, and drank too much, he continued.<sup>42</sup> More generally, only about one in five inhabitants was a full member of the church, compared to about one third of the population in the Dutch Republic at that time. Despite the political victories won by the people and clergy against the WIC in previous decades, and despite recent growth, no one believed that the church flourished as much as Steendam asserted. New Netherland was not strictly a Reformed community.<sup>43</sup>

His hyperbole is understandable, however, in light of his experience in Africa and the circumstances in which he now wrote. From the view of a colonist, New Netherland was much improved since the terrible Kieft years. Dutch traditions and institutions were taking root. Even with low membership numbers the Reformed Church was comfortably

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<sup>41</sup> Nina Baym, ed., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Sixth Edit., Vol. A: Literature to 1820* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 276-284. For Steendam's African poetry, see Chap. 4 of this dissertation. The idea that Africa impacted Steendam's view of New Netherland is not original to this project. See also Frijhoff, *Wegen*, Chap. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in De Jong, *The Dutch Reformed Church*, 42-43. For clerical pay, see Chap. 3 of this dissertation and Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 154-155.

<sup>43</sup> Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 157-160.

situated at the center of society, enjoying the same public role and official attentions that it did in Brazil: regular fast and prayer days, rulers who attended services, and control of education and charity, all of which exerted pressures on people to become members and heralded future progress. Unlike Brazil, the church in North America had the advantage of operating without an angry, conquered, Catholic population. Lutherans and other non-conformers in New Netherland may have been the cause of many headaches, but they at least sailed from the Netherlands as willing subjects and reproduced the sectarian makeup that the church was accustomed to managing at home. And membership numbers do not include many *liefhebbers* or supporters of the church who chose not to subject themselves to consistorial discipline but still attended services, married, and baptized their children in the public chapel. For these reasons, complaints about the colony's great sins must be taken with an equally great helping of salt. When they reported the shortcomings of their parishioners, ministers like Schaats were merely doing their job, echoing the lament of the clerical class in every Christian society on every continent since the first century A.D. New Netherland was not a unique case, especially among European colonies.<sup>44</sup>

Calvinists who lived in the colony in the 1650s and 1660s had one other important reason for optimism: The governor, Pieter Stuyvesant, was clearly and resolutely one of them. The son of a Reformed minister, he married a minister's daughter and subscribed to the orthodox Reformed agenda throughout his life. In fact he may have chosen a career with the WIC precisely because of its reputation as a Calvinist institution.<sup>45</sup> His religious ardor was matched by a hard-nosed, decisive leadership style that brought change to New

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<sup>44</sup> For the church's place in New Netherland society, see *ibid.*, Chap. 5; Venema, *Beverwijck*, 131-156, 330-354; Venema, "Poverty and Charity in Seventeenth-Century Beverwijck/Albany, 1652-1700," *New York History* 80, no. 4 (Oct 1999), 369-390. For education, see also De Jong, *Dutch Reformed Church*, 43-45.

<sup>45</sup> Jaap Jacobs, "Like Father, Like Son? The Early Years of Petrus Stuyvesant," in *Revisiting New Netherland*, ed. Goodfriend, 205-242.

Netherland almost from the moment he arrived. He instituted new safety measures and made physical improvements, issued more severe laws against drinking and fighting on Sunday, and forbade cohabitation before marriage, which of course complemented the work and wishes of the Reformed consistory. Among the physical improvements was the completion of the chapel, only partly constructed before because of the Indian wars. He became an important benefactor to the clergy, personally paying salaries when a contract or extension had not been approved at home yet, for example, or paying Reverend Selyns *f* 250 per year to hold regular services at the governor's farm.<sup>46</sup> Stuyvesant also supported the church's campaign against Catholic or "pagan" holidays and festivities like the Feast of Saint Nicholas and Shrove Tuesday. These things he did, he said, because of what was then happening in Brazil. The difficulties of "our sister state" should serve as a reminder of God's wrath and the consequences of sinful living. "He proceeds no longer by words or writings, but by arrests and stripes," complained a colonist. Another said: "Stuyvesant is starting a whole reformation here."<sup>47</sup>

Most of the new governor's reforms contained some religious component, if not because they involved the church directly, at least because the interests of civil rulers in creating an orderly society—and their beliefs about the roots of *disorder*—often aligned with the church's efforts to change non-members and sinners. Planting the church by supporting the policies most conducive to planting colonial society, accomplished in New Netherland's early decades, was only one facet of a broad religious mission. Stuyvesant's

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<sup>46</sup> For "benefactor" and Selyns, see *ERSNY* 1:296, 363-364, 477. For the rest, see Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 187-188; Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 43-59. See also Joyce D. Goodfriend, "The Struggle Over the Sabbath in Peter Stuyvesant's New Amsterdam," in *Power and the City in the Netherlandic World*, eds. Wayne te Brake and Wim Klooster (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 205-224.

<sup>47</sup> As cited in Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 58; and Scott Christianson, "Criminal Punishment in New Netherland," in *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place*, ed. Zeller, 86.

opposition to some of those policy changes, coupled with his own religious leanings and support for the church in most other contexts, is again a reminder that the major debates within the company about New Netherland were not a choice between profit or piety, as some claimed. One could side with the WIC on the question of company government and still be a good Calvinist; one could support the monopoly and still champion Reformed society, which was, ultimately, the goal of the devout. They did not just want to make the region Christian; they wanted it to be *Reformed*.

How did the clergy and consistory seek to accomplish this in New Netherland? What role did the WIC play and how does one reconcile such efforts with the colony's persistent reputation for tolerance? Many of the English who settled on Long Island and other places within the company's jurisdiction did not pose a problem for the Reformed Church. As the historian Frederick Zwierlein pointed out a century ago, the company did not grant them freedom of religion, but "freedom of *their* religion."<sup>48</sup> It did not look on their beliefs and practices as fundamentally different, things that had to be either changed or tolerated. Stuyvesant claimed that the English were "co-religionists." When a group of Puritans requested permission to settle in 1661, he allowed it, explaining that "there is no difference in the fundamental points of the worship of God betwixt these [the Dutch churches] and the Churches of England." The following year he wrote that "there is [not] the Least differency In the fundamentall points of Religion." Only in "the Ruelinge" of their churches did the two peoples sometimes disagree.<sup>49</sup> Such organizational disparities might have been a larger problem if the colony had a classis or synod. Though the Dutch worried about "independents" and hired their own English clergy for that reason, it was

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<sup>48</sup> Zwierlein, *Religion*, 144.

<sup>49</sup> *ERSNY* 1:319, 511, 519.

kind of a moot point in New Netherland: By refusing to allow any colonial hierarchy, the church at home inadvertently erased the differences between English Congregationalists and Dutch Presbyterians, making them all independent at the local level.<sup>50</sup>

Lutherans, Quakers, and Jews posed a bigger challenge to those who wanted to make New Netherland Reformed, but none of them were allowed to worship openly. Officers and employees had to take an oath to maintain the Reformed Church and forbid all other “sects.” As the population increased and non-conformers began to agitate for freedoms, the WIC took steps to prevent it. Stuyvesant refused a Lutheran petition for a minister in 1653. Three years later the colonial government passed a law against conventicles, imposing fines and imprisoning people who taught or attended them. When the Lutheran church in Amsterdam sent Reverend Johannes Gutwasser to the colony in 1657, the Reformed clergy, the civil magistrates, and the governor and his council united against him, forbidding him to preach, ordering him to adhere to all the new ordinances. Upon further pressure from the clergy, without any evidence of misconduct, Stuyvesant agreed to deport Gutwasser, who returned to Amsterdam in 1659 after hiding for a time. Similarly, Quaker dissidents were fined, detained, sentenced to hard labor, flogged, and deported in the 1650s and 1660s. Stuyvesant even billeted soldiers in English homes on Long Island when he learned that some inhabitants were harboring Quakers.<sup>51</sup>

Harsh treatment of Quakers was not unique to New Netherland. Because of their novel views on authority and their outgoing, vociferous way of sharing those views, they were considered dangerous radicals in most societies. When the Dutch suppressed and

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<sup>50</sup> For concerns about independents, see *ibid.*, 320-321, 334-336; the Amsterdam classis to the church in New Netherland, 1 Mar 1660, ACA 157:408-410, SAA.

<sup>51</sup> The most thorough account of these events is Zwierlein, *Religion*, Chaps. 6-7. See also Jacobs, *Colony*, 160-171; De Jong, *Reformed Church*, 35-38; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 230-233; Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 190-211.

removed them, they were simply trying to get rid of a disruptive threat. Their suppression of other faiths was not quite the same. While most religious outsiders caused concerns about division, keeping them from the public sphere served a parallel, active, evangelical purpose, as well. Suppression did not just protect the Reformed Church, but actually grew it; suppression was a tool for making New Netherland Reformed. When Lutherans first asked for a minister of their own, the clergy objected because it “would tend to the injury of our church” and “*the diminution of hearers of the Word of God.*” They knew quite well why some colonists attended church: “For as long as no other religion than the Reformed has been publicly allowed, all who wish to engage in public worship come to our service. By this means ... several [Lutherans] have made a profession of religion, and united with us in the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>52</sup> The directors decided “absolutely” to deny the request, asking Stuyvesant to “employ all possible but moderate means ... to induce them to listen, and finally join the Reformed Church.” Megapolensis worried after Gutwasser arrived that, if he were allowed to preach, “the number of hearers in our ... church would be perceptibly diminished.” “Many” Lutherans now attended Reformed sermons and “several” were full members, Megapolensis concluded. Indeed, after Gutwasser’s departure, “quietness” was restored; “the Lutherans again go to church, as they were formerly accustomed to do.” Even the former Lutheran ringleader “is now one of the most punctual attendants, and has his pew near to the pulpit.” Reverend Schaats likewise wrote from Fort Orange the next year that “Lutherans ... are gradually being led to us.” Without competition, “the vineyard of the Lord” would continue to grow.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *ERSNY* 1:317-318 (emphasis mine).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 324, 387, 449, 483.

So much for tolerance. Similar to the slow and subtle suffocation of Catholicism in Brazil when more direct evangelical efforts failed, Calvinists hoped to bring Lutherans and other dissenters in New Netherland to the true religion by taking away their other options. It was a gentle (and sometimes not-so-gentle) form of pressure or even force, one could say—though of course the Dutch would never have put it that way. Since their own experience with the Inquisition and the Revolt against Spain they had prided themselves in *not* using force in religious matters, in allowing “freedom of conscience,” or freedom to believe and worship how one wanted within the walls of one’s home (with one’s own family). By separating public and private they tried to resolve the inherent contradiction between freedom and favoritism: In the name of unity they outlawed every form of public worship but one, promising at the same time not to persecute people for holding different views and not attending services. However, in playing favorites the Dutch still resorted to other kinds of pressure, for there were many social advantages to joining or participating in the public church. And they used a heavy hand to keep other faiths quiet.

Pretending not to notice when non-conformers ignored the law was another way that rulers could resolve the contradiction. One New Netherland historian argued that “connivance” was “the Dutch Colonial Contribution to American Religious Pluralism.”<sup>54</sup> Like the regents of Amsterdam and Governor Johan Maurits in Brazil, Dutch rulers often winked at illicit religious activity. By the second half of the seventeenth century connivance was the unofficial, *de facto* policy in some cities at home. The period 1650 to 1672 was one of rising republicanism, when influential figures like Johan de Witt and Pieter de la Court promoted a political program called “the True Freedom” and openly

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<sup>54</sup> Smith, *Religion and Trade*, Chap. 15.

heralded the advantages of a tolerant society.<sup>55</sup> What the new political atmosphere meant for the company is difficult to ascertain. De la Court was a WIC *hoofdparticipant* who regularly attended meetings and helped nominate all new directors.<sup>56</sup> The power of one *hoofdparticipant* was small, of course, but with or without him, the directors were part of the new generation, further removed from the Spanish war and divisive religious contests of the first half of the century, less actively involved in the church and its politics than the founding generation. In addition, because of its financial struggles, the WIC had sold the Delaware River to the city of Amsterdam. The southern half of New Netherland was now controlled by the creators and defenders of connivance, and decisions about the colony as a whole sometimes had to be made with their input.

The use or effect of connivance in New Netherland is greatly overstated, however. The governor from 1647 until the colony's loss in 1664 was ardently opposed to the practice, and even the directors did not usually embrace it, likely because they disagreed among themselves. In their communication with the church in Holland and their various instructions to Stuyvesant on religious matters one finds a range of advice. They claimed to "oppose the plan of the Lutherans," believing that open worship would be "injurious." They feared the "evil consequences" of going down that path. They resolved not to permit a Lutheran minister, encouraged Stuyvesant to draw Lutherans to the Reformed faith, and approved the deportation of Gutwasser.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand they wished that Stuyvesant had proceeded "less vigorously," just as they told him to deal with Lutherans

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<sup>55</sup> Israel, *Dutch Republic*, Chap. 30; Herbert Rowen, *John de Witt: Statesman of the "True Freedom"* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). For de la Court's writings on tolerance, see his *Interest van Holland often Gronden van Hollands welvaren* (Amsterdam, 1662); or in English, *The true interest and political maxims of the Republic of Holland* (London, 1746).

<sup>56</sup> See the minutes of the Amsterdam *hoofdparticipanten*, OWIC 17:79-144, NA. De la Court appeared first on 19 Oct 1667 and continued to attend until the French invasion in 1672. His name appears on the lists of attendees again briefly in 1674.

<sup>57</sup> *ERSNY* 1:320-322, 324, 423. See also 515-516.



“quietly and leniently” after the ordinance against conventicles. They were not pleased with the new law and told him to “let [the Lutherans] have free religious exercises in their houses,” leaving open the question of whether people could worship only as families or as non-family groups. Lutherans claimed to have the quiet support of some directors, and the Amsterdam church feared the same, especially when it had to work with the directors and the Amsterdam regents together on the matter.<sup>58</sup>

Questions about severity, flexibility, and making New Netherland Reformed came to a head over the simple word “here” (*alhier*). In the midst of all the other controversies Lutherans began to complain about the baptismal ceremony, particularly the moment that parents were asked to affirm that they believed the Christian doctrines taught “here” (or “at this place”). Without the word a person of any denomination could answer positively. Including it was a problem because it implied the Reformed Church. The directors urged Stuyvesant to use the old formulary, which did not include the word, and the colonial clergy even said that they were willing to do so, pending advice from their colleagues at home. Some churches in the Netherlands still used the old formulary, after all.<sup>59</sup> But the Amsterdam classis disagreed with the decision and “earnestly admonished” the New Netherland clergy to do the same. Similar to its objections to the Tupi catechism and other foreign, colonial publications, the classis worried about differences in religious practice. Only after years of correspondence, after the directors declared that they would brook no more opposition, after it became clear that the WIC enjoyed the support of some clergy, including those in America—then the classis finally gave up the fight.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 352, 354-355, 374-375, 378-381, 409-411.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 423, 425, 431.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 440, 471, 476-477, 485-486, 505-506.

The directors did not urge flexibility because they loved Lutheranism or because they were indifferent to religious disagreements. Rather, they believed that changing the baptismal ceremony would draw more people to the public church. They asked the governor to use “the least offensive” means possible “so that people of other persuasions may not be deterred from the ... Reformed Church, but in time be induced to listen and finally gained over to it.” “[T]hereby these and other dissenters,” they wrote on another occasion, “will be satisfied and kept in the Reformed Church.” They even claimed that lenience in the *alhier* controversy was one way to prevent Lutherans from getting their minister. Frequent, contentious disagreements “might result in the permission to conduct a separate divine service there,” the directors said, “for the Lutherans would *very easily obtain the consent of the authorities here*,” meaning Amsterdam, and “we would have no means of preventing it.” Regardless of the directors’ personal political and religious leanings, the Amsterdam regents clearly cast a shadow over company decisions after the sale of the Delaware River.<sup>61</sup>

The directors’ repeated instructions to the governor to be more careful, to tread lightly, probably did reflect a more liberal attitude among the WIC’s new generation. But the *alhier* decision was the only one that had an impact on New Netherland, and a rather trivial one at that. While their orders regarding Jewish immigration after the loss of Brazil are also occasionally offered as evidence of connivance, Stuyvesant acted illegally in that instance, not the directors. Goaded by the clergy, he wanted to deport and ban Jews from the colony altogether. When the directors refused the proposal, or when they scolded him for placing unusual restrictions on Jewish trade, they were simply upholding the accepted legal traditions of the Dutch Republic. On the issue of religion they told Stuyvesant that

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 423, 425, 460 (emphasis mine).

Jews, like Lutherans, should worship only “in their houses”; the WIC would not let them build a synagogue. Such open-ended instructions could have been interpreted liberally to allow conventicles, but that would have required a liberal ruler, which the colony did not have. That Stuyvesant and the Reformed clergy never complained about Jewish worship afterward suggests that they got their way, that Amsterdam’s unique religious culture did not develop in New Netherland.<sup>62</sup>

The clearest example of the connivance tradition among company directors came in 1663, following the banishment of the English Quaker John Bowne. The directors told Stuyvesant that he had gone too far in shipping Bowne to the Netherlands. Like him, they preferred that such “sectarians” stay away. However,

we doubt very much, whether we can proceed against them rigorously without diminishing the population and stopping immigration, which must be favored at a so tender stage of the country’s existence. You may therefore *shut your eyes*, at least not force people’s consciences, but allow every one to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offence to his neighbors and does not oppose the government. As the government of [Amsterdam] has always practiced this maxim of moderation and ... has often had a considerable influx of people, we do not doubt that your Province too would be benefitted by it.<sup>63</sup>

They could not have provided a more succinct summary of the liberal, republican worldview. Again, though, it had no discernable effect in New Netherland. Whether the directors wanted Stuyvesant to wink at Quaker worship, he never did. He always treated Quakers harshly and the colony fell to the English just one year after he was ordered to “shut [his] eyes.” Whether some directors wanted him to allow Lutheran worship or even connived a decade before in sending the Lutheran minister, the latter was sent home and Lutherans never attained religious freedoms. In fact the Amsterdam classis expressed its

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<sup>62</sup> Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 212-219; *ERSNY* 1:352.

<sup>63</sup> *ERSNY* 1:530 (emphasis mine).

pleasure with the directors from time to time. After quashing the Lutherans, it thanked the directors for their help. Regarding Jews and their “blasphemous religion,” the directors “acted ... in a very Christian manner,” the classis reported.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Calvinists attained their wishes on almost every front; the tolerant, conniving practices of Amsterdam were simply not transplanted to North America in any meaningful way. From 1621 to 1664, in the face of great religious diversity, New Netherland was officially Reformed.

### *Fighting Philistines, Resisting Sinners*

Without a classis or synod it was unlikely that New Netherland would become an ecclesiastical center for the Dutch Atlantic as Brazil had briefly been. But the New Netherland church did develop meaningful ties with other places because of commercial and other connections among them. Despite the WIC’s division into five chambers, it was still one company, and the activities of each part overlapped in Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, not to mention the early privateering fleets. Enterprises like the *patroonships* or the terms and conditions available to settlers, for example, were similar, whether one sailed under the Amsterdam or Zeeland chamber, whether one settled on the Wild Coast, in the Caribbean, or New Netherland. In fact, the merchant David de Vries, the man who encouraged Governor Kieft to build the chapel in New Amsterdam, founded *patroonships* both on the Wild Coast and Delaware River. (Both failed.) Bonds among Dutch colonies in the North Atlantic increased after the WIC reorganized its possessions in 1647, when Stuyvesant became governor of New Netherland and Curaçao, then when Brazil was lost in 1654, which pushed its Dutch and Jewish inhabitants to other places and produced new commercial networks. The final section of this chapter examines the significance of such

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 349, 470.

relations and compares church-company conflict in North America (outlined above) with similar incidents elsewhere, often attributed to poor clergy or WIC neglect. Placing them side-by-side suggests other explanations.<sup>65</sup>

Consider the connections between New Netherland and Curaçao from the island's earliest surviving baptismal register (1659-1662). An absentee "witness" at the baptism of one child was Hillegond Megapolensis, daughter of Reverend Megapolensis in New Netherland, probably meaning that she was the child's godmother. An absentee witness for another child, and thus probably godfather, was Jacob Alrichs, Dutch commander on the Delaware River.<sup>66</sup> Having family or friends in one place or the other was common. A minister at Curaçao corresponded regularly with his cousin, a New Netherland merchant. When Stuyvesant was looking for someone to educate his son and perhaps expand on his contacts and opportunities, he sent him to the same minister, Wilhelmus Volckering, who later wrote to Stuyvesant from Curaçao that the boy had a "good disposition and well-regulated life." So far, however, he had not shown much interest in the kind of education that Volckering could provide. Such relationships depended on regular exchange between the two regions. Stuyvesant's hopes for his son made little sense otherwise.<sup>67</sup>

The church at home was aware of these contacts and relations. When it wrote to colleagues in New Netherland it informed them of those who had recently been examined and sent as clergy to the Caribbean. It sometimes sent correspondence to both places (and to the Wild Coast) on the very same day, probably with the same ship. When it informed

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<sup>65</sup> An alternative view, that the Dutch Atlantic was never really integrated after Brazil, is found in Pieter Emmer and Wim Klooster, "The Dutch Atlantic, 1600-1800: Expansion Without Empire," *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999): 48-69. See also Pieter Emmer, "The West India Company, 1621-1791: Dutch or Atlantic?" in *Companies and Trade: Essays on Overseas Trading Companies During the Ancien Regime*, eds. L. Blussé and F. Gaastra (Leiden University Press, 1981), 71-95.

<sup>66</sup> Curaçao baptismal register and membership list, 1659-1662, ACA 224:27-34, SAA.

<sup>67</sup> Gehring, ed., *Curaçao Papers*, 216-217, 221-222.

Reverend Specht at Curaçao about a new minister in West Africa, it added that, “without a doubt,” Specht would have already heard about the appointment.<sup>68</sup> In addition to Stuyvesant and various WIC soldiers and officers, some of whom remained in New Netherland when their contracts expired, Reverends Michaelius, Bogardus, Backerus, and Polhemus had all worked elsewhere, including West Africa, Curaçao, and Brazil (not to mention Europe). Like Backerus, who only decided to work in New Netherland when his ship touched there on its return to Holland, the schoolmaster Jan Walreven was destined for the colony on the Hudson but, stopping first at Curaçao, agreed to remain as lay preacher. He worked there for nine years, lost his wife in a horrible epidemic that wiped out most of the garrison, including his “religious kin” (i.e., the Reformed members), and ultimately sailed to Asia as a *ziekentrooster* for the East India Company.<sup>69</sup>

Some effects of integration and prior experience have been noted: Bogardus drew upon his memories of the West African climate to paint his political enemies in the worst possible light, as African “monsters.” Michaelius, who had also served in Africa, wrote that the only good thing about Native Americans was that they “do not speak so jeeringly and so scoffingly of the godlike and glorious majesty of their Creator as the Africans dare to do.”<sup>70</sup> Backerus viewed New Netherland and its great potential for growth through the prism of his recent work on Curaçao, whose religious promise was small by contrast. And Polhemus wanted the same communication and organization for New Netherland that he had known in Brazil, which the Amsterdam church denied because of its own experience with that colony. One did not even have to serve in more than one place to be influenced

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<sup>68</sup> The Amsterdam classis to the New Netherland church, 1 Mar 1660, ACA 157:408-410, SAA; the classis to Specht, 27 Sep 1672, ACA 168:67.

<sup>69</sup> Minutes of the deputies, 28 Oct 1647, 12 Sep 1650, 11 Oct 1655, 23 Oct 1656, ACA 157:190, 249-250, 330-331, 365, SAA; Walreven to the Amsterdam classis, 8 July 1649, ACA 224:8-10.

<sup>70</sup> *ERSNY* 1:57-58, 62.

by developments elsewhere. When the minister Adriaen Beaumont arrived at Curaçao in 1659 and immediately began baptizing Indians and slaves, colleagues at home rebuked him for proceeding so quickly. He apologized, acknowledged that his proselytes were not ready, and blamed his boldness on “Brazil,” probably meaning that the ease with which the Dutch had won Tupi converts there caused misunderstandings about conversion and Native Americans in general. Growing bonds between Curaçao and New Netherland also allowed him to monitor and report on the movements of a problematic minister named Machiel Zyperus after Zyperus caused a scandal at Curaçao. Together Beaumont and the Amsterdam classis exposed his troubled history and prevented him from taking up a post in New Netherland.<sup>71</sup> For these ministers the charge to plant and cultivate the Reformed Church overseas was a unified project, blind to location. Their work was informed by previous experience; they knew about appointments and deaths, progress and failures in other colonies and on other continents.

The health of church-company relations in each place depended on the politics and personalities of secular rulers and clergy and a myriad of other factors. As we have seen, ecclesiastical conflict in New Netherland declined and grew according to the state of general political and economic discontent. The church there also fared better under Stuyvesant, a capable ruler who happened to share the Calvinist worldview. His religious leanings probably contributed much to peaceful church relations. The governor (“vice-director”) at Curaçao during the same period, Matthias Beck, was of the same religious stripe as Stuyvesant, with similar results. Beck was a former member of the High Council in Brazil and a member of the Reformed consistory in both colonies. Most ministers who

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<sup>71</sup> Beaumont to the Amsterdam classis, 17 Apr 1660 and 5 Dec 1662 ACA 224:11-13, 17-21, SAA; the Amsterdam classis to Beaumont, 9 July 1661 and 15 Dec 1661, ACA 157:425, 432-33.

served under Beck praised him and claimed a close friendship with him. He and Reverend Beaumont, who was also his son-in-law, worked closely together to “rebuild the walls of Jerusalem” after Zyperus departed. At the minister’s insistence, Beck closed taverns inside Fort Amsterdam and issued placards against unchastity, drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking. The number of Reformed members grew from six to about fifty during Beaumont’s three years.<sup>72</sup> His successors reported further growth and large congregations at Sunday services because Beck required everyone in the garrison to attend, regardless of their religion. He was a “very Devout Gentleman,” wrote Reverend Specht, adding that the governor did whatever was necessary to build the church and (as colonists said about Stuyvesant) effect a widespread “reformation.”<sup>73</sup>

Contrast Beaumont’s experience at Curaçao with that of two other clergy in other times and places: The misadventures of Johannes Urselius on the Wild Coast (1660) and Specht’s difficulties under Governor Beck’s successors at Curaçao in the 1670s. In light of similar events in New Netherland, they reveal much about the struggle for power and the place of the Reformed Church in young, developing, divided Dutch colonies. Urselius traveled to the Wild Coast less than one year after Beaumont arrived at Curaçao and was immediately assigned to the company’s headquarters on the Essequibo River, about sixty miles from another settlement on the Pomeroon River (both in modern-day Guyana). He was not encouraged by what he found. Of the 1600 colonists who had migrated in recent years, only 300 or 400 survived, spread out over many miles. For the most part they were

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid; minutes of the deputies, 25 Oct 1660, ACA 157:415, SAA; the Amsterdam classis to Beaumont, 9 July 1661, ACA 157:425; minutes of the North Holland synod, 9 Aug 1661, ASNH 5, NHA; Beaumont to the Amsterdam classis, 5 Dec 1662, ACA 224:17-21. See also Beck to Stuyvesant, 23 Aug 1659, in Gehring, ed., *Curaçao Papers*, 127.

<sup>73</sup> Specht to the Amsterdam classis, 15 Oct 1668, ACA 224:35, SAA; Volckering to the Amsterdam classis, 9 June 1664, ACA 224:24-25.



sick, hungry, and unhappy. According to the Reformed consistory, the Dutch commissary on the Essequibo, Cornelis Goliath, was something of a tyrant. He tried to force himself on the consistory as one of its members. When they refused him, he forbade them to meet at all. So “unbearable” was his reign, the consistory claimed, the colonial council finally removed him from his post.<sup>74</sup>

The councilors reported the same events rather differently. They conceded that people were unhappy with Goliath and, under pressure, they probably did remove him. But they accused Urselius of outright revolt. Calling him a “grasping wolf,” they detailed his plot to seize Goliath, commandeer two yachts, and sail to the Caribbean. Had they been successful, the rebels supposedly would have sold the colony’s slaves and taken the money for themselves. The council alleged that Urselius made his plans in the consistory and then, with two elders and a deacon, he riled up church members in their homes under the guise of his regular visitations. He used his sermons, prayers, and “daily conversations” for the same purpose. The consistory circulated some kind of “document” (*geschrifte*) and “forced” people to sign it, the council wrote. The uprising was scheduled for an important holiday, when Reformed members came together from throughout the colony to worship and celebrate the Lord’s Supper. In normal circumstances it was held three or four times per year. In this case, because Urselius had just arrived, it was likely the first in the colony’s history. As he and his consistorial accomplices went from house to house to question church members on their faith and conduct, preparing them for the gathering, they also gave each person a secret assignment that he or she was to perform directly after the sermon. The council somehow got word of their plans, however, and on

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<sup>74</sup> Minutes of the Walcheren classis, 12 Aug 1660, ACW 4:152, ZA. See also Goslinga, *Dutch in the Caribbean*, 422-423.

the day in question, with assistance from Essequibo's "good inhabitants," the mutiny was suppressed and the ringleaders sent to the Caribbean.<sup>75</sup>

Urselius's real purpose probably had more to do with righting perceived wrongs and alleviating the harsh conditions that colonists faced than with the malevolent motives that the council ascribed to him and his followers. Complicating the situation even further, he arrived in Essequibo with explicit instructions from his classis at home to deal with Cornelis Goliath on a separate, unrelated matter: The commissary was a full member of the Reformed Church, suspended from Communion in his home town of Oostkapelle four years before for the "terrible sin" of manslaughter. He had appealed the decision to the Zeeland classis, who reviewed the case after he departed for America and determined that his consistory had acted appropriately. The classis also transferred authority over Goliath from Oostkapelle to the new Essequibo consistory. In other words, in a period of tremendous difficulty, anger, and division, when colonists were dying or leaving the Wild Coast of their own accord, the classis granted Urselius the power to sit in judgment of the very man whom many people blamed for their problems. No wonder Goliath intruded in the consistory; no wonder he tried to halt its meetings. If the council's description of what followed is accurate (and they did provide evidence), he had reason to fear.<sup>76</sup>

The story of Urselius and Goliath bears striking similarities to that of Reverend Bogardus and Governor Kieft in New Netherland. Both ministers posed a threat to the authority of unpopular rulers; both became critics and opposition leaders, using the pulpit

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<sup>75</sup> J. van Falloo, Willem Sonnemans, and David Costuril at Essequibo, 5 Oct 1660, ASV 1784, ZA.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the Oostkapelle consistory, 30 Sep 1656, AKO 1:47, ZA. See also 31 Mar 1657, Jan 1658 (p. 52), 7 Apr and 5 Oct 1658, and the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 14 Nov 1658, AKV 364, GAV. The classis first gave power to deal with Goliath to Rev. Pieter Lodewycks. Lodewycks died, however, and Urselius went instead. For "evidence," see the previous fn. The council mentioned and appended papers that are no longer extant, including the document signed by church members and various Urselius letters.

and consistory to undermine political enemies, exploiting their pre-Communion visitation privileges to communicate with Reformed allies. Just as Kieft and his supporters finally refused to attend sermons, making the church the ultimate marker of New Netherland's political divisions, so radical resistance to Goliath and the colonial council in Essequibo was centered in the church. In settings where company officers exercised total political and military control, where civic government was just beginning to emerge, discontent with the WIC or with a particular ruler naturally gravitated toward *the* alternate source of authority, the only institution with a traditional, accepted, authoritative role in society and the only person—the Reformed minister—who could claim some kind of right or power that did not originate in the company, for he was just as much an independent servant of the church as an “employee.” That Reverend Urselius was simply filling a role that some considered legitimate, that his actions were not beyond the pale, is suggested by his later career. Although he had to go before the directors shortly after his arrival in Zeeland and apologize for his “imprudence,” saying that he was just a “young minister,” they released him from his contract. His classis accepted his explanation of events, provided him with written testimonials, and allowed him to preach. By 1662 he had a permanent post at the village of Cadzand in southwest Zeeland.<sup>77</sup>

Reverend Specht's run-ins with two successive governors on Curaçao were not as dramatic as those of his colleagues in New Netherland and Essequibo, yet they do shed additional light on similar issues. Like Beaumont and other clergy, Specht got along fine with Matthias Beck. Under the new governor Dirk Otterinck (1670-1673), then under Jan Doncker (1673-1679), things changed, though. Curaçao was by that point emerging as a

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<sup>77</sup> Minutes of the Walcheren classis, 30 Dec 1660, 13 and 27 Jan, 31 Mar, 7 Apr 1661, ACW 4:158-159, 163-164, ZA; *ibid.*, 24 Feb and 23 June 1661, AKV 364, GAV; minutes of the Nova Zeelandia deputies, 3 Feb and 4 Apr 1661, OWIC 33:31, NA; *Ondertekening's Boek*, 19 Jan 1662, ACW 45, ZA.

major commercial entrepot, a thriving colony, as Specht described: His congregation was “growing daily, both in listeners, because of the great trade, and in members, because many who have wandered here and there are settling down here.” But the island’s success brought problems for him, as well. “[W]herever God’s church grows, especially in places of trade and prosperity, numerous nations and evil people flow there.” More and more, he went on, “unrighteousness gets the upper hand, and we must, therefore, urge the practice of godliness continually and be vigilant against the shocking, serious sins of drunkenness, whoredom, and adultery that dominate here most.” To that end the consistory complained to Otterinck about single men and women living together openly. After various “requests and remonstrations,” the governor agreed to deport “four adulterous whores.”<sup>78</sup>

The church’s complaints and Reverend Specht’s efforts to eradicate the practices that he found so objectionable soon began to rub some people the wrong way, including Otterinck and his successor, Jan Doncker. Specht claimed that Otterinck resented him and undermined his work from the very start, forcing Specht to back down somewhat from his reform project. Trouble really began when Otterinck’s wife arrived and the minister asked to see their testimonials, which all church members had to show when they came to a new place. Otterinck took offense and refused, claiming that, as governor, he also had authority over the church. When the consistory continued to protest against adultery and other behaviors, he allegedly told an elder, “Where there is trade, there must be whores.” Like Bogardus, Urselius, and other clergy, Specht took the fight to the pulpit, preaching a sermon from the Old Testament about Israel’s improper relations with “the daughters of Moab,” the wrath of God, and (in the Bible story) the execution of two offenders. Specht decried the “awfulness of the sins of whoredom and adultery” and warned about inviting

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<sup>78</sup> Specht to the Amsterdam classis, 8 Mar 1672, ACA 224:39, SAA.

the “terrible judgments of God” in time of war. (The Dutch were then fighting England and France.) Coming on the heels of the dispute between the consistory and governor, the sermon did not go over well in some quarters. People began to call Specht a firebrand, a troublemaker, and the church’s relations with the company deteriorated further. Each side wrote letters accusing the other of misdeeds.<sup>79</sup>

When Otterinck died, Governor Doncker also refused to listen to Specht, “even if it meant preventing enormous sins,” the minister wrote. Basically their dispute centered on the question of power. Otterinck and Doncker did not want people to think that Specht controlled them, nor would they let him undermine the colonial regime; yet Specht could not, in good conscience, remain silent about conduct that he detested, appealing at least once to his instructions and authority from the Amsterdam classis, which was not subject to the WIC. He went “with tears to the pulpit, knowing well that chastising sins ... would not be pleasant for some, and they would hate me.” Vigilance was essential “in these heathen and dissolute lands,” he said; only “repentance” would deflect God’s wrath and protect them from attack. “As God is my witness, if it were possible, if I could have held the entire community in my heart, and with my arms carried them into heaven, I would have done it.” Unfortunately for Specht, the governor did not want the minister to hold him or carry him anywhere. Though Specht did not single people out, preaching instead “in general terms” and leaving the interpretation open, Doncker heard each sermon as a denunciation of his government, and he finally banned Specht from the pulpit altogether. In 1676, more than eight years after leaving the Netherlands and just two years after the

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<sup>79</sup> Specht to the Amsterdam classis, 26 Apr 1673, ACA 224:41-42, SAA; minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 12 Jan 1673, OWIC 16:121, NA. For “daughters,” see Numbers 25:1, KJV.

WIC went bankrupt, Specht sailed home and took up a post in the army. As a warning to others, Doncker allegedly burned his Curaçao property to the ground.<sup>80</sup>

Specht shared one characteristic with all the “trouble” ministers described to this point: their youth. He, Bogardus, and Urselius went straight from school to the company. Except briefly as *proponents*, none had experience in the Netherlands before, which may explain their zeal (in part). Time spent working in a busy, diverse place like Amsterdam or some other trading center sometimes taught clergy the necessity of restraint. Even the Amsterdam classis—often so strident and unbending—said as much to one of its younger colonial ministers, Bartholomeus IJsebout, who spent four months on Curaçao and witnessed Specht’s clash with Governor Otterinck. IJsebout had worked for a few years on the Gold Coast before Curaçao and described the illicit relations that some employees had with African women. The classis chided him for being too frank and obliterated the offending lines from his letter, explaining that a good minister had to mix his ardor with “understanding.” IJsebout needed to “moderate” himself with caution in the future so he did not give offense or cause a scandal. In a gentler version of Otterinck’s “Where there is trade, there must be whores,” the classis asserted that “the considerations of trade and government (though regrettable) cannot always be reconciled with the views of a minister of tender conscience.” In that case IJsebout must simply “take comfort in the witness of [his] conscience.” If company clergy like him and his young colleagues were deficient in some meaningful way, it was mostly in the sense that inexperience may have heightened their combativeness: Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Specht to Selyns, 25 June 1676, ACA 224:44-49, SAA; minutes of the deputies, 7 Sep 1676, ACA 158:162; HV 1463a and b, GAR.

<sup>81</sup> IJsebout to the Amsterdam classis, 28 Feb 1668, ACA 210:215, SAA; the classis to IJsebout, 27 Aug 1668 and 5 Nov 1669, ACA 168:34-35, 50; minutes of the deputies, 11 June 1668, ACA 158:60.

Yet the choices of rulers and favorable or unfavorable conditions of each colony were just as responsible, if not more responsible, for church-company conflict (or the lack thereof). Beaumont and other clergy who did not become entangled in controversy were also very young. Specht was just as young—indeed younger—under Governor Beck as he was under Otterinck and Doncker, yet his consistory’s aggressive activities caused no known quarrels during the earlier administration. Beck’s and Stuyvesant’s Calvinist inclinations, membership in the consistory, and support for ecclesiastical, social reforms mitigated the tensions that reform movements inevitably caused: Few people would risk displeasing the most powerful figure in the colony. By the same token, a defiant, resistant ruler increased the likelihood that others would resist the consistory. Just as Kieft kept his employees from attending church when Bogardus preached, Specht wrote that Doncker intimidated people by questioning them, threatening them with ruin, eventually silencing supporters who could thus only stand up for Specht in written testimonials that he carried secretly to Holland and shared with the church and company there.<sup>82</sup>

Each of the clergy in question had supporters at home and overseas, and none of them suffered any consequences for their behavior—suggesting again that their righteous indignation, their fire and brimstone, was acceptable and perhaps expected at the time. Except for Urselius’s apology for nearly causing an insurrection and his explanation that he was a “young minister,” each of them defended his ground until the end. In IJsebout’s case the Amsterdam clergy upbraided him not so much for chastising sexual misconduct but for how he did it, for naming names. Otherwise his peers commended his actions and he continued to report his “ardent exhortations and reprimands” and his struggles against “unzealous religion.” The Lord would “spew lukewarm people from his mouth,” IJsebout

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<sup>82</sup> Specht to Selyns, 25 June 1676, ACA 224:44-49, SAA.

wrote.<sup>83</sup> Likewise, the Amsterdam classis defended Bogardus and Specht, praising Specht for trying to ban “foul” women, for example, or telling him that he was right in asking for the governor’s testimonials.<sup>84</sup> WIC clergy who used the power of their office to change society in direct, heavy-handed ways did not engage in prohibited behavior. Rather, they drew on a long tradition based in the *Nadere Reformatie* (further reformation). However much some rulers resented it, or however much some ministers learned to moderate their ire in the interest of peace, those who chose the more confrontational approach were just playing the established role of the Calvinist reformer in Dutch society.<sup>85</sup>

Ultimately, then, the Reformed Church could be a hindrance to the company just as easily as it was a partner, depending on whether particular WIC officers looked on the clergy as friend or foe, ally or nuisance, and depending on the consistory’s willingness to involve itself in political, economic, and other disputes that were only loosely connected to its central religious mission. Where the WIC only had a basic trading presence, where its own sailors and soldiers were the only Europeans, the church played a critical role in maintaining order and upholding company authority, as shown in Chapter Four. Insofar as the WIC *was* the government, the church could and sometimes did play the same role in colonial societies. There the two could just as quickly become enemies, though—not because of neglect or religious indifference among the directors and other rulers, and not because of unqualified clergy. The same problems and disagreements between secular and ecclesiastical authority that existed overseas had existed in the Netherlands for a long

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<sup>83</sup> IJsebout to the Amsterdam classis, 14 July 1670, ACA 210:217, SAA.

<sup>84</sup> For Bogardus, see, for example, *ERSNY* 1:142, 149-151. For Specht, see the Amsterdam classis to Specht, 29 Aug 1673, ACA 168:75, SAA. See also the “attestatie” from his consistory, 24 Apr 1673, ACA 224:43; and the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 20 Aug 1673, ACA 7:64.

<sup>85</sup> For the *Nadere Reformatie* and Bogardus, see Frijhoff, *Wegen*, translated as *Fulfilling God’s Mission: The Two Worlds of Domine Everardus Bogardus, 1607-1647* (Brill, 2007), especially 184-192.



time; their extension simply demonstrates that the Dutch successfully exported the public church (and all the baggage that accompanied it) as they spread throughout the world. If contention in America was sometimes worse, it was because individual rulers and clergy had a louder voice in small, developing, and oftentimes endangered societies where their particular religious leanings and personalities mattered more and their decisions were potentially more impactful and divisive. Similarly, prostitution, illicit worship, and other phenomenon of social growth could not hide as easily as they did in larger towns and cities, posing an embarrassing challenge even to clergy who, in other circumstances, may have preferred silence to confrontation. Those who chose to do something about it when they did not have secular support, or those who sided with colonists against the WIC on other matters, could do so because their association with the churches of the Netherlands and their callings and instructions from Reformed councils there conferred a measure of autonomy or separation from government that was unique to colonial clergy.

Clergy often wrote more about the difficulties that they faced overseas than their successes, perhaps because the latter were less common. “Oh wretched ministers in these foreign lands!” wrote Reverend Specht at the height of his troubles with Doncker. His lament was not just for himself, but for colleagues all around the world, whose stories he knew well. His brother was a minister in Asia and his current correspondent a former WIC minister, Henricus Selyns, who would soon go again to America to serve the Dutch community in New York City.<sup>86</sup> If by the end of the seventeenth century they could not find many lasting Dutch achievements, they could at least rejoice in Protestant ones: In a 1697 poem that he wrote for his friend Cotton Mather, Selyns celebrated the advent of

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<sup>86</sup> Specht to Selyns, 25 June 1676, ACA 224:44-49, SAA. For Specht’s brother, see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 10 May 1672, ACA 7:33; and the classis to Specht, 27 Sep 1672, ACA 168:67. Specht compared his problems to those of VOC ministers in his letter to the classis, 26 Apr 1673, ACA 224:41-42.

European law and Christian religion in North America. God had blessed “the Churches of the West,” he wrote. He praised England’s imperial feats and ended with a disingenuous contrast between the bloody conflicts and religious divisions of Europe and the allegedly peaceful New World.<sup>87</sup> If Selyns erased much of the past, if he forgot that he now lived in a conquered colony, he did have an excellent excuse. He had worked both in England and Holland, then in Dutch and English colonies. He corresponded with Specht, Mather, and other clergy of various backgrounds. And despite living in New York, he reported even in the 1690s to the Reformed Church in Amsterdam. In short, Selyns spent his entire career within an international Protestant community that helped him ignore national differences and the affairs of state. With or without the Dutch West India Company, and without any exaggeration, he included himself in a story of successful, enduring Protestant expansion.

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<sup>87</sup> Corwin, ed., *Manual* (4th edition), 735-740.

## CONCLUSION

From 1662 to 1674, when the WIC finally declared bankruptcy, individual company chambers began to bicker with their local Reformed churches over the question of clerical callings: Should the church continue to recruit potential colonial clergy and introduce them to the company or could the company act alone, identifying the personnel that it preferred before bringing them to the church for examination? And who issued the official, written calling? In light of the independence that clergy sometimes exhibited overseas in siding with the WIC's political and economic enemies, the directors were probably seeking greater loyalty and control. They wanted peaceful, pliant clergy. But the churches at home objected to all "innovations" and "novelties" in their dealings with the directors. The Walcheren classis eventually announced that it would not participate in the process at all if any change was made. Owing also to the WIC's financial trouble, church-company relations deteriorated markedly in the final years.<sup>1</sup>

One important purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between the West India Company and the Dutch Reformed Church. Ideologically, financially, and in other ways, I have shown, their fortunes and fates were closely entwined, despite their occasional tug-of-war. In conclusion I will review the major historiographical issues and themes from Chapters One through Six, dealing with loose ends and answering questions

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<sup>1</sup> For Amsterdam, see the minutes of the deputies, 25 Sep 1662, ACA 157:437, and 3 Apr 1663, ACA 158:57, SAA; extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 19 Nov 1663, ACA 165:105; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 30 Jan and 19 Mar 1668, ACA 6:446, 448; minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 8 Mar 1668 and 19 Feb 1671, OWIC 15:3, 252, NA. For Zeeland, see the minutes of the Walcheren classis, 11 Apr 1663 and 20 Nov 1670, AKV 364, GAV; minutes of the Walcheren classis, 2, 16, and 30 Jan, 17 July 1670, 10 Dec 1671, ACW 5:152-155, 165, 204, and 11 Aug 1678, ACW 6:235, ZA. For WIC finances and the problems they caused, see below.

set forth in the introduction about Reformed Christianity and expansion. The Dutch offer a unique opportunity to study the topic because no other seventeenth-century power had a Reformed Church. England's public church was (small-r) reformed, but not to the extent that Puritans and Dutch Calvinists preferred, and the country was too divided then for a strong Anglican presence abroad. Recent studies on religion in English colonies stress the struggles of state religion and the proliferation of non-conformers. Carla Gardina Pestana has even argued, most recently, that religious diversity and the weakness of the Anglican church in America—not functioning at all in some times and places—was ultimately a boon to empire, resulting in a diverse, malleable, cosmopolitan Protestantism, a kind of hybrid religious culture that united disparate peoples.<sup>2</sup>

Why does this literature matter in a study about the Dutch? Because the new focus on religious diversity in the English world is so at odds with an older story about English Puritanism and homogeneity, both of which have made regular appearances in the New Netherland historiography for two hundred years. Unhelpful, inaccurate comparisons and contrasts with New England shaped the still-persistent narrative about tolerance, religious indifference, and the dearth of European institutions in Holland's "commercial empire." New Netherland, in short, has had an inordinate influence on how people view the WIC and early modern Dutch expansion as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Ironically, the Dutch were far better at

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<sup>2</sup> Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). On the diversity of religions and the struggles and weakness of traditional state churches in English colonies, see also Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). For the weak Anglican presence even in Virginia, see Edward L. Bond, *Damned Souls in a Tobacco Colony: Religion in Seventeenth-Century Virginia* (Mercer University Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> See the introduction. For "unhelpful contrasts" and, in some cases, drawing conclusions about the Dutch or Dutch expansion based solely on New Netherland, see also, for example, Macauley, *History*, 302-303; O'Callaghan, *History*, 386-387; Fiske, *Dutch and Quaker Colonies*, 112-115, 193, 195-205; Doyle, *Middle Colonies*, 3-4, 19, 94-95; Ellis, et al., *Short History*, 18, 26-27; Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period*

exporting at least one institution—their public church—than the English. As I have tried to demonstrate throughout this study, the Reformed Church traveled wherever the WIC had a presence, from ships and forts to the smallest and most substantial settlements. The question remains: Was the union of Reformed religion and business beneficial to expansion? Conversely, how did a strong public church hinder the WIC overseas?

First consider circumstances in the Netherlands, where the Reformed Church was certainly an advantage to the expansionist interest. The WIC's bellicosity complemented the war effort at home and drew from fears about Hapsburg power in Europe and around the world. As an international institution in terms of its interests and ties to foreign clergy and universities, the church was part of a large anti-Hapsburg, anti-Catholic coalition and probably would have supported the WIC for that reason alone. The clergy celebrated the company and its successes, viewing it as an instrument for destroying Catholicism and, at the same time, spreading the true religion. Reformed churches and clergy at home took a keen interest in Dutch activities overseas. In fact they often bickered with each other for control of colonial churches: From individual clergy in the Amsterdam classis who could not participate on the Indies committee to the classes and synods that had virtually no say in foreign affairs because their towns and cities did not have a WIC chamber, everyone wanted to be involved. Though the church's diffuse structure complicated the question of oversight, its various councils found ways to work together on key issues, leaving day-to-day concerns in the hands of the powerful Amsterdam and Walcheren classes.<sup>4</sup>

When it comes to defining and understanding the church, one must keep in mind that company directors and merchants were not outsiders. They also had ideological and

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*of American History*, 8th edit., vol. 3 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 71-96; Shorto, *Island*, 85, 96-97, 274-277, 301, 309-311.

<sup>4</sup> Chap 1.

material interests in the fate of international Protestantism, many having immigrated to the Dutch Republic from the south, most having family, friends, or business relations in other countries. Those who served on Reformed consistories, classes, and synods were part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, acting in an official, authoritative capacity as much as any clergy. Though their duties had more to do with charity and church government than theology, their presence and input, combined with the financial benefits that the church enjoyed from the profits of trade, probably encouraged a positive, pious interpretation of activities that people today label secular, even among the clergy. In their writings on the WIC the latter sometimes celebrated the blessings or benefits of commerce and wealth, at the same time warning that, if used improperly, riches could replace God as a kind of idol worship. As individuals and on behalf of the company, the directors donated regularly to Dutch-, English-, and French-speaking deaconries in the Netherlands and, as intermittent deacons, they managed poor relief for the orphans and other family members of their own employees in West Africa and America. Their prayers and written rhetoric revealed very elastic definitions of godliness, suggesting a belief that people served God by working for the WIC or that the directors—because of their alliance with the church—spread Christ’s kingdom even as they engaged in other pursuits. Their participation as lay leaders within the church, which declined in later years, also facilitated efforts to supply their ships and foreign possessions with clergy, books, and other ecclesiastical needs.<sup>5</sup>

The WIC was a large, multi-faceted business, not a simple charity or missionary society, and the directors naturally had to balance religious needs against the company’s financial health. In consultation with the church, for example, they came up with a kind of quota system in the 1640s for determining how many clergy they could afford to send

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<sup>5</sup> Chap. 2.

to each place. For a brief period they also took a small percentage from employee wages to help pay their clergy, just as people at home paid taxes to support the church. But the directors were hardly the neglectful, indifferent “moneyhounds” of some accounts.<sup>6</sup> They demanded quality clergy, worked closely with the church to obtain them, and in some cases even paid for their training and education. They also offered competitive wages, at least before taking into account the high inflation and other significant financial problems in colonial settings. If the WIC had a disproportionate number of young, inexperienced ministers and foreigners, it was not because the directors wanted to get off cheaply, but because established ministers were often unwilling to give up comfortable posts to work abroad. In most cases their interest in foreign affairs and concern for global Protestantism did not extend so far.<sup>7</sup>

The difficulty for directors lay in running a business while simultaneously bearing the responsibilities of a small, scattered state. Without any precedent, they could not really know where their religious duties ended and their responsibilities to investors began, where to locate the line between God and Mammon in an organization that, by its very nature, served both.<sup>8</sup> In a similar dilemma, colonial clergy were virtual servants of Mammon, a different breed of employee than colleagues paid by municipal governments in Europe. They worked for quasi-private companies whose success or failure had significant implications for their own livelihoods and the spread of Reformed religion. In such organizations God and Mammon did not just exist uncomfortably side by side: They were partners. Like the difficult balance that the directors and other WIC officials had to

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. “Moneyhounds” is from van Dillen, “De West-Indische Compagnie,” 157. It is cited approvingly in Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 86.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. 3.

<sup>8</sup> For Christian/Reformed concerns about wealth, see Schama, *Embarrassment*.

maintain between secular and ecclesiastical duties, clergy who worked overseas struggled to understand their relationship to this new kind of state, which was ostensibly subjected to the traditional state at home. They fluctuated between criticism and support, sometimes siding with WIC opponents to condemn alleged greed and neglect, sometimes performing novel tasks that came extremely close to crossing an ambiguous line that was supposed to separate men of their profession from material concerns.<sup>9</sup>

Deciding the degree to which the WIC was willing to fund its religious mission in the Dutch Atlantic—putting a total price tag on religion, so to speak—is impossible now. But it was not cheap. In addition to clerical wages, the company provided lodging, a slave or servant, food and drink, or in place of the latter, a monthly allowance (on top of the wage). It maintained small collections of Bibles and other works for its ships, forts, and colonies, even financing translations and new publications. At the request of the Brazil classis it paid someone to copy and send Holland’s synodal minutes to the colony every year so the church could have an archive of the most recent Reformed decision-making.<sup>10</sup> Other costs included the sacramental bread and wine, horses for those who served in the army, and regular cash disbursements to cover the expenses of ministers who traveled throughout Brazil to organize new consistories, check on existing churches (even if they had ministers of their own), preach at forts and towns that had no permanent clergy, and baptize or administer Communion in places that only had lay preachers. This setup was not wholly exceptional because Reformed classes and synods in Holland also appointed regular visitors to individual churches. But the system that developed in Brazil was more

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<sup>9</sup> For greed, neglect, and clerical criticisms, see Chaps. 5-6. For “novel tasks,” see below.

<sup>10</sup> For salaries and books, see Chaps. 3-5. For synodal minutes, see the extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 6 July 1637, 163:30-32, SAA; the Amsterdam classis to the Brazil classis, 10 Dec 1641, ACA 163:96-99; Dec 1648, ACA 164:24-38; minutes of the deputies, 19 May 1642, ACA 157:74.



than that, not unlike the circuit preaching that Methodists would employ in Great Britain in the following century—an attempt to cover large swaths of territory with few clergy. It could not just have been a cost-cutting measure, for it was expensive. The price tag on a one-month visit to the towns south of Recife by two ministers in 1643 was *f* 330, which would have paid the salary of a permanent minister for three months. At other times the High Council paid individual clergy an extra *f* 72 a year for services to a nearby fort, for example, or set up a monthly fund of *f* 100 to reimburse its circuit preachers.<sup>11</sup>

The annual and biannual classis meetings in Brazil were one of the WIC's most significant ecclesiastical expenses. They brought together every minister and at least one elder from every consistory, no matter how distant from Recife, meaning gatherings of twenty-five people and more. Each of them needed travel money, food, and lodging for about a week. Classes and synods convened at least twenty-three times during the short life of Dutch Brazil. The method of funding them was inconsistent, the company paying the attendees cash, sometimes allowing them to eat with the High Council, using a combination of cash and WIC stores, or even asking merchants to open their homes. With the colony's high inflation, and with so many men, each gathering was potentially thousands of guilders. One year the council had too little money left in the treasury and had to cancel the synod, which caused a minor scandal at home. Eventually it cut costs by withholding the subsidy from anyone who resided at Recife. Local clergy and elders were unhappy, but the council stuck with its resolution.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 19 Mar 1637, 26 Nov 1640, 8 June, 31 Oct 1641, 11 Feb 1642, 27 Feb, 2 Mar, 1 May, 11 June 1643, 1 and 25 July 1644, 12 Apr 1645, 18 Mar 1650, 12 June 1651, OWIC 68-75.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 Feb 1637, 22 Apr 1639, 2 Oct 1641, 2 and 10 Feb, 30 July 1644, 23 Feb 1645, 11 and 13 July, 30 Nov, 19 Dec 1645; Maurits and council to the XIX 29 Apr 1643, OWIC 58:268; the council to the XIX 13 Feb 1645, OWIC 60:10; Franciscus Plante's report, 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:40. For the classis or synod meeting twenty-three times in Brazil, see Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church*, 86.

Turning to merchants for assistance, once canceling the synod, refusing to pay the members of the Recife consistory for something that did not impose extra costs on them anyway: The struggling company found various ways to shift its financial burden, though still shouldering most of it. One time it tried and failed to save money by announcing that it would no longer provide free housing to any employee. The clergy (and some elders and deacons) raised such a fuss, threatening to leave Brazil *en masse*, that the policy was soon reversed.<sup>13</sup> But the WIC stood its ground on other issues. For example, ministers in Brazil and New Netherland complained that, because of inflation, their living allowance was insufficient, requiring them to dip into their main salary, which was supposed to be saved. Although the company agreed to increase the allowance for clergy with children, it repeatedly refused a general raise. In Brazil the directors said that costs would go down when trade and supply routes normalized, which never happened because of the war, then the Portuguese revolt, with few years of peace in between. A shortage of cash meant that salaries were sometimes paid in kind or just credited to individual accounts, not paid at all for long periods. Only when Reverend Petrus Ongena traveled to Holland in 1650 and made a personal appeal to the directors did they relent, settling his debts and tripling the living allowance for Recife, where inflation was the most severe.<sup>14</sup> As New Netherland's population increased in the 1650s, local congregations and new municipal governments gradually took over clerical pay, sometimes in exchange for the WIC's dropping a certain

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<sup>13</sup> The XIX to Maurits and council, 18 Apr 1642, OWIC 9:1-25, NA; 29 Oct 1643, OWIC 9:134, 141; minutes of the Brazil council, 20 and 22 Aug, 2 Sep 1642, OWIC 69; "verzoekschrift," 21 Aug 1642, OWIC 57:227.

<sup>14</sup> Jacobus Dapper to the Zeeland chamber, 30 May 1637, OWIC 52:70, NA; 20 Mar 1638, OWIC 53:46; the Brazil classis to the XIX, 4 Mar 1638, OWIC 53:4; the Amsterdam classis to the Brazil classis, 17 Oct 1639, ACA 163:56-58, SAA; the XIX to Maurits and council, 1 July 1640, OWIC 8:313, 317-318, 330; Petrus Doornick to the Zeeland chamber, 25 Sep 1642, OWIC 57:50; minutes of the Brazil council, 3 May 1645, 1 June 1651, 17 Apr 1652, OWIC 70, 75; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 7 Dec 1648, 7 Mar 1650, ACA 5:108-110, 145; minutes of the deputies, 5 July, 12 Sep 1650, 6 Feb 1651, ACA 157:235, 248-249, 264.

tax, for example. The company still paid a portion of some salaries and continued to give the housing allowance to clergy in New Amsterdam.<sup>15</sup>

Church facilities imposed additional costs. In Brazil the company did not have to construct many new buildings because it could always just commandeer them from the Portuguese. But it did build or contribute to some, and it had to make repairs and employ carpenters and other laborers. Chapels were constructed in Brazil at Mauritstad, Cabo St. Agostinho, Goiana, and St. Antônio do Cabo. In New Netherland they were built at New Amsterdam, Rensselaerswyck, Flatbush, and Flatlands. In other towns people probably just worshipped in homes, barns, cabins, and the like. The company gave *f* 4,000 for the Huguenot chapel in Mauritstad, at least *f* 1,000 and *f* 2,000 for those at St. Agostinho and St. Antônio, and an unknown amount for Goiana's. Some funds came from company coffers, but the WIC also found ways to supplement its money. Most famously, the High Council obtained another *f* 4,000 for the Huguenot chapel from a Jewish merchant, fined for blasphemy. For the rest, the company imposed temporary duties on sugar exports and consumption taxes on items like wine and beer in areas with new churches, the revenue earmarked for construction. Any additional funds had to be raised locally through private subscription.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, the New Amsterdam chapel was partly funded by subscription but mostly by the WIC (about *f* 8,000). The *patroon* Kiliaen van Rensselaer paid for the chapel at Rensselaerswyck. Years later his son, the new *patroon*, paid *f* 1,000 for a larger

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<sup>15</sup> *ERSNY* 1:296, 324, 328-329, 423-424; Jacobs, *Colony*, 154-155; Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 188-189. On the WIC's allowance for New Amsterdam clergy, see also the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 11 Feb 1669, OWIC 15:81-82, NA.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 28 July 1636, 11 Sep 1638, 21 May 1639, 4 Apr, 6 Aug, 2 Nov 1641, 6 Feb, 18 Mar, 5 and 16 Apr, 20 May, 1 Sep, 9 Oct 1642, 2 Jan, 5 Feb 1643, 23 June 1644, OWIC 68-70, NA; Jodocus a Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 10 Sep 1640, OWIC 55:132. For the Jewish fine and the Huguenot chapel, see Schalkwijk, *The Reformed Church*, 262-263.

building, acquiring an additional *f* 1,500 in criminal fines at the local court. The directors also sometimes contributed pulpits and bells.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, the company incurred great costs from institutions that were not strictly ecclesiastical but still involved the church: schools, poor relief (including the care of orphans), and Brazil's hospital. Schoolmasters were often just *ziekentroosters* with added responsibilities and a small raise, the company also paying for primers, paper, and other supplies. Parents only had to contribute if they were not employees.<sup>18</sup> Deacons cared for the poor, as they did everywhere, but their duties in Brazil were greater than normal because the never-ending conflict left numerous widows and orphans and filled the hospital that they administered to overflowing. The typical means of obtaining alms through door-to-door collections and in deaconry boxes that hung throughout Recife were never enough. Lands and rents that formerly supported the Catholic priesthood were redirected to the deacons, though the harmful effects of war on trade probably made them much less lucrative than before. The deaconry also received money in wills, from fines imposed on employees, a small percentage of prizes captured at sea, occasional taxes and tolls, and from the directors and churches in the Netherlands. The High Council paid any additional costs directly, either in cash or kind, just as governments at home gave regular subsidies to their deacons. Already by 1644, before the Portuguese revolt exacerbated the situation, the WIC had disbursed *f* 60,000.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Chap. 6, as well as *ERSNY* 1:157, 169, 344, 372-373, 495; and De Jong, *Dutch Reformed*, 28-34.

<sup>18</sup> The Brazil classis to the XIX, 4 Mar 1638, OWIC 53:4, NA; minutes of the Brazil council, 11 Mar 1637, 18 Mar 1650, 22 July 1651, OWIC 68, 74-75; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 8 Sep 1642, OWIC 25:44; "List of books," 9 June 1645, OWIC 60:80; minutes of the Brazil classis, 18 July 1644, OWIC 59:43.

<sup>19</sup> Schalkwijk, *The Reformed Church*, 121-128. For the deacons' being in charge of the hospital, which was abnormal, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 1 Feb 1636, OWIC 68, NA; Servaes Carpentier's report, 11 June 1636, OWIC 51:25. For fines, prizes, and money from the directors or churches of the Netherlands, see, for example, the minutes of the council, 11 May 1637, 22 Mar 1638, 27 Jan 1642, 20 Apr 1652, OWIC

Even without Brazil's deaconry bill, the price of religion in the Dutch Atlantic was steep: regular donations to the churches at home, salaries, allowances, slaves, and housing for hundreds of colonial clergy, translations and libraries, travel expenses, classis meetings, church facilities, and some of the other costs mentioned above must have come to a large sum. If the WIC tried to save money and find alternate sources of funding, it was just balancing its financial well-being against its ecclesiastical responsibilities and oft-proclaimed desires to spread the true religion. And the choices it made, like refusing to pay the Recife elders and ministers the same stipend as others for attending meetings in the city where they lived, were not unreasonable. Not caring about costs would have meant an even shorter path to bankruptcy, a surer way to ruin whatever hopes the church had in America. The clergy's occasional disregard or lack of sympathy for the company's financial dilemma was understandable, of course, because they endured real economic suffering. But many things that they disliked were realities that everyone faced, no matter one's place in society. The directors did not neglect the church as much as they drove the WIC into the ground and carried everything, including the church, with them.<sup>20</sup>

Pay problems contributed to the tensions between church and company in the Netherlands in the years before bankruptcy. As early as 1649 rumors began to spread that the WIC would not be able to satisfy its debts, which put a damper on clerical recruitment. More and more ministers wanted to serve the VOC, not the WIC. As some clergy came home from Africa and America with thousands of guilders credited to their accounts, the directors indeed had difficulty paying them in a timely manner. In 1654 the Dutch States General ordered a freeze on all salaries as it tried to help the company sort

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68-69, 75; minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 28 July 1636, OWIC 14:163-164; Income and Expenditures Book, 11 Oct 1646, AKA 149:102, SAA.

<sup>20</sup> For neglect, see the introduction and Chaps. 5 and 6.

through the increasing financial morass. Many former employees received bonds with a small interest payment on the principal debt. Though people were eventually paid, it took years in some cases.<sup>21</sup> Similar issues with WIC widows and orphans, who were thrown on Reformed deaconries at home, only increased tensions. When widows tried to collect their husbands' back pay they often faced the same slow process and asked the church to represent them before the company or help them financially for a time.<sup>22</sup> Twelve orphans from Brazil were divided among the different WIC chambers, who conferred them (with minor support) on municipal authorities. Along with the children sent to the orphanage in Amsterdam, for example, the directors submitted 1,304 guilders-worth of coins and other gold and silver items. The Zeeland deacons at first enjoyed little support for their colonial orphans, but eventually the company contributed some West African gold.<sup>23</sup>

For all its ecclesiastical expenses the company enjoyed many benefits. Reformed religion provided a number of theological and ideological traditions useful to early Dutch goals in the Atlantic world. To justify and contextualize the WIC's violent work, clergy and others drew from an older, international Protestant discourse about lawful resistance to Catholic tyranny. Like other Calvinists, they leaned heavily on Old Testament themes and stories and viewed themselves as God's covenant people, a modern-day Israel, which

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<sup>21</sup> For "1649," see the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 3 May 1649, ACA 5:120, SAA; J. Walreven to the Amsterdam classis, 8 July 1649, ACA 224:8-10. For the States General, see the extracts from the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 10 Aug 1654, ACA 164:172. For clergy who had trouble collecting their wages, see the minutes of the synodal deputies, 11 Sep 1654, ASSL 53, GA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 2 Oct 1657, ACA 6:78; minutes of the XIX, Sep 1659, ASG V 12564.42, NA; minutes of the Haags Besoigne, 18 and 27 Apr 1662, OWIC 6:45, 54. For "bonds," see the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 19 July 1663, OWIC 28:2. See also the minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 29 July 1669, ACA 6:483; minutes of the Amsterdam chamber, 2 and 9 Sep 1669, OWIC 15:129, 132, 16 June 1672, OWIC 16:64.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, the minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 20 June 1658, 26 June and 17 Nov 1659, OWIC 27:12, 40, 51-52, NA; minutes of the Amsterdam classis, 6 July 1655, ACA 5:386, 1 May 1656, 5 May and 29 July 1659, 2 Sep 1659, ACA 6:13, 142, 150, 161, SAA; minutes of the XIX, 25 Aug 1659, ASG V 12564.42, NA; minutes of the Walcheren classis, 2 Dec 1660, ACW 4:157, ZA; minutes of the North Holland synod, 9 Aug 1661, ASNH 5, NHA.

<sup>23</sup> States General resolutions, 29 Oct 1654, ASG I:4846, NA; renteboek, 1655, ADA 65:32, SAA; minutes of the Zeeland chamber, 22 Jan 1660, 8 Sep, 13 Oct, 8 Dec 1661, 23 Mar 1662, OWIC 27:57, 91-98, 105.

bestowed a sense of righteous piety even on the bloodiest Dutch activities in Africa and America. Ministers and lay preachers used the Heidelberg Catechism and other Reformed literature to teach men how to die properly. In daily and bi-weekly religious services they upheld WIC authority and helped maintain discipline among sailors and soldiers, many of whom adhered to other faiths. Prayers and sermons were incorporated in most gatherings and ceremonies, including public punishments, for example, or at the swearing in of some new general or governor. People were reminded to be obedient, do their duty, and eschew smuggling and other behaviors that might damage the company and incur God's wrath. In that regard the interests of secular and ecclesiastical officers often overlapped.<sup>24</sup>

Missionary work had costs and benefits both. In a very broad sense the company's aims were evangelical simply because it sought to establish Dutch power and influence in Catholic and "heathen" territories formerly devoid of Protestants or downright hostile to them. Planting a fort or colony naturally meant planting the church somewhere that it had not existed before, thus spreading the Lord's vineyard. But the Dutch were not content to carve out small zones of worship just for merchants and company personnel, as historians have often maintained.<sup>25</sup> WIC plans were far more grandiose, involving the seizure and transformation—the reformation—of Iberian imperial possessions. In Brazil, where the company replaced Catholic worship with Reformed, pressured colonists to join the new public church, and employed full-time missionaries, schoolmasters, and other lay clergy among the Tupi Indians, one sees the religious program that the directors probably would have implemented in places like São Tomé, Luanda, Chile, and elsewhere if their resources had equaled their enthusiasm—if certain attempted conquests had not failed or

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<sup>24</sup> Chap. 4.

<sup>25</sup> Introduction, fn. 22.

if they had retained their successes longer than they did. To the ecclesiastical costs listed above must be added the personnel, publications, and schools associated with the thirty-year Tupi mission. If for no loftier reason, Dutch writers sometimes suggested that they wanted converts because shared religion was a bond between allies and a unifying factor in society, ensuring greater loyalty and security. Tupi conversion also benefited the WIC in the sense that the Tupi provided military aid and other services.<sup>26</sup>

The absence of any considerable missionary program beyond Brazil's cannot be attributed to indifference or the supposed "divorce" between religious and commercial concerns among the seventeenth-century Dutch.<sup>27</sup> The Brazil episode belies such claims. And this project has shown just how tangled religion, trade, and empire could be. While WIC overreaching and financial difficulties must have also had something to do with the lack of missions, any effort to explain the phenomenon by looking only at Dutch attitudes and concerns—as opposed to local factors and indigenous agency—would be extremely Eurocentric. Most Africans showed little interest in Protestantism and the Dutch could do nothing about it, though they sent clergy to the Kongolese court and established schools in their forts on the Gold Coast at least twice. Tropical diseases also limited their power there. In contrast to the Tupi, who sought European allies to assist them in their struggle against the Portuguese, New Netherland Indians only needed the Dutch to trade—and, in fact, they kept the newcomers at arm's length. Reverend Megapolensis tried to compile a vocabulary for the purpose of eventually preaching and teaching in the Mohawk language, but his potential proselytes, he complained, repeatedly gave different names for

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<sup>26</sup> Chap. 5.

<sup>27</sup> For indifference and "divorce," see the introduction. The latter comes from Riemersma, *Religious Factors*, 25-33. In the same vein, see George Smith's "godly afterthought" in *Religion and Trade*, 17.



the same objects.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Reverend Basseliers wrote from the Wild Coast about thirty years later that local Indians would not let him get close. They sometimes sat through prayers and sermons in Dutch with the regular congregation, yet they lived far away and refused further instruction. When they communicated, the two peoples used a pidgin: no colonist could speak the indigenous language, nor could Indians speak Dutch. Basseliers once brought a boy to live in his home and began teaching him letters and prayers, but the child's mother soon took him away. Older Indians explained that they had never learned European languages because their own mothers, when they were young, had not allowed it. When he offered to build a home next to his and invited Indians to live there and learn Dutch ways, they refused. And they did not let Europeans live in their villages.<sup>29</sup>

The struggle that WIC officials had in balancing secular and ecclesiastical needs was mirrored in different ways by the clergy. Employed by a joint-stock company, often working in harsh, diverse environments, they had to fill new roles and expand on normal ones in unusual ways. The consistory in Recife, for example, had extra duties pertaining to engagements, marriages, and other relationships, and it supervised the local hospital.<sup>30</sup> The church was closely associated with these things at home, too, so the expansion of its responsibilities was perhaps predictable in a place where Dutch traditions and institutions were still developing. In keeping with the view in ecclesiastical circles that the company was the vehicle through which God established his work in America, individual ministers sometimes served the company even in secular capacities.<sup>31</sup> Most simply, they reported

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<sup>28</sup> For the Tupi/Mohawk comparison, see Meuwese, "Dutch Calvinism"; Meuwese "For the Peace and Well-being of the Country." For the vocabulary experience, see also Megapolensis, "Short Account."

<sup>29</sup> Basseliers to the Walcheren classis, 16 Jan 1676, in Bijlage V, J.M. van der Linde, *Surinaamse Suikerheren en Hun Kerk: Plantagecolonie en handelskerk ten tijde van Johannes Basseliers, predikant en planter in Suriname, 1667-1689* (Wageningen: H. Veenman en Zonen N.V., 1966), 198-202.

<sup>30</sup> Chap. 5.

<sup>31</sup> The Brazil classis to the XIX, 4 Mar 1638, OWIC 53:4, NA.

regularly to colonial governors or the directors in Europe about the availability of lumber and fresh water in the places where they labored, the quality of the soil and its potential for livestock, sugar, manioc, and other agriculture, the existence of salt pans and mineral deposits, unfamiliar plant life and its potential uses, and the current quantity of supplies like medicine and gun powder. They shared their opinions on divisive issues like whether the company ought to relinquish its monopoly on trade, and they acted as deputies from the colonies to the directors, the States General, and the Prince of Orange on political and military matters. Sometimes serving in an official capacity and sometimes offering their views unsolicited, they were exceptional emissaries because of their educations, writing ability, and frequent movement and contacts throughout the Atlantic world.<sup>32</sup>

Clergy only wandered into questionable territory when some activity caused them to neglect the work of the church, and even that was allowed at times. The most clearly unacceptable labor or pursuit was for personal gain, as opposed to something that at least benefited the company or community. Reverend Schagen provided the best example: His plantation in Brazil profited no one but himself and kept him from visiting the members and performing other duties even on Sundays, so he was forced to return to Holland. On the other hand, Reverend van der Poel once accepted a political commission to travel to the distant province of Maranhão with a WIC officer to scout its condition and economic potential. He canoed “66 miles above the furthest plantation” on the Itapecuru River and later reported in Recife on the surrounding lands and unhealthy climate. Absent from his

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<sup>32</sup> For Brazil, see the report of Cornelis van der Poel, 3 Aug 1634, 703:50, SADEV; Vincent Soler, *Seventeen Letters*, 53; Jodocus à Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 28 July 1638, OWIC 53:116; the Brazil council to the Zeeland chamber, 25 May 1639, OWIC 54:132; minutes of the Brazil council, 15 May 1643, OWIC 70. For Africa, see Nicolaes Ketel to Johan Ketel (extracted for the States General), 10 June 1643, ASG V, 12564.15, NA; “Extract,” 10 July 1643, ASG V, 12564.12; the XIX to the directors of the southern district of Africa, 30 Nov 1644, OWIC 9:196 (Reverend Jacobus Beth van der Burch).

post for weeks, the Recife consistory complained to the council, but van der Poel was not disciplined.<sup>33</sup> In New Netherland, Reverend Megapolensis served as a kind of all-purpose agent for Kiliaen van Rensselaer, delivering messages, advising local leaders, witnessing deeds, and arbitrating disputes. His colleague, Reverend Drisius, represented the WIC as ambassador to Virginia (because he spoke English). However much the church preferred that clergy avoid non-ecclesiastical tasks, their knowledge and skills were too valuable to secular rulers in colonial settings.<sup>34</sup>

Reverends van der Poel, Stetten, and Kemp were all involved in mining, which was celebrated at the time as a godly enterprise because it helped fund the war against Catholicism and the Indian mission. Stetten came close to crossing the line of acceptable clerical behavior. In fact, had he found a gold deposit, he probably would have left his vocation in the church. One of the earliest, longest-serving ministers in Brazil, he was almost dismissed during the reformation of 1636-1637 for unknown reasons, turning to mining during the brief period before his reinstatement. He was familiar with the work already, claiming to have the essential “learning” and a knowledge of minerals—perhaps related to the fact that he was a German refugee and some of Europe’s important mining centers were in the Holy Roman Empire. When he requested books, he knew what titles he needed and he asked for equipment from “Germany” (*duytslandt*).<sup>35</sup> As a refugee, his relationship with the directors was unique. They were not just his employers but, in a

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<sup>33</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 15 and 20 May 1643, OWIC 70, NA.

<sup>34</sup> Chap. 3. For Megapolensis, see also Gerald de Jong, “Dominie Johannes Megapolensis: Minister to New Netherland,” *New York Historical Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (Jan. 1968): 6-47.

<sup>35</sup> Jodocus à Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 23 July 1644, OWIC 59:93, NA; Stetten to the XIX, 24 June 1645, OWIC 60:75-76. For his involvement with mining during his period of limbo, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 7 Dec 1637, OWIC 68. In various of his letters he also mentions having been to the mine seven years before. For his giving up the clerical vocation (perhaps), see his letter of 24 June 1645, when he asked the directors to grant him and his family permanent charge over the mine. He would make it his “office and work,” he wrote.

very real sense, his patrons, and he groveled before them more than others, connecting the WIC's work with the work of God in interesting ways. He had "nothing left in the world" and must "begin here anew," he wrote. He was their unworthy, humble, "faithful servant," always prepared to demonstrate his gratitude. He prayed for their health and happiness, thanked God for their success, and promised to serve them until his death. In the perfect illustration of the partnership between piety and trade, demonstrating none of the Protestant Reformation's anxiety about church décor and idolatry, he affixed a large company logo to the new chapel at Cabo St. Agostinho. In doing so, he said, he intended to honor the WIC and proclaim the directors' first church in that region.<sup>36</sup>

The same partnership was apparent in Stetten's work at the mine. Seven years after his reinstatement, the WIC's finances growing worse daily, the High Council asked him (or agreed to his request) to return to the place where he had previously searched for gold. The council handed him the perfect opportunity: He could serve his family, the company, and the "fatherland" at the same time. With a group of soldiers, miners, Tupi Indians, and African slaves, he traveled to his old site and, after calling on God with "folded hands" and "bowed knees," began to dig, sending occasional samples of ore to the council, which shipped them to the Netherlands. Later recounting his prayer to the directors, he asked that "God would ... animate me with the Holy Spirit and lead me in this work: to begin, arrange, and execute it for the praise and honor of the Holy Trinity, for you and your posterity's benefit and profit, that the congregation of Jesus Christ be assisted here and in all lands and the enemies of God and his word be destroyed." Stetten hoped to afford them great riches, he wrote. After his miners and slaves had cleared one

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 9 Aug 1635, OWIC 50:124; 12 Dec 1635, OWIC 50:150; 16 July 1636, OWIC 51:85; 28 July 1638, OWIC 53:116; 10 Sep 1640, OWIC 55:132.

promising vein, “I went with everyone into the mountain and exhorted them to thank God Almighty with me, from their hearts, that he would continue to bless us with these gifts.” He tried to have his motley crew sing a “hymn of praise” before setting them to work on a new vein. Since many of them probably could not speak or read Dutch, theirs could not have been a very rousing refrain.<sup>37</sup>

In light of Schagen’s plantation and the complaints about van der Poel’s secular assignment, Stetten’s mining, which occupied him for at least five months, provoked surprisingly little controversy. There must have been some grumbling, for he wrote that people wondered “if it is lawful for a minister to do such things.” Yet the church covered for him by adding his old post to the route of the traveling ministers, visited every other week, and neither of the classes that he attended before and after the mining adventure brought it up. He responded to critics by describing the godly uses of gold and silver: “I say it is lawful for any man to provide the means of waging a righteous war against the unbelieving enemies of God and his Holy word, for the protection of the congregation of Christ.” Precious metals supplied physical “nourishment,” sustained the true religion and congregation of God, and again, enabled the WIC to wage its “righteous war against our enemies and God’s.”<sup>38</sup> Stetten grew more personally involved in the war after the start of the revolt, when the council asked him to lead a contingent of Tapuya Indians against the

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<sup>37</sup> Stetten to the Brazil council, 1645, OWIC 60:86, NA; Stetten to the XIX, 24 June 1645, OWIC 60:75-76. For his involvement with the mine, see also the minutes of the council, 28 Jan 1644, 3-8 and 21 Feb, 5-6 Apr, 12 May 1645, OWIC 70; the raad to the XIX, 13 Feb 1645, OWIC 60:10; the XIX to the council, 6 July 1645, OWIC 9:236-238.

<sup>38</sup> Stetten to the Zeeland chamber, 23 July 1644, OWIC 69:93, NA. For the church covering his post while he was away, see the minutes of the Brazil council, 25 July 1644, 27 Feb 1645, OWIC 70.

rebels in Rio Grande. He said that he was “entirely willing” to undertake the assignment and “whatever else the company’s service might require.”<sup>39</sup>

Reverend Kemp’s mining experience was less dubious than Stetten’s, but almost as confused in its objectives and still very different, of course, from clerical work in the Netherlands. Also a foreigner (an Englishman), Kemp was asked to travel to the province of Cearà almost four years after Stetten’s failed experiment. Kemp did not go as the head of his expedition, but accompanied an elder in the Recife consistory, Matthias Beck, as assistant and translator. With soldiers, miners, slaves, and Indians, they sought to reclaim the province for the Dutch, construct a fort, and pursue rumors of precious metals. Kemp also baptized and enlisted Indians in the area, which legitimized his involvement. Yet he was not just a missionary. Besides preaching, baptizing, and performing marriages, he questioned Indians about conditions in the region, delivered presents and messages from Beck, and pressured leaders to locate old, forgotten mines. He also accompanied Beck to inspect them, once located, and the main Indian town served as a meeting place to collect minerals. When Kemp was away from the fort in pursuit of converts, Beck appointed a lay preacher to offer the evening prayers and ask for a divine blessing on their “designs” in Cearà. Once again demonstrating an ability to make any endeavor godly, Beck claimed that the mine was really for the Indians: “this work ... will be for their preservation and prosperity,” he told Kemp. Although they now go “naked and bear, without clothing,” the mine would supply an “abundance” of every necessity. They could labor in it and provide other services to the Dutch, who would reward them fairly, Beck asserted.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Minutes of the Brazil council, 11 and 25 July 1645, OWIC 70, NA. See also the council to the XIX, 2 Aug 1645, OWIC 60:130; Stetten to the council, 1 Sep 1645, OWIC 60:210.

<sup>40</sup> Matthias Beck journals, 20 Mar to 3 May, 23 July to 9 Sep 1649, OWIC 65:77 and 106. For “designs” and all other quotations, see 14 Apr 1649. See also Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 220.

Despite the tensions and difficult choices that arose when the Dutch combined religious, political, and economic goals in a single institution like the WIC, they did not always draw neat lines between the secular and spiritual. Serving God by serving the company, spreading Christ's kingdom through commerce, righteous warfare, righteous mining—clearly, they could see anything as a pious undertaking. Whether that was true of others, too, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. But if a uniquely positive attitude toward work and business developed in northwestern Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, beginning in Holland, the union of commercial and clerical interests in Reformed consistories and joint-stock companies probably had something to do with it.<sup>41</sup> The church tried to hold its clergy to a high standard of plain living and keep them focused on their duties in the community, just as it taught austerity and social, religious responsibility to merchants. The language of separation existed within Christianity and had existed for hundreds of years: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s,” and most famously, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”<sup>42</sup> When they tried, Christians had never quite known how to satisfy such charges. With broad, inclusive ideas about what constituted a godly endeavor, in an era when church and state were still inseparable, it was especially difficult to know where God’s work ended and the service of Mammon began. Life under a large company in a foreign land only added to the problem, creating new quasi-religious responsibilities, new ways to serve a state that was so much more than a state.

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<sup>41</sup> See the introduction. One of the most recent advocates of this argument (about changing attitudes) is McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity*. Similarly, for capitalism as a cultural phenomenon, see Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Matt. 22:21; Matt. 6:24, KJV.

Despite the many services that clergy provided the WIC and the ideological and other benefits from partnering with the church, at times the relationship also caused major headaches for the company and created obstacles to the imperial project in general. The same flexibility that allowed people to conflate war, trade, and mining with ecclesiastical work was used against the WIC when some unwanted policy or economic failure incited the righteous ire of opponents and injured parties. Unpopular governors could easily fill the historic role of Spanish-Catholic tyrants; financial, military, and other troubles soon became evidence of divine wrath and the spiritual depravity of those who first endorsed unsuccessful policies (i.e., the directors). Drawing upon a tradition of reform movements in the Netherlands—most importantly the *nadere reformatie*—colonial clergy often added their voices to the cacophony of discontent. Sometimes they inserted themselves in political and economic debates, sometimes they criticized rulers who, for example, would not combat sin as vigorously as some wanted. The clergy's social authority and callings and instructions from the Reformed Church at home conferred a degree of independence and acted as a magnet for malcontents who had nowhere else to turn, which is likely why the directors sought more control over clerical callings in the 1660s and 1670s.<sup>43</sup>

To be clear, religious rhetoric and combative clergy did not scuttle the West India Company. Its troubles had more to do with the immense cost of waging war, its late entry into the Atlantic world, unfavorable climates in many of the places that the Dutch tried to establish themselves, and prosperity and stability at home, which meant that there were fewer people trying to leave the Netherlands than other European countries. To the extent that policies like the monopoly stifled growth, they did not last beyond the 1630s, and they had little to do with one's faith, despite what the WIC's critics argued at the time. To

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<sup>43</sup> Chap. 6. For the WIC seeking more control over callings/instructions, see the first paragraph, above.



accept claims of neglect—at least insofar as they involve religion—is to accept a biased seventeenth-century interpretation. In fact, the Reformed Church was sometimes culpable for problems attributed solely to the WIC. Calvinist concerns about heterodoxy and non-conformity injured the company and hindered expansion in three ways: They limited the number of clergy who served abroad, erected barriers to missionary work, and created an intolerant atmosphere that divided colonists and reduced settlement.

First consider the occasional clerical vacancies in Dutch Atlantic possessions. If the directors had not worried about containing costs and generating profits they could have anticipated deaths and shortcomings by sending more clergy in advance—rather than just staying on top of current needs, as they did. However, shortcomings often had little to do with them. Ministers sometimes died prematurely and went home early with injuries, leaving colleagues with greater burdens than before. Rapid military expansion also stretched them thin at times, at least until the directors could catch up with the latest conquest. Yet the church was a proponent of the company's martial activities. Given the time it took to send word about vacancies, then to find new personnel, the company was always a bit behind. The churches of the Netherlands could have helped out by relaxing their grip on colonial religion and allowing colleagues overseas to conduct examinations and make appointments from among the colonial population, but they refused to permit it, fearing that unorthodox doctrines and practices would infiltrate the church if they ever lost control of it. So much power did they exercise, talented clergy like David à Doreslaer and Fredricus Kessler had to return early to Holland to defend themselves when their actions (writing the Tupi catechism and organizing a synod without permission) raised career-ending questions about their loyalty to the Reformed faith. Similarly, the churches

at home investigated and recalled Wilhelmus Grasmeer and other clergy with dubious pasts, men who strayed outside the usual channels, even though in Grasmeer's case his congregation in New Netherland liked him and his controversy had nothing to do with skill or knowledge. Rather, he flouted religious authority.<sup>44</sup>

The Reformed Church hindered missionary work in a number of ways. Quashing Doreslaer's much-needed catechism because of its omissions and possible mistranslations, despite the absence of certain Christian words and concepts in Tupi, as Doreslaer tried to explain in his defense, is one example of the obstacles that missionaries faced because of the fears and control of their colleagues at home. And his was not the only book that was suppressed over the years.<sup>45</sup> The church set a high, inflexible standard for conversion, as Reverend Beaumont experienced when he wrote home excitedly about recent baptisms on Curaçao and received a mild rebuke: Adult slaves and Indians must make a confession of faith before baptism; children cannot be baptized until their parents abandon "heathendom" and embrace the Christian lifestyle in its entirety, *even if parents were previously baptized by Catholics*. Beaumont's apology again shows how submissive colonial clergy had to be. They obviously worried about their future careers.<sup>46</sup>

Equally significant to the question of missions and the church's own barriers was the lack of Reformed classes and synods outside Brazil. There the Tupi mission had only begun in earnest after the classis was organized in 1636, which was no coincidence. Because of printing, translation, travel costs, and countless other issues, evangelical undertakings required intensive planning and coordination. But the various ecclesiastical

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<sup>44</sup> Chaps. 1, 3, and 5.

<sup>45</sup> Chap. 3. The books of Reverends Soler (Brazil) and Megapolensis (New Netherland) were also quashed.

<sup>46</sup> Chap. 6; the Amsterdam classis to Beaumont, 9 July 1661, ACA 157:425, SAA. For the Reformed Church's high standard, see also Jacobs, *Colony*, 172-176.

controversies of the Brazil period turned the churches at home against the idea of colonial classes, and they refused to sanction them afterward. By not allowing the church in New Netherland to organize itself locally when it finally grew and obtained enough clergy, the Amsterdam classis inadvertently robbed its colleagues of one tool that might have made a dent in Indian apathy and resistance. Instead, missionary work was left to individual ministers. As I described above, they sometimes took up the cause in their own spheres of influence, as their instructions required, yet they had little choice but to quit when indigenous peoples showed no interest.<sup>47</sup> Overall the young Dutch Reformed Church was not equipped for major missionary activity in most of the places where the company had a presence. The church did not have the requisite traditions and institutions; it permitted none of the flexibility and independence that made Jesuits successful, for example. From the WIC's founding and first ventures overseas, probably because of the recent Calvinist-Arminian dispute, the church in the Netherlands harbored a rigid and controlling attitude that did not begin to characterize (and dampen) Catholic missions until after the Chinese rites controversy in the eighteenth century.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, consider how the church's social goals and animosity toward other sects decreased the Dutch population overseas, fomented religious tension, and contributed in other ways to the difficulties and deficiencies listed before. One of the primary goals of Reformed consistories in every locale was to cut down on sexual misconduct and rid the populace of "foul" women, as one minister put it. Churches in Brazil, Curaçao, and New Netherland all investigated single, suspicious women and in many cases instigated legal proceedings to return them to Holland. Clergy constantly preached against them. Though

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> For Jesuit flexibility and the Chinese rites controversy, see Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

some rulers resented and resisted it, others did not, and even the former occasionally had to bow to ecclesiastical pressure.<sup>49</sup> Reverend Schagen's deportation from Brazil in 1637 demonstrated a similar disregard for population needs. The consistory pressured the High Council to remove him from the colony even if he gave up the cloth and became a private sugar planter, which was desperately needed in order to increase the number of loyal subjects (i.e., non-Portuguese) living in the countryside. Dutch colonies always struggled to attract women, families, and other settlers, yet consistories often pushed people in the other direction. They may not have been devout Calvinists, but in time they could have at least strengthened the WIC's foothold in the Americas. Ultimately that would have been better for the church, too.

Much more significant than the trickle of prostitutes and other lawbreakers and troublemakers forced from Dutch colonies was the impact of religious tension and intolerance, both heightened by the Reformed Church. Calvinist ideologies justified the invasion of Brazil in the first place; then, once Dutch power was established, the clergy stirred up widespread anti-Catholic sentiment among the invaders. The WIC instituted a new public church, took Catholic buildings and other property that formerly supported the Catholic priesthood, deported Jesuits and other priests who appeared to plot against Dutch rule, and typically did not allow new priests into the colony, all of which stirred Portuguese resentment and religious fears. Seven years of relative tolerance or (perhaps more accurately) religious ambiguity under Governor Maurits could not atone for such grievances. When it appeared after the Treaty of the Hague and Maurits's departure that the directors intended an even more radical reformation, Portuguese colonists could no

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<sup>49</sup> Chaps. 4-6. For New Netherland, see also Linda Biemer, "Criminal Law and Women in New Amsterdam and Early New York," in *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers*, ed. Nancy Anne McClure Zeller (New Netherland Publishing, 1991), 73-82.

longer brook Dutch occupation. Thus the church contributed to the revolt, the eventual loss of Brazil, and the company's subsequent financial dilemma.<sup>50</sup>

In New Netherland the church's unbending attitude and intolerance was manifest in episodes like the "alhier" debate, when the Amsterdam classis, for the sake of Lutheran colonists, would not omit the offending word from a baptismal formulary to which it had only recently been added, even though the old formulary was still used in some Reformed churches. The Dutch persecuted Quakers, suppressed Lutheran worship in the hopes of driving them to the public church, and deported several dissidents, including a Lutheran minister. Whether these activities dampened settlement (beyond the deportations) is unclear. The new generation of directors certainly worried about the possibility, although their more liberal outlook—perhaps influenced by the Brazil fiasco—may have mitigated whatever qualms potential migrants felt. In any case, despite its lasting reputation to the contrary, New Netherland was not really a tolerant place. However much some directors in the 1650s and 1660s encouraged lenience for the sake of growth, Governor Stuyvesant and the colonial church negated their efforts.<sup>51</sup>

On the whole, the Dutch Reformed Church was more bane than boon to the West India Company: Ideological benefits and the church's support for the company in some settings was outweighed by the tight, oppressive grip that the churches of the Netherlands maintained on religious affairs overseas and the tension and division that a strong public church caused among employees and colonists of sundry faiths. Insofar as it encouraged the WIC's aggressive, militaristic approach, even the first boon, Calvinist ideology, was ultimately damaging. It undergirded the initial expansionist interest, but the great cost of

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<sup>50</sup> Chap. 5.

<sup>51</sup> Chap. 6.

making war and the difficulty of maintaining power in conquered territories proved too much in the long run, driving the company toward bankruptcy and leaving the Dutch with few significant possessions in the Atlantic world.

To speak in terms of church vs. company is, of course, problematic, for they were not distinct entities. The directors and many officers and other personnel were Reformed members and ecclesiastical lay leaders; clergy were WIC employees or in some cases just cheerleaders of imperial activity because of financial and evangelical interests. The WIC could not have gotten along without a spiritual counterpart. More than anything else, its relations with the church prove that it was much more than a trading company. Even the aforementioned conflict and tension were signs of the union between the two, signs that the WIC exported the public church of the Netherlands to America mostly intact. That the company did so in the face of such problems is all the more remarkable. Rather than asking why the Dutch did not have missions in some regions or why the WIC sometimes lacked clergy, perhaps the better question is why a semi-private business, a forebear of the modern corporation, had a religious mission at all. The church's robust character and various missionary and reform activities, despite clear struggles and failures, reveal the diverse aspirations of the early modern Dutch and the inadequacy of labels that partition European powers as traders, planters, or conquerors.

This dissertation has, I hope, shown the value of studying extra-commercial aims and activities among the seventeenth-century Dutch. Many rich research opportunities in religious and intellectual history and the history of colonial societies remain. Atlantic history offers numerous untouched possibilities as well. By placing Dutch possessions in West Africa and America under a single institution, the Republic created a Dutch Atlantic

world almost at the stroke of a pen, guaranteeing a measure of integration if only because of the regular movement of company personnel from place to place. Tracing these kinds of connections further, studying their effect, deciding the nature of the Dutch Atlantic and the uses and limitations of the term today, and incorporating new Dutch colonial scholarship into the larger narrative of European expansion are tasks for the future.

## APPENDIX A

### Clergy and Schoolmasters of the Dutch Atlantic<sup>1</sup>

Name	Position(s)	Location(s) Served	WIC Years
A., Jean	Z, S	unknown	1639 – ?
Abbamma, Ovitius	Z	<i>Witte Leeuw</i> , Muscovy, Asia	1624 – 1626
Abbesteech, Wilhelmus	M	Luanda, France	1642 – ?
Abrahamsz, Isaac	Z	Guinea	? – 1636 – ?
Adams, Laurens	V, Z, S	Brazil	? - 1646 - 50 (†)
Aelbrechts, Frans	Z	Sao Tome	1642 – ?
Aelbrechts, Lonys	Z	<i>Middelburg</i> (possibly to stay in Brazil)	1634 – ?
Aertss, Abraham	Z	unknown	1628 – ?
Aertss, Adriaen	Z	unknown, Asia	1629 – ?
Aertss, Cornelis	Z	Brazil, Asia	1642 – 1644
Aertss, Jonas	M	Curacao, Asia	1640 – 1642
Alcken, Frederick	Z	Brazil, New Netherland, Asia	1637 – ?
Aldertsen, Albert	Z	Guinea, Sao Tome	? – 1645 – ?
Andriesz, Cornelis	Z	Brazil	1640 – 1645 (†)
Anseel, Pieter Bouwersen van	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Appel, Abel	Z	Cabo Verde, Asia	before 1663
Appel, Willem	Z	Brazil	1647 – ?
Apricius, Johannes	V, Z, M	Brazil, St. Kitts, Dutch Republic	? – 1643 – 1654
Arentsen, Dirck	V	unknown	1630 – ?
Arentss, Jan	Z	Guinea	1614 – ?
Arrentssen, Hendrick	Z	ship, Guinea	1624 – 1629 – ?
Artopaeus, Valentinus	M	Brazil	1624 – 1625
Assuerus, Meynaert	Z	Guinea	1612 – 1615
Babtista, Jan	Z	Cabo Verde	1632 – ?
Bachiler, Samuel	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1634 – 1647
Backer, Johannes	(Z)	Brazil	? – 1647
Backerus, Johannes Cornelisz	M	Curacao, New Netherland, Asia	1642 – 1649
Baers, Johannes	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1630
Barton, Jacob	S	Brazil	? – 1646 – ?
Basseliers, Johannes	M	Suriname	1667 – 1689 (†)
Beaumont, Adriaen	M	Curacao	1659 – 1663 (†)
Beckom, Abraham Janss	Z	unknown, Asia	1630 – ?
Beeck, Cornelis van der	Z	Brazil, Asia	1640 – ?
Beerman, Johannes	Z	Brazil	1644 – ?
Belhombre, Daniel Hesta	(Z)	Brazil	? – 1647/48
Benderius, Laurentius	M	Guinea	? – 1634 – ?
Benningh, Henricus	M	Guinea, Admiralty ship	? – 1666 (†)
Beverhout, Gelaude van	M	St. Eustatius, St. Martin	1650 – 1663 (†)
Biscaretto, Dionisius	S, M	Brazil	1638 – 1648
Bloemendael, Arent Jansen	Z	ship	? – 1642
Blom, Hermanus	M	New Netherland, Dutch Republic	1660 – 1668

<sup>1</sup> In the “Position” column, V = *voorlezer* (reader); Z = *ziekentrooster* (comforter); S = schoolmaster; and M = *proponent*/minister. Something in parentheses means that it is likely but not certain. In the “Location” column, only known locations are listed. Most men probably worked in other places. Ship names are given in italics. If a ship’s name is unknown, I simply wrote “ship.” “Guinea” or “Brazil” might sometimes mean that someone only served on a ship to that place, not that he stayed. Likewise, some who served on ships may have stayed in some place as clergy after arriving. Locations in the Dutch Atlantic are listed first, all other places last, even if one did not work for the WIC first. In the “Years” column, an asterisk (\*) means “not continuously.” A cross (†) means that the person died in Africa, America, or aboard a company ship.



Blom, Simon Simonsen de	Z	Brazil	1641 – ?
Blonde, Francois	Z	<i>Galiœn</i> , Brazil	1626 – 1636 – ?
Bogardus, Everardus	Z, M	Guinea, New Netherland	1630 – 1647 (†)
Bois, Joost du	Z, S	Brazil	1636 – ?
Bonnissen, Pieter	Z	unknown, Asia	1624-1625
Bosschaert, Marcus	V	<i>Leeuw</i>	1628
Bottelier, Anthony	Z	<i>Haringh</i> , Guinea	1635 – ?
Bouville, Melchior	Z	unknown	1623 – 1626 – ?
Boys, Jan du	Z	unknown, Asia	1628 – ?
Bradshaw, Robert	Z	Brazil, Asia	1640 – 1644
Brassicanus, Theodorus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1647 – 1648
Breen, Jacobus van	M	Guinea	1674 – 1678
Briffen, Hans	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Bruyn, Pieter de	Z	ship, Brazil	1636 – 1640 – ?
Burch, Jacobus Beth van der	M	Luanda, Muscovy, Dutch Republic	1643 – 1648
Burch, Jan Claesz van der	Z	Brazil, Asia	1636 – ?
Busschoff, Gerardus	Z	unknown	1629 – 1631 – ?
Cake, Jan	Z	<i>Leeuwinne</i>	1629 – ?
Caletus, Cornelis	M	Cajana, Asia	1659 – 1660
Calvert, Samson	V, S	Brazil	1635 – ?
Cammius, Wilhelmus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1647 – 1648
Camp, Johannes	S	Brazil	? – 1650
Camps, Jean de	M	St. Martin	1656 – 1659
Carelsen, Carel	Z, S	Brazil	? – 1638 – 1647/8
Caspersz, Abraham	Z	Brazil	1637 – 1645 *
Cellarius, Robertus	Z	unknown	1628 – ?
Chaillou, Francois	M	Tobago, Suriname, France	1660 – 1681 * (†)
Christianssen, Christian	Z	Brazil	1634 – 1637/38
Claess, Aris	Z	Brazil	1633 – ?
Claessen, Jacob	Z	Brazil	1644/45 – ?
Claesz, Antoni (or Theunis)	M	Brazil (died en route)	1639 (†)
Claesz, Simon (Cuyper)	Z	ship	1627 – 1628
Clavius, Jacobus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1653 – 1654
Clavius, Servatius	M	St. Martin, Asia	1664 – 1666
Clevius, Conradus	M	Brazil	1633 (†)
Cleyer, Jan Jacobsoon	Z	<i>Mercurius</i>	1630 – ?
Cluisen, Rocus	Z	<i>Walcheren</i>	? – 1627
Coertss, Burger	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Cole, Bartholomeus	S	Brazil	1642 – 1644
Coninck, Samuel de	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1640 – 1642 (†)
Coningsvelt, Christianus	M	Cajana, Curacao	1660 – 1663
Corlaer, Jacob van	S	New Netherland	? – 1658
Corneliss, Cornelis	Z	unknown	1626 – 1631 – ?
Corneliss, Jacob	V	unknown	1629 – ?
Cornelissen, Godefroy	Z	Brazil, Asia	1639 – 1643
Cornelissen, Jan	S	New Netherland	? – 1650 – ?
Cornelisz, Aris	Z	Brazil	? – 1637
Cornelisz, Christoffel	Z	Brazil, Luanda, Admiralty ship	1641 – 1649
Cornelisz, Gerrit	Z	ship, Brazil, Asia	1637 – 1639
Cornelisz, Jan	Z	ship	1623 – ?
Cornely, Johannes	M	Curacao	? – 1643 – ?
Corynss, Dirrick	Z	<i>Neptunus</i>	1629 – ?
Costa, Bento da	S	Brazil	1651 – ?
Cralingius, Jacobus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1644 – 1645 (†)
Crijns, Claes	Z	<i>Goude Haese</i>	? – 1635 – ?
Croes, Gerrit Johannis	Z	unknown	1628 – ?
Croes, Jan Gerritss	Z	unknown, Asia	1628 – ?
Curtius, Alexander Carolus	S	New Netherland	1659 – ?
Cuyper, Symon Symonsz	Z	Brazil	before 1638

Danens, Jacob	Z	Brazil, Asia	1645 – 1654
Dapper, Jacobus	M	Brazil, ship, Dutch Republic	1625-26; 1636-39
Derrixen, Willem	Z, M	ships, Dutch Republic	1627; 1629
Dinckgieven, Hubbertus	Z	unknown	1628 – ?
Dincklagen, Jacobus	Z	Guinea, Brazil, Spitsbergen	1632-33; 1640-44
Dirxs, Jan	Z	unknown, Admiralty ship	1631 – ?
Dirksen, Pieter	Z	Guinea, Asia	? – 1641 – 1645
Doornick, Petrus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1640 – 1643
Doreslaer, David a	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1636 – 1643
Douwensz, Pieter	Z	Guinea, Asia	1637 – ?
Drijstrang, Dirck Pietersz	M	Guinea, Asia	1620 – 1624
Drisius, Samuel	M	New Netherland, England	1652 – 1674 (†)
Durerus, Casperus	Z	Curacao, Asia	1639 – 1643
Duysenpond, Abraham H.	Z	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1646 – 1648
Duyst, Jan	Z	Brazil	1640 – 1645 (†)
Edelwaert, Jacobus	M	unknown	1629 – ?
Eduards, Evert	Z	unknown	1638 – 1641 (†)
Eduardus, Johannes	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1639 – 1643
Eeckholt, Rabirius	M	Brazil	1639 – 1641 (†)
Engelaer, Johannes	S	Brazil	1640 – 1650
Engelaer, Samuel	S	Brazil	unknown
Engman, Johannes	Z	Guinea, Luanda, Asia	1637 – 1644
Evertss, Barent	Z	<i>Medenblick</i> , Asia	1624 – 1626
Evertss, Cornelis	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Fletcher, Thomas	Z	<i>Princesse</i>	1642 – 1643
Folckerius, Samuel	M	Brazil	1635 – 1637
Four, Marcus de	Z	unknown, <i>Middelburg</i> , Brazil	1626 – 1646 *
Fouwe, Elias	Z	Brazil	1635 – ?
Franccisco, Belchior de	S	Brazil	1642 – ?
Franck, Andries	Z	<i>Neptune</i>	1628 – ?
Fransen, Pieter	Z	Guinea	1640 – ?
Fransz, Clement	Z	Brazil, Asia	1640 – 1650
Fredricksz, Martinus	Z	Brazil	? – 1648 – ?
Fredricxs, Jacob	(Z)	Brazil, Asia	1630 – ?
Frison, Jan	Z	Brazil	1640 – 1644
Galjaert, Jan	S	Curacao	? – 1649/55 – ?
Gerritsen, Bastiaen	Z	Brazil	? – 1637 – ?
Gerritsen, Jan	Z	ship, Greenland	before 1632
Gerritz, Christiaen	Z	Brazil	1634 – 1639 – ?
Gersman	(M)	Brazil	? – 1635 – ?
Gonsalves, Joao de	Z, S	Brazil	1642 – 1647 – ?
Grasmeer, Wilhelmus	M	New Netherland, Dutch Republic	1650 – 1651
Gravius, Daniel	M	St. Eustatius, Asia, Dutch Republic	1641 – 1642
Grever, Jacob de	Z	Brazil	before 1652
Gribius, Petrus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1646 – 1648
Grinel, Isaac Thomassoon	Z	unknown, Greenland, Asia	1628 – ?
Haes, Gysbert de	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Hamel, Jeremias	Z	Brazil, Asia	1638 – 1642
Harmensz, Caspar	Z	Curacao	1643 – ?
Haselbeeck, Johannes	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1641 – 1645
Hassinck, Warnerus	M	New Netherland (died en route)	1643 (†)
Hautain, Noe	Z	unknown	1625 – ?
Hautain, Sadrach	Z	unknown, Asia	before 1626
Havermans, Johannes	M	Brazil	before 1641
Heeress, Heere	Z	<i>Cammeel</i> , Guinea	1636 – ?
Heindricksz, Steven	Z	Brazil, Asia	1635 – 1638
Heins, Richard	Z	Brazil	1639 – 1642 – ?
Hendricks, Meindert	M	Guinea, Brazil, Dutch Republic	1639 – 1646
Hermannius, Henricus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1645 – 1654

Hermansz, Jan	M	Guinea, Dutch Republic	1617 – 1618
Hessels, Arent	Z	unknown	unknown
Higby, Thomas	Z	Brazil	1645 – 1648
Hoboocken, Harmanus van	V, S	New Netherland	1655 – ?
Hoest, Jacobus de	M	Guinea, Dutch Republic	? – 1674
Hoestert, Pieter	Z	Brazil	1647 – ?
Hono, Jean le	Z	unknown	1635 – ?
Hoornaer, Samuel	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Hoornaert, Salomon	Z	unknown	1628 – ?
Horst, Anthoni van der	Z	unknown	1624 – ?
Hulsebos, Simon	Z	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1639 – 1645 *
Huppelen, Franciscus H.	Z	Brazil	1646
Huybertss, Hendrick	Z	unknown	1628 – 1630 – ?
Huybertss, Jan	Z	Brazil	? – 1635
Huybertss, Willem	Z	<i>Alkmaar, Enkhuizen</i> , Admiralty ship	1630 - ?; 1639 - ?
Huygen, Jan	Z	New Netherland	1628 – ?
Huysscher, Jan	Z	Brazil	1640 – 1644
IJsebout, Bartholomeus	M	Guinea, Curacao	1666 – 1672
Isaacsz, Abraham	Z	Guinea	1639 – 1642 *
Jaco, Alvaro	S	Brazil	1651 – ?
Jacobsen, Cornelis	Z	<i>Amersfoort</i> , Brazil, Guinea, Asia	? - 1635/38 - 1647
Jacobsen, Joan	V	<i>Lieffde</i>	1641 – ?
Jansen, Abraham (van Sluys)	Z	<i>Amsterdam</i>	1635 – ?
Jansen, Seger	Z	Guinea	1661 – ?
Janss, Allert (Witmont)	Z	<i>Wapen van Enkhuizen</i> , Admiralty ship	1627 – ?
Janss, Dirck	Z	unknown, Brazil, Greenland, Asia	1629 – 1635
Janss, Dirck (van Lochem)	Z	Brazil	1641 – ?
Janss, Heyndrick (van Diever)	Z	Brazil	1641 – ?
Janss, Isaac	Z	unknown, Brazil	1629 – 1633 – ?
Janss, Jacob	Z	Cabo Verde, Asia	1629 – ?
Janss, Jan	M	Guinea	1624/25 – ?
Janss, Lambert	V, Z, S	Brazil	1646 – 1648 – ?
Janss, Symon	Z	unknown	1630 – ?
Jansz, Andries	S	New Netherland	1650 – ?
Jansz, Harman	Z	Brazil	? – 1638
Jansz, Jan (van Dordrecht)	Z	Brazil, Asia	1636 – 1641
Jansz, Jan	Z	Brazil, Greenland, Asia	1638 – 1643
Jansz, Lenardt	Z	Guinea (captured by pirates en route), Asia	1641 – 1642
Jasparsen, Jacob	Z	<i>Sonne</i>	1634 – ?
Jobss, Jan	V	<i>Veere</i>	1633 – ?
Jochemsen, Hans (de Vries)	Z	Brazil	1635 – 1636
Jochomss, Michiel	Z	Guinea	1632 – ?
Jochumss, Gerrit	Z	unknown	before 1629
Johannes, Francisco	S	Brazil	unknown
Juyckesen, Jacob	V	ship	1630 – ?
Kemp, Thomas	Z, S, M	Brazil	1635 – 1654 (†)
Kesseler, Fredericus	M	Brazil, Germany, Dutch Republic	1637 – 1643
Ketel, Nicolaus	M	Luanda, Brazil, Dutch Brazil	1640 – 1645
Kien, Anthony	Z	<i>Zeelandia</i> , Guinea, Brazil	1643 – 1647/48
Krol, Bastiaen Jansz	Z	New Netherland	1624 – ?
Kuyscher, Jan de	Z	Brazil, Sao Tome	? – 1642 – ?
Laer, Samuel van	M	Brazil (died en route), Dutch Republic	1640 (†)
Laine, Carolus de la	M	Berbice, Dutch Republic	1671 – 1672
Lamber, Samuel	M	Tobago	1673 – ?
Langevelde, (J.) Laurens van	Z	ship, <i>Walcheren, Swane</i>	1626 – 1629 – ?
Lansheer, Hans de	Z	<i>Jager</i>	1645 – ?
Lantman, Pieter Janssen	M	Brazil	1639 – 1640 (†)
Laren, Barent van	Z	ship, <i>Noorsterre</i>	1628 – 1630 – ?
Latonius, Lambertus	M	unknown, Brazil	1628 – 31

Layrelius, Wilhelmus	M	Guinea, Germany	1628 – ?
Leeck, Arthur	Z, S	Brazil	1642 – 1648 (†)
Lely, Gerrit Janss	Z, S	Curacao, Asia	? – 1640 – 1642
Lenso, Meyndert Jan	(Z)	Guinea	? – 1645
Leoninus, Cornelis Jr.	M	Brazil, Admiralty ship, Dutch Republic	1640 – 1644
Leoninus, Cornelis Sr.	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1631 – 1632
Lerons, Alexander	V	Brazil	? – 1643
Lessenaer, Wouter	Z, S	Brazil	1652 – 1654
Leys, Isaac	Z	<i>Moriaen</i>	1643 – ?
Liesvelt, Abraham van	Z	Brazil	? – 1652 – ?
Lodewycks, Jan	Z	Cabo Verde, <i>Hollandse Tuin</i> , Brazil, Asia	1630 – 1645
Lodewycks, Pieter	M	Essequibo, Dutch Republic	1658 – 1659 (†)
Louwerens, Adriaen	Z	Guinea	1642 – 1646 (†)
Lunes, Theophilus	V	Brazil	1643 – 1644
Luyck, Aegidius	S	New Netherland, Dutch Republic	? – 1674 – ?
Macque, Daniel	Z	Brazil, Asia	1630 – ?
Macque, Jacob	Z	Brazil, Asia	1640 – 1644
Maenhout, Boudewyn	V, S	New Netherland	1662 – ?
Marcus, Pieter	Z	Brazil	1629 – 1632
Marschalk, Boudewijn	Z	Brazil	1638 – 1645
Martenss, Adriaan	Z	Brazil, Curacao, Asia	? – 1644 – ?
Martini, Jacobus	M	Brazil	1630 (†)
Megapolensis, Johannes	M	New Netherland, Dutch Republic	1642 – 1670 (†)
Megapolensis, Samuel	M	New Netherland, Dutch Republic	1664 – 1668
Mel, Maillaert de	V	<i>Charitas</i>	1640 – ?
Messen, Jan van	Z, S	Brazil	1640 – 1645
Mey, Johannes de	M	St. Eustatius, Dutch Republic	1643 – 1646
Meynhart, Marco Philippi	M	Guinea	1629 – ?
Michaelius, Jonas	M	Guinea, New Neth., England, D. Repub.	1625 – 1632
Michielsen, Jan	Z, M	Brazil	1635 – 1640
Mijliser, Johannes Petri	M	Tobago, Germany	1630 – ?
Minnertsga, Jan Claes	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Montagne, Jean de	S	New Netherland	1652 – ?
Montenier, Francois	S	Brazil	1645 – ?
Neander, Johannes	M	Brazil	1624 (†)
Nieuwenhuisen, Wilhelmus	M	New Netherland	1671 – 1682 (†)
Neveux, Daniel	Z, M	Brazil	1634 – 1636
Offeringa, Johannes	M	Brazil	1640 – 1651 (†)
Ongena, Petrus	M	Brazil, Asia	1640 – 1654
Ooms, Eduart	Z, S	Brazil, Asia	1639 – 1652
Oosterharen, Arnoldus	M	Tobago	1659 – ?
Oosterzee, Regnerus ab	Z	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1640 – 1646 – ?
Osterdag, Johannes Hartman	M	Brazil, Asia	1634 – 1639
Ottensz, Arend	Z	Brazil	before 1652
Oudermolen, Abr. van den	Z	Luanda	1642 – ?
Oudewater, Abrahamus	M	Guinea	1671 – 1672 (†)
Outerman, Cornelis	Z	Brazil, ship, Asia	1624 – 1627
Overney, Johannes	M	Tobago, Cajana, South Africa	? – 1663 – ?
Paulusz, Michel	M	New Netherland	? – 1633 – ?
Pequet, Joannes	Z	Brazil	? – 1649 – ?
Perkins, Jan	S	Brazil	1645
Philips, Jacob	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Pick, Jan Cornelis	M	Brazil	1624 – ?
Pietersen, Evert	V, Z, S	New Netherland	1656 – 1658 – ?
Pietersen, Gerrijt	Z	ship, Guinea	1623 – 1627 – ?
Pietersen, Mathijs	Z	unknown	1641 – ?
Pieterss, Abraham	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Pieterss, Jacob	(Z)	unknown	1630 – ?
Pietersz, Cornelis	Z	Brazil	1639 – ?

Pistorius, Wilhelmus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1630 – 1633
Plante, Franciscus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1637 – 1644
Poel, Cornelis W. van der	Z, M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1633 – 1646
Pol, Dirck Jansz	Z	Brazil	1645 – 1647
Polhemus, Johannes	M	Brazil, New Neth., Dutch Repub., Germany	1636 – 1676 (†)
Polsius, Abraham	M	St. Eustatius, Asia	1663 – ?
Possenier, Guillelmus	Z	Brazil	1645 – 1648
Provoost, David	S	New Netherland	? – 1652 – ?
De Raet	S	Brazil	1650 – ?
Ratingen, Herman Jansz van	Z	Brazil	before 1639
Rensselaer, Nicolaus van	M	New Netherland, England	1674 – 1677
Reyer, Hans Melchior	Z	Brazil, Asia	1637 – 1640
Reymans, Cornelys Pietersz	Z	Sao Tome	? – 1646
Rijssen, Jan Hendrickss van	Z	ship, Brazil, Guinea	1623 – 1627 – ?
Rissert, Sauwel	M	Curacao	? – 1665 – ?
Ritsma, Lambertus	M	Brazil	1643 (†)
Roberts, Benjamin	Z	ship	1629 – ?
Robol, Leonardus	Z	Cabo Verde	1668 – ?
Rochefort, Carolus, de	M	various Caribb. islands, France, D. Repub.	1644 – 1649
Rodermont, Harman	Z	Brazil	1647 – 1650 – ?
Rolands, Adam	V, S	New Netherland	1633 – ?
Roy, Jan de	Z	unknown	1630 – ?
Ruelius, Julius	Z	unknown	1629 – ?; 1640 – ?
Ruteau, Abraham	Z	St. Martin, Brazil, Asia	1632 – ?; 1643
Schaats, Gideon	M	New Netherland	1652 – 1694 (†)
Schaets, Gerrit Mathysen	V, S	Curacao	1659/60 – ?
Schagen, Daniel	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1634 – 1637
Schelius, Petrus	(Z)	ship	1630 – ?
Scheyns, Jan van	Z	<i>Tijger</i>	1632 – ?
Schulperoord, Joannes	M	Guinea	1657 – 1659 (†)
Selyns, Henricus	M	New Netherland, Dutch Republic	1660-64; 82-01 (†)
Sergers, Samuel	Z	<i>Trouwe</i>	1645 – ?
Seroijen, Jasper	Z	unknown	1639 – ?
Smeet, Jan Janss	Z	ship, Brazil	1639 – 1642 – ?
Smit, Daniel	Z	Guinea	1667 – ?
Smith, Adam	Z	Brazil	1635 – 1638
Soler, Vincentius Joachimus	M	Brazil, France, Dutch Republic	1636 – 1644
Spaen, Johannes	Z	<i>Somme</i>	1629 – ?
Specht, Philippum	M	Curacao, Dutch Republic	1668 – 1676
Steendam, Jacob	Z	Guinea, New Netherland, Asia	1641-49; 1650s
Steenhuysen, Engelbert	V, S	New Netherland	1661 – ?
Steenlandt, Johannes van	M	Guinea	1654 – 1655 (†)
Sterthenius, Enoch	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1624 – 1625
Stetten, Jodocus a	M	various ships, Brazil, Germany	1629 – 1647 (†)
Stevensen, Jan	V, S	New Netherland	1641/42 – 1648
Stuperus, Johannes	Z, M	unknown	before 1641; 46-?
Suregyn, Danyell	Z	unknown	before 1630
Tacke, Jan	Z, S	Brazil	1630 – 1648
Thomassen, Reynier	V	ship	1628 – ?
Tiaeus, Isaacus	M	Guinea, Dutch Republic	1625 – ?
Tijmanss, Pieter	(Z)	unknown	1630 – ?
Urselius, Johannes	M	Essequibo, Dutch Republic	1659 – 1660
Valentijn, Abraham	S	Brazil	1639
Vaux, Gilbertus de	M	Brazil	1640 – 1643
Velthusius, Casparus	M	Brazil, Dutch Republic	1640 – 1646
Vestensen, Willem	Z, S	New Netherland, Asia	1650 – 1655
Vinman, Willem	M	unknown, Asia, Dutch Republic	before 1642
Vittaeus, Fredericus	M	Brazil, Luanda, Curacao	1630s; 41-42 (†)
Vockelman, Hendrick	(Z)	Guinea	1630 – ?

Vogelius, Nicolaus	M	Brazil	1639 – 1647
Volckering, Wilhelmus	M	Curacao	1664 – 1666 (†)
Volckertsen, Jan	Z	<i>'t Wapen van Hoorn</i>	? – 1628/29
Wachtelo, Christianus	M	Brazil	1630 – 1635
Wachtendorp, Petrus	M	Cajana, Asia, Dutch Republic	1660 – 1664
Walreven, Jan	Z	Curacao, Asia	1646 – 1655
Warmond, Adrian	M	Curacao	1659 – ?
Watsen, Dirck Janss	Z	<i>Vlissingen</i> , Brazil, Greenland, Asia	1630s; 1642-45
Welius, Everardus	M	New Netherland	1657 – 1659 (†)
Wernartsen, Jan	Z	Brazil	1634 – 1636
Weneri, Petrus	Z	Brazil	1639 – 1644
Wessels, Jan (Stickelkamp)	Z	unknown, Asia	1626 – 1630 – ?
Wesselsz, Gerrit	Z	unknown, Asia	before 1638/39
Westbroeck, Claes van	Z	unknown	1629 – ?
Westerwyck, Martinus	M	Guinea	1656 (†)
Wibrantsen, Jacob	Z	<i>Witte Leeuw</i>	1635 – ?
Wijngaerden, Franciscus	M	St. Eustatius, Asia	1646 – 1650
Willems, Cornelis	Z	ship	1628 – 1630 – ?
Wilems, Thomas	Z	Brazil	1642 – 1643
Willems, Willem	Z	unknown, Asia	1630 – ?
Willemsz, Pieter	Z	Brazil	1638 – 1642
Winckeler, Daniel	V, Z	Brazil	? – 1643-1650 – ?
Wisman, Hermanus	M	Brazil	1624 (†)
Witmont, Allert Janss	Z	<i>'t Wapen van Enkhuizen</i>	1627/28 – ?
Wolff, Herman de	Z	Brazil	1639 – ?
Zyperus, Machiel	V, Z, S, M	ship, Brazil, Curacao, New Neth., Virginia	? – 1652-59 – ?

## APPENDIX B

### WIC Directors – Amsterdam Chamber<sup>1</sup>

Name	Representing	Decade(s)	Burgemeester	Vroedschap	Schepen	Elder	Deacon
Joris Adriaensz	Amsterdam	1620s					x
David van Baerle	Amsterdam	1640s-70s					
Johan Wentolt Bartels	Gelderland	1630s				(x)	
Jan Barteringh	Amsterdam	1630s				x	x
Guillielmo Bartholotti	Amsterdam	1620s					
Albert Bas	Amsterdam	1640s	x	x	x		
Warner Ernst van Bassen	Amsterdam	1630s		x	x		
Everhard Becker	Amsterdam	1620s					
Samuel Becker	Amsterdam	1630s-40s				x	x
Isaack van Beeck	Amsterdam	1640s-60s				x	x
Nicolaas van Beeck	Amsterdam	1660s-70s					x
Pieter Beltens	Amsterdam	1620s					
Frederick van Berck	Amsterdam	1630s-40s					
Cornelis Bicker	Amsterdam	1620s-30s	x		x		
Toussain Blanche	Amsterdam	1630s				x	
Pieter Janss Blauhaen	Deventer	1630s-40s					x
Samuel Blommaert	Amsterdam	1620s-50s					x
Hans Bontemantel	Amsterdam	1650s-70s		x	x		
Jacques Boursse	Amsterdam	1630s					x
Jacob van Broeckhoven	Leiden	1630s				x	
Bonaventura Broen	Amsterdam	1640s-50s					
Hendrick Broen	Amsterdam	1620s-30s				x	
Marcus Broen	Amsterdam	1670s					
Hendrik Brouwer	Amsterdam	1640s					
Willem Bruyn	Amsterdam	1630s				x	
Albert Coenraets Burgh	Amsterdam	1620s-40s	x	x	x		
Coenraed Burgh	Amsterdam	1660s		x	x		
Jacob Quina Carelsz	Amsterdam	1670s					
Matthys van Ceullen	Amsterdam	1630s-40s					
Cornelis Cloeck	Amsterdam	1660s-70s		x	x		
Adriaen Cromhout	Amsterdam	1620s		x	x		
Johan van Cuylenburch	Utrecht	1640s-50s					x
Nicolaas van Damme	Haarlem	1640s				x	x
Symon van der Does	Amsterdam	1620s-40s		x	x		
Jacob van der Dussen	Gouda	1670s				(n)	
Jan van Erpecum	Amsterdam	1660s-70s					
Willem Everwijn	Gelderland	1620s				x	
Frederick van Geel	Amsterdam	1640s				x	x
Jan van Geel	Amsterdam	1630s-40s					
Samuel Godyn	Amsterdam	1620s-30s				x	
Henry Gras	Amsterdam	1640s					
Jean Gras	Amsterdam	1630s					
Benjamin van Halewijn	Amsterdam	1640s					

<sup>1</sup> “Decade(s)” refers to the approximate period that each was director. “Burgemeester,” “Vroedschap,” and “Schepen” are only applicable to those from Amsterdam. The mark “(n)” means that one was nominated but not selected (though nominations are only known for a few years); “(x)” means he was *maybe* selected.

Name	Representing	Decade(s)	Burgemeester	Vroedschap	Schepen	Elder	Deacon
Jan van Halewyn	Amsterdam	1640s					
Hendrick Hamel	Amsterdam	1620s-40s					
Jacob Hamel	Amsterdam	1620s-40s					
Johan van Harynchouck	Amsterdam	1630s-40s					
Jeronimus Heesters	Amsterdam	1630s-40s					x
Dirck van Helsdingh	Utrecht	1620s					
Gijsbert van Hemert	Deventer	1620s-30s				x	
Johan van Hemert	Deventer	1620s				x	
Isaac van Heuvel	Amsterdam	1670s		x	x		
Jacob P. Hoochcamer	Amsterdam	1620s		x	x		x
Arnout H. Hooft	Amsterdam	1660s-70s			x		
Andries van der Horn	Haarlem	1660s-70s				x	
Jacob Geritsz Hoyng	Amsterdam	1620s	x	x	x	x	
Pieter Evertz Hulst	Amsterdam	1630s					
Rombout Jacobsen	Amsterdam	1620s-30s				x	x
Mattheus Joyen	Haarlem	1630s				x	x
Jacob de Key	Haarlem	1630s					x
Joannes de Laet	Leiden	1620s-40s				x	
Cornelis de Lange	Gouda	1660s-70s					
Daniel van Liebergen	Amsterdam	1630s				x	x
Charles Loten	Amsterdam	1620s-40s					x
Marinus Louwyssen	Amsterdam	1640s				x	x
Eduard Man	Amsterdam	1630s-60s				x	x
Franck van der Meer	Amsterdam	1650s	x	x	x		
Jan van der Merckt	Amsterdam	1620s					x
Willem van Moerberghen	Leiden	1620s					
Jacque de la Myne	Amsterdam	1630s-40s					x
Abraham Oyens	Amsterdam	1620s-40s					
Jan Panhuysen	Leiden	1630s				(x)	
Albert Pater	Amsterdam	1640s-50s	x	x	x		
Mattheus Pauw	Utrecht	1620s-30s					
Michiel Pauw	Amsterdam	1620s-30s			x		
Elias Pels	Amsterdam	1620s					
Jacob Pergens	Amsterdam	1640s-70s					
Jacob Quina	Amsterdam	1640s-50s				x	x
Elias de Raet	Amsterdam	1630s-40s					x
Pieter Ranst	Amsterdam	1620s					
Johan Ray	Amsterdam	1630s-40s				(n)	
Reynier Reael	Amsterdam	1620s-30s			x		
Jacob Reepmaker Jr.	Amsterdam	1630s-50s					
Kiliaen van Rensselaer	Amsterdam	1620s				x	
Jacobus Reynst	Amsterdam	1650s-60s					
Johannes Rijckaerts	Amsterdam	1640s-70s				x	x
Pieter Schaep	Amsterdam	1660s-70s		x	x		
Ferdinando Schulenborch	Amsterdam	1630s-50s				(n)	
Frederico Schulenborch	Amsterdam	1640s					
Nicolaes van Sitterich	Amsterdam	1630s					x
Jacques Specx	Amsterdam	1640s-50s					
Dirck Spiegel	Amsterdam	1650s-70s			x		
Abraham Spiers	Amsterdam	1630s				x	x
Gommer Spranger	Amsterdam	1620s					
Dirck van Swanenburgh	Utrecht	1630s					x
Johan le Thor	Amsterdam	1640s-50s					x
Paulus Timmerman	Amsteradm	1640s-50s					
Olivier Uyttenhoven	Utrecht	1620s					



Name	Representing	Decade(s)	Burgemeester	Vroedschap	Schepen	Elder	Deacon
Johan Uyttewael	Utrecht	1620s					
Marcus van Valkenburch	Amsterdam	1620s-40s				x	
Pieter Varlet	Utrecht	1630s-40s					
Johan van Velthuysen	Utrecht	1660s-70s					x
Abraham de Visscher	Amsterdam	1630s					
Marcus de Vogelaer	Amsterdam	1630s-40s					
Frederik de Vries	Amsterdam	1630s					
Jan Gysbertsz de Vries	Amsterdam	1620s		x	x		x
Abraham Wilmerdonx	Amsterdam	1640s-60s				x	x
Cornelis Witsen	Amsterdam	1640s-60s	x	x	x		x
Jonas Witsen	Amsterdam	1620s	x	x	x	x	
Cornelis van Wyckersloot	Utrecht	1630s				x	x

## APPENDIX C

### WIC Directors – Zeeland Chamber<sup>1</sup>

Names	Decade(s)	Representing	Elder/Deacon
Pieter Alleman	1630s	Middelburg	x
Christoffel Barents	1620s	Veere	(n)
David Baute	1630s-50s	Middelburg	
Symon van Beaumont	1620s		
Steven Becker	1630s		
Pieter Beurdt	1620s	Middelburg	x
Abraham Bisschop	1630s	Middelburg	x
Pieter Bisschop	1630s-40s		
Pieter Boddaert	1660s	Middelburg	x
Pieter Boudaen Courten Jr.	1660s	Middelburg	x
Pieter Boudaen Courten Sr.	1620s	Middelburg	x
Adriaen van Bullestraete	1640s	Middelburg	x
Jacob Cats	1630s	Vlissingen	(x)
Nicolaes Clement	1660s		(x)
Rogier Cobbaert	1620s	Vlissingen	x
Willem Constant	1640s		
Cornelis Coorne	1620s-30s	Tholen	
Abraham Droogbrood	1620s-30s	Middelburg	
Joos Duvelaer	1660s	Middelburg	x
Pieter Duvelaer	1660s	Middelburg	Reformed minister
Pieter Joosten Duvelaer	1630s-40s	Middelburg	x
Cornelis Claesz Elfsdyck	1630s	Middelburg	x
(?) Engelsen	1660s-70s		(x)
Pieter van Essen	1620s-30s	Middelburg	
Evert Ghyseling	1650s	Vlissingen	x
Johan Ghyseling	1630s-40s	Vlissingen	
Anthony Godyn	1620s-30s	Middelburg	x
Johan van Grypskercke	1670s	Tholen	
Galeyn ten Haeff	1620s	Middelburg	x
Jacob de Haze	1640s-60s	Veere	
Adriaen van Hecke	1650s	Vlissingen	
Jasper van Hecke	1660s	Vlissingen	
Pieter van Hecke	1660s-70s	Vlissingen	
Willem van der Heyden	1630s-60s	Tholen	x
Joost van der Hooghen	1620s	Middelburg	x
Johan van Hoorn	1660s	Middelburg	x
Adriaen de Ketelaer	1620s	Vlissingen	
Johannes Kien	1650s	Veere	x
Cornelis Lampsins	1630s - (?)	Vlissingen	
Jan Lampsins	1670s	Vlissingen	x
Hendrick Liens	1630s	Tholen	x
Jan Louys	1630s-40s		

<sup>1</sup> “Decade(s)” refers to the approximate period that each was director. The mark “(n)” means that one was nominated but not selected (though nominations are not known for every year); “(x)” means he was *maybe* selected. See Jan van der Merckt also in Appendix B. He was a director in Amsterdam, too. Because of missing and problematic records, probably more were elders/deacons than this table shows: See Chapter 2.

Johan Luyckx	1650s		
Jaspar de Maecht	1640s		x
Jan van der Merckt	1630s-50s	Middelburg	x
Nicolaes van der Merckt	1640s	Middelburg	x
Francois Moens	1650s	Middelburg	x
Jan de Moor	1620s	Vlissingen	x
(?) de Moor	1660s-70s		(x)
Pieter Mortamer	1640s-60s	Middelburg	
Pieter Muenix	1620s	Middelburg	
Alexander de Muncq	1660s	Middelburg	x
Johannes Pelletier	1640s-50s		
Abraham van de Perre	1630s	Vlissingen	x
Ewaldus van de Perre	1660s	Middelburg	
Isaac van de Perre	1670s	Vlissingen	
Paulus van de Perre	1640s	Middelburg	x
Jan Pietersen	1640s		(x)
Johan van de Poele	1660s-70s	Middelburg	x
Johan van der Poort	1620s-30s (1650s-60s?)	Middelburg	x
Job Porrenaer	1620s	Vlissingen	
Johan Rademacher	1670s	Middelburg	(x)
(?) van Ree	1650s		(x)
Jan van Roubergen	1630s-60s	Middelburg	x
Abraham Schooten	1630s		
Bouwen Melssen Schot	1630s		
Sijmon Schotte	1620s	Middelburg	
Pauwels Jansz Serooskercke	1630s		
Willem Snellen	1620s	Vlissingen	
Heyndrick Soomer	1640s		
Nicolaes Swancke	1630s		(n)
David Taetse	1630s	Vlissingen	x
Woulter Teunemans	1630s		
Leonard Thyssen	1670s	Veere	(x)
Abraham Trouwers	1640s		
Pieter van de Velde	1630s-40s	Middelburg	x
Jan Velinx	1620s-30s	Middelburg	
Nicolaes Velinx	1630s	Veere	x
Adriaen Velters	1620s-30s	Veere	x
Lieven van Vrijberghe	1630s	Tholen	
Jeremias Walens	1620s	Tholen	
Cornelis Arentss Westdorp	1640s-50s	Middelburg	x

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