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## **Pleading for diversity : the church Caspar Coolhaes wanted**

Gottschalk, Linda Stuckrath

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# Pleading for Diversity: The Church Caspar Coolhaes Wanted

Linda Stuckrath Gottschalk



Pleading for Diversity:  
The Church Caspar Coolhaes Wanted

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Promotor:

Prof.dr. E.G.E. van der Wall

Co-promotor:

Dr. J.W. Buisman

Promotiecommissie:

Prof.dr. W. Janse (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Prof.dr. A.F. de Jong

Prof.dr. M.G.K. van Veen (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

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## Abbreviations

AD	Archief Delft
BBKL	<i>Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon</i>
BLGNP <i>protestantisme</i>	<i>Biografisch lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse protestantisme</i>
BWDN	<i>Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden</i>
BWNZL	<i>Biographisch woordenboek der noord- en zuidnederlandsche letterkunde</i>
BWPGN	<i>Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland</i>
CBR	De Centrale Bibliotheek Rotterdam
ELO	Erfgoed Leiden en omstreken archieven
HEG/SAE	Haus der Essener Geschichte/Stadtarchiv
HUA	Het Utrechts Archief
LHAKo	Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz/Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz
NAKG/DRCH	<i>Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History</i>
NDB/ADB	<i>Neue Deutsche Biographie/Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie</i>
NL-HaNA	Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Collectie Realia
NNBW	<i>Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek</i>
OER	<i>Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation</i>
SAB	Stadsarchief en Athenaeumbibliotheek Deventer
SAA	Stadsarchief Amsterdam



SAMH	Streekarchief Midden-Holland
UBL	Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden
<i>WMV</i>	<i>Werken der Marnix-Vereeniging</i>

## Technical notes

Translations into English from Coolhaes or others in the text or the footnotes have been made by the author, unless otherwise indicated.

Spelling of English words is according to American English conventions.

Citation is according to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, sixteenth edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010). Please note that, according to Chicago style, footnotes and bibliographic citations of the same work differ from each other in various ways, especially in the use of commas, periods, and parentheses. For examples, see: [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) (accessed Feb. 18, 2016).

## Introduction

In this dissertation, I set myself the task of bringing the ecclesiology of Caspar Coolhaes into focus, first through an updated biographical sketch, and then through special attention to his written works. Coolhaes opposed many features of the organization of the developing Reformed Church in the Northern Netherlands and Dutch Republic in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He disagreed strongly with the “Reformed polity” which many of the Calvinist clergy were pursuing with vigor.<sup>1</sup> He was also critical of all other major confessions. The question, therefore, is this: what sort of church would Coolhaes himself have wanted to design for the new Republic?

Caspar Coolhaes (c. 1534-1615) was a Reformed preacher and a writer of theological tracts. In his writings he showed himself to be a critic of the churches of his day and an advocate of religious diversity. Originally from the German Palatinate, he came to preach and live in the Northern Netherlands during the Dutch Revolt, when the region was struggling for a new political direction and a new identity. He advocated a broader church than many of his Reformed colleagues. Although he died before the National Synod of Dordt (1618-1619), he would have opposed its decisions vehemently.<sup>2</sup> He was linked during that process with the ideas of Arminius, and it is no wonder that H. C. Rogge, his first biographer, took hold of and further established the idea of Coolhaes as the forerunner of Arminius and the Remonstrants.<sup>3</sup> But Coolhaes never saw the emergence of the kind of church he was advocating.

He was not unique in his broader views, nor in his critiques. Others in his day felt similarly. In addition, a large percentage of the population in the Northern Netherlands and the emerging Dutch Republic of the late sixteenth century had not made a clear choice for

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1. Alastair Duke and Rosemary Jones, “Towards a Reformed Polity in Holland, 1572-1576,” in Alastair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 199-226.

2. It may seem bold of me to speculate as to Coolhaes’ reaction to the National Synod, but, as we will see, he died only in 1615, just three years before the start of the Synod and during the controversy which led up to it. He had also earlier addressed both Arminius and Gomarus about their disagreements, as will be discussed.

3. Hendrik Cornelis Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes, voorlooper van Arminius en de Remonstranten* (Amsterdam: H. W. Mooij, 1856). The first volume of the two-volume work appeared in 1856, and the second volume in 1858. They were reprinted in 1865, but that edition is missing a few pages (vol. 2, 241-47, which comprise several pages of “Additions and corrections”). There is also a new scanned and reprinted facsimile version available from Nabu Press, 2010. All of these editions are identical; they are the 1865 edition; there is no new material, although both the Nabu Press edition and the online versions are missing the aforementioned pages. So, the 1856/8 edition is actually the more complete one.

any confessional identity. True, many of them were *liefhebbers* of the Reformed religion, others were members of that church or of some other, but others had no ties to any church. Those who differed in their views were often categorized as “other”: as Papists, libertines, Neutralists, Schwenckfelders, Franckists, “enthusiasts,” *Schwärmer*, *geest-drijvers* – pejoratively-meant terms which were also often inaccurate.<sup>4</sup>

Coolhaes was, himself, eclectic in the views he held. This study will argue that he was inspired by Reformed ideas, both Zwinglian and Calvinist, and also by Lutheranism and Spiritualism. In fact, this dissertation will argue that Spiritualism is foundational to his ecclesiology. Spiritualists were a heterogeneous group who tended to be dissatisfied with the progress of the Reformation, critical of established or state churches, tolerant of diversity, and who focused on the Spirit and the subjective aspects of religion. Many were members of the so-called “Radical Reformation.” But Coolhaes was a Reformed Spiritualist, who identified as Reformed, served as a Reformed preacher, and continued to hold broadly Reformed beliefs throughout his life.

Nevertheless, Coolhaes was a critic of the Reformed Church. His writings are full of criticism of what he saw as hypocrisy in many Reformed preachers. He deplored treating “human” (non-biblical) writings such as catechisms, synodal acts, and writings of theologians as authoritative, which he held that many Reformed preachers did. He disagreed with those who emphasized visible, external things but in his view disregarded the invisible, the internal, but essential things. Especially, he opposed the lack of love in the greater Body of Christ - in other words, in the whole visible church - which was leading to judgment and condemnation of some by others. Coolhaes pleaded for religious diversity within the visible church as well as society. Surprisingly, because of this, he often held even his own theological views loosely for the sake of what he considered love and tolerance.<sup>5</sup> This has frequently made it difficult for scholars to categorize him.

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4. Wiebe Bergsma, “Calvinisten en libertijnen,” *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 22 (1996): 209.

5. “Tolerance” and “toleration” are very similar words, and share the verb form “to tolerate.” Benjamin J. Kaplan writes that, traditionally, tolerance was seen as an abstract ideal, whereas toleration means the actual, “peaceful coexistence” between those whose religions differed. Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 7-8. A similar way of differentiating the two concepts is to say that tolerance is a non-judgmental attitude and acceptance of differences, whereas toleration is the legal acceptance of others while at the same time retaining the right to a personal disapproval of them or their views or practices. In other words, tolerance is an attitude; toleration is a law. See *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/tolerati/> (accessed 3 August 2015), for the history of this view. Coolhaes himself usually wrote of *verdraagzaamheid*, which can be translated as both toleration and tolerance. I will use



A longer biographical sketch will follow, in the first part of the dissertation, but the basics of his biography are that Coolhaes was raised Roman Catholic in the German Palatinate, and then became a monk. He had then “come over to the Reformation,” as he put it, and preached in various cities. In 1566 he moved to the Northern Netherlands to serve as a Reformed preacher. Later, as one of the city preachers in Leiden, he ran afoul of stricter Calvinist colleagues and took the side of the city magistrates against them. His insistence on a broader sort of Protestantism, and specific disagreements with the consistory and preachers, eventually led to his defrocking at the Synod of Middelburg (1581), and, soon after, to excommunication from the Reformed Church. He was the first person to be excommunicated by these Dutch Calvinists.<sup>6</sup> To support his family, he learned the distilling trade, but continued to write in defense of religious diversity and tolerance throughout his long life.

Although this dissertation has no pretensions to offer a full-fledged biography,<sup>7</sup> the first part will summarize, supplement and update Coolhaes’ life story with details which were not known to the only major biographer Coolhaes has had up till today, the nineteenth-century Remonstrant, Hendrik Cornelis Rogge. Many of these details have been brought to light after Rogge’s two-volume study in 1856-1858 by other scholars, and this biographical sketch will make an effort to bring them together. I was also glad to build on the work of other scholars, including Christine Kooi, Olivier Fatio, Jan van Dooren and others, to add pertinent details from those sources, and to weave them into my story. In short, this is not yet the definitive biography of Coolhaes; the first part of this dissertation is intended to bring together the biographical facts which are known at this point, as a solid basis for the discussion of ecclesiology in the second part. The first part will introduce most of his writings, putting them in context. The second part of the dissertation will focus in detail on his ecclesiology. Coolhaes was critical of all churches and confessions, so what sort of church would he have wanted? His doctrine of the church, its definition and its practices, will be explored, using a deeper discussion of his books and other writings as the main sources of his views. Despite Coolhaes’ various writings, interests and activities throughout his life, his main preoccupation was the church.

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the word “tolerance” in my discussion of Coolhaes’ view about personal religious freedom, and “toleration” when I am talking about his opinion of legal religious freedom.

6 . J. Wayne Baker, “Zwinglianism,” *OER*, vol. 4, 325.

7. I also look forward very much to the work which C. P. (Kees) de Wildt, PhD researcher at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, is doing with the Leiden church council records from this period.

## A forerunner of Arminius and the Remonstrants?

Coolhaes was a preacher and theologian, but he built no far-reaching theological system as, for instance, Arminius would. He was not the founder of a separate church, nor would he have wanted to be. Nevertheless, as just mentioned, he has been identified with Remonstrantism. Contra-Remonstrants were quick to connect Coolhaes with the Remonstrants. After his death, he was listed in the foreword of the *Acta* of the Synod of Dordt.<sup>8</sup> Remonstrant Johannes Wtenbogaert, in his *Kerkelicke historie* of 1647, however, claimed that the Remonstrants were not Coolhaes' followers. Referring to Coolhaes' *Naedencken*, he maintained that Coolhaes had not actually denied predestination.<sup>9</sup> It was Contra-Remonstrant Jacobus Trigland, responding to Wtenbogaert, who first called Coolhaes "the forerunner of Arminius and the Remonstrants," the label which Rogge would later use. Trigland, in his *Kerkelycke Geschiedenissen* of 1650, retold the whole Coolhaes history to prove that the Reformed Church was consistent and fair in their judgment of him and others.<sup>10</sup>

It is possible that early Remonstrants may have minimized any connection with the disgraced, excommunicated Coolhaes because their reputation would not have benefited from it. Over time, though, Remonstrants have been more than willing to claim a connection with the earlier conflicts in which Coolhaes and others had been involved.<sup>11</sup> In the early twentieth

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8. This list is reproduced in the "Acta of handelingen der nationale synode Dordrecht 1618-1619," *Kerkrecht*, [www.kerkrecht.nl/node/1857](http://www.kerkrecht.nl/node/1857) (accessed 26 jan. 2016). For more background on those mentioned and on the Synod as a whole, see also the following recent works relating to it: Donald Sinnema, Christian Moser, and Herman J. Selderhuis, eds., *Acta of the Synod of Dordt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); Aza Goudriaan and Fred van Lieburg, eds., *Revisiting the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

9. Johannes Wtenbogaert, *Kerkelicke historie vervattende verscheyden, gedenckwaardige saken in de Christenheyt voorgevallen van het jaer 400 af tot het jaer 1619: voornamentlijck in dese geunieerde provincien*, vol. 2 (Rotterdam: Wagens, 1647), 214b. See also J. Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid* (Groningen: Uitgeverij De Vuurbaak, 1970), 12.

10. Jacobus Trigland, *Kerkelycke geschiedenissen. begrypende de swaere en bekommerlijcke geschillen, in de Vereenigde Nederlanden voorgevallen, met derselver beslissinge, ende aenmerkingen op de kerchelycke historie van Johannes VVtenbogaert* (Leiden: A. Wijngaerden, 1650), 188-90. See also Jacobus Trigland, *Klaer ende grondich teghen-vertooch, van eenighe kercken-dienaren van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt, gestelt tegen seker vertoogh der Remonstranten* (Amsterdam: F. M. J. Brandt, 1617), 36-37. See also mention of Coolhaes in H. W. ter Haar, *Jacobus Trigland* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1891), 159, 166-67.

11. Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines: Confession and Community in Utrecht 1578-1620* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press/Clarendon Press, 1995), 230; James Nichols, trans. *The Works of James Arminius, D.D.*, vol. 1 (Auburn/Buffalo, NY: Derby and Miller, 1853), 240, 229-30.

century, Coolhaes was given several pages as part of a discussion of currents preceding the Remonstrant movement in a volume celebrating the three-hundred-year anniversary of the Remonstrant Brotherhood.<sup>12</sup> However, it has really been since the nineteenth century, through Rogge's biography, that Coolhaes has become so linked with Arminius. Rogge's interest and archival diligence produced the biography that has long stood as a good reference about Coolhaes' life and many of his basic views. He is right that Coolhaes was certainly one forerunner of Arminius and also of the Remonstrants. Rogge's biography is still extremely valuable, and an important study to build on for any scholar who wants to study Caspar Coolhaes. In a way, however, it can be argued that Rogge did Coolhaes a disservice by so closely identifying him anew with Remonstrantism, a theological and political movement with which Coolhaes had much in common, but which he did not know in his life and which brought a division which I believe he would not have supported.

In what ways, then, is Coolhaes linked to Arminius? Coolhaes and Arminius are both representatives of the rather heterogeneous *libertatis causa* faction as opposed to the *religionis causa* group. *Libertatis causa*, "for the sake of liberty," was used widely during the Dutch Revolt as a rallying cry by many, in contrast to others who preferred the slogan "for the sake of [the] religion." The stricter Reformed, or Calvinist, portion of the population, wanted rather to frame the Revolt as a fight for the Reformed faith.<sup>13</sup>

Also, it will be shown that Coolhaes, like the Remonstrants, seemed to oppose what we know as the doctrines of total depravity and limited atonement. In addition, he opposed continued focus on predestination and other "hard" doctrines, when they were insisted upon to the detriment of love and tolerance. Also, his pleading for diversity and toleration was very much in the spirit of the Remonstrants. Coolhaes emphasized that God gives grace to all to choose to do the good. In a desire not to make God the author of evil, he put any failures on the human side of the equation. This was Arminius' view also,<sup>14</sup> and the view of the earliest

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12. F. Pijper, "Geestelijke stroomingen in Nederland vóór de opkomst van het Remonstrantisme," in *De Remonstranten. Gedenkboek bij het 300-jarig bestaan der Remonstrantsche Broederschap*, ed. G.J. Heering and H.Y. Groenewegen (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1919), 54-57.

13. Christine Kooi, *Liberty and Religion: Church and State in Leiden's Reformation, 1572-1620* (Leiden, Boston, Cologne: Brill, 2000), 29.

14. Keith D. Stanglin and Thomas H. McCall, *Jacob Arminius, Theologian of Grace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 140.

Remonstrants.<sup>15</sup> Coolhaes' statements on these ideas will be examined in more detail throughout the dissertation. Holding Scripture above confessions, and desiring unity and toleration, are two important aspects of the "Arminian legacy,"<sup>16</sup> which in fact Coolhaes taught first. Furthermore, his desire for toleration and diversity, free from the rule of the preachers and the church, foreshadows the Remonstrants. In these basics, he can truly be said to be their forerunner. On the question of the relationship between church and state, the Remonstrants also reflected and indeed expanded Coolhaes' ideas. Wtenbogaert, in his 1610 publication *Tractaet van t'ampt ende autoriteyt eener hoogher christelicker overheydt in kerckelicke saecken*, asserted that "collaterality" between ecclesiastical and secular governments as two separate authorities was unworkable. Instead, the secular government, ordained by God, should have authority over all public, external worship.<sup>17</sup> Hugo Grotius would go on to say that when a church is called "public," it means that no one except God may decide on it.<sup>18</sup> All of these points are arguments for Coolhaes being a forerunner of the Remonstrants.

However, a close identification of Coolhaes as the forerunner of Arminius, especially as his primary inspiration, is not made as easily. In the nineteenth century, Rogge picked up this old claim. A Remonstrant himself, he was interested in establishing Coolhaes' link with Remonstrantism, and to identify and popularize in him a hero for his church. His biography of Coolhaes is very thorough in discussing events up to the Synod of Middelburg in 1581, which began the process which led to Coolhaes' defrocking and excommunication. In addition, Rogge summarized some of Coolhaes' works, but did not spend much time on the majority of the theological writings, which were written after this Synod. Even when he used, as sources, those works of Coolhaes accessible to him, he focused largely on the biographical sections, the schisms, and the synods, while summarizing and skimming over many doctrinal sections. For any theological analysis of Coolhaes, therefore, Rogge's biography is not enough. It is important to look more closely at Coolhaes' theological writings.

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15. Stanglin and McCall, *Jacob Arminius*, 190.

16. Stanglin and McCall, *Jacob Arminius*, 204-205.

17. Quoted in Hugo Grotius, *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae Pietas (1613)*, ed. Edwin Rabbie (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 15-16.

18. Grotius, *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae Pietas*, 189. See also Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 12, in regard to this connection.

In looking at these writings, one can see that Jacob Arminius was not a follower of Coolhaes in any clear way. They did hold common ground in an emphasis on free will, and in finding problematic any systems which seemed to make God the author of evil. Nevertheless, there is no one-to-one correlation between Coolhaes and Arminius, historically or doctrinally. It is true that Arminius had been a student in Leiden when Coolhaes was a preacher there in the city churches, and was present in the city during the so-called “schisms” of the Leiden church which resulted from Coolhaes’ disagreements with his fellow Leiden preachers. Coolhaes and his preaching would thus certainly have been familiar to Arminius. And, as it will be shown, Coolhaes briefly lectured at Leiden University in the spring of 1575. However, Arminius would not have been one of his students, since he studied in Leiden from 1576 to 1581.<sup>19</sup> No list remains of the students Coolhaes taught. It is, nevertheless, certainly possible that Arminius may have absorbed some general impressions from Coolhaes during his time in Leiden which inspired him.

However, Arminius was not impacted solely by Coolhaes. As a theologian, Arminius had studied not only at Leiden University but also in Geneva with Theodore Beza. He was conversant with the philosophical thought of Petrus Ramus. He was a greater and more far-ranging theologian than Coolhaes had the capacity or interest to be. He was also systematic and thorough, as Coolhaes was not; his writings encompassed all dogmatic *loci*. He went on to become a Reformed preacher in Amsterdam as well as returning as a professor in Leiden. He famously disputed with Franciscus Gomarus and his other colleagues at Leiden University, at the heart of one of, arguably, the most significant theological debates in the history of Christianity.<sup>20</sup>

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19. Guilielmus du Rieu, *Album studiosorum academiae Lugduno Batavae 1575-1875* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1875) 4, 1449.

20. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to analyze Arminius or Gomarus, or their thought, fully; however, a few sources may be helpful. For sources on the life of Franciscus Gomarus, see J. P. van Itterzon, *Franciscus Gomarus* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1929); and J. van Belzen, and S. D. Post, *Vroom, vurig en vreedzaam: het leven van Franciscus Gomarus (1563-1641)* (Houten: Den Hertog, 1996). For Arminius’ biography, see Carl Bangs, *Arminius. A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998) (originally published by Abingdon Press, 1971). See also Stanglin and McCall, *Jacob Arminius, Theologian of Grace*. See also: Keith Stanglin, ed., *The Missing Public Disputations of Jacobus Arminius: Introduction, Text, and Notes* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010); William den Boer, *God’s Two-fold Love. The Theology of Jacob Arminius (1559-1609)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010). See also some newer studies about Arminius: William den Boer, “Defense or Deviation? A Re-examination of Arminius’ Motives to Deviate from the ‘Mainstream’ Reformed Theology,” in *Revisiting the Synod of Dort (1681-1619)*, 23-48; Simon Vuyk, *Het einde der Remonstranten: Arminius als mythe: vrijheid en verdraagzaamheid bij de Remonstranten als probleem* (Utrecht: Kok, 2012); John Valero Fesko, “Arminius on Justification,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 94 (2014): 1-21; Simon

Furthermore, during the course of that debate, it is important to know that Coolhaes rebuked both Arminius and Gomarus equally for what he saw as a mistaken focus and lack of good teaching and example. These rebukes will be described in more detail later.

Also different from Arminius was Coolhaes' controversial support of Mennonites, Catholics, and Spiritualists, and even of certain Socinians. Coolhaes was broader and more accepting in that sense than Arminius. In fact, Willem Nijenhuis found this decisive. He judged that Coolhaes' sympathies for Socinians and Spiritualists make it impossible for him to be the forerunner of the Remonstrants.<sup>21</sup> Finally, Coolhaes would have abhorred the continued division between Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants which played out after his death in 1615. He pleaded for diversity within the visible church, not for the creation of more theological or confessional groups. It is hard to imagine him at all happy with the emergence of the Remonstrants, even though he would have thoroughly opposed many of the Contra-Remonstrant positions. For all of these reasons, even though similarity can be seen between the broader Reformed ideas of Coolhaes and Arminius, and it may be true that Coolhaes was one inspiration to Arminius, it is inadvisable to link them together unquestioningly.

In addition, Coolhaes himself is a part of a bigger stream of critics and discontents: it is important to say that he was more than "just" a forerunner of Arminius and the Remonstrants. Coolhaes was similar to other libertine preachers in the Netherlands in various ways. Rogge pointed out his resemblance to Herman Herberts of Gouda, who had affirmed human perfectability and denied predestination, to Tako Sybrants of Utrecht and later Medemblik, who also rejected predestination, and to Cornelis Wiggertsz of Hoorn, who had rejected the doctrine of original sin.<sup>22</sup> Herberts, Wiggertsz and Coolhaes were named as forerunners of Arminius at the National Synod of Dordt, 1618-1619, in the foreword of the *Acta* of the Synod.<sup>23</sup> But they were not the only contemporaries of Coolhaes who were

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Vuyk, *De Arminiaanse vredeskerk: redevoeringen van Jacobus Arminius (1606) en Simon Episcopus (1618) over de onderlinge verdraagzaamheid van Christenen* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2015).

21. Willem Nijenhuis, "Coolhaes (Koolhaes, Coelaas), Caspar Janszoon," in *BLGNP*, vol. 4, 102.

22. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 152-230. Although Coolhaes was compared to some who rejected original sin and affirmed human perfectability, we will argue that his position on these questions is difficult to pin down.

23. "Foreword of the *Acta* of the National Synod of Dordt," *Kerkrecht*, [www.kerkrecht.nl/node/1857](http://www.kerkrecht.nl/node/1857) (accessed 26 jan. 2016).

similar to him. Cornelis van Braeckel and Pieter (Petrus) Hackius, both later preachers in Leiden, would be his successors in criticism of Reformed power there.<sup>24</sup> Also, earlier, Herman Duifhuis in Utrecht had agreed with Coolhaes on the importance of the Spirit and open communion, and opposition to consistories and confessionalism.<sup>25</sup> In Rotterdam, the conflict around Petrus Anastasius Hyperphragmus Gandensis, the magistrates' choice, echoed the struggle in Leiden between consistory and secular government. In addition, Michiel Andrieszoon, who preached in several places including The Hague and in Friesland, opposed Reformed organization in favor of secular oversight of the church.<sup>26</sup> So, in short, Coolhaes was one of a large number of preachers and laymen of his time who were critical of and discontented with various aspects of the churches and belief.

In addition, Coolhaes was a Spiritualist, which Arminius was not. This dissertation argues that he should be seen as a member of a “fourth stream” of sixteenth-century Dutch church history. Sebastian Franck, a German Spiritualist who inspired Coolhaes, described this category:

Three main beliefs have originated in our times, which have large following: Lutherans, Zwinglians and Baptists; the fourth is coming, that will clear out of the way all outward preaching, ceremonies, sacraments, the ban, and callings as unnecessary, and simply collect an invisible, spiritual Church in unity of the Spirit and belief among all people ....<sup>27</sup>

The great Dutch expert on Reformation history, Cornelis Augustijn, also spoke of these categories when he proposed that alongside Catholics, Calvinists and Anabaptists, one should speak of a fourth stream – libertines, enthusiasts, “neutrals.” This fourth stream is for him not necessarily a statement of ideology, but should be seen as those who had a more critical

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24. Olivier Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine: contribution à l'étude de l'établissement de la discipline ecclésiastique aux Pays-Bas, ou Lambert Daneau aux Pays-Bas (1581-1583)* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 83.

25. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 80, 86-92.

26. *NNBW*, vol. 9, 25-26; J. Smit, “Michael Andrieszoon, de eerste predikant van Den Haag, medestander van Coolhaes in zijn strijd tegen kerkorde en confessie,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 24 (1931): 25-68.

27. Quoted by Patrick Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World. A Biography of Sebastian Franck* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 40.

stance against the Reformed Church.<sup>28</sup> Coolhaes fits into this stream. In this dissertation, I define this “fourth stream” as that of the Spiritualists, and talk more in depth about it in Chapter 6.

One could even argue that Coolhaes, along with other Spiritualists, critics of clericalism and a strict rule of the Reformed Church, and advocates of tolerance and religious diversity, can be seen as forerunners of other broad, modern movements and ideas. In this group of many critics, skeptics, libertarians and free-thinkers, Coolhaes is like one small drop of water in a thunderstorm. But it is not too much to say that he, together with many, many others, is one forerunner not just of Arminius and the Remonstrants with their opposition of Calvinist predestination and their calls for toleration, but also of the Collegiants and Quakers and their free preaching and reliance on the Spirit, the Pietists and their emphasis on affective religion, and even in a small way of the Enlightenment and its religious skepticism.<sup>29</sup>

#### Overview of Coolhaes study: some trends and aspects

This dissertation is being completed in 2015 – four hundred years after Coolhaes’ death in 1615. Interest in Coolhaes by others has ebbed and flowed with these centuries. In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Coolhaes was mentioned in contemporary documents. The first few sources are from Coolhaes’ lifetime, in the period before his excommunication, during the turbulent times of disagreement between the Leiden preachers, elders and magistrates. Most of them will be discussed in more depth as they come up chronologically and thematically, but a brief introduction is in order at this point. The “Arbitral Accord” is the document of reconciliation between previously quarreling preachers Coolhaes and Pieter Cornelisz, which was reprinted and discussed, in the story of Leiden’s Reformation and its

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28. Cornelis Augustijn, “Die Reformierte Kirche in den Niederlanden und der Libertinismus in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Querdenken. Dissenz und Toleranz im Wandel der Geschichte. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Hans R. Guggisberg*, ed. M. Erbe et al. (Mannheim: Palatium, 1996), 107-21. See also: Bergsma, “Calvinisten en libertijnen,” 220; Janse, “De protestantse reformatie,” 42.

29. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002) 67; John G. Stackhouse, Jr., ed., *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic), 2003, 23; R. Emmet McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent: Caspar Schwenckfeld and the Schwenckfelders* (Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1996), 70-71; R. Emmet McLaughlin, “Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld: two Spiritualist *Viae*,” in Jan-Dirk Müller, ed., *Sebastian Franck (1499-1542)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993), 84.



fiery schisms, by Christine Kooi.<sup>30</sup> *Justificatie* and *Remonstrance*, presented initially as anonymous works issued by the Leiden magistracy and signed by Jan van Hout, were actually written by Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert on behalf of the city government.<sup>31</sup> Coornhert also wrote two letters to Coolhaes,<sup>32</sup> although any of Coolhaes' to Coornhert that may have existed have not survived. The *Cort, eenvoudich en waerachtich verhael*<sup>33</sup> is a document written by preachers who opposed Coolhaes, justifying their decision. The records of Leiden University, where Coolhaes briefly lectured, also mention him. There are also engravings from his lifetime: a well-known depiction of the festive procession, including Coolhaes, on the occasion of the university's dedication, and a portrait of Coolhaes as "professor of theology."

Those early and mid-seventeenth-century works in which Coolhaes is connected with Arminius and the Remonstrants have already been mentioned. For many chroniclers, interest in him mostly ceased after the story of his excommunication. This may be because the majority of his written works, written after that excommunication, were not reprinted, and survive in single or very few copies in archives only. Also, the early identification of him with the Remonstrant movement by the Synod of Dordt and by Trigland likely pigeonholed him for many as "heretical" - as a known, and possibly despised, character.

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30. "Het Arbitrael Accord," 29 October, 1580, no. 3358, RKZA, SA II, ELO. The text of the *Arbitral Accord* is also reproduced in Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 217-20.

31. Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, *Justificatie des magistraets tot Leyden in Hollandt, teghens de calumnien, ter saecken vande differenten, tusschen henluyden ende eenighe vande ghemeente aldaer, by den selven, den magistraet wat min dan Christelicken nageseyt* (Leiden: Andries Verschout, 1579); Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, *Remonstrance, of vertooch by die van Leyden den heeren ritterschappen ende steden representeerende de Staten slants van Hollant, in februario 1582. hare mede-lidmaten gedaen, nopende tverhandelde der predicanten, inden latest-voorledenen zomer tot Middelburch in het nationael synodus (zo zijt noemen) vergadert geweest zijnde, met den gevolge van dien* (Amsterdam: N. Biestkens, 1582).

32. Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, Two letters from Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert to Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes, "Brieven-boek," in *Wercken*, vol. 3, BPL 2249, folio 146BCD, UBL.

33. [Arent Cornelisz (Crusius)?], *Cort eenvoudich ende waerachtich verhael, waaromme Caspar Coolhaes predikant gheweest zijnde binnen Leyden: eytelick (na langhe handelinghe diemen met hem vander ghemeyner kercken weghen gehadt heeft) den 25 martij anno 1582 by den synode provinciael van Hollandt van der kercke Christi is ghexcommuniceert. Ghestelt van weghen der predicanten ende ouderlinghen in den voorsc. Synode vergadert, tot noodwendighe verantwoordinghe der waerheyt, ende onderwijs der ghene, die vander saken qualick oft onrecht bericht moghen zijn. Waerinne verhaelt wort het beghin des twist binnen Leyden, ende wat neersticheyt ghedaen is, om dien neder te legghen, ende den voorsc. Casparen tot afstandt zijns onrechts ende dwalingen te brenghen* (Dordrecht: Jan Canin, 1582).

In the seventeenth century, Coolhaes is mentioned briefly in A. J. van Beeck Calkoen's *Observationes aliquot juris publici sacri in Hollandia*, 1619,<sup>34</sup> and Meursius' *Illustrium Hollandiae et West-frisiae ordinum alma academiae Leidensis*, 1624.<sup>35</sup> He comes up repeatedly in Remonstrant Gerard Brandt's history of the Reformation, 1677.<sup>36</sup>

Then, for quite some time, Coolhaes was not written about. In 1800, J. A. de Chalmot wrote the entry for Coolhaes in the *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden*, but makes factual errors in his account, such as the dates of Coolhaes' preaching in Deventer.<sup>37</sup> In 1857, Kist addresses the negative reaction of Coolhaes to Justus Lipsius' return to Catholicism.<sup>38</sup> In 1895, J. Hania refers to him in his biography of sixteenth-century preacher Wernerus Helmichius, one of the mediators in the "Coolhaes affair."<sup>39</sup> So, in a small way, Coolhaes was beginning to be mentioned by scholars.

The most significant of these nineteenth-century scholars, as has been mentioned, was H. C. Rogge. His two-volume work<sup>40</sup> is a Remonstrant, confessional, biographical and thematic study of Coolhaes as "the forerunner of Arminius and the Remonstrants." Rogge believes that Coolhaes is important and worthy of study, because to Rogge the Arminius/Gomarus conflict is the "flashpoint" of Dutch church history, involving the issues of church/state relationships and free will upon which all other disputes are based.<sup>41</sup> Rogge ends the work with attention to other broader thinkers whom he believes are also forerunners, as mentioned earlier: Herman Herberts of Gouda, Tako Sybrants of Utrecht and later Medemblik, and Cornelis Wiggertsz

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34. A. J. van Beeck Calkoen, *Observationes aliquot juris publici sacri in Hollandia, desumptae ex historia introductae legis ecclesiasticae, anno 1619* (Trajecti ad Rhenum: N. van der Monde, 1830).

35. Joannes Meursius, *Illustrium Hollandiae et West-frisiae ordinum alma academiae Leidensis* (Leiden: Colster, 1624).

36. Gerard Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie* (Amsterdam: Jan Rieuwertsz, Henrik en Dirk Boom, 1671), vol. 1, 366, 557, 649, 652-54, 674-75, 684-85, 716-17, and in the Register, spelled "Koolhaes."

37. See *BWDN*, vol. 7, 266. Chalmot says Coolhaes preached in Deventer in 1576, when it was actually in 1566. This error is mentioned by E. W. Moes and C. P. Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers en uitgevers in de zestiende eeuw*, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: C.L. van Langenhuisen, 1915), 135-38.

38. Nicolaas Christiaan Kist, "J. Lipsius door Caspar Coolhaes beoordeeld," *Kerkhistorisch archief* 1 (1857): 425-27.

39. Jan Hania, *Wernerus Helmichius* (Utrecht: H. Honig, 1895), 28, 130-44, 207-13.

40. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*. Rogge also wrote a shorter but very enthusiastic biographical sketch in W. Moll, ed., *Kalender voor de protestanten in Nederland*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: H.W. Mooij, 1856), 210-15.

41. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. I, 3.

of Hoorn.<sup>42</sup> Rogge also appends lists of Coolhaes' (and Herberts') written works, in so far as he knows them. He also uncovered more of Coolhaes' writings and so continued to focus on Coolhaes by editing *De Roomsche feestdagen en hunne viering in de 16de eeuw*.<sup>43</sup>

The twentieth century saw much more interest in Coolhaes. C. P. Burger, in 1915, continued the series about Amsterdam book publishers of the sixteenth century begun by Ernst Wilhelm Moes, and devoted quite a lot of attention to Coolhaes. He brought much new scholarship to the discussion, reproduced rare content and illustrations, and included a substantial section of biography, a list of works by Coolhaes, and brief discussions of most of them. He featured the books and woodcuts Coolhaes produced during his later Amsterdam years, some of which were unknown to Rogge.<sup>44</sup> So, Burger's work is essential to the study of Coolhaes.

More study of Coolhaes appeared in the 1970's and 1980's, beginning with J. Kamphuis' small book in 1970 about the Synod of Middelburg and Coolhaes' excommunication. Kamphuis, from a strongly confessional, Calvinist perspective, discussed the Synod of Middelburg as a useful weapon in the hands of the Reformed of the sixteenth century against confessional indifference.<sup>45</sup> In his view, it was Coolhaes' unwillingness to submit to the church order and church rule that led to the disputes in Leiden in 1579-1580, by which the city was *beroerd en gescheurd* ("disturbed and torn apart").<sup>46</sup> Importantly, Kamphuis also included previously unpublished documents from Middelburg, including letters between Coolhaes and the Leiden magistracy, and Coolhaes and this Synod, in the person of Arent Cornelisz.<sup>47</sup> Also, he discussed the strong link between Coolhaes and Sebastian Franck, an important topic which had not been adequately explored up to that time. To him, Coolhaes was primarily a follower of Franck. Despite its small size, and its bias, addressing these important topics makes Kamphuis' book vital to our topic.

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42. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 152-230.

43. H. C. Rogge, ed., *De Roomsche feestdagen en hunne viering in de 16de eeuw*. N.p., 1886.

44. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*.

45. Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 9.

46. Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 10.

47. Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 66-82. Kamphuis relates that these were found in the Leiden Archive, in a group which Burger mentions he had scanned quickly. See Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 42.

Other twentieth-century authors have also gone deeper in discussing Coolhaes, even though they have not devoted an entire book to him. Carl Bangs, in 1971, wrote about him in his definitive biography of Arminius.<sup>48</sup> In the same year, Olivier Fatio addressed Coolhaes in some detail from the point of view of his Calvinist opponent Daneau, in his study of the latter<sup>49</sup> – an important critical perspective. Willem Nijenhuis mentioned him in his biography of Adrianus Saravia in 1980.<sup>50</sup> R. H. Bremmer, in 1981, analyzed Coolhaes at Middelburg in a volume commemorating the four-hundredth anniversary of the Synod of Middelburg.<sup>51</sup> J. P. van Dooren, in the same volume, wrote about Coolhaes' early years in Germany, enlarging the fund of biographical facts with German sources from Coolhaes' earlier life. Van Dooren had also written an article in German the year before, giving a concise biography of Coolhaes and presenting him as a Biblical theologian, rather than a libertine.<sup>52</sup> A certain amount of attention was paid to Coolhaes in the dissertation of Wiebe Bergsma on Aggaeus of Albada in 1983.<sup>53</sup> Coolhaes as a "Zwinglian" is discussed in an article by Ulrich Gaebler in 1985.<sup>54</sup> Coolhaes was mentioned numerous times in the 1986 history of the Rapenburg by Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, and a short biography was given in volume 4.<sup>55</sup>

Attention to Coolhaes continued to increase. Willem Nijenhuis focused important, renewed attention on Coolhaes by a biographical entry in the *Biografisch Lexicon voor de*

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48. Bangs, *Arminius*. (See note 17).

49. Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*. (See note 21).

50. Willem Nijenhuis, *Adrianus Saravia (c. 1532-1613): Dutch Calvinist, First Reformed Defender of the English Episcopal Church Order on the Basis of the ius divinum* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 81.

51. R. H. Bremmer, "De nationale synode van Middelburg (1581): politieke achtergronden van kerkelijke besluitvorming," in *De nationale synode te Middelburg in 1581. Calvinisme in opbouw in de Noordelijke en Zuidelijke Nederlanden*, ed. J. P. van Dooren (Middelburg: Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen, 1981), 1-63.

52. J. P. van Dooren, "Kaspar Kohlhaas (Caspar Coolhaes) (1532-1615), Prediger in Essen und der Niederlanden," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Stadt und Stift Essen* 95 (1980), 85-99; J. P. van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven vóór en na de synode van Middelburg," in Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 174-83.

53. Wiebe Bergsma, *Aggaeus van Albada (c. 1525-1587), schwenkfeldiaan, staatsman en strijder voor verdraagzaamheid* (Meppel: Krips Repro, 1983), 140-41.

54. Ulrich Gäbler, "Zur Verbreitung des Zwinglianismus in den Niederlanden und der Fall C.C." in H. R. Schmitt, *Zwingli und Europa* (Zürich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 217-36.

55. Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, C. Willemijn Fock, and A. J. van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg: geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht*, vol. 4 (Leiden: Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 1986), 395-98.

*Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*, which includes facts Rogge did not bring out.<sup>56</sup> Benjamin Kaplan has written Coolhaes' entry in the 1996 edition of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, and has mentioned him in other books and articles. Kaplan identified Coolhaes as Reformed yet libertine, "a champion of tolerance," and felt that his writings "reveal spiritualist influence."<sup>57</sup> Gerrit Voogt included a good description of Coolhaes in connection with Coornhert, Lipsius, and questions of conscience.<sup>58</sup> Christine Kooi has done significant work with Coolhaes as part of her book on the Reformation in Leiden, published in 2000. She highlights the two factions: those who act on behalf of "the religion," and those who are motivated by liberty – in other words, *religionis causa* and *libertatis causa*. She focuses predominantly on the "schism" between colleague-preachers Coolhaes and Pieter Cornelisz, and includes the text of the "Arbitral Accord."<sup>59</sup> Karel Bostoën, in 2009, wrote in some detail about Coolhaes' translation of Gwalther, *Van de Christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*.<sup>60</sup> Marianne Roobol has also given some concentrated attention to Coolhaes in her study of Coornhert from 2010.<sup>61</sup> In 2012, Huib Noordzij detailed quite a lot of Coolhaes' story, along with those of other "dissidents" and their opponents.<sup>62</sup> Mirjam van Veen contributed an article on Coolhaes' time in Deventer, in which she notes that a "modern biography of Coolhaes is a desiderium."<sup>63</sup> All in all, interest in Coolhaes has continued to grow throughout the twentieth century and beyond.<sup>64</sup>

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56. Nijenhuis, "Coolhaes (Koolhaes, Coelaas), Caspar Janszoon," (See note 18).

57. Benjamin J. Kaplan, "Remnants of the Papal Yoke: Apathy and Opposition in the Dutch Reformation," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994): 653-67; Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*; Benjamin Kaplan, "Coolhaes, Caspar," *OER*, vol. 1, 423-24.

58. Gerrit Voogt, "Primacy of Individual Conscience or Primacy of the State? The Clash between D. V. Coornhert and Justus Lipsius," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997): 1231-50.

59. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*.

60. Karel Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden: Jan van Hout (1542-1609), stadssecretaris, dichter en vernieuwer* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2009).

61. Marianne Roobol, *Disputation by Decree: the Public Disputations between Reformed Ministers and Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert as Instruments of Religious Policy during the Dutch Revolt (1577-1583)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010).

62. Huib Noordzij, *Handboek van de reformatie: de Nederlandse kerkhervorming in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw* (Kampen: Kok, 2012).

63. Mirjam van Veen, "'... your praiseworthy town Deventer ...' Caspar Coolhaes on Unity and Religious Tolerance," in *Religious Minorities and Cultural Diversity in the Dutch Republic: Studies Presented*

Coolhaes, therefore, has an established niche in the history of the Dutch churches as the “libertine,” “Erastian” preacher who sided with the Leiden magistracy against his fellow Reformed clergy: a forerunner of the Remonstrants. Why then, in light of this, should there be a fuller re-examination of Caspar Coolhaes at this time? Several reasons may be put forward.

First, and most importantly, in the various studies about Coolhaes, there has been insufficient attention to his theological works, especially the works which have been more recently rediscovered, and in turn no adequate integrated definition of Coolhaes’ identity or ecclesiology. Studying all of his writings allows us to place him more precisely on the colorful spectrum of Dutch Reformation diversity, and to analyze his eclectic views. In examining Coolhaes’ writings, his most pressing concerns can be clearly seen to have to do with the church, both visible and invisible. Therefore, any good analysis of him and his thought should focus on his ecclesiology. What did he believe and teach about the church?

Also, Coolhaes’ story lends itself well to the writing of religious history in which confessional emphases are giving way to other approaches.<sup>65</sup> The Reformed have long been seen as confessional “champions,” while the libertines or other independents were “fierce opponents.” In today’s climate, it is tempting to read the situation in the opposite way – the Reformed as having been the fierce ones, and the libertines as the champions of tolerance and freedom of religion and thought.<sup>66</sup> Coolhaes’ writings reflect that latter point of view. Certain Reformed preachers were his primary opponents, as will be seen. The divisive early seventeenth-century Remonstrant/Contra-Remonstrant struggles served to sideline Coolhaes;

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to Piet Visser on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday, ed. August van Hollander, Mirjam van Veen, Anna Woolstra, and Alex Noord (Leiden: Brill, 2014). 111-23.

64. See also the short Coolhaes bibliography on Leiden University’s site: <https://vre.dutchrevolt.leiden.nl/vre/dutch/personen/C/Pages/coolhaes.aspx> (accessed 26 jan 2016).

65. Wim Janse, “De protestantse reformatie in de Nederlanden. Wendingen in de twintigste-eeuwse historiografie,” in *Balans van een eeuw: wendingen in de historiografie van het Christendom 1901-2001*, ed. Jack de Mooij and Ineke Smit (Heerenveen: Uitgeverij Groen, 2002), 33-49. For an overview of the process of confessionalization and how this process affected and was affected by the forces of modern state-building, see Heinz Schilling, *Konfessionalisierung und Staatsinteressen, Internationale Beziehungen 1559-1660* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2007), 34-41.

66. Bergsma, “Calvinisten en libertijnen,” 211.

a non-confessional historiography is a good opportunity to re-present this “confessionally-indifferent” preacher – a prime representative of the *latitudinaire hervormingsgezinden*.<sup>67</sup>

Further, the study of Coolhaes is interesting as it informs the histories of Leiden and Amsterdam, assisting in the fleshing out of the study of the “Reformation in the cities.”<sup>68</sup> These include Coolhaes’ relationships with magistrates, consistories, classes, and the States of Holland. Both Leiden and Amsterdam were growing and changing during Coolhaes’ lifetime. The Reformation and, indeed, the Reformed Church, did not just become accepted and dominant in society by some easy and natural process, but had to convince each city in turn, which in some cases went against local urban customs and governments.<sup>69</sup> Coolhaes is also what might be called in today’s scholarship a “transnational” figure. He passed back and forth between the cities and towns of the Palatinate and the Northern Netherlands, linking those regions in the company of other exiles and religious immigrants. All in all, through reflecting on these emphases, Coolhaes comes more clearly into view and in turn enhances the picture of his geographical, historical, political and especially religious contexts.

In addition, a compelling reason for new attention on Coolhaes is to highlight his pleading for religious diversity. This is a vital feature of his thought which must not be forgotten in the midst of details about specific controversies in which he was involved. The sixteenth century was a time of dangerous division, much as ours is today. Coolhaes’ ideas of confessional diversity and Christian freedom are interesting for this reason. He defined the church as a place which should be characterized by inclusion, not exclusion. His idea of society was that different church confessions could and should exist side by side in peace. This will be considered in more detail in later chapters; it is the theme of this dissertation, and it is key to the understanding of Coolhaes.

Finally, a word or two about the sources and the structure of this study. Coolhaes’ extant works,<sup>70</sup> which we have considered to be the most important sources for this project, are

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67. Bergsma, “Calvinisten en libertijnen,” 216; Johannes Lindeboom, *De confessioneele ontwikkeling der reformatie in de Nederlanden* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1946), 107-109.

68. Kooi mentions this as a reason for her study of Leiden: Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 2.

69. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 3-6.

70. The Bibliography lists all of Coolhaes’ extant works, all of which I have analyzed for this study. Several works by Coolhaes, which he himself or others reference, are non-extant. They are: *Aenwijzinge*

mostly little-known and un-examined. Some are in manuscript, but most are printed but not reprinted since the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. They have survived exclusively in archives, many in a single copy, although since this research was begun in 2005, several have been scanned and put online by others. In making the choice to use Coolhaes' own works as the main sources for this study, it must be admitted that the polemical nature of many of his works may make him somewhat unreliable as a narrator for historical events or for the evaluation of other figures. However, his own works are the best choice for a study of what he believed his own theological views to be – far better than the works of his detractors or even admirers. His own positions are, of course, the focus of this dissertation. Combining a critical analysis of his own works with those of his contemporaries – both those who admired him as well as those who despised him – yields the best overall result. The evaluation of his works has not been a quantitative study which would equate numbers of pages with the importance of a certain topic, but one which qualitatively sought to know his life events, to understand to what provocations he was responding in any given work, and then to discern his views under and behind the lengthy rhetoric and criticism. This was especially important since he rarely makes any systematic exposition of his ideas. Familiarity with biblical themes and passages has been key in this evaluation, in order to understand his use of spiritualizing metaphors and symbolic language. This reading of Coolhaes' works has enabled a systematizing of the key features of his ecclesiological framework – distilling, to use a metaphor appropriate to Coolhaes, his most distinctive ideas about the church.

Since these ideas are mirrored in some significant ways by his life events, this dissertation will, as promised, begin with an updated biographical sketch of Coolhaes, interspersed with short descriptions of his writings when helpful. This biographical sketch is the introduction to our main question, and fills in vital background. Rogge and Burger's foundational story will be fleshed out with Coolhaes' own narration from his writings, and with archival facts when available. First, there will be a description of his life before his

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(mentioned in *Aenhechtsel* as having been published in 1596); *Afbeeldinghe vande waerachtige kercke Godts, mitsgaders de sichtbaerlijcke Kercken* (woodcut with Coolhaes text); *Afbeeldinghe vande waerachtige kercke Godts, hoe sy is in deser werelt* (woodcut with Coolhaes text); *De eenvoudige ende van gantscher herten Godt soekende mensch* (woodcut with Coolhaes text); *De Leeraer die tgene dat hy anderen leert, selfs niet en doet* (woodcut with Coolhaes text); *De Leeraer, in godlicken saecken blint zijnde* (woodcut with Coolhaes text); *De Leeraer, neerstich zijnde* (woodcut with Coolhaes text); *Van de godlick wijsheyt* (woodcut with Coolhaes text); *Vermaning aen Jaques Mercijs*, 1601; *Christelijcke Schrijf-calendar*, 1606?



arrival as a preacher in Leiden in 1574, and the disagreements and power-struggles, such as the so-called “Coolhaes affair,” which led to his excommunication, will be traced. It will be shown that although his ideas developed in small ways throughout his life, the main beliefs remained constant from early in his ministry. The Middelburg Synod and his excommunication will receive special attention. The story will then follow his unexpected career change: his life as distiller and rogue writer of theology in Leiden and Amsterdam. In the second part, the dissertation will leave the biographical and focus on Coolhaes’ thinking, and on the main question, which is what sort of church Coolhaes would have founded if he could. Several main themes, the ecclesiological ideas which drove him most, form the body of this work. His writings will inform the sections in which they fit best. Our examination of his ecclesiology runs as follows. First, there will be an examination of his Spiritualism, meaning his bipartite emphasis on the visible and invisible, the seen and unseen, which will be argued to be at the very basis of all his views. Then, it will be shown how this inspired his Erastianism on the relationship between church and state. After that, his views on clergy, both his criticisms of them and also what should characterize them in order for them to serve the churches well, will be laid out. Finally, his deep desire for tolerance, religious diversity, and individual freedom, both in the visible church and in society, will be displayed, by looking at the congregation of people as a whole.

## Part I: The life Coolhaes led

### Chapter 1: From silent monk to preacher of reform

In this biographical sketch, the research of H. C. Rogge,<sup>1</sup> C. P. Burger,<sup>2</sup> W. Nijenhuis,<sup>3</sup> and others, who have done so much to verify the basics of Coolhaes' life story, will be used as the foundation, although not unquestioningly. Facts which have come to light since they wrote will be added, some contributed by other secondary writers and some emerging from archival research. Coolhaes' writings and the writings of others in his time will be mentioned along the way, but in-depth discussions of most of these will come the second part of this book.

Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes was born in Cologne on January 24, 1534 or 1536.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, inquiry at the Cologne city archives gives no definitive birth date, or further information about his father or his father's occupation, since there existed no birth-registers in sixteenth-century Cologne, and since Coolhaes was a common name in that area.<sup>5</sup> His family was apparently Roman Catholic,<sup>6</sup> devout, and educated, since Coolhaes testified that

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1. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*.

2. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*.

3. Nijenhuis, "Coolhaes," *BLGNP*, 100-102.

4. Most, including de Chalmot, Rogge, Burger, and Molhuysen and Blok say 1536. In this they are following the date in Meursius, *Illustrium Hollandiae et West-frisiae ordinum alma academiae Leidensis*, 3-5. On the other hand, the argument of the *BWPGN* for 1534 is that in 1614, when honored by the *burgemeesters* of Leiden for his service to the city, he was said to be "over 80 years old" which he would have been if he were born in 1534, *BWPGN*, 172; see also *Nav.* X, 279-80. Nijenhuis in *BLGNP* also lists 1534 as Coolhaes' birth year: Nijenhuis, "Coolhaes, Caspar Janszoon," 100.

5. Dr. Max Plassmann, Historisches Archiv der Stad Köln, confirms that the question cannot be resolved based on birth registers. He has been kind enough to write, "The finding aids of the City Archives of Cologne contain no hint on Caspar Coolhaes. There are no birth-registers or registers of inhabitants for the sixteenth century, so it is not possible to find traces of him or his family in the sources without further information (where he lived etc.). I also cannot find traces of his father. The name Coolhaes (Kohlhaas etc.) is to be found, but it is a frequent name, so it cannot be proven, that its bearers are relatives to Caspar Coolhaes without further evidence." E-mail to the author, March 11, 2014.

6. Dr. Josef van Elten, Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln, has kindly let me know that regretfully no baptismal record exists for Coolhaes. He writes, "Unfortunately I have to inform you that church registers on baptism, weddings and mortality had been introduced in our church administration on demand of the Trent Council (1545 to 1563). Then it took some time, about one hundred years, until those registers were established in all churches of our diocese. So, I'm afraid to tell you, there will be no chance of getting a testimony of baptism." Dr. Josef van Elten, Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln. E-mail to the author, May 11, 2015.

he had “from childhood (not to boast) known the Bible, and had seen and read much.”<sup>7</sup> It is striking that he was born in Cologne, a city which features in the story of several well-known Spiritualists in the sixteenth century. Caspar Schwenckfeld had been a student at the University of Cologne, before 1510 or 1511.<sup>8</sup> Much later, in 1565, Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert stayed in Cologne and became friends with jurist Aggaeus van Albada, who introduced him to Schwenckfeld’s works, and may have met Hendrik Niclaes there also.<sup>9</sup>

Surely young Caspar must have received a certain amount of education, since his later life shows him with at least some knowledge of Latin, a wide knowledge of the works of various authors, the ability to write theological prose, poetry, and fiction, and even the breadth of knowledge to understand and write about the chemical principles of distilling, which he would carry on as a successful trade. As will be shown, he had been a schoolmaster, and also lectured at the University of Leiden, albeit very briefly. Some believe that he may have been more or less self-schooled.<sup>10</sup> However, it has been more generally thought that he studied in Düsseldorf and perhaps in Cologne,<sup>11</sup> a view which will now be examined in light of some context and archival evidence. Coolhaes does not write anything about his education himself.

First, it is possible that he studied in Cologne at the cathedral school, or in Düsseldorf at the *Hochschule*. This study might have been under Johannes Monheim (Monhemius) of Elberfeld (1509-1564). It is a popular idea with scholars that Coolhaes had contact with

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7. “... ende van kints beenen aen (sonder roem te spreken) in de heyliger Godlicker Schrifture geoeffent.” Caspar Coolhaes, *Een cort, waerachtich verhael van tsorgelicke vyer, der hatelicker, ende van God vervloecter oneenicheyt in religions saken, ontsteecken zijnde in Hollandt anno 1574: door wien het selve ontsteecken ende smoockende gheleghen heeft tot int jaer 1579: door wien, ende wat plaetsen in Hollandt, tselve op gheblasen, dattet brandende gheworden is: Des welcken vlam een weynich gedaelt zijnde, door wien tselve opt nieuwe weder op gheblasen, stercker ende grooter gheworden is, dan het te voren was: des welcken vlam oock metter tijt minerende, nu wederom met veel ende verscheyden, so grooten, als cleynen blaesbalghen, teffens op gheblasen wort om stercker te branden, ten eynde, dat het gheheele landt, door het selve vernielt, ende inden gront soude moghen bedorven worden: door wat mannen tselve vyer by tijts uytgebluscht, ende soo gheheel tot niet soude connen ghedaen worden, dat van tselve gheen coolken meer over blijven, van t welcke men te besorghen mocht hebben, dat t eenigher tijt, aen tselve, een nieu vyer soude moghen ontsteecken worden. Tot ghetrouwer waerschouwinghe, ende opwecken van den ghenen, der welcken ampt is, om tselve by tijts te remedieren* (Leiden: N.p., 1610), 79.

8. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 70.

9. Hendrik Bongers, *Leven en werk van D. V. Coornhert* (Amsterdam: G. A. van Oorschot, 1978), 62.

10. This is the view of Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 35.

11. This view is found in many places, including the entry for Coolhaes in the NDB/ADB by Nijenhuis, “Coolhaes (Koolhaes, Coelaas), Caspar Janszoon,” *BLGNP*, 100, and Kaplan, “Coolhaes,” *OER*, vol. 1, 423. They are, possibly, using Rogge as their source.

Monheim, who admired both Luther and Calvin, as well as Erasmus, and who might have been an influence for humanism and/or Protestantism on the boy. Monheim had finished his M.A. in Cologne in 1530, served as the rector in the seminary in Essen (1532-1536), and then as rector also for the cathedral school in Cologne until 1545. In 1545, he became rector of a new *Hochschule* in Düsseldorf, which was established by Duke Wilhelm V that same year. Students there were taught Greek, law, catechism and the Bible, and held regular disputations. Monheim also wrote a series of textbooks in 1538-1550, then editions of Erasmus in 1551, and later a catechism, which showed influence of both Luther and Calvin, and which advocated a middle view of the Eucharist between the two.<sup>12</sup> This points to a possible evolution of Monheim's own views. It will be seen that Coolhaes' own Eucharistic views are hard to fit into either Lutheranism or Calvinism. If Coolhaes studied with Monheim, it would have been in the period between before 1554, and this means that he could have been at the cathedral school in Cologne<sup>13</sup> as a very young boy before 1545, and/or at the school in Düsseldorf after that.

Did Coolhaes attend one of Monheim's schools? It is impossible to say for sure, since there is no evidence. The school in Düsseldorf numbered 1,200–2,000 pupils in 1550, but no student lists survive.<sup>14</sup> However, Monheim's eclectic approach to the Reformers does resemble what Coolhaes' would be in the future. If Monheim's views were evolving, however, the boy Coolhaes would have been his student at an early stage in that

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12. See biographical articles about Johannes Monheim in the NBD/ABD. See also Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 9-11, about Monheim. Also see Judith Rice Henderson, "Humanism and the Humanities: Erasmus' *Opus de conscribendis epistolis* in Sixteenth-Century Schools," in Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell, eds., *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present. Historical and Bibliographic Studies* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 141-77, esp. 156-57, about Monheim's use of Erasmus in his teaching of writing. Also see: Johannes Monheim, *Catechismus, in quo christianae religionis elementa syncere simpliciterque explicantur*, ed. Karl Heinrich Sack (Bonnae: Eduardus Weber, 1847); F. Koldewey, "Johannes Monheim und die Kölner Jesuiten," *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 42 (1899): 106.

13. In answer to my queries about this, Dr. Stefan Flesch, of the Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland in Düsseldorf, has been kind enough to write: "Unfortunately, there are no records of the students of the [Cologne] cathedral school. So Coolhaes might have studied there – but we cannot prove it." E-mail to the author, 14 May, 2014.

14. Again, Dr. Stefan Flesch, of the Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland in Düsseldorf, has been kind enough to write: "Regrettably, there are no surviving lists of pupils of Monheim's famous Latin-school at Düsseldorf. Coolhaes should have studied here around 1550, together with approx. 1,200–2,000 pupils. It is most likely that Monheim was his teacher, but there is no definite evidence." E-mail to the author, 11 March, 2014. He continued, "The problem with the Latin schools in the 16th century is the general lack of records concerning their pupils (in contrast to university where many *Matrikel* have survived). This applies to Düsseldorf as well as Köln where Monheim was active in 1536-1545." E-mail to the author, 8 May, 2014.

development. Since Coolhaes' home area was a center of various developing confessional ideas, and he was seemingly in close proximity to the intriguing figure of Monheim, the idea of a possible connection between them is, therefore, tempting, but ultimately just speculation.

Second, some writers, as mentioned above, have also thought that Coolhaes studied at the University of Cologne.<sup>15</sup> Inquiry, nevertheless, shows that this is impossible, as he is not listed in their very complete student records.<sup>16</sup>

What is certain, however, is that in 1554 Coolhaes became a monk in the Charterhouse Koblenz.<sup>17</sup> He chose to take the cowl and to conform to the rule of silence which marks the Carthusian order. It is possible that even in the absence of other formal education, his time as a monk would have been a learning experience. In addition, he mentioned later in his life that he had also been a "procurator" in the monastery, but had not tried to profit from it financially.<sup>18</sup>

However, in 1560, after six years, he left the monastery. He changed his mind and his life's path by becoming a Protestant, writing that he had been "better enlightened by the Lord" and had left the monastic life to serve God.<sup>19</sup> His use of the term "enlightened by the Lord" suggests a subjective conversion experience. Nevertheless, Coolhaes records no actual description of one - nothing about any experience that would compare to the extreme *Heimsuchungen* of Schwenckfeld. Coolhaes' life changed in other ways as well. In that year, or the next, he married a woman named Grietje Casparsdochter from Koblenz.<sup>20</sup>

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15. De Bie, Lindeboom and Van Itterzon, for instance, maintain that Coolhaes studied at the university of Cologne, and after that at Monheim's *Hochschule* in Dusseldorf: *BWPGN* vol. 5, 172.

16. Dr. Stefan Flesch, of the Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland in Düsseldorf, has been kind enough to verify for me that Coolhaes is not included in the Keussen edition of their *Matrikel*. E-mail to the author, 11 March, 2014. Dr. Max Plassmann, Historisches Archiv der Stad Köln, was also very helpful and kind enough to check the records of the University of Cologne. He assured me that no Coolhaes had studied there, and upon my further questions wrote, "Yes, the university records are complete, Coolhaes did not study in Cologne." E-mails to the author, 11 March and 19 March, 2014.

17. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 11. See also Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 174. Dr. Anja Ostrowitzki of the Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz/Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz was kind enough to confirm to me that he had been a Carthusian in Koblenz: "Der Hinweis auf seine vorherige Zugehörigkeit zur Koblenzer Kartause findet sich in diesem Zusammenhang in einem hier bei uns erhaltenen Visitationsprotokoll (LHAKo, Bestand 33 Nr. 4942)." E-mail to the author, 12 March, 2014. see Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 11, and Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 174.

18. Caspar Coolhaes, *Grondlicke waerheyt, op het min dan waerachtich schrijven van eenen, schuylende onder t'decksel van die gereformeerde kercke, sonder ontdeckinghe zijns naems teghens die Wederantwoort Caspari Coolhasen* ([Amsterdam]: Peeter Gevaertsz, 1600), 88.

19. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 141-42.

## Preaching in the Palatinate

After his conversion, Coolhaes lived in various towns in the Palatinate, in the valleys of the Mosel and the Rhine. First, he served as deacon and schoolmaster in Winnigen, down the Mosel River not far from Koblenz.<sup>21</sup> He is known to have been the first schoolmaster after the Reformation in that town.<sup>22</sup> By the next year, 1561, he had gone south and was preaching throughout Pfalz-Zweibrücken. He also preached in Beilstein on the Mosel, and Siegen, east of Cologne. He served with two other preacher-colleagues. He says that relations were good between him and his colleagues; that “there was never a question between them.”<sup>23</sup> Much later, he reflected that perhaps he had begun to preach too soon.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps in retrospect he thought that he or his ideas were not fully mature, but at the time he seems to have pursued these ministry opportunities with energy and zeal. Frederick III, Elector Palatine, was not a Calvinist, but was sympathetic to Calvinism. He had made the Palatinate, especially Heidelberg, a place of refuge for Calvinists. This would be especially true after 1567 during the time of Alva.<sup>25</sup>

Coolhaes apparently identified himself as Lutheran during this time. Certainly it is clear that he read Lutheran theologians. In 1563, a report made at the time of an oversight visit to Coolhaes mentioned that he read the Bible zealously, as well as the *Loci* of Melancthon, Augustine’s *Confessions* and the writings of Johannes Brenz, the Lutheran

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20. We know this because Coolhaes quotes his wife as saying, while they were in Middelburg in 1581, that they had been married for twenty years. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 131. Dr. Anja Ostrowitzki of the Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz/Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz has kindly verified that no other information about this marriage can be found in the archive. E-mail to the author, 12 March, 2014.

21. J. P. van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” in J. P. van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 174.

22. LHAko, Visitation Protocol, Order no. 33 4942; also printed in Heinrich Engelbert and Günter Engelbert, eds., *Die Visitation in der hinteren Grafschaft Sponheim von 1560, mit Inventaren einzelner Kirchengemeinden* (Düsseldorf: Presseverband der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland, 1969), 38, 58. Dr. Ostrowitzki of the Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz/Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz, mentioned above, has kindly brought this to my attention.

23. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 131.

24. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe, aen alle onpartydighe predicanten: om te waecken, ende by tijts te voorsien, dat die Sathan gheen nieu pausdom, aen des ouden benaest veruallen plaets wederom oprechte* (N. p., 1584).

25. Cornelia Boer, *Hofpredikers van Prins Willem van Oranje, Jean Taffin en Pierre Loyseleur de Villiers* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 44.

reformer of the city of Schwäbisch-Hall and the duchy of Württemberg. Brenz had upheld real presence in the Eucharist, opposed the death penalty (which inspired Sebastian Castellio) but composed and implemented the “Great Church Order,” which enforced church government and discipline.<sup>26</sup> It is reported that Coolhaes complained about low church attendance, especially when the catechism was being expounded. He was also worried about “superstitions,” which is the word he uses throughout his later works to mean the vestiges of certain Roman Catholic practices among the people. Other surviving comments by overseers report negative characteristics. In 1564, he was accused by a search committee of lack of interest in study. In an oversight visit dated July 18, 1566, it was written that he improvised too much, studied too little and kept company with lots of “different” people,<sup>27</sup> which must mean that he had friends who were suspect characters.

To Deventer in the “miracle year”

In 1566, Coolhaes was called as preacher by the magistracy of Deventer, the first preacher openly chosen by that city,<sup>28</sup> and so came with his family into the Netherlands. The religious situation at that moment was unique. Some called this period a “miracle year” of evangelical openness, but for others it was a “time of troubles” filled with iconoclastic violence. In Flanders and Brabant it was explosive; in the Northern Netherlands not as much.<sup>29</sup> The situation in Deventer was quite peaceful in comparison to places in the south.

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26. James M. Estes, “Brenz, Johannes,” in *OER*, vol. 1, 214-15. For more about Brenz, see James M. Estes, *Christian Magistrate and Territorial Church: Johannes Brenz and the German Reformation* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2007).

27. These visits are mentioned by Van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” 174.

28. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdruckers*, 34. For confirmation of this, see also Jacobus Revius, *Licht op Deventer: De Geschiedenis van de provincie Overijssel en met name de stad Deventer, boek 5 (1578-1619)*, (Deventer: Daventria illustrate, 1651). Reprint. (Hilversum: Verloren, 1995), 367. I have also found, with the kind help of archivists Jan Keuning and Hylle de Beer, that Coolhaes is mentioned in the Cameraarsrekening van 1566, Gemeente Deventer Stadsarchief en Athenaeumbibliotheek, ID 0698, inv. nr.34. It is a note which testifies to some building work having been done – not a note of any real substance, but still one more testimony of his presence there at that time, and as a preacher, as Coolhaes is clearly listed in the section of “Pastoeren en Capelaneren,” which gives additional confirmation as to his position. Mr. Keuning also confirmed that there was no special record of the Reformed Church surviving from that year. E-mail to the author, March 11, 2014.

29. Alastair Duke and D. H. A. Kolff, “The Time of Troubles in the County of Holland, 1566-67,” in *Reformation and Revolt*, 125.

Why did Coolhaes leave the Palatinate and come to the Netherlands? The oversight reports he had been receiving in Germany had not been too glowing. Maybe things were uncomfortable for him there, either theologically or personally. But the simplest answer would be simply that he came at the invitation of the secular government, the magistracy of Deventer. Also, Deventer had a reputation for being both humanistic and biblical.<sup>30</sup> It had been a center for the *Devotio moderna*. It may have appealed to Coolhaes for all those reasons.

Apparently Coolhaes had made some connection with Deventer, leading to his call. One of the only sources of information about his ministry there is an uncharitable one. The Reformed preacher of Delft, Arent Cornelisz Crusius, who will be Coolhaes' adversary at the Synod of Middelburg in 1581, wrote that the specifics of how Coolhaes became a Reformed preacher in Deventer were unclear:

Caspar Coolhaes has never reliably shown how he came into the ministry of the Word in the Reformed Church. He was originally a schoolmaster in Nassau and if he was also a Lutheran preacher there, we do not know for sure, but, coming from Nassau to Cologne, his brother (during the first freedom of the Netherlands) recommended that he should go to Deventer and perhaps obtain a better condition. He came, stayed a while, and preached. If this was on the recommendation of Jan Arendtz<sup>31</sup> or not, we do not know, but after Jan Arendtz left he preached there and the church had use of his ministry for some time. However, he has not (it seems to us) shown us that he was legally sent and called, renounced his Lutheran errors and taken up the Reformed religion. Because of this he himself admitted that he preached on the topic about the Lord's Supper, because (as he said), "it would win the people better."<sup>32</sup>

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30. Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 174-75.

31. Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 183. Note: Jan Arendtz was a hedge preacher in Amsterdam.

32. "Casparus Coolhaes heeft nooyt te deghen doen blijcken hoe hij tot den dienst des Woorts in de Ghereformeerde kercke ghecomen zij. Hij is aenvanckelick schoolmeester gheweest in Nassauwen ende of hij aldaer Luthersch predicker gheweest is, weeten wij voor seker niet, maer, uut Nassauwen tot Cuelen comende, heeft hem zijn broeder (in de eerst vrijhyt der Nederlandts) gheraden dat hij na Deventer soude trecken, mogehelick of hij aldaer beter eenigh conditie conde krijghen. Daer comende heeft hij hem een wijlken ghehouden ende is op den predickstoel ghecomen: oft gheweest is door recommendatie van Jan Arendtz of niet, weten wij niet, maer na Jan Arendtz vertreck heeft hij aldaer ghepredickt ende de ghemeente heeft zijnen dienst een wijl ghebruyckt. Doch hij heeft (ons achtens) noch niet laten blijcken dat hij wettelick ghesonden ende beroepen zij, zijn luthersche dwalinghen versaecht ende de Reformeerde religie anghenomen hebbende. Daeromme hij selve wel bekennt heeft dat hij op 't stuk van 't Avondmael predickt, omdat hij (so hij seyde) 't volck te beter winnen soude." Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 174. Original is in AD, Arent Cornelisz Collection, Stukken betreffende Caspar Coolhaes, inventarisnr. 83. Arent Cornelisz (Crusius) preserved much of his personal correspondence. H. J. Jaanus, *Hervormd Delft ten tijde van Arent Cornelisz (1573-1605)* (Amsterdam: Nordemann's Uitgevers Maatschappij N.V., 1950), 9, maintains that



This passage from Cornelisz shows his clear distrust of Coolhaes.

Incidentally, it is surprising that Cornelisz says in the passage above that Coolhaes began originally as a schoolmaster in Nassau. The only town where Coolhaes is known to have been schoolmaster is Winningen, west of Koblenz and the river Rhine in the Palatinate, as mentioned above.<sup>33</sup> The town of Nassau itself is east of Koblenz and the river Rhine. The two might be said to be in the same general region; perhaps that is what Cornelisz means. Or perhaps there was some misinformation or misunderstanding on someone's part. There is, it appears, no evidence to be found that Coolhaes had been schoolmaster in Nassau.<sup>34</sup> Whether this means that Arent Cornelisz was an unreliable source is uncertain. It is also interesting that Coolhaes' brother is said by Arent Cornelisz in the passage above to have advised him to come to the Netherlands. Nothing else is known about this brother aside from this brief mention.

Coolhaes himself testified that he served in Deventer from September 15, 1566 to May 6, 1567.<sup>35</sup> His descriptions of his time in Deventer show that he found the openness and toleration of religious differences in the city exciting, and applauded the magistrate-church relationship, which he said led in many cases to conversions from Catholicism to the Reformed religion. "The majority of those still in the darkness of the papacy came to God's mercy in a short time," wrote Coolhaes.<sup>36</sup>

The religious atmosphere was revival-like and also confessionally diverse, according to Coolhaes. He related that for thirty-four weeks he was preaching there on workdays as well

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"restful" people tend to preserve more of their personal papers. Whether or not one can call Cornelisz restful, it is certain that his carefully preserved correspondence gives valuable insight into this case.

33. Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 174.

34. For this information I am indebted to Dr. Rouven Pons of the Hessisches Hauptstadtsarchiv in Wiesbaden. He writes that Coolhaes is not to be found listed as schoolmaster in Nassau or indeed in any of their records. E-mail to author, 27 May, 2015.

35. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 79. His ministry in Deventer is also mentioned in Revius, *Licht op Deventer*, 96, note 367, on the basis of *NNBW*.

36. Caspar Coolhaes, *Apologia: een christelijcke ende billijcke verantwoordinge Caspari Coolhaessen, dienaer des goddelijcken woorts tot Leyden, daer in hy hem nootsakelijck sonder eenighe blamatie, met der waerheit ontschuldicht, teghen eenighe quadtwillighe ende onverstandighe, die hem van valscher leer, ende onchristelijcken leven beschuldighen, ghestelt in forme eens dialogi van twee personen. Met een corte voorreden, ghestelt in forme eens dialogi van twee personen. Met een corte voorreden aen die edele erntseste, hochgheleerde ende wijze heeren, burgemeesters ende regeerders der loffelijcker vrije hanzestadt Deventer.* (Leiden: J. Paets Jacobszoon and/or J. Bouwensz?, 1580), folio Aiiiiv.

as Sundays and holidays, in the evenings as well as the mornings, twice every day, three times on Sundays. There was a great hunger to hear God's Word, he observed, not only among the working classes but among the educated, the magistrates and nobility as well. This preaching did not emphasize confessional or denominational differences, but demonstrated a unity among the preachers.<sup>37</sup> Confessional labels were unimportant. Coolhaes wrote, "There was never heard 'Martinist,' 'Calvinist,' 'Mennist,' 'Papist,' but the Word was preached and also heard by the majority with singleness of purpose."<sup>38</sup>

There was no violent iconoclasm - the city had agreed with the reformers that they could use the church of Our Lady (the *Lieve-vrouwekerck*, also called the *Mariakerk*). It was a smaller medieval worship space built to abut the large *Lebuinuskerk*, just north of the river IJssel and near to the City Hall, located at New Market 35. Coolhaes was allowed to use it for preaching, ruled the authorities, if Catholics could also worship and if the church remained undamaged.<sup>39</sup> The atmosphere of tolerance was partially attributed to Johannes van Bronkhorst, rector of the canon school, who had studied at the University of Rostock, which had become Lutheran in 1542.<sup>40</sup> Of course, the city had long been a center for the Modern Devotion's focus on the religion of the heart. There was also already a precedent for Protestantism in Deventer's little Maria church, since in 1560 Carolus Gallus (Karel de Haan) had begun to preach there in a "Reformation-spirit" and served communion at Christmas in both kinds. Disagreement with the *stadhouder* had followed and Gallus was terminated as preacher; later he became an outspoken Calvinist and then professor at Leiden University in 1587. Incidentally, the Maria church fell into disuse and disrepair after the Reformed victory in Deventer in 1578,<sup>41</sup> and is now an empty, secular space for events.

Coolhaes will reminisce often in the future about the joy of this inter-confessional time of service in Deventer. One can understand Arent Cornelisz' suspicions about Coolhaes' true confessional allegiance.

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37. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiir.

38. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiiv.

39. *BWPGN*, 173.

40. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 175.

41. Lindeboom, *De confessioneele ontwikkeling der reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 12-13; Pieter Antoon Marie Geurts, *Voorgeschiedenis van het statencollege te Leiden, 1575-1593* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 43. Gallus was in Deventer only one year – until 1561. See: *BWDN*, vol. 7, 28.

## Examinations in Essen

Despite Coolhaes' enthusiasm for Deventer, Coolhaes and his wife<sup>42</sup> chose to flee from the war-threatened Northern Netherlands on May 6, 1567. They left Deventer and went to Essen, where he continued preaching. Others were fleeing also. The first revolt of William of Orange, Brederode and the "Beggars" had failed, and the rebels temporarily escaped abroad to safety. Fernando Álvarez de Toledo y Pimentel, the third Duke of Alba, entered the Netherlands and began to rule harshly.<sup>43</sup> Protestant preaching was discontinued throughout the Netherlands. The Eighty Years War – the Dutch Revolt – was beginning in earnest by 1568. Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert also passed through Deventer about this time. It is interesting to try to posit a possible connection during this period between Coolhaes and Coornhert, who would later correspond with each other. Coornhert worked for the "beggar" Van Brederode, and came in haste to Deventer, arriving on May 4, 1567 (or shortly thereafter), and stayed only a very short time. He wanted to go to Cologne or Emden, but went to Emmerich and then returned to Deventer. He had a letter from William of Orange in Emmerich and surely met with the prince in May of that year in Siegen where, as has been mentioned, Coolhaes preached in 1561. While Coornhert was in Deventer he wrote *Lijdens Troost*.<sup>44</sup> It is tempting to wonder whether Coolhaes became acquainted with or met with him there. Since Coolhaes fled on May 6 to Essen, they would have had only two days together at the most in Deventer to form or renew any sort of connection.

Coolhaes and his family settled in Essen for three years.<sup>45</sup> He himself reported that he and his fellow-preacher, Caspar von Isselburg, "lived together peacefully."<sup>46</sup> However, this

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42. It is not known if they had any children at this time.

43. The Duke of Alba is outside of our scope, but a recent work on him is: Maurits Ebben, Margriet Lacy-Briujn, and Rolof van Hövell, eds., *Alba: General and Servant to the Crown* (Rotterdam: Karwansaray Publishers, 2013).

44. Gerrit Voogt, *Constraint on Trial: Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert and Religious Freedom* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000), 31; Bonger, *Leven en werk*, 46-47.

45. He is said by some to have been present at Wezel at the Synod of 1568 and signed their "convent." However, the questions surrounding this Synod are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Many scholars cast doubt upon the date, the extent or even the existence of this Synod. Contemporary sources do not mention the existence of the Synod of Wezel 1568. See: Owe Boersma, *Vluchtig voorbeeld: De Nederlandse, Franse en Italiaanse vluchtelingenkerken in Londen, 1568-1585* (Kampen: dissertation, 1994); J.F.G. Goeters, ed., *Die Beschlüsse des Weseler Konvents von 1568*. (Düsseldorf: Presseverband der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland, 1968); J. de Jong, *De voorbereiding en constitueering van het kerkverband der Nederlandsche Gereformeerde kerken in de zestiende eeuw. Historische studiën over het convent te Wezel (1568) en de synode*

peace did not characterize their relationship with their surroundings. Coolhaes became embroiled in a theological controversy every bit as volatile as that which he would experience in the Netherlands in 1581-1582. Interestingly, neither Coolhaes himself nor Rogge even mentions these events, which were so similar to later Coolhaes episodes.<sup>47</sup> As would happen later, Coolhaes was conspicuously different in his views in his preaching in Essen, and must have been outspoken enough about them to be seen as a theological threat. For several decades, theological controversy in the German regions had raged as Lutherans, especially after the death first of Luther in 1546, and then of Philip Melanchthon, his theological successor and the codifier of much Lutheran doctrine, in 1560. Especially controversial were the doctrines of justification and the Lord's Supper. In both of these doctrines, Coolhaes would be seen to be suspect.

The council of state was not pleased with either Essen preacher.<sup>48</sup> Both were thought to be too Reformed. In truth, however, it seems more exact to say that Coolhaes showed signs of being more Melanchthonian, and even more precisely, to favor a synergist position (although he never identified himself this way in so many words). Synergism was a variant which Melanchthon came to by 1548, and which some of his successors (the Philippists) held, which tries to resolve the dilemma of predestination versus free will by saying that man must cooperate with God by yielding to him in contrition or repentance. Repentance, as will be mentioned continually through this dissertation, is a vital step into the Christian life according to Coolhaes. Luther and later Gnesio-Lutherans condemned this view as a denial of *sola gratia* itself, and thus a denial of the heart of the Reformation. For them the solution was neither synergism, nor Reformed doctrines of predestination and election, but the

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*te Emden* (1571), vol. 1 (Groningen: 1911), 192-93; J. J. Woltjer, "De politieke betekenis van de synode van Emden," in D. Nauta et al., *De Synode van Emden, October 1571* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1971), 22-49; J. P. van Dooren: "Der Weseler Konvent 1568. Neue Forschungsergebnisse," *Monatshefte für Evangelische Kirchengeschichte des Rheinlandes* 31 (1982): 41-55; *Communio et mater fidelium. Acta des Konsistoriums der niederländischen reformierten Flüchtlingsgemeinde in Wesel 1573-1582*, ed. J. G. J. van Booma and J.L. van der Gouw, in *Schriftenreihe des Vereins für Rheinische Kirchengeschichte* 103, Delft/Cologne, 1991; A. Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 76-77.

46. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 131.

47. This controversial episode is summarized in *BWPGN*, vol. 5, 174-75.

48. This episode is touched upon in Hermann Burghard, *Essen: Geschichte einer Stadt* (Essen: Pomp, 2002), 219-21. Strangely, the book describes Von Isselburg's views but does not mention Coolhaes at all in the text. Nevertheless, they include a picture of Coolhaes with the caption: "Caspar Coelhas 1563–1615, Prediger in Essene 1571."

“monergism” of God’s grace.<sup>49</sup> In fact, Luther’s view and Calvinism are extremely similar, as neither in its pure form gives a place for human involvement in the salvation process. Despite this, Calvinism in Essen and other German places was as unpopular, and even sometimes as feared both theologically and politically, as Melanchthon’s views. The eventual execution of Nikolaus Krell for Calvinism in Saxony in 1601 shows this.<sup>50</sup>

The city of Essen sought to replace Coolhaes and Von Isselburg in May, 1570 with East Frisian Johannes Ligarius, but this was not successful. Former Essen preacher, Heinrich Barenbroch, a Lutheran of great influence in the 1563 reformation of that city, had left earlier in disagreement with Von Isselburg about communion, but then became involved back in the situation by writing to accuse both men of heresy and calling the Council of State for their removal. In response, Coolhaes and Von Isselburg first appealed to the *Rat*, and when refused, to the *Vierundzwanzig*, the “Twenty-four” or citizens’ council of the city, to have the matter judged by theological experts.<sup>51</sup> The Council, which wrote to Coolhaes about this on April 30, 1571, was enraged by this appeal to the populace.<sup>52</sup>

The Augsburg Confession had been the approved Essen standard.<sup>53</sup> Von Isselburg was seen to be too “Zwinglian,” and was asked to leave in 1571, going instead to Bremen.<sup>54</sup> Coolhaes himself was asked for a written statement of faith that same year which was sent to

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49. F. Bente, “The Synergistic Controversy,” *The Book of Concord*, [www.bookofconcord.org/historical-14.php](http://www.bookofconcord.org/historical-14.php) (accessed 26 jan, 2016).

50. For more information about the situation in Essen, see: Joachim Beckmann, *400 Jahre Reformation in Essen, 1563-1963: Festschrift der Drei Evangelischen Kirchenkreise in Essen* (Essen: Druckerei Gemeinwohl, 1963); Hermann Burghard, *Essen: Geschichte einer Stadt* (Essen: Pomp, 2002); Hanns-Joachim Massner, *Von Erbe der Väter - 400 Jahre Reformation in Essen; Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung 1963* (Essen: W. Th. Webels, 1963). About Krell, see also: Benno Bohnenstädt, *Das Processverfahren gegen den Kursächsischen Kanzler Dr. Nicolaus Krell 1591 bis 1601: dargestellt nach den Akten des Dresdener Haupt-Staats-Archiv* (Halle: C.A. Kaemmerer, 1901).

51. For a description of the *Rat* and the *Vierundzwanzig* and their roles in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, see Burghard, *Essen*, 202-203.

52. *DBNL*, vol. 5, 174.

53. Van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” 176.

54. Johann Arnold von Recklinghausen, *Reformations-Geschichte der Länder Jülich, Berg, Cleve, Meurs, Mark, Westfalen, und der Städte Aachen, Cöln und Dordtmund* (Düsseldorf: C. H. E. von Oven, 1837), 359. Von Isselburg was also the father of Heinrich Isselburg, theologian in Bremen, 1577–1628, who also attended the Synod of Dordt in 1618-19 as part of the “moderate” Bremen delegation which opposed limited atonement (the other delegates were Ludwig Crocius and Mathias Martinius). See also “Isselburg, Heinrich,” *NDB/ADB*.

the Universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig for theological examination. They declared him to be both Calvinist and “heretical,” and he was then relieved of his post in Essen.<sup>55</sup>

This written statement of faith, handwritten by Coolhaes, listed in the Essen city archives as “Glaubensbekenntniss,” survives, but only partly. The seventy-two pages in the archive are, unfortunately, only the second half of the lengthy document. They are made up of articles numbered 10 through 20; the articles address the Word (art. 10), the invisible church (art. 11), the visible church (art. 12), discipline and the calling of clergy (art. 13), baptism (art. 14), the Law and the Gospel (art. 15), the Lord’s Supper (art. 16), repentance, conversion and the admittance of a sinner to the community (art. 17), the definitions of who are and are not true Christians (art. 18), rituals and ceremonies (art. 19), and finally the question of distinguishing between ministry and those who hold the office of ministers (art. 20).<sup>56</sup> It is striking how similar these topics are to the topics which consumed Coolhaes through the rest of his life. He lays out the ideas of the visible and invisible church. He addresses the question of inclusion and exclusion in both. He is concerned with the injustice of Christian discipline, and with the over-emphasis on rituals and ceremonies as opposed to

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55. Van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” 174-76. Van Dooren mentions on page 183 that he had access to documents in the city archive in Essen, but does not give more precise details. Through correspondence with Dr. Klaus Wisotzky from the Haus der Essener Geschichte/Stadtarchiv, and Dr. Magdalena Drexel, I was able to receive scans of three manuscripts: the “Glaubensbekenntniss von Caspar Coelhas,” 1571, Rep. 100, inventarisnr. 2231, bd. 3, folio 1-34, HEG/SAE; “Gutachten der Universität Wittenberg,” Rep. 100, inventarisnr. 2231, bd. 3, folio 95-123, HEG/SAE; and “Gutachten der Universität Leipzig,” Rep. 100, inventarisnr. 2231, bd. 3, folio 79-95, HEG/SAE. I am in the process of a more detailed study of these documents for their eventual publication. Dr. Drexel confirms that the “Glaubensbekenntniss von Caspar Coelhas” is incomplete, and they do not have the earlier section.

56. “Vom Wordt Gottes, wairumb und wairzu uns Gott sein Wort geben hat. Der zehendt artickel (Concerning the word of God, why and to what purpose God gave us His word, the 10th article),” 1v. [NB: The page numbers are in red pencil and modern script.] “Von den wahren unsichtbarlichen gemeinden Gottes der elffte Artikel (Concerning the true invisible communities of God, the 11th article),” 4v. “Von den sichtbarlichen gemeinden Gottes der zwelffte Artikel (Concerning the visible communities of God, the 12th article),” 6v. “Von Christlicher straeff oder disciplin, Item von dienern der Kirchen Gottes und ihrem beroeff, der 13. artickel (Concerning Christian punishment or discipline, also of the servants of the church of God and their calling, the 13th article),” 11v. “Von der tauff der 14 artickel (Concerning baptism, the 14th article),” 15v. “Vom Gesetz und Evangelio, der 15 Artikel (Concerning the law and gospel, the 15th article),” 21r. “Von des Herrn Nachmael, der 16 Artikel (Concerning the Lord's Supper, the 16th article),” 22r. “Von der Bueß (?) und bekerung des sünders und auffnemung desselbigen in Gottes gemein der siebenzehndt artickel (Concerning repentance and conversion of a sinner and the acceptance of the same into the community of God, the 17th article),” 23r. “Wilche die wahre Christen sindt und wilche für Christen zu halten oder nicht zu halten der 18. Artikel ( Who can be regarded as true Christians and who not, the 18<sup>th</sup> article),” 25r. “Von den Sitten und Ceremonien der neunzehndt Artikel (Concerning rituals and ceremonies, the 19th article),” 26r. “Von den Gottlichen Ampten, und was unterscheidens man haben muesse, zwischen den persohnen die die Ampten bedienen und zwischen den Amptern der 20. Artikel (Concerning the divine ministries and which difference must be made between those persons holding them and the ministries themselves, the 20th article),” Coolhaes, “Glaubensbekenntniss,” 30v. I am indebted for the kind help in transliteration of this manuscript to Dirk Pfeifer, PhD researcher at Leiden University.

an inner faith. He defends his ideas of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and he tries to make some statements about clergy. Here is also his characteristic emphasis on repentance.

The Leipzig theologians found Coolhaes' view of predestination - that God's choice of a person cannot be judged from externals, since one can repent at any time - to be problematic. Here again is a possible connection to the synergist emphasis on repentance. On the other hand, the Wittenberg theologians felt that Coolhaes affirmed determinism in his statement that the sin of Adam and Eve was necessary, rather than out of their free will. He was unwilling to be precise about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and wanted to be called by no confessional name but Christian. Both faculties admitted that in many aspects of the faith Coolhaes was one with orthodox teaching, but worried that he often used "strange, dark, almost dangerous and sometimes totally objectionable expressions."<sup>57</sup> This judgment of the theological faculties may have served to push him farther away from Lutheranism.<sup>58</sup> It may very well also have encouraged him - or indeed compelled him - to return to the Netherlands eventually, despite the war there.

However, first he and his family went to Monsheim (in the Palatinate, near Worms), where he had found a preaching appointment. Meanwhile, beginning on October 4, 1571, the ground-breaking Synod of Emden took place in Lower Saxony, in which exiled Reformed preachers met and Dutch Reformed Protestantism began to take real shape. It was already possible to begin to talk about factions in the Reformed Church which were present there - the *preciezen* and the *rekkelijken* (the stricter and the latitudinarian) and even perhaps to subdivide the latter further into *politieken/libertijnsgezinden*. *Politieken* or *libertijnsgezinden* could be used for those who would bind the church to the state, although these terms must be used with care and flexibility.<sup>59</sup> Coolhaes, however, did not appear at this Synod. He had been preaching in Monsheim beginning in that same year. He remained in this position for two years. There he is likely to have listened to the ideas of Thomas Erastus which were circulating regarding church/state relations.<sup>60</sup> Coolhaes says about this prosperous period of

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57. "... maar zij becritisceerde zijn vaak vreemde, duistere, bijna gevaarlijke en soms geheel verwerpelijke uitdrukkingen." These are Van Dooren's words. Van Dooren, "Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven," 176.

58. Lindeboom, *De confessioneele ontwikkeling der reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 28.

59. Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 48-51. On the other hand, newer scholars say that the struggle between these parties was less than was earlier thought - see James D. Tracy, "Emden, Synod of," *OER*, vol. 2, 40-41.

his life, “I had served similarly in the *Keurvorstelicker* Palatinate ... receiving a large yearly salary (as long as I was there I received more than 500 daalders per year)...”<sup>61</sup> In *Cort waerachtich verhael*, he relates his wife’s reminiscence, “As far as the brothers were concerned, we lived in the Wormsgau, and they served the church with us, and we with them, in peace and unity.”<sup>62</sup> Caspar and Grietje surely experienced these times of unity with relief, after the debacle in Essen.

Protestants were already in control in much of Holland in 1572. However, elsewhere fellow Reformed believers were suffering. On August 24, 1572, thousands of Protestants were killed in the St. Bartholemew’s Day massacre in France.<sup>63</sup> Many Huguenots fled (and would continue to flee) to the Northern Netherlands, which was now congenial for the Reformed faith. Were the southern immigrants more strictly Calvinist, thus becoming a destabilizing force for the Reformed Church in the North, which pushed it to the right? Some argue yes, but others feel that this is too broad a generalization, although the immigrants were certainly a revitalizing force to the economy and society.<sup>64</sup> This would be a factor in the Leiden church.

### Permanent immigration

In the winter of 1573, Coolhaes was called by the city council of Gorcum to return to the Netherlands and to preach there. Gorcum had only just experienced a Calvinist “revolution” in 1572 from the top down, as the rebel forces found the whole region essential to protect

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60. J. Wayne Baker, Review of Ulrich Gäbler, “The spread of Zwinglianism into the Netherlands and the Downfall of Caspar Coolhaes 1581/1582,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 17 (1986), 511. For more about Erastus, see: Charles D. Gunnoe, Jr., *Thomas Erastus and the Palatinate: A Renaissance Physician in the Second Reformation* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011).

61. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 53Or.

62. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 131.

63. J. H. M. Salmon, “Wars of Religion,” *OER*, vol. 4, 260.

64. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 21-22, 104-105. Kees de Wildt, “Ambt, doop en avondmaal in de oudste Leidse kerkenraadsacta. Enkele aspecten van het Gereformeerde kerkelijke leven in de zestiende eeuw” (Leiden University, master thesis, 2007), 60. For more about Huguenot immigration to the north, see: Yves Krumenacker and Olivier Christin, eds., *Entre calvinistes et catholiques: les relations religieuses entre la France et les Pays-Bas du Nord (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010), Jane McKee and Randolph Vigne, eds., *The Huguenots: France, Exile & Diaspora* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013); Geoffrey Treasure, *The Hugenots* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2014).



against the Spanish. It was strengthened not only by their troops, but also by German and Walloon soldiers against the Catholics.<sup>65</sup> He may not have known it at the time, but with this move he was immigrating to the Netherlands permanently. Why did he leave a good, well-paying position in Monsheim, in his German homeland, to come back as a foreigner to a region at war? He did not say that he had become more convinced of the doctrines of the Reformed Church, although judging by his termination in Essen that may have been true. On the other hand, perhaps the atmosphere in the Palatinate had actually become too Reformed for his liking.<sup>66</sup> He did not write about theological factors affecting the move, but instead, he wrote, “Out of love for these Netherlands, I left it all, and with wife and children in mid-winter, not without hurt and danger to myself, came into this country.”<sup>67</sup> Coolhaes’ expression is interesting considering that a national identity for the former Northern Netherlands, the Dutch Republic, was arguably still in the process of being formed – both when he decided to return to the Netherlands in 1573, and still when he penned these words in 1580. Coolhaes identified the Netherlands as a distinct unit in his writing, and claimed loyalty to it. Did he really feel such warm affection for his adopted country? Perhaps, but on the other hand, it is possible that he may have been overstating his emotion and his hardships, either to prove his commitment to his accusers, or to put them to shame.

The journey was dangerous because of Spanish troops, which had become a persistent reality in the Netherlands. After the mid-1540’s, their discipline diminished and their numbers grew. Combined with anxiety about a possible “Spanish Inquisition” in the Netherlands, they were feared.<sup>68</sup> Coolhaes related that he and his family traveled through “enemy land” - past Grave, from Goch until Zaltbommel. The Spaniards were on the road on foot and horseback, but the travelers were able to elude them. A very close call happened

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65. A. J. Verschoor, ed., *Classicale Acta 1573-1620, VIII Classis Gorinchem 1579-1620* (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 2008), XXV–XXVI.

66. This is the opinion of J. C. H. de Pater, *Jan van Hout, 1542–1609, een levensbeeld uit de 16e eeuw* (The Hague: D. A. Daamen’s Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1946), 55. For the importance of the Palatinate as both the center of the debate between the Genevan and Zurich models of church government, and a “Reformed stronghold,” see Philip Benedict, *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed: a Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 193, 211-16.

67. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 53Or. For a detailed discussion of political and linguistic questions regarding the developing identity of the Netherlands, see Alastair Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 9-51; also, R. Stein and J. S. Pollmann, eds., *The Dynamics of Identity in the Low Countries, 1300-1600. Toward a Comparative Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

68. Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 66.

near Ravenstein: they were hiding in a house to which Spanish troops were trying to gain access. Unable to enter, the troops went away to the nearby village of Oss, but returned again to knock on the door of the house where Coolhaes and his family were at that moment. Everyone in the house kept silent and the house was not taken. He considered that had the Spaniards found them there, they would have killed them.<sup>69</sup>

Was there really so much danger from the Spanish troops? Coolhaes' fear seems extreme. It may have been that the Spanish had been vilified to such an extent that people expected unreasonable cruelty from them.<sup>70</sup> However, both Henricus Vellelius and Joost de Jonge (who was indeed later captured and executed) said that they were afraid to travel to the Dordrecht Synod of 1574 because of fears of the Spanish.<sup>71</sup> Sources point to rape and mutilation of women and others in this period at Spanish hands, in the Northern Netherlands especially in Naarden and Zutphen, and in the South in Mechelen and Antwerp.<sup>72</sup> William of Orange's politics were assisted by "tap[ping] into the anti-Spanish prejudice in the Empire." Beggar songs also "fed this 'Hispanophobia.'"<sup>73</sup> Coolhaes himself referred to "the power and violence of the bloodthirsty Spaniards and their 'attack dogs.'"<sup>74</sup> Although his views on Catholics overall in his later life were tolerant, Coolhaes continued to think the worst of the Spanish once he was in Leiden. He maintained in 1581 that the Spanish had no other aim but to bring eternal slavery into the Netherlands.<sup>75</sup> He considered that he and his family had been delivered by the Lord on that day near Ravenstein. It had been a narrow and miraculous escape.<sup>76</sup>

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69. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 540iiv.

70. See K. W. Swart, "The Black Legend during the Eighty Years War," in J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossman, eds., *Britain and the Netherlands*, vol. 5 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), 36-57.

71. R. H. Bremmer, *Uit de geboortegeschiedenis van de Gereformeerde kerken in de Nederlanden* (The Hague: Willem de Zwijgerstichting, 1977), 25.

72. See Peter Arnade, "The City Defeated and Defended. Civism as Political Identity in the Habsburg-Burgundian Netherlands," in *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650*, ed. Robert S. Stein and Judith S. Pollmann (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 213.

73. Alastair Duke, "In Defence of the Common Fatherland. Patriotism and Liberty in the Low Countries, 1555-1576," in *Networks, Regions and Nations*, 235-36.

74. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiir.

75. "Coolhaes aan de Leidse magistraat d.d. 27 juli 1581," in Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 80.

They arrived in Gorcum in mid-winter, 1573, and served there until May of 1574. Coolhaes quotes his wife remembering, “Having been called to Gorcum, we came in danger of both of our lives, and my husband served the church together with Henry, our fellow worker and brother, very peacefully.” This was the same Henricus Rolandus Vellemius, Protestant preacher in Cologne (1571-1572) and Gorcum (1573 -1574), who was relieved of this latter ministry at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1574.<sup>77</sup> Coolhaes was very negative about that Synod, which he nevertheless was brave enough to travel to attend. It may be that he was so negative about it partly for their attack on his colleague.<sup>78</sup> Vellemius was accused of scandalous and offensive behavior, although what this could have been is not known; many questions remain surrounding him and his case.<sup>79</sup> However, although this judgment of his close coworker seems a logical reason for Coolhaes’ dislike of this Synod and may surely have been a factor, he never mentions this aspect of the Dordrecht Synod. He had other criticisms of it, which will be mentioned later.

In any event, Coolhaes stayed in Gorcum only a short time. Perhaps his assignment there was intended to be short, but in any case the Leiden magistracy called him. It is important to emphasize here that he was called not by the Leiden church, but by the Leiden magistracy only.<sup>80</sup> Coolhaes uses the word “magistracy” to designate the ruling council of a city. It would be more precise to define the entire group of rulers of Leiden as the *Vroedschap*, which is composed of a sheriff (*schout*), four mayors (*burgemeesters*), eight aldermen (*schepenen*), forty town councilmen (*vroedschapleden*), one or two legal advisors (*pensionarissen*), and the city secretary (*secretaris*). The sheriff, mayors and aldermen made up the court (*gerecht*), which also is sometimes called the magistracy.<sup>81</sup> The call to Coolhaes

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76. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 7-8.

77. *NNBW*, deel 3, 1279-80. For more discussion of this, see Verschoor, *Classicale Acta*, XXXIII-XXXIV. Coolhaes is not mentioned here, although he is listed on page 540. Unfortunately for us, the actual records of the classis do not begin until 1579, so we do not find any records of Coolhaes there, either.

78. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 35.

79. Bremmer, “Uit de Geboortegeschiedenis van de Gereformeerde kerken,” 24-25. See also Verschoor, *Classicale Acta*, XXXIII-XXXIV, 540.

80. See Andrew Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory: The Upbuilding of a Calvinist Church in Holland, 1572-1590,” in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*, ed. Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke, and Gillian Lewis (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 165.

81. Sterling A. Lamet, “The Vroedschap of Leiden 1550-1600: The Impact of Tradition and Change on the Governing Elite of a Dutch City,” in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 12 (1981), 16. To see the diversity of the

was made after the first siege of Leiden,<sup>82</sup> in May, 1574. He accepted and left Gorcum on June 1, but the second siege of Leiden began suddenly and the city was surrounded. Unable to enter, he and his family stayed in Delft, “awaiting” (as he wrote) “what the Lord, in his mercy, would do with the frightened and very dejected city.”<sup>83</sup>

During this time of waiting, as the Spanish held Leiden in their grip, he preached in Delft (three weeks), Dordrecht (ten weeks), and Gouda (one and one-half weeks).<sup>84</sup> He was also able to attend the Dordrecht Synod of 1574; however, he was not favorably impressed. Although religious matters were, in his view, in chaos, since the States were not united confessionally, there were also very few qualified preachers. Most, he relates, were “beginners,” who had either been priests or monks earlier and had not truly left the mindset of Catholicism, or who had been artisans or trades-people (clothes-makers, shoemakers, weavers, locksmiths, and so forth).<sup>85</sup> It has been alleged that Coolhaes is responsible for the idea, said to be current until the recent past, that it was easy to become a Reformed preacher, because so many lazy artisans were accepted who had been looking for a profession that was less strenuous and more regularly paid.<sup>86</sup> Coolhaes’ negative reaction to the “newcomers” would have also been a reflection of his conflict with the stricter Calvinists at the time of his writings.<sup>87</sup> In any event, Coolhaes was urged by some there in Dordrecht to serve in Rotterdam, since Leiden was not open. He decided not to take them up on their suggestion, not only because he was committed by his word to the magistrates to go to Leiden, but surely also because, owing to his view of the authority of the civil government in religious affairs, he preferred invitations to come from the magistracy of a city, than from the church. He may also have suspected or known that the more Calvinist nature of that city would prove

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Leiden magistrates, see also: Dirk Jaap Noordam, *Geringde buffels en heren van stand: Het patriciaat van Leiden, 1574-1700* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994).

82. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 54Oiiiv.

83. “... verwachtende wat de Heere uyt ghenaden, met der benauder ende seer bedructer stadt soude doen willen.” Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 9.

84. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 54Oiiiv.

85. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 10.

86. Ingrid Dobbe, “Requirements for Dutch Reformed Ministers, 1570-1620,” in *The Pastor Bonus: Papers Read at the British-Dutch Colloquium at Utrecht, 18-21 September 2002*, ed. Theo Clemens and Wim Janse (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 191.

87. H. H. Kuyper, *De opleiding tot den dienst des woords bij de Gereformeerden* (The Hague: 1891), 267.

uncongenial to him. He would not be dissuaded; he wrote that he was already present from that time in Leiden, “not physically, but with heart and soul.”<sup>88</sup> Again, one wonders what prompted his decision. What really drew him so strongly to the war-torn, hungry city of Leiden? He does not give us any further answers. Perhaps it was because he felt so sure of the support of a broader magistracy.

### Theological disagreement in liberated Leiden

Coolhaes and his family finally entered Leiden on October 3, 1574 - the very day of its liberation by the Beggar forces. The prince’s troops had cut the dikes and come in with flat-bottomed boats on the resulting flood, bringing food for the citizens, who according to the traditional view had been subsisting on rats, dogs, cats and horses. About half of the population was said to have died of starvation - “Hunger was Leiden’s means of heroic suffering.”<sup>89</sup> More recent research speculates that this situation may have been slightly exaggerated - there may have been food left in the city, but the presence of the plague in the summer and contaminated drinking water leading to dysentery may have accounted for so many deaths.<sup>90</sup> Others maintain that Leiden may have been liberated just in time; if the Spanish had not lost courage but had held out even one more week, Leiden would possibly have had to capitulate - which may very well even have meant the end of the rebellion.<sup>91</sup> In any event, one cannot help but try to imagine the joyous atmosphere of the freed city. A service of thanksgiving was held that day in St. Peter’s church, led by preacher Pieter Cornelisz, who had served in Leiden throughout the Spanish occupation.<sup>92</sup>

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88. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 54Oiiiv.

89. Peter J. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: the Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 241. For a summary of this time period in Leiden, see Jan Wim Buisman, “Kerk en samenleving,” in R. C. J. van Maanen, ed., *Leiden, de geschiedenis van een Hollandse stad*, vol. 2, 1575-1795 (Leiden: Stichting Geschiedschrijving Leiden, 2003), 127-31. For more information, see: Raymond Fagel, *Leids beleg en ontzet door Spaanse ogen* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1999); Herman Amersfoort, *Belaagd en belegerd* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2011).

90. Thera Wijsenbeek, *Honger*, 3 Oktoberlezing 2006 (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 2006), 28-29.

91. J. J. Woltjer, *Kleine oorzaken, grote gevolgen* (Leiden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1975), 11.

92. L. Knappert, *De opkomst van het protestantisme in eene Noord-Nederlandsche stad* (Leiden: S. C. van Doesburgh, 1908), 269.

Coolhaes was about forty years of age when he arrived in Leiden. He was not inexperienced as a preacher; he had been preaching since at least 1561, i.e., thirteen years. However, any initial euphoria on the part of the new city preacher and his flock soon gave way to tension. The city had been Reformed since 1572, when it became part of the rebellion. But there was no “haven of spiritual serenity” in the public church.<sup>93</sup> The position of the Reformed Church was far from secure, and the disagreements and *twisten* in exhausted and depleted Leiden came at a time when unity would have been particularly helpful.<sup>94</sup>

Coolhaes’ ministry in Leiden was marked with disagreements between himself and the other preachers, elders and deacons, especially fellow preacher Pieter Cornelisz. The two preachers differed on various points. Early conflicts between Coolhaes and Cornelisz reflected Coolhaes’ openness to those with differing views about ceremonies and sacraments, his belief in the authority of the civil government in church life, and his indifferent attitude to keeping up the Presbyterian system of consistory, classis and synod. Coolhaes reported that it was said that the preachers in Leiden were lazy for not preaching as often as preachers did in other cities. He tended to want to keep up local customs, while Cornelisz stood on the side of the decisions of the Dordrecht Synod of 1574, and opposed evening prayers, funeral sermons (which could imply prayer for the dead), and celebration of holidays which fell on days other than Sunday<sup>95</sup> - all customs which smacked of Catholicism.<sup>96</sup> It was harder, in a sense, for the Reformed to tolerate Catholics than other religious groups, because they were the “false church” from which they had been liberated. Mennonites and Lutherans were seen as being merely deceived.<sup>97</sup> Evening prayers were discontinued, then reinstated when it was discovered that Delft and Rotterdam, which had never had evening prayers in the past, were

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93. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 1.

94. Point made by Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 38-39.

95. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 73Tv. Coolhaes also speaks of this in his *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 99-100.

96. Rogge makes this point. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 53. Rogge also asserts that Christmas in 1574 was on Monday, so traditionally there would have been preaching on both Monday and Tuesday. This, according to him, made this question of the celebration of Christmas especially rancorous in 1575. However, Rogge is in error about the days at issue. December 25, 1574 was a Saturday according to the Julian calendar, so there could have been preaching on Saturday and Sunday, or on Sunday only. The Gregorian calendar, or “new style,” ten days later than the Julian calendar, was adopted in Holland only in 1583 (see Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, xvii).

97. Christine Kooi, “Popish Impudence: The Perseverance of the R.C. Faithful in Calvinist Holland, 1572-1620,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995): 77-78, 82.

now holding them.<sup>98</sup> Baptism is also mentioned by Coolhaes as a divisive issue. Pieter Cornelisz baptized by sprinkling, which Coolhaes declared was not done in any other church in Holland, Zeeland, or West-Friesland.<sup>99</sup> However, he says that he tried for a time to conform in these things for the sake of unity. He mentions that the Leiden consistory met about once per month, whereas in other places more frequent meetings were the norm. For example, in Dordrecht, the consistory met every Sunday after the mid-day sermon, every Thursday at 2 p.m., and other times when necessary.<sup>100</sup> Although active in the local Leiden/Rijnland classis, Coolhaes showed himself to be reluctant to accept advice from other classes, stating that there was nothing particular for which he needed the brothers' counsel.<sup>101</sup> That attitude was suspicious to his fellow preachers, both in Leiden and in other cities.

It is not surprising that agreement was hard to reach. The Reformed Church was the "public" church<sup>102</sup> of Leiden and, increasingly, of the cities of the emerging Dutch Republic. In many ecclesiastical and social ways it was the inheritor of the Roman Catholic Church. It used church buildings as it saw fit, its clergy were on the city payroll, and it performed important functions in the community. However, not all city inhabitants were part of it, as they generally had been (at least in name) of the Catholic Church.<sup>103</sup> Communing members (*lidmaten*) of the Reformed Church were a small percentage of the population. An additional number were called *liefhebbers* or *toehoorders*. They were perhaps a large number, although it is difficult to say as data are insufficient. They, by their own choice, attended and often participated actively, but were nevertheless not full communing members. Other city residents were affiliated with another church, secretly or openly, as much as they were allowed or dared, or with no religious community at all. This is consistent with the Union of Utrecht in 1579, especially its famous thirteenth article, which meant to guarantee freedom of conscience in Holland and Zeeland.

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98. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 99-100.

99. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 99-100. Coolhaes directs us to his *Wederantwoort*, para. 143.

100. "Extracts from the Consistory book of the Reformed Church at Dordrecht, 1572-1574," [www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/english/sources/Pages/15721574.aspx](http://www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/english/sources/Pages/15721574.aspx) (accessed January 26, 2014).

101. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 49; AD, no. 23, 24 Jan. 1575.

102. There is some difference of opinion between scholars as to when it is proper to call the Reformed Church the "public" church. Officially, it is correct to use it from the mid-seventeenth century, but Kooi uses the term for the Reformed Church in Leiden during Coolhaes' tenure as preacher.

103. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 7-9.

However, this meant that the Reformed Church was not a *volkskerk* - a national, “people’s” church - in the way the Catholic Church had been. It did not embrace the whole nation. Instead, the Reformed Church maintained strict membership requirements which included doctrinal and lifestyle requirements. The idea of this Reformed Church as the “public” church was already a compromise. Nevertheless, the stricter preachers of the Reformed clergy did not find the idea of a small Reformed Church as the public church paradoxical. To them, purity of doctrine and of the members’ lifestyle was paramount, and they expected the secular government to support and defend them. Calvinists insisted upon having a special and exclusive relationship with the secular government, which they expected to recognize their authority and legitimacy.<sup>104</sup> In cities such as Delft and Dordrecht, magistrates and church consistories shared this vision and worked together in harmony.<sup>105</sup>

However, this was not the case in Leiden. Within the Reformed Church itself, consensus was lacking. Thus, the composition of the team of preachers present in the city at any one time determined to a large extent how that church would look. In Leiden the preachers “fell out” with one another regularly, as well as with the magistrates. They tried to get rid of each other, or left in anger. Just before Coolhaes entered the situation, there had already been conflict. Adriaan Jansz Taling, who had left Leiden to preach in Delft before the second Spanish siege, refused to return after the liberation because of conflicts with certain church members.<sup>106</sup> Taling is said to have been the one who had been upset with the magistrates for issuing paper money inscribed with the saying, *Haec libertatis ergo* (“This is for the sake of liberty”), rather than, as had been suggested, *Haec religionis ergo* (“This is for the sake of [the] religion”). He seems also to have called the magistrates pigs from the pulpit.<sup>107</sup> Pieter Cornelisz may have been the preacher who, during the occupation, insisted that the motto on Leiden paper money should read *Haec religionis ergo*. Jan van Hout, city secretary and at that time also one of the mayors, became so disturbed with this sort of talk

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104. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 9.

105. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 13.

106. For more information about Taling and Verstroot, as well as the other earliest Reformed preachers in Leiden, see Rosemary Jones, “De Nederduits Gereformeerde gemeente te Leiden in de jaren 1572-1576,” *Leids Jaarboekje* 66 (1974): 132-34. For more about the relationship between church and City Hall in these years, see Jan A. F. de Jongste, *Om de religie of om de vrijheid: spanningen tussen stadhuis en kerk in Leiden na het beleg* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1998).

107. Johan Koppenol, *Leids heelal: het Loterijspel (1596) van Jan van Hout* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 31.



that he pointed a gun at one of the city preachers, probably Adriaan Jansz Taling, and threatened to shoot. This could certainly have colored Cornelisz' subsequent view of the magistracy.<sup>108</sup> Coolhaes claimed, however, that no Leidener would have taken up arms or given a penny for "the religion" – they had fought for liberty.<sup>109</sup> As we mentioned in the Introduction, he was a clear proponent of *libertatis causa*.

Emotions also ran high when Claes Jansz Verstroot, another Leiden preacher who had served through both Spanish sieges, requested permission to leave Leiden in 1575 in order to serve in Hazerswoude (southeast of Leiden), despite opposition from the city church council and magistracy. Coolhaes urged him to think of his responsibility, but after some time Cornelisz and Coolhaes convinced the city magistracy to grant his request.<sup>110</sup> However, the Leiden magistracy claimed that Verstroot, who was beloved by the community, was driven away by one of the "opponents;" presumably Cornelisz, and was currently preaching in Naaldwijk, southwest of The Hague. This acrimony, the magistrates said, opened their eyes to the party-spiritedness of some of the consistory.<sup>111</sup> From the point of view of some of the Reformed Church, the magistrates in Leiden were too strong and too aware of their position and authority after having come through the Spanish occupations. The magistrates believed that they controlled the governing of the Reformed Church, and consulted preachers in neighboring cities for support so as not to lose that control.<sup>112</sup>

Leiden was not unique in these struggles for control between the civil government and the Reformed Church council. Rotterdam and Gouda also experienced serious tension. Rotterdam already had a strongly Calvinist preacher, Aegidius Johannes Frisius. The consistory was outraged when the magistrates appointed the preacher Petrus Anastasius

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108. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 56. See Brandt, *Historie der reformatie*, 554; also Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 49-59. For more about Jan van Hout, see: Karel Bostoën, Piet de Baar and Kees Walle, *Jan van Houts nalatenschap: bronnen* (Leiden: Vereniging Jan van Hout, Uitgeverij Ginkgo, 2013).

109. Quoted in Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 59. Bostoën does not give the reference, but it is from Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie vanden kercken raedt ende ouerlinghen [sic], aen dien plaetsen daer een christelijcke magistraet is, het ghevoelen der kercken Christi tot Zurich, tot Bern, ende anderen dierghelijcken vermaerden steden ende plaetsen in Zwitserlandt, door den eerweerdighen welgeleerden Rodolphum Gwaltherum, in verscheyden zijnen sermonen int latijn beschriven, uit het latijn ouergheset door C.C.V.M.I.D.H.G.* (Gouda: 1582), 1611 edition, 2b.

110. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 56.

111. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Aiiiij.

112. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 36.

Hyperphragmus Gandensis,<sup>113</sup> known also as Pieter Overdhage, who had earlier fled to Emden. The Rotterdam consistory did not approve of the choice or of the fact that the nomination which had been made without them. But not only did the consistory's threat of complaining to William of Orange not help their case, the magistracy went ahead and fired Frisius. However, ultimately Overdhage was considered by many as a problematic choice, and the magistrates did not take him on either.<sup>114</sup> This all took place in Rotterdam several years before the Leiden "Coolhaes affair" of 1579. Then, in 1582, in Gouda, a dispute similar to the "Coolhaes affair" and its aftermath, was played out around preacher Herbert Herbets. Herbets, who had ministered in Dordrecht, in 1582 preached affirming human perfectibility over the Heidelberg catechism, rejecting predestination, and affirming freedom of choice. He left to preach in Gouda, a city known for a broader church. Nevertheless, Herbets was asked to account for his unorthodox views. Over the next several years, the Gouda magistracy supported and protected Herbets against Calvinist preachers and synods.<sup>115</sup> So, we see that conflict over these issues, while pronounced in Leiden, was not unique.

Much of this conflict arose because the Reformed Church did not yet have a clear identity. Everything about the church was developing – its organization, its theology, its practice. This was a "plastic phase;"<sup>116</sup> opposing theological views had not yet been co-opted by various interest groups. Because of this, the terms "Calvinist" and "Reformed" are often not used as equivalents. "Reformed" sometimes signals a broader view, while "Calvinist" often means a Genevan-influenced person of narrower views.<sup>117</sup> However, there actually existed many variations in Dutch Reformed thought in the sixteenth century. Some were more fervent and polemical, others were more irenic.<sup>118</sup> Coolhaes himself did not want to be called a Calvinist. He states:

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113. "Gandensis" means: from Ghent/Gand.

114. Pettegree, "Coming to Terms with Victory," 165.

115. A. J. van den Berg, "Herman Herbets (ca. 1540-1607) in conflict met de Gereformeerde kerk," in *Kerkhistorische opstellen aangeboden aan prof.dr. J. van den Berg*, ed. C. Augustijn, P. N. Holtrop, G.A.M. Posthumus Meyjes, and E.G.E. van der Wall (Kampen: Kok, 1987), 20-29; A. Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen, kerk en kerkvolk ten tijdens van Maurits en Oldenbarneveldt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 53; Pettegree, "Coming to terms with victory."164.

116. Woltjer, *Kleine oorzaken, grote gevolgen*, 14.

117. For example, see Duke, "Perspectives on European Calvinism," 4.

118. Nijenhuis discusses many contrasting figures: Arent Cornelisz, Marnix van St. Aldegonde, the Dutch refugee churches in London and Emden including Lawrence Jacobsz. Reael, Lutheran-leaning

I call Calvinists the ones who stand upon Calvin and his writings and would not diverge from them even a tiny bit ... Our office is not Calvin's but Christ's; not Calvin's but Christ's teaching to preach. And Calvin did not die for us. He does not have the witness from God that he could never err. Just the same as Luther, Zwingli, Brentius, Bullingerus, Bucerus, Oecolampadius, Melanchthon, Beza, Gualterus, and whoever may be called good men. God the Lord does not point us to them, neither to Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and those like them and their writings, but he points us only to his divine Word.<sup>119</sup>

This is consonant with what he had affirmed in Essen in 1571 – that he would rather be called “Christian” than any confessional title.

## A new university

In 1575, Leiden University was founded. On February 8, the university was inaugurated with pomp and pageantry. Coolhaes played an important part. He participated as a preacher on the day, and then as the first, albeit temporary, lecturer of theology in the infant university. The festive day of dedication began with a service in St. Peter's at seven o'clock in the morning (most sources agree that fellow preacher Pieter Cornelisz preached at this early service).<sup>120</sup> This was followed by the procession at nine o'clock - a lavish parade from St. Peter's church to the new Academy Building, including participants in classical costumes, a decorated boat

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Amsterdam preachers Petrus Gabriël and Jan Arentsz., court preachers Pierre de Villiers and Jean Taffin, Petrus Dathenus, Franciscus Junius, Adrianus Saravia, and Herman Herbertz. See: Willem Nijenhuis, “Varianten binnen het Nederlandse Calvinisme in de zestiende eeuw,” *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 89 (1976): 358-72.

119. We give here the unabridged passage: “Ic noeme Calvinisten de gene die also op Calvinum ende zijne schrijften staen, dat sy niet een tittelken daer van souden afwijcken willen, of hy al wel (als een mensche zijnde) de sake niet effen so wel hadde ghetreffet, ende alle anderen die int cleynste daer teghen souden willen kicken, ofte dit, of dat, also niet verstaen en conden ghelijck Calvinus, verachten, lasteren, verdoemen: onser ampt is, niet Calvinum maer Christum: niet Calvini, maer Christi leere te prediken. Ende Calvinus en is voor ons niet ghestorven, hy en heeft oock dat ghetuychnis van God niet, dat hy niet en hadde moghen dwalen. Desghelijcken oock Lutherus, Zwinglius, Brentius, Bullingerus, Bucerus, Ecolampadius, Melancthon, Beza, Gualterus, ende hoe die goede mannen souden moghen ghenoecht worden: God de Heere wijset ons oock niet op hare, noch op Augustini, Hieronimi, Ambrosij, ende hares ghelijcken schriften, maer hy wijst ons alleen op zijn Godlick woort”. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 100 BBiiiiiv-r.

120. Matthijs Siegenbeek, *Geschiedenis der Leidsche hoogeschool van hare oprigting in den jare 1575, tot het jaar 1825*, vol. 1 (Leiden: S. en J. Luchtman, 1829), 18; Willem Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid. De Leidse universiteit in heden en verleden* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2008), 22. Note: this book is also published in English: Willem Otterspeer, *The Bastion of Liberty: Leiden University Today and Yesterday*. Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2008. See also: Willem Otterspeer, *De lezende Pallas: het dubbeltalent van de Leidse universiteit* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 2000), 5-8.

on the Rapenburg called “the ship of Apollo,”<sup>121</sup> music, and the firing of artillery.<sup>122</sup>

Coolhaes is pictured walking in the procession in the engraving which commemorates it, along with other professors, representatives and guests.<sup>123</sup> Coolhaes walked between Gerhard van Wyngaerden (representative of His Excellency and the Court of Holland) and Jacob van der Does, city official. Each teacher was flanked by secular officials and honored guests.<sup>124</sup>

Coolhaes then spoke “in praise of holy theology,” “De s.s. theologiae laudibus” - an address which is not extant.<sup>125</sup> It is interesting to wonder why Coolhaes was requested to speak and to teach, rather than Pieter Cornelisz, his fellow preacher. One can speculate that his academic qualifications, whatever they were, were seen to have been better, or perhaps the magistracy’s favor was the deciding factor.<sup>126</sup>

Can Coolhaes truly be called the first “professor” of theology at Leiden University? Some say yes, while others think not.<sup>127</sup> He had no official appointment. Nevertheless, an engraving was made of Coolhaes late in his life in Leiden, commemorating him as a professor of theology. The facts are as follows. The inauguration had taken place on February 8, 1575. The statutes of the university had been drawn up on June 2, 1575, declaring the four

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121. A. J. F. Gogelein, and R. E. O. Ekkart, *Leidse universiteit 400, stichting en eerste bloei 1575 - ca. 1650* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 1975), 37.

122. Ro Van Luttervelt, “De optocht ter gelegenheid van de inwijding der Leidsche universiteit,” *Leids Jaarboekje* 50 (1958): 87-104. For a description of the procession in English and of motivations in the founding and planning of the new university, see J. A van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors. Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers, and the Leiden Humanists* (Leiden: Sir Thomas Browne Institute, 1962), 2-8. For more description, see also Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 1, 17-20.

123. Van Luttervelt, “De optocht ter gelegenheid van de inwijding der Leidsche universiteit,” 101.

124. Siegenbeek, *Geschiedenis*, 21. An enlargement of Coolhaes in this engraving can be seen in Bostoen, *Hart voor Leiden*, 58. Two of the engravings of the procession are in existence. The first is anonymous, from 1575 or shortly after. The second, basically a mirror image of the first with some variations, was also anonymously done and printed in Leiden by Pieter van der Aa after 1682.

125. This was reported by J. J. Orlers, who chronicled city happenings. Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid*, 22.

126. Fatio and Maag speculate that it was the latter. The choice of Coolhaes showed the magistracy’s power of the university at that time. Fatio, *Nihil pulchris ordine*, 7; Karin Maag, *Seminary or University? The Genevan Academy and Reformed Higher Education, 1560-1620* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995), 173.

127. Coolhaes is listed as the first member of the faculty of theology in Rieu, *Album studiosorum*, 4. On the other hand, Rogge does not think he deserves that title. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 49. Agreeing with Rogge is A. A. Bantjes, *De Leidse hoogleraren en lectoren 1575-1815; 1. De theologische faculteit* (Wergroep Elites, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, August, 1983), 20 - 21. He lists Coolhaes as though he had been a professor, but adds “Wellicht nooit echt hoogleraar geweest en slechts les gegeven in theologische faculteit,” 21. Bantjes uses Rogge as his main source. Otterspeer, the modern historian of Leiden University, does call Coolhaes the first professor of theology. Otterspeer, *De lezende Pallas*, 5.

faculties of the university to be Theology, Law, Medicine, and “Philosophy” (including liberal arts subjects, classical languages and Hebrew). The earliest record of the students of the university, the *Album studiosorum*, begins with its first entries in August of 1575, with two students.<sup>128</sup> However, Coolhaes had taught only in the spring of that year - i.e., after the service of dedication, but before the statutes had been drawn up. Unfortunately no records remain of it. It is not surprising, since the first years of the university were difficult both financially and organizationally.<sup>129</sup>

The answer to this question of Coolhaes’ status surely depends upon the definition of “professor.” Guillaume Feugeray is commonly viewed as the first professor of theology in Leiden, whereas Coolhaes is described as having been engaged to “hold some lessons” in theology, a phrase that is also used of most of the other *hoogleraren* who walked in the procession on the day of dedication. In the contemporary engraving of the opening procession, he and the other *hoogleraren* are dressed in the now-recognizable regalia of Leiden professors.<sup>130</sup> Siegenbeek lists them as: Coolhaes (Theology), Diederick van der Nieuwborch (Law), Joost de Menyn (Law), Pieter van Foreest, also called Petrus Forestus (Medicine), Lauren van Oorschot (Medicine), Geraert de Bont (listed as a Doctor of Medicine, who would give lessons in Astronomy and Mathematics), and Cornelis de Groot (Philosophy). Siegenbeek says that the university, anxious to provide qualified teachers, had mostly engaged these early teachers only until an academically qualified person could be found. Only two of the original six “professors” remained at the university after the first months - De Bont and De Groot. The others, like Coolhaes, assisted the University in getting off the ground, but did not stay in academia.<sup>131</sup> Coolhaes had a friendly relationship with the soon-dismissed first professor of Hebrew, Herman Rennecher, and with his successor, Johannes Drusius, who lived with Coolhaes as lodger. Perhaps Coolhaes was one of several who sang a satirical song outside of Rennecher’s window in October, 1576.<sup>132</sup>

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128. Rieu, *Album studiosorum*, 1.

129. P. C. Molhuysen, “De eerste secretaris van de senaat der Leidse hoogeschool,” *Leids jaarboekje* 6 (1909): 58.

130. A clear version of this engraving is reproduced in Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid*, 24-25.

131. Siegenbeek, *Geschiedenis*, 2. See also Maag, *Seminary or University*, 173.

132. This is the conjecture of Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 85-88. For more about Drusius, see: Theodor Dündelgrün, “Johannes Drusius en Leiden,” *Omslag: bulletin van de universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden en het*

Coolhaes lectured on the Epistle to the Galatians in the spring of 1575.<sup>133</sup> One of the key verses of that epistle is “For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1), which is appropriate for Coolhaes because, as we will see, he opposed what he saw as the slavish attention of the Reformed to “human” religious rules and regulations. Perhaps this emphasis already formed part of his lectures. It also could very well have been connected in Coolhaes’ mind to “*Haec libertatis ergo*” – *libertatis causa*. As for the students to whom Coolhaes lectured that spring, no list of them exists. Perhaps Coolhaes lectured to non-enrolled auditors. Perhaps some of the early auditors became enrolled students later.

Guillaume Feugeray arrived later in 1575: a French preacher who had been recommended by De Villiers, one of the court preachers of William of Orange. Feugeray set out a curriculum of biblical theology for the new faculty to teach - a study of the Old and New Testaments which focused on the common dogmatic *loci*, and excluded “quibbling” about truth.<sup>134</sup> After Feugeray took up residence at the new university, Coolhaes no longer gave lectures.<sup>135</sup> Also, Ludovicus Capellus is recorded as having held an oration in June of 1575, which has also been called the dedication of the university.<sup>136</sup> This all points to a conclusion that the entire arrangement with Coolhaes had always been meant to be temporary. In support of this is the fact that Coolhaes never complained of any inequity in his departure from university teaching. He is not reported to have complained about it to others, and he never mentions it in his writings.

So, in conclusion, Coolhaes played a part at the university’s beginning, but it is actually quite generous to give Coolhaes the title of “professor.” He participated in the university’s opening ceremonially, but after that seems by any account to have taught only one set of lectures. His students were not registered or even recorded. He may have sat in on

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*Scaliger Instituut* 1 (2008): 12-13; Jacob van Sluis, “Een proefschrift over Johannes Drusius,” *Letterhoeke* 2 (2006): 22-23; Martin H. H. Engels, *Merendeels verloren gegaan: 2000 brieven aan Johannes Drusius (1550-1616)* (Leeuwarden: ME Uitgeverij, 1995); Abel Curiander and Herman Van den Abeele, *Leven en werken van Johannes Drusius* (Oudenaarde: Sanderus, 1979).

133. L. Knappert, “Een academisch leerplan van den jare 1575,” *Leids jaarboekje* 6 (1909): 73.

134. John Platt, *Reformed Thought and Scholasticism: The Arguments for the Existence of God in Dutch Theology, 155-1650* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 119. Platt does not mention Coolhaes in his book.

135. Knappert, “Een academisch leerplan van den jare 1575,” 73.

136. Otterspeer, *De lezende Pallas*, 16.

some *colleges* (lectures), especially in 1578 and 1586, which will be described later, but he did not participate in any disputations, or serve in any other related capacity.

#### At home between Rapenburg and Papengracht

Although his official time lecturing at the university was brief, Coolhaes continued to lodge students and visitors in his nearby house close to the university, in houses backing each other on the parallel Papengracht and the Rapenburg streets. Some of his lodgers are known to have been German students, from the Palatinate. It has always been a Leiden tradition for students to lodge in private homes.<sup>137</sup> For example, a “fashionable University boarding house” called the “Huis te Lochorst” is mentioned in connection with Geoffrey Whitney, the English student and later well-known poet and compiler of verse in his *A Choice of Emblemes*, which was published in Leiden by Plantijn. This boarding house was in Coolhaes’ street, the Papengracht, just a few doors away from him - evidently “particularly popular with English undergraduates.” Jan van Hout also allowed students to lodge in his house in the Breestraat, near to the City Hall. In 1581, four students registered in the Faculty of Arts, as well as Van Hout’s son who was also studying, lived with the humanist city secretary.<sup>138</sup> One could suppose that Van Hout, poet and humanist as well as politician, was especially interested in students with literary aspirations.

Coolhaes lived on the Papengracht and extended to the parallel Rapenburg.<sup>139</sup> He had two plots of land beside each other on the Rapenburg (numbers 18-22), and adjoining land on the Papengracht (numbers 13-19); more surface area together than any of the surrounding houses. Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, in their multi-volume history of all of the parcels

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137. For more discussion of this, see Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid*, 89.

138. Van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors*, 124, 131; see also plate 5, which is located between pages 108 and 109.

139. The location of Coolhaes’ house can be seen in Salomon Davidsz van Dulmanhorst, Jan Pieterz Dou, and W. Pleyte, *Leiden vóór drie honderd jaren en thans* (Leiden: Brill, 1874), appendices XIX and XXV, 83. The house at Rapenburg 22 is also mentioned in Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 88. The best source for information is Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel. *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 1, 25; vol. 3, 40, and vol. 4, 268, 344, 352-53, 365, 372, 389, 395-98. The gate between 18 and 20, which he made, is still visible in the photo from c. 1870 in Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, in *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 4, 380. There is also plan of the ground floor, but from 1977, on page 381, as well as a photo of the living room from 1983. The same book, pages 380-83, describes the changes to Rapenburg 20 through the centuries. It appears that very few if any features remain from the time Coolhaes lived there.

of land on the Rapenburg, throughout the centuries often the most elite area to live and work in the city of Leiden, record that Coolhaes and family came into Rapenburg 22 in 1574, and in 1583 also bought Papengracht 13-17 which backed it, and which included the area of Rapenburg 18 and 20. He then sold Rapenburg 22 to move into the “little house” 18, which he expanded into the empty lot of 20. In 1590 he sold part of the property, Papengracht 19, and the descriptions of the sizeable complex mention a large room and a kitchen.<sup>140</sup> It seems that he and his family lived on the Rapenburg side and records showed that he rented the Papengracht house.<sup>141</sup> His friend, Dr. Johannes Heurnius, professor of medicine, had Papengracht 21 and 23 – a location which retains a medical association with the house title “Hôpital Wallon” (although the buildings presently on these sites do not date from Coolhaes’ time).

This sizable space was useful for lodging traveling preachers and students, and became very important later when Coolhaes began his distilling business.<sup>142</sup> Coolhaes lived there with his wife, children, and serving maid, as well as lodgers, students and occasional visitors. The household engendered some controversy on several fronts. Some of his critics thought that he lived too luxuriously for a preacher, and that he associated with the magistrates and was compromised by social intimacy with them. Others suspected his household of unseemly frivolity and lawlessness. Coolhaes defended himself: “I bought this house when I first came to this country and city; I brought the money with me to pay for and repair it; no one gave me a penny toward it and I bothered and bother no one for it.”<sup>143</sup> To charges of gluttony, he replied that he hardly earned enough to feed and clothe his wife and small children, not to mention the preachers who from time to time stayed with him, who had been driven out of the Palatinate. Even if he could afford banqueting, he said that he was sickly, could not stand excessive eating and drinking, and was never more healthy than when he kept to his “diet.”<sup>144</sup>

As to insinuations regarding his relationship with the magistrates: “Now further, that I banquet every day with the honorable magistracy of Leiden, gorging myself and drinking to

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140. Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 4, 344, 352-53.

141. Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 4, 395.

142. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 365-67.

143. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 15Diiir.

144. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Diiir.



excess, they themselves can testify for me that it is untrue, and none of the citizens can say that they have seen it or heard it from reliable people.”<sup>145</sup> Concerning the lifestyle of his student lodgers, he thought that they merely took “honest exercise” and played musical instruments. Rowdy, boisterous behavior was noted as being a problem in Leiden earlier in 1575,<sup>146</sup> and dancing was often frowned upon. Some, especially Mennonites, Coolhaes wrote, assumed that when music was present, so was dancing. However, he asserted, there was nothing wrong with games with balls or playing the lute. He wrote that “young people who study must have exercise to move their limbs and drive away melancholy and heaviness.”<sup>147</sup>

### Coornhert and the Leiden disputation

During this period, Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert, the famous Dutch humanist, poet, playwright, and “self-styled critic and gadfly” of the Reformed Church,<sup>148</sup> debated Reformed preachers Arent Cornelisz and Renier (also known as Reynier or Reginaldus) Donteclock in Leiden on April 14, 1578. Hundreds attended the public disputation at Leiden University. It is not known if Coolhaes attended, but it is hard to believe he would have missed it. Unfortunately, he did not mention the event in any of his writings. Like Coornhert, Coolhaes was already a critic of the views of many of the Reformed preachers. Also, as we will see, Coolhaes echoed so many ideas from Coornhert<sup>149</sup> that it seems extremely likely that the

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145. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Diiiir.

146. Jones, “De Nederduits gereformeerde gemeente te Leiden,” 139.

147. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Diiiir. It should be noted that Coolhaes almost always used the term “Anabaptists/*Doopsgezinden*.” I will generally use the term “Mennonites” in this dissertation, since Anabaptists have come to be associated primarily with the Munster radicals and other extremists, whereas after Menno Simons (1496-1561), those in the Netherlands holding Anabaptist beliefs and practices have generally been called Mennonites. I will, however, use “Anabaptist” if I refer mainly to their theological views. However, others differ in their precise usage of these names. Piet Visser, for instance, prefers to use “Mennonite” only for those groups which harken directly back to the influence of Menno, but “Anabaptists/*Doopsgezinden*” for the groups which emerged from the Waterland rift in 1557. Piet Visser, “Mennonites and *Doopsgezinden* in the Netherlands, 1535-1700,” in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700*, ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 299-300.

148. Voogt, *Constraint on Trial*, 197. See also Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 156-57, for a description of Coornhert and Coolhaes. See also: Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert, *Politieke geschriften: opstand en religievrede*, ed. J. Gruppelaar (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

149. Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 123. See also Hendrik Bongers, *The Life and Work of Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert*, trans. Gerrit Voogt (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 72-77.

humanist served as a source of inspiration to the preacher, even though Coolhaes does not credit Coornhert with this in his written works.

Many of these ideas were brought out during the disputation. Coornhert, Cornelisz and Donteclock, as we have mentioned, debated the definition of the true church. Coornhert believed that the Roman Catholic Church, while flawed, was indeed the true church, and defended Roman Catholic rights to free worship. He thought that the Reformed Church was dangerous and ill-conceived. He despised the Heidelberg Catechism. He did not believe in the doctrine of predestination. Indeed he went further - he denied original sin and affirmed perfectionism (human perfectibility) in this life.<sup>150</sup>

It is outside the purpose of this study to do more than touch upon this event briefly, but some of Coornhert's points bear so much resemblance to the ideas of Coolhaes that it would be remiss to give them no attention at all. Some of these are: Coornhert emphasized the difference between the visible and the invisible in sacraments and ceremonies. What is internal is essential; the external is valueless. Ceremonies (in other words, the sacraments and how they are administered, as well as church orders and every custom and tradition), are not important enough to fight over. Therefore, freedom for religious diversity is very important. To punish and kill the "others," the diverse, those whom many were calling "heretics," is in Coornhert's view a great wrong. This position led him to defend the right of those others to their ceremonies, even as he thinks those ceremonies unimportant.<sup>151</sup> As we will see, Coolhaes, while criticizing but still remaining in the Reformed Church, was also preoccupied with defining the nature of the church, and focused on distinctions of external practices versus internal realities. Similarly to Coornhert, Coolhaes was willing to allow all sorts of ceremonies for the sake of diversity but did not find any of them truly important. Coolhaes also criticised the Heidelberg Catechism. In these several things, Coornhert and Coolhaes were kindred spirits.

In this chapter, we have seen the early part of Coolhaes' life and his entrance into Leiden, as well as the beginnings of the divisions centered around him which would grow in the Leiden Reformed Church in the years immediately following. In the next chapter, we will

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150. Voogt, *Constraint on Trial*, 56; Hendrik Bongers J. R. H. Hoogervorst, M.E.H.N. Mout, I. Schöffer, and J. J. Woltjer, eds. *Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert: Dwars maar recht* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1989), 24-26. For a theological discussion of Coornhert's views on perfectibility, see also W. Nijenhuis, "Coornhert and the Heidelberg Catechism. Moment in the Struggle between Humanism and Reformation," in *Ecclesia Reformata. Studies on the Reformation*, vol. 1, part 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 188-206.

151. Voogt, *Constraint on Trial*, 83.

focus on the most important of these conflicts, the so-called Coolhaes affair, between Coolhaes, Pieter Cornelisz, the Leiden elders and the magistrates, over elder selection – a dispute which became so serious that it eventually led to Coolhaes' excommunication and defrocking.

## Chapter 2: The “Coolhaes affair”: a struggle for dominance

In the second half of the 1570's, Coolhaes continued to be immersed in disagreements with the Reformed consistory and with his co-preachers. He called this the schism, *de scheuring*, and sometimes divided the unhappy experience into the first and second schisms. With Pieter Cornelisz he had various conflicts. The major one was the degree to which civil government should lead in the governing of the church. This controversy led to the aforementioned first schism of the church in Leiden in 1579, in which Coolhaes with the magistracy formed a new consistory, while the old “Calvinist” consistory also continued to meet. In the second schism in the following year, 1580, Coolhaes and Lucas Hespe argued over questions of baptism and communion with former Mennonites. Both of these quarrels involved three factions in addition to the city preachers: first of all, other Reformed preachers (both in Leiden, other cities, and in the surrounding Rijnland classis); secondly, the Leiden magistracy; and thirdly, the States of Holland. Coolhaes' sympathies were almost invariably with the magistracy.

This sequence of events was later nicknamed “the Coolhaes affair.” It is difficult to figure out who first coined this expressive phrase, but it has popped up frequently in most writings about Coolhaes from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. By calling the events of the disagreement between the Leiden consistory, magistracy, and the States “the Coolhaes affair,” this complicated power struggle is reduced to identification with the one who became its lightning rod.

This conflict situation was local in scope, but encapsulated the growing tussle in many cities between preachers, magistrates and the States. It was, in a sense, a “test case” for the emerging Republic, which looked on as the drama played out in Leiden. The controversy highlighted each faction's differing views of the ideal definition and balance of the church/state relationship, and the struggle in all were engaged for dominance.

This part of Coolhaes' life, which shows his struggle on behalf of the power of the magistracy against the consistory up until his excommunication, is more documented and discussed than any other period of his life. Coolhaes himself related much of the story in his first book, *Apologia*, and his second, *Breeder bericht*.<sup>1</sup> Coornhert, in helping the Leiden

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1. Caspar Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht van die scheuringe der kercken Christi tot Leyden, ende den negen questien die rechte voort heen ende wederom ghedraghen, ende na eens yegelijcken goetduncken werden geinterpreteert, welcke deselve zijn, en tot wat eynde die ghestelt, en door wien sy in yeder mans handen zijn ghecomen, oock by wien het staet dat deze scheure tot deser tijt toe niet is gheheelt worden, etc.*, Leiden: J. Paets Jacobszoon and/or J. Bouwensz? 1580.

magistrates to defend Coolhaes, wrote about it in *Justificatie*. Rogge wrote extensively about it. Almost any writer who has written at all about Coolhaes has mentioned it.

Most importantly, Christine Kooi has written a lively and comprehensive description of the events of the “Coolhaes affair.” Her book’s purpose is to show Leiden’s ecclesiastical journey from 1572, when the city first declared itself for the Reform, to 1620 after the Synod of Dordt. As an important part of this, she tells the story of Coolhaes’ Leiden ministry, as well as the similar case of later preacher Pieter (Petrus) Hackius, who held similar views to Coolhaes. She then follows events through the political turmoil between the Arminians and Gomarists at the University and the civic unrest which resulted from their disagreements. So Kooi focuses on Coolhaes, in general, only from 1572 to 1580, giving a very complete account of those years, referring to Coolhaes’ first two books, as well as archival and other sources, and reproducing the text of the agreement which resolved the “schisms”: the “Arbitral Accord.”<sup>2</sup> We can therefore be thankful for her full coverage of this period.

Since the purpose of this biographical sketch is to relate Coolhaes’ life as a relatively brief but updated story, so that the later discussion of his ecclesiology can be seen in the context of that life, using the work of others but especially his own writings, this section will be less detailed than that of Kooi. We will relate the essential biographical details of Coolhaes in this period of his Leiden ministry, especially related to ecclesiology, but not all of the detail Kooi brings to bear for her wider picture of Leiden.

Reshuffle the preachers?

As we have seen, differences of theological opinions were present from the time of Coolhaes’ arrival in the city. Coolhaes’ opponents in the city – colleague Pieter Cornelisz and the consistory – tried to solve this by a reshuffling of the preachers to their own advantage.

Initially, an attempt was made to transfer Coolhaes out of Leiden. In June 1577, Noordwijk, a preaching point for the Leiden preachers and part of the Rijnland classis,<sup>3</sup> asked

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2. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 217-20.

3. Leiden was the only larger city in the Rijnland classis, and was its driving force. Kooi lists the eventual towns in the Rijnland classis (although a classis book only exists from 1585): Benthuisen, De Kaag, Hazerswoude, Hillegom, Katwijk, Leiden, Leiderdorp, Lisse, Noordwijk, Oegstgeest, Rijnsburg, Sassenheim, Valkenburg, Voorhout, Voorschoten, Warmond, and Zoeterwoude. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 49; J. Roelevink, “Inleiding classis Leiden,” *Classicale acta 1573-1620 II: Particuliere synode Zuid-Holland, Classis*

for one of the preachers to be permanently assigned to their village. Initially the consistory was opposed to the idea of losing one of their preachers, but when the magistrates of Leiden agreed with Noordwijk to help them in this way, the elders proposed Coolhaes for the transfer. Instead, the Leiden magistracy sent Pieter Cornelisz himself, but only for three months. This was not what the consistory had intended. Coornhert, defending both Coolhaes and the magistracy, wrote that Cornelisz “fell into the net he had spread for his brother Coolhaes.”<sup>4</sup> Eventually, Noordwijk called its own preacher, Cornelis Rycwaert.<sup>5</sup> As Kooi points out, the magistracy was strong enough to confound and overturn the decisions of both classis and consistory.<sup>6</sup>

Soon after, they saw an opportunity to move preacher Johannes Hallius out of the Rijnland classis. Hallius could be called Coolhaes’ protégé at this point, although it is not sure how much they really agreed theologically. He was an unmarried preacher from the Palatinate who had been living with the Coolhaes family for two years and who also preached in nearby Warmond.<sup>7</sup> A request came in 1578 that Hallius move to another location in Flanders.<sup>8</sup> Coolhaes and Hallius were against this move. The Leiden consistory believed that it held the authority to send him regardless. The Rijnland classis, which met in Leiden, addressed this issue on November 5, 1578. Coolhaes was the classis president at that time. The Rijnland classis had not been in existence long – it dated only from 1575, numbering at that time seven preachers in the Rijnland area. Up until that time, the classis of Delft had wanted Leiden to be included with them, but Coolhaes, in asserting the right of “Leiden with all of Rijnland” to have an independent classis, had sent word, as we mentioned earlier, that there was nothing special in which they needed the advice of the brothers there.<sup>9</sup> Now, in 1579, the classis took a key role in the decision about Hallius, siding with the Leiden

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*Dordrecht 1601-1620, Classis Breda 1616-1620* (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1991), xxi.

4. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Aiiiijb.

5. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. I, 61.

6. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 49-50.

7. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 36Jiiiiv.

8. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Civ.

9. “... dat wij niet besonder wichtigs hebben, dairin (?) wij die broederen raedt bedorffen...” AD, inventarisnr. 445, nr. 21, 24 Jan. 1575; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 48-49.

consistory. They voted, as the consistory had wanted, to send Hallius to the South. They charged two elders to accompany him to Warmond to request that the lady of Warmond, Henrica van Egmond,<sup>10</sup> and the church there would release him from service. In the meantime, Hallius asked Warmond for support to keep him there. He wanted it, and evidently the Warmond church did not want to lose him.<sup>11</sup>

Coolhaes, in a move which typified his attitude about the authority of secular government over the church, but also his ability to maneuver around obstacles, went over their heads and complained to the States of Holland, who advised the Rijnland classis that preachers should not be taken from the region or moved against their will. Meanwhile, the church in Warmond had had a change of heart. On November 11, 1578, a written consent for Hallius' dismissal came from them. Perhaps pressure had been applied from another quarter, such as the Leiden consistory. The classis was then called together for an accusation against Coolhaes and Hallius, along with the two professors of theology, Feugeray and Louis Cappel, in attendance. Coolhaes, at bay, held that the group had no authority over him; the case was delayed until the next provincial synod, and Hallius remained in Warmond and Leiden for the time being. The Leiden magistracy supported Coolhaes and reproved the consistory.<sup>12</sup> Although Coolhaes undoubtedly wanted Hallius to remain, in a sense he had also used Hallius and this case to encourage the power of the magistracy over the consistory and classis.

### Consistorial innovation

The power struggle which would cause the "first schism" came to a head in January of 1579 over the selection of elders and deacons. Kooi posits that because of the Synod of 1578, and the victory over Catholicism in Amsterdam and Haarlem in the same year, the Reformed church in general, and possibly the consistory in Leiden in particular, were feeling

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10. See also "Johan van Duvendoorde, Heer van Warmond, Woude en Alkemade," [www.geni.com/people/Johan-van-Duivendoorde-heer-van-Breda/600000002739594906](http://www.geni.com/people/Johan-van-Duivendoorde-heer-van-Breda/600000002739594906) (accessed January 26 2016).

11. Testimony of Tilmannus Cupus 1579? inventarisnr. 672, AD; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 50; and Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 57-58. Also, Coolhaes wrote a short manuscript note to Cupus which is extant: Letter from Caspar Coolhaes to Tieleman Cupus, 1594, UBL.

12. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 57-59; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 49-51.

confident.<sup>13</sup> Historically, the Leiden consistory, from 1574 until 1578, had followed the custom of submitting newly chosen elders and deacons to the magistracy for approval. This demonstrates the influence that the Leiden magistracy had kept over this process even after the city went over to the Reform. Coolhaes said that when he arrived in Leiden, the custom had already been well established: the list of new elders and deacons was suggested to the magistracy, approved, then read out to the whole church. More precisely, they were read out in both of the city's main Reformed Churches, i.e., St. Peter's and the Hooglandse Kerk.<sup>14</sup> This was done on the Sunday following the approval, after the sermon. If there was no objection from individuals (*suffragia tacita* - silence is consent) in the congregation during the following week, they would be installed into service the Sunday after that.<sup>15</sup>

However, the Leiden consistory boldly decided to attempt to follow the prescriptions of the Synod of Dordrecht, 1578, in article 4. The Synod had decided that preachers should be appointed by the consistory together with the agreement of the deacons and the classis. Then, they should be presented to both the magistrates and the congregation, who had two weeks to object if they so chose. The civil magistrates, they believed, had no right to select clergy.<sup>16</sup> This gave the church the initial power advantage in selection, and brought the secular government into the process only at the end. Coolhaes discussed the subtleties of this procedure at length in his first book, *Apologia*.<sup>17</sup> The key point that he makes is that the one who approved the selection had the power.

So, during the Christmas season of 1578, things were done differently than before. The consistory went ahead and chose twelve elders and twelve deacons. As Kooi points out, this was the method which the Synod of Dordrecht 1578 had directed – twice the number of required elders and deacons were chosen, and the consistory would make the final selection later. They would be announced to the congregation, and then would be on trial for eight days, after which half would be chosen and after eight more days would be presented to the

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13. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 55-56.

14. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 87.

15. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 33.

16. Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555-1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 229-30.

17. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 28 Gijjv-29Hv.



congregation, before they would be finally confirmed in their office.<sup>18</sup> Their presentation to the congregation gave time for objections from the church community. So, the names of the proposed Leiden group of twenty-four were read out on a Friday after the sermon in St. Peter's church. One of them, Coolhaes reported, asked if the magistracy was aware of their calling. No, he was told, but the magistracy was always satisfied with the selection, even if the names would be sent to them after the installation. The one who asked the question was dissatisfied. Two of the candidates refused to accept the office under those circumstances.<sup>19</sup>

The secular government is not mentioned in the 1578 church order in relation to this process. The Leiden consistory, nevertheless, chose that moment – when the double number had been named but before they had been further narrowed – to go to the magistrates. Boldly, two consistory members went to the magistracy with the names of their candidates.<sup>20</sup> However, the magistrates refused to ratify them. Some of the candidates they found unsuitable. As Kooi mentions, the magistrates said that they would have liked to know the names before the congregation had heard them. They would have liked to veto candidates quietly, when desired. But on the other hand, that may likely have been the very reason why the consistory tried to force their hand.<sup>21</sup>

Who is an elder?

The magistrates not only refused, they asked for a written statement of a scriptural description of the duties of an elder, to be delivered in four days.<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, the consistory chose Coolhaes to write this document. Why did they chose Coolhaes, with whom they already knew that they had disagreements? Possible explanations could be, first, that Coolhaes still had some support in the consistory despite Cornelisz and his party, or second, that he was thought to be fitter for writing a theological statement of this sort than Cornelisz.

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18. *Acta of handelingen van de nationale synode der Nederlandse, Duitse en Waalse kerken, zowel inlandse als uitlandse, begonnen te Dordrecht de 2e juni, en geëndigt de 18e van dezelfde maand in het jaar 1578*, article 4, [www.kerkrecht.nl/node/4888](http://www.kerkrecht.nl/node/4888) (accessed 26 January 2016).

19. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 101-102; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 88-89, Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 56.

20. Kooi lists the names and occupations of the candidates, and later the ones chosen. We will not reproduce them here or discuss them. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 56.

21. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 56.

22. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 101-102; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 88-89.

A third option might have been that they did not all actually know how deep-seated their differences were at this point.

Coolhaes' description of the ministry of elders<sup>23</sup> was based closely on Acts, Paul, Peter and James, and primarily analyzed the various Greek words used in the New Testament for elder, bishop, and overseer. He distinguished between "elders" of the first type, who are preachers with a public ministry and called to teach, exhort, comfort, pray, and discipline, and "elders" of the second type, who are also called to teach and exhort, as well as pray for the sick. Elders of the second type are not forbidden to preach, but they are not gifted for it or have not had enough practice in it, interpreted Coolhaes. However, this description by Coolhaes did not describe the duties of the sorts of elders that the Calvinists were envisioning. In fact, he said that both types of "elders" may discipline, but did not say it very resoundingly. Instead, "rulers," which Coolhaes again claimed was a synonym for what his generation had come to call preachers, should be the ones to discipline. What his document actually affirmed, and what all his examples pointed to, was that the preachers and teachers – those of the first type - are the true elders. Whoever is not a preacher or teacher, cannot in truth be called an elder.<sup>24</sup> He made the point also that preachers must be more learned and mature than the ones whom they teach.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, the consistory approved this description. They may not have disapproved of the content of the description written by Coolhaes, which as we will see was closer to their position than his subsequent written views would be, in that he at least accepted the value of elders of the second type, even though there was not much support for them from the New Testament. Later, Coolhaes will be much more critical of elders of this second type, and write that in many cases there is no necessity for consistories to exist.

The description was duly delivered to the magistrates, who then asked if the newly chosen elders would, in turn, sign it. However, they were unwilling. At this point, the chief disagreement seems to be not the content of the description, but that the magistracy should have demanded it. It seems that the discontent of the consistory over this grew as days

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23. Coolhaes says that the description he wrote is reproduced in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, under letter M. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 22Fijv; Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Hiiijv – Hiiijr.

24. Coolhaes in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Hiiijv.

25. "Want die een ander leren zal, met recht geleerder moeten zijn als die geleert wort." Coolhaes in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Hiiij.

passed. Cornelisz said that the government should not interfere with church business - they had enough to do in governing the city. He also argued that the magistrates had not made a public confession of the Reformed religion, and so were not “church men,” and so the church should not be bound by their decisions.<sup>26</sup>

For Coolhaes, this was the real beginning of the schism.<sup>27</sup> He, however, thought that the government’s demand was not unreasonable. He reasoned that he and the church had always been obedient to their legal government in all things not in conflict with God’s Word. In regard to the argument that the magistrates were not “church men,” he felt that although it was true that most were not communing members, they all attended church. In fact, he pointed out, five of them did come to the Lord’s Table, and all came to the sermons.<sup>28</sup>

The matter did not end there. After twenty-four days without signing, the consistory went back to the magistracy and asked for Coolhaes’ description of the role of elders to be returned. They explained that Coolhaes had worked too quickly, and had left out some things. In the meantime, without consulting Coolhaes, Pieter Cornelisz and the consistory wrote to Delft, where stricter Calvinist preacher Arent Cornelisz obliged by writing a different description of the duties of elders. He wrote of their responsibility in Christian discipline – that they should keep an eye on the teaching and life-style of the preachers, the individuals of the congregation, and each other, and they should have the power to discipline offenders. The government should support them in these activities, and further punish offenders who had been banned if necessary.<sup>29</sup> This point of view, in fact, gives the elders and thus the consistory much more power, not only over the magistrates and the congregants, but over the preachers themselves. This document from Delft was then presented to the Leiden magistracy in the name of the Leiden consistory but without their signatures.<sup>30</sup> As Kooi mentions, no other church in another city was being put through this requirement of signing a statement, and Arent Cornelisz advised the Leiden consistory to resist it.<sup>31</sup>

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26. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 89-90.

27. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 22Fijv-ijr.

28. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 105-107.

29. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 929-24.

30. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 107-109; Coolhaes, *Apologia*, Conversations Five and Six; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 59.

At the beginning of 1579, therefore, the situation remained unresolved; the government did not ratify the chosen elders and deacons but the consistory did not back down from their position. This created a gridlock in the proper running of the churches in the city. Also, Coolhaes deplored the disobedience of the consistory to their legal government. During this time, the city of Deventer invited Coolhaes back to preach for several weeks. He said that he would have loved to go back for a visit to the place where he had been so happy and fulfilled; the Leiden magistracy gave him permission to go. However, the consistory did not want him to leave the city while so much remained unresolved.<sup>32</sup>

### Attempts at compromise

On a certain Wednesday in February of 1579, Coolhaes and Pieter Cornelisz, despite their general disagreements, were somehow able to come together to work on a compromise plan for a new consistory made up of three paid members of the magistracy's choice (in place of those they had rejected), and six members chosen by the consistory. As Kooi notes, since there was a vacancy of one preacher (at this point only Coolhaes and Pieter Cornelisz were left), the vacancy would leave enough money for the three elders chosen by the magistracy to receive a salary.<sup>33</sup> This was also in line with another point which Coolhaes had made in his original elder description – that a worker was worthy to be paid (1 Tim. 5:18).<sup>34</sup> In other words, he was still affirming that the office of these elders was of the same type as preachers - that they were also Christian workers, even if on a lower rung. The consistory approved this idea, and Coolhaes and Cornelisz went to the magistracy to propose it. The government agreed to the idea of paid elders, since the office required the time and effort of “the whole person.”<sup>35</sup> It is also logical to infer that they saw this as a sign that the elders were also in a sense employees of the city,<sup>36</sup> which they would have liked, since it made them their

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31. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 59.

32. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiijv, folio Fiiijv-r.

33. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 60.

34. Coolhaes in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Hiiij.

35. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 95, quoting from Coornhert, *Justificatie*; Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Fiiijr.

36. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 61.

employers and so in some sense their authority. The magistracy agreed on February 14, 1579. However, a final decision was not made for another day. The consistory wanted a bigger majority than six to three would give them. Cornelisz countered their last-minute request with the idea of nine members selected by the consistory, and three by the magistracy. Coolhaes agreed for the sake of compromise, although he thought it too large a group overall for the purpose of easy decision-making. The government agreed to this proposal, and issued two additional written acts on February 15, 1579, signed by Jan van Hout.<sup>37</sup>

However, in these two additional acts,<sup>38</sup> the magistrates had actually found other ways to increase their influence on the consistory. First, the government appointed not only three elders as agreed, and ratified the elders selected by the consistory, but also named two Reformed Leiden magistrates<sup>39</sup> who were to be present as well in all consistory meetings, to “preside,” and to limit further disputes. This was not unknown in Leiden, since in 1566 former Leiden Reformed preacher Jorjaan Ypensz and his church council had invited two of the all-Roman Catholic magistracy to be present in their meetings, so that the “light” of the Reform could be seen by them.<sup>40</sup> As well, the magistrates directed that, in the future, the consistory should present double the number of candidates for elders, and the government, not the consistory, would approve half. The magistracy defended this change on the basis of the Synod of Dordrecht 1574, articles 28 and 29, which described just this procedure. Also, the salary was set for the three paid elders whom the government had named, and they were appointed for life. Groningen would make a similar move, in the church ordinance of 1594, to paid, life-term elders.<sup>41</sup> The Leiden consistory, alarmed, would not agree to the terms set by the magistracy, fearing that life-term elders would become more powerful than elders appointed every year.<sup>42</sup>

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37. Coornhert, *Justificatie*; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 97, note 19.

38. The two acts of the magistracy are found in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Appendices P and Q.

39. As mentioned earlier, we are focusing on Coolhaes and his views, and so we will not go into detail about the individuals named by the consistory or the magistrates, as Kooi has covered them thoroughly. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 59-66.

40. This idea is also mentioned in Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Fiijr-Fiiijv.

41. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 61; Heinz Schilling, *Civic Calvinism in Northwestern Germany and the Netherlands, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, 1991), 110. For the magistracy’s defense of the two acts to the consistory, see 5 April 1579, SA II, inventarisnr. 3417 ELO.

42. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 97-99.

Coolhaes at this point decided to take his proposed trip to Deventer after all, but changed his mind because of what he called “my physical weakness, also because of a difficult sickness of my wife.” For four weeks, he wrote, he remained inside his house, and said that no one from the consistory, not even colleague Pieter Cornelisz, visited him.<sup>43</sup> Whether he and his wife were indeed only sick (it was the middle of winter, and sickness would not be unlikely for anyone then), or whether he was mostly sick at heart over the intractable division, or whether this was also a calculated move on his part, perhaps to avoid any consequences of this disunity, is impossible to say.

It does seem that he was less minded to compromise after this. Shortly after this month at home, he and Cornelisz were called to the City Hall at the end of March and asked by the magistrates why the situation with the elders and deacons was still unresolved. Both preachers acknowledged their fundamental disagreement. On his side, Cornelisz replied that the magistracy’s acts could not be accepted by the consistory while they limited its power. Coolhaes added that although he and his colleague preached one Gospel and had always acted in concord, he did not want to oppose the magistracy because he did not consider that the acts they had given were against the Word of God.<sup>44</sup> The relationship between Pieter Cornelisz and Coolhaes deteriorated further from this point. Coolhaes described him as “a good, friendly man, and gifted to teach” and said, “I do not give him the primary blame, but [blame] many others (whom for the sake of their honor I will not name here) who encouraged and stimulated him.” Coolhaes did not name names, but Coornhert described consistory member Matthijs van Banchem as “less than peace-loving, not a stranger to ambition or an appearance of holiness, because of which he has become the second leader of all the unrest.”<sup>45</sup>

The magistracy strikes back

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43. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiiijv; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 98.

44. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 34-35; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 103-104; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 62.

45. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 40Kiiiijr–41Lv. Coornhert, *Justificatie*; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 60. See also Bongers, *The Life and Work of Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert*, 82.

At this point, neither the consistory nor the magistracy could bring themselves to be more flexible. The consistory turned a document in to the magistracy in their own defense (Coolhaes said he did not see this document<sup>46</sup>), but the magistrates were having none of it. At two o'clock that afternoon the newly-chosen elders and deacons were called to the City Hall, and asked individually if they were prepared to serve under the conditions of the two acts. Of the twenty-four, only one agreed. Another made an excuse that he was about to move to another place. Twenty-two refused to serve under the new conditions. The magistracy immediately relieved those twenty-two of their consistorial positions and forbade them to meet further as a council. The magistrates then confiscated the key to the room where the consistory met, from the sexton. The group was forbidden to meet there, or anywhere else, any longer. The old consistory was furious, and said that because the key had been awarded to them by the States of Holland and the *stadhouder*, the magistracy was out of bounds to take it away. This, however, made no difference to the magistrates.<sup>47</sup> As Kooi notes, the key was a “powerful symbol... with its implicit assertion of the civil power’s domination over the physical space reserved for religious life....”<sup>48</sup>

It should also be noted that this ironic appeal of the consistory to the higher powers of government over the magistrates shows how complicated the situation had become. At this point, it began to resemble a “palace coup.”<sup>49</sup> Actually, it was the palace itself which decided that enough was enough, and re-seized control from its rebellious subjects. The magistracy immediately asked Coolhaes to choose a new set of elders and deacons. Time was of the essence, and the new council needed to be presented on the following Sunday. Coolhaes wrote that he would have liked time to bring the matter before the church, but as the magistracy was insistent he chose two new elders to join the one who had agreed to the two acts from the magistrates. Actually, the two had served in the past, but had recently excused themselves because of work obligations. One suspects that perhaps they had not been of the same mind with the others, and Coolhaes now chose them because of this. He also chose six

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46. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 105; Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 32Hiiiijv.

47. Act of dismissal of the 1579 consistory, 30 March 1579 SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

48. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 63.

49. Term from Charles Marius Dozy, “Kerk en staat te Leiden,” in *Handelingen en mededeelingen van de maatschappij der Nederlandsche letterkunde* (Leiden: Brill. 1898), 19, and used by Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 63.

deacons.<sup>50</sup> In addition, he recommended Johannes Hallius as a third preacher for the city. The deposed consistory and Cornelisz did not take this lying down. The old consistory continued to meet, disregarding the injunction against this; two separate groups began to operate in the church with much mutual animosity.

The magistracy continued to take the initiative by announcing their decisions the following Sunday, April 5, 1579, with a statement written by city secretary Jan van Hout. As Cornelisz refused to read the statement aloud, Van Hout himself did so. He read it out after Cornelisz' sermon in the *Vrouwenkerk* at eight-thirty a.m., and after Coolhaes' sermon in St. Peter's at eleven o'clock a.m. This action caused confusion in the churches, and gave rise to wild rumors that the government was trying to reinstate Catholicism or bring in Lutheranism.<sup>51</sup> As Kooi notes, the people of the congregation did not see the nuances of competing ecclesiastical systems of government, but only the magistracy's unilateral actions.<sup>52</sup> Church-goers became polarized in the weeks to come as Cornelisz preached against the magistracy in his sermons, while Coolhaes preached in support of them. Congregants stayed away from Coolhaes' sermons in droves. Aggrieved former elder Matthias van Banchem, along with two others, informed Arent Cornelisz of Delft that Coolhaes was teaching that, in the Old Testament, not the priests but the patriarchs and kings "reformed" religion.<sup>53</sup>

In fact, Cornelisz and those who agreed with him did not buckle under yet. Cornelisz did not want to sit on the new consistory, and tried to thwart the alms-collecting duties of the deacons by omitting the usual mention of the poor after his sermon, and even mocking the serving deacons. The old consistory wrote to William of Orange on April 6, not asking for their offices back, but nevertheless complaining that the schism was not their fault.<sup>54</sup> William wrote back promptly to the magistracy saying that the difficult situation of the country at

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50. List of elders and deacons chosen by Coolhaes in Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 107. in Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 5v, and in Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 63.

51. Letter regarding magistracy decisions by Jan van Hout, 5 April, 1579, 1, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 106-109.

52. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 63-64.

53. Matthias van Banchem, et al. to Arent Cornelisz, 6 April 1579, inventarisnr. 445, nr. 46, AD; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 65.

54. Old Leiden consistory to William of Orange, archiefnr. 445, nr. 46, 6 April 1579, AD. See also H. C. Rogge, "Brief van de Leidschen kerkeraad aan Prins Willem I," *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap* 30 (1874): 466-67.



present required that the relationship between the church and the city governments should be left as it had been.<sup>55</sup> Although this showed that William wanted to communicate with the magistracy, not the consistory, the old consistory itself took this message as favoring them. Cornelisz was so elated that before he could even read the letter, he announced (on Easter, April 19, 1579) that the old consistory would be reinstated. This disturbed the magistracy, who called both Cornelisz and Coolhaes in and requested that they preach only from God's Word and not mention political things.

In fact, on May 6, 1579, Cornelisz was relieved of his post by the magistrates. The Prince, in the meantime, fearing damage to the infant university, had asked two men to travel from the court to Leiden to investigate the turmoil. He had written on April 10, and the representatives arrived on May 8. But their efforts bore no fruit. They stayed only one day and returned to report to the States, and decided to meet together with court preachers in The Hague to discuss church/state issues. Coolhaes was asked to attend, but the magistracy responded that he was needed in the city. This was certainly a statement from them to the States that they could handle the situation themselves. Cornelisz' supporters continued to maintain that they possessed a "certificate" (William's letter) endorsing their method of choosing elders and deacons. The old consistory, although deprived of their access to their chamber, continued on as shadow elders.<sup>56</sup>

### Taking it outside

Pieter Cornelisz, the week after his dismissal, boldly began to preach in Voorschoten, a village south of Leiden; he had been requested to do this by Lord van den Wijngaerden, one of the two sent by the Prince to Leiden in May.<sup>57</sup> Hundreds of his supporters from Leiden traveled there every week for his sermons, the Lord's Supper and baptisms.<sup>58</sup> Back within the city, the magistracy and their consistory brought in two additional preachers: Lucas

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55. William of Orange to the Leiden magistracy, 14 April, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

56. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Aiiijr; William of Orange to the Leiden magistracy, 14 April, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Report of Caspar Coolhaes, two elders and two deacons, 5 May, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 67. See also Notes by Jan van Hout on a sermon by Pieter Cornelisz (fragment), 26 April, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

57. According to Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 115.

58. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, conversations five and six; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 68.

Anthonisz Hespe, an elderly man, from Nieuwveen, and Johannes Hallius from Warmond. Some outside observers did not take the situation too seriously. Pieter Cornelisz wrote to Hendrik van der Corput of Breda, then preacher in Dordrecht, maintaining the need for a return of “the church in her ancient liberty.”<sup>59</sup> Van der Corput, although in agreement with the sentiment, wrote shortly after to preacher Arent Cornelisz that the whole dispute was merely a personal conflict between the two preachers, and thus of little consequence,<sup>60</sup> Arent Cornelisz had already encouraged the Calvinist-minded in Leiden in their struggle against the magistracy’s attempts to rule over them.<sup>61</sup> In Amsterdam, preacher and future professor of theology Johannes Kuchlinus hoped that libertines there would not follow the example of the Leiden magistracy.<sup>62</sup>

However, the States and William himself did not take this divisive, potentially state-weakening situation lightly.<sup>63</sup> At that moment, they wanted stability, not innovation. The preachers gathered in The Hague approved a *Remonstrantie* which underscored the church order of the Dordrecht Synod of 1578. As Kooi emphasizes, they desired a separation of ecclesiastical and civil governments as much as possible. However, the Leiden magistracy disliked this effort on the part of the States to usurp their privileges.<sup>64</sup> And Coolhaes had shown at every turn that what he wanted was a church submissive to the local magistracy.

At this point, Coolhaes and Cornelisz were called before the preachers in The Hague to clarify their views to the assembly. Despite his and the magistracy’s reluctance earlier, this time Coolhaes went. The two preachers traveled there to testify on May 22, 1579. Before the assembly, Coolhaes maintained that the articles of Dordrecht 1578 were not in conflict with God’s Word. On the other hand, he said, the formulation of those articles was not the only

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59 . Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 68; Pieter Cornelisz to Hendrik van der Corput, 5 June, 1579, no. 511, HUA.

60. Hendrick van der Corput to Arent Cornelisz, 13 May and 7 September, 1579; 100, 107-8, from “Brieven uit onderscheidene kerkelijke archieven,” *WMV*, ed. H. Q. Janssen and J. J. van Toorenenbergen (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1878), vol. 3, part 2, 100, 107-108; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 69; Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 31.

61. Deposition of Nicholas Stochius, 22 May, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 69.

62 . Kuchlinus to Arent Cornelisz, 24 April, 1579, *WMV*, vol. 3, part 5, 236-7.

63. William of Orange to the Leiden magistracy, 4 June, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; William of Orange to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 18 July, 1579 SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

64. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 70.

possible, biblical formulation. In other words, he meant, the Calvinist faction did not have a monopoly on acceptable church orders. Further, he reasoned to the assembly, the articles had never been accepted by the Leiden magistracy, so surely the magistracy could not be accused of a violation of them.<sup>65</sup> These were equivocal statements, allowing Coolhaes both to affirm the articles of this Synod and to disagree with the preachers.

Coolhaes was asked to sign a written version of his statements. In addition, the preachers reproved him, saying that he should have disapproved of the actions of the magistracy. At this point, Coolhaes left the meeting, perhaps in anger or frustration, or to gather his thoughts. Two men followed him. They seemed to have misunderstood and thought that Coolhaes had acted against his own conscience in submitting to the magistracy. Coolhaes then revised his response. He recommended that two representatives be sent to the Leiden magistrates, so that it would be understood that the magistracy had no intention of taking away the discipline from the church – an accusation which had been made often. He admitted that he had been hasty in choosing the new consistory without church input. Because of this, he declared that he would offer his resignation to the magistracy. This revised statement was then written up into a document, but Coolhaes did not sign it, making the excuse that it had been written hastily on a piece of scratch paper. Because of his wife's ill health, he said, he wanted to hurry back to Leiden, but promised to return immediately the following day to sign a fair copy. Once at home, however, he decided to speak to the magistrates in order to bring their answer back to the meeting. The magistracy did not want him to sign anything, but would not accept his resignation. In fact, they forbade him to return to the meeting in The Hague.<sup>66</sup>

Was this avoidance calculated disobedience on Coolhaes' part? His excuses for not signing seem disingenuous. He may well have been expecting the magistrates to protect him, when they heard about what had been said in The Hague. In any event, from Leiden Coolhaes wrote to the preachers to explain his non-appearance, while the magistracy wrote to the States to say that the whole business involved them and not Coolhaes, and that no more time should be wasted upon it. The preachers, however, recommended that both Coolhaes and Cornelisz should be suspended and that a general synod should follow. The States, in their turn, decided

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65 . Coolhaes, *Cort waerachtich verhael*, 12/Bijb; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 118-21; Van Wyngaerden and Casembroot to Coolhaes, 20 May, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

66. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 118-20.

that Coolhaes should be advised to stop preaching temporarily, and wrote to all cities on May 30, 1579, that no changes should be made in them, either church or city government, and sent them all a copy of the Dordrecht 1578 church order.<sup>67</sup> However, the magistrates told Coolhaes to keep preaching. They ignored the directive of the States, even in the face of a persistent rumor that Coolhaes and the magistracy had conceived a plot in which Coolhaes was paid to continue splitting the church, which he firmly denied.<sup>68</sup>

This caused the shadow consistory to contact the States again. The States sent two noble members to request Coolhaes' suspension by the magistracy: Artur van Brederode and Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. But the magistrates thought that it was Pieter Cornelisz, and his unauthorized activities south of the city, which should be stopped, rather than Coolhaes.<sup>69</sup> The Rijnland classis responded to all this with mixed messages. Officially they recommended that Cornelisz should stop his ministry in Voorschoten. At the same time, they protested the magistracy's treatment of him. Cornelisz himself persisted in meeting with the shadow consistory in nearby Rijnsburg, which resulted in the banning of two of those members from Leiden and Rijnland (including the aforementioned contentious Van Banchem) for three years when the magistracy learned of the meetings which they had forbidden.<sup>70</sup>

Let us refocus our attention on Coolhaes in the midst of this complicated flurry of communications and demands. It is not surprising that Coolhaes would go against the wishes of the Reformed preachers. It should be noted, though, that in this case he also disobeyed the directives of the higher civil authority, the States, in order to obey the directives of his local civil authority, the magistrates. This theme will come back again and again in his story – while for Coolhaes civil authority comes before the authority of preachers, synods and consistories, local civil authority comes before distant or national civil authority.

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67. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 70.

68. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 118.

69. Petition of Leiden's deposed consistory to the States of Holland, June 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Document, 3 July, 1579, folio 113v., SA II, no. 44, ELO; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 70-71.

70. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 71; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 123-55; Declaration of the Rijnland classis, 23 May, 1579, no. 511, HUA; Deposition of Govert Henricsz van Gesteren, preacher at Rijnsburg, 25 June, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Deposition of Johan Vos, preacher at Benthuisen, 27 June, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Act of banishment against Matthias van Banchem and Nicoles van Dam, 27 July, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. As Kooi notes, their case was appealed and their ban was lifted: Document, 29 September, 1581, no. 556, case no. 228, NL-HaNA For more about the confusion which these events caused among the people of Leiden, and the disputes which arose among them, see Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 72-73.

## Tilius and Coornhert intercede

Thomas van Thielt (Tilius),<sup>71</sup> who had been involved in the debates in which Coornhert had participated in Leiden and elsewhere, now tried to intercede for reconciliation in the Leiden church. Tilius had likely been sent by William of Orange. Unlike the court preachers Jean Taffin and Pierre Loyseleur de Villiers, he was often sent by the Prince to solidify churches in other cities in the Netherlands and mediate in disputes.<sup>72</sup> Tilius urged people not to abandon the Leiden churches, and took part in preaching in Leiden. He called for a new church council to be elected and for a fresh start on all sides. Coolhaes approved of Tilius – he praised him in *Apologia*, saying that he labored day and night to bring unity, but that he was suspect to many, who questioned his authority to preach and act.<sup>73</sup> The people were suspicious of his connection with the Prince – as Kooi notes, William was resident in Antwerp at that moment - and many objected to any attempt from the outside at control.<sup>74</sup>

Coolhaes continued to be a focal point of suspicion, especially concerning his lifestyle, teaching, and new consistory, and so an attempt was made to find impartial judges to address this. Tilius was named, along with Artur (also known as Artus) van Brederode from the Court of Holland and the well-respected Justus Lipsius, humanist, classical scholar, and rector of the university, but they were rejected because they were not all communing members of the Reformed Church.<sup>75</sup> Coolhaes was seen as more and more of a troublesome

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71. Thomas van Thielt, or Tilius (c. 1534-1590), was a well-respected churchman of great activity. Reformed preacher in Antwerp beginning in 1579, the same year as these events, he had also founded congregations in several Dutch cities including Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Delft and Haarlem. He had good contact with William of Orange, and corresponded with Beza. He had earlier been the abbot of the Cistercian Abbey of St. Bernard. "Thomas van Thielt," *NNBW*, vol. 2, 1433-36. See also the biography of Tilius on Leiden University's site by Guido Marnef, [www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/dutch/personen/heilingen/Pages/thielt.aspx](http://www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/dutch/personen/heilingen/Pages/thielt.aspx) (accessed January 27, 2016).

72. Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 5; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 79-80; Thomas Tilius to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 14 September, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

73. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 56Oiiijr.

74. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 79-80; Thomas Tilius to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 14 September, 1579, no. 3417, SA II, ELO; Thomas Tilius to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 18 September, 1579, no. 3417, SA II, ELO; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 125-26; Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, points 60-64.

75. Response of the old consistory to Tilius' recommendations, 30 September, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Tilius to the Leiden *Gerecht*, 13 November 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 123-26.

character, and was accused of many excesses and deviant behavior.<sup>76</sup> In 1580, Menso Alting, the fervent and influential Calvinist preacher of the exile congregation in Emden from 1575, wrote to Arent Cornelisz that “the daily vomiting forth of poison by Caspar of Leiden wounds me to my very soul [...] If the magistrate were not such an enemy to all religion he would never permit the man such freedom.”<sup>77</sup> Everardus Bommelius (Van Bommel), preacher in Gouda, preached for a time in 1581 in Leiden. He apparently spoke out publically against Coolhaes, but later wrote a letter of apology for his slander, saying that he knew nothing of Coolhaes other than virtue, honor and piety.<sup>78</sup>

The enlisting of Tilius seems to have been a move for reconciliation in the city’s church on the part of the Prince. It did not work, and Tilius blamed the partisan extremism of the Calvinists.<sup>79</sup> The magistrates tried from their side to defend their point of view. They enlisted the renowned Dirk Volckertz Coornhert, who, as has been mentioned, had debated preachers Arent Cornelisz and R. Donteclock in Leiden on religious issues a couple of years previously in 1578, to write in defense of Coolhaes anonymously in their name. Coornhert’s *Justificatie* (1579) is a fiery defense of Coolhaes, the magistracy, and all their actions. It was signed initially by city secretary Jan van Hout alone, perhaps because the association of Coornhert with it would certainly put off the more Calvinist faction. It was first thought by some to be Coolhaes’ work. Coolhaes denied this,<sup>80</sup> and Coornhert’s authorship eventually became known. The writing styles of Coornhert and Coolhaes are also very different.<sup>81</sup> Since the *Justificatie* deals with church/state relations, more concentrated discussion of it will come in Chapter 7.<sup>82</sup> Although Coolhaes and Coornhert differed in some of their views, Coolhaes later defended Coornhert also, saying that Coornhert did “only as a friend is obliged to do.”<sup>83</sup>

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76. Coolhaes defends himself against these in *Apologia*, folio 16Diiiiiv-r, for instance.

77. Letter from Menso Alting to Arent Cornelisz, 24 March, 1580. AD 112, inventarisnr. 445, nr. 47, AD. It is also quoted in and translated by Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 167.

78. Nicolaas Christiaan Kist and Willem Moll, “Caspar Coolhaes en Everhardus van Bommel,” *Kerkhistorisch archief* 2 (1859): 473-77. See also “Bommelius, Everardus,” *NNBW*, vol. 1, 401.

79. “Briefwisseling van Thomas Tilius,” ed. A. A. van Schelven, *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 55 (1934): 155-60; Hendrik van der Corput to Arent Cornelisz, 15 November, 1579, *WMV*, vol. 3, part 2, 119.

80. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 101Ccb (the first page of the Last Conversation).

81. “Coolhaes is as wide-ranging as Coornhert is concise.” Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 33, my translation.

Meanwhile, other communication had arrived in Leiden which needed to be answered by the magistrates. The States of Holland had decided, back on May 27, 1579 that voting cities should be asked for their advice on the *Acta* of the Dordrecht Synod from 1578, so the classis of Rijnland sent it to the magistracy on June 30, 1579.<sup>84</sup> Coolhaes had not attended that Synod, although three other local clergy had.<sup>85</sup>

The magistrates replied with their *Advies* after just three days, sending an answer on June 30.<sup>86</sup> The *Advies* was strongly worded (perhaps even “hateful”<sup>87</sup>) and uncompromising - their “confession of faith”<sup>88</sup> against what the Reformed preachers were attempting with their proposed church order. Perhaps it seemed harsh partly because the Leiden magistrates responded quickly, whereas other cities did not hurry, and their reports were not submitted in time for the meeting of the States on August 25, 1579. On the other hand, the magistrates did not have to hesitate to know what they thought about this issue. Most likely the *Advies* was largely the work of Jan van Hout (who signed the document) and perhaps Jan van der Does (Janus Doesa),<sup>89</sup> noble statesman, historian and librarian. Actually, Leiden was not the only city to refuse support to the 1578 church order, which was never in fact adopted officially. Gouda, Delft, Rotterdam, and Hoorn were also against it, whereas Amsterdam, Haarlem, Dordrecht, Alkmaar, Schiedam and Brielle were in favor.<sup>90</sup> In the meantime, Coolhaes and

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82. See also Kooi’s summary of the contents: Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 75-77. For negative reactions to the *Justificatie*, see Hendrik van der Corput to Arent Cornelisz, 7 September, 1575, *WMV*, vol. 3, part 2, 109-10, and from the Brielle classis, J. Reitsma and S. D. van Veen, eds., *Acta der provinciale en particuliere synoden, gehouden in de noordelijke Nederlanden gedurende de jaren 1572-1620*, vol. 2 (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1893), 183-91.

83. Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, folio B, point 16; Bijr-Bijjv, point 26; points 45, 47.

84. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 73.

85. J. C. Overvoorde, “Advies van burgemeesters en gerecht van Leiden aan de Staten van Holland over de acta van de in 1578 te Dordrecht gehouden synode,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 9 (1912): 119, with note to F. L. Rutgers, ed. *Acta van de Nederlandsche synoden der zestiende eeuw*. Wercken der Marnix Vereniging, series 2, vol. 3 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1899. Reprint. Dordrecht: Van den Tol, 1980), *Acta*, 96.

86. A complete copy of the answer of the Leiden magistrates, alongside the heading of the *Acta* articles, can be found in: Overvoorde, “*Advies*,” 117-49.

87. Overvoorde, “*Advies*,” 123.

88. Overvoorde, “*Advies*,” 118.

89. Overvoorde, “*Advies*,” 120.

90. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 73; C. C. Hibben, *Gouda in Revolt: Particularism and Pacifism in the Revolt in the Netherlands 1572-1588* (Utrecht: HES, 1983), 108-109.

the new consistory tried to bring some stability to city worship in the midst of these upsets. One thing they mentioned was an exhortation to the magistrates to be more regular in taking communion and listening to the sermons.<sup>91</sup> This is interesting as evidence that the magistrates may not have been after all very regular in their church attendance, and that Coolhaes may have been exhorting them as their pastor, even as he agreed with many of their policies and their authority in general over the church. On the other hand, perhaps this exhortation reflected the view of the consistory members or the congregation, rather than Coolhaes himself.

### Unapologetic *Apology*

In early 1580, Coolhaes released his first book, *Apologia*. Dated January 27, 1580, it is a relatively cheerful, upbeat defense of himself and his ideas. *Apologia* contains first a dedication to the magistracy of Deventer, and then a dialogue of ten conversations between Coolhaes and a presumed fictional character, “Theophilus.”<sup>92</sup> This Theophilus is described as a friend from Deventer who comes to Leiden to investigate rumors he has heard about their former city preacher – that he is a schismatic and disturber of the church of God in Leiden, and that he and the Leiden magistracy are “godless” libertines. This genre of conversations, which Coolhaes will repeat in several of his later works, is called a “pamphlet dialogue.” This genre often featured lay people who “spoke the truth,” or who criticized the church or clergy.<sup>93</sup> The accessible style leads one to think that Coolhaes was defending himself more in the court of public opinion, than to his colleagues.

*Apologia* is the longest and in many ways the most important of Coolhaes’ writings, even though it is in a popular style, because it covers most of his ideas: his views of sacraments, preachers and synods, his church/state ideas, some information about his personal life, and underlying it all, his Spiritualism. Because of this, a complete review of the

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91. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 75; Proposed ecclesiastical regulations, submitted to the *Gerecht* (unfoliated, in Coolhaes’ hand), 7 August, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO.

92. This character, if fictitious, may have been meant by Coolhaes as an allusion to Luke 1 and Acts 1.

93. Steven Ozment, “The Revolution of the Pamphleteers,” in *Forme e destinazione del messaggio religioso. Aspetti della propaganda religiosa nel cinquecento*, ed. Antonio Rotondo (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1991), 6-7.



book will not be given here, but only an overview. In subsequent chapters, points will be drawn from it as appropriate.

Here, it is enough to relate that “Theophilus” comes to visit Coolhaes in mid-winter, and they speak about old times in Deventer and about the accusations which have reached his friend’s ears about Coolhaes and the terrible state of the Leiden church. Because anyone may come to the Lord’s Supper in Leiden (open communion), people say it is like visiting a dog stall or a pig pen<sup>94</sup> – meaning that dubious characters appear in church and chaos rules throughout the service. Theophilus has a hard time believing these tales, for he arrived in Leiden a few days earlier, in time to hear all the sermons throughout Christmas week and to see the Lord’s Supper distributed on Christmas Day. He is impressed by the orderliness and piety which are evident.<sup>95</sup>

He says also that Coolhaes was accused of living a luxurious and gluttonous life. Theophilus therefore comes to the house of Coolhaes and his family, and sees that it is nothing like the extravagant rumors which he has heard of the preacher’s lifestyle. Coolhaes defends his choices, but on the other hand does not condemn those who might live more prosperously. Preachers deserve a reasonable standard of living, he says. He affirms diversity in religious and lifestyle choices, as long as all Christians build together on one foundation.<sup>96</sup> If some do not go to communion, have had their children baptized by Catholics or have been married at the City Hall rather than in church, they should not be condemned or despised.<sup>97</sup> No, love should be the mark of Christians.<sup>98</sup> It is not ours to judge, but only God’s.<sup>99</sup>

What would the Coolhaes household have been like? In the Leiden population register of the following year of 1581, the Coolhaes household living in Leiden are listed as Caspar Coolhaes, Grietje Casparsdochter his wife, their children Sara, Rebeke, Caspar, Adolf, and

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94. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Cv.

95. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 9Cr.

96. 1 Corinthians 3:10-12.

97. From 1580, those who did not want to marry in the Reformed Church could marry before magistrates in Holland. See: J. J. Woltjer and M. E. H. N. Mout, “Settlements: The Netherlands,” in Thomas A. Brady Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy, eds., *Handbook of European History 1400-1600*, vol. 2, (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 407.

98. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 19Eiijv.

99. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 19Eiijr.

Judith, and their serving maid Agnies van Collen.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps Agnies, at least, had come with them from Germany, since her name means “from Cologne.” The 1581 census listed the Leiden city population as 11,899; possibly about one third of those were immigrants,<sup>101</sup> as the Coolhaes family had been.

Returning to *Apologia*, we see that, at his friend’s request, Coolhaes retells the history of the conflicts between himself, the Leiden consistory, and the magistracy which he believes should guard and guide the church. He talks about the meeting at The Hague and his defense, then the issue of internal church government – the consistory, the deacons, the oversight of elders for the six areas of the city, the roles of classes and synods, the relationship of the internal church structure to the secular government, and the right use of sacraments. The friends also have a lengthy discussion about Christian discipline. True discipline is achieved not so much by the church and elders, as by God himself and by fellow Christians as they exhort and rebuke each other using the “rule of love” – mutual exhortation among congregants, which should lead to amendment of life. Coolhaes then states more precisely what the tenets of his belief are. Keeping close to the articles of the Apostles’ Creed, he gives a special emphasis to the doctrine of hell, in which he was reputed not to believe. Actually, he says, he teaches the reality of spiritual pains in hell which are worse than any merely physical pain.<sup>102</sup> His teaching about the Lord’s Supper emphasizes the spiritual eating of Christ’s body and blood.<sup>103</sup> *Apologia* leaves no doubt about Coolhaes’ basic views, and foreshadows many of his later writings.

More division

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100. “Coolhaes, zie: Colohaes Casparus,” Volkstelling 1581: Stadsbestuur (SA II), nummer toegang 501A, inventarisnr. 1289, folio 79v, ELO. See also: Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 37. Sara is mentioned, on the occasion of her marriage in 1691, to have been born in Leiden. Marriage record of Sara Caspersd. Coolhaes, 6 Sep. 1591, Nederlands Hervormd Ondertrouw (1575-1795), archiefnr. 1004, inventarisnr. 2, folio B-160v, ELO. Baptismal records have not been found for any of the children.

101. These immigration statistics are found in F. Daelemans, *Boekhoudingen van landbouwbedrijven in de Hoeksewaard uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw Leiden 1581: een socio-demografisch onderzoek. Afdeling agrarische geschiedenis. Bijdragen 19* (Wageningen : Landbouwhogeschool, 1975), 147, 200.

102. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 90Zijv–90Zijr.

103. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 98BBijv.

However, in late January 1580, another row was already in the making, involving Coolhaes and preacher Lucas Hespe. The story of what Coolhaes calls the second schism is told by him in his second book, *Breeder bericht*.

*Breeder bericht* (1580), sometimes referred to as Coolhaes' "second Apology,"<sup>104</sup> is not a dialogue like *Apologia*, and there is no playfulness in its tone as there was in its predecessor. Instead, it is a terse re-telling by Coolhaes of his conflicts with Hespe.<sup>105</sup> Evidently Coolhaes was moved to seriousness in his self-defense by the continuing contentious situation. There are several theological disagreements documented in the book, but at the heart of it all is Hespe's disagreement with Coolhaes over the case of a man named Jan Janszoon. A Frisian wheelwright, with Mennonite connections, Janszoon had unbaptized older children, but also a new baby born in Leiden for whom he desired baptism. Janszoon was not opposed to the baptism of his older children, but at that point wanted to have them taught Christian doctrine first and baptized later. In addition, Janszoon wanted to receive communion in the Leiden church, and even eventually train as a preacher. Coolhaes let him preach to judge his giftedness, saying that he did not wish to "quench the Spirit."<sup>106</sup> At some point, the knowledge that Janszoon's older children were unbaptized became public. The situation proved to be explosive. Hespe declared that he could not "break the bread of the Lord" with anyone with whom he was not in complete agreement. Coolhaes, however, maintained that all were brothers who held to the same foundation, even if they were mistaken about or ignorant of some details. Coolhaes said that Hespe was a good preacher, but misused his gift; that he spread untruths and allowed his opponents "to blow up this little flame of disunity into a big fire that went on to be seen over the whole town - even all of the Netherlands – alas, even as God allowed."<sup>107</sup>

Coolhaes wrote a detailed description of his views for Hespe on January 16, 1580. Despite an apparent cease-fire between the two, on the very next day, Sunday, January 17, Hespe preached against Coolhaes with great rancor.<sup>108</sup> Coolhaes approached several

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104. For instance, in Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 116.

105. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 10r.

106. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 2r.

107. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folios 8v, 5v. In saying this, Coolhaes is appropriating Coornhert's fire metaphor from *Remonstrance*, Aijv–Aijr.

influential men to ask if he might perhaps tender his resignation and be moved to a different place. However, the magistracy did not approve this.<sup>109</sup> Intervention by certain magistrates, elders, and Warmond preacher Pieter van Oy, in whose house Hespe was living at the time, achieved, again, apparent reconciliation.<sup>110</sup> But all was overturned when Hespe, who had asked in view of his age to seek a place of ministry which was less tiring,<sup>111</sup> returned from a visit to North Holland on February 24 with the demand that he would not give communion again with Coolhaes unless he also was at peace with the brothers there, and if the Leiden preachers (Coolhaes and Hallius; Pieter Cornelisz had since gone to Zeeland) would appear to give account of themselves, together with him, at the next synod.<sup>112</sup> This was surely an attempt to bring the latitudinarian Coolhaes in direct contact with stricter preachers, and perhaps discipline him in some way outside of the safety of the shadow of Leiden's City Hall.

For his part, Coolhaes declared himself willing to go to any classis or synodal gathering, as long as he was reasoned with out of God's Word. He would not be judged by human regulations and rules. As he wrote, "Once I was a monk, and I beg leave to refuse to put on that hood again, and not to be bound by human institutions."<sup>113</sup>

The Leiden consistory would not agree to send Coolhaes and Hallius to the next synod. They instead petitioned the former elders and deacons, still a force for stricter Reformed rule, on March 6, 1580, to participate in mediation with magistrate-appointed mediators. This petition was signed by Leiden *burgemeester* Pieter Adriaansz van der Werff, fellow preacher Hallius (who despite growing disagreement with Coolhaes apparently desired mediation rather than Hespe's methods), and an elder named Jacobsz. This was, in fact, a consistory sub-group which would be expected to agree with the magistrates and Coolhaes.

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108. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 4r. For more of Hespe's view, see his statement from the preceding year, Deposition of Lucas Hespe, 14 August, 1579, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. Kooi suspects that he leaned more toward the Calvinists' views. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 82.

109. Willem Jan Reyersz van Heemskerck (*burgemeester*), Pieter Oom Pietersz (alderman) and Pieter van der Werff (deacon). Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 82.

110. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 5r.

111. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folios 6r-7v; Letter from Hespe, 26 February, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 82-83.

112. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 7r. Kuchlinus wrote to Arent Cornelisz of his meeting with Hespe: Kuchlinus to Arent Cornelis, 1 March, 1580, *WMV*, vol. 3, part 5, 245-46; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 83.

113. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 7v.

However, on March 10, 1580, the former elders and deacons returned an answer which declined this request; they maintained that the Prince and the States had sufficient information and that the decision was in their hands. In response to this, the current consistory wrote to them once more on March 15, to exhort them to peace and unity, but then decided that it would perhaps be better to communicate this in person. A meeting was arranged for several representatives of each side at the house of the verger on March 27, 1580, where it was agreed that Coolhaes and one other preacher from his side, and two preachers from the other side, would address the case from God's Word. If they could not agree, a church judge would be chosen by both parties.<sup>114</sup>

The party which represented the old consistory came back on March 28, 1580, with an additional condition - that the Prince and the States would be kept informed and be represented. Again, one can note here that the old consistory, which wanted freedom from secular government, nevertheless attempted to use the power of the higher government to maneuver against the city magistracy. The present consistory would not go this far. But the Prince and States ruled that both Coolhaes and Hesperus must suspend their ministry until the next synod. They demanded obedience of Coolhaes in particular, communicating this in writing to both preachers and the Leiden magistracy on April 6, 1580.<sup>115</sup>

However, the magistracy overturned this and commanded that Coolhaes continue preaching, on the grounds that the States had been misinformed by Coolhaes' opponents, and would forgive the preacher upon the receipt of better information.<sup>116</sup> They also saw this as necessary for the public church in the city, because Hesperus refused to preach.<sup>117</sup>

### Successful arbitration

The schisms were finally resolved through mediation. Leiden *burgemeester* Willem Jan Reyersz van Heemskerck, in the name of the Leiden magistracy, had gone to ask Thomas

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114. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, Appendices F, folio 22v., G, folio 23, and I, folio 26; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 82-84.

115. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 182.

116. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 10v.

117. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, Appendices F, folio 22v.

Tilius in Antwerp to return to Leiden to help with this, but Tilius declined the invitation.<sup>118</sup> Perhaps more investment in Leiden or perceived association with Coolhaes would not have been good for him. Ysbrand Balck (Trabius), on the other hand - another Antwerp preacher of Frisian origin, a follower of Bullinger, and a delegate to the Synod of Dordt in 1578<sup>119</sup> had been on the verge of leaving Antwerp for a post in Friesland, but agreed to come to Leiden on an interim basis. Coolhaes stepped down from preaching when Balck arrived on July 15, 1580.<sup>120</sup> Balck would later return to Leiden again to preach, from September 1585 to approximately May 1587.<sup>121</sup> Rogge thinks that because of Coolhaes pulling back and Balck taking over the preaching during the reconciliation process, Coolhaes' opponents may have been more ready to consider compromising and agreement.<sup>122</sup> Balck appears to have been favorable to Coolhaes; at the later Middelburg Synod in 1581, he was one who refused to sign the sentence against Coolhaes.<sup>123</sup> It is not unusual that Balck would have been sympathetic to Coolhaes, as he also identified as Reformed but was known to be sympathetic to the Augsburg Confession.<sup>124</sup> His presence nevertheless also seemed to mollify Coolhaes' opponents also and they agreed to meet together with him, the magistracy, the current consistory, and Coolhaes. Balck, together with University bursar Volker Westerholt and local Latin school rector Nicholas Stockius, were able to plan the negotiation process. The old and

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118. List of expenses incurred by the negotiation of the Arbitral Accord, January 1581, SA II, no. 3417, ELO..

119. Willem Nijenhuis, "Balck," *BLGNP*, 20-22. Balck was Reformed but with a "broader outlook;" see "Balck," *NNBW*, vol. 1, 221. For new work on Balck, see also: Frank van der Pol, *Mosterdzaad in ballingschap: over christelijke Identiteit en geloofsrepressie in de Nederlanden: Het cleyn mostertzaet (1590)* (Kampen: Kok, 2007); Frank van der Pol, "Conversion and Civil Society: Ysbrandus Trabius' Sermon 'Het cleyn mostertzaedt'" (1590) in *Paradigms, Poetics and Politics of Conversion*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer, Wout J. van Bekkum, and Arie L. Molendijk (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 73-84; Frank van der Pol, "Ysbrand Trabius' 'Het cleyn mostertzaedt' (1590): Aspekten der Theologenbildung in einer reformierten Predigt," in *Bildung und Konfession: Theologenausbildung im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis und Markus Wriedt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 231-44.

120. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 84-5; J. Reitsma, "Ysbrand Balck. Een predikantenleven in de tweede helft der zestiende eeuw," *Friesche Volksalmanak* 16 (1899): 46-67.

121. "Balck," *NNBW*, vol. 1, 229.

122. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 183; Reitsma, "Ysbrand Balck," 58; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 85.

123. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 128. See also the correspondence of Aggaeus van Albada in regards to Balck, PAP 2 and 3, UBL.

124. "Balck," *NNBW*, vol. 1, 228.

new consistories participated in this plan.<sup>125</sup> Arbiters from both church and state, from inside and outside Leiden, were selected to deliberate the conflict.<sup>126</sup> These lengthy meetings, held from September 10 to October 29, 1580, finally produced reconciliation, culminating in the document named “the Arbitral Accord.”<sup>127</sup> The document itself was intended as a “formula of concord”<sup>128</sup> to restore good will and trust in the Leiden church. It described the more Calvinist side and Pieter Cornelisz as having had a “thoughtless zeal for ecclesiastical freedom” while Coolhaes needed to ask forgiveness and submit to church discipline and then be reinstated as preacher, together with Cornelisz and Hallius. Both sides were thus to admit fault, although Pieter Cornelisz who had, in the midst of the conflict, departed to Middelburg to serve a church in Walcheren in Zeeland,<sup>129</sup> was not happy with the statement and wrote to complain. The Accord also directed that the consistorial mess would be resolved by each side selecting six possible candidates and then letting the magistracy appoint eight of them, and that two magistrates would attend future consistory meetings, but only to listen, not to preside.<sup>130</sup> Despite some lingering complaints, a formal acknowledgement and ceremonial reconciliation happened on Sunday, November 27, 1580, when one of the arbiters, Wernerus Helmichius from Utrecht, read the Accord to the congregation in St. Peter’s church.

The resolution, however, did not fully answer and heal the deep divisions between parties which believed in very different models of church/state relations. On a personal level, also, relationships between the preachers were not truly healed. In the end Hesperus succeeded (according to Coolhaes) in turning their third colleague, Hallius, against his former mentor. Coolhaes must have shown some temper here – he confesses to being too heated in his

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125. Negotiation compromise between the old and new consistories, 19 August 1580, SA II, no. 3358, fols. 11-14, ELO.

126. Antwerp consistory to the Leiden magistracy, 28 July, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. This was to lengthen Balck’s stay: Draft negotiating compromise, 15 July, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. Also, Geurts, *Voorgeschiedenis van het staten college te Leiden*, 7-13. For a list of all arbiters, see Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 85-86, 220.

127. “Het Arbitrael Accord,” 29 October, 1580, SA II, no. 3358, RKZA, ELO. The text of the *Arbitral Accord* is also reproduced in Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 217-20.

128. Letter of Werner Helmichius to Hendrik van der Corput, 31 December, 1580, Appendix D, in J. Hania, *Wernerus Helmichius* (Utrecht: H. Honig, 1895), xi–xv; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 86.

129. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 109; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 87.

130. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 87; Extracts of Pieter Cornelisz’ letter to the arbiters, 17 November, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO. See also Old consistory to the Leiden magistracy, 28 November, 1580, SA II, no. 3417, ELO, for continued complaints about the banishment of Van Banchem and Van Dam.

reaction against the younger preacher.<sup>131</sup> Hallius in 1581 moved to Amsterdam to preach. Later in his life, he identified himself as a Contra-Remonstrant.<sup>132</sup> For his part, Hespe did not remain in Leiden, but went to Haarlem.<sup>133</sup> The controversies around Coolhaes himself did not come to an end either, but progressed to the Middelburg Synod and beyond, where he would be defrocked and excommunicated.

So it is apparent that the disagreements in Leiden and beyond, with Coolhaes at their center, become more and more heated and difficult to resolve. The disputes contained in miniature many of the issues with which the society was wrestling – what the nature of the “public church” was, and how far its authority extended; the role of government in church life, both city and national; and the appropriateness of church discipline. The “Coolhaes affair” was in reality less about Coolhaes than it was about the competing consistories and factions – the local magistrates and their party on one side, the “Calvinists” both in Leiden and in the wider regions on the other, and the power of the Prince and States. Coolhaes inevitably threw in his lot with the authority of the local government in Leiden. In the next chapter, Coolhaes will be forced before his opponents and judged by his peers.

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131. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 3r.

132. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 57.

133. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 182-87; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 83; Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 110-16; Joke Spaans, *Haarlem na de reformatie. Stedelijke cultuur en kerkelijk leven* (The Hague: Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1989), 279.



### Chapter 3: Middelburg trials (1581)

The Arbitral Accord of 1580 did not bring any permanent solution to substantive issues. Although amicable relations had been restored in the Leiden church, Coolhaes was still theologically suspect to many. In April 1581, questions about Coolhaes were brought up in a local Synod in Rotterdam. Later that year, he was called before the national Synod in Middelburg (1581).<sup>134</sup> It wanted to examine him on the basis of *Apologia* and *Breeder bericht* (both from 1580), and to discuss his ideas on church order.

Coolhaes was annoyed at the accusations which the Synod was making against his books. He felt that he had expressed himself adequately on church order in them, so he thought that the Synod had no need to meet with him to discover his views. The preachers, however, declared that Coolhaes' books had been written without church permission.<sup>135</sup> Hendrik van der Corput, who served as the second scribe at the Synod, also complained that Coolhaes used quotes from well-respected theologians and reformers in his books in a way which was not good. Thinkers who were respected and widely read, said Van der Corput, nevertheless had their errors or dark passages, but Coolhaes collected all these together and quoted them to prop up his heretical positions.<sup>136</sup>

The stage is set

According to Coolhaes, the Leiden magistracy were not in favor of him appearing at the Middelburg Synod. They wanted to leave the situation of the turbulent Leiden church to its hard-fought balance, and let any accusers come to confront the preacher in Leiden, for, they said, the wound must be healed in the place it was made.<sup>137</sup> Coolhaes felt at this point that the schisms had been healed.<sup>138</sup> The magistrates also thought that the Synod had not been called

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134. Letter from Arent Cornelisz to Coolhaes, June 1, 1581, in Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 66-67. See also: [Cornelisz?], *Cort eenvoudich ende waerachtich verhael*, 1582. Coolhaes critiques this document in Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 117-28.

135. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 37.

136. Letter from Van der Corput to Arent Cornelius, *WMV* III, 2, 164; as cited in Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 40.

137. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 128; also "Letter from Coolhaes to the Middelburg Synod, June 10, 1581," Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 68.

legally.<sup>139</sup> Therefore, in obedience to the magistrates' opinion of the Synod, and probably also to his own reluctance, Coolhaes did not go; he was not there in Middelburg on the first day of the Synod. The Synod wrote to request that he come. They wrote to the classis of Leiden to ask for their help in persuading Coolhaes to make the trip. Coolhaes complained about the cost and trouble;<sup>140</sup> but nevertheless wrote that he did not want to appear to be "hiding from the light." So, he went to the magistracy and requested their permission to go after all.<sup>141</sup> One wonders how much of Coolhaes' initial non-appearance was based on the magistrates' belief in their own authority, and how much on his own qualms.

The Synod of Middelburg (1581) was important in the establishment of the Reformed religion and the building up of the Calvinist ecclesiastical system in the Netherlands for several reasons. The forty-eight Reformed representatives who met there, despite being a minority in the nation numerically, were trying to make far-reaching and comprehensive decisions – ecclesiastically, socially, and in the areas of education and the care of the poor.<sup>142</sup> The delegates felt themselves to be the inheritors of the medieval Catholic Church in taking care of society.<sup>143</sup> As one of the earlier synods, it was influential in the initial formulation of some ecclesiastical policies. It would be, however, the last synod in which so many provinces of the Northern and Southern Netherlands were present, since Antwerp would fall in 1585, and from that time onwards the church in the Northern Netherlands could not meet with those from the South.<sup>144</sup> The Synod wanted to deal with questions of church law and liturgical practice, but mostly with the troublesome cases of Caspar Coolhaes and Petrus Dathenus (Pieter Datheen), the Calvinist translator of the Heidelberg Catechism and the first Dutch

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138. Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 68.

139. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 37; also "Letter from Coolhaes to the Middelburg Synod, June 10, 1581." Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 68.

140. "Letter from Coolhaes to the Middelburg Synod, June 10, 1581," Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 68.

141. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 129.

142. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, x. There is also a helpful list of all delegates, with biographical details for most: 128-38. Also see Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 48-50, for more discussion on those present and their positions.

143. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 32.

144. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, x.

rhymed translation of the Psalms.<sup>145</sup> Dathenus, who had earlier been active in the Palatinate and more recently preached in Ghent, had fallen foul of William of Orange in his support of violence against Catholics. This case was not solved by the Synod, because of Dathenus' non-appearance.<sup>146</sup> The Prince had been trying with his *Unie van Utrecht* of 1579 to guarantee freedom of religion. Doctrinally, the *Formula of Concord* and the subsequent *Book of Concord* (1580) of the Lutherans, which had appeared, and questions relating to the church in England, were also topics to be addressed. So the Synod sought to continue to work toward a system of confessional doctrine as well as discipline.<sup>147</sup> The Synod lasted for three weeks. Much business was accomplished, although later Van der Corput wrote to Arent Cornelisz that he hoped the next Synod would be more edifying, shorter, and more productive.<sup>148</sup>

Coolhaes traveled to the Synod, after all. He tells his perspective of events in Middelburg in his *Een cort, waerachtich verhael*.<sup>149</sup> His wife, Grietje, had come to Middelburg with him. The day after they arrived, a Sunday, they were invited to a meal and then walked with a party of preachers out to the sea fort "Rammekens," a local sight. The preachers took the opportunity to speak particularly to Coolhaes' wife, urging her to try to convince her husband to be obedient to the Synod. As they said, a wife, because of her intimacy with her husband, can influence him for good or evil.<sup>150</sup> The feisty Grietje reportedly said, according to Coolhaes, "I would rather get bread by begging for my husband and our small children, if we couldn't earn it with the labor of our hands, than have my husband act against his conscience."<sup>151</sup> She said further that the disruptions in Leiden were

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145. For more on Dathenus and the Psalms, see F. N. Snoek, *Samen gezien of the vergelijking van de onberijmde psalmen in de Statenvertaling en de parafrasen* (Ermelo: Boekbinderij en Uitgeverij Snoek, 2013); F. N. Snoek, ed., *Concordantie van de berijming van Petrus Datheen* (Ermelo: Snoek, 2006); F. N. Snoek, ed., *Synopsis van het boek der psalmen: de onberijmde psalmen in de statenvertaling, benevens de berijmde psalmen naar de berijming van Petrus Datheen en de berijming uit het jaar 1773, alsmede enige gezangen* (Ermelo: Snoek, 2001, 2005); G. J. M. van Oosten, ed., *Psalmen in de berijming van Datheen* (Katwijk: Het Zevende Zegel, 2000). See also the popular-level book for younger readers: Jan de Kok, *Een opgejaagde dienstknecht: uit het leven van Petrus Datheen (1531-1588)* (Goes: Uitgeverij "De Ramshoorn," 2010).

146. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 2-10, 170.

147. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 64.

148. Letter was dated August 4, 1581. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 35, 53.; *WMV*, III-2, 156.

149. Caspar Coolhaes, *Een cort, waerachtich verhael*.

150. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 130-33.

151. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 130-33.

caused not by her husband, but by preachers from Delft and Dordrecht – presumably she meant Arent Cornelisz and Van der Corput.<sup>152</sup>

### The Middelburg theses

The following day, Monday, June 12, 1581, Coolhaes appeared before the Synod. He stated from the outset that he did not consider himself to be at the mercy of their judgment, or of a majority vote which he maintained should not have authority over human opinions and conscience, but that he was willing to converse with them as brothers, and to be corrected from God's Word if necessary.<sup>153</sup> He brought with him a letter from the Leiden magistracy, saying that they did not regard the Synod as lawful.<sup>154</sup> Arent Cornelisz headed up the Middelburg Synod. He had corresponded with his friend Van der Corput beforehand about both key cases of the impending gathering. Van der Corput had been instrumental in requesting the Prince to call the Synod. Cornelisz was fully prepared for the task. He had been scribe at the Synods of 1574 and 1578, and was powerful and decisive.<sup>155</sup> His intensity was rewarded with the nickname “the Pope of Delft.”<sup>156</sup> However, despite his activity with the stricter Reformed and their organization, Arent Cornelisz was not as extreme theologically as one might suppose. He would later defend infralapsarianism against the more Bezan supralapsarianism.<sup>157</sup>

Coolhaes already knew very well which of his views seemed suspicious to his opponents. They were the very points which he addressed in *Apologia*, and supported with quotes from Calvin and other Reformers.<sup>158</sup> Rather than a purely spoken discussion, he asked

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152. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 38.

153. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 133, Coolhaes evidently quoting [Cornelisz (Crusius)?], *Cort eenvoudich ende waerachtich verhael*, 27.

154. He had already written the same to them; see “Coolhaes aan Middelburg d. d. 10 juni 1581,” Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 68.

155. “He knew how to chop with the synodal axe.” Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 15.

156. A. Ph. F. Wouters, *Nieuw en ongezien. Kerk en samenleving in the classis Delft en Delftland 1572-1621, I, De nieuwe kerk* (Delft: Eburon, 1994), 17.

157. Ironically, Arminius, during his time in Amsterdam, would be asked to defend supralapsarianism. Nijenhuis, “Varianten binnen het Nederlandse Calvinisme in de zestiende eeuw,” 358-59.

that a written charge against him and his books should be given to him, and that he would be allowed to reply in writing, since there were so many of them accusing him and he was alone.<sup>159</sup> So on Tuesday, June 13, 1580, perhaps because of this request, Coolhaes was given five theses, dealing with doctrinal points, to examine and sign.<sup>160</sup> They were statements formulated by the Synod, which the Synod felt addressed the issues which they had with Coolhaes' viewpoints. Later, he would also be given five theses dealing with church law and order.

The first group, the “doctrinal” theses, were originally written in both Latin and Dutch.<sup>161</sup> The Latin is more extensive and in some cases very different from the Dutch, and also contains biblical references. The second group of theses, concerning church order, was written only in Dutch.<sup>162</sup>

These are the “doctrinal” theses according to the Latin version:

1. Although those in the Old Testament did not have such a clear knowledge of Christ, his person and office, or the light of the Gospel as we have, they by a dim light of grace saw Christ from a distance, through the same will and faith by which we are saved. All who were saved in the Old Testament were saved inasmuch as they had a knowledge of the person and office of Christ, according to the measure granted by God. Heb. 11:53; Eph. 2:20; Titus 1:1-3; Rom. 1:2; John 17:3.

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158. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 194.

159. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 134-35. He had already made the same request in writing; see “Coolhaes aan Middelburg synod, 10 juni 1581,” Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 68.

160. Rogge says that they were given to him on the 12th, but he seems to be in error – the letter in Kamphuis is dated the 12th “Middelburg aan Coolhaes, 12 juni 1581.” Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 68. Rogge more specifically says that they were given to Coolhaes first in Latin, and that when Coolhaes returned them with some notations, the Synod was not satisfied, and submitted them to him again in Dutch. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 194-95.

161. The original Latin version of the “doctrinal” theses was reproduced by Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 113-14. The manuscript version is in Synod of Middelberg theses, 1580, inventarisnr. 83, AD. Fatio says that it is hand-written by Arent Cornelisz. The original Dutch version was published by Kamphuis as “Middelburg aan Coolhaes, d. d. 12 juni 1581,” Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 69. Rogge gives a modernized Dutch version: “Verklaring over vijf geloofspunten, afgelegd tijdens de nationale synode te Middelburg, 15 Juni 1581,” Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 195.

162. The original in Dutch of the “church order” theses, including Coolhaes' signature in Latin (“Casparus Koelhasius haec approbo”), is in Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 115-16. The original is found in: Synod of Middelburg theses, 1580, Secretariearchief, inventarisnr. 2189, ELO. Rogge gives a modernized Dutch version: Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, I, 197-98.

2. From the Word of God it cannot be proved that non-baptized children of the Jews, Turks, and other nations, if they die, number among the elect. However, it is not for us (not knowing the deep plan and election of God) to condemn that which is already condemned by God in His Word, since all sons of Adam are infected with original sin. Eph. 2:3; Ps. 51:5; 58:4; Rom. 5:12.

3. The Word of God says that all children who have not been baptized are outside of Christ, since they are not members of the visible church, the covenant of God. That is to say, the words of the covenant do not apply to them. Gen. 17:7; 1 Cor. 7:14; Eph. 2:11.

4. God undoubtedly gave in Adam to the whole human race to be heirs of the grace given in Adam, but people are unfit through the fall of Adam to accept the gifts necessary to salvation and are completely dead and so cannot do good works, unless the grace of God receives them in the light of His Spirit and calls them back. Gen. 8:21; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13.

5. Although the works of the Gentiles, Jews, and Turks imitate the acts which God's law prescribes to praiseworthy men, they are honest and to be imitated, but they are not truly good in the sight of God. For whatever is done without faith is sin. Rom. 14:23; Isa. 64:6; Ps. 143:2.

I, Caspar Coolhaes, the minister of the divine Word in Leiden, testify that I understood the doctrines of these theses, condemn the contrary and will always be faithful to them, with the help of God. Middelburg, 15 June, 1581.<sup>163</sup>

In reading over these “doctrinal” theses, it is easy to see that all of them relate to predestination, election, grace, good works, and covenant theology. In a sense, this discussion is a foretaste of the later controversies around Arminianism.<sup>164</sup> All were points upon which Coolhaes was suspect. Aside from the first thesis, all were points with which he was likely to disagree. The records of the Synod add that if Coolhaes were to give his agreement on these dogmatic points, the second part of the examination which dealt with church law could be handled more lightly.

Coolhaes met separately with three of the Synod members, then brought back a written response.<sup>165</sup> In this response, he writes that he is frustrated that the Synod members

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163. My English summary translation is based not on the Dutch version, but on the original Latin version as reproduced by Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 113-14. The manuscript version is in Inventarisnr. 672, AD.

164. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 38.

do not seem to have read his books (*Apologia* and *Breeder bericht*, referred to as *Apologia Prior* and *Apologia Posterior* during the Synod) in their entirety. As to the content of the five theses, he cited page numbers from his books in refutation.<sup>166</sup> The Synod found this and his subsequent explanation, which he wrote on the next day, less than clear. Regarding the first point, he denied that he taught that believers under the old covenant had to believe that the seed of the woman would be both God and man. He stated that his views could also be found in Luther, Calvin and Bucer, and gave detailed references to some of their works. Furthermore, he maintained that he had never taught such a thing as the second thesis, and cited the works of the Reformers again in regard to the third. As for the fourth, he believed that all had in Adam lost the image of God and free will, and were unable to do any good unless they were reborn through Christ and taken up again by his grace. As for the fifth question, he again directed the brothers to look more carefully into his books for the answer.<sup>167</sup>

The Synod found these answers unacceptable.<sup>168</sup> During the ensuing discussion, Coolhaes asked for a copy of the Belgic Confession, and returned it having written notes in the margins in regard to articles on election (XVI) and the church (XXVIII and XXXI).<sup>169</sup> This may have been because the Confession was in 1581 largely unknown. Later, Trigland

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165. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 194-95.

166. They are typed in the margin by each point in Kamphuis' reproduction of the document: 1. *apol. post. f. 20 b. linea 9*. 2. *Ibidem f. 18a linea 20*. 3. *Ibidum f. 17a in fine* 4. *apol. priori f. 99a sub fine*. 5. *Ibidem f. 93a*. "Middelburg aan Coolhaes, d. d. 12 juni 1581," Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 69. Fatio also lists the same in his notes: Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 192.

167. "Coolhaes aan Middelburg, d. d. 13/14 juni 1581," Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 69-74.

168. Bremmer emphasizes that Coolhaes' writing was in half-German, half-Dutch. He says that, even accounting for the inconsistent spelling of the age, Coolhaes' letters and this statement are more "German" than his printed books. Bremmer, "De nationale synode van Middelburg (1581)," 38-39, 43. While this may be an exaggeration, it is true that his printed books are more "Dutch" than the letters reproduced in Kamphuis. For examples, see "Coolhaes aan Middelburg synod, 13/14 juni 1581," Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 69-71. It is true that his spelling is so different from his printed works that it seems to point to extensive editing by an editor of those printed works. For another example in which Coolhaes' spelling looks very German, see the letter from him in the name of the church council to the Dordrecht Synod, June 6, 1578, in Rutgers, *Acta*, 328-29.

169. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 39. As far as I know, the copy and annotations are no longer extant.

said that the Dutch version which Coolhaes was given was not clearly translated or printed.<sup>170</sup> What he meant by that is unclear.

### A Seeming About-Face

After repeated pressure, Coolhaes, surprisingly, signed the Latin version of the five theses on Thursday, June 15, 1581.<sup>171</sup> He was immediately given five more “church order” theses, in Dutch, to sign. This is the second group of theses, the “church order” theses:

1. At the same time as the church servants and shepherds serve the sacraments according to God’s Word, they also must pay attention who of the congregation may receive the Lord’s Supper and who may not. The examination of those who receive communion is thus partly up to the preachers, and partly up to the communion-goers themselves.

2. The sacraments are instituted by God and the Lord’s Supper is a witness of our communion with Christ. Therefore, those who take communion, are more rightly regarded as members of the church, than those who abstain from it.

3. Concerning the order and discipline in the whole church: that which will be adopted by its representatives must be maintained until it is found advisable to propose new rules. Also the magistracy is to be counted as one of the foremost members of the church.

4. The duty of the government is to sanction the church order and help to carry it out. Everyone must be subject to this, until a following synod brings changes in it.

5. The acceptance of the Bible and the articles of faith is shown not only in word, but in the intention and teaching. Everyone who appears to keep the words of the articles, but repudiates the teaching, may not be allowed to receive the Lord’s Supper. Some can be tolerated due to their weakness, but not those who oppose deliberately.<sup>172</sup>

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170. F. S. Knipscheer, *De invoering en de waardeering der gereformeerde belijdenisschriften in Nederland vóór 1618* (Leiden: Adriani, 1907), 63, 76-78.

171. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 40, 54.

172. My English summary translation of the “church order” theses is based on the Dutch original as given in Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 115-16.



Coolhaes signed the second group of five theses on Friday, June 15, 1581.<sup>173</sup> They reflected a Calvinist, disciplinarian model. There is little doubt that Coolhaes disagreed with all of them entirely.

Why did Coolhaes give in and sign the theses? The story is unclear. Coolhaes had not decided to sign until two individuals came to the Synod to negotiate. Their identities are unknown; perhaps they were people already belonging to the Synod. One might have been Trabius, who later refused to sign the act against Coolhaes.<sup>174</sup> Or, Coolhaes may have been convinced by a friend to sign the second group as he had done the others, in a hope that the Synod would soon conclude his case. Although not convinced, he may have been more conciliatory than truthful.<sup>175</sup> Did he think it would blow over, or was he feeling pressured? Perhaps he did not take it seriously. In reading Coolhaes' writings, one notices, as R. H. Bremmer observes, that despite being a Reformed preacher, he is "inwardly foreign" to Reformed structure and law, does not quote Calvin, and is not strict about rules and laws. His latitudinarianism flies in the face of the attitudes of the preachers of the Synod. Coolhaes, objecting to the authority of the Synod, did not see Reformed Church order as a finished edifice, but as a structure which was still in the process of being built. He does not say this in so many words in his descriptions of the Synod, but it is clear from both of his 1580 books. He did not feel bound by Reformed Church order in any way.<sup>176</sup>

The Synod went on; Coolhaes remained present. However, the next day, Saturday, June 17, 1581, he protested in writing to the Synod, restating that he did not consider the members of the Synod to be his judges, and that they had not reasoned with him according to

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173. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 41/54.

174. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 44.

175. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 39.

176. The words and thoughts above are based on this whole paragraph from Bremmer, and so it seems good to reproduce it in full: "Waarom tekende Coolhaes? Hoopte hij door toegeeflijkheid er af te komen? Door te tekenen verloochende hij veel van wat hij tot nu toe staande had gehouden. Dacht hij misschien dat de zaak met een sisser af zou lopen? Tekende hij omdat hij geen verweer had en onder zware druk was gezet? Hij was er de man niet naar om gemakkelijk te capituleren. Voorzag hij niet in wat voor situatie hij zichzelf nu had gebracht na alles wat zich in Leiden had afgespeeld? Het is moeilijk op deze vragen een antwoord te vinden. Wie zijn geschriften leest krijgt wel de indruk dat hij innerlijk vreemd was aan de confessionele en kerkrechtelijke opbouw van de Gereformeerde Kerk die hij diende. In zijn eerste Apologie had hij zich min of meer laatdunkend over Calvin en de calvinisten uitgelaten [footnote to Coolhaes, *Apologia*, 100, 100a]. Hij was er innerlijk vreemd aan en hij was doordrenkt van kerkrechtelijke overwegingen waarin de overheid een beslissende rol speelde. Dat bracht als vanzelf een latitudinarisme mee waarvan de Gereformeerde Kerk wars was." Bremmer, "De nationale synode van Middelburg (1581)," 41-42.

God's Word. He declared that neither his conscience nor God's Word accused him. He believed himself in the right. Perhaps to try to prove their case further, the Synod members promised to compile a collection of incriminating passages from his books. Their *Memorie* was put together over the weekend by Cornelisz and Van der Corput.<sup>177</sup> Coolhaes had, after all, claimed that his books had not been read sufficiently to judge them or him, so this step seems to have had the potential to be constructive.

Coolhaes was given a day to look at this *Memorie*, presumably to come to agree with their assessment. However, on Tuesday, June 20, 1581, he came back with a written statement of his own.<sup>178</sup> He complained about their desire to condemn his books, and then went on to maintain that his books did not disagree with the theses he had signed, nor with God's Word. He appeared to take a different tack now that he had signed the ten theses – he maintained that he agreed with them as he interpreted them – that he did not contradict himself. He demanded to be reheard at the next legal synod, or, he said, he would bring his case before the Prince and the States.<sup>179</sup>

The Synod, out of patience, decided that they had taken long enough.<sup>180</sup> However, there seems to have been some panic at Coolhaes' threat. A letter was sent quickly to the classis of Brabant to ask for reinforcements who would sign an act of excommunication against Coolhaes.<sup>181</sup> The threat of excommunication had not been uttered in so many words in the earlier stages of the proceedings, at least according to the written records, but the speed with which events progressed at this point makes one conclude that it had always been there. Coolhaes was allowed to think about the matter till the following day, Wednesday, June 21, which was the final meeting day. However, on Wednesday, he did not appear. Instead, he sent a request to five of the Synod members to meet him at a notary (Van der Varendt of Middelburg) to make a statement which would record the events of the Synod. The five

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177. Reproduced in the *verweerschrift* of the Synod of Haarlem, 1582. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 43.

178. This statement is "Coolhaes aan Middelburg synode, 20 juni 1581," Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 71-74.

179. Van Dooren reproduces letters from the synod during its session to the Prince and to Marnix, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 50-60.

180. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 43.

181. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 44-45, citing Rutgers, *Acta*, 372.

refused and reported the incident to the Synod which was still in session.<sup>182</sup> It appears that Coolhaes thought that those five might support him in circumventing the whole Synod, and escape in possession of some document that he might use in the future against the Synod. But whatever sympathy those individuals might have had for him evidently did not go so far. The Synod went ahead with the excommunication process, which would be continued by the classes of Delft, The Hague, Haarlem and Leiden, and which would be proclaimed in the church of Leiden if possible or in the surrounding churches.

The Synod had not covered all of the business they had hoped to resolve, since the business with Coolhaes had taken so long. For instance, they did not get to the case of the Jacobskerk in Utrecht, which they had also intended to address. Herman Duifhuis had been another libertine preacher who charted his own course in Utrecht in the Jacobskerk. Duifhuis and Coolhaes agreed on several key ideas. First, that the Spirit was essential, because the importance of the written Gospel would never be superseded, but the Holy Spirit must illuminate.<sup>183</sup> Thus, in the church there were those who were saved and those who were unsaved - the visible church was not the same as the invisible.<sup>184</sup> Also, both taught open communion, favored magistrates, opposed consistories, elders, catechisms, and strong confessionalism.<sup>185</sup>

But in the meantime, Duifhuis had died, and the situation with the Jacobskerk may well have seemed less urgent.<sup>186</sup> Arent Cornelisz was not pleased; he had been sorely tried. The church order proposed in Middelburg would not be sanctioned by the States, and the Coolhaes case would drag on still longer.<sup>187</sup> At least the Synod had concluded that Coolhaes

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182. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 44/55; citing the notary's record included in Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 76-77.

183. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 86-92. A note about page 89: Kaplan says Duifhuis was "simply inconsistent" for distinguishing between justification and sanctification and saying that justification could be reversible. The passage he quotes looks, instead, as if Duifhuis did not hold to a belief in eternal security. In other words, Duifhuis may have believed that one could be justified by one's decision for God, but then fall away and not proceed further in being sanctified. It is not mysterious or inconsistent. Sin could cause the loss of salvation i.e., "the garment of justification." Coolhaes would likely have agreed.

184. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 80.

185. For a comparison and a list of literature about Duifhuis, see Benjamin Kaplan, "Duifhuis, Hubert," *OER*, vol. 2, 10.

186. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 44.

187. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 44-45.

was forbidden to preach or to write and publish books. His books were declared to be dangerous and a great nuisance to the church. The Synod resolved that the classes of South Holland would move toward his excommunication.<sup>188</sup> The decision was important, because there was a lot at stake even beyond Leiden. Although Duifhuis was dead, the situation in Utrecht was still uncertain. Other places also experienced church/state conflicts. But the Reformed Church was clear about its theocratic vision.

More trials: The Hague (1581) and Haarlem (1582)

Judged by the Middelburg Synod of 1581, which had decided to proceed towards his excommunication, Coolhaes appealed to the next legal national synod, wanting to take his case to the highest authority. He wrote an emotional appeal to the Leiden magistracy on July 27, 1581, asking them to write to the Prince and the States.<sup>189</sup> In the meantime, the classes of Leiden and other cities were deputed to continue to work with him; if he would not submit, excommunication by the classes would follow. When the classis of Delft received this request, it wrote to its sister classes in Haarlem, Leiden, and The Hague, to set up a meeting to this end in The Hague on August 12, 1581. This came to nothing, since The Hague did not send its delegation and thought that the Synod should take action for itself. Another meeting was attempted for October 18, 1581, in Leiden, but the Leiden classis replied that Coolhaes wished to meet with Arent Cornelisz from Delft again, and they thought it would be better for this to happen behind closed doors. They had, however, arranged that the Leiden consistory and magistrates would watch and act as observers, and a notary to record the proceedings would be also be present, to record Coolhaes' words for what would become a public confession. The Delft classis found this unacceptable and demeaning to the authority of the Synod. It was decided that another local synod, comprising North and South Holland, would be called.<sup>190</sup>

In the meantime, the church in Leiden was losing patience with the situation. Coolhaes in fact remained, but the other preachers resigned. It is likely that the magistracy

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188. Rutgers, *Acta*, 363.

189. "Coolhaes aan de Leidse magistraat d.d. 27 juli 1581," Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 78-81.

190. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 204-205.

protected him, knowing that if he laid down his office, he would not be hired anywhere else.<sup>191</sup> Students at Leiden University, influenced by Lambert Daneau, also began to protest over the fact that Coolhaes remained in the pulpit. Some students also wrote to the consistory on February 7, 1582, supported by professors, to protest about Cornelis van Braeckel, the new city preacher whom they regarded as a “new Coolhaes.” Van Braeckel was asked to answer five of the Middelburg theses.<sup>192</sup> Daneau, who succeeded Feugeray as professor of theology, had arrived in 1581. Feugeray had left in 1579; Hubertus Sturm had been carrying the teaching load.<sup>193</sup> Daneau would also write concerning the case of Duifhuis in the summer of 1582, to “defend the visible church.”<sup>194</sup> He was a close friend of Beza and had been called out of Geneva. Daneau had set out to prove Coolhaes’ unorthodoxy by examining his writings. Because he did not know Dutch, they had to be translated into French or Latin for this task.<sup>195</sup>

Coolhaes was also suspected because of some of the guests he invited into his home. Daneau and Sturm wrote to the consistory on October 1, 1581, regarding an incident involving Coolhaes and a certain Henri Westhoeve,<sup>196</sup> who was staying with Coolhaes, was said to be called to be preacher in Katwijk, and was thought to be a “heretical Pelagian.” A follow-up letter to the consistory and Daneau, presumably from Coolhaes, accused the council and Daneau of lack of Christian love in this, and criticized their surveillance of doctrine and morals.<sup>197</sup>

The magistracy in response complained to the rector and university senate, comparing Daneau’s “Genevan inquisition” to the Spanish one. This was the last straw for the Calvinist

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191. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 206.

192. Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 83.

193. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 206. Sturm was thought to have been born in Cologne, died in the Palatinate; studied in Heidelberg, worked in Ghent. Sturm was called to replace Feugeray in Leiden November 30, 1579. Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 193, note 35.

194. Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 71.

195. Bongers, *Leven en werk*, 102; Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 104. I have not found any record of these suspected translations. For more about Daneau, see also Olivier Fatio, *Méthode et théologie: Lambert Daneau et les débuts de la scolastique réformée*, Genève: Droz, 1976.

196. Also called Henricus Westphalus. See Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 50-51.

197. Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, 51, 121, 125-26. In this letter, Coolhaes is spoken of in the third person, but Fatio thinks that Coolhaes is the author. If this is true, it is the one example we have of Coolhaes writing in Latin.

Daneau, who left the city. After scarcely one year in Leiden, he submitted his resignation in the spring of 1582, announcing publicly on May 30, 1582, that he could not continue in the face of such disunity among the preachers. However, it is also given as a reason for his departure, that Daneau left Leiden when his organizing of a consistory for the French-speaking Walloon church, where he had been preaching, was opposed by magistrates.<sup>198</sup> The organization of such an additional church council in the city was in opposition to the *Arbitral Accord*.<sup>199</sup> In any event, despite his short tenure in Leiden, Daneau was extremely influential in bringing a strict teaching of predestination to the university, paving the way for the later Gomarus. Daneau was replaced by Johannes Holmannus, the predecessor of Arminius.<sup>200</sup>

### Revisiting the theses

The classes of Amsterdam and Rotterdam petitioned the States that a provincial synod would be held that year to revisit the matters which had been addressed in the Middelburg Synod, including Coolhaes. The States approved this. A synod in The Hague was called for the end of November, 1581. Coolhaes and some of the magistrates had unsuccessfully requested the States that the Synod be held in their city, and complained that Coolhaes had not been dealt with in a Christian or legal manner. Five of the Leiden magistrates attended the Synod, along with representatives of the consistory and Coolhaes himself.<sup>201</sup> The Middelburg records were read aloud and debate about Coolhaes' writings followed. Each thesis that Coolhaes had signed was revisited. It became clear to the preachers that his views were "not only in his books but in his heart."<sup>202</sup> He was unwilling to say that unbaptized children were condemned, and unwilling, as he saw it, to make God through predestination the source of sin. This latter statement caused even more heated debate. This view is consistent with the single-covenant

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198. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 50.

199. J. J. Woltjer, *Een nieuw ende onghesien dingh. Verkenningen naar de positie van de kerkeeraad in twee Hollandse steden in de zestiende eeuw* (Leiden: Rijksuniversiteit, 1985), 6.

200. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 207.

201. The Leiden magistrates were Van der Werff, Van Hout, Van Reyersz, Pieter Pietersz Oom and Dirk Gerritsz Smalling. For a discussion about Jan van Hout in particular, and how Coolhaes may have influenced the humanistic city secretary to accept the idea that God's grace is available to all, see Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, 363.

202. Says Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 212-13.

idea, espoused by Zurich theologians, in which Christ's death is seen to be effective for forgiveness of sins both forward and backward in time – thus, for all.<sup>203</sup>

His writings were judged to be in clear disagreement with the second group of theses also. Since Coolhaes had earlier signed them in an attempt to bring the matter to a close, this caused him to be accused of inconsistency and self-contradiction, which he then countered by downplaying the importance of the act of signing. On the third day of the Synod in The Hague, Coolhaes brought forth a new document in which he quoted Bucer, Bullinger and others, but the preachers responded that the issue was not the thoughts of other theologians, but his own. In the discussion that followed, Coolhaes is reported by the preachers to have given a clear statement that all people were given the ability to accept the grace offered by Christ. He was rebuked severely for his views and his behavior while at this and the earlier Synod. He offered to step down from his office as preacher, and even to leave the country, but would not sign a statement of guilt. It was decided that he must not be allowed to resign, but must be relieved of his office to show the justice of the synodal operation, and that if he continued to be uncorrected by God's Word must be excommunicated. The Leiden magistrates were forced to concur, and sent a report to the States the following day, who then issued a formal decision to “defrock” him: in other words, to relieve him of his office as preacher.<sup>204</sup> This had however already been done informally, when the Middelburg Synod forbade him to teach.

It was also decided that Coolhaes would be subject to three “solemn warnings” officially exhorting him to repentance, according to the procedure described in Matthew 18. The warnings would be delivered in person, every fourteen days. Insofar as he was not repentant, public prayers would be said for him after each warning, in churches in Delft, Haarlem and The Hague. After the first warning, he would be prayed for anonymously; after the second, anonymously but with an explanation of his offense; after the third, with his name and offense clearly stated.

With this advance notice, Coolhaes had time to invite the Leiden magistrates to be at his house when Arent Cornelisz and one of his elders would arrive for the first “warning.” Pieter Adriaansz van der Werff, Jan Jansz van Baersdorp and Jan van Hout were among those

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203. Lee Palmer Wandel, “Zwingli, Huldreich,” *OER*, vol. 4, 322.

204. [Cornelisz?], *Cort eenvoudich ende waerachtich verhael*. Whether the magistrates were convinced of his guilt, or forced to concur, is addressed by Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 215, note 15.

who gathered, along with fellow Leiden preacher Pieter Hackius and some of his elders and deacons - in all, twenty-seven men. Hackius was a friend of Coolhaes and a similar broad-minded preacher. He was called to Leiden in 1581, preached against Christian discipline in the mid-eighties and got into conflict with colleague Ysbrand Trabius, in a way very reminiscent of Coolhaes and Pieter Cornelisz.<sup>205</sup> When Arent Cornelisz arrived, he wanted to speak with Coolhaes and rebuke him privately outside, but Coolhaes insisted that his supporters be present. Cornelisz and his elder came in and rebuked him. After the warning was over, however, the visitors were called to the City Hall and forbidden to give any more public warnings. In consequence, only the remaining public prayers were said, on February 4, February 17, and March 4, 1582, in Delft and Haarlem. The Hague refused to participate, which may have been a sign of solidarity with Coolhaes.

As the date for Coolhaes' excommunication grew closer, some of the preachers involved, among whom presumably and chiefly Arent Cornelisz, published the *Cort eenvoudich ende waerachtich verhael*.<sup>206</sup> It is the story of all of the disagreements involving Coolhaes, including copies of many related documents, including a letter from the Prince which they believed validated the legality of their synods.<sup>207</sup> In it the preachers talked about their good intentions. They emphasized that although they had censured Coolhaes, it had been done in a spirit of love and not in the harsh way that the Catholic Church had ruled in earlier ages. They wrote that freedom does not mean that anyone should believe only what they think good, as if that belief could save him. If that belief does not have its foundation in God's Word, then it is unbelief.<sup>208</sup> The preachers hoped for repentance from Coolhaes.

### Rushing to the defense

The Leiden magistrates put their views in print again: a *Remonstrance* appeared in February, 1582, and was sent to the States.<sup>209</sup> It was signed by Jan van Hout of the Leiden magistracy,

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205. For more information about this conflict, see Christine Kooi, "Pharisees and Hypocrites: A Public Debate over Church Discipline in Leiden, 1586," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 88 (1997): 258-78.

206. [Cornelisz?] *Cort eenvoudich ende waerachtich verhael*,. See Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 242-48.

207. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 240-48.

208. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 247.



but was written by Coornhert at the request of the Leiden magistracy as the *Justificatie* had been.<sup>210</sup>

Cornelisz and the preachers responded to this *Remonstrance* with an *Antwoord der dienaaren des woordts ... op de remonstrantie by de overicheydt van Leyden*.<sup>211</sup> They affirmed that they could not be servants of the government or of one man, but of Christ. They also defended the necessity of councils and synods, such as Nicaea, to combat heresy.<sup>212</sup> They denied that they wanted to assert political power, and warned the secular governors not to confuse spiritual and secular governance, because God had made them separate, as the body was separate from the soul. They asserted that preachers and elders were the most suited to choose their own colleagues, since they understood best what the issues were. They also declared that liberty was not to do whatever one liked, because this would lead to licentiousness.<sup>213</sup>

Coolhaes also spent the time between the Synods writing. He hastily finished the short book *Sendtbrief*<sup>214</sup> on March 10, 1582. It is a document addressed not to the public but to his peers; a plea for understanding from his preacher-colleagues in South and North Holland, a plea that the decision given by Middelburg would not proceed “prematurely.”<sup>215</sup> The vocabulary and style are strikingly different from the earlier *Apologia* and *Breeder*

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209. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*.

210. As *Justificatie* also addresses issues of church and state, we will discuss it in Chapter 7.

211. Arent Cornelisz (Crusius), *Antwoorde der dienaaren des woordts ende ouderlinghen der kercken van Hollandt, wt den naem derselven onlancx vergadert gheweest zijnde tot Haerlem: aen mijn e. e. heeren de Staten desselven lands: op de remonstrantie by de ouericheyt van Leyden, aen de voorsz heeren Staten gedaen, ende wtgheven [sic], aengaende t'verhandelde der dienaren des woordts end' ouderlinghen der Nederlandsche kercken in het synodus tot Middelburgh, etc. Waerinne de clachten teghen tvoorsz synodus ende synodale acten voortghebracht, cortelick ende claerlick tot noodighe ontschuldighe der kercken beandtwoordt werden.* (Delft: Cornelis Iantsz, 1582).

212. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 253.

213. As summarized in Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 238.

214. Caspar Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief Caspars Coolhaes, dienaer des godlicken woorts, residerende tot Leyden. Aan de dienaren des goddelicken woordts in Suyt- ende Noort-Hollant, te samen ende eenen yghelicken besonder. Om niet ontijdelick voort te gaen, int oordeel ghegheuen by de versamelinghe binnen Middelburch in iunio anno 81. ghehouden, die buyten recht voor een nationael synodus wt gaet. Waer wt oock yederman sal verstaen mogen, met wat onrecht de selue Coolhaes verleden sondach, wesende den 4. nu loopende martij, tot Delft (een weet niet of aen ander plaatsen meer) der gemeynte opentlick van den predictoel, als onboetueerdiche erghenis met zijn schrijven aenghericht te hebben, met name voorghedraghen is, om met der scherphelyd van af-snijdighe teghens hem te proceduren. Waer van de summa breeder te vinden is int volghende blat* (N.p., 1582), Giiir. Rogge deals more extensively with *Sendtbrief* than with many of Coolhaes' other works. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 233-42.

215. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, title page.

*bericht*. In his *Sendtbrief* he used just as many biblical references but more theological terminology, just as many metaphors, if not more, but a more direct, linear style of argumentation. Coolhaes shows himself as a theologian in this work, in which he lays out the principles behind his ecclesiology, defends inclusivity, and condemns the actions of the synods and preachers in Holland.

Coolhaes thought that he had not been treated “evangelically” at the Synod. He should have been reasoned with and convinced from God’s Word, but claimed that not a single verse of Scripture was quoted against him.<sup>216</sup> He wanted to have been, so to speak, “dialogued with” – something which his opponents either would not or could not do. Arent Cornelisz had earlier debated Coornhert in Leiden. Coolhaes desired something similar; something more dialogical than the assembled preachers gave him. Instead, he was rebuked. He asked, “Now I ask everyone – is it right to treat an erring lover of truth in the same way as a willful hater? This was punishment, where there should have been tolerance.”<sup>217</sup> He points to the shamelessness of Arent Cornelisz in having him, Coolhaes, declared to be a troublesome, unrepentant person, and in using his classis of Delft to overbalance the classes of Rijnland/Leiden, Haarlem and The Hague. Coolhaes is unsure of the classis of Haarlem, but is sure that Rijnland and The Hague should have been on his side.<sup>218</sup>

### Making an end

The final Synod was held in Haarlem, beginning on March 15, 1582. It was clear beforehand that the preachers would go ahead with excommunication, assuming that Coolhaes continued to “despise the warnings.”<sup>219</sup> All of the classes of Holland were represented, except for Gouda (whose delegates pleaded illness) and Leiden. However, Leiden sent elder Symon Jacobs on March 17, 1582 with apologies, and also with a printed copy of the *Sendtbrief* for the representatives of each classis.

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216. All three points are introduced in Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, D; Fijr.

217. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, Fijv.

218. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, Gijv.

219. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 224.

The *Sendtbrief* was examined by the Synod along with all earlier material, but was seen as further evidence of disobedience and intractability. The decision was made for excommunication. The Hague classis did not vote for this action, since they had misgivings, and because their credential letter did not allow it. Eventually they left the meeting in protest.<sup>220</sup> Coolhaes, who did not attend, was informed of the intention of the Synod by letter on March 23, 1582. As he was not home, the letter was received by his wife. It was recorded that she received it scornfully.<sup>221</sup> He did not respond himself, but his friend and colleague Hackius wrote back in his name, asking for an extension of eight days. However, the Synod decided against this, and proclaimed his excommunication on March 25, 1582.<sup>222</sup> The excommunication was announced in Haarlem and Delft, but not in Leiden or The Hague. Those cities refused to participate in the announcement.

Jean Taffin and Pierre Loyseleur de Villiers, the court preachers of William of Orange, had also been involved with the events which led to the excommunication of Coolhaes, although not many facts about this involvement remain. Taffin was loyal to the side of the Reformed Church in the theological conflicts involving Coolhaes, Herbertsz, Duifhuis and Arminius, and prioritized the independence of the church. However, he distanced himself from the more radical Calvinists and supported the government. De Villiers, for his part, wrote about the importance of personal spirituality and free will.<sup>223</sup> After the provincial Synod in Haarlem in March 1582, Taffin wrote to Cornelisz in Delft. Apparently there was a feeling in some quarters that Coolhaes should after all be allowed to take the Lord's Supper, and that the decision of the Synods was shaky and not generally recognized. This does not mean that the two court preachers were not on the side of the synods in their desire for the church's authority, but seems to indicate that reconciliation was wanted. Hendrik van der Corput, however, was insistent that Coolhaes should not be

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220. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 225-26.

221. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 226.

222. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 153-57.

223. Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 174. De Villiers' theses about the church and free will are found in: Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 190-94 (in Latin). For more about De Villiers and his influence in emphasizing personal spirituality in the seventeenth century Dutch *Nadere reformatie* ("Second" or "Further" Reformation), see Joel R. Beeke, "Taffin, Jean," *OER*, vol. 4, 143; S. van der Linde, *Jean Taffin: hofprediker en raadsheer van Willem van Oranje* (Amsterdam: Bolland 1982).

reinstated until he was legitimately reconciled – in other words, until he would repent and change his views.<sup>224</sup>

Coolhaes' excommunication and defrocking from ministry as a preacher in the Reformed Church ended an important phase of his life. He was no longer a young man; he was in his late forties with a wife and family to support. He had been thrown out of his ministerial office. He had been disgraced in the eyes of many of his former colleagues in the clergy.

However, even though his opportunities to preach had ended, he had evidently made an important impact in Leiden during his preaching years. Although the magistrates were already advocates of fewer Calvinist strictures, Coolhaes is the only Leiden preacher during the period 1574-1582 who was consistently preaching in the city for a broader, latitudinarian Reformed Church. In "plastic" situations of rapid change, an inspiring preacher is often enough to develop events in one direction versus another.<sup>225</sup> In those pivotal days of early freedom, his voice must have reached those who would carry on the desire for a less narrow public church in Leiden through the rest of the century and into the larger confessional conflicts of the early 1600's. Looked at another way, one can say that the stricter Calvinist preachers' evaluation was in a sense true – he was a "disturber of the church" – someone whose influence worked against some of the things that those preachers were trying to establish. Whether one judges this disturbance to have been good or bad depends upon one's point of view about whether the Reformed Church which was being established was a positive or a negative development for society. Coolhaes' influence in Leiden catalyzed those elements which would eventually result in the turbulent events of 1618-1619.

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224. Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 88-89.

225. Woltjer, *Kleine oorzaken, grote gevolgen*, 14.

## Chapter 4: Distilling spirits and theology

After March, 1582, Coolhaes was no longer allowed to preach in the public Reformed Church in Leiden, due to his being excommunicated and defrocked by the Synods. However, his opponents had been only partly successful in silencing him. He could not preach, but he continued to write and publish, even though they had objected to that just as strongly. The end of Coolhaes' preaching career was the beginning of his activity as a pamphlet-writer.<sup>1</sup> He was motivated by events around him to write about the church not only from a theoretical standpoint, but also from a pastoral one, even when he was no longer a pastor. Through his writings, a window opens up to us about the further course of his life, and one can see which contemporary issues moved him to respond.

In this second half of his life Coolhaes found, learned, and perfected a new trade, built a business, and continued to write theology, all of which showed his survival instinct and sense of vocation. He still enjoyed the approval of many of the citizens of Leiden, including, in general, the magistracy.<sup>2</sup> He himself, and a certain number of those around him, may still have considered him a public figure, with a right to a voice in public and ecclesiastical affairs. His excommunication may have made him even more notorious, controversial, and thus fascinating to some of the populace. He would continue to write throughout his long life - both in Leiden and later in Amsterdam, where he eventually relocated.

His next publication dealt, unsurprisingly, with his disagreement with the practice of excommunication as a form of Christian discipline. *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*<sup>3</sup> is a collection of Coolhaes' Dutch translations of sermons and writings by Zwinglian Rudolph Gwalther, with Coolhaes' original introductions. It was first published without Coolhaes' name, but with the acrostic pseudonym *C.C.V.M.I.D.H.G.*, meaning "Caspar Coolhaes van Menschen in Den Heere Ghebannen." He used this acrostic pseudonym in signing several of his works written immediately after his excommunication,

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1. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 41.

2. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 65.

3. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*. A reproduction of the title page of the 1611 edition can be found in Bostoen, *Hart voor Leiden*, 51. This work was first published in 1582, and then re-published in 1585 and in 1611.

perhaps to avoid trouble for the Leiden magistracy who were protecting him. Coolhaes says he has chosen this way to refer to himself, not out of shame, but because of “legal reasons.”<sup>4</sup> Since much of *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie* deals with the questions of church and state, it will be discussed again in Chapter 7, for a closer look at these topics. It should be noted, though, that Coolhaes had opposed excommunication as a form of Christian discipline in his earlier writings also – before he was excommunicated himself.

Coolhaes steadily continued his writing. In 1584,<sup>5</sup> three pamphlets were published: *Een christelijke vermaninghe* (Coolhaes dates it January 5, 1584, making it arguably the first of the three, unless of course the others were written at an earlier date and only published in that year), *Seeckere pointen*,<sup>6</sup> and *Toutzsteen*.<sup>7</sup> They have in common the topics of true apostolicity, hypocrisy, and the claims of various groups to be the true church. *Een christelijcke vermaninghe* is the shortest of the three. It is also the most impassioned and strongly-stated, the most Reformed and the most anti-Catholic. However, all three books are critical of all churches, regardless of confession.<sup>8</sup>

In 1585, the Leiden magistracy allowed his translations of Gwalther from the year before to be reprinted. Also, Coolhaes published *Conciliatio* (dated February 21, 1585), which is a strongly-worded theological argument against the decision of Middelburg, and an answer to the preachers’ *Cort eenvoudich verhael* from 1582. Coolhaes says that he wrote this book three years earlier, but hoped not to have to publish it. Nevertheless, since his situation had not improved, he was publishing it now at his own expense, and continued to hope that a

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4. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaning*, folio Eij.

5. It is interesting to note that “New-style” or Gregorian dating (abbreviated “n.s.”) was adopted by Holland in 1583. However, in Utrecht dating was “old-style” or according to the Julian calendar, until 1700. Gregorian is ten days ahead of Julian; see Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, xvii. We bring this up for the sake of completeness, but in fact this distinction does not clarify any difficulties or questions in Coolhaes’ works, although he sometimes specifies the date in *stylo novo*.

6. Caspar Coolhaes, *Seeckere pointen met die heylighe godtlicke schriftuur, ende vervolch vandien ghenomen: aenwisende het ghene, dat allen gheloovighen, bysonder doch den predicanten ende leeraren van allerhande partijen, soorten, ofte exertitie van religien, wel aen te mercken, ende tachtervolgen van nooden is: ende grootelijcks, soo wel tot gherustheyt van eens yeghelicken menschen conscientie, als tot tijdtlijcken vrede, soude mogen dienen* (N.p., 1584).

7. Caspar Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen tot een seecker proeve welcx in der waerheydt die apostolische, catholijcke, evangelische, gereformeerde reyne kercke sy. Allen leergierigen menschen, ten besten voor ooghen ghestelt, ende in handen ghegeven, door C.V.M.I.D.H.G* (N.p., 1584).

8. *Toutzsteen* contains much discussion about diversity, and will be discussed extensively in Chapter 9.

national synod would overturn his case.<sup>9</sup> He insisted in it that he did not contradict himself by signing the theses,<sup>10</sup> and wished the preachers would show him where they think he did.<sup>11</sup> It seems clear by this that Coolhaes was hoping for a return to the ministry. On the other hand, he wrote near the end of his life that during this period he had no thoughts about trying to regain the office of preacher, and was glad to serve the church by his writing. He would have given a great service to Satan, he says, if he had changed “parties,” or had tried to found his own church.<sup>12</sup>

### Reinventing himself

Coolhaes’ life changed dramatically after the decisions of Middelburg and Haarlem. Banned from the pulpit and the Lord’s Table, he learned a trade. He depended temporarily upon a continued salary from the city to support his large family and chronically ill wife. As he put it, God “allowed, in his grace” the Leiden magistracy to continue his salary.<sup>13</sup> This amounted to three hundred *guldens* (guilders) per year, and thirty *guldens* for house-hire, which he received while he learned a new way to support his family - the making of medicinal wines, “waters,” and oils with fire, instruments, spices, roots, herbs, flowers, and wines from the Rhineland, Spain and France. Thanks to the teaching of his neighbor in the Papengracht, the “impartial” Johannes Heurnius, whom we have mentioned earlier, Coolhaes learned to distill these wines, which, as he said, “serve the human body internally and externally.”<sup>14</sup> He spared no effort and worked day and night to learn his new trade.<sup>15</sup> His fellow Spiritualist Sebastian

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9. Caspar Coolhaes, *Conciliatio: dat is verghelijkinghe, van sekere punten der leere, ende disciplijn. Van C.C. gheschreven ende onderschreven, in diewelcke claerlijk is blijckende, met wat recht, die voornoemde C.C. in namen van allen kercken in Hollant gheexcommuniceert: ende met een wtghegheven boeck, van kettery ende der christelicker disciplijn verachtinghe, ghediffameert is worden* (Gouda: J. Tournay, 1585), folio Ciiijr.

10. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, folio Kiiijr.

11. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, folio Kiiijv.

12. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 163.

13. Rogge says that this was via Lodewijk van Treslong, on the condition that he would be quiet and obedient, and continually prepared to take up public ministry if requested to do so by the magistracy. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 2.

14. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 141.

15. Coolhaes’ distilling is mentioned in R. J. Forbes, *A Short History of the Art of Distillation: From the Beginnings up to the Death of Cellier Blumenthal* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 161.

Franck had turned to soap-making as a trade when he was expelled from Strassburg.<sup>16</sup> However, Franck did not enjoy the success with his business that Coolhaes did with distilling. Coolhaes also wrote two books dealing with the technicalities of the distilling process: *Van seeckere seer costelijke wateren*<sup>17</sup> and *Water-boecxken*.<sup>18</sup> They have no significant theological content, but are interesting because of the details of the distilling process described. In 1584, after two years of receiving a salary, in 1584 he was able to go to the City Hall and tell the magistracy that it was no longer needed. He reported proudly that since that time, he had received no payments from the Leiden magistracy, and also nothing from the States of Holland out of the funds of convents, despite his earlier monastic profession. However, it appears that payments were not discontinued until his reinstatement to the ministry in 1586.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Coolhaes was not a reliable narrator on this matter.

Along with his distilling, he continued to write and publish, disobeying the decrees of the Synods and the order of the States. This disobedience not only to religious but also civil authority he excused by quoting Acts 5:29: “We must obey God rather than men.” The support of the Leiden magistracy was crucial to him in the years after the excommunication, both in regard to the continuing salary and for the protection which they gave. As Coolhaes says, they refused to “play executioner” for the Synods, but instead “held their hand over him” and gave him the freedom to continue writing.<sup>20</sup> He and his family were able to remain

16. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 103-104.

17. Caspar Coolhaes, *Van seeckere seer costelijcke wateren diemen met recht soude mogen noemen aquae vitae: ende sommige wtgelesene olien den edelen en welruyckenden balsem olie, niet sonder redenen te vergelijken: der welcker cracht ende menichfoudige deuchden in dit boecxken cortelijc (wt den schriften sommiger hoogheleerden ende experten doctoren ende professoren der loffelijcker medecijnen, welcker naemen op dandere zijde deses blats verhaelt zijn) beschreven worden. Met eener voorreden des distilateurs vanden stercken ende bernenden smaeck deser wateren. De welckemet Gods hulpe cunstelijck digereert. circuleert oft subtilizeert ende distileert worden . tot Leyden op Rapenburch, al waer men die te coop vintom eenen redelijcken prijs, ten huysse van Casper Coelhaes* (Amsterdam: Barendt Adriaensz, 1588).

18. Caspar Coolhaes, *Water-boecxken: het welcke aenwijst, hoe men seeckere edele ende seer goede spiritus, aquae vitae compositae, wateren, cracht-wateren ende gedistilleerde olien, tot een yeder cranckheit ende ghebreken des menschen lichaems, die uyt kouden humoren ende catharen haren oorspronck hebben, so wel uytwendich als inwendich, met grooten nut sal moghen ghebruycken. Met een corte ende clare aenwijsing uyt des Heeren woort, hoe enn yeder selfs door Gods genade, achtervolgende het bevel des Heeren, veel ende verscheyden sware crankheit ende gebreken can voor-comen: sijn leven niet verkorten: een geruste conscientie behouden: ende ten laetsten vrolijck in den Heere soude moghen ontslapen. Door Casparum Coolhaes. By des welcken soon, Adolf Casparsz. Coolhaes, die voorghenoemde wateren na rechter const gedistilleert ende verkocht worden tot Amstelredam, in de Warmoesstraet, in den vergulden Mortier, by Sanct Olofs Poort* (Gouda, 1608).

19. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 2-3.



in their house and even expand it to include a shop which opened onto the Rapenburg. In that shop, they sold the medicinal and alcoholic “waters” which they distilled, as well as books. He does not mention anywhere that he and his family felt a sudden lowering of their social class as a result of becoming tradespeople. Perhaps his earlier contact with the magistrates allowed him to remain in touch with them. In short, if 1581-1582 was the “downfall” of Caspar Coolhaes,<sup>21</sup> one could say that, actually, he landed on his feet.

Continuing to incite

In 1583, Adrianus Saravia, the Calvinist Leiden University professor who at the request of the States had earlier debated Coornhert together with Arent Cornelisz in The Hague as a follow-up to the Leiden debate, got into a dispute with Coolhaes over his freer ideas about theology and discipline. The Leiden magistracy put a stop to it hurriedly.<sup>22</sup> However, much public opinion was in favor of restitution for Coolhaes to the public ministry. The magistracy discussed sending a statement of faith from Coolhaes to the Universities of Zurich and Basel to ask for their advice and, hopefully, support. Coolhaes corresponded with the Leiden magistracy in 1583 about other preachers who did not feel his views were wrong, including Herman Herberts of Gouda. He wanted to invite twenty or so impartial preachers to a meeting to examine his views, a meeting which would be open to the public and be judged by the magistrates. He called this attempt to bring about some reinstatement to the preaching ministry a simple and inexpensive plan;<sup>23</sup> however, it never came off. Again, in 1584, there was public discussion about Coolhaes’ restitution and rehabilitation, but the magistracy responded that they could do nothing so quickly.<sup>24</sup>

For the moment, the magistracy was able to protect him. However, his activities tried this protection of the magistrates sorely. At least twice, Coolhaes’ hospitality again caused

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20. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 161.

21. This is Gäbler’s term; see the title of: Gäbler, “Zur Verbreitung des Zwinglianismus in den Niederlanden und der Fall C.C.”

22. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 64.

23. The letters are reproduced in Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 42-43, one in a photograph of the original and one transcribed. He says that these documents are part of a file in the city archive, but despite the help of archive staff I have been unable to find them.

24. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 65.

scandal and upset. The first incident happened when the Coolhaes family still inhabited Rapenburg 22, that is, before 1583. Godefroy Hubertsz from Liège, who had been wanted by the States of Holland for counterfeiting gold coins, had been staying there. Apparently after three calls for his arrest, he was able to escape from the law. It was not discovered if Coolhaes had any real involvement with any criminal activity in the case.<sup>25</sup>

The second incident became known when, on March 8, 1584, Coolhaes' wife Grietje sold twenty copies of a work by the well-known anti-Trinitarian, Erasmus Johannes, out of their shop. Erasmus Johannes (Erasmus Janssens, c. 1540-96),<sup>26</sup> had been rector in Antwerp in 1576, but was made to resign by William of Orange due to his anti-Trinitarian teaching. In 1584, he published *Clara demonstratio Antichristum immediate post mortem apostolorum coepissi regnare in ecclesia Christi*, which caused so much controversy that he was forced to emigrate. It may have been that he stayed with Coolhaes on his way out of the country. He went to Poland and disputed with Faustus Socinus on November 29-30 of the same year, officially embraced Unitarian views, and lived to the end of his life in Budapest. Two hundred-twenty more copies of Johannes' books (perhaps including the aforementioned *Clara demonstratio Antichristum*, or the Dutch translation, *Clare bewijsinghe dat d'Antichrist terstondt...*, which came out in the same year), destined for sale, were found in Coolhaes' house. The Leiden magistracy let it pass. However, on May 24 of the same year, one hundred more suspicious books were seized from Coolhaes' house and brought to the City Hall. Burger points out that it is surely a sign of the favor in which Coolhaes was held by the magistracy, that they confiscated Johannes' books but left those written by Coolhaes alone.<sup>27</sup> He was known to be very hospitable to traveling preachers. He seems to have found Johannes to be a "brother," and as such worthy of his help.

Did Coolhaes agree with Johannes' developing anti-Trinitarianism? There is no proof of it from any of Coolhaes' writings. In fact, he held the Trinitarian Apostles' Creed (the

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25. Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, vol. 4, 352-53.

26. Philip Knijff, Sibbe Jan Visser, and Piet Visser, eds., *Bibliographia Sociniana: A Bibliographic Reference Tool for the Study of Dutch Socinianism and Antitrinitarianism* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), 26, 48-49; Martin Schmeisser, *Sozinianische Bekenntnisschriften: Der Rakower Katechismus des Valentin Schmalz (1608) und der sogenannte Soner-Katechismus* (Munich: Oldenbourg Akademieverlag, 2012), 40; "Janssens, Erasmus (Lat. Erasmus Johannes)," in *McClintock and Strong Biblical Cyclopedia*, [http://www.biblicalcyclopedia.com/J/janssens-erasmus-\(lat-erasmus-johannes\).html](http://www.biblicalcyclopedia.com/J/janssens-erasmus-(lat-erasmus-johannes).html) (accessed 27 January 2015).

27. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 44-46.

“Twelve Articles”) as part of his foundational doctrine,<sup>28</sup> which we will discuss at greater length later. He did not write about Erasmus Johannes, nor did he mention him or the incident in any of his writings.

Coolhaes’ desire to help and identify with the persecuted and with minority views, for the sake of diversity, seems to be operating here. However, the two rebels did have certain beliefs in common. Clearly Johannes believed that the spirit of Antichrist entered the church after the death of the Apostles, and worked in the synods, corrupting it. Coolhaes also believed that the church had declined after the time of the Apostles, and was against the authority of synods.<sup>29</sup> It seems likely that Coolhaes’ tolerance of radical viewpoints and their propagators, and his belief in their right to exist and have a voice, extended even to those with whom he had theological disagreements – especially if they were also at odds with the authorities.

### Tolerant Leiden

As a shelter for rebels, Leiden was in many ways an ideal place. Diversity of opinion could be found in Leiden; the magistrates tolerated it; this worked in Coolhaes’ favor. In 1584 Leiden was already a center for education and theology; it was becoming an important center for book-publishing. Lodewijk Elsevier had been there since 1580. Christoffel Plantijn published for the university till 1585. Leiden was also a congenial place for confessional non-conformists, including English publisher Thomas Basson, who had also lived for a time in Cologne. He came to Leiden in about 1584. Some of these, including Plantijn, Basson, and possibly Coolhaes’ neighbor Heurnius, seem to have had some connections with the “Family of Love,” the secretive religious group based on the teachings of Hendrik Niclaes. Somewhat later, Paulus de Kempenaer was another unusual figure - an irenic Reformed elder during the

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28. He also affirmed the clearly Trinitarian confession of earlier Frisian Anabaptists: Caspar Coolhaes, ed. *Summa, ende bekentnisse christelijcker leer der predicanten, die in Oost-Vrieslandt omtrent tachtentich iaren voorleden, openlijck ghepredickt ende gheleert hebbe: met een supplication der selven, aen den welgheboren en edelen heere, Heer Enno, te dier tijt zijnde grave en heer van Oost-Vrieslandt, van woorde tot woorde gevolgt het exemplaer, tot Embden ghedruckt Anno 1565. Met noch een schoone bekentnisse, schriftuerlijck inventeert, ende rethorijlijck ghecomponeert, by Johan Baptista Houvvart, consilier ende meester ordinaris van die reeckeninghen des hertichdoms van Brabandt, beschreven in zijn boek van de vier wtersten des meschen, ende anno 83 t’Antwerpen ghedruckt by Christoffel Plantijn* (N.p., 1603), A–F4b. See also his statement about the importance of the Holy Spirit, applying to the Spirit the pronoun “he,” in Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Bijr.

29. We will discuss this in more depth in Chapter 8.

tenure of Hackius in Leiden in the 1590's and 1600's, who was also syncretistic, interested in astrology, Kabalah, and alchemy, and may have been linked to Rosicrucianism.<sup>30</sup>

But toleration in Leiden and elsewhere could not be taken for granted. 1584 was the year of the violent death of William of Orange. To Coolhaes, he was not only the “father of the fatherland” and the highest secular ruler, but a defender of freedom of conscience and religious plurality. The Prince had earlier supported Coolhaes in his disagreement with Pieter Cornelisz. Coolhaes would certainly have been disheartened by the death of the Prince, as so many of his subjects undoubtedly were. Coolhaes and other broad-minded churchmen lost in him a defender. The Prince had desired religious freedom and had instituted his *godsdiensvrede*. Once again, one sees the split between the *libertatis causa* group and the *religionis causa* group, in terms of the goals of the Revolt. But Petrus Dathenus, for one, had been opposed to this degree of religious freedom. In this period, hate between the Reformed and the Roman Catholics had increased. Others, such as De Villiers, found instead that the polemicism and anti-Catholic rhetoric of Dathenus was inexcusable. Why, he wrote, should the church discipline men like Duifhuis and Coolhaes, but not Dathenus?<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, inside the Leiden Reformed Church, things were not peaceful, even without Coolhaes in the pulpit. Leiden preacher Petrus Hackius was in favor of a role for the secular government in church affairs. He irritated the consistory in various ways in the years 1584-1586, including his support of Coolhaes' writing,<sup>32</sup> but they were patient with him so as not to anger the magistrates. Adrianus Saravia was his co-preacher in the beginning; later, when Mattheus Platevoet had also come as preacher, Saravia was no longer one of the official preachers but did preach regularly along with his work as professor/rector at the university.<sup>33</sup> Coolhaes supported Hackius in his efforts. Helmichius wrote to Arent Cornelisz in 1583 that Coolhaes “incited” Hackius.<sup>34</sup> In 1584, Coolhaes wrote a seven-page letter to the preachers

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30. J. A. van Dorsten, *Thomas Basson 1555-1613, English Printer at Leiden* (Leiden: Sir Thomas Browne Institute, 1961), 10-25; Alastair Hamilton, “Paulus de Kempnaer, ‘non moindre Philosophique tresbon Escrivan,’” in *Quaerendo X* (1980), 293-335; C. C. de Bruin, “Radicaal spiritualisme te Leiden,” in *Rondom het Woord* 17 (1975), 66-81, spec. 73. See also: Alastair Hamilton, *The Family of Love* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co.), 1981, for a general introduction to the group.

31. Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 102-104.

32. Nijenhuis, *Saravia*, 81.

33. Nijenhuis, *Adrianus Saravia*, 55-57.

34. Nijenhuis, *Adrianus Saravia*, 81-82.

and elders in Leiden, causing the magistrates to wonder to Saravia if he could not be reconciled with the church. Later, when, as will be seen, Coolhaes was temporarily reinstated to the ministry while Hackius was suspended, Coolhaes wrote to the consistory to defend him. Coolhaes' wife was deputed to deliver the letter since Coolhaes himself refused to be present. Reconciliation was achieved in Saravia's home.<sup>35</sup>

### New hope

In August of 1585, Antwerp had fallen to the Spanish after a prolonged siege. Thousands of Calvinists fled to the North. Drama continued into 1586 concerning Coolhaes, with accusations that the Leiden magistrates had received sealed letters directing them to keep him in lifelong service.<sup>36</sup> But new hope of positive resolution in the Coolhaes matter arrived in the form of Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, who had been sent by Elizabeth of England in response to requests for help from the Dutch. He was a boon to the Calvinists but a threat to others who feared English control. Coolhaes was a very small point on Leicester's radar. The Earl of Leicester had come to the Netherlands along with advisors and soldiers – “court” and “camp.” This period was not only of military importance, but also allowed the meeting of humanistic scholars from both nations. The Earl and his people toured the country in a “progress,” and stayed in Leiden from January through March, 1586. Thereafter, they kept court in The Hague.<sup>37</sup>

A national Synod in The Hague began on June 20, 1586. Leicester as Governor General, allied with the stricter Reformed interests,<sup>38</sup> was keen to resolve outstanding ecclesiastical problems that were causing disunity.<sup>39</sup> Coolhaes was not an admirer of

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35. Nijenhuis, *Adrianus Saravia*, 82-85. See also Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 57, 117.

36. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Cijjr.

37. Van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors*, 106-18. For a map of where the Earl and various notables stayed in Leiden, see plate 5 (plate located between pages 108 and 109). For more about the Leicestrian period in the Netherlands, see also Harold John Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 109, and Van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons, and Professors*, 64-69, 78, 126-30, 168.

38. For more of the political background of Leicester's goals, see F. G. Oosterhoff, *Leicester and the Netherlands 1586-1587* (Utrecht: HES, 1988), 182-84.

39. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 180-81; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 111.

Leicester. The Earl “lit a fire” in all the places where he visited, he wrote, and one can see that he is “born of the flesh, not after God’s Word.”<sup>40</sup> Coolhaes, in fact, suspected his opponents of hoping to use Leicester to have him exiled. The orthodox preachers, on their side, were not happy that Coolhaes continued to speak out in print, and was being tacitly supported by the magistracy and the States. The magistrates, also, were not pleased that they had already that year been forced to question the city preachers about the suspicious presence in Leiden of other preachers whom they believed had kept the disputes alive.<sup>41</sup> Coolhaes’ views were not completely re-examined at the Synod. It was, however, insisted that Coolhaes affirm the Belgic Confession.<sup>42</sup> Article 16, about the doctrine of election, proved to be particularly troublesome, but Coolhaes was convinced to sign Article 16 on July 25, 1586.<sup>43</sup> Ironically, this synodal attention, motivated by the interest of strict Calvinist Leicester, led to a rescinding of the excommunication. Coolhaes was declared to be a member of the church and able to participate in the Lord’s Supper, and able to preach and teach after a six-month “suspension.”<sup>44</sup> Coolhaes was warned to refrain from advocating the doctrine of God’s grace to all people.<sup>45</sup> An additional requirement was that his books would have to be suppressed.<sup>46</sup> He was also asked during this time to attend lectures of theology at the university and to confer with the professors. So Coolhaes registered for lectures (*colleges*). The *Album academicum* lists Coolhaes enrolled as student in 1578 along with Pieter Cornelisz, and again in 1586, “both times probably to give an appearance of a reconciling spirit.”<sup>47</sup>

Sadly for him, Coolhaes’ rehabilitation was short-lived. Some short time after the Synod in The Hague in 1586, Coolhaes preached in Warmond. Perhaps the six months of

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40. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio Av.

41. The city preachers were Balc, Van de Wouwer and Hackius; the others were Platevoet and Van der Corput. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 66.

42. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 68. See also Rutgers, *Acta*, 536-89.

43. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 47.

44. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 163-66.

45. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 46-48.

46. Burger says (Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 47) that the Leiden city (now regional) archive has a copy of the proceedings of this conference. I have not found it.

47. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 131-32. Rieu, *Album studiosorum*, 2, 20.

probation were not up, or perhaps the problem was that he had not attended those theology classes at the university. In any event, he had been invited to preach twice in Warmond by its preacher Pieter van Oy and the Lady of Warmond, ostensibly because of Van Oy's age and sickness. He preached first on the text Romans 12:1, and the following Sunday on Romans 12:2-3. Afterwards he was visited by two Leiden elders to discipline him and forbid him access to communion until he would confess his guilt. The two elders claimed to come at the request of the consistory. Coolhaes relates details about these two elders which paint them in a very bad light: the one, Pieter Crutziger, apparently went bankrupt two weeks after this event, ruining others with him, and the other, Jacques Vallemaer (or Valmaer), was imprisoned three weeks later and executed for his alleged involvement in the "Leiden *coup*." This failed plot to seize Leiden and Amsterdam came to light on October 11, 1586, and Leicester and the English were discredited by it. They and Saravia soon left the Netherlands for England. Vallemaer's head, Coolhaes claims, was stuck up on the ramparts of the city as an example.<sup>48</sup> Regardless of the apparent bad character of these two, however, the consistory stood by their decision against Coolhaes. He was amazed to learn that the consistory did not think that anything he had preached in Warmond had been wrong; the error was that he had gone without the consent of the consistory and the Rhineland classis.<sup>49</sup> There is no record that Coolhaes ever preached again after this. In the Leiden church council *Acta*, there is evidence that he corresponded with the consistory in 1585 and 1587. It is noted there that on December 3, 1585, "another" letter was received from him (a note is made of November 26); on March 10, 1587 that Coolhaes had instructed his wife not to throw a certain letter "inside" (presumably, into the consistory chamber), but to give it to the sexton. Evidently she had indeed thrown it, and this was mentioned by way of an apology. Were these letters about the rehabilitation efforts, or protesting the renewed ban on preaching? Unfortunately, there is no other evidence.<sup>50</sup> Coolhaes ceased attending the *colleges* at the university after his rehabilitation attempt failed.<sup>51</sup>

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48. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 168-76. The whole story can be found in: W. Bisschop, *De woelingen der Leicestersche partij binnen Leiden, 1586 en 1587* (Leiden: Boekdrukkerij J. C. Drabbe, 1867), 49-74.

49. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 171.

50. De Wildt, *Ambt, doop en avondmaal*, 26, 37.

51. Bonger, *Leven en werk*, 102. For more small references from the point of view of the synods and classes about Coolhaes in the period 1583-89, see M. Kok, J. Roelevink and A. J. J. van 't Riet, eds., *Classicale*

However, at least distilling was going well for Coolhaes. In 1588, he published the aforementioned *Van seeckere seer costelijke wateren*, a distiller's *vademecum*.<sup>52</sup> This book catalogues many of the alcoholic and medicinal wines and "waters" which he had learned to distill. Although the book is not theological, it occasioned another flurry of controversy. He used the opportunity to write, to apologize for his change of profession, and to assert that he had been defrocked unlawfully. This caused conversations about him in synodal meetings, and reprimands followed.<sup>53</sup>

Coolhaes was proud of his new profession and skill, and related how his new knowledge helped him to overcome persistent colds which he had had for fourteen years, and enabled his wife (who suffered from various weaknesses and sicknesses) to recover her "earlier verve" despite her increasing age.<sup>54</sup> Until the late 1580's, he remained outspoken and productive in Leiden, raising his family and distilling both medicinal potions and theology.

## A peculiar shop

However, in the later part of the century, Coolhaes, his family, and his business relocated to Amsterdam.<sup>55</sup> Reasons behind the move are unknown. Perhaps things in Leiden were, after all, getting too tense for him. Perhaps Coolhaes was bitter that the Leiden magistracy had ultimately let him down.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps it was related to his distilling - twice in 1590, he petitioned the States to request freedom from tax for his "waters," but they were unable to

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*acta V, classis Leiden 1585-1620, classis Woerden, 1617-1620* (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1996), 4; P. H. A. M. Abels and A. P. F. Wouters, eds., *Classicale Acta 1573-1620 VII, Provinciale synode Zuid-Holland, Classis Delft en Delfland 1572-1620* (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 2001), 12, 26-27, 28-29, 38, 229.

52. This expression is from M. Wagenaar, "Een predikant-destillateur-arsenijmenger," *Pharmaceutisch Weekblad* 22 (1932): 592.

53. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 60-61.

54. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 54. Coolhaes mentions his own health again in his second distilling book, *Water-boecxken*, telling how he treats his "cold and damp." Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 57.

55. Burger says it was between August, 1590, and August, 1591. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 62. This is also the year in which Coornhert died. (There is no evidence that the two had any contact in Coornhert's final years.) However, the BWNZL, 167-68, says that the family moved to Amsterdam in 1587.

56. Cited in Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 43.



grant this, at least at first, as a safeguard against frauds or damage arising from his products.<sup>57</sup> In any event, they moved, and his Amsterdam distillery and shop were established “in the Gilded Mortar by St. Olof’s Gate”<sup>58</sup> in the Warmoesstraat – in the heart of the city, close to the Old Church.

It must have been a peculiar shop in the Warmoes Street at St. Olof’s Gate, where one could find benefit for both the body and soul – where healing waters and oils in little bottles stood ready, while edifying and at the same time satirical prints decorated the walls and windows.<sup>59</sup>

These prints were a new occupation of his. At about the same time as the move, Coolhaes started the production of woodcut prints with text, for the purpose of communicating simple religious lessons. He called them *Inventiones* or *Schilderijen*.<sup>60</sup> This sort of print is usually labeled *emblemata*, a genre of art and literature in which a picture is paired with a text, on religious or secular themes. When compiled, they form emblem books. *Emblemata* and emblem books were popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Italy, France and Germany, and developed into a true craze in the Netherlands.<sup>61</sup> Many in the sixteenth century were printed by Christoffel Plantijn.<sup>62</sup> Politically, “visual propaganda” had not been much used during the Dutch Revolt, but in Germany woodcut and broadsheets with pictures had been common since the 1520’s.<sup>63</sup> In the Netherlands, poems and *emblemata*

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57. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 50.

58. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 62. It is interesting to note that at this location on the corner of Warmoesstraat and Nieuwebrugsteeg, in present-day Amsterdam, there is a building dating from 1618-19, so the old gate building which Coolhaes would have known is no longer there. However, the location is still connected to strong drink. It houses an establishment, “Café In Den Olofpoort,” which specializes, according to its website, in over two hundred different domestic and imported spirits.

59. “Het moet in de Warmoesstraat bij St. Olofspoort wel een eigenaardige winkel geweest zijn, waar men baat kon vinden voor lichaam en ziel tegelijk, waar geneeskrachtige wateren en oliën in fleschjes klaar stonden, terwijl de stichtelijke en tegelijk min of meer satirieke prenten wanden en ramen sierden.” Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 66.

60. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 12.

61. For fascinating examples of many different emblem books, see “Emblem Project Utrecht,” <http://emblems.let.uu.nl> (accessed January 27, 2016). Also useful (although Coolhaes’ *emblemata* are not listed) is John Landwehr, *Emblem Books in the Low Countries, 1554-1949. A Bibliography* (Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1970).

62. Landwehr, *Emblem Books in the Low Countries*, ix.

were predominantly written on themes of courtly, romantic love (some blatantly erotic), or on religious piety. Some poets wrote both, such as the later Jan Luyken.<sup>64</sup> A comparison can be made with Coornhert who was also an engraver, and had produced engraved prints.

Coornhert's style was quite elaborate and extravagant, whereas the allegorical woodcuts accompanying Coolhaes' texts were much simpler in style.<sup>65</sup>

Coolhaes' *emblemata* were on strictly religious themes. He wrote the texts, and the woodcuts were done, probably, by Wilhelm Janszoon van Campen.<sup>66</sup> They were sold at fairs and markets,<sup>67</sup> and proved to be controversial, as they criticized preachers as well as emphasized heart religion as opposed to outward ceremonies and appearances. Coolhaes' first was *De mensch die eenvoudich is ende van ganser harten Godt suckt*, also known as *De weg met zijwegen* (1591).<sup>68</sup> Like the trope of the much later *Pilgrim's Progress* of John Bunyan (1679), this is a picture of a man going to a heavenly city, asking the way of people he passes, and in danger of being distracted by what is on his right and left. Another woodcut, *Van de twee aanbidders* (also called *De waerachtige ende valsche aenbidder Godts*) from 1591, was also very popular, contrasting the true and false worshippers of God.<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately, most of the rest of these woodcuts, which are mentioned in Coolhaes' works and by others, are non-extant. They are described in documents of the pamphlet-battle, such as Coolhaes'

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63. Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 169-70; Duke, *Reformation and Revolt*, 104-106. For more specific information on and reproductions of the prints which *did* appear during the Dutch Revolt, see Daniel R. Horst, "De Opstand in zwart-wit: Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand 1566-1584; Deel I en II: Propaganda en Prenten; Deel III: Catalogus en Afbeeldingen" (PhD diss., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2000).

64. For the poems of Luyken, see J. W. Schulte Nordholt, ed., *Ontmoeting met Jan Luyken* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1978).

65. Bonger, et al., *Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert: Dwars maar recht*, 115. For more about Coornhert, his prints, his time in Cologne, and his ideas, see also Ilja M. Veldman, "Keulen als toevluchtsoord voor Nederlandse kunstenaars (1567-1612)," *Oud Holland* 107 (1993): 38-40, and Ilja M. Veldman, *De wereld tussen goed en kwaad* (The Hague: SDU uitgeverij, 1990).

66. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 10-11.

67. According to Trigland, as quoted by Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 70.

68. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 10; also printed in Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 271. The original is: Caspar Coolhaes, *De mensch die eenvoudich is ende van ganser harten Godt suckt*, [Amsterdam]: Willem Janz van Campen, 1591.

69. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 71; Burger gives more information and reproduces the picture and some of the text; Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 15-19. The original is: Caspar Coolhaes, *De waerachtige ende valsche aenbidder Godts* [Amsterdam]: Willem Janz van Campen, 1591.

*Wederantwoort, Grontlicke waerheyt and Cort waerachtich verhael*. Cornelisz and Van der Corput also mention them in *Corte Antwoordt*.

Jacob Arminius was also in Amsterdam during this time, as a preacher, from 1588 to 1603. One wonders what sort of contact Coolhaes may have had with Arminius, if any. There is no record of this, but perhaps Coolhaes was a communicant again in these years, since even though he was not allowed to preach, it was not mentioned that he was excommunicated again after the Warmond incident. On the other hand, perhaps he attended the sermons but was not a communing member. In any case, it seems unlikely that he and Arminius would have had no relationship at all. Arminius and his fellow preacher, Petrus Plancius, had fallen into disagreement. This is not surprising; Plancius was a firm Calvinist and predestinarian who would oppose Arminius and would later be an important Contra-Remonstrant figure.

Coolhaes' move to Amsterdam, and the *emblemata* prints, were mentioned at the Synod in The Hague in August, 1591. The church of Leiden was directed to write to the church in Amsterdam and recommend an inspection and exhortation.<sup>70</sup> Presumably the exhortation concerned his books and prints, or perhaps he was also outspoken in general. Later in the same year, Coolhaes was visited by the preacher Plancius together with one of his elders, for a conversation on Coolhaes' views. The fact that Plancius visited him seems to show that he was still in the Reformed world and that he was seen as a responsibility of Plancius. Perhaps it was a disciplinary visit, associated with the question of Coolhaes' fitness to come to the Lord's Table, although that is only conjecture. Plancius would later be sent to investigate other objectionable activities; he came to Leiden in 1595 about Chamber of Rhetoric feasts.<sup>71</sup> In his visit to Coolhaes, Plancius was concerned about Coolhaes' theology and also about the distilling book.<sup>72</sup> A report was made from Amsterdam back to the next Synod, in Leiden, November 1592, saying that Coolhaes preferred not to speak to them, due to his age, but preferred to have their conversation in writing. This was a strange objection,

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70. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 61.

71. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 120; Pater, *Jan van Hout*, 118. Regarding Plancius' role with Coolhaes, see also R. B. Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: W. Ten Have, 1965), 172-75.

72. Michael A. Hakkenberg, "Plancius, Petrus," *OER*, vol. 3, 280.

considering he was only about fifty-seven. Perhaps it was just an excuse. They asked him if he considered the Reformed, visible Church to be the true church, and he answered, no.<sup>73</sup>

Defending himself: pamphlets and *hutspot*

Coolhaes defended himself, during the late nineties, in what came to be known as the “pamphlet battle.” The old Leiden controversies were re-publicized and both old and new accusations were leveled against Coolhaes, which he attempted to counter in print. For instance, the consistory of Deventer received a copy of Coolhaes’ *Apologia* on August 13, 1599, with the request to read it (presumably again, since it had been available since 1580) and give their judgment. No response from them is recorded.<sup>74</sup>

What was the cause of this renewed interest in Coolhaes and the Leiden affair? It is because Coolhaes was not quiet in his new location, but remained very outspoken, especially in print. The whole renewed controversy may have begun with the publication of Coolhaes’ *Aenwijsinge* (mentioned in *Aenhechtsel* as having been published in 1596, presumed non-extant), but certainly the re-issuing of Coornhert’s *Justificatie* and *Remonstrance* in 1597 would have further stoked the fire of controversy. *Remonstrance* was so popular that it was actually published in that year in three editions.<sup>75</sup> It is unknown why *Remonstrance* itself was so popular. In any case, people who may not have been old enough twenty years earlier in the 1580’s to be aware of Coolhaes’ case could now judge the whole debate for themselves. It can be assumed that there was enough opposition to the stricter Calvinists that the Coolhaes affair and Coornhert’s impassioned writing caught the attention of a new generation. But the stricter Calvinists did not keep silent. *Justificatie* caused a response to come in the form of a lengthy *Antwoorde op de valsche beschuldiginghen* (1598),<sup>76</sup> and the printing of an older

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73. The record is unclear and something has been left out; Burger explains it further. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 62-63.

74. Revius, *Licht op Deventer*, 96.

75. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 76.

76. The title page of this work is reproduced in Bostoan, *Hart voor Leiden*, 53.

anonymous work, *Verantwoordinghe van den dienaer, ouderlinghen ende diaconen der kercke tot Leyden*, which had been written to refute the *Justificatie* earlier but never printed.<sup>77</sup>

Coolhaes published his *Wederantwoort* in 1598 as his response to what he considered slander.<sup>78</sup> The book begins with a poem of thirty-six lines. Perhaps it is Coolhaes' own verse, although this is unclear. The book continues with the discussion of the slanderous writing which has been published about him by "one of the preachers." He finds it outrageous that his "brothers" should attack him. This slander is actually nothing more than "old spit" (*oude wtspoechsel*) mixed up like a mashed stew (a *hutspot*, as he calls it), and served up to the simple.<sup>79</sup> Recounting the Leiden controversy, he exhorts the preachers and elders with biblical passages, and cites the example of Zwingli, in response to Luther and his followers, to show that even disagreement over the Real Presence can coexist with "friendliness and politeness."<sup>80</sup>

Response to *Wederantwoort* came from the South Holland Synod in The Hague in 1599, which declared that anyone publishing the slanderous books of Coolhaes, or Coornhert's *Justificatie* and *Remonstrance*, would be censured by their classis. They also appointed Coolhaes' old opponents, Arent Cornelisz and Hendrik van der Corput, to write a response,<sup>81</sup> which was their *Corte antwoordt*, published in 1600.<sup>82</sup> These orthodox preachers charged that he had spread his writings and pictures through the country to the unrest of many

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77. *Verantwoordinghe van den dienaer, ouderlinghen ende diaconen, der kercke tot Leyden, eertijds naer het wt-gheven van de Justificatie ghestelt, ende nu door occasie van de vernieuwinghe, ende herdruckinghe der zelve Justificatie, int licht ghebracht*. There is no title page for this piece, which seems to have been printed and distributed together with the reprinted *Justificatie*. The author is unknown. See also: Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 76-77.

78. Caspar Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort Caspari Coolhaes op een faemroovende boexken sonder naem des authours onder eenen gedichten ende versierden naem van een verantwoordinghe des dienaers. oulingen [sic] ende diaconen der kercken tot Leyden, voor seventhien jaren tegen die Justificatie van Leyden geschreven, ende nu eerst tot Rotterdam gedrukt by Jan van Waesbergen int jaer 1598* (Rotterdam: Jan van Waesbergen, 1598).

79. Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, 28; Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 78.

80. Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, 18, Bv–Br.

81. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 79-80.

82. Arent Cornelisz (Crusius) and Hendrik van der Corput, *Corte antwoordt op de valsche beschuldighen end' blamerigen van Casper Coolhaes teghen de ghemeene kercken, begrepen in syn boecxken ghenaemt Wederantwoort : waer inne ooc vervatet is een corte aenwijsinge end' wederlegginge van dwalinghen, stekende inde boecxkens end' afbeeldinghen hier voren van Coolhaes uytghegheven, door Adr. Cornelisz van der Linden*. N. p., 1600.

of the pious.<sup>83</sup> They also took issue with his claim not to have chosen a party or sect. On the contrary, he was part of the biggest party of all – the *stilstaenders, speculeerders ende toekijckers* – “the silent, the speculators and the on-lookers”<sup>84</sup> who all wanted to establish a new “Catholic” Church: always seeking, but never finding, wanting only to sit at Christ’s feet like Mary. They are found in countless numbers, and must be counted.<sup>85</sup> Their reference is likely to the *toehoorders* or *liefhebbers*. In addition to criticism of Coolhaes, the two preachers wrote about Sebastian Franck’s *Apologia*, which Coolhaes was translating.<sup>86</sup> “Franck was not pure, and Coolhaes dirties himself with Franck, with whom it is well-known that he agrees.”<sup>87</sup>

Coolhaes responded by publishing *Grondlicke waerheydt*,<sup>88</sup> which Burger calls Coolhaes’ “confession of faith.”<sup>89</sup> Coolhaes himself, who begins the book by listing many of his works to date, calls it his “fifth apology” (after but in the same category, as he explains, as *Apologia, Breeder bericht, Conciliatio, and Wederantwoort*).<sup>90</sup> The verse included on the title

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83. Cornelisz and Van der Corput, *Corte antwoordt*, 75; Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 83.

84. Cited by Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 72. For more about the difficulty of determining who belonged to this amorphous group, see Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 68-69.

85. “... die altoos soecken, maer nemmermeer vinden.... Dese Stilhouders, ende die haer uytgheven dates alleen aende voeten des Heeren Christi met Maria begheeren te zitten, zijnder huydendaeghs in ontallijcker grooternighte, God better: Maer zy moeten al mede voor een partye gerekent worden.” Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 83-84; Cornelisz and Van der Corput, *Corte antwoordt*, 73.

86. We will address this work extensively in Chapter 9.

87. “Franc niet zuyver en is gheweest, ende dat Coolhaes hem selven vuyl maect met Francken, met wien hy rondelijc bekent in een ghevoelen (te weten, gheheel onpartydich) te staen.” Cornelisz and Van der Corput, *Corte antwoordt*, 45-56; Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 82-83.

88. Caspar Coolhaes, *Grontlicke waerheydt op het min dan waerachtich schrijven van eenen, schuytlende onder t’decksel van die gereformeerde kercke, sonder ontdeckinghe zijns naems teghens die Wederantwoort Caspari Coolhasen* ([Amsterdam]: Peeter Gevaertsz, 1600). Initial attempts in 2011 to find this book in Rotterdam and elsewhere were unsuccessful. I feared it was no longer extant. However, I noticed in August, 2015, that an entry for it had appeared in the Universal Short Title Catalog, where it had not been before. Dr. A. H. van der Laan, curator at the Erasmus Center for Early Modern Studies, Bibliotheek Rotterdam, was then able to find the physical copy. He wrote, “Inderdaad hebben wij dit boek in beheer als bruikleen van de Remonstrantse Gemeenschap Rotterdam. Omdat het niet ons eigen bezit is, hebben we dit boek nog niet beschreven in onze online catalogus. Het boek is het zevende onderdeel van een convoluut (signatuur Erasmuszaal 29 E 2) dat ooit deel uitmaakte van de bibliotheek van Johannes Vvtenbogaert, die overigens geen sporen in het boek heeft nagelaten.” E-mail to author, 14 August 2015.

89. “Het geschrift ‘Grondelijke waerheydt’ van 1600, bevat wat men zijn geloofsbelijdenis zou kunnen noemen.” J. Reitsma en Lindeboom, *Johannes Geschiedenis van de Hervorming en de Hervormde Kerk der Nederlanden* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1948), 173.

page is 2 Timothy 3:8, which mentions the two men Jannes and Jambres, who stood against Moses and were publicly exposed. Since Moses for Coolhaes is a symbol for the secular government, who should guide the church in place of the clergy, this is a clear message of his derision for the preachers who have been writing against him in the “pamphlet war,” and a prediction of their eventual downfall. In this book, Coolhaes takes a tone which is frustrated and even angry. He responds in detail to accusations from his detractors, often quoting passages out of their writings before giving his defense. They accused him of false teaching and godlessness in 1579, which he is still anxious to disprove. They were the ones who sent his writings throughout the country, not he.<sup>91</sup> But the main problem, he goes on, is that he will not agree that their church is the one true church.<sup>92</sup>

Some of Coolhaes’ other works from this period appear to be non-extant; for instance, *Van eenen mensche in twijffel staende*, 1596 (mentioned in *Aenhechtsel*, 1602), and *Naespeuringhe*, 1597 (mentioned in *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 1610). Arent Cornelisz and Van der Corput did not respond again, but a schoolmaster in Naarden made up a slanderous song which Coolhaes answered with *Vermaninge aen Jaques Mercijs*, 1601.<sup>93</sup>

Petrus Plancius, meanwhile, had brought a complaint regarding Coolhaes and his continued writing to Leiden in 1600. He felt that Coolhaes, even after long years in Amsterdam, was persisting in his wrong opinions and acting very party-spiritedly against the church. In his opinion, the South Holland churches were the ones which should proceed against him. Amsterdam had been obligated to have him, not as a preacher but as a private person. He had been exhorted to no avail, he remained obstinate, so he should be excommunicated - because if he was tolerated too long, the true Christian Reformed religion would be mocked.<sup>94</sup> His complaint is yet more proof that Coolhaes remained in the orbit of the Reformed world as a member or *liefhebber* during these years.

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90. Coolhaes, *Grondlicke waerheyt*, Bijv.

91. Coolhaes, *Grondlicke waerheyt*, Bjr.

92. Coolhaes, *Grondlicke waerheyt*, 102.

93. Also assumed non-extant, but discussed by Burger. Burger was published in 1915 but no trace of some of the works he mentions can be found today. Perhaps, like *Grondlicke waerheyt*, they will eventually be relocated as part of a *convoluut* as described above. *Vermaninge aen Jaques Mercijs* is mentioned in Coolhaes, *Een noodwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, Eb.

94. *Acta III*, 153; Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 85-86.

At the Amsterdam Synod in 1601, the delegates discussed Coolhaes' book *Grondlijke waerheyt*. A strong statement was made in Gouda in August 1601, saying that even though a certain D. Halsbergius had talked to Coolhaes without much fruit, the procedure begun against him in South Holland was improper and should be overturned. Evidently by this point Coolhaes had not stopped attending church. It was reported that he said that he differed in opinion and thus was not coming to listen to sermons because, first, the preachers from the pulpit slandered others. In particular, they slandered those whom they have not heard and whose books they have never read, such as "Menonists" and Arians. Second, the preachers taught erroneously about predestination. Third, he did not need the sermon - he understood all things better than the preachers themselves. When asked about his books and prints and what he wrote about Franck in the foreword to his translation of the *Apology*, which is a section of Franck's *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, he said that the preachers did not understand either Franck or his own books and prints. The Synod weighed this and decided that Wernerus Helmichius, Casparus Grevinckhovius, and another preacher from the Amsterdam church, who remained unnamed, would further exhort Coolhaes to recant his views and books. If he did not, excommunication would proceed without further writings to answer his books. The Synod wished this to be done in the Amsterdam church, since he had been living, writing and publishing his books in Amsterdam all this time, and then to be publicized in churches in South Holland.<sup>95</sup> Obviously, Coolhaes and his activities were an embarrassment to them.

However, their attempts did not lead to anything. Over the next few years, synods kept calling for his excommunication, but in 1604, at the Synod in Emden, it was reported that the church in Amsterdam opposed his excommunication, and that therefore it would be very difficult. It was put off again.<sup>96</sup> Much of the difficulty was in regard to the question of whether the responsibility belonged to North Holland or South Holland. It was finally decided in Rotterdam (1605) to put off any resolution until the next national synod. Excommunicating Coolhaes again probably seemed less urgent at that moment, since the pamphlet battle had slowed down.<sup>97</sup>

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95. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 87-88, from *Acta III*, 168.

96. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 89, from *Acta I*, 363, and *III*, 214.

97. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 90-91.



## Chapter 5: Mature preoccupations

Coolhaes occupied himself with several causes throughout the years of his maturity, even while he continued his distilling and then eventually turned the business over to his son. He translated and defended Sebastian Franck, the German Spiritualist. He advocated toleration of Mennonites. In a fictitious work, he painted some Catholics in a positive light, while at the same time, in non-fiction, combated what he perceived as residual Catholic superstitious practices in society. He also rebuked Arminius and Gomarus over their conflict at Leiden University. These interests consumed him intensely. We will look in greater depth at each of these “preoccupations” by examining his writings on each cause.

### Sebastian Franck *via* Coolhaes

The ideas of Sebastian Franck were well-known in the Netherlands. Franck was a major influence on such figures as Coornhert.<sup>1</sup> Two books which defend Franck are linked to Coolhaes. For the first, his authorship is not at all certain. The second, however, is surely written by Coolhaes. We will explore this below.

Since this dissertation’s main topic is Coolhaes’ ecclesiology, and since the foundation of that ecclesiology is, in our opinion, his Spiritualism, and since, furthermore, he was inspired a great deal by Franck in that Spiritualism, a more pointed discussion of Franck will come later under the heading of ecclesiology in Part II, Chapter 6. As well, Franck’s inspiration on Coolhaes in regards to tolerance and diversity will also be addressed in Part II, Chapter 9. However, this biographical sketch would be incomplete if we did not deal on a basic level with the interest that Coolhaes had in defending the late Franck at this point in his life, and introduce the works Coolhaes wrote at this time.

To begin with, it is clear that Coolhaes was inspired by the ideas of Franck on several levels. One of these levels was that of ecclesiastical diversity. For example, Franck deplored the lack of unity, the many sects, in Christendom. He believed that only “... the free, non-

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1. Horst Weigelt, *Sebastian Franck und die lutherische Reformation* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 1972), 68-69. See also Cornelis Augustijn and Theo Parmentier, “Sebastian Franck in den nörderlichen Niederlanden 1550 bis 1600,” in Müller, *Sebastian Franck (1499-1542)*, 303-18; H. Bongers and A. J. Gelderblom, “Coornhert en Sebastian Franck,” *De zeventiende eeuw* 12 (1996), 321-39.

sectarian, impartial Christendom, that is bound to no thing, but stands free in spirit on God's Word and can be grasped and seen with faith, not with the eyes, is of God."<sup>2</sup> Also, Franck, as most other Spiritualists, talked about the need to go "from the outer to the inner, from flesh to spirit...."<sup>3</sup> Coolhaes was equally absorbed with these issues, and was surely inspired by reading Franck's works.

One very significant difference can easily be seen between the two, however. Coolhaes did not agree with Franck about interpretation of Scripture. Franck's hermeneutic is based on the idea that Scripture appears contradictory to anyone not enlightened by the Spirit. In this he can be traced to Hans Denck, who in turn may have been influenced in this method of scriptural analysis by Karlstadt, Müntzer or Tauler. Denck had earlier collected forty pairs of supposedly contradictory quotations from the Bible in his *Wer die warheit/warlich lieb hat* (1526). Franck's method was clearly inspired by this. Then, Franck also drew inspiration from Luther's Heidelberg disputations (1518) and from Erasmus' *De Libero Arbitrio* (1524): Luther and Erasmus' ideas "cleared away space' within which Franck could "reconstruct his world view."<sup>4</sup> Franck's ideas developed further when a certain Andreas Althamer, a student of Luther, intending to disprove Denck, asked Franck to translate, from Latin to German, scriptural passages which gave another interpretation to Denck's original quotes. At that time, Franck was still focused on the words of the written Bible, but became convinced, based on Denck's method, to focus on the words less.<sup>5</sup> Denck's intention was not to denigrate the written Scripture, but to point readers to the Spirit, who would then enable the true seeker to understand the true meaning of a passage rather than to misread it.<sup>6</sup> However, Franck took this to a new level. In Franck's view, any spiritual writings, including the Bible, had the potential to impact people in an untrue way, "because the truth could simply not be captured by the spoken or written word."<sup>7</sup> "All Franck had to do [was] accentuate a bit more the role

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2. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 119.

3. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 39, 166.

4. Weigelt, *Sebastian Franck und die lutherische Reformation*, 15-16; Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 28-30.

5. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 15.

6. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 11-17; Weigelt, *Sebastian Franck und die lutherische Reformation*, 13-18.

7. McLaughlin, "Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld: two Spiritualist *Viae*," 76.

of God's Spirit in the understanding of his Word, and the Word would come loose from the physical word of the Bible and settle directly in peoples' hearts."<sup>8</sup> Franck went on to a method of expounding two contradictory interpretations of single scriptural passages.

Coolhaes, who longed for freedom and diversity, could not resist defending Franck, but did not go all the way with Franck's ideas. Coolhaes never "came loose" from the physical word of the Bible in his thinking. He quoted the Bible frequently, but without Franck's sense of irony or double-meaning, or believing that in so doing he is making a strong argument for his point of view. Coolhaes used a traditional hermeneutic which looked for one truth in the passages he quoted. As well, he expected these unidirectional arguments to be met by equally uncomplicated arguments from his opponents, and for the truth to emerge from this process of dialogue. Although he disagreed with the interpretation of his opponents, he expected them to engage him in the discussion of which interpretation was the correct one. He did not doubt that one correct interpretation existed.

At the same time, perhaps inconsistently, Coolhaes did not want to label any view as "heretical," but still considered some views less correct than others. This can be seen in his use of the well-known Franckist metaphor of flowers, bees and spiders in his own *Apologia* (1580): drawing on the belief, popularly accepted at that time, that the flower is used by bees to make honey but by spiders to make poison. Even so can the Bible be used by "heretics" to lead people astray, as well as by godly teachers to show them the right way.<sup>9</sup> Even earlier, in his "Glaubensbekenntniss" (1571), Coolhaes used a simile that resembles this: when people listen to God's Word, the Word is like water; fish can swim in water, but people drown in it.<sup>10</sup> But Coolhaes did not mean, as Franck did, that some people take the Bible and make something toxic out of it through their interpretation. Coolhaes meant by referencing the bees and spiders that any and all diversity of interpretation may exist and is part of the visible church. Even so, in his view some of the beliefs which are present in the visible church are in fact toxic, and some misguided or evil teachers are like the spiders. In comparing the Word to water, he is not employing the same hermeneutic as Franck would, but instead saying something similar to Paul's statement (2 Corinthians 2:16) that the same fragrance brings

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8. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 17.

9. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, 102Ccijr.

10. Coolhaes, "Glaubensbekenntniss," 7v.

death to some and life to others – in other words, some people are being saved while others are perishing. It is a much more orthodox way of thinking than that of Franck.

Still, despite this difference in hermeneutic, Coolhaes admired and rushed to the defense of the late Franck. Philips van Marnix, lord of St. Aldegonde, diplomat, writer, and associate of William of Orange, had written in 1595 against certain theologians and *geest-drijvers* (fanatics), various Mennonites and Spiritualists, and advocated punishment of such elements by the secular government.<sup>11</sup> Marnix accused them all of allegorizing in a devious way for their own rebellious ends, and over-emphasizing the role of subjective Spirit-leading, which resulted in the loss of piety and godliness.<sup>12</sup> Coolhaes, while he would have agreed that any punishment should be in the hands of the secular government and not the church, objected to Marnix' inclusion of fellow-Germans Sebastian Franck and Johannes Tauler in this list, which included extremists such as the Münsterites and David Joris. He wrote that he was compelled to respond in order “to be useful to my fatherland” and wanted to defend Franck especially, who “could not defend himself.”<sup>13</sup> Marnix wrote back defensively that it certainly was true that Franck thought of Jesus only as an example of the internal Christ.<sup>14</sup>

A year later in 1596, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*<sup>15</sup> was published. This is a work which has been associated with Coolhaes, but whose authorship is disputed. Rogge believes that it is written by Coolhaes. Burger does not; it is a “higher style” than Coolhaes uses, and it shows a fuller familiarity with Franck's works than Coolhaes supposedly had. Burger believes it might be by Cornelis Wiggertsz. Van Dooren agrees with Burger, saying that the work is not in the style of Coolhaes, nor does the motto on the inside of the title page (*Leeft altijd vroom*, “Always live piously”) reflect Coolhaes. He reports that some posit that a Franckish party existed and that the acrostic refers to several authors: CC would be for Coolhaes, W for Wiggers, H for Herbertsz, and S for Tako Sijbrants. However, Van Dooren

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11. F. E. Beemon, “Marnix van Saint Aldegonde, Philip,” *OER*, vol. 3, 14.

12. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 72.

13. “*tot nut mijns vaderlands.*” Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 74.

14. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 73-78.

15. Caspar Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck, jegens de onwaerachtighe beschuldiginghe, hem (onder meer andere) nu langhe jaren near zijn doot, opghedict, by Philips van Marnix, heere van St. Aldegonde, in zijn boecxken, ghenaemt, Ondersoekinghe ende grondelijcke wederlegginghe vande gheest-drytsche leer. Met naeck bewijs. Dat de wtghegeven schriften van Sebastiaen Franck niet en stricken tot oproer tethen de overheyden: noch tot wechneminghe van het wroegen der conscientien: nochte oock tot verachinghe der h. bybelsche schrift* (Rotterdam: D. Mullem 1596/1598).

concludes, Coolhaes has said he would not belong to any party, so it is unlikely he would belong secretly to a Franckish one.<sup>16</sup>

Our view is that the vocabulary and style are not the same as Coolhaes', and that it was likely written by a contemporary of his. However, since some of the content is similar to Coolhaes' ideas, and some scholars believe that Coolhaes is the author, we will look at it briefly. *Verantwoordinghe* begins with a sonnet<sup>17</sup> in which the author encourages the poor, unlearned and pious to disregard the criticism of the learned against them, to sorrow over their sins, be subject to the government, and just to keep living piously. A dedication follows the sonnet, which is addressed to the States General of the United Netherlands, hoping that they will not allow a new inquisition now that the Netherlands is experiencing religious freedom. This sort of policy, the author continues, which lost the king of Spain his lands, could never work here.<sup>18</sup> The author continues: Justus Lipsius, who had written that the Reformed were rebellious to the king of Spain, left discredited.<sup>19</sup> And now the lord of Aldegonde, who knows personally how bitter it is to be forced in his Reformed conscience, wants to punish others.<sup>20</sup> Marnix attacks the thought of Tauler (whom the author says he would not defend in everything, but is so simple that he would never cause disturbances), and Franck. Marnix should remember the old motto, *Audi alteram partem*. This phrase might point to Coolhaes, as it is one of his favorite expressions, it is used for example in *Apologia*, although it is by no means unique to him. Then comes a foreword to the reader. The author says that upon reading Marnix' book, he was alarmed and re-read all the books of Franck he had read previously, to see if those awful things which Marnix mentions were there. He found human errors in Franck's work, but nothing of the magnitude of Marnix' accusations.<sup>21</sup>

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16. "Dat Coolhaes in Francks gevoelen deelde omtrent de punten waarop deze door Marnix was aangevallen, en die hij in dit boek door Achitob en Clemens laat verdedigen, is zeker niet te betwijfelen. Hieruit af te leiden dat hij in alle opzigten een aanhanger van Franck was, zou zeker te gewaagd en ook moeilijk te bewijzen zijn." Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, II, 89-90. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 71-75. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg* 183-84.

17. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, Aib.

18. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, A2-A2b.

19. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, A4-A4b.

20. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, A5.

21. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, A8.

Then follows the main part of the book – a conversation between two (fictional) men, Achitob<sup>22</sup> and Balac,<sup>23</sup> who are traveling. Achitob notices that Balac is reading Marnix’ book. Balac, interested in the book, says that it describes many libertines such as Tauler, Franck, Joris, Niclaes, Müntzer, Jan van Leyden, and their heresies – that they all use double meanings and dark allegories. Under cover of spirituality and high-sounding words like a “spiritual Christ” and divinization (“godded,” or *vergoddighe*) they turn the whole teaching of Christ into a spiritual allegory, denying God, Christ, eternal life and resurrection, and teaching that people only have to conquer their conscience and fulfill their heart’s desires. Whatever one thinks or does, that is the free Spirit of God. These people are all similar to those of the Münster uprising and will lead to more of the same.<sup>24</sup> Achitob is not at all convinced, saying he has read Franck more than the others and Franck is not like that.<sup>25</sup> The two discuss the issues Marnix raises, along with another man named Clemens, and meet later to continue the discussion. They list fourteen books Franck has written, and critique Marnix’ assessment of Franck using points from several.<sup>26</sup> They conclude the discussion by quoting the Reformers and Erasmus.<sup>27</sup>

As mentioned above, this author’s view, based partly on differences in this book from Coolhaes’ other works, and an admittedly subjective feeling that it is not written in his style, is that it was written by another contemporary defender of Franck. The book does not seem to me to contain enough theological content to have been written by Coolhaes. Further, the author discusses Erasmus, which is not typical of Coolhaes. Also, the author lists himself as C.C.W.H.S., not an abbreviation used by Coolhaes elsewhere. Furthermore, Coolhaes never mentions this book in any of his others. This author also does not mention Coolhaes’ work, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck* (see below), or its contents. Nevertheless, it might be possible that the book is indeed by Coolhaes. It should be noted that even if Coolhaes is in fact the

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22. Achitob is a name from 1 Esdras 8:2 – a descendant of Aaron the chief priest.

23. Balac, or Balak, was a king of Moab, and was involved with the teachings of Balaam and with idol-worship (Numbers 22:4; Joshua 24:9; Judges 11:25; Revelation 2:14).

24. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, B2-3.

25. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, C3.

26. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, D6r.

27. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, F-G.

author of this *Verantwoordinghe*, this does not necessarily mean that he agreed with Franck completely or even in most areas, as alleged by some, notably Kamphuis.

On the other hand, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*,<sup>28</sup> which appeared in 1598, is Coolhaes' without doubt, even as it contains a translation of Franck. Coolhaes mentions this *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck* in his *Wederantwoort*, where he says that he published the translation to refute Marnix. The publication of Franck's work brought Coolhaes under renewed fire by the "orthodox majority."<sup>29</sup> It contains a short preface to the reader (four pages, dated December 31) and then his translation of Franck's *Apologia*, which is the last section of Franck's book *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*.<sup>30</sup> Surprisingly, the translation which Coolhaes made of this work of Franck's is a great deal longer than the original. The "translation" is fifty-three pages (not counting the four pages of introduction) compared to Franck's original eight pages. In fact, Coolhaes did not just translate – he commented upon the original text extensively, perhaps adding passages from other works of Franck into the text of the *Apologia*.<sup>31</sup> He expanded and embellished what Franck

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28. Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck; De welke hy zelfs in synen leven gheschreven: ende achter syn boec van den seven zegelen: tot defensie van syn persoon ende schrijften, heeft doen drucken. Nu eerst in Nederduytisch over gheset door Caspar Coolhaes* (N. p., 1598). See also discussion of this book in Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 25-26, 71-75. Note: The introduction exists, in photocopied form, at the University of Amsterdam library. Their catalog online lists the whole work, although they do not in fact have it. The whole work is only to be found in CBR, Erasmuszaal Erasmuscollectie (Erasmuszaal) Rem.Gem. 29 E 2. The author is listed as Sebastian Franck. I am deeply indebted to Prof. dr. Hans Trapman for locating this book for me there.

29. "Met deze uitgaaf van een werk van Franck die juist door Marnix zelve voor een verderfelijck geestdrijver verklaard was, en met de openhartige verzekering dat hij het met Franck eens was, en niemand om verschil van geloof wilden verdoemen, stelde Coolhaes zich op nieuw openlijk tegenover de rechtzinnige meerderheid." Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 75. See Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, 114.

30. Sebastian Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln Verschlossen Büch, das recht niemandt auffthun, verstehen, oder laesen kan dann das lamb, und die mit dem Thaw bezeichne, das lamb angehören, sampt einer Vorred von den siben Sigeln, was sie seyen, und wie die auffthun werden. Zu letst ein klein einlaiting und anweysung in die Heylige Schrift, wie man sich in Mosen richten, die Propheten laesen, und Christum das Buch dess lebens verstehen soll, allen schuleren Christi, zur Christlichen vbung, vnd Götlichen räterschaftt, von Sebastian Francken fürgestellt. 1539. Facsimile reprinted Frankfurt/Main, 1975. For an admiring look at this work and at Franck in general, see Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1914)], 10-11, 26-30.*

31. An example: Franck writes, "Ich acht aber das sich der frey hailig gaist (freihait mit sich bringt und geburt waer ist) nit also in ein boctshorn werden lassen zwingen, und ann gewiss regelmenschlicher ordnung und glosslassen binden, das es also und also muss lauten, wie ein jeder fürhat." Coolhaes translates and expands, "Maer ick houde het voor zeeker dat die vrije H. Gheest (die welke rechte Christelijcke vrijheyt met hem brengt ende baert waer hy is) hem niet en laet bedwinghen, in een hoorn van eenen Boeck, ofte in ander diergelijcken plaetsen: ende dat hy hem niet binden laet, aen zeeckere menschelicke ordinantien, ende wtleggingen der heyligher goddelijcker Schriftueren, dattet juist dus, ofte zoo zoude moeten te verstaen zijn,

said. Sometimes he also noted, “As I wrote in the *Ark*, the *Paradoxa*, the *Chronijck*, the *Wereltboec*,” as though Franck were speaking of his other works, and adding things which are not in the original. He added many more pages of Bible passages with explanations. Coolhaes also brought in the “school of the Holy Spirit and the Cross”<sup>32</sup> and his categories of *Jongeren* (youths), *Jongheren* (young men), and *Christen*, which are levels of maturity in that “school,”<sup>33</sup> which, as far as I have determined, is his own invention (although, as we have said, doubtless based on other writers’ similar ideas of levels of spiritual maturity).

Coolhaes begins his foreword by stating that he has read very little by Franck, as he has also read very little of other authors and theologians, because he would rather go directly to the fountain of Holy Scripture than to commentaries or explanations. This may well be a tactical statement, or one prompted by polite diffidence, especially given his expansion of the translation. However, he admits he has nevertheless read some books by Franck, and can easily see and understand the latter’s meaning - that Franck is totally impartial to everyone, condemning no one.<sup>34</sup> However, everyone must judge for themselves by reading Franck’s own *Apologia*, to see that he is impartial, peaceful and in no way like the Münster trouble-makers. He was not unchristian; his works were not poison. Coolhaes thinks that he has reason to hope that Franck is with the Lord.<sup>35</sup> We can see with Franck, Coolhaes says, that God is no respecter of persons;<sup>36</sup> that in all people, languages and nations all those who fear God and do righteousness are pleasing to him, and that we may embrace and love all God-fearing people as brothers and sisters in Christ.<sup>37</sup>

Coolhaes’ “translation” of Franck’s *Apologia* follows this forward. Since it is the final section of Franck’s *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Buch* (often shortened in English to *The Seven-sealed Book*), it is useful to make a few observations about that work

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gelijck elck bysonder wil, dat men het zoude moeten verstaen, ende niet anders.” Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, Aviiiv.

32. Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, Biiijr. For another place Coolhaes talks about this “school,” see Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 69 Sr–70 Siiv. We also address it in detail in Chapter 8.

33. Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, folio BViv

34. Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, folio Aijv.

35. Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, folio Aijbv.

36. This idea comes from Acts 10:34 and Rom. 2:11.

37. Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, folio Aiiijv.



as a whole. *The Seven-sealed Book* is an enormous volume (more than 800 pages) made up mostly of Scripture quotes arranged by topic. Franck's point throughout this collection of quotes is that the Bible is a mysterious book whose meaning is sealed.<sup>38</sup> The picture on the title page is of a large book on a stand, with seven round seals hanging from it, and a man who resembles a magician with a peaked hat and beard blindfolded before it, pointing towards it with his right hand.<sup>39</sup> Each theological/biblical topic introduced by Franck, has a selection of passages first for and then against it. He labels these *Schriftt*, which are passages supporting the topic, and *Gegenschriftt*, which are passages opposing it. To cite just a few examples: *Schriftt*: Aaron and Moses are holy, pious servants [with supporting verses about their obedience]. Then, *Gegenschriftt*: Aaron and Moses are unbelieving [verses citing their sins].<sup>40</sup> Another example: *Schriftt*: Jerusalem is the beloved city of God [verses praising it]; *Gegenschriftt*: Jerusalem must fall [prophecies of its judgment].<sup>41</sup> There are hundreds of other topics addressed in this way.

Of all of the many verses and metaphors Franck uses in this book, Coolhaes draws on only a very few in any of his works. The most important to Coolhaes is that Franck gives verses to defend that God is impartial,<sup>42</sup> and in a very long section gives the scriptural defense and refutation of free will.<sup>43</sup> Whenever Coolhaes mentions Franck, this is what he emphasizes. Also, Moses and Aaron, as we will see, are important to Coolhaes because for him they represent the secular and ecclesiastical governments. Jerusalem is the symbol of the invisible church. However Coolhaes does not say that they are both godly and ungodly. He does not say that Jerusalem will fall, but on the contrary, that it will endure forever.

Several more important arguments can be made against more significant influence on Coolhaes by Franck based on this book, despite the inspiration he draws from it about God's

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38. This is a reference to Rev. 5:1-14.

39. See also Klaus Kaczerowsky, *Sebastian Franck Bibliographie* (Wiesbaden: Guido Pressler, 1976), 110-11.

40. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, page V; this is the page after Aiiiijb; the page numbering is very irregular.

41. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, Dr-Dijv; also CCCLIII-CCCLXIIb. For more discussion on this work, see Hayden-Roy. *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 182-83.

42. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, XVIIIb.

43. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, P-S (37 pages).

impartiality. First, as I pointed out earlier, Coolhaes never uses Scripture against itself in this way. He does not argue both sides of an issue. There are no works in his corpus in which he uses this kind of hermeneutical approach. On the other hand, all of Franck's work is in the tradition of the *via negativa*; God is not to be apprehended. Franck continually gives evidence for the insufficiency and incapability of the human languages to express theological truth.<sup>44</sup> Second, on the question of the body of Christ (the church), Coolhaes and Franck also differ. We will discuss this in more depth in Part II, but here it is enough to say that Franck argues about whether Christians are one, or whether they are divided.<sup>45</sup> He deplors division, but neither the words he uses nor the verses he lists are reminiscent of Coolhaes' reasoning relating to the unity of the invisible church or the tolerance Coolhaes would like to see in the visible church. On the other hand, for Coolhaes, the visible church is one Christendom, and should act like it. Third, in the aforementioned passages about Jerusalem, Franck spends many pages discussing the temple and whether or not it will be rebuilt. The temple is a symbol of the external church, which Franck does not believe that Christians need.<sup>46</sup> However, the temple is not a symbol which Coolhaes uses even though he agrees that many externals are at the very least non-essential for true faith. All in all, although Coolhaes chose to translate and expand only the concluding eight pages, a book-within-the-book which Franck calls *Beschlus des buchs Sebastiani Franck aller seyner vortgenn bücher gleichsam/Apologia*, Coolhaes does not seem to have drawn much direct inspiration from the bulk of the rest of *The Seven-sealed Book*, which, as we have said, is largely composed of hundreds of *Schrift* and *Gegenschrift* examples. It was the short *Apologia* section, written in regular prose, with its theme of impartiality, which captured his attention.

We have said that Coolhaes did not only translate, but that he also expanded Franck's small *Apologia*. In looking at Coolhaes' version, the two most striking ideas are first, that God is impartial, and second, that there is still time for people to repent. First, God accepts all servants in his vineyard. As in Jesus' parable, some servants come to work in the vineyard early, while others do not arrive until late. Some work early and rest later, others rest early

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44. Christoph Dejung, "Wahrheit und Haeresie. Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichtsphilosophie bei Sebastian Franck" (Zürich: University of Zürich doctoral dissertation, 1979), 194.

45. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, CCXXXIIIb–CCXXXIIIb.

46. Dejung, "Wahrheit und Haeresie," 129.

and work later. Only Christ determines when someone has to work. When someone repents and comes to work, that work is worthy. Second, there is enough time for repentance and many more workers coming into the vineyard. Time also heals disagreement and changes opinions; unity and agreement can be possible later; for example, Saul turned into Paul.<sup>47</sup> However, these differences should not lead to condemnation or party-spiritedness. God is the savior of the whole world, and will accept anyone who accepts him.<sup>48</sup>

Franck and Coolhaes continue by emphasizing that the Bible's message is difficult to understand. Many have not understood; God's Spirit was not yet given, and the educated do not know any more than the uneducated. In fact, the more educated they become the less they know, a theme expressed by the saying found in Franck's *Paradoxa: Quo doctior, eo perversior: ye gelerter, ye verkerter*.<sup>49</sup> Throughout Christian history various groups have thought that they had the truth, whereas God does not look at sects and denominations but accepts those who fear him. Everything should be examined and the good should be kept, not quenching other opinions or despising others. Franck says one should be neutral towards everyone - remain silent, be peaceful and see whether an idea will blossom, because if something is incorrect God will show it eventually.<sup>50</sup>

Franck and Coolhaes both consider it terrible that there are so many sects. As the Jews are dispersed, so are the Christians, in and among all sects and people, like a rose under the thorns. Jerusalem is under the heathen and the flock of Christ among the wolves. Good and bad fish are caught in one net; the wheat and the weeds grow up together.<sup>51</sup> But brothers can be found everywhere:

And so my heart is not separated from anyone, being assured that I also have my brothers among the Turks, Jews, Papists – yes, among all sects and parties. But they are nevertheless not Turks, Jews, Papists, and so forth – or at least they are, only until that time; they shall nevertheless not remain so until the end, but at the sixth, or ninth

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47. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, CCCCXXVII.

48. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, CCCCXXVIIb.

49. See Carlos Gilly, "Das Sprichwort 'Die Gelehrten die verkehrten' oder der Verrat der Intellektuellen im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung," in Rotondo, *Forme e destinazione*, 229- 375.

50. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, CCCCXXVIII. This is similar to the advice of Gamaliel, the Pharisee who in Acts 5:34-39 recommends to the Sanhedrin that the preaching of Peter and the apostles should not be stopped, since if God is not with them, they will fail, and if God is with them, no one could defeat them.

51. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, CCCCXXVIIIb.

or eleventh hour will be called, and in the evening will be found to be working in the Vineyard of the Lord, and will receive the same pay with us.<sup>52</sup>

This is a vital passage, because Coolhaes through Franck is not saying that the brothers will remain “Turks, Jews, Papists, and so forth” until the “end.” Those who are brothers will be “called” and will work in the vineyard at some time – in other words, they will change their opinions.

Similarities between Franck's *Apologia* and Coolhaes' other writings are easy to see. Coolhaes loved metaphors and allegorical language. He admired the impartiality of Franck, the idea that God has his own among all nations, and the emphasis on God's sovereignty and even inscrutability. He agreed with the idea that education does not equal spirituality. He also loved to consider as brothers those with whom he disagreed. Franck says, “I will love and bear all others, even if they are not of my opinion. Oh how many dear brothers I have on earth whose thoughts I cannot reach, not they mine ....”<sup>53</sup> This must be how Coolhaes felt about Franck as well. Despite differences, Coolhaes considered him a “dear brother” and worth defending, regardless of the danger of being tarred with the same brush in the eyes of Marnix and others. This was typical of Coolhaes' eclectic, tolerant, and in some sense reckless approach.

#### Defending Mennonites and others: the Severe Edict

Coolhaes next turned his attention to disputes dealing with the *Scherpe Plakkaat* (“Severe Edict”), which was enacted by the magistracy of Groningen in 1601 against the free assembly and worship of Mennonites and other non-Reformed groups, including Roman Catholics.<sup>54</sup> The States had resolved to ban Catholic worship in 1581, but this was not enforced strictly. There was more latitude for non-Reformed churches in Holland and Zeeland. For instance, Catholic worship (in other words, the celebration of the mass) went on in Leiden in homes,

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52. “Daerom en is myn hart van niemant afgesondert, versekert zijnde, dat ick noch mijne Broeders heb onder den Turcken, Joden, Papisten: Ja onder allen secten ende partijen: maer die selve en zijn nochtans geen Turcken, Joden, Papisten, etc. of al ist dat sijt noch ter tijt zijn mogen, zoo zullens sy nochtans ten eynde toe alsoo niet blijven, maer ter sester negender ofte elfter ure beroepen zijnde, aen den avont inden Wijnberg des Heeren werckende bevonden werden, ende gelijcke loon met ons ontfangen.” Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, CVIIa.

53. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, CCCCXXVIIIb.

54. S. Zijlstra, “Het ‘scherpe plakkaat’ van Groningen uit 1601,” *Doopsgezinde bijdragen* 15 (1989): 65-78.

hoffes, and the Elizabeth hospital.<sup>55</sup> However, in Groningen this latitude was not present. This “Severe Edict,” and the inequities which he saw in it, occupied Coolhaes’ thoughts and pen extensively for a few years.

The first book which Coolhaes wrote on the topic of the “Severe Edict” was a fictional conversation: *Tsamenspreekinghe*, 1601, by Coolhaes together with Amsterdam Mennonite Jan Claessen Kotte (also known as “Rolwaghen”<sup>56</sup>).<sup>57</sup> How much was written by Coolhaes is debated.<sup>58</sup> It seems to me that the Author’s Note with which the work starts is not in the style of Coolhaes, but that much of the rest of the work is.<sup>59</sup> The Author’s Note refers to “freedom of conscience” - *gemoedts vryheyd*, not a typical Coolhaesian expression.<sup>60</sup> The rhythm of the sentences also does not sound like Coolhaes, whereas much of the rest of work is similar to Coolhaes’ other fictional conversations in style, vocabulary and content. *Tsamenspreekinghe* was popular enough to be reprinted the following year, in 1602.<sup>61</sup> Burger posits that it may have been inspired by the similar *Ratelwachts ende torenwachters waerschouwinge* of a certain Robbert Robbertsz,<sup>62</sup> which is mentioned in *Tsamenspreekinghe*

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55. Kooi, “Popish Impudence,” 81-82.

56. See the satirical print, mentioning Kotte and Robbert Robbertsz: “De Neutralisten Rolwagen,” 1603, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-80.657> (accessed January 27, 2016).

57. Caspar Coolhaes and Johann Claussen Kotte, *Tsamenspreekinghe van drie personen, over het regireus placcaet van Groninghen, ghekondicht den 7. September, oude stijl. Anno sestien-honderd ende een. Hollander, Embder, Gherefoormeerde. Door welcke tsamenspreekinghe naecktelijk verthoont wort, dat die van Groninghen doort self de soecken nieuwe conscientijs d’wangh inte voeren, tot berovinghe des dueren gecochten landts, vryheden, ende beroovinghe des landts middelen* (N.p., 1601/1602).

58. Rogge thought that *Tsamenspreekinghe* was written by Rolwaghen, aside from the introductory and concluding verses. Kras thought that the work was by Coolhaes alone, but Coolhaes denied this in *Een noodtwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 92, 97. Burger thinks his authorship is clear and the work belong to “the best which flowed from his pen.” Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 91-3.

59. Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, Aij–Aiiij.

60. Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, Aij.

61. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 91-93.

62. I have not been able to find more information about this book or author; perhaps it is a made-up parody. The author’s name may be a humorous reference to Herman Herbertz.

by the character Hollander. The authors of *Tsamenspreekinghe* used Albada's *Acta* as an important source.<sup>63</sup>

This story is a fictional dialogue, displaying typically Coolhaesian themes and also defending the idea that *libertatis causa* versus *religionis causa* benefits society. There are three characters: a "Hollander," an "Emder," and a "Reformed man." It is striking that in naming his characters, Coolhaes and Rolwaghen chose two geographical names ("Hollander" and Emders) and one confessional one ("Reformed"). His reasons for this are not clear. The Reformed man demonstrates views consistent with *religionis causa*. The other two characters are both skeptical of this, and question the Reformed man. The Hollander speaks out more than the Emders.

As the story begins, the three characters meet and converse about the recently published "Severe Edict," remarking over the heavy fines which Mennonites and Roman Catholics must now pay for their worship activities.<sup>64</sup> The Reformed man is enthusiastic about this, because, as he says, the government is ordained by God to uphold both Tables of the Law. He says that the Edict is a good thing. The Hollander, however, objects that the Reformed man would not have "sung the same song" under the papacy, which persecuted all Protestants including the Reformed. The Reformed man says that the difference lies in now having a Christian government. No, says the Hollander, the Scripture teaches that there should be no distinction between a pagan government and a Christian one, and no less obedience to the former than to the latter. The office is ordained by God, whether or not the official himself is Christian. He compares this to the institution of marriage, which is good in God's eyes even if the people are not Christians. Marriage in the Bible is never connected with church or temple, so why do the Reformed insist upon weddings taking place in church? Many good gifts from God – health, and even the sun, moon and stars – are created as good, but can be abused.<sup>65</sup> It should be noted in passing, that these points which are brought up by the Hollander in the story are all very Coolhaesian themes. He was concerned about marriage

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63. Bergsma, *Aggaeus van Albada*, 139-40. Bergsma notes in particular the phrase "They have no visible sword, and do not call magistrates to their defense...." Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, CIII vo.

64. Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, Aiiijb-B; Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 94.

65. Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, Biiij-C.

in just this way in *Apologia*,<sup>66</sup> and he will write against astrology in later works, which we will discuss later in this chapter.

The fictional Hollander goes on to bring up the example of Amsterdam, which enjoys God's blessings while nevertheless allowing freedom for all. He quotes a song which speaks of the joys of the capital, describing city improvements, six hundred decorative houses, and seven ships from the East Indies laden with spices and one hundred thousand pounds of peppers. This is all because, he says, their magistrates have been wise enough not to give in to firebrands like those in Groningen.<sup>67</sup> All the subjects can live together peaceably. The Hollander says,

What does it hinder us, if around us live Turks, Tartars and Moscovites, not to mention Catholics, Lutherans, Anabaptists, and so forth, if they do not molest us, and everyone can keep their own view? If we want to bring them from unbelief to true faith, let us do it not with name-calling, slandering, gossiping and persecution, but in friendliness and modesty speak to them out of the Lord's Word.<sup>68</sup>

It is in this way, he adds, that God will be pleased and the land will flower.<sup>69</sup> Evidently the words of the Hollander have made sense to the others. The Reformed man says that he has been given much to think about. In a typically Coolhaesian sentiment, he says that, according

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66. See Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 21Fv.

67. The song:

“Int Iaer doe men schreef sestien hondert en een  
Is Amsterdam verbeterd int ghemeen  
De Stads Toren seer hellende ginckmen weerrechten  
De Stadts binnen Mueren afbreken en beslechten  
Men boude oock twee stercke nieuwe Sluysen  
Daer beneven meer dan ses hondert cierlijke huysen  
Van Oost-Indien quamen eens seven Schepen int selvde Iaer  
Gheladen met Speceryen, ende andere dierbare waer  
Thien hondert duysent pont Pepers sy hadden mee gebrocht  
Die waren binnen thien daghen altesamen vercocht.  
Ist dat wy d'con d'ander niet verdrucken  
God sal geven dat het voorts wel sal gelucken.” Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, Eijv-Eijr.

68. “Wat hindert ons dat neffens ons, by, ende om ons woon, Turcken, Tartaren, Moscoviters, Ich verwighe dan papistens, Martinisten, Doopsghesinden, ende haers ghelijcken, als sy ons niet en molesteren, ende elcken een van ons zijn ghevoelen laten houden? Willen wy haerlyden van het ongheloove totten rechten gheloove brenghen, laet ons sulcks niet met schelden, lasteren, achterklappen ende vervolginghe doen: Maer met aller vriendtlickheyt ende bescheydenheyt, spreekende met hun uyt des Heeren woordt:” Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, Gij.

69. Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, Gij.

to Paul's teaching, he will think further about this; i.e., "test everything and keep the good."<sup>70</sup>  
The three part on friendly terms.

We should note in conclusion that Coolhaes in this book expressed many of his signature views in an irenic spirit of dialogue. For instance, he defended the rights of the Mennonites, with whom theologically he had little in common. Interestingly, he also included the rights of the Catholic population in his defense.

In the following year, 1602, Coolhaes wrote an addition to this work, called *Aenhechtsel*.<sup>71</sup> He is, without doubt, the author. He included verses and the letters of his name and cities (*Caspar Coolhaes van Collen Woonende Tot Amsterdam*; "Caspar Coolhaes from Cologne living in Amsterdam") concealed throughout as a puzzle. It is a cheerful little book, in which reason and mutual understanding prevail. Customers in a bookshop, who are reading the *Tsamenspreekinghe*, strike up a conversation with the tolerant and confessionally "impartial" Bookseller. The Bookseller is amused that both are reading *Tsamenspreekinghe* – one with smiles (a Jesuit, sympathetically portrayed), but the other with frowns (a Calvinist).<sup>72</sup> Eventually the three characters, despite their disagreements, establish a peaceful, respectful dialogue. Coolhaes' own views are expressed by the tolerant and impartial Bookseller. Burger says:

This is clearly Coolhaes himself, and I cannot get away from the impression that this, as well as other books and his prints, would also have lain in the shop for sale, beside the medicinal waters. And I have no doubt that the shopkeeper would always have been completely prepared to discuss and exchange thoughts with his customers.<sup>73</sup>

As we saw earlier, the genre of conversation, or "pamphlet dialogue," was not new to Coolhaes. He had written his first conversation in *Apologia*, in which he had put his own views in the mouths of both his own character and Theophilus. Other authors had written in

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70. Coolhaes, *Tsamenspreekinghe*, G.

71. Caspar Coolhaes, *Aenhechtsel aen t' boecxken of tsamenspreekinghe, ouer het regireus plackaet van Groninghen aldaer ghekondicht den 7. September. ouden stijl, 1601. Ofte antwoordt, op de opspraeck by sommighen ghedaen, teghen het drucken ende verkoopen des selfdes. Vervatet in een t'samenspreekinghe van drie personen, als boeckverkooper, partidich gereformeerde, ende een jesuwijt* (N.p., 1601).

72. Coolhaes, *Aenhechtsel*, Aij.

73. "Dit is duidelijk Coolhaes zelf, en ik kan mij aan den indruk niet onttrekken dat deze, en nog wel andere boekjes even goed als zijne schilderijen, ook in zijn winkel zullen te koop gelegen hebben, naast de geneeskragtige wateren; en ik twijfel niet of de winkelier zal dan steeds ten volle bereid geweest zijn met zijn bezoekers over 't een en ander van gedachten te wisselen." Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 97.



this conversational genre; one thinks first of Erasmus. Erasmus often used this genre to distance himself from dangerous views which he held, by having them spoken by a third person in a fictional conversation.<sup>74</sup> Coornhert had also used this genre. Anonymously, he wrote *Schijndeugt der Secten* in 1574. It described a voyage on the Rhine with a Calvinist, a Lutheran, a Mennonite, and an “impartial” Catholic who discuss religious issues. In it Coornhert defends Schwenckfeld, Franck and Castellio, but concludes that varied “ceremonies” are not important enough to make one leave “Mother Church.” Coornhert in 1590 wrote a conversation between a Roman Catholic, a Reformed Protestant and a character called “Pacifijc,” a peaceful advocate of tolerance. The moral of that story was that ecclesiastical differences were inevitable, but concord was vital for a society.<sup>75</sup> Coolhaes was likely inspired in certain ways by both writers.

It is notable that despite Coolhaes’ earlier fear of the Spanish troops (as well as his own monastic past), he expresses doctrinal disagreement with Catholicism but no hatred or fear of the Catholics. In neither the *Tsamenspreekinghe* or the *Aenhechtsel* does Coolhaes link Catholics negatively with the Spanish. If this had been written slightly later, in 1609 or after, one might have expected this relatively conciliatory attitude, because of the Twelve Years’ Truce. There was new openness on the part of those in the Northern Netherlands then to those from the Southern Netherlands, and even in a way to experiencing something of Catholicism, for the sake of possible “national” unity. However, already in 1600 and just beyond, the States General were writing in hope of a reconciliation of North and South.<sup>76</sup>

Coolhaes’ opposition to the Severe Edict was not only through fiction, however. An argument erupted with the Calvinistic Wijnant Kras, who wrote *Antwoordt op een faemroovend Boeck*<sup>77</sup> in which he strongly criticized Coolhaes and Rolwaghen for

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74. Erika Rummel, “Erasmus and the Art of Communication: Willing to Publish, But Not to Perish,” in M.E.H.N. Mout, H. Smolinsky, and J. Trapman, eds., *Erasmianism: Idea and Reality* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1997), 30.

75. Bonger, *Leven en werk*, 79; Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, “Wortel der Nederlandsche oorloghen met aenwijsinghe tot inlantsche eendracht,” in II deel van Dieryck Volertsz Coornherrts wercken (1590), chapter 6, [www.coornhert.dpc.uba.uva.nl/cgi/t/text-idx?c=coo;idno=coo.0102;view=text;rgn=div1;node=coo.01.02%3A9](http://www.coornhert.dpc.uba.uva.nl/cgi/t/text-idx?c=coo;idno=coo.0102;view=text;rgn=div1;node=coo.01.02%3A9) (accessed January 27 2016). Mentioned in Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 255.

76. Judith Pollmann, “No Man’s Land. Reinventing Netherlandish Identities, 1585-1621,” in *Networks, Regions and Nations*, 245-47, 249-50, 256-57.

77. Wijnant Kras, *Antwoordt op een faem-roovend boeck, het welcke ghenaeemt is: Tsamenspreekinghe van drye personen, ouer het regireus placcaet van Groninghen* (Amsterdam: S. J. Gerritsz, 1602).

*Tsamenspreekinghe*. He printed in the work the page-long decision of the States of Holland from December 4, 1581, in which Coolhaes is said not to be “one in teaching with the Reformed Church.”<sup>78</sup> Rolwaghen responded by writing *Corte bestraffingh*,<sup>79</sup> while Coolhaes replied in *Een noodwendighe broederlycke vermaninge* in 1602.<sup>80</sup> Coolhaes addresses two substantive topics in his book: the assembly of the non-Reformed, and the practice of performing weddings outside of Reformed Churches.

Coolhaes had not intended to write further to Kras.<sup>81</sup> However, a new work appeared defending the Edict, entitled *Apologia*,<sup>82</sup> by scientist and mathematician Johannes Acronius Frisius, 1602, which derided Coolhaes for his unwillingness to answer further. Coolhaes wrote that this *Apologia* accused him of being a “Goliath - a captain of all godless sects,” and a *libertijnsche rol-waghen drijver*, coming in the place of Coornhert to disturb the peace of the country.<sup>83</sup> He responded with *Missive aan den Authoor van die Apologia*. It begins with a poem by Coolhaes about the office of preacher – that a preacher must be pure of heart and taught by God, standing on God’s Word and thinking about it repeatedly, to determine God’s will.<sup>84</sup> Coolhaes is incensed that this person whom he does not know would criticize his

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78. Kras, *Antwoort*, folio Gijjr.

79. Jan Claessen Kotte Rolwaghen, *Corte bestraffingh op d’antwoort van een sorchvuldich held, die hem al te regireus in de wapens stelt. Wijnant Kras, liecht op dit pas, veel leughens groot: Waer dat het stondt, ick noyt en vondt, t’geen hy schrijft bloot*, 1602. H. C. Rogge, *Geschriften betreffende de Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk* (J. H. Scheltema, Amsterdam, 1864). See also: *NNBW*, vol. 2, 88-89.

80. Caspar Coolhaes, *Een noodwendighe broederlycke vermaninge aen zijnen voor zeeckere jaren bekenden vriendt, ende nu ter tijt door zijn eyghen in druck wt ghegeven schriften zijnde onwetenden broeder, genaempt Wijnant Kras, woonende buyten Jan Rooden poort, opt Lijnbaens Pat* (Amsterdam: P. Ghevaerts, 1602).

81. He states this plainly in Coolhaes, *Een noodtwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, Eijr.

82. Johannes Acronius Frisius, *Apologia, ofte verandtwordinghe des edicts, het welcke van een eerbaren raet der stadt Groeningen, tegen der der Wederdooperen ende andere secten onordeningen, den 7 septemb. des jaers 1601 ghepubliceert is. Ende door eenen onghenoemden libertyn, met allerley valsche ende niet weerdich gheschrey, aengheblast is gheworden. Tot onderrichtinghe der eenvoudighen, wt bevel eenes erberaeds, nu nieulick ghestellet, ende in druck uytghegeven. Ende nae het Sassische exemplaer, in Nederlandsche tale ghedruckt* (Groningen: Gerardt Ketel, 1602). As the title suggests, there was also a German-language edition of this work.

83. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 148.

84. Caspar Coolhaes, *Missive van den authoor van die Apologia, over het placact ofte edict, eenes eersameen wijsen raets der stadt Groningen: in die welcke de voorschreven authoor na t’bevel der godtlijcker schrijftuere, broederlijck met goeder manieren bestraft wordt, van t’ghene hy teghen den aert der christelijcker liefde, openbaerlijck voor alle de werelt, onder t’decksel van d’authoriteit desselven e. w. raedts, met grooter*

*Aenhechtsel*, which did not in any case speak about the Edict or the situation in Groningen or Friesland directly.

In his next work, Coolhaes went on to summarize some of his research about the views of earlier Frisian Anabaptists, in order to prove that their views were biblical and that their intentions were peaceful. The centerpiece, from which the book gets its title, is the *Summa*, i.e. “Confession of Faith of the preachers of East Friesland.”<sup>85</sup> In this work, published in Amsterdam on November 20, 1603, he brings together a selection of the writings of several authors. Although an interesting document, we will not review its contents here. The important point is that Coolhaes defended the Frisian Mennonites through his writings as much as he was able.<sup>86</sup>

How close was Coolhaes, in his views, to the Mennonites? On one side, he is seen to be very sympathetic at various points to them. As we have seen, during the Leiden schisms of 1579-1580, he disagreed with colleague Hesperus about the case of Jan Janszoon, a former Mennonite who regardless of his older unbaptized children wanted to have a new baby baptized, and even to train as a preacher in the city’s Reformed Church.<sup>87</sup> Coolhaes encouraged him in both things. Now, with his positive attention to the Frisian Anabaptists and their *Summa*, one certainly wonders about a possible affinity.

It should be mentioned that although Coolhaes should be identified as a Spiritualist,<sup>88</sup> this does not automatically put him in the camp of the “Radical Reformation.” He did not become a Mennonite at any point in his life. In the early years of his ministry and throughout his time in Leiden he was at the center of the Reformed conflicts. He did not identify as a Mennonite in his writings, and was never accused of being one by his detractors, who would certainly have done so if there was any evidence.<sup>89</sup> In fact, when he

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*onwaerheyt, zijnen naesten onschuldich, van wercken des doots weerdich zijnde, beschuldicht, tot voorder bericht ende na-dencken, desselven e. w. raedts, ende des onpartijdighen lesers* (N.p., 1602), Ar.

85. Coolhaes, *Summa*.

86. Coolhaes does not address whether the “apocalyptic” actions of early Anabaptists in Friesland and Amsterdam were good or biblical, or the split of the “quietist” Mennonites from the “revolutionary” Anabaptists. For more information, see Cornelius J. Dyck, William E. Keeney, and Alvin J. Beachy, trans. and eds., *The Writings of Dirk Philips, 1504–1568* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992), 22-25.

87. See Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 2r.

88. We will discuss this extensively in Chapter 6.

was accused by fellow preacher Lucas Hesper from the pulpit, who mentioned his views in connection with those of several others including Menno, he wrote that he never considered any of them to be true teachers.<sup>90</sup> He also wrote that he had no doubt about infant baptism.<sup>91</sup> In addition, he criticized the Mennonites equally with the Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed as falling short of the ideals which they themselves claimed to exemplify.<sup>92</sup> He never wrote in his own books about current Mennonite beliefs such as the wrongness of oath-taking or the necessity of adult baptism.<sup>93</sup> Unlike most Mennonites, he was always positive and supportive of the secular government. Despite his criticism of the Calvinists, he apparently continued to attend the Reformed Church even after his excommunication and in Amsterdam later in life, since the preacher Petrus Plancius felt it necessary to make a pastoral visit, as we have seen earlier. Also, even in his later works he spoke in favor of the Reformed faith.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, it seems very clear that Coolhaes was not in any way a Mennonite. As with his translations of Spiritualist Franck, and his support of future Socinian Erasmus Johannes, Coolhaes' defense of the Frisian Mennonites comes not from changes in his views, but out of his desire to promote and protect diversity in the visible church.

Meanwhile, all of this writing brought the critical eyes of the Reformed back to Coolhaes. In 1603, the Synod in Brielle voted to excommunicate Coolhaes again,<sup>95</sup> but he says in the *Summa* that it was not done because of the intervention of the commissioners in

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89. It is true that he was accused once of being a David-Jorist, which he denied vehemently. Coolhaes, *Een noodwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, Ciiijr, Dr.

90. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folios 4v–r.

91. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 11r.

92. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folios Jijr–Jiiijv.

93. Coolhaes does not teach about baptism in the way a Mennonite would. For the Anabaptist perspective, see Leonard Verduin, trans., and J. C. Wenger, ed., *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1956), 120-42, 229-87.

94. One example is in the extended title of his *Remonstrantie aen zijne prinslijcke excellentie*, 1608: "... t'ghene, dat nootlick naer eysch der heyligher godlijcker schriftuere, ende ghereformeerde professie, ter eeren Godes ende stichtinge van veel duyzent menschen behoorde..." title page. Caspar Coolhaes, *Remonstrantie aen zijne prinslijcke excellentie, ende de edele (door Godes genade) zeer vermogende ende gereformeerde heeren staten ende steden der verreenighde ende gereformeerde Neder-landen, indewelcke (onder verbeteringe) aenghewezen wordt t'ghene, dat nootlick naer eysch der heyligher godlijcker schriftuere, ende ghereformeerde professie, ter eeren Godes ende stichtinge van veel duyzent menschen behoorde: ende met kleyne moyte verbeteret zal kunnen werden*. Gouda: J. Migoen, 1608.

95. Coolhaes is mentioned only once in passing, as an example of disunity, in W. C. Visser, *De classis Brielle 1574-1623* (Leiden: University Dissertation, 2013), CCXLI. He is not mentioned in the acts of the classis of Brielle, included as part of the same dissertation.

the name of the States.<sup>96</sup> This is more evidence that throughout this time he had been a member of the Reformed Church in Amsterdam – presumably receiving the Lord’s Supper occasionally. Coolhaes in this period signed his name openly on his works and also called himself a “legally-called minister of the Word,”<sup>97</sup> which must have angered many.

### Almanacs and superstitions

Coolhaes was also preoccupied, from the first years of the 1600’s onwards, with writing against the growing popularity of almanacs in the Netherlands. Almanacs, known in the ancient world and the Middle Ages, were little books for popular use, which combined a calendar for planting and local events with astronomical and astrological information. In the Middle Ages the illuminated *Books of Hours* (*getijdenboeken*) also included almanac sections. Month by month, they gave people an overview of church holidays and saints’ days, as well as seasonal illustrations and sometimes pictures of astrological signs. Coolhaes believed that almanacs encouraged many superstitious practices derived from popular Catholicism and astrology, and posed an obstacle to a godly life. Several of his publications in this period of his life addressed the concern which he had for the health of churches and society.

After the invention of the hand-printing press, separate almanacs were produced with woodcut illustrations. Printed almanacs were popular in the Netherlands throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>98</sup> Despite the religious changes in society, they retained many of the old Catholic elements, such as saints’ days, the dates of Lent, and the appointed Bible texts for each week. They also included practical data which people could use, such as the phases of the moon and schedules of the tides, and also astrology, to help people predict something of the coming year. Predictions were made in almanacs in four general areas: weather, sickness, the economy, and politics.<sup>99</sup> The almanacs sometimes listed medical

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96. Coolhaes, *Summa*, folios F4v-F4r.

97. Coolhaes, *Summa*, folios title page-A2.

98. Jeroen Salman, *Een handdruk van de tijd. De almanak en het dagelijks leven in de Nederlanden 1500–1700* (Delft: Stedelijke Museum Het Prinsenhof, 1997), 9.

99. Salman, *Een handdruk van de tijd*, 50.

information. Bloodletting, surgery and other practices were often tied in peoples' minds to special days, and dependent on astrological factors.<sup>100</sup> Astrology had been a preoccupation of ordinary people and the learned alike for some time. Many were interested in the movements of the heavenly bodies, looking to them for signs of the rise and fall of empires and of the Second Coming.<sup>101</sup> The woodcuts accompanying each month often featured the agricultural activities of that month, whether planting, reaping, slaughtering, wine-making, or whatever. They sometimes also had whimsical illustrations of children playing gaily in blooming spring fields or skating in icy December. Some were of a type called *schrijfcalendars*: empty spaces were left after the dates of each month so that people could write in their own information or records.

Early in his Leiden ministry, as we have seen, Coolhaes was seemingly indifferent to the keeping of "Catholic" practices such as funeral sermons and celebrations not held on Sundays. However in this case and by this point in his life, Coolhaes was convinced that almanacs and popular emphasis on saints' days and other Catholic practices were misleading and dangerous to the unlearned. He was not the only one to think so. The references to saints' days was troubling to many Reformed preachers, since at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1574, the decision was made that all celebration of saints' days should be stopped. The publishers of the almanacs, however, wished to attract new Reformed customers to buy the popular almanacs, while not alienating the Catholic sectors of the population.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, Coolhaes appears to be one of the first, if not the first, to attack the genre of the almanac directly, and to attempt to "reform" the genre.<sup>103</sup> Other "Reformed" almanacs began appearing ten to fifteen years later, after 1618. The well-known Reformed preacher and pietist Willem Teellinck also wrote against them in the 1620's.<sup>104</sup>

Almanacs, Coolhaes felt, encouraged superstitions and reliance on saints throughout the church year. They also linked these saints, the seasons of the years, agricultural schedules

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100. Salman, *Een handdruk van de tijd*, 57-68.

101. For the story of a German astrologer from the early sixteenth century, see Paul Albert Russel, "Astrology as Popular Propaganda. Expectations of the End in the German Pamphlets of Joseph Grünpeck (+1533?)," in Rotondo, *Forme e destinazione*, 165-95.

102. Salman, *Een handdruk van de tijd*, 70-71.

103. Rogge claims he was the first to do so. Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 113. See a reproduction of his portrait and the cover of his *Trouwe waerschouwinghe* in Salman, *Een handdruk van de tijd*, 46-47, 70.

104. Salman, *Een handdruk van de tijd*, 70-74.

and seafaring. They emphasized astrology: the planets, the moon and the sun. Although recognizing that people dealing with the water needed to know the phases of the moon, he deplored the superstitious nature of these topics, which exalted the heavenly bodies rather than giving glory to and depending on God the Creator of that natural world. He complained about the prevalence of fortune-tellers and soothsayers in what should have been a Reformed nation. Coolhaes also criticized the Reformed Church and even the government for forbidding the printing of controversial theological books – books which Coolhaes felt were much less dangerous to the common people – but doing nothing against these almanacs and other books which encouraged superstitions among the simplest of the populace.<sup>105</sup>

In 1606, Coolhaes tried to reform this genre by publishing his own *Comptoir-almanach*.<sup>106</sup> It consisted of twelve calendar pages, one for each month, including the appointed Scripture readings for each Sunday and an occasional mention of a holiday. It is a *schrijfcalendar*, with plenty of spaces for individuals to write things in. Various waterways are listed with times of the tides.<sup>107</sup> The second part of the *Comptoir-Almanac*<sup>108</sup> has come down to us in a separate edition called *Christelycke ende stichtelycke vermaningen*.<sup>109</sup> It is a

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105. Caspar Coolhaes, *Comptoir Almanach: oft journal, op het jaer nae de geboorte onses Heeren ende salijcmakers Jesu Christi, M.DC.VI. Warin achter aen plaetse van duslange gebruyckten ende mit de warachtighe prognosticationen, ofte practijcken, tot onderwijnsinge ende stichtinge des lesers, het recht gebruyck eens yeghelijcken voornaemsten feestdags angewesen ende het misbruyck derselver, als oock de verscheyden Bachus feesten: vastelavont: vasteldaghen: bededaghen ende vierdaghen uyt des Heeren woort bestraft worden, seer profijtelyck ende stichtelyck te lessen. door C. Crambi-Lagon* (t'Amstelredam: Jan Thennisz., 1606). 20.

106. Coolhaes, *Comptoir Almanach*, title page. Coolhaes uses the unexplained author's name C. Crambi-Lagon, which Burger mentions is a Greek-like version of Coolhaes' own name. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 118. Another calendar, *Christelijcke Schrijf-calendar*, 1606? mentioned in Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 36, is presumed non-extant.

107. Coolhaes, *Comptoir Almanach*, 15, 16. (N.B.: this work has no page numbers marked.)

108. There is a copy in the Erfgoed Leiden en omstreken (formerly Leiden Regional Archive) in the large book which contains *Apologia* and is labeled on the spine *Alle Werken van Caspar Coolhaes*. It comes immediately after *Comptoir-Almanach* and looks at first like part of the same work; however, the quarto numbers start with B in *Christelycke ende stichtelycke vermaningen*. There is also a copy in UBL; however, the title/first sentence is slightly different. Burger also believes that these works belong together. Petit lists a similar work called #23 *Over het rechte gebruyck en misbruyck der feestdagen en Bachusfeesten*, Amsterdam 1606.

109. Caspar Coolhaes, *Christelycke ende stichtelycke vermaningen aen plaetse van dus lang gebruyckten, ende min dan waerachtigen prognosticationen ende practijcken, in de welcken het rechte gebruyck eens yegelijcken voornemsten feestdag aangewesen, ende het misbruyck der selven (als oock der verscheyden Bachus feesten vastelavonden, vasteldaghen, bededaghen ende vierdaghen) wt des Heeren woort aenghewesen ende bestraffen worden tot dienst van alle den genen, die Christum Jesum, en in hem de eeuwige salicheyt van herten soecken* (N.p., 1607). Rogge also reprints excerpts from this work, which he discovered after he had written his biography of Coolhaes, in Rogge, *De Roomsche feestdagen*.

long collection of short exhortations (in other words, sermons) for each Sunday and holiday of the year. As such, they are interesting examples of how Coolhaes may actually have preached. Other preachers from Coolhaes' time, including his fellow libertine Herman Herberts, left written sermons, but no real sermons by Coolhaes from his preaching years are extant. Within various of these exhortations are reminiscences about Coolhaes' early life in Cologne; also, criticism of the veneration of saints and the Virgin, and of pagan holiday practices, especially "Bachus festivals" and *Coppelkens* (the Monday after Three Kings Day/Epiphany/Twelfth Night; a day devoted to romance and subsequent excesses).<sup>110</sup> It should be noted that although Coolhaes in his other books advocates freedom for Catholics, here he calls many of their folk-practices useless, ugly, and against the commands in Scripture (for instance, dressing up in clothes of the opposite sex as part of festivities on the evening before Ash Wednesday). He condemns Ash Wednesday as coming not from Scripture, but from the devil.<sup>111</sup> He objects to the excessive holiday eating and drinking, and to laziness and useless games. One wonders if Coolhaes is less tolerant to Catholics, or whether he has just become more conservative in his old age. Regardless of any personal motives, the general rise and spread of a Puritanistic spirit in society may also be an important factor here.

In keeping with the criticism of Catholicism in this book, Coolhaes also mentions Justus Lipsius' return to the Catholic Church, and judges him very negatively. He had been acquainted with Lipsius since at least the early days of the Leiden Schism – Lipsius as rector had signed the *Arbitral Accord*.<sup>112</sup> He complains that he had been Lipsius' good friend for twenty years, but had never really known him.<sup>113</sup>

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110. Coolhaes, *Christelycke ende stichtelycke vermaningen* C-Ciiijb. For a mention of Coolhaes and Twelfth-night customs as written about by Rogge, see Anke A. van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, "The Celebration of Twelfth Night in Netherlandish Art," in *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 22 (1993-94), 65-96. See also Wayne E. Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-century Genre Painting: Its Stylistic and Thematic Evolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 47, 267; Franits mentions that he is indebted to Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven.

111. Rogge, *De Roomsche feestdagen*, 6-7.

112. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 220.

113. Kist, "J. Lipsius door Caspar Coolhaes beoordeeld," 425-27. For more about Lipsius' early life, time in Leiden and return to the south, see H. T. Oberman, "Van Leiden naar Leuven: de overgang van Justus Lipsius naar een 'Roomse universiteit,'" in *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 5 (1908): 68-111, 191-227, 269-304 (especially 203-206 and 302 in which Coolhaes is mentioned on the basis of Rogge's biography).



In 1607, Coolhaes continued his battle against almanacs and published *Trouwe waerschouwinghe*.<sup>114</sup> He praised the Netherlands as a country with knowledge of God, whose magistrates were enlightened enough to rid the formerly Catholic Churches of idols of wood and stone, and where true religion is preached, rather than monks' fables. By God's grace, he continued, the Lord States have forbidden the printing of papist, religious books which might mislead the average citizen.<sup>115</sup> It is thus amazing that this Christian government permits the publication of almanacs, which contain unchristian prognostications and practices, as well as Catholic superstitions, and references to the planets and phases of the moon. It is astounding, he commented wryly, that our godly Reformed theologians and preachers have not thought up some better form of calendar.<sup>116</sup>

Coolhaes continued to enumerate the dangers of the almanacs. They are written in the vernacular and for the average reader, and are cheap, so they are more pernicious than Latin theological treatises. They contain amorous songs.<sup>117</sup> They bring astrology into the Dutch context, which is a system of belief unknown to earlier generations in Holland.<sup>118</sup> They promote patron saints for various maladies.<sup>119</sup> These sorts of things are Satanic lies, from prognosticators and seers. They make the average Dutch person, who believes in the true God but is otherwise blind, worse off than, as he puts it, the Turks and Saracens, the wild people of the East and West Indies, and others in such places in Asia, Africa and America<sup>120</sup> today. This is because, as Jesus says, the servant who says he will obey the master, but who does not prepare for him or do his will, shall be beaten.<sup>121</sup> In other words, the Dutch are the unfaithful

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114. Caspar Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge voor den schandelijcken abuysen offte misbruycken der almanacken, de welcke (gelijk alle andere valsche godes-diensten) uyt de schatcamer der verscheyden pausen ghecomen zijn, ende daerom niet minder, reformation van doen hebben als de kerck en staende vol afgodische beelden, outaren ende dergelijcken: doch met minder moyte ende arbeyt vernielt ende in haer gheheel (ghelijck zij tallen tijden bij de kercken Gods gheweest zijn) gestalt zullen connen worden. Allen Godt-vresenden magistraten ende predicanten als oock eenenjegelijcken van herten Godt-vresenden menschen ter prove voor-gesteld door Casparvm Coelhaes* (Gouda: J. Migoen, 1607).

115. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, Aij.

116. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, Aijr.

117. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, Dr.

118. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, Aiiij–Aiiij.

119. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, BB.

120. This is Coolhaes' only mention of America in his works.

121. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, Bijr.

servants of Jesus' parable. Also, the almanacs are full of various "practices." Thieves can practice how to steal, but good people can and should practice goodness.<sup>122</sup> People are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, but instead are fed these useless fables.<sup>123</sup> In conclusion, Coolhaes fears that he will get criticism from booksellers and astrologers for his views, and that the preachers, whose job it should be to defend the truth, will not thank him either.<sup>124</sup>

In 1608 Coolhaes published another model, or specimen, for a Reformed almanac or calendar. This is a very short booklet, similar to the *Comptoir-Almanac* but with the addition of little poems for each month, which emphasize God's creation, provision and blessings throughout the year. No author for the little poems is given; perhaps it is Coolhaes himself.<sup>125</sup>

### Theology and academia: Arminius and Gomarus

In Coolhaes' later years, he also looked on with disapproval as the conflict between professors Gomarus and Arminius was brewing in the "ivory tower"<sup>126</sup> of Leiden University. He weighed in on the theological disputes for which they are known, as well as on the question of learning versus spirituality. Coolhaes in these writings showed himself to be closer to Arminius than to Gomarus about predestination (his view has been called "conditional predestination"<sup>127</sup>), but did not hesitate to rebuke both theologians for what he felt was a concentration on non-essential doctrines at the expense of Christlikeness.

By way of background, we will survey Coolhaes' views on predestination and free will as they developed, since in these writings to the Leiden theologians, he also looked back on his defrocking and excommunication as a result of the Synods in Middelburg and The

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122. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, Ciiijr.

123. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, Dd.

124. Coolhaes, *Trouwe waerschouwinge*, Diiij–Diiijr.

125. As one example, here is the poem for April: *De boomen beginnen nu te bloyen/ Het velt vangt aen overall te groyen/ Geeft Heer dat wij in deugden bloyen schoon/ Om in weinich te kome u voor uwen troon* ("The trees begin now to bloom, the field everywhere is growing. Lord, may we also beautifully bloom in virtue, that we may soon come to You before Your throne."). Coolhaes, *Specimen ofte Monster Eens Christelijcken Calendars ofte Almanac*, Aij.

126. Coolhaes did not use this expression, but this was his attitude.

127. This term used of Coolhaes' views in Stanglin and McCall, *Jacob Arminius*, 44.

Hague in 1581-1582, especially on the theological points which he had debated there. Earlier, in Essen in 1571, Coolhaes had appeared close to the Melanchthonian synergist position of justification – that man cooperates with God by having contrition and repenting. Also, as we have mentioned, Coolhaes was quoted as saying, at The Hague in 1581, that all people were given the ability to accept the grace offered by Christ.<sup>128</sup> This all was at odds with the developing Calvinist doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election and limited atonement, and was disturbing to the Reformed preachers at the Synod. In his *Sendtbrief*, Coolhaes clarified:

From the other of the first four articles, one speaks of free will, of which I hold that the same fell away in Adam, that we by nature, are unable and unfit to think of the good as well as to accomplish it. However, God gave all people grace (note: grace) in the Word: in the Word I say, and not from nature, so that all people without exception are offered grace, and this allows that they may accept [the offer of] sonship. This is because it is separated far from God's goodness to condemn a person; for him not to be able to do what he wanted to do would be impossible. The Impartial Reader, reading my words, will reasonably wonder where I am to have contradicted myself, since the unity is so clear. I also do not mean that someone would have accused me of false teaching in this, unless he had gone so far with predestination that he would have all err in a deadly way, and rather confess God the Lord to be a cause of evil – that is, that he is not to be trusted; that he would have created someone for condemnation.<sup>129</sup>

It is important to note that here Coolhaes affirms his belief in original sin. Also important is that here Coolhaes says that he would not want God to be considered to be a cause of evil. He would say that God in his Word says that God extends grace to all. God both states it in his Word, and offers it through his Word, Coolhaes implied. He also spoke about “good works.” Can people do the good they need to do, to be able to turn to God? Coolhaes emphasized that God's judgments are unsearchable and beyond human understanding.<sup>130</sup> The fourth

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128. See Chapter 3.

129. “Van de anderen vier articulen deses eersten stucx, is een vande vrije wille sprekende, waer van ick houde, dat die selve in Adam also vervallen is, dat wy van naturen tot goedts te dencken, also wel als om te volbrenghe, onnut ende onbequam zijn: Maer wederom, dat God alle menschen die ghenade (mercet die ghenade) int woord, int woord segghe ick, ende niet van naturen ghegheven heeft, om die alle man sonder wtneminghe van persoon aengebodene genade, ende desen geeft der kintschap aen te nemen. Ende dat daeromme, wantet verre van Godts goetheyt verscheyden is, den mensche te verwijten, dat hy niet doen wilde tgunt, dat hem te doen soude onmogelijck zijn. De onpertidighe Leser, sal lesende mijn eyghen woorden, hem billicks te verwonderen hebben, waer in ick my soude moghen teghensproken hebben, daer de eenicheyt soo claer is. Ick en meen oock niet dat my yemant hier in valsscher leer soude te beschuldighen hebben, ten waer dat hy hem so verre mette predestinatie verlopen hadde, dat hy soude meynen alle de ghene dootlick te feylen, de welcke God den Heer liever hebben, als dat sy hem voor eenen oorsaeck des quaets souden bekennen connen: Dat is, dat sy hem niet toe vertrouwen moghen, dat hy yemant totter onsalicheyt gheschapen heeft.” Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, Diiiijr.

proposition at the Middelburg Synod, he said, was, in essence, that God in Adam gave all mankind the grace to be inheritors of God as Adam had first received it. But Adam's fall and sin has killed any ability in man to choose good; the only hope is that God, because of Christ, will extend his grace and enlighten one by the Spirit.<sup>131</sup> Election to salvation or condemnation does not contradict his ideas, Coolhaes believed. Faith is a gift of God. The godless cannot say that God has not extended grace to them. They despised it and did not take it or use it. The guilt is their own. There are many places in the Old and New Testaments in which God offers grace to people, and they do not take it. This means that God is offering all people his grace, and also the grace or power to accept the offered grace.<sup>132</sup> Otherwise, he would be asking people to do what they were not able to do. Coolhaes said that he agreed with the Synod - that natural man is unfit without God's spirit to take the gifts which are necessary for salvation. Natural man is dead to morality and as such not virtuous enough to "do the good."<sup>133</sup>

But in regard to the five theses of the first group in Middelburg, Coolhaes says that all the "good" – wisdom, virtue, with which men are gifted – is from God, wherever it appears. Good works are valued, even when they are misused. God did not rob his creatures of all righteousness and truth, but the unrighteous annex the good gifts of God and take possession of them.<sup>134</sup> People who are not Christians, he seems to be saying, can also do "good." In this he seems to foreshadow a denial of what would be called total depravity. The Synod thought his views were self-contradictory.

Coolhaes' wording here gives us a clue to some of the differences between his formulations and what the Synod might have wanted. They use the term "good work" to mean different things. For him, "doing the good" is not the initial turning to God which the

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130. The whole discussion can be found in *Conciliatio*, Fijj–Gijr.

131. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Fiiijr and G.

132. His words are: "... waerwt onwedersprekelick volgen moet/ dat hy (gebenedijt in der eewicheyt) henluyden/ wie ooc allen menchen aenbiedende zijne genade/ mede die genade ofte crachten geeft/ om die aengeboden ghenade te aenveerden: want anders soude hy/ tonrecht hen verwijten dat sy niet doen en willen het gene/ dat sy niet doen en connen." Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Gr.

133. "So veel sy dan nu (segghe ick) natuerlick menschen zyn, dat is/ sonder Godes geest ende ghenade/ so bekenne ick vry rondt met den Synodo/ dat sy onbequaem zyn, om die gaven tot der salicheyt van nooden, aen te nemen, ja dat sy gheheel na der zeden gestorven, ende dat sy over sulcx nu ondeuchdich zijn gheworden om goets te doen &c." Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Gr.

134. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, E.

preachers meant, but living the Christian life - being “moral” and “virtuous” - words which in addition may have sounded too humanistic for the preachers’ liking. His emphasis on moral living as the good may also have seemed like agreement with Coornhertian human perfectibility. But from a Calvinist standpoint, a person is totally helpless to do the first “good work” of all – turn to God – unless he is predestined and elect, and it seemed heretical and Pelagian to suggest it.

Coolhaes spoke to what would become the discussion between limited and unlimited atonement. The good work of turning to God can, “with or through God’s spirit, grace and help,” be done.<sup>135</sup> For him this is a difference between fleshly, natural man, and man with or through God’s grace. But one who despises God does not want to accept the offered grace, though it was a gift of God which he should have applied and made his own.<sup>136</sup> If this were not true, Coolhaes says, it would be as though God were like a rich man giving alms to a poor man without hands, on the condition that the poor man reached out his hands to take it. In other words, God would be demanding of humankind something which it had no ability to do. It would be a cruel trick on the part of God to require this. This is why, Coolhaes summarizes, it was so terrible for him to hear the formulation of the Middelburg Synod which, as he puts it, dared to say that God offers all people his grace, but will not give it to all.<sup>137</sup>

“Hard food” served at Leiden University

Coolhaes became concerned that the debate on predestination and related issues was heating up at Leiden University, because it was a distraction to the students and the churches. Also, the lack of peace in itself was troubling to him. His *Naedencken*, published in 1609, is addressed to Arminius and Gomarus.<sup>138</sup> It will be noted that 1609 is the year in which

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135. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Gr.

136. “Nu is mijn seggen dat die ghene, denwelcken Godt verwijt, dat syluyden syne aengheboden ghenade niet en hebben aennemen willen, die gave te voren van Godt ontvanghen hebben, ofte ymmers, int aenbieden te ghelijck van Godt ontvanghen, dat syt ghene dat hem Godt aenbiet, ende van herten willich ende bereyt is te geven, souden aennemen, hen selfs appliceren, ende te eyghen maken moghen.” Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Gijr.

137. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Gijr.

Arminius died. Perhaps, therefore, Arminius did not see this book. Coolhaes addressed both professors formally and without references to any earlier acquaintanceship.

*Naedencken* makes Coolhaes' main point about the predestination/free will controversy clear. According to him, it is a matter so far above the understanding of the natural man that it is not an edifying subject. Other "hard" teachings are equally unprofitable. He names baptism, communion, the divinity and incarnation of Christ, original sin, and the role of the government all in this category of "difficult." The New Testament's metaphor for difficult teachings is that they are "hard food;" in other words, meat, which is difficult to digest, versus "soft food" or milk, which nourishes the young and spiritually immature.<sup>139</sup>

Coolhaes interprets this to mean that difficult doctrines, while they might be discussed occasionally by scholars, are detrimental to the young in age or faith. Jesus and the Apostles preached repentance and the new birth, whereas sixteenth-century reformers spent much of their attention on the dispute of contentious issues.<sup>140</sup> He says that Luther and Zwingli disputed about the Lord's Supper before a church had gathered that was, as he puts it, worthy of receiving it. They argued about baptism before people had learned enough to mourn their sins. These disputes made simple people doubt and err.<sup>141</sup> Salvation does not depend on knowledge of these theological points.<sup>142</sup> Disputes do not eliminate opposing viewpoints, but instead they strengthen them and keep them alive.<sup>143</sup> Disputes between Luther, Zwingli and Karlstadt, for instance, were sown by the Devil and kept the Reformation from realizing its potential.<sup>144</sup>

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138. Caspar Coolhaes, *Naedencken of de disputatien vande Godtlijcke predestinatie, ende derghelijcken meer, des natuerlijcken menschen verstant verre te boven gaende, oorbaerlijck ende stichtelijck ghetracteert, ofte verhandelt kunnen worden: Ende of Christus onse salichmaker: sijne h. apostelen ende propheten, op eene sodanighe manier van doen, de kercke des Heeren (dewelcke sy tot haren tijden geheel vervallen te zijn ghevonden) ghereformeert hebben, so men huyden-daechs, ende omtrent in de hondert jaren herwaerts te doen, onderstaen heeft. Den eerwaerdighen ende welgheleerden heeren Francisco Gomaro, ende Jacobo Arminio, beyde doctores ende professores theologiae, in de universiteyt tot Leyden in Hollandt: mitsgaders oock der gantscher kercken des Heeren Christi Iesu, ter proeve voorgesteld* (Gouda: Jasper Tournay, 1609).

139. 1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12; 1 Pet. 2:2.

140. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Aijb/4.

141. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, BB/10.

142. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Eb/34.

143. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, E/33.

144. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Bij/11.

In that sense, all of the theological disputes, including those in Leiden, were seen by Coolhaes as primarily spiritual in nature rather than academic. They were the result of good, learned teachers succumbing to Satanically-inspired division; allowing themselves to be preoccupied with fine points of theology or *adiaphora*, rather than concentrating on the nourishing of the young minds with which they have been entrusted. In this, he notes, the four faculties at Leiden University have different tasks. Doctors, lawyers, and humanists can dispute as long as they like, since no one's salvation is dependent upon what they do. But the office of the theologians is not to dispute, but to teach and exhort young and old, learned and unlearned, government and subject to repentance and the virtues of godliness – and not just with words, but with their own repentant life and godly walk.<sup>145</sup> Otherwise, the universities are just as damaging to the state of the church as are divisive synods and councils.<sup>146</sup>

Those professors who are truly baptized, both with the baptism of John the Baptist (by which he means repentance), and then with the fiery baptism of Jesus (by which he means with the Holy Spirit), will not dispute, be party-spirited, divisive or violent.<sup>147</sup> Leiden University (which he loves, he said, mentioning that he was able at the beginning of its history to lay the first stone, so to speak<sup>148</sup>) was founded by the Prince and the States not to be party-spirited, but to be a greenhouse for young plants – to nurture young men spiritually, as gardeners nurture trees, herbs and flowers. This is an apt Leiden analogy which he employed, by the way, since the famous *Hortus Botanicus* of Leiden University had been planted and nurtured since the arrival of Carolus Clusius in 1593.

The Leiden University *Staten College* wanted to prepare preachers for the Republic. Head of theology Johannes Kuchlinus, colleague of Arminius and Gomarus, would use another metaphor for this process – that of a beehive, from which learned and virtuous bees would fly into all parts of the Republic and sweeten it with the honey they would produce.<sup>149</sup> Coolhaes would agree that the students should be prepared for their future ministries in the

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145. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Cijj/20–Cijj/21.

146. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Eiiijb/40.

147. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Eijj/38.

148. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Gijj/53.

149. Keith D. Stanglin, *Arminius on the Assurance of Salvation: The Context, Roots, and Shape of the Leiden Debate, 1603-1609* (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2007), 21.

best possible ways. However, these idle disputations which are going on now, he said, are not in line with the original goal.<sup>150</sup>

Coolhaes did not speak much here about the specific questions of predestination and free will.<sup>151</sup> He said that the knowledge we have in this life about divine and heavenly things is like nothing more than pieces of broken bottles, or like looking into a dark mirror.<sup>152</sup>

However, he does make one very clear statement:

... the good God and merciful heavenly Father is not the cause of anyone's damnation; on the other hand, no person born and bred from the seed of Adam is the cause of his own salvation. For the one who is saved, is saved by grace, and the one who is damned is damned because of his own sins. Because of unbelief, obstinacy, and stubbornness, he is condemned and cast away from God. This is the way it is, even though we, with our spirit, cannot comprehend or understand it.<sup>153</sup>

Coolhaes, therefore, says that God's grace saves, but God does not condemn. People are the cause of their own condemnation. So, although *Naedencken* is primarily an exhortation to Arminius and Gomarus to nourish more and dispute less, Coolhaes does express, albeit briefly, the paradox he holds in tension on the predestination/free will question.

Coolhaes may be indebted for this way of looking at the question to Caspar Schwenckfeld, who held a view between that of Luther and Erasmus: "in the old man the will is enslaved, but in the new it is free." The new man *had* to choose, and then he *could* choose.<sup>154</sup> After the initial saving grace, obedience and continued growth is needed to

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150. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Fijr/44.

151. As we have seen, he addresses these issues in his earlier works; the clearest statements are Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, Diiijb, and Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Gij.

152. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Cij/20. The "dark mirror" is, of course, an allusion to 1 Cor. 13:12.

153. "... de goede God ende barmhertighe Hemelsche Vader/ gheen oorsake en is/ van eens eenighen Menschen verdoemenisse/ ende dat daerenteghen oock/ niet een eenich Mensche uyt het zaed Adams vvorgebracht ende gheteelt zijnde/ selfs oorsake soude zijn van sijner eyghener salicheyt. Waerom dan de gene/ die salich worden/ uyt ghenaden salich worden/ ende die/ welke verdoemt worden/ om haerder eyghen sonden/ onghelooove/ obstinaetheyt ende hardneckicheyt willen van Godt verstooten ende verdoempt worden: Al ist soo/ dat wy t'selve met onser vernuft niet en kunnen begrijpen noch verstaen." Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, C/17–Cb/18.

154. Paul L. Maier, *Caspar Schwenckfeld on the Person and Work of Christ. A Study of Schwenckfeldian Theology as its Core* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1959/2004), 12. Peter C. Erb, "The Beginning and End: Caspar Schwenckfeld on the Person of Christ," in *Schwenckfeld in his Reformation Setting* (Pennsburg, PA: Judson Press, 1978), 77. Also see: Christopher Schultz, *A Vindication of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig. An Elucidation of his Doctrine and the Vicissitudes of his Followers* (1769), trans. Elmer Schultz Gerhard (Allentown, PA: Edward Schlechter, 1942). Also see: H. H. Drake Williams III, trans. and ed., *Caspar Schwenckfeld: Eight Writings on Christian Beliefs* (Ontario: Pandora Press, 2006).



continue in salvation. Coolhaes did not mention Schwenckfeld in this connection, but the similarity is there.

But, one could ask, what about original sin? Although Coolhaes said, at the Synod of Middelburg, that he had never denied the doctrine, it does not appear as a factor in his formulations. It could be that this is an area in which his views changed over time. In works written throughout his life, however, he emphasized the need for repentance and change. It would be hard to make a case from his writings for a “total depravity” which would mean that an individual did not have the freedom to “choose the good.”<sup>155</sup>

After the death of Arminius, Coolhaes still felt uneasy about the situation at the university. He wrote again to Gomarus: the letter is Coolhaes’ book, *De basuyne ofte trompette Godes*, 1610.<sup>156</sup> The instruments in the title refer to verses from the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Hezekiah, which compare the brass instruments to calls of warning for impending judgment. Coolhaes understands, he said, that Arminius in his last days was unable to respond to his last writing. That Gomarus has still not responded, Coolhaes attributed to his current status as a false teacher, or as a tradesman, neither of which merits a response.<sup>157</sup> He repeated the themes of *Naedencken* – spirituality should not be only in learning, but seen in one’s life in servanthood. The university should teach this reality, and be like a garden for young plants, rather than teaching the student to dispute and argue.<sup>158</sup> Christ is the example: Christ is the one Rector of Leiden University; he is a true theologian in the truth.<sup>159</sup>

Coolhaes wrote briefly again against the doctrine of predestination:

How many thousands of people are converted by the disputation about predestination – inspired to salaciousness, to idleness and godlessness, who otherwise would repent and improve their lives? How many are brought to desperation, and hindered, that they could not call out to God or believe, and because of that their prayer is not heard by the Lord?

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155. See the discussions about the Synod of Middelburg in Chapter 3, and about his book *Sendtbrief* in Chapter 4 for more details.

156. Caspar Coolhaes, *De basuyne ofte trompette Godes. De welcke sijn goddelijcke majesteyt, den propheet Esaia, ende allen sijnen h. profeten, apostelen, getrouwen herders ende leereren, sonder ophouden te blasen bevolen heft, om sijn volck voor haren erfvyandt, den duyvel, te verwaerschouwen, ten eynde dat sy van hem niet verrascht, ende met den eewighen doot geslaghen mogen worden, tot hunlieden eewich verderffnisse ende onderganck* (Gouda: Jasper Tournay, 1610).

157. Coolhaes, *De basuyne ofte trompette Godes*, Aiiiijr–B.

158. Coolhaes, *De basuyne ofte trompette Godes*, Fij.

159. Coolhaes, *De basuyne ofte trompette Godes*, Hiiiij.

For the person in his prayer (which he makes to the Lord) doubts, and does not think that he will ever be received by the Lord, as James says in 1:6.<sup>160</sup>

This is very much like Arminius' concern for the dangers of excessive *securitas*.<sup>161</sup> Arminius had considered *securitas* to mean that, because of a person's election, he "persuades himself that, however inattentive he may be to the worship of God, he will not be damned but saved." The other extreme, *desperatio*, is when he "persuades himself that, whatever degree of reverence he may evince towards God, he will not receive any remuneration." Both, said Arminius, are "contrary to faith."<sup>162</sup> In writing this to Gomarus, Coolhaes may be trying to raise one of Arminius' fallen banners.

### Reflections on a long life

Coolhaes' final works did not deal with any of the preoccupations of his later years. Instead, once more he set about defending himself and his ideas. Perhaps this defensiveness related to the continued questions about him which came up in the Amsterdam church, as we saw earlier. In 1610, he addressed *Een cort, waerachtich verhael* to the States of Holland. This is his most autobiographical work, an "ego document," and is his second-longest book (after *Apologia*). Coolhaes told the story of how he came to preach in Leiden, and commemorated the events of his life and ministry.<sup>163</sup> He appealed to the government to be the guardians and foster-parents of the church.<sup>164</sup> The historical reflections in this work, however, have a usefulness beyond Coolhaes' own story. His personal memories were recalled at a time of increasing political tension, already leading to turbulent events. Theological disagreements between Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants would result in political conflict and near-

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160. "Hoe veel duysent menschen worden door het disputeren van de Predestinatie verkeert: tot wulpsheyt, tot ydelheyt ende tot godloosheyt verweckt, die anders wel boete gedaen, ende haer leven ghebetert souden hebben, ende noch daghelijcx hun beteren soude. Hoe veel menschen worden door de selve in wanhopinghe ghebrocht, ende verhindert, dat sy Godt niet aenroepen noch ghelooven connen, ende dat daeromme oock haer gebedt niet verhoort en wort van den Heere? want de mensche die in sijn ghebedt (t'welck hy tot den Heere doet) twijfelt/ die en denckt niet/ dat hy yet ontfangen sal van den Heere/ soo de H. Jacobus seyt 1.6." Coolhaes, *De basuyne ofte trompette Godes*, Ir.

161. Stanglin and McCall, *Jacob Arminius*, 179-82.

162. Stanglin, *Arminius on the Assurance of Salvation*, 174.

163. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 190.

164. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 194.

civil war. By this book, he intended to warn the members of the States, and indeed all civil government, to rule the church as he believed that they should. His story incorporated the events in Leiden and beyond, and contributed to the collective memory of a time of great political and religious change in the Netherlands.<sup>165</sup>

In the next year, 1611, Coolhaes' translations of Gwalther, *Van de Christelijcke Discipline ende excommunicatie* were reprinted in a third edition with Coolhaes' new foreword. This new foreword,<sup>166</sup> dedicated to the Leiden magistracy, gives him a last chance to defend himself, his views and his choices. Coolhaes says that he was re-publishing because, due to his enemies, his works as well as those of the magistracy had been "thrown behind the couch" and suspicious to some in the States.<sup>167</sup> Coolhaes, in addressing the Leiden magistracy, calls himself "very old," and says that "no one to my knowledge has suffered from false brothers as much as poor me."<sup>168</sup> This complaint is anything but new, although here he sounds tired and disillusioned.<sup>169</sup> The people, meanwhile, "take their cues from the Hoeks and Kabeljauws"<sup>170</sup> and go outside the city to satisfy their itching ears with preachers they prefer, which happened earlier in Leiden and Voorschoten, but was now happening also in Alkmaar and Utrecht.<sup>171</sup> So Coolhaes, in conclusion, dedicates his work to the magistracy, exhorting them to maintain their rule.<sup>172</sup>

On the personal level, Coolhaes had said earlier of his family "I have lived together honestly with my wife for forty-one years, and have had seventeen children, whom we, as

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165. For more discussion of cultures of memory and commemoration in the Netherlands of Coolhaes' time, see "Tales of the Revolt," <https://www.vre.leidenuniv.nl/vre/tales/emm/Pages/Home.aspx> (accessed January 27, 2016).

166. Coolhaes, in this foreword, mentions his later work, *Een cort waerachtich verhael*, which was published in 1610. So this foreword must have been written in 1610 or later. The foreword is thus Coolhaes' last writing. This is Rogge's opinion: Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 2, 150-51.

167. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio Av.

168. "Maer mijns wetens en isser niemant die also vanden valschen Broederen ghequelt is worden als ick arme ..." Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folios 2b - 3v.

169. See Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios Bv, Biiv.

170. The well-known feud between the Hoeks and Kabeljauws, two noble families, took place in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See S. ter Braake, "Parties and Factions in the Late Middle Ages: The Case of the Hoeken and Kabeljauwen in The Hague (1483-1515)," *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009): 97-111.

171. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio A2r.

172. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio A3r.

much as we were able, raise in the fear of God; of which twelve fell asleep in the Lord and only five are left, three sons and two daughters, all now adults.”<sup>173</sup> As for Coolhaes’ wife, Grietje, in 1610 he mentions her again: “my wife (with whom I have been blessed through the Lord to live for fifty years, and with whom I am still living in the married state).”<sup>174</sup> Despite the weaknesses to which she had been subject throughout her life, she lived along with him to a ripe old age.<sup>175</sup> As for the children who had been mentioned in the 1581 census, Sara, Rebeke, Caspar, Adolf, and Judith, some records remain. Sara was married in Leiden on September 6, 1591, to Lambert Jheronimusz of Leiden, an apothecary.<sup>176</sup> Judith is recorded as having been buried in Amsterdam in 1598.<sup>177</sup> Coolhaes’ oldest son, Caspar Casparszoon, was married in Amsterdam in June, 1601, to Jannecken Claesdochter.<sup>178</sup> He later became a full citizen in Gouda in 1616.<sup>179</sup> This Gouda connection is also seen in Coolhaes’ writings - in 1608, Coolhaes brought out a new edition of his *Water-boecxken*, published in Gouda. His *Een basuyne ofte trompette Godes*, 1610, was also published there. Son Adolf Casparszoon was married in Amsterdam in December, 1602, to a woman whose name was Hillether [sic] Claesdochter, and a child of theirs was baptized, also in Amsterdam, in 1604.<sup>180</sup> Adolf took over management of his father’s distillery in Amsterdam in 1607.<sup>181</sup> Although Moes and Burger mention that Coolhaes’ business still existed in Amsterdam 1622, which is seen by a

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173. Coolhaes, *Een noodtwendinghe broederlijke vermaninge*, folio Dr.

174. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 130.

175. Van Dooren, *De nationale synode te Middelburg*, 174.

176. Marriage record of Sara Caspersd. Coolhaes, 6 Sep. 1591, Nederlands Hervormd Ondertrouw (1575-1795), archiefnr. 1004, inventarisnr. 2, folio B-160v, ELO.

177. Burial record of Judith Casparsdochter Coolhaes, Begrafenisregister, 1598, 216, SAA.

178. Marriage registration and signature of Caspar Casparszoon Coolhaes, Trouwboek 1601, OT 1601,150, SAA.

179. I was able to verify this with the kind help of Cathelijne Timmermann of Streekarchief Midden-Holland [SAMH], who scanned the Poorterboek entry for me. The entry lists Caspar Casparszoon Coolhaes, earlier resident in Deventer, was made a citizen by Ghijsbert Loebertzs. burgemeester, May 7, 1616. Poorterboek Gouda, folio 71v, SAMH.

180. Marriage registration and signature of Adolph Casparszoon Coolhaes, 174, Trouwboek 1602, OT 1602, SAA; Doopregister, 1604, 82, SAA. “Hillether” is an unusual name, but the handwriting is fairly clear.

181. Sale of shop, Notaris 1607, 87-88, SAA. Inventory and prices are listed, and the document shows both men’s signatures. For further information about the shop, see also Notaris 1626, 38-43, SAA.

later re-publication of *Water-boecxken* in that year after Coolhaes' death in which Adolf was mentioned as still operating the business at the same shop in Amsterdam,<sup>182</sup> records show that an Adalphijs Coolhaes died and was buried in Amsterdam in 1617. Adolf's wife is also recorded as having been buried in the same year.<sup>183</sup> Incidentally, citizenship in Amsterdam had been mentioned as a possibility in 1601.<sup>184</sup> Nevertheless, none of the Coolhaes men appear in the Amsterdam records as having become citizens.<sup>185</sup>

In any event, in 1614, Coolhaes may have travelled to Leiden for the engraving of his portrait, in which he is pictured as a professor of the University. The portrait exists and the engraving is anonymous. In this portrait, Coolhaes' head and shoulders are framed in an oval, surrounded by a simple rectangular frame. Below is written: "Casparus Coolhaesius S.S., Theologiae Professor." He wears a fur collar, and a ruff,<sup>186</sup> "einen Mann mit vollem Bart und freundlichen Augen," as Van Dooren puts it.<sup>187</sup>

On January 15, 1615, Coolhaes died in Amsterdam, as it is thought.<sup>188</sup>

Contra-Remonstrants were soon linking his name with the Remonstrant cause. He was not mentioned in the list by the Remonstrant Wtenbogaert in his *Copie van seker Vertoogh*

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182. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 58-59.

183. Burial register, Begrafenisregister, 1617, 21, 30, SAA.

184. Notaris 1601, 82 r, SAA.

185. Marloes Clarenburg of the SAA writes, "In die [akte] van 1601 zou er sprake zijn van poorterschap, maar in de Poorterboeken komt Koolhaes of één van zijn zonen niet voor." E-mail to author, May 27, 2015.

186. Meursius, *Illustrium Hollandiae et Westfrisiae Ordinum Alma Academia Leidensis*, folio A1v, UBL: 116 B 16; also Deventer, Historisch Museum De Waag (inv. nr. P490); also reproduced in Bostoen, *Hart voor Leiden*, 52. It is also to be seen in Salman, *Een handdruk van de tijd*, 47. Another engraving exists by J. Buys and Reinier Vinkeles (1785). It portrays an older-looking and heavier man, with a white beard. This second portrait is reproduced in Revius, *Licht op Deventer*, 97.

187. Van Dooren, "Kaspar Kohlhaas," 86.

188. I rely here on Willen Nijenhuis' article on Coolhaes from 1998, which lists Coolhaes' death place as Amsterdam: Nijenhuis, "Coolhaes," *BLGNP*, vol. 4, 102. Earlier scholars had been divided: Burger lists some evidence for a move of Coolhaes to Leiden. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 134. He also spent some time in Gouda; we have seen above that he wrote *Een basuyne ofte trompette Godes*, 1610, there. However, Revius recorded of him, "obiit Amstelodami." *BWPGN*, vol. 5, 200. I am also indebted to Marloes Clarenburg of the SAA, for verifying that his death is not recorded there. She writes, "Zijn overlijden is inderdaad niet aangetroffen in Amsterdam." E-mail to author, May 27, 2015. I am indeed grateful also to mv. Clarenburg for pointing me to all of the above-mentioned documents in the SAA.

*onlanghs by eenighe Predicanten der Ghereformeerde Kerck ghedaen*, 1617. However, he is listed in *Klaer ende grondich Teghen-vertooch* published by the staunch Calvinist Trigland in the same year.<sup>189</sup> Trigland was the first to call Coolhaes the Remonstrants' "forerunner."<sup>190</sup> Since Coolhaes had continued to be controversial all his life, this association may well have been a tactic by Trigland to discredit the Remonstrants. Coolhaes was then labeled as a key forerunner of Arminius at the National Synod of Dort, 1618-1619, in the foreword of the *Acta* of the Synod,<sup>191</sup> as the first in a list of three, along with Herman Herbertsz of Dordrecht and Gouda, and Cornelis Wiggers of Hoorn. What Arminius himself thought of him is unknown. Considering that Arminius had died earlier, in 1609, and that in his last years he had been preoccupied with his own battles, he may not spared any thought for Coolhaes.<sup>192</sup>

Before we end this general section of biography, it would be good to address the question, in general, about the development or the evolution of his views. Did Coolhaes' basic views change radically as a result of his life circumstances? Perhaps surprisingly, the answer is: not very much. Still, some development can be seen. We will talk about his views on Spiritualism, the church and state question, preachers and synods, and tolerance and

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189. "Onder alle de Predicanten die in deselve Kercke [he means in Leiden] ghestaen ende gheleert hebben van den aanvangh der Reformatie voor de comste in de Vniversiteit aldaer, en souden sy niet een connen voort brenghen, die in haer ghevoelen ghestaen heft, als alleen Casparum Coolhaes..." quote from Trigland, *Klaer ende grondich Tegen-vertooch*, 1617, 36-37, as quoted by Burger. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 136.

190. Trigland, *Kerckelycke geschiedenissen*, 188-90.

191. "Deze lieflijke, Gode en allen vromen zeer aangename vrede en eenstemmigheid, hebben sommigen, die, het Pausdom verlatende, maar den zuurdeesem des Pausdoms niet ten volle uitgezuiverd hebbende, tot onze Kerken waren overgekomen, en tot dienst derzelve in die eerste schaarschheid van Predikanten toegelaten werden, gezocht te verstoren: Caspar Coolhaas te Leiden; Hermannus Herbertsz te Dordrecht en te Gouda; en Cornelis Wiggers te Hoorn; met eene zeer ongebreidelde stoutheid, doch niet met zeer grooten voortgang. Want hoewel dezelve in de voornoemde plaatsen sommigen, die den Gereformeerden Godsdienst niet al te gunstig waren, gekregen hadden, op dewelken zij steunden, nochtans desnietteenstaande is deze hunne booze stoutheid, zoo door autoriteit der Hooge Overheid, als door de zorgvuldige voorzichtigheid der Predikanten en billijke censuren der Kerken, bij tijds bedwongen geweest; Coolhaas in de Nationale Synode van Middelburg; Herbertsz in de Synoden van ZuidHolland, en Wiggers in de Synoden van NoordHolland. Daarna heeft Jacobus Arminius, Predikant in de beroemde Kerk van Amsterdam, datzelve met een dapper opzet gepoogd te doen, een man wel van een kloek verstand, maar die nergens behagen in had, dan in hetgeen door eenen schijn van nieuwhed zichzelf recommandeerde; alzoo dat hij van het meestedeel der leerstukken, in de Gereformeerde Kerken aangenomen, een walg scheen te hebben, nergens anders om, dan omdat ze van de Kerken aangenomen waren." "Acta of handelingen der Nationale synode... te Dordrecht." *Kerkrecht*, <http://www.kerkrecht.nl/sites/default/files/Nationale%20Synode%20te%20Dordrecht%20201618-1619.pdf> (accessed January 27 2016), vi.

192. On the other hand, David J. Sturdy claims in his *Fractured Europe, 1600-1721* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 186, that Arminius became convinced of the truth in Coolhaes' views when he was asked to rebut them by the Amsterdam consistory in 1588. We have not found this assertion elsewhere, or any proof for it.

diversity in the second part of this dissertation. The details properly belong there. But we can say here that his fundamental beliefs are all present in the Essen statement of faith of 1571, and in his first two books, *Apologia* and *Breeder bericht* of 1580.

It seems that all the big changes – from Carthusian monk to Protestant preacher, and perhaps a wavering back and forth between Melancthonian-Lutheran and Zwinglian-Reformed – happened before any of his written works. The Essen statement of faith, as we have seen, included an emphasis on the visible and invisible church, and addressed inclusion and exclusion in both. It condemned harsh Christian discipline and reliance on ceremonies rather than inner faith. It demonstrated his sacramental ideas, which do not fall clearly into any category. It also showed that he was unwilling to be precise about predestination and free will. In Deventer, he rejoiced in the broad, inter-confessional cooperation. In *Apologia* and *Breeder bericht*, he continued to defend himself and the way he was running the Leiden church, and to condemn Calvinist discipline and the church–state relationship.

It is true that after his excommunication and defrocking, he was critical of the Reformed Church. However, all evidence shows that he remained in its orbit. Perhaps it can be said, however, that he was actually less critical than before of the Reformed, but more critical, after his excommunication, of all denominations and confessions in his later *Seeckere punten* and *Toutzsteen*. The excommunication and defrocking surely brought all aspects of ecclesiology to the forefront of his attention, although now he exhorted the whole visible church, rather than just the Reformed.

It could be that he relied less on the physical sacrament of communion personally – after all, he had been banned and for a greater or lesser time had to live without it. However, he did not deny its usefulness to others. He continued to be critical of clergy, and associated instead with all kinds of “heretics.” However, even back in *Apologia* he had recorded that people had been saying that his congregation, full of “sinners,” was as bad as a pigpen. So he was only continuing with the kinds of friends he had always had.

It could be said that, in his maturity, what he changed were not his views but his tactics. If he had ever been “intellectual,” he now was “popular.” Unable to preach, he turned to his woodcut *emblemata* prints, to Christianizing almanacs, and to objections to astrology and Catholic “superstitions” in order to influence people for what he thought was good for them and society. He continued to defend himself and his reputation fiercely, and also began to defend other underdogs – the Frisian Mennonites, the departed Franck. For the crucial

debates at Leiden University, which would change the face of theology forever, he had only rebuke. His desire for diversity, though, did not abate. Despite his condemnation of Catholic saints' days and practices later in life, he made a fictional Jesuit one of the heroes of *Tsamenspreekinghe*. So we see that the title of the bibliography compiled by Jacob Jetzes Kalma - "from monk to tolerant preacher to libertine"<sup>193</sup> – is not accurate. Coolhaes always wanted and preached broad freedom – in Essen, in Deventer, in Leiden. Advocating religious liberty was not just something which he ran to after his excommunication.

In conclusion, these chapters have given a biographical sketch of Coolhaes, building on information from Rogge and Burger, but also incorporating much new information from various sources. We have seen his early life in Germany as a Roman Catholic and then as a Protestant preacher. We have followed him to the Northern Netherlands and traced his disagreements in Leiden with the stricter Calvinist preachers around him. We have looked in detail at his defrocking and excommunication, and seen how he took up the trade of distilling but continued to write about the topics of diversity, Christian freedom, and the church. We have taken an in-depth look at some of the preoccupations of his pen in the years of his maturity. In the next section, we will first look at Coolhaes the Spiritualist, and then examine his specific views on the church-state question, on what makes good preachers, elders and deacons, and on diversity in the visible church. Throughout, we will focus on Coolhaes, and on what sort of church he would have wanted to build in the Netherlands if he could have done so.

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193. Jacob Jetzes Kalma, *Caspar Jansz. Coolhaes (1536-1615): van monnik tot tolerant predikant tot libertijn: bibliographische aantekeningen* (Leeuwarden: Eigen beheer, 1984).



## Part II: The church Coolhaes wanted: an ecclesiology

### Chapter 6: Through a Spiritualist prism

In the first part of this dissertation, we looked at the life Coolhaes led. Our biographical sketch was indispensable to understanding Coolhaes and his views. In his case, life and theological principles are inextricably woven. The events of his life were thus retold briefly. They inspired most of his written works, which were responses to events or, often, defenses against accusations. We introduced many of those works in the context of their chronology. In this second part, we will examine the church that Coolhaes would have wanted, if he could have created it. Therefore, many of his doctrines and views, which we touched upon earlier will be addressed more deeply as we focus on his ecclesiology. Here we will analyze the several basic categories which make up his doctrine of the church – what he believed theoretically, what he taught, and what he would have put into practice. Many quotations from and references to his own works, along with other sources, will be cited in our picture of his ecclesiology.

The church was Coolhaes' central preoccupation. Diversity in the church, with love, was his goal. He wanted diversity in the bodies of the visible church which existed already, and mutual respect between the various confessions. For him, "party-spiritedness" was always a negative quality. As we have seen,<sup>194</sup> he did not think it would have been the right thing for him to have formed a new church or party of his own. He thought that such a thing would have helped Satan to create even more division. We will see that he did not want further options, groups and choices for religion in society. He did not want a narrowing of confessional categories.

If Coolhaes had been able to create the church which he wanted, the church that he thought was biblical and right, the church he thought best for the new Republic, it would have been a diverse, broad church. It might have been Reformed theologically, but it would have included all other groups in Christendom as subgroups which had the right to be present and active in their own ways. Also, it would have been a church watched over by benevolent, Christian magistrates, rather than preachers bound up in confessionalism. It would have been led, day-to-day, by church servants who were truly called, both by the civil government and

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194. For earlier discussion, see Chapter 4. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 163.

by God, and who cared more about love than about any specific ceremonies. In addition, it would have been a church seen through his version of Spiritualism – defined through the binary of visible and invisible, with an emphasis on the unseen but essential.

At various times, scholars have co-opted Coolhaes to serve their needs. As we have seen, Coolhaes was regarded, immediately after his own lifetime, as a forerunner of the Remonstrant Church. Others have suspected that his tolerance of Arians and Socinians meant that he shared their views. Advocates of religious tolerance have also been glad through the years to claim him as one of their own. Those looking from the perspective of Reformed thought can easily label him as an Erastian or a follower of the Zurich theologians, both in his ideas of the relationship between church and state and in the seeming resemblance of his Eucharistic ideas to that of Zwingli, whereas others who are less confessionally-oriented emphasize the idea of “confessional indifference” which has been attributed to him. We have even seen vestiges of Lutheran doctrine, in his emphases on repentance, justification, and unlimited atonement. There is some truth in most of these labels. He was both eclectic himself, and sympathetic to most others who differed with him. In fact, though, the key to Coolhaes’ eclecticism is found in his Spiritualism. He was tolerant, Erastian, individualistic, anti-confessional, broadly Reformed. But to gain a clear picture of his ecclesiology, we maintain that he can best be viewed through a Spiritualist lens, out of which are refracted the individual colors of his eclectic ecclesiology.

The identification of Coolhaes with the Spiritualist stream is relatively recent.<sup>195</sup> This chapter will develop this idea, discussing how Coolhaes saw the church through the “prism” of his Spiritualism. He was tolerant, critical, and individualistic as he advocated his ideal church. First, this chapter will present a definition of Spiritualism, then look at how scholars have identified and categorized certain figures in this group. It will then compare and contrast Coolhaes with them. His Spiritualism will also be seen in his convictions about the invisible church and in his views of the sacraments. This discussion of Coolhaes’ Spiritualism will also function as an introduction to the remaining chapters, since Coolhaes’ other significant views – about church and state, anticlericalism, and above all diversity – can be seen to flow out of this Spiritualistic center.

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195. Benjamin Kaplan has been in the forefront here: Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 106.

## Stepchildren and other rebels

“Spiritualism” is a term that, in this context, signifies the mindset of a group of religious figures, mostly in the sixteenth century. In their day, many idiosyncratic, Spiritualistic individuals were labeled as heretical and dangerous. In the *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, attributed to Coolhaes by many, for instance, the author accuses Marnix of lumping together and condemning Franck, Tauler, Joris, Niclaes, Muntzer, and Jan van Leyden, who supposedly used dark allegories and “high-sounding language” such as divinization.<sup>196</sup> The characterization of this whole group with the more violent of them, demonized them. Chroniclers eventually listed them as part of the unwieldy “catch-all” group of the Radical Reformers - the “stepchildren of Christianity.”<sup>197</sup> However, H. C. Rogge, writing Coolhaes’ biography in the mid-nineteenth century, did not think of Spiritualism as an important label for Coolhaes. For him, as we saw in the Introduction, the most important thing was to defend Coolhaes’ link with Arminius and the Remonstrants.

Spiritualists are diverse and hard to categorize. R. Emmet McLaughlin gives a helpful, broad definition of Spiritualist characteristics in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*. Sixteenth-century Spiritualists typically held one or more of several characteristics: first, individualism; second, a dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Reformation; third, a view of the nature of the church which emphasizes religious freedom; fourth, some type of dualistic view of reality, including the importance of an “inner Word,” with a corresponding emphasis on the interior, affective, mystical relationship with God; and fifth, distinctive or unusual Christologies, such as the doctrine of “heavenly flesh,” or non-trinitarianism.<sup>198</sup> Coolhaes exemplifies all of these characteristics but the fifth.<sup>199</sup>

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196. See Chapter 5 for the discussion. Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, B2-3.

197. Johannes Lindeboom, *Stiefkinderen van het Christendom* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1929); Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 67. See also Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), who uses the term to support his thesis that most rebels and many heretics throughout church history were actually the Anabaptistic followers of the original New Testament faith. He calls them the “Second Front” (see 11–20). Also important as a standard source for study of the “Radicals” is G. H. Williams, *Radical Reformation* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press), 2000.

198. These criteria are taken from R. Emmet McLaughlin, “Schwenckfeld, Caspar von,” *OER*, vol. 4, 21–23, and R. Emmet McLaughlin, “Spiritualism,” *OER*, vol. 4, 105–106. The idea of the “heavenly flesh” is

In other words, we can say that people who have been identified as Spiritualists were dissatisfied, critical, tolerant and idealistic, and focused on the subjective aspects of religion and the free working of God's Spirit, often without the need for ceremonies, Scripture and external sacraments.<sup>200</sup> Sometimes, but not always, they held other unorthodox views about God and Christ. There is no clear consensus among scholars about how to group these individuals, or even agreement on a comprehensive list.<sup>201</sup> There was no movement called Spiritualism; Spiritualists did not necessarily have any contact with each other. While some knew and influenced each other, others were not connected. Some Spiritualists were Anabaptists, but not all.

Still, despite the heretical reputation many Spiritualists had, Spiritualism in the earlier part of the sixteenth century can also be seen as a force for reform, giving a "religious legitimation" for advocates of tolerance.<sup>202</sup> Spiritualist themes were well-represented in the plays of the Chambers of Rhetoric.<sup>203</sup> Of course, all of the reformers, magisterial, radical, and others, wanted reform. But the Spiritualists were different in that they emphasized the role of the subjective and the Spirit, as they defined them, more than the others did. They were in this sense mystics, as well as reformers. Spiritualism had "absorbed important aspects of late medieval mysticism but within an ethical and individualistic framework that was distinctly post-medieval."<sup>204</sup> This Spiritualist mysticism emphasized the unseen and the invisible. Therefore, the study of Spiritualist sources is not straightforward, because the sources tend to

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also found in Melchior Hoffman, Menno Simons and Clement Ziegler, although the three are not listed with the Spiritualists (see list below).

199. We have defended Coolhaes as a Trinitarian in Chapter 4.

200. Bergsma, *Aggaeus van Albada*, 43.

201. Those figures who are recognized now in some sense or other as sixteenth century Spiritualists include: Thomas Müntzer, Sebastian Franck, Caspar von Schwenckfeld, Valentin Crautwald, Hans Bündlerin, Christian Entfelder, Johannes Campanus, Valentin Weigel, Dirk Volkertszoon Coornhert, Hans Denck, Ludwig Hätzer, David Joris, Hendrik Niclaes, Michael Servetus, Sébastien Castellio, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, Theophrastus Paracelsus, Jacob Böhme, the Unitarians (Socinians), and the "Zwickau prophets": Nicholas Storch, Thomas Dreschel Marx, and Marcus Thomä Stübner. This list is taken from McLaughlin, "Spiritualism," *OER*, vol. 4, 105-106. Coolhaes does not appear in it.

202. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 4.

203. Gary K. Waite, *Reformers on Stage: Popular Drama and Religious Propaganda in the Low Countries of Charles V, 1515-1556* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 172-75, 205; Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 83-86. See also: Mirjam van Veen, "Spiritualism in the Netherlands: From David Joris to Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 33 (2002), 129-50.

204. Bernard McGinn, "Mysticism," *OER*, vol. 3, 123.

be metaphorical and hard to understand – full of “pseudonyms, secrets, veiled language, allegories and secret language.”<sup>205</sup> Coolhaes writes in this way frequently throughout his works. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the majority of Spiritualists emerged from German (or Dutch) -speaking places. The culture of the *Theologia Germanica*, Johannes Tauler, and the Rhineland Mystics did not only inspire Luther, but also bred the Spiritualists. Coolhaes, therefore, is right at home in this group geographically as well as spiritually.

There is no agreement at this time among scholars about how Spiritualists should be categorized. Spiritualist characteristics can perhaps best be seen as a matrix of values, which these individuals held to a greater or lesser degree. Some individuals focused on the Spirit, but used philosophical reasoning. Others threw themselves into true mystical contemplations which had less to do with logic. Some were activists who set out to change society by preaching tolerance and the rights of individuals. Others emerged as compelling political leaders or “prophets” of sects. To classify them all here would be less than useful. But as an overview, some scholars differentiate between mystics, rationalists and activists.<sup>206</sup> Other scholars highlight the difference between Anabaptists and “Evangelicals.”<sup>207</sup> Some trace *Täufer*, Spiritualists, *Schwärmer*, and anti-Trinitarians.<sup>208</sup> Other terms brought into the categorization attempts are “Charismatics” such as Thomas Müntzer, “Sacramentals” such as Schwenckfeld, and “Noetics” (metaphysicians) such as Franck.<sup>209</sup> Still others use additional terms such as libertines, Unitarians, and “egocentric prophets.”<sup>210</sup> R. P. Zijp, in discussing Spiritualism in the sixteenth-century Netherlands, focuses on two of the more extreme examples, David Joris and Hendrik Niclaes, and then on Coornhert, as an “impartial”

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205. Bergsma, *Aggaeus van Albada*, VIII.

206. This is the terminology of Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*.

207. These are the categories of Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 1293. See also G. H. Williams, “Radical Reformation,” *OER*, vol. 3, 376.

208. Heinold Fast, *Der linke Flügel der Reformation* (Bremen: Carl Schünemann Verlag, 1962), ‘Einleitung’; IX-XXXV.

209. R. Emmet McLaughin, “Reformation Spiritualism: Typology, Sources, and Significance,” in Hans-Jürgen Goertz, and James M. Stayer, eds., *Radikalität und Dissent im 16. Jahrhundert; Radicalism and Dissent in the Sixteenth Century* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2002), 127.

210. E. M. Braeckman, “Les courants religieux de la Réforme au Pays-Bas,” in *The Century of Marnix St. Aldegonde*, ed. Michel Baelde and Herman van Nuffel (Oostende: Toulon, 1982), 24. See also: McLaughin, “Reformation Spiritualism.”

Spiritualist.<sup>211</sup> However, these categories are of only limited usefulness. Each Spiritualist is unique. Classifying Coolhaes is also not easy in such a diverse group. The most helpful method in connecting him with such a complex collection of figures and views is to find links between them and identify similarities and differences.

His closest Spiritualist relatives

In fact, several of the numerous Spiritualists are similar to Coolhaes in one way or another, especially in their views of the visible versus the invisible, their openness to the Spirit, and their struggle in favor of tolerance. Sebastian Franck must be the first Spiritualist to be mentioned in connection with him, since Coolhaes linked himself with Franck by defending him and translating and expanding the “Apologia” from Franck’s *Seven-sealed Book*. Franck was absorbed by the contrasts between the visible and invisible, the external and internal, and so was Coolhaes. Also, Coolhaes undoubtedly drew important inspiration from Franck in relation to tolerance of others, diversity, and disgust for party-spirited clerics who did not share these convictions. However, Franck called the external Scripture and its usual interpretations and thus usefulness into question by finding both good and bad in the same passages. Coolhaes did not follow him in this hermeneutic.<sup>212</sup>

Caspar Schwenckfeld, a different type of Spiritualist from Franck, interpreted the Bible with metaphorical definitions of various terms. However, he did not use the dualistic hermeneutic of Franck. Nevertheless, he was just as concerned to differentiate between the visible and the invisible, the external and the internal. Eventually, in conjunction with his *Stillstand*, he proclaimed no need for the external Eucharist at all in the present age. Coolhaes surely must have been inspired by Schwenckfeld on the Eucharist, as we will argue later in this chapter, but he does not show any influence from Schwenckfeld’s “heavenly flesh” Christology, in which Jesus is a new sort of humanity.<sup>213</sup> Schwenckfeld reasoned that the

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211. R. P. Zijp, “Spiritualisme in de 16de eeuw, een schets,” in *Ketters en Papen onder Filips II*, ed. Paul P. W. M. Dirkse and Robert P. Zijp (Utrecht: Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, 1986), 75-93. See also M. E. H. N. Mout, “Spiritualisten in de Nederlandse Reformatie van de zestiende eeuw,” *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 111 (1996): 297-313.

212. See Chapter 5 for a longer discussion of this work, and of similarities and differences between Coolhaes and Franck.

213. McLaughlin, “Schwenckfeld,” *OER*, vol. 4, 23. Also, Maier, *Caspar Schwenckfeld on the Person and Work of Christ*, 2.

immaculate conception of Mary was needed so Christ did not have “tainted” flesh. Furthermore, faith is the spark, the new man, Christ’s divine flesh, in the believer.<sup>214</sup>

Despite this, Coolhaes shows much similarity to both Franck and Schwenckfeld. Schwenckfeld, Franck and Coolhaes did agree that reason and faith were often in opposition, since the simple but godly often precede the more educated in being enlightened.<sup>215</sup> Coolhaes’ resemblance to “sacramental” Schwenckfeld includes his doctrine of sacraments, which seems so striking that we will discuss it later in this chapter. On the other hand, Coolhaes is somewhat like “noetic” Franck, in that both are skeptical of accepted confessional interpretations of Scripture, and pleaded for tolerance of diversity. But Coolhaes does not resemble Franck at a deeper level. At that level, the primary orientations of Franck and Schwenckfeld are quite different from each other. Schwenckfeld continued largely in an Augustinian, biblical tradition, emphasizing the heart and growth of the individual believer. His views have been said to foreshadow affective Pietism.<sup>216</sup> Coolhaes is similar to him in this orientation. Franck, on the other hand, lived in the Pseudo-Dionysian *via negativa* inherited from the earlier German mystics, which can be said to prefigure deism and eventually even atheism.<sup>217</sup> Also, Franck “privileged Spirit over Scripture.”<sup>218</sup> It is true that both Schwenckfeld and Coolhaes gave the Spirit a high and important role, but Franck contrasts the Spirit versus the Word, to the extent that, for him and “for many Spiritualists, the Bible has no soteriological function.”<sup>219</sup> Franck emphasized the role of the Spirit, as we mentioned earlier, enough for the “Word” to come “loose” from the Bible,<sup>220</sup> which allows it to be interpreted in all sorts of different, non-traditional, non-orthodox ways.

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214. Erb, “The Beginning and End,” 81-83; McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 16, 32-32, 81.

215. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 83.

216. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 70-71; McLaughlin, “Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld: Two Spiritualist *Viae*,” 84.

217. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 70-71; McLaughlin, “Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld: Two Spiritualist *Viae*,” 84.

218. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 67.

219. Bergsma, *Aggaeus van Albada*, 44.

220. We discussed this in Chapter 5. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 17.

However, as we have said above, Coolhaes does not resemble the two in one important particular, which they have in common with each other. Although Coolhaes taught that conversion must be internal, he did not share the view of the “inner Word” in a Franckian sense of “an image or spark of divine being existing at the center of the human essence.” Schwenckfeld held that the implanting of God’s Spirit was the source of truth.<sup>221</sup> Franck exhibited a “a bleak pessimism about the learning of the day ... [he] resorted to secret founts of knowledge to gain access to divine revelation which bypassed the orthodox mediators.”<sup>222</sup> He talked about believers who “receive it [the Holy Spirit and his gifts] in the hidden abyss, in the secret kingdom, in the wondrous ground, where the noble picture of the Holy Trinity lies hidden, which is the most noble part of the soul...”<sup>223</sup> Coolhaes was not so esoteric or Gnostic. Johannes Tauler, whom Coolhaes admired along with Franck, believed that a divine spark is left over in humans, because they were at one time one with that Divine.<sup>224</sup> However, despite Coolhaes’ defense of Tauler, this sort of teaching, and the implication that an original state of oneness with God existed for every person, is completely absent from his works. He does not speak either for or against it. Schwenckfeld believes that one is saved when a particle of the heavenly flesh is implanted, and the Lord’s Supper is the spiritualized “inner supper” for this new life.<sup>225</sup> Schwenckfeld and his colleague Valentin Crautwald’s discussion of the “creatureliness” of Christ’s humanity, and what happened to it after his glorification,<sup>226</sup> are also absent from Coolhaes’ writings. Schwenckfeld held that “salvation of mankind by a progressive deification of man” resulted from the growth of the heavenly flesh and its feeding.<sup>227</sup> Coolhaes does not discuss or defend these related ideas, despite, as we will see, his similarities to some of Schwenckfeld’s eucharistic views.

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221. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 60.

222. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 136.

223. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 116.

224. Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World*, 115.

225. McLaughlin, “Schwenckfeld,” *OER*, vol. 4, 21-23; McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 81.

226. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 15-16, note 13.

227. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 75.



Coolhaes shows no evidence in his works of having shared these so-called Neo-Platonist or Neo-Stoicist ideas, which for a good many Spiritualists must have followed on naturally from their dualism between spirit and matter, favoring the spiritual over the material.<sup>228</sup> The idea of the “divine spark” in each human can be said to be “a rejection of the doctrine of original sin combined with a minimum of theology and a maximum of classical/philosophical content.”<sup>229</sup> He does not show much similarity, for example, to Hendrik Niclaes, aside from a conviction about the importance of the invisible church as the true church. However, Niclaes went on to teach that anyone not a member of the Family of Love, of which he claimed to be the “new Messiah,” would be damned. The true church would not remain invisible – it would eventually be revealed throughout the nations.<sup>230</sup> Also, Niclaes held a variant of perfectibility that man can become divine, or be “godded” in connection with baptism.<sup>231</sup> Did Coolhaes teach perfectionism/human perfectibility, as Coornhert and Herman Herberts did? It is doubtful; at least, there is not enough evidence in his works to assert that he did.

Another key belief in the Spiritualist matrix, as we have seen, is the desire for diversity and tolerance. Here Spiritualists overlap with thinkers of various groups who hold these values. Coolhaes shared this with Coornhert, as we have seen. He also surely must have been inspired by Sebastian Castellio, and also by Jacob Acontius. He shared the belief in free preaching with both of them.<sup>232</sup> Castellio, who disagreed with Calvin over the execution of Servetus, rejected predestination and defended an Erasmian toleration which would bring peace because of the *imitatio Christi* as exemplified in the lives of Christians.<sup>233</sup> Castellio,

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228. For more on Schwenckfeld’s dualisms, see Paul Gerhard Eberlein, *Ketzer oder Heiliger? Caspar von Schwenckfeld, der schlesische Reformator und seine Botschaft* (Metzingen: Ernst Franz Verlag, 1989), 172-76.

229. M.E.H.N. Mout, “Heilige Lipsius, bid voor ons,” *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97 (1984): 199; Mout, *Bohemen en de Nederlanden*, 94-117.

230. Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 38.

231. We also mentioned this in Chapter 5. Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 35.

232. Jacob Acontius, c. 1520–67, was an Italian in England and friend of Castellio. See Gerrit Voogt, “‘Anyone Who Can Read May Be a Preacher’: Sixteenth-century Roots of the Collegiants,” in *The Formation of Clerical and Confessional Identities*, ed. Wim Janse and Barbara Pitkin (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 416–18; see also Henry Kamen, “Acontius, Jacobus,” *OER*, vol. 1, 1.

Coornhert, Franck, and Acontius can be linked because of their humanism and rational arguments for toleration,<sup>234</sup> and Coolhaes resembles them in this. Also, Aggaeus van Albada, the only influential Schwenckfelder in the Netherlands,<sup>235</sup> is in this tolerant group. Albada was a friend of Marnix of St. Aldegonde, with whom he corresponded about specific Schwenckfeldian ideas which the latter found heterodox and occult-leaning. Albada did not think much of external church and probably did not attend it. Like many freer thinkers, he had lived for a time in Cologne.<sup>236</sup> He translated Schwenckfeld's *German Theology*.<sup>237</sup> Albada quoted passages from the writings of Schwenckfeld and Castellio in his edition of the acts of the 1579 Cologne peace conference between the Union of Utrecht States and Philip II. This became a source for the question and discussion of toleration then and for the next hundred years.<sup>238</sup> Surely Coolhaes must have approved and been inspired by this, as it is consistent with everything he wrote.

In the seventeenth century, Spiritualism grew, especially when linked with a desire for toleration and Christian freedom. Remonstrants and Collegiants inherited Spiritualist concerns. One later example with whom Coolhaes holds some things in common, but not all, is Petrus Serrarius. Serrarius is a representative of the early and mid-seventeenth century Dutch Collegiants, and is characterized by his chiliasm, mystical Spiritualism, a disbelief in

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233. Hans Rudolf Guggisberg, "Castellion, Sébastien," *OER*, vol. 1, 271-72. See also the discussion of Castellio's idea of toleration of more than one religion in Mario Turchetti, "Religious Concord and Political Tolerance in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991), 20. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss Castellio in more depth, but sources available for him include: Mirjam van Veen, *De kunst van het twijfelen: Sebastian Castellio (1515-1563): humanist, calvinist, vrijdenker* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2012); Mirjam van Veen, *Vermaninghe ende raet voor de Nederlanden: de receptie van Sebastian Castellio's geschriften in de lage landen tot 1618* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2012); Hans R. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio 1515-1563: Humanist und Verteidiger der religiösen Toleranz im konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

234. Lindeboom, *Stiefkinderen van het Christendom*, 293-302.

235. Bergsma, *Aggaeus van Albada*, x. Bergsma also mentions another – Daniel Sudermann of Liège, who lived from 1550 to 1631. Bergsma, *Aggaeus van Albada*, 64.

236. Despite remaining firmly Roman Catholic, Cologne was attractive to immigrants and dissidents of various types and confessions, especially after the coming into the northern Netherlands of Alva in 1567, and the fall of Antwerp in 1585, up until 1600, when many were expelled. See Veldman, "Keulen als toevluchtsoord," 34-5, 58.

237. Bergsma, *Aggaeus van Albada*, 12-13, 15, 22, 36.

238. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 32, including the title in note 64, *Acten vanden vredehandel geschiet te Colen/ inde teghenwoordigheyt vande commissarisen der keyserlijcker maiesteyt...*, Leiden, 1580.

hell, and philojudaism – all non-Coolhaesian views.<sup>239</sup> But he finds some common ground with Coolhaes in his interest in emphasizing the distinction between the visible church and the invisible church, which we will discuss further in this chapter. He maintains that the visible church can lose its splendor, but that the invisible, true church will never be lost. The visible church's decline was predicted by Christ and the Apostles; Serrarius' warning is not to confuse the visibility of the church with the truth of it. The true church has always existed but is often hidden.<sup>240</sup> These are similarities to Spiritualists such as Sebastian Franck,<sup>241</sup> as well as to Coolhaes, and reason enough to mention him in this context. Of course, the opposition of the visible and invisible is not unique to Spiritualism; the difference is that Spiritualists prioritize and favor the invisible and downplay or even deny any importance of the visible. In the following sections we will discuss this further.

Individualistic, critical, tolerant

Coolhaes, himself, we have said, exemplifies most of the defining characteristics of Spiritualism: individualism, a dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Reformation, a view of the nature of the church which emphasizes religious freedom, some type of dualistic view of reality, and a corresponding emphasis on an interior, affective, mystical relationship with God.<sup>242</sup> To define him further, three words can describe Coolhaes' brand of Spiritualism: individualistic, critical, and tolerant. First, Coolhaes is an individualistic Spiritualist. Individualism is a characteristic which comes through clearly in the biographical sketch of his life. We saw many examples there. He was not concerned to fit in among Carthusians, as he converted to Protestantism. He did not fit in among Lutherans, as he was considered too Reformed in the Palatinate. He certainly did not find his place easily among the Reformed - his excommunication is the ultimate example of this.

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239. We saw in Chapter 1 that Coolhaes was accused of disbelief in hell; however, he said that the spiritual pains of hell are worse than any physical ones. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, 90Zija–90Zijb. For more about the Dutch Collegiants, see Fix, *The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment*.

240. E. G. E. van der Wall, "De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en zijn wereld" (Leiden: Leiden University PhD, 1987), 31-32.

241. Van der Wall, "De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius," 615-16.

242. These criteria are taken from McLaughlin, "Spiritualism," *OER*, vol. 4, 105-106.

Second, Coolhaes was also critical. He was clearly dissatisfied with how the Reformation was progressing. In fact, his criticisms form the majority of pages of his written works. We will see that Coolhaes thought that the Reformation began well, but was soon neutralized by division and stifled by a focus on unimportant details.<sup>243</sup> His criticism can also be called “libertine,” due to his stance against ceremonies and his dislike of rules, although he opposed that word because to him it implied godlessness, antinomianism, and lack of personal and even sexual restraint.<sup>244</sup>

Coolhaes himself rejected the label “libertine.” It can be noted that J. P. van Dooren, in his biographical article written in German about Coolhaes, maintains that Coolhaes was not a libertine, but instead a Biblical theologian, who believed that one should bind oneself only to the Scripture and to the Creed. He came to certain views because of his belief that Christ’s love was for all humanity (in other words, because of his belief in unlimited atonement). Van Dooren also argues that the reason that Coolhaes’ critics battled him so sharply was that, although he was not a libertine himself, his views were “opening the door” to the libertines.<sup>245</sup> There is no question that Coolhaes held the Bible and Twelve Articles as his foundation, and that he was a Biblical, rather than a systematic theologian – in other words, that he built his doctrinal ideas on the Bible (or intended to), often without the regard for internal consistency of his “system” in the way which would characterize theologians such as his Calvinist opponents. On the other hand, as we will see in a later section, he allowed all believers to have “Christian freedom” in their opinions and lifestyle. This certainly did, at least theoretically, open a way for every kind of diversity in the church and in society. I agree that that is surely a danger which Coolhaes’ opponents would have seen in his views. I also agree that he held unlimited atonement and believed Christ’s love was for all. I therefore feel justified in calling Coolhaes’ views “libertine.” Even though he himself did not wander far from orthodoxy or traditional Christian moral teaching, he defended the freedom of each believer to do so if he or she thought it best.

Also, it is obvious that another key adjective for Coolhaes is “tolerant.” Emphasis on religious freedom is one of the most distinctive things about Coolhaes. As we shall see,

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243. Cf. e.g. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, Aij/3.

244. Rogge, *Caspar Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 106-109.

245. Van Dooren, “Kaspar Kohlhaas,” 95-96, 98.

Coolhaes' firm belief is that religious freedom, tolerance and diversity are essential in the church.<sup>246</sup> In this sense, he is a “tolerant” Spiritualist. We will spend much more time addressing this in a later chapter.

At the risk of repetition, it would be good here to summarize again briefly what Coolhaes as Spiritualist was *not*. First, as we have said, Coolhaes did not hold any unusual Christology, and as we saw earlier,<sup>247</sup> despite his openness to a friendship with Erasmus Johannes,<sup>248</sup> he appears to have remained a Trinitarian. Second, to expand our definition and include terms used above by other scholars, we would have to say also that Coolhaes was not really “noetic.” Aside from some possible skeptical reasoning which he used to defend diversity in two books, which we will discuss, he was not interested in specifically philosophical argumentation. His argumentation style could more accurately be described as dialogical, evangelical, and metaphorical. In other words, he wanted dialogue, perhaps even a synthesis of views; he based most of his arguments on the Bible as understood in a broadly evangelical way rather than a scholastic one; and he relied on metaphors, both biblical (for example, building on a foundation) and non-biblical (raging fires, great lions). Also, we have seen that what he wrote about predestination and other topics connected with Arminius is brief. He was not primarily a dogmatist or systematician. Third, he was not an activist. Although he spoke and wrote about his views, even when he knew it would cause controversy, he did not go on to found a movement or to rally supporters with the kind of “prophetic voice” necessary for that. He was not a “charismatic Spiritualist” like Thomas Müntzer, or an “egocentric prophet” like Nicolaes. As we have said before, he did not want to found his own church.

Was Coolhaes a mystic?

In later chapters, therefore, we will delve deeper into Coolhaes' individualism, his dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Reformation, and his desire for diversity and religious freedom. In the remainder of this chapter, we will focus on showing how Coolhaes

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246. See Chapter 9.

247. See Chapter 4.

248. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 44-46.

exemplifies the remaining two points: “some type of dualistic view of reality, including the importance of an ‘inner Word’”, and “a corresponding emphasis on the interior, affective, mystical relationship with God.” This all creates a type of mysticism. It is not the mysticism of Schwenckfeld, with his *Heimsuchungen*, or of Castellio, who loved medieval mystics and is said to have had “a weakness for ecstasy.”<sup>249</sup> Nevertheless, Coolhaes was, we would argue, a mystic of a different type – one who put the unseen and the affective above all other things.

It has not been unusual for Christians through the ages to divide life and faith into the seen and the unseen, the visible church and the invisible church, or to allegorize and spiritualize physical realities. To differentiate between flesh and spirit, internal and external, was not limited to Spiritualists. For instance, it had been an emphasis of Erasmus,<sup>250</sup> and through him, Zwingli.<sup>251</sup> However, for Coolhaes this bipartite view of reality was absolutely central. The dualism of the visible/invisible and the external/internal, especially of the visible and the invisible church, is the basis upon which he builds his eclecticism. This is seen especially in his ideas about the sacraments and about the invisible church – the comfort he took from them, and the importance he laid on them. He took comfort in the unseen communion of saints, and in his conviction of God working unseen in the depths of peoples’ souls. This invisible and unseen is the goal, for which the visible church is just the door.

We will discuss the invisible church here, because Coolhaes was at his most lyrical and mystical when writing of the invisible church and its members. It is the true church throughout time and space – the “communion of saints.” It is a refuge from the sin which is outside it.<sup>252</sup> It is the “true heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all, the true Bride of the Lamb, the one, holy universal Christian church.”<sup>253</sup> “Heavenly Jerusalem” is a reference to Galatians 4:26, and it is for Coolhaes both a name for the invisible church and a spiritualized metaphor - not existing only in the eschatological future, but existing now for those true believers who experience its reality.<sup>254</sup> In other places, relatedly, Coolhaes refers to the

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249. Van Veen, *De kunst van het twifelen*, 133.

250. John B. Payne, *Erasmus: His Theology of the Sacraments* (N.p.: M. E. Bratcher, 1970), 36.

251. Cornelis Augustijn, *Erasmus* (Baarn: Ambo, 1986), 169.

252. Coolhaes, *Comptoir-almanac*, 16.

253. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Aijr.

254. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, Aijv–Aijr.

people of God as striving to become the “city where God lives” (*woonstadt Godts*),<sup>255</sup> which is also a way of referring to Jerusalem and the invisible church. The “communion of saints” is a reference to the Apostles’ Creed. The membership of the invisible church is diverse and known completely only to God. They preach and hear God’s Word with physical as well as spiritual ears, use the sacraments truly, and subject themselves not to human discipline but to the “fatherly castigations”<sup>256</sup> of God, by taking up their cross.<sup>257</sup> They are the true church. Though they may also be members of the visible church, they should not be worried by its sin. It should not trouble them to be a small, spiritual minority where they are.<sup>258</sup> Surely Coolhaes must have felt like a part of a minority. The visible church excommunicated him; he surely must have derived a certain comfort from contemplation of his membership in the invisible church.

Some people are members of the invisible church, but not of the visible. Some who do not “bear the signs” (meaning, do not live in a Christian way) are nevertheless born of the Spirit and are elect. In other words, some “heathen” people may be invisible church members, and among the elect. In this, also, Coolhaes follows Zwingli, who was the only one among the Reformers who included elect, pious heathen in his definition of the invisible church. Zwingli’s belief was that God had freely chosen even those “heathen” for salvation.<sup>259</sup>

How does Coolhaes reconcile this with his belief that Christ is the only gate-keeper to the true church? Here the only possible explanation is that in some way the righteous heathen are, so to speak, in process. Coolhaes implies that they will, in some way, some day – as we

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255. Caspar Coolhaes, *Eenvuldige vertooninghe, waer inne naectelijck wt de h. schrijfture aengewesen wort, dat Gods gemeente niet op eenigher mensen vroomheyt, oude gewoonten, traditien, ofte lange belevingen, dan alleen op den hoecsteen Christum, sijne heylsame leere ende onberispelijck leven ghefondeert staat. Ook hoe ende watmen op dat fundament timmeren moet, om selve een woonstadt Godts te zijn, als mede de waere kenteyckenen, der kinderen Godts ende der wereld. Eyndtlijck sommiger hier teghen strydende argumenten, verhaelt, ende weder leyt, alles tot opmerckinge vande eensgheloofsgezinde, nochtans verscheydene vergaderingen, ende ten dienste van alle die den Heeren begeeren te vreesen* (N.p., 1610), title page.

256. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, Biiijr. Coolhaes’ own phrase.

257. This is from Mark 8:34. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, Cr.

258. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, Biiijr.

259. See Gottfried Wilhelm Locher, *Zwingli’s Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 179; Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Academic, 2013), 128–29.

have seen in Franck's use of the parable of the workers in the vineyard, which Coolhaes uses as well – repent and “come in.”<sup>260</sup>

Coolhaes thinks that the historical process by which the Roman Catholic Church gained power and became identified as the successor of the Apostolic Church may have confused people about the true nature of the invisible Church. Because they associated the creedal “one, holy, universal [in other words, ‘catholic’] and Apostolic Church” with the Roman Catholic Church for so long, they were used to defining the church as a visible entity, “which people could see with their eyes and point to with their fingers,” as Coolhaes writes. However, the “one, holy, universal and Apostolic Church” is the invisible church, which cannot be seen, but must be believed in by faith.<sup>261</sup>

Membership in the invisible church requires a personal spiritual life, dependent upon faith. This is mysticism also, because church membership, right preaching, sacraments and discipline are not enough. The existence of this personal spiritual life is demonstrated by love. Coolhaes writes, “What is needed for salvation is not knowledge on all points but the love for God and our neighbor, as a good fruit which true faith brings forth.”<sup>262</sup> This means that a true Christian must be sincere – the opposite of a hypocrite. A working man, he says, must be what he advertises himself to be - a shoemaker, tailor, painter, doctor - and so should a Christian also be what he advertises himself to be. No one will hire a painter who cannot paint. In the same way, no one will believe in the Christianity of a person who does not live Christianly.<sup>263</sup> But, on the other hand, no one should judge someone else's personal spirituality. One cannot judge the hearts of those who live a pious Christian life; it thus follows that one should not judge sinners either, for the inner life is only known to God. Both godless and godly persons can live an outwardly good life; a true child of God can sometimes fall heavily and remain lying in sin for a time.<sup>264</sup> So in his emphasis on the interior Christian

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260. Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, CCCCXXVIIb; Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, CVIIa. See also a similar idea in Bullinger: Wim Janse, “‘Ik wil liever blijven bij den wortel van den boom, dan hoog klimmen’: een beroep op de predestinatieleer van Heinrich Bullinger en Albert Hardenberg in Noord-Holland in 1596,” *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis* 6 (2003): 122.

261. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folios B-BB. Coolhaes uses Heb. 11:1 in connection with this idea: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

262. “Die liefde Godes ende des naesten, is noodich ter salicheyt, als een ghoede vrucht, die welcke dat waerachtige gheloove voortbrengende is: Maer die wetenschap ende kennisse van allen stucken ende pointen, niet also.” Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, Pijj–Pijjr.

263. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, B. This is a reference to 1 Cor. 2:14.



life, the need for repentance, and the affective aspect of faith: in these things, Coolhaes is a mystic.

### True baptism

Inclusion in the invisible church is mystical, and depends upon personal piety and spiritual experience. Coolhaes says, “For we are not after all saved through knowledge and study of this or that, but only by grace, having the knowledge of God and his son Christ Jesus.”<sup>265</sup> Christ is the way into the true church. He states, “I know no other way to salvation than Christ, no other gate to the sheep pen, in other words, to the true church - no other way to eternal life.”<sup>266</sup>

Baptism is one of the requirements for inclusion in the visible church.<sup>267</sup> The invisible church also has a spiritualized baptism.<sup>268</sup> Physical baptism, the entrance to the visible church, is not the most important thing; the important baptism is a spiritual baptism into the invisible church, which is achieved by true repentance. That is the baptism that counts.<sup>269</sup> In other words, the physical baptism is less important than a true, spiritual, mystical baptism. A quote relating to this hidden, unseen work is one in *Summa*, which Coolhaes cites approvingly: “To get the correct understanding of God’s Word, God himself must be the teacher. To get the power of the sacraments, God himself must work in the people what is hidden.”<sup>270</sup> In terms of ecclesiology, this is a theme which grew in importance after Coolhaes’ time, in the Pietistic and Wesleyan movements, and which is also found in present-day Evangelicalism: the idea that the true church consists of those who have personally experienced the grace of God and who can narrate this experience. This affective experience and the resulting confession of it to others allows others to discern the true mystical body of

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264. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, Nijj.

265. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, Fij.

266. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, Biir.

267. We will discuss this in Chapter 9.

268. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, Kijb–Kijj.

269. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 3.

270. Coolhaes, *Summa*, H3. See Chapter 5 for more discussion of this work.

Christ.<sup>271</sup> This mystical, personal experience of God's grace is for Coolhaes the baptism into the invisible church.

Is it possible that one might be excluded from the invisible church? Yes, it appears so. In his "Glaubensbekenntniss" (1571), he says that those who are not members of the invisible (God's) church are members of the Devil's church.<sup>272</sup> In his later works, he says that the true church is built on Christ; whoever is shut out from it is shut out from Christ.<sup>273</sup> Members of this church obey God in belief and action; if they do not, they are "spat out" of the true church and cannot be saved. Those who are outside of the true church are lost, just as those outside of the Ark were lost in the waters of the Flood.<sup>274</sup> Satan can also tempt members of the invisible church by his deception to forget about their "sure shelter."<sup>275</sup> Coolhaes does not teach a Dordtian assurance or "perseverance of the saints." One may be secure in one's inclusion in the invisible church, although at the same time one must be vigilant in order to remain there.

#### Pictures of the invisible

Several of Coolhaes' woodcut prints with text, also variously called emblems, *schilderijen*, or *inventiones*, which we briefly mentioned in the biographical sketch, are on the theme of the invisible church, and illustrate what he meant by it.<sup>276</sup> *De Mensch die eenvoudich is ende van ganser harten Godt suckt* ("The person who is simple and seeks God with his whole heart") pictures a man on the way to the city of heaven. First he gets off the right path because of his lack of understanding, then because of the nature which is "planted" in him, then because he is tricked by others. He finally gains understanding from another man, continues on the straight path, and comes finally to God.<sup>277</sup>

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271. Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 67; Stackhouse, Jr., *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* 23.

272. Coolhaes, "Glaubensbekenntniss," 5r.

273. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 91Ziir.

274. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 81 Xr–folio 82 Xiiv.

275. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Aijv–Aijr.

276. See Chapter 4.

277. "Want dat hy dwalt, dat is hem leet

Unfortunately, two of the most intriguing of Coolhaes' woodcut prints have not survived. They also are known to have had the true church as their theme. We cannot see them, but descriptions have survived. The first, *Afbeeldinghe vande waerachtige kercke Godts* ("Illustration of the true church of God"),<sup>278</sup> is mentioned by Coolhaes in his *Wederantwoort*<sup>279</sup> and *Grondlicke waerheyt*.<sup>280</sup> He says first, in *Wederantwoort*, that the print shows that God stretches out the power of his Word to all nations, peoples and external exercises of religion.<sup>281</sup> Cornelisz and Van der Corput, Coolhaes' opponents, give a much more detailed but disapproving description. They write that it pictures Christ standing on a branch with his head surrounded by the glory of God, and at his feet are men and women with white clothes holding palms. Under that are Roman Catholics celebrating mass and holding processions. Some older people are being baptized. Several other groups of people are present, labeled Turks, Tartars, Jews, Greeks, and Muscovites. Some individuals are present who are considered to be heretics (Cornelisz and Van der Corput do not mention them by name). Lines connect each group to those in white clothes, and then to Christ. From each group a small, naked figure, with a cross around its neck, flies to those in white clothes

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T is, dat hy den wech niet en weet  
 Erst dwalt hij doer zijn onverstant  
 Dwelck dnatur hem heyt ingeplant  
 Een anders onverstant doet me  
 Hem dwaelen van die rechte ste,  
 Des schalx bedroch, en boese daden  
 Doet hem dwaelen van rechte paden  
 Als hy hier is gewecken van  
 Ziet hij van verre eenen man  
 Daer hij verstant van heft gecregen  
 Dat hy can gaen die rechte wegen  
 Hy gaet recht vijt, en blijft daer by  
 En wickt rechter noch slincker sij  
 Tot dat hy compt daer hy wil wesen  
 Dats by Got, end Engelen gepresen."

Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 11-12. See also Coolhaes' own description and defense of this print in Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, point 117, 70-71. The original is: Coolhaes, *De mensch die eenvoudich is ende van ganser harten Godt suckt*.

278. Coolhaes, *Afbeeldinghe vande waerachtige Kercke Godts, mitgaders de sichtbaerlijcke Kercken, ende der ghenen die niet voor Gods Kercke ghehouden werden, ende nochtans niet al te samen God mishagen*.

279. Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, point 118 (71-72); also Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 14-15.

280. Coolhaes, *Grondlicke waerheyt*, 111.

281. Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, 71-72.

and to Christ. By those who use the Word and Christian sacraments is written, “Here is Christ;” “Here is the Lord’s temple;” “He is in the desert,” along with other Scriptures.<sup>282</sup>

Coolhaes responds to their objections about the print in *Grondlicke waerheyt*, first with a strong Christocentric statement. No one ever has been saved, is saved, or will be saved, without passing from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ. This makes them new creatures and transforms them to love and serve others. They have received the spirit of Christ by grace and taken up their cross and followed Christ. This, he says, is the goal of the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures (in other words, the Old and New Testaments): that we would examine ourselves and cry out to God, attaining to a unity of faith, a perfect manhood, and the full measure of Christ.<sup>283</sup> Then, he explains the print - that the figures are naked but have the cross on their necks, and come through Christ to God. They represent those in every people and even religion, out of which some are saved through Christ. On one hand, this is a strong picture of the diversity that Coolhaes believes in. As he wrote in another place: “God has his people everywhere, and always keeps some who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”<sup>284</sup> But in *Grondlicke waerheyt* he is more explicit than he is in any other work about what he means by this diversity in the invisible church, and what sort of inclusivity he holds. He writes that God condemns all false religion and superstition: that of the Turks, the Tartars, the

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282. Cornelisz and Van der Corput, *Corte antwoordt*, 62.

283. Coolhaes, *Grondlicke waerheyt*, 107. Coolhaes’ statement is based on many Scripture verses, which I have not reproduced in full. This last sentence I mentioned is from Ephesians 4:13. His use of “perfect” here might point to a view of human perfectionism, of which he had been accused but of which there is very little evidence.

284. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, Tb. We have seen earlier that the preachers accused Coolhaes of “dirtying himself with Franck,” Cornelisz and Van der Corput, *Corte antwoordt*, 45-56. Kamphuis thought the same. For a discussion on Coolhaes’ similarity to Franck based on this print, see Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 16-19. Kamphuis criticizes Coolhaes for this and “many more” instances of his acceptance of non-Christian religions. Kamphuis is not correct in this. However, on the contrary, this is the only example of Coolhaes seeming to include people in the invisible church who have not converted to Christianity. It is not even extant, and it is conceivable that Coolhaes’ opponents may even have exaggerated in their description to “blacken” his name still further. From the rest of Coolhaes’ works, it is logical to interpret the meaning of this illustration to be that even in non-Christian faiths, some members of the invisible church are present. Coolhaes assumed that, as in the parable, some workers would come to the vineyard late in the day, at “vesper time.” In other words, some outside Christianity would repent and embrace Christ even at a very late date: Franck, *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln verschlossen Büch*, CCCCXXVII; Coolhaes, *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck*, CVIIa. There is no reason not to think that Coolhaes was trying to say the same thing in this woodcut also. One cannot make a case for Coolhaes’ preaching of an “ecumenical totalitarianism” (as Kamphuis describes it). based on the description of this one non-extant print, which goes further than any of his extant written works. In fact, as I describe, Coolhaes is much clearer in *Grontlicke waerheyt*. He definitely intended the figures in the print to be coming to Christ. Kamphuis apparently did not see *Grontlicke waerheyt*; indeed, I speculate that it is possible that, due to lack of cataloging, it was read by no one between Burger in 1915 and myself in 2015. At the very least, no one has cited it.

Indians, the Muscovites, the papists, and the Jesuits. On the other hand, he is sure that God does not condemn people who through misunderstanding find themselves in these false religions, because those who are seeking God with their whole hearts will be at a certain time saved out of them.<sup>285</sup>

In the second non-extant print, *Afbeeldinghe vande waerachtighe kercke, hoe sy is in deser werelt* (“Illustration of the true church and how it is in this world”), the true church is portrayed as a lily among thorns,<sup>286</sup> or a person surrounded by venomous scorpions. However, the believers should not fear them (Coolhaes gives the reference as Ezek. 2:16). Cornelisz and Van der Corput, whose description is our only guide, do not describe the picture in their criticism, but add that it is written, “They will serve God with pure hearts, and will unite with God in their inner selves.”<sup>287</sup> These people, who are the godly, face difficulties which try them. These trials are like a fiery oven. However, God’s people the godly are not holy in and of themselves, but because of Christ’s grace and everlasting, sacrificial, sanctifying love.<sup>288</sup> The descriptions of both of these non-extant prints make it clear that Coolhaes is picturing a true, invisible church of great diversity which must suffer in the world.<sup>289</sup>

### Spiritual eating

Coolhaes’ view of the Lord’s Supper is one area in which his eclectic influences, his Spiritualism, and his love of allegory and metaphor come together. We have mentioned that Coolhaes’ views seemed suspect both to Lutherans in the Palatinate and to the Reformed in

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285. His words are: “Maer daerom en verdoem ick niet, houde oock voor zeecker, dat Godt almachtich niet en verdoemt alle menschen wt een onverstandt noch levende, onder een van sondanige religien. Die valsche religien ende Godsdiensden zijn alle verdoempt ende vervloecht van Godt, maer alle menschen wt onverstandt stekende in soodanighen valschen religien ende afgodendienst, en zijn niet verdoemt [sic]: want van herten Godt soeckende, sullen tot haerder tijt daer wt verlost worden.” Coolhaes, *Grontlicke waerheyt*, 109. Burger also gives an abbreviated quote of this: Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 64.

286. Coornhert had earlier used this simile. See Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 34. Coolhaes had already used it also, in Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 91Ziijr–92Ziijv.

287. Coolhaes, *Wederantwoort*, point 119, 72. Also described by Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 14-15. It was also mentioned in Coolhaes, *Grontlicke waerheyt*, 112. The original of the quote in the text above is: *Met herten reyn wil sy Godt dienen, ende inwendigh met Godt vereenen*. It is also quoted in Cornelisz and Van der Corput, *Corte Antwoordt*, 65.

288. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 91Ziijr–92Ziijv.

289. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, filio Cr.

the Netherlands. His view of the Lord's Supper was hard to pin down. Johannes Monheim, who held a view somewhere in between the Lutheran and the Reformed, may have influenced Coolhaes.<sup>290</sup> In fact, Coolhaes' own view of the Eucharist reflects several influences: medieval, Spiritualist, Lutheran, and Calvinist.

The Reformers disagreed profoundly about the Eucharist. For Luther, consubstantiation meant that the real presence of Christ was in, with, and under the physical elements of bread and wine. On the other hand, Zwingli emphasized remembering and memorializing Christ's death in the Lord's Supper, without any real presence of Christ in the physical elements. They disputed over this at the Marburg Colloquy (1529). After Zwingli's death, however, Bucer and others began to moderate Zwingli's extreme view, teaching that the bread and wine are symbols through which Christ communicates.<sup>291</sup> In the Consensus Tigurinus (1551), Calvin, Bullinger, and Farel came to a more nuanced Reformed view. Calvin himself was sure that some sort of participation with Christ happened in the communion.<sup>292</sup> Calvin believed that Christ was truly present to believers in a spiritual way, but not in a physical way.<sup>293</sup>

What was Coolhaes' doctrine of communion? It can perhaps best be represented as "spiritual eating." He de-emphasized the importance of the physical elements, but maintained the idea of the presence of Christ. For Coolhaes, the physical sacraments are far less important than the unseen reality to which they correspond. He described this with metaphors for communion which have a long history. In the Middle Ages, a comparison existed of the sacrament to seals, deeds to property, or a wedding ring, which the groom leaves behind with the bride before he goes on a long journey. This concept of communion as a sign remained controversial with Luther and the other Reformers. It was connected with spiritualized communion as a heresy: with Lollards, Waldensians, and Hussite Taborites.<sup>294</sup> Nevertheless, Coolhaes uses it, comparing the physical elements of the sacraments to a seal of ownership:

Just as if I gave you my house, gave it to you with seal and letter, you, thousands of miles away, having the seal and the letter, have the house. Thousands of miles away,

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290. See Chapter 1.

291. B. A. Gerrish, "Eucharist," *OER*, vol. 2, 75.

292. Gerrish, "Eucharist," *OER*, vol. 2, 76.

293. Calvin, *Institutes*, IV, xvii, 31-33. See also Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed*, 86.

294. Bastian Jan Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoën [Honiüs] and his Epistle on the Eucharist [1525]* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 41.

even to the ends of the earth, if you sell the seal and letter, you sell the house or give it to the one you want to have it, then the one who buys the seal and letter or to whom you wanted to give it will possess the house, even if he never comes to Leiden, and never sees this house. But the one to whom I did not want to give or sell the house, but had the seal and letter against my will and desire, the house would then not be his own. It's the same with the Sacraments, for they are instituted and given for the believers, not for the unbelievers, for Christ's intention is that one must eat and believe, be dipped in/sprinkled in water in baptism and must believe. If one eats and drinks or is washed or baptized and does not believe, he does not then have what the Sacrament is a sign of.<sup>295</sup>

Coolhaes was not too worried, on the other hand, about eucharistic ceremonial details. The Synod of Dordrecht (1578) had recommended communion every two months,<sup>296</sup> and in Leiden during his ministry in the mid- and late 1570's, the church had communion about that often.<sup>297</sup> However, the physical communion and its frequency was not what Coolhaes found most important. He also did not find that the type of bread, or the ceremonial breaking of it ("fractio panis") were of much importance.<sup>298</sup> He was much more concerned to say that those who are members of the invisible church receive the sacraments internally and spiritually. His view was that the spiritual participation in the sacraments, not the physical, is what is efficacious. What is vital – literally, life-giving – is the "spiritual eating" of Christ's body rather than the reception of the physical elements. The spiritual eating of Christ's body is more important than the physical reception of bread and wine. There is no physical presence of Christ in the elements.

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295. "...gelijck als of ick u mijn huys gave, ende gave u daer van seghel ende brief, ende ghy dan over duysent mijlen weechs zijnde, hebbende seghel ende brief, so hebt ghy ooc dat huys, ende over duysent mijlen, ia aen den eynde des werelts zijnde, ende vercoopende den brief ende seghel, so vercoopt ghy het huys, ende die het seghel ende brief van u coopt, oft dien ghy die geven wildet, dien soude dan het huys zijn, oft hy wel nemmermeer tot Leyden comen, noch dit huys nemmermeer sien en worde, maer dien ick nu dit huys niet gheven noch vercoopen wilde, ende hy niet te min segel ende brief buyten mijnen wille, ende tegen mijnen danck hadde, diens soude daerom dit huys niet eyghen zijn: Also ist oock met den Sacramenten, want sy zijn ingheset ende ghegheven voor de gheloovinghen, ende niet voor de ongheloovinghen, want Christi wille is, dat men eten ende ghelooven moet, met water in de doop begoten, ende gelooven moet, etet men nu ende drinket. Item is men met water gewasschen ofte begoten ende ghelooft niet, so en heeftmen oock niet dat ghene dat die Sacramenten beteeckenē." Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 98 BBijv-r. For more about Zwingli's use of sign or seal as a metaphor for communion, see also Paul Robert Sanders, "Consensus Tigurinus," *OER*, vol. 1, 414.

296. The Dutch Revolt, "Select Acts from the Synod of Dordrecht, 3-18 June 1578," <http://www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/english/sources/Pages/15721574.aspx> (accessed January 27, 2016).

297. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 53.

298. Coolhaes, *Aenhechtsel*, civ. Van Veen, "Your praiseworthy town Deventer," 121.

This had been part of the problem which the church authorities had with his views in Essen in 1571. His statement of faith, written for examination by them and the theological faculties of Wittenberg and Leipzig, spoke to the question of the Lord's Supper in Article 16. In it, Coolhaes said that the body and blood are not phantoms, are also not just bread and wine, and are certainly not the real body and blood that were conceived with the Virgin Mary and hung on the cross. People make fantasies or pictures in their heads about Christ's body and blood, which should be investigated, he wrote, but Christ (and, by implication, his body and blood) have ascended to the right hand of God. So, the "real" body and blood which we receive is something else.<sup>299</sup>

In his first work, *Apologia*, he already addressed this question at length. Christ has ascended into heaven, and is not on earth physically; he will not return until his Second Coming. What then are the bread and the wine? They are:

... the sacramental bread and wine, which are called the body and blood of Christ because of the fellowship which this bread and wine have with the body and blood of Christ. For it is certain that Christ, with this visible and natural bread and wine, offers, gives and gifts us himself, his body and his blood, yes, and all his works, merits, and holiness, as if, namely, whoever eat this bread, believing that Christ's flesh hung on the cross on account of his sins, and drinks this wine believing firmly that Christ's blood was shed for our sins, will be also in his soul fed to eternal life with Christ's flesh, and given to drink Christ's blood, so that he is now truly in Christ, remains in Christ, and Christ in him and will live eternally (John 6:55).<sup>300</sup>

So the physical bread and wine have their value, in Coolhaes' view. Through them, Christ gives the believer himself. The believing communicant receives and eats both the bread and the body of Christ, while the unbelieving communicant eats only the bread. By an act of believing, one in a sense "makes one's own Christ" whom one also receives in the communion. Thus, the invisible communion is more important than the visible. Coolhaes emphasizes that Luther said that it is not about eating and drinking, but about believing the words "given for you; shed for you."<sup>301</sup> In saying this, he acknowledges his connection to Luther as well – at least a little.

Coolhaes' view of communion became even more "spiritualized" at some point after his excommunication, when he was forbidden to partake of the elements. He believed that he

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299. Coolhaes, "Glaubensbekenntniss," article 16, 22r–23v.

300. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 97 BBv.

301. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 19Eiijv.



continued to “commune” spiritually, even without the physical bread and wine. As he said in his old age:

You, and those like you, do not have the power to forbid me, or to forbid any of the believers in Christ Jesus, from the Lord’s Supper. You may forbid from your own Supper; as Paul says in 1 Cor. 11:20, each eats his own Supper. I have never done it since the time when the Lord in his grace opened the eyes of my understanding - never eaten it with you, who forbid the doing of good. But I have eaten the Supper of the Lord with the believers in Christ Jesus, who hide among you, and of whom the Spirit of the Lord speaks in the following words: “You have nevertheless a few among you, he said, who have not soiled their clothes, and who will walk with me in white clothes,” and so forth. With such I have been eating the Lord’s Supper for twenty-one years, which externally or visibly is not allowed by you all and those like you. I have been eating it with a living faith in Christ Jesus with his holy church, after the good advice of the old teacher Augustine, who said, *Crede & manducasti*; ‘Believe, and you have eaten it.’<sup>302</sup>

He connects himself here with the invisible church, which he believes is the true church, and with whom he believes he has been communing.

Gansfort, Hardenberg, Hoen

Coolhaes is in the tradition of those who emphasized a spiritualized aspect of communion, de-emphasizing the physical elements; however, not in a Zwinglian way.<sup>303</sup> Coolhaes is more similar to Calvin than to Zwingli, since Calvin also can be said to have held a sort of “spiritual eating.”<sup>304</sup> We will see that Coolhaes’ eucharistic doctrine is also similar in certain ways to that of Hoen, Gansfort and Hardenberg, and in the next section, to Schwenckfeld.

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302. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 173-74. This is not a new idea; Coolhaes uses the same quote from Augustine in Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 19Eijv. There is another possible interpretation for this quote – that Coolhaes is not talking about spiritual eating at all, but talking about taking communion with some friends outside of the church secretly. I have not come across any scholarly discussion of this; it is my own idea. However, I do not think that is the correct interpretation, because he says that communion is not “externally or visually allowed.”

303. See Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen*, and J. Alton Templin, *Pre-Reformation Religious Dissent in the Netherlands, 1518-1530* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2006).

304. John Williamson Nevin, *The Mystical Presence and the Doctrine of the Reformed Church on the Lord’s Supper*, ed. L. J. de Bie and W. Bradford Littlejohn. 1846. Reprint (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 63. Herman Speelman is also doing interesting work on explaining Calvin’s Eucharistic doctrine, which emphasizes a similar theme. See: John Calvin, *Eén met Christus. Een klein traktaat over het Heilig Avondmaal*, trans. with an introduction by Herman Speelman, with foreword by Paul van Geest (Kampen: Brevier, 2014). He has also given a paper on this topic, titled: “At the Lord’s Table: Calvin’s desire for a very frequent celebration of the Holy Supper,” at the RefoRC Conference, “Crossing Borders: Transregional Reformations,” Leuven, May 7-10, 2015.

The so-called “Words of Institution” or the *verba*, are Jesus’ words at the Last Supper. In them, the phrase, “This is my body,” *Hoc est corpus meum*, is used in reference to the bread. A traditional Roman Catholic interpretation is a physical presence of Christ in the bread and wine resulting from the process of transubstantiation. However, the 11th-century Berengar of Tours broke with that interpretation and began to use figurative language to describe communion. Berengar argued that Christ’s risen body is at the Father’s right hand in heaven, and so cannot also be in the bread in a real way, in two places at the same time.<sup>305</sup> Therefore, the true sacrament is eaten spiritually. Coolhaes made this very point in his earliest writing in Essen in 1571.<sup>306</sup> He did not say that he took this idea from Berengar. Nevertheless, in using this argument, he has somehow become Berengar’s heir.

Wessel Gansfort, Albert Hardenberg, Cornelius Hoen, and the so-called Delft circle are all connected with the idea of spiritual eating.<sup>307</sup> Albert Hardenberg (c. 1510-1574), Reformer in Bremen and Emden, had written that Hoen had found a treatise about the Lord’s Supper among the papers of Wessel Gansfort. Gansfort had claimed an even older precedent than Berengar, maintaining that Paul the hermit did not partake of the outer Eucharist, but enjoyed the inner Eucharist.<sup>308</sup> This treatise “seemed to condemn the gross, ‘Capernaite’<sup>309</sup> eating of the body of Christ and interpreted this eating instead as spiritual (*manducatio spiritualis*).”<sup>310</sup> This Eucharist, which is the true Christ, is what Hardenberg said was essential – the real presence of the whole Christ, without which one has no part in Christ’s benefits.<sup>311</sup>

Since Coolhaes was writing about similar ideas in 1571, it seems possible to that he

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305. Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen*, 139, 149.

306. Coolhaes, “Glaubensbekenntniss,” article 16, 22r–23v.

307. For Albert Hardenberg, see Wim Janse, *Albert Hardenberg als Theologe: Profil eines Bucer-Schülers* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 194-209.

308. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 107, FN 55. He is referring to Paul the “First Hermit” of Thebes, the third century anchorite.

309. A term which was used for transubstantiation.

310. Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen*, 4.

311. “Die wahrhafte Präsenz des ganzen Christus im Abendmahl will Hardenberg nachdrücklich betont wissen: ‘weil wir ohne den wahren Christus selbst keinen Anteil haben an seinen Wohltaten.’” Janse, *Albert Hardenberg als Theologe*, 201.

may have been reading Hardenberg. Unfortunately, there is no further proof aside from these similarities of view.

Other historians of the period report that Hoen taught this “tropical” interpretation of the Eucharist in an evangelical congregation which existed in Delft.<sup>312</sup> A letter from Hoen was carried by Johannes Rhodius and Georgius Saganus to, among others, Zwingli. Zwingli is said to have rejected transubstantiation and consubstantiation sometime after 1524, allegedly after reading this letter, and to have begun to interpret *Hoc est corpus meum* to mean *Hoc significat corpus meum*. There seems to be a line, then, from Gansfort, to Hoen, through Rhodius and Saganus, to Zwingli. Spruyt says, therefore, that the “Swiss” doctrine of the Lord’s Supper has Dutch roots.<sup>313</sup> He elaborates, in discussing Hoen’s *Epistle*, that it “not only establishes the continuity between late medieval dissent and the early Reformation, but also between the early and the Radical Reformation.”<sup>314</sup>

However, on the other hand, perhaps Hoen should not be given all the credit for the popularization of a spiritualized doctrine of communion in Delft and elsewhere. Erasmus had taught the spiritual meaning of the mass. Then, the concept of a real presence in the elements was countered by Karlstadt, Zwingli, and Oecolampadius, who put forth more spiritualized ideas.<sup>315</sup> Zwingli had remarked that Hoen’s interpretation of *hoc est corpus meum* actually came from popular speech and ideas.<sup>316</sup> Also, Hoen came too late to be the significant influence for this “tropical” interpretation after 1525. However, contemporary opinion of the populace may have influenced Hoen, who “tried to lift their arguments to a higher level in order to give them a voice in the debate about the most important sacrament of the church.”<sup>317</sup>

### Schwenckfeld and the non-physical flesh

Coolhaes also shows some marked similarities to Caspar Schwenckfeld in terms of his

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312. Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen*, 15, 17.

313. Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen*, 35.

314. Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen*, 221.

315. Payne, *Erasmus*, 133, 138.

316. Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen*, 220.

317. Spruyt, *Cornelius Henrici Hoen*, 220.

eucharistic doctrine. Schwenckfeld held that the inner Eucharist, which was the real and important part, differed from the outer Eucharist, by which he meant the elements, the ceremony, and everything that was physical. Schwenckfeld and his colleague Valentin Crautwald pioneered a “middle way” in Eucharist teaching - a pre-Calvin “real participation” which was nevertheless “not bound to the bread.”<sup>318</sup> For Schwenckfeld, the “outer Eucharist” equals the elements, in which there is no real presence, since, after all, Judas partook of the physical elements. The “inner Eucharist” is the one which is efficacious.<sup>319</sup> Schwenckfeld may have been influenced by Wessel Gansfort.<sup>320</sup> Before Calvin, therefore, Schwenckfeld believed in a non-physical presence of Christ in the Eucharist – a presence that was not in the elements. Some have believed Schwenckfeld had become a Zwinglian by 1525, but it should be noted that Schwenckfeld uses the “Catholic” John 6:54-57, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life,” rather than Zwingli’s preferred verse, John 6:63, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.” Also, Schwenckfeld differed from Zwingli in one crucial way: “For Schwenckfeld, by contrast with Zwingli, it was precisely Christ’s flesh that availed”<sup>321</sup>; however, Schwenckfeld had redefined “flesh” to mean something entirely non-physical. As he writes in the first of his Twelve Statements, “The body of Christ broken for us is a spirit food and can be taken only by that which is also spiritual.” The physical food cannot bring what is spiritual; someone such as Judas who participated in the Last Supper but without faith received only bread and wine, but the believer something entirely different.<sup>322</sup>

Coolhaes does not credit Schwenckfeld with inspiration for his eucharistic views, but nevertheless shows a strong similarity. Zwingli feels the flesh is nothing, but for Schwenckfeld and Coolhaes, the flesh is the most important thing, but not the physical flesh. Still, Schwenckfeld goes farther. He comes to disengage the spiritual meaning, the presence of Christ in a true way, completely from the physical elements. To him, for instance, the

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318. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 133, 135.

319. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 11.

320. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 106-107.

321. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 11.

322. Martha B. Kriebel, *Schwenckfelders and the Sacraments* (Pennsburg, PA: The Board of Publication of the Schwenckfelder Church, 1968), 3-4.

“inner Eucharist” signified every contact of the soul with the living Christ – all “communion,” communication, comfort and interaction – every way in which a person “receives” Christ in his or her life.<sup>323</sup> Schwenckfeld also believed that the external church and its sacraments were a hindrance - first in the Roman church and increasingly in the Protestant. This is why he decreed the *Stillstand*. At some future time, he expected a true Apostolic Church and practice to be realized.<sup>324</sup>

Coolhaes agrees with the idea that the body and blood of Christ are non-physical but essential. He writes that the bread is the body of Christ sacramentally, but not physically.<sup>325</sup> Schwenckfeld is mentioned only in passing by Coolhaes, as one name on a list of many whose orthodoxy Coolhaes repeatedly defends in a general way.<sup>326</sup> A closer connection cannot be found in Coolhaes’ written books or biographical details. Nevertheless, this unusual eucharistic view links the two.<sup>327</sup> Coolhaes, however, as we have said, never advocates a time to stop the physical eating and drinking of communion entirely. Nor does he predict a future time of ideal sacramental practice.

However, two differences between Coolhaes and Schwenckfeld which relate to the Lord’s Supper could be mentioned. First, Coolhaes finds comfort in the deed or seal idea, as we mentioned above, whereas Schwenckfeld finds it problematic:

We know that Christ instituted no external sign to strengthen faith and give assurance to conscience. But the bread of the Lord is to be broken in the assembled congregation in remembrance of him and to show forth his death, but not to seal our faith thereby. Let me illustrate by a plain example. If a good man wishes to believe the words of his friend, he will not ask a seal of him. Likewise, we wish to honor God’s Word and accept it. The Word alone, which is spirit and life, must do it, and not the external sign.<sup>328</sup>

So the concept of the sign or seal, which to Coolhaes is a reassurance from Christ of his presence and relationship, is interpreted by Schwenckfeld as something superfluous, given the true faith which needs no proof.

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323. Maier, *Caspar Schwenckfeld on the Person and Work of Christ*, 13, 21-23.

324. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 55.

325. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 97 B.

326. For instance, in Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 18Eijv.

327. Oecolampadius and Bucer also denied a real presence but accepted spiritual participation in Christ. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 13.

328. Kriebel, *Schwenckfelders and the Sacraments*, 8.

Also, it should be mentioned that Coolhaes was not mystical in practice as was Schwenckfeld. Schwenckfeld's doctrines of the Eucharist were born out of his experiences with God. One looks in vain at Coolhaes for anything like the sort of mysticism which inspired Schwenckfeld - his heavenly and mystical *Heimsuchungen*. Coolhaes, did not mention experiencing visions or experiences, nor did he advocate them. Instead, he emphasized the affective relationship with Christ, repentance, and even suffering as the way to maturity.<sup>329</sup>

To sum up this section about the Lord's Supper, Coolhaes cannot be shown without doubt to have followed in the line of these thinkers to accept a "tropical" interpretation of the Eucharist. However, the similarities of his view with theirs are tantalizing enough to posit a possible connection. Some might nevertheless make a case that Coolhaes, in his eucharistic view, is merely a Zwinglian. There is no question that Coolhaes, Hardenberg, Schwenckfeld, and the others are closer to Zwingli's view than they are to Luther's. There is no physical presence in the elements. Others might call Coolhaes' view "Calvinist." However, by spiritualizing the meaning of "flesh and blood," and continuing to emphasize that the Lord's Supper is not a memorial but is spiritual eating, all of them are nevertheless different from Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin.

### Looking through the prism

In conclusion, we have defined and illustrated Coolhaes as a tolerant, critical, and individualistic Spiritualist, with similarities to Franck, Schwenckfeld, and others, but also with important differences. Coolhaes' Spiritualist perspective informed and linked together his views of ecclesiological issues about which he felt strongly. In the remaining chapters, we will look at his opinions of how the visible church should be governed, what makes good preachers, and the need for diversity in the visible church.

His Spiritualism, while not always seen openly, remained the force within him. Because of this, his eclectic views inter-relate and make sense together. For instance, we will see that when Coolhaes looked, as a tolerant, individualistic, critical Spiritualist, at the church/state question, he was looking with eyes that were more interested in the individual than in the institution, especially in the unseen aspects of individuals' lives. He felt strongly

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329. For example, see Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 89Zv.

that because of this, the state should protect its citizens, including their “liberty.” During Coolhaes’ time this concept of liberty was beginning to mean a protection of their religious rights as well as their physical safety – in particular, their acknowledged rights to their own points of view; in other words, their rights to diversity in religious belief and expression. Coolhaes did not believe that the Calvinist preachers were fulfilling this “right,” as much as building an institution, full of visible structure and discipline of peoples’ physical lives. On the other hand, his experience in Deventer and Leiden showed secular magistrates and other rulers with broader views, which for him would give the individuals the space and privacy that their growth in faith needed. His Spiritualism “shone through” his “Erastianism.”<sup>330</sup> In other words, his Spiritualism was the source of his Erastianism.

Also, when he looked more closely at those preachers, his critical orientation came fully to the fore. Whereas the stricter preachers did not tolerate “heresy,” but disciplined it, Coolhaes’ Spiritualist viewpoint discounted much of what was visible in peoples’ outward lives for what he believed was internal and therefore more essential. The invisible meaning of the sacraments was more vital to him than the elders’ examination and listing of the members before they could come to the Lord’s Table. Many preachers looked precisely at the external and visible to gauge the growth of members and the good changes they were working for in society. However, Coolhaes urged everyone, including the preachers, to look hard at their interior motivation, call and spiritual development. This development is what he called “the School of the Holy Spirit and the cross.”<sup>331</sup>

When Coolhaes looked from his belief in the mystical, invisible church to the discussion of confessional diversity, tolerance and individual liberty, he believed he knew what it meant that some were members of that true church. He believed he knew why some belonged and why some were excluded. However, he also believed that only God knew who they were. Therefore, he had to disagree with how the doctrine of predestination was developing and being disputed. It seemed impossible to him that anyone would be able to know who the elect are, how they are chosen, and how one can identify them. He also questioned that anyone could know the truth in the case of confessional differences. Diversity

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330. Kamphuis states: “Het spiritualistisch individualisme schemert door het erastiaanse kerkrecht heen.” (“Spiritualistic individualism shines through [Coolhaes’] Erastian church law.”) Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 32. Note that Kamphuis means this as a criticism.

331. We discuss this in Chapter 8.

thus is safer for the state and more desirable for the visible church; freedom is better for the individual.

So Spiritualism remains foundational for Coolhaes, but will now recede to the background in our discussion. We will look now, in the next three chapters, at three key aspects of the church – its governance, clergy and visible organization. These are the three major divisions of Coolhaes' ecclesiology. We will see Coolhaes' views from his writings in each particular area.



## Chapter 7: Church and state: under good guardianship

Coolhaes, in his desire for diversity in the visible church, opposed preachers who wanted to limit that diversity. In this chapter, we will look at Coolhaes' conviction that the church should be governed by a benevolent secular government.

The question of how the church relates to the secular state<sup>1</sup> is a perennial issue, resurfacing particularly in times of political upheaval. During the sixteenth century, the political and religious developments in Europe made it one of the most pressing questions. The balance between ecclesiastical and secular rule was attempted in different ways in the different Protestant regions of the time: in England, Zurich, Geneva,<sup>2</sup> and various areas of the Holy Roman Empire including the Palatinate, workable compromises were being developed which included a more or less active role for the secular princes and magistrates and which were unique to each situation.<sup>3</sup> In the Northern Netherlands, the balance had not been achieved. During Coolhaes' ministry in Leiden, the church and state question was the issue which attracted the most publicity and caused the most friction.

The general context of the situation was that, as the Roman Catholic Church lost control in the Northern Netherlands, power vacuums emerged, both politically and ecclesiastically. Roles and tasks in society opened up, to be filled by another religious body, or by the secular government on either the local or national level. The secular authorities took over the responsibility for some of these roles and tasks, and preachers sought control over others.<sup>4</sup> Many Calvinist preachers seemed to have a theocratic vision, and hoped to build a godly state in which their faith could thrive and be publicly recognized as the guiding force. To want a theocracy is to have a desire that the church should lead in the running of an overtly religious society, in which every aspect glorifies God and points its citizens to him. Calvin's Geneva is one model of a theocracy, in which consistory, preachers and magistrates

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1. I use the term "church and state" as shorthand in awareness that "statehood" is not a sixteenth-century term or concept.

2. See Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 13-16, for an overview of Reformed views of church and state relations in various countries at the end of the sixteenth century.

3. For more discussion of these different solutions, see Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 13-16.

4. M.E.H.N. Mout, "Kerk en staat in de zestiende eeuw," in *Kerk en staat in een turbulente samenleving* (Delft: Gemeentearchief, 2004), 9-24.

rule according to the Bible and theological dogma. However, it was not a model which Coolhaes (among others) wanted to be recreated in the Netherlands.

In this battle for power in different areas of Dutch society, conflicts of interest sometimes arose. Calvinist preachers boldly demanded protection from other rival religious groups, and insisted on the authority, for example, to decide on how schools and education should develop, on church orders, and on management of poor relief, despite the dependence of these preachers on the city magistrates for their salaries.<sup>5</sup> Governance of the church, selection of the clergy, balance of power between various confessions among the magistrates, liturgical questions, oversight of ecclesiastical buildings, care of the poor and orphans – these were some of the gray areas of struggle. One telling example is that some Reformed wanted the Heidelberg Catechism to be taught in schools, and the authority to appoint Reformed schoolmasters (the latter was established in Dordrecht, but not Rotterdam or Haarlem).<sup>6</sup> As for the poor, before the Reformation various guilds and monastic groups provided a patchwork of relief, but later magistrates often wished to create a more unified approach which they did not desire to return to the complete control of Reformed deacons.<sup>7</sup> Another question was that of weddings. Weddings in many places were legally performed at the City Hall, a practice which Coolhaes supported. But this was still a sore spot to many who believed that they should be performed in the Reformed Church. Further, the question of a government-written or at least government-sponsored church order was controversial. In short, what tasks and roles rightly belonged to the church – Reformed or other? What should the government be doing, and under whose authority? How should the government relate to the church, or churches?

These were burning questions on the local level in Leiden, which possessed a broad-minded magistracy but a fair number of less broad-minded consistory members. We discussed these events earlier in the biographical sketch, and so will just summarize them here. The situation had been complicated by the iconoclasm of 1566 in Leiden, and the subsequent crackdown by the troops of the Duke of Alva who kept order in the city, during which time the citizenry lost a certain degree of respect for the magistrates and patrician class

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5. Pettegree, "Coming to Terms with Victory," 168.

6. Pettegree, "Coming to Terms with Victory," 168-69.

7. Pettegree, "Coming to Terms with Victory," 170.

in terms of their ability to rule effectively.<sup>8</sup> This would also have helped to lessen the trust that church members had in the city government, independent of any theological concerns. Coolhaes tended to side with magistrates even before arriving, and he found himself in disagreement with his colleagues and consistory about these questions almost as soon as he arrived in the liberated city in 1574.<sup>9</sup> The conflict finally came to a head in 1579 (“the Coolhaes affair”) in connection with the process of choosing elders.<sup>10</sup> Both opposing sides, the consistory and the magistrates, thought it essential to be the ones with the deciding voice in the selection. The authority of the States of Holland was also called in, creating in effect three groups of “players.” However, the local magistrates did not always conform to the wishes of the States. Meanwhile, Coolhaes, “the most vociferous polemicist and partisan for an open, non-confessional Reformed Church subject to the supervision of a Christian magistracy,” was made, as Kooi remarks, both the personification of conflict in Leiden and the scapegoat for it.<sup>11</sup>

The Leiden magistrates had already made their point of view clear in the *Advies*<sup>12</sup> which they had submitted to the States, in opposition to the *Acta* of the Synod of Dordrecht 1578, and to its proposed church order. Several main areas of objection to the *Acta* were noted in the *Advies*. First, civil authority should not be taken over by the church, especially in the regulating of education and marriage registers. The magistrates saw marriage in a civic, legal category. Second, the church should submit to the oversight and protection of the government, which represented the community. This would apply in the naming and approval of preachers, elders and deacons, the hiring and firing of preachers, the scheduling of feast and prayer days – even the schedules and topics for sermons, the collections, and the running of classical and consistory meetings. Third, there would be toleration of freedom of the press and open communion. As Kooi emphasizes, the magistrates (and particularly Jan van Hout, who composed the *Advies*), felt free to make theological and liturgically decisions as well as

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8. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 27-28.

9. See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion.

10. For our discussion of the “Coolhaes affair,” see Chapter 2; also Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 57.

11. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 57.

12. A complete copy of the answer of the Leiden magistrates, alongside the heading of the *Acta* articles, can be found in: Overvoorde, “Advies,” 117-49. See also Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 73-75.

administrative ones for the church.<sup>13</sup> Further, students of theology should not be required to practice preaching under the preachers, but should be taught by the professors. Preachers should be free to make changes in the order of service, and parents should be free to decide the time of the baptism of their children, and in the choosing of the children's names (the Synod opposed names that were "superstitious"). The magistrates also opposed the Synod's condemnation of performances on religious topics in the Chambers of Rhetoric, dancing in public, church bells at funerals, and organ music in church. In short, the magistracy sought to limit the preachers' authority in almost every area. All of these things were the things that Coolhaes had tolerated or actively advocated.

Where did Coolhaes stand on the question of the proper relationship between the visible church and civil government? He declared that he had been banned for "elevat[ing] the Christian government above the office of preacher, and the council of Christian magistrates above the church council."<sup>14</sup> He believed that the civil government should exercise a benevolent, godly guardianship over the church. Like Zwingli and Bullinger, he believed that they formed a "single sphere."<sup>15</sup> The government should do what it thinks best, on its own, God-given, authority. The government is "the principal part" of the church, an expression deriving from the Lutheran *landesherrliche* idea.<sup>16</sup> The government is both part of the church and stands above it. The preachers must also recognize this authority. Coolhaes believed in this whole-heartedly. His translation of Gwalther states this concisely: "All people, the ordinary man as well as the church servants, shall be obedient to their legal magistracy; namely, those whom God has willed should bear the sword."<sup>17</sup>

Now let us look at his views in detail.

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13. Overvoorde, "Advies," 124-25. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 73.

14. "...daeromme dat ick na uytwysen der godlicker schrijffuren, Christelicker overheyt verheffende was, boven het ampt der predicanten, ende den Raet des Christelicken Magistraets, boven den Kercken Raedt:" Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, 3a.

15. Baker, "Zwinglianism," *OER*, vol. 4, 324.

16. David M. Whitford, "Cura Religionis or Two Kingdoms: The Late Luther on Religion and the State in the Lectures on Genesis 1," *Church History* 73 (2004): 41-62.

17. "Alle menschen, soo wel die ghemeene man als der Kercken Dienaren sullen ghehoorsaam zijn haerder wettelicken Magistraet, namelic, den ghenen den welcken Godt ghewildt heeft dat sy het zwaert hebben souden." Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, 1.

## Moses must rule

We have seen that one complaint from the original consistory of Leiden was that Coolhaes taught in the Old Testament that the patriarchs and kings “reformed” religion, not the priests.<sup>18</sup> This reflects the well-known model of Moses as the “political” leader of the Israelites, to symbolize secular power, and Aaron, who was the high priest, to symbolize ecclesiastical power. This Old Testament construction is at the base of Coolhaes’ church and state ideas.<sup>19</sup> This had been Coornhert’s point in *Justificatie*,<sup>20</sup> also, and Coolhaes builds on it. When the Israelites fled Egypt, Moses had authority over all of the people, and even over the high priest Aaron, who was both his own brother and the religious leader. This hierarchical pattern, Coolhaes believes, is proper and biblical. Preachers should not take authority over secular rulers, since this authority has not been given to them by God.<sup>21</sup> Secular rulers should also not sit back and allow themselves to be ruled by the church. Secular rulers should “step up” to their responsibility and authority; preachers should serve faithfully in the role they have been given. In the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13), the servants ask the lord who it was who had sown weeds along with the wheat.<sup>22</sup> However, Coolhaes insists that instead of asking this question, the servants should have been keeping watch. They symbolize the government, which should be on guard against evil. If Moses and Aaron are asleep (in other words, if neither is fulfilling his rightful role), Satan is at work.<sup>23</sup> The magistracy must guard and guide the church, and protect it from undue influence by preachers, theologians, and professors of theology in the universities:<sup>24</sup> from rule by the religious professionals. Of course, these ideas of church rule by the secular government threatened those wanted to build a Calvinist theocracy in the Netherlands.

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18. Matthias van Banchem et al. to Arent Cornelisz, 6 April, 1579, no. 112, AD; Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 65.

19. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 65Rr. Rogge mentioned that Coolhaes was inspired by Musculus in this: Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, vol. 1, 66-67.

20. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Eiiijv.

21. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 205.

22. Because Coolhaes uses this parable to discuss diversity and lack of judging, we will deal with it more extensively in Chapter 9.

23. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 40-41.

24. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio A3r.

The States of Holland were also civil rulers, and as such Coolhaes wanted to see them also rule over the church and society, as the city magistrates should. They must take the rudder in hand, for their people have been steering poorly for a long while and are in danger of running the ship aground.<sup>25</sup> The government, called by God as Moses was, will find the best ways to build up the fallen church, so that people will be called to repentance and forgiveness of their sins without slander or condemnation. When the government takes the place of Moses, and the preachers, teachers and theologians take the place of Aaron, then rest and peace will follow.<sup>26</sup> Best of all, this oversight by secular authority could create and maintain a peaceful balanced environment for the visible church in all of its confessional branches, creating a society in which “sweet and lovely religious freedom”<sup>27</sup> would give space for true repentance and inclusion in the invisible church on the part of individuals in God’s time.

Coolhaes’ use of this Moses/Aaron model put him at odds with theocratic Calvinist preachers. He found their attitude against the magistracy wrong, considering that they are paid by the secular government and protected by them.<sup>28</sup> He objected to their expectation that the government would “play the executioner;” i.e., carry out the preachers’ disciplinary decisions.<sup>29</sup> Their real purpose, he averred, was to achieve their own political power, “to put one foot in the pulpit and the other in the City Hall, and then to push their legal government out of its chair and sit on it themselves.”<sup>30</sup> Coolhaes’ opponents, the Calvinist preachers Cornelisz and Van der Corput, answered this in their *Antwoord der dienaaren des woordts ... op de remonstrantie by de overicheydt van Leyden*.<sup>31</sup> They painted themselves defensively as the apostles Peter and John, who had faced persecution in their efforts to establish the church and who were a minority in a hostile world: persecuted by the Jews. However, Coolhaes’

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25. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 190.

26. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 179, 194, 205.

27. “Hoe soet ende lieflicke de vryheyt in gheloofs saecken is.” Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, A2.

28. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 107.

29. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 141-43; 150.

30. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio unpaginated 4v. He borrows this idea from Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folios Aiiijv-Aijr.

31. Cornelisz, *Antwoorde der dienaaren des woordts*.

interpretation of the current religious situation was not that of the struggling Early Church, but of the Israelites who had left slavery in Egypt. Moses, with Aaron, was building a foundation for the future, as well as reinventing the Jewish state and religion. The covenant people of God remain in the covenant. Moses was confident that they were reaching the Promised Land to possess it. The civil government would continue to be kindly disposed and “brotherly” to the religious side of society. There would be peace and order between Moses and Aaron. Church and state comprised a single sphere.

### Model for a Christian magistrate

As we saw in detail in our biographical sketch, earlier in his preaching career, in Deventer, Coolhaes had admired the city magistrates and owned their vision for a multi-religious city during a turbulent year. Later however, in Essen in 1571, he and colleague Von Isselburg found themselves on the opposite theological side from the council of state, and appealed to the “Twenty-four,” the citizens’ council. After 1574, during his tenure as Leiden preacher, Coolhaes was glad to place himself under the authority of the civil government, in the form of the Leiden magistracy – the ones who had called him – even in conflicts with the higher authority of the States of Holland. Coolhaes was invariably loyal to magistrates during his tenure in Leiden. As he wrote in 1580, “In all right things which are not against God’s Word or my calling, I am heartily willing to be obedient to my lords.”<sup>32</sup> A few years later he wrote, “In 1582 [I] was banned ... because I, according to the Scriptures, elevated the Christian government above the office of preacher, and the council of Christian magistrates above the church council.”<sup>33</sup> Zwingli had taught that New Testament elders could be compared to the magistrates of modern cities.<sup>34</sup> Coolhaes did not make that argument, but his attitude to magistrates consistently puts them on a similar high level.

Cities, with their ancient “privileges” giving them an independence, were used to charting their own courses. City magistrates attempted to govern their cities and keep peace,

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32. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 10v. This phrase is from the Belgic Confession, article 36: *gehoorzaam te zijn in alle dingen die niet strijden tegen Gods Woord*. See also Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 22Fiiir.

33 “...daeromme dat ick na uytwysen der godlicker Schrijfturen, Christelicker overheyt verheffende was,boven het ampt der predicanten, ende den raet des Christelicken magistraets, boven den kercken raedt:” Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio 3v.

34 . Baker, “Zwinglianism,” *OER*, vol. 4, 324.

but their personal views varied along the spectrum from convinced Calvinists, through moderates or “libertarians,” to closet Catholics. In short, the civil government and the church did not find it easy to know how to work together to build their new society. Their cooperation during the Revolt was often uneasy; a “certain suspicion”<sup>35</sup> colored their relations.

Coolhaes showed a tendency to believe the best of any “legal government.” He praised the Deventer magistracy in *Apologia* (1580). His *Seeckere punten* (1584) is dedicated to William of Orange.<sup>36</sup> Coolhaes often dedicated his works to secular rulers and magistrates, either those he admired or those he wished to encourage to embrace their God-given role to govern both church and state. He even tried to believe that the intentions of the Groningen magistracy were good, despite their edict against Mennonites; he assumed that “evil persuasions” made them change what had been in use in Holland for, as he says, about twenty to thirty years. Coolhaes lauded rulers of whom he approved, such as Count Enno of East Friesland, to whom he dedicated his edition of *Summa* in 1603. He blamed not magistrates but preachers for unrest, since they “only want to rebel and over time to take the government's sword out of its hand (as the Pope did) and build a new papacy.”<sup>37</sup> He emphasized both explicitly and by his persistent use of the term “church servants” that “the preachers are only a part of the churches – ‘servants,’ not lords or heads of the church.”<sup>38</sup> As he wrote in *Apologia*:

They say I am a disturber and schism-maker of the churches of God. I may answer rightly and say that it is they who are, because they did not want to obey their legal and God-given government in reasonable things, holding more to human beings and human institutions than to God's Word, which says, “Everyone is subject to the government, for there is no government that is not of God, and the government is ordained by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.” (Rom. 13:1-2).<sup>39</sup>

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35. This phrase is inspired by the title of Teunis Martinus Hofman, *Eenich achterdencken. Spanning tussen kerk en staat in het gewest Holland tussen 1570 en 1620* (Heerenveen: J. J. Groen en Zoon, 1997).

36. It is an interesting question as to whether the Prince received and read this work before his death on July 10, 1584. No indication of the month of writing or publishing is given.

37. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 102 Ccijr.

38. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 48Miiijr–49Nv.

39. “Sy segghen van my dat ick een perturbateur ende scheurmaker der kercken Gods sy, ende ick



He summarized Scriptural teaching in favor of obedience to secular authority in the case of a Christian government.<sup>40</sup> But even a non-Christian government should be obeyed in reasonable things, just as children should be obedient to parents:

If a drunkard commands his son to be sober, the son is obliged to obey him. If an adulterer commands his son to live cleanly and chastely, if a thief commands his child to keep his hands pure – the children are obliged to obey. But also, if a godless government makes good laws, and commands its subjects to follow them, they are obliged to obey, even if the government does not follow its own good laws.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, the church should be subject to the state, and Christian magistrates represent the state. Christian magistrates should rule in three ways: by guarding/overseeing, by foster-parenting, and by their own example of a godly life.

First, the civil government should be the guardians and overseers of law, both civil and religious – of “both tables” of the Lord.<sup>42</sup> They should see “that God’s Word is preached purely, that people are obedient to it, and that willful lawbreakers are rebuked.”<sup>43</sup> This entails the making of “good laws and ordinances, serving for the well-being of the subjects as long as they do not conflict with God’s Word.”<sup>44</sup> To watch over the church specifically, Coolhaes agrees with the controversial proposal to place members of the magistracy in the meetings of the Leiden consistory.<sup>45</sup> Also, he does not want the church council to outnumber the magistrates. The church council is not to be a *regeer-college*, a ruling body. Instead, Coolhaes advocates an “oligarchy of regents.”<sup>46</sup> He also insists that the magistracy take the lead in the selection and approval of preachers and elders. This is all because the government

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mochte te recht antwoorden, ende segghen, dat sy de selfde zijn, daerom dat sy haer wettelicken ende van God ghegevene Overheyt, in billicken dinghen, niet en hebben willen ghehoorsaem zijn, ende hebben meer aen menschen ende menselicken instellinghen ghehanghen, als aen Gods wort, twelck seyt: Een yeghelick sy der Overheyt onderdanich, want daer en is gheen Overheyt dan van God: ende die Overheyt zijn, zijn van Godt gheordineert: Ende wie der Overheyt wederstaet, die wederstaet der ordinatie Gods, ende diese wederstaen, sullen het ordeal teghen haer selven nemen. (Rom. 13.2)”. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 34ijv–34ijr.

40. Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13.

41. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 42 Liir.

42. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, unpaginated A4.

43. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 23Fiiijv–23Fiiijr.

44. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 22Fijr.

45. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 31Hiiijr–31Hiiijv.

46. “een oligarchische regenten-regering.” Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 25.

should guard and protect the church, and also discipline and rebuke it. He is not optimistic that preachers and elders could or would discipline those in their own ranks. It is the office of the government to perform this discipline. The preachers and elders are all on the same side, as it were, and cannot oversee each other. As he puts it, “one crow doesn’t scratch out the eyes of another;” the preachers might make allowances for the elders, and not rebuke them, and so the government must rebuke those who willfully break God’s law.<sup>47</sup>

Second, Coolhaes also calls the government the “foster fathers and mothers” (a reference to Isa. 49:23) of the church – with the responsibility to care for the poor, and to maintain the places where people meet to hear God’s Word.<sup>48</sup> The Apostolic Church, he asserts, bore Christian care for the true and worthy poor and cared for them not only with preaching to their souls or inner persons, but also cared for their physical needs. So, contemporary churches must care for the poor, not just spiritually but physically. Poor relief should be for all, not given prejudicially only to those of one’s own church. No city or even village is so large that its true poor cannot be easily cared for where there is diligence and the preachers serve their office as the Apostles did. If the church or churches find it hard to eliminate begging and maintain the poor by themselves, they should preach, teach, exhort, pray, and keep after the government to make and maintain good order in this.<sup>49</sup> He means that if the government is not doing its job of overseeing, if “Moses” is not doing his job, the preachers do have the responsibility. If they are then not able to cooperate with the government, they must try to work with private citizens. As for deacons, in the best possible case they are unnecessary. They were necessary in the Apostolic Church; the government then was not responsible for the Christian poor. But now, if the government does not “foster,” then it would be the task of all true believers, especially the preachers, to care for the poor. This could include the office of deacon. But preachers are not allowing the government to fulfill its obligation in this. He refers to a well-known “dog-in-the-manger” saying, that a dog lay on the hay, preventing the ox from eating, even though the dog could not eat it himself. In the same way, he states, preachers say that in the cities and villages where they preach, they

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47. “Een cray crabt der anderen gheen ooch vit.” Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 23Fiiijv.

48. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 23Fiiib, folio 63 Qiiia, and folio 64Qiiib.65Rr–66Rijv; also Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 3v.

49. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 6.

cannot get rid of the beggars. But the preachers do not permit the government to do what it has authority to do.<sup>50</sup>

Part of the government's responsibility, Coolhaes affirms, was in connection with weddings which take place at the City Hall. This happy duty is surely also in the category of "fostering" for him. Coolhaes elaborates on the rightness of this sort of wedding in his correspondence with Wijnant Kras, in connection with the rights of Mennonites and Catholics who did not want to be married in a Reformed Church. Kras evidently wanted anyone not married in a Reformed Church to be considered guilty in the eyes of the government of concubinage, and liable to punishment.<sup>51</sup> Coolhaes declares that such a demand has never been made in Holland, nor had any Reformed theology professors demanded it. It has always been allowed for the couple to come before commissioners to declare their intent and to sign the book.<sup>52</sup> This would have been the legal practice of most Mennonites, Lutheran, or Roman Catholic couples. Coolhaes remarks that the confirmation of the married state is not commanded in the Bible to be only the task of preachers, just as Christ and the Apostles did not perform weddings. According to him, weddings in a sense are a political thing. Although in a Christian country it is certainly a good thing to have a wedding in church, to hear a sermon, to pray and give thanks, and to have the whole congregation present, it is not required. The location is not important.<sup>53</sup> Coolhaes' refusal to insist on weddings in church had branded him in some circles as a David-Jorist or a figure such as Jan van Leyden – someone who believes in practicing polygamy. Coolhaes was insulted and disgusted by this accusation, and emphasized his faithfulness to one wife, and his godly children, as proof against it.<sup>54</sup>

Third, the magistrates must lead by example. His words to the magistrates of Deventer illustrate what he believed is the right way for Christian magistrates to rule the

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50. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Q.

51. Coolhaes, *Een noodwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, Aiiijr.

52. Coolhaes, *Een noodwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, B. Indeed, Coolhaes discusses this question and practice very similarly in *Apologia*, folio 21Fv.

53. Coolhaes, *Een noodwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, Dijr.

54. Coolhaes, *Een noodwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, Ciiijb; Db. He was also accused of being a libertine *rol-waghen drijver* (associated with Mennonite Rolwaghen, with whom he wrote *Tsamensprekinge*) or *vrijgeest* "whose desire for freedom served the flesh." Coolhaes, *Een cort, waerachtich verhael*, 140, 148. For more regarding this, see Chapter 5.

church: “Oh with what fervency and unity of the whole citizenry the Word of the Lord has been preached there, through your Excellencies’ careful ruling.”<sup>55</sup> The Gospel spread, he continues, because “they saw that your honors, their legal government, came earnestly to the listening of God’s Word and to the right use of the sacraments.” Even Catholics and others were attracted to the preaching, he relates, not because of force or persecution, but because of the magistrates’ attitude.<sup>56</sup> Magistrates should manage the church without persecuting other faiths, and lead by example.

“Fostering” and setting a good example had to do with the enforcement of public morality as well as coming to church. Court preacher Jean Taffin said that without the efforts of the civil government to “foster” peace and the true religion, ordinary citizens would fight and devour each other “like rats in the straw.”<sup>57</sup> Village life and the habits of the lower classes were seen as being filled with drunkenness, illicit sex, gaming, and dancing. The fairs were said to be rife with offenses against public decency and morality. The Sabbath was being disregarded. Winandus Beeck, in a letter to Arent Cornelisz, deplored these circumstances.<sup>58</sup> The condition of the middle classes was also said to be less than godly. Taffin also complained about the popularity of dancing and the Chambers of Rhetoric in 1575. He said the Chambers were useless against Roman Catholicism, which they were supposedly lampooning. In reality, they were all about making money and showing off. They encouraged laziness and impurity. This is a criticism which could also have been aimed at Leiden, since its magistracy supported the Chambers of Rhetoric and honored their favorite recreation with a festival in 1596.<sup>59</sup> Coolhaes, despite his distaste for rules and forced discipline, joined with the preachers in this desire for a more moral, godly and ordered

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55. “Och met hoedanigen vrede ende eenicheyt der gantscher burgerschap, door uwe E.E.W. voorsichtige regeeringhe, is aldaer het woort des Heeren gepredict worden.” Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aijr.

56. “Also dat gheen twijfel en soude dat gheweest, dat so het den Heere also hadde belieft, ende ons de deure des Evangelij ware open gebleven, de meeste deel van den ghenen die noch in de duysternisse des Pausdoms saten, soudén in corten tijden door Gods genade, tot het licht des Evangelij gebracht geworden zijn, ende dat niet sonder reden: want sy sagen uwer E.E.W. haer wettelicke Overheyt vlijtich ende vierich tot tgehoor des Godlijcken woorts, ende tware ghebruyck der Sacramenten comen.” Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiijv.

57. Taffin, *Onderwijsinghe teghens de dwalinghe der wederdoopers* (Haarlem: 1590), 171-72, quoted in Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 219, 240.

58. Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 176-77.

59. Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 177-78.

society, and the “fostering” and good example of the magistrates were a vital part in this project.

I will mention here briefly, though, one document about these issues that is attributed to Coolhaes but may not have been written by him. I am speaking of a short essay, *Cort ende schriftmatich gevoelen*, included in Kamphuis’ book, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*. It gives a similar view about the crucial role of magistrates. However, it does not sound like Coolhaes, although there are commonalities with his ideas. The writer compares secular and church governments - they are both in the eyes of God a service or ministry; they are both, by the power of God, to be guardians. But they differ also: the secular government, besides caring for the church, cares for the state and the common good. It makes sure the Word of God is heard – by authority and example. The church servants work to teach the Word and show it by their walk and life. The government keeps peace in the church against despisers and falsifiers of God’s Word, regardless whether they are preachers, public or private persons. The servants’ office is to exhort in Christ’s name. The government punishes external people with external punishment: prison, physical punishment or fines. But the servants must punish with internal weapons; threats of eternal life and eternal death call the spirit or the soul to repentance. The government adapts the external punishments to the place and time, but the servants must use the threats of divine thorns and excommunication carefully.<sup>60</sup> It is in these final thoughts that a difference from Coolhaes can be seen clearly. While Coolhaes acknowledges that preachers sometimes suffer, even by God’s hand in the process of their growth, he would never advocate clerical “threats,” especially of excommunication. So, I am inclined to conclude that he did not author this essay.

Giving each other a hand

Just as the church and state question (in particular, the adversarial relations of the two sides) has often been oversimplified,<sup>61</sup> it is also too easy to categorize Coolhaes as merely

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60. Coolhaes? *Cort ende Schriftmatich gevoelen der kercken Christi, van de gemeynschap ende onderscheyt, dwelck tusschen die politische ende kerckelijcke regeringe is*. In Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 81-82.

61. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 62-63.

anticlerical<sup>62</sup> without looking at the nuances of his church and state view which call for cooperation between secular and ecclesiastical authorities. At times, power can give way to cooperation. Although civil government stands over the church servants in terms of hierarchical order, in practice government and clergy should work together.

Usually the government should lead, but sometimes this cooperation means that the government may be rebuked by its church servants. The government and church should be like two hands which work together - not like the old adage of “two hands on one stomach,” which implies that there is no difference between them or their work, but as a partnership. The Word of God is above even the government, and if the magistrates break it, they must also be rebuked – even though the preachers are under the government.<sup>63</sup> This sort of mutual oversight would bring a balance. This should only be done occasionally, but especially in cases where the government and society are “enemies of the true religion.” Such admonishment can then bring them “from the wrong path to the path of salvation.”<sup>64</sup>

In fact, if the government is hostile to the faith, then the church - classes, consistories and church servants - must fulfill the role of the absent Christian government. Coolhaes himself, a preacher in his own eyes still, even though defrocked, certainly saw his own role to be to exhort the magistrates, the States, as well as the church. In trying times, the church must call preachers and elders, order the place and time for preaching, take care of the support of church servants, and fire or move them when necessary.<sup>65</sup> It may be that Coolhaes’ opponents thought that this was precisely what they were doing, since they doubted the godliness of the Leiden magistrates, repeatedly emphasizing that the magistrates were libertines and not of the “true religion.” However, they expected the rule of the Reformed structure to last, while Coolhaes intended clearly that a situation involving a non-Christian government (or perhaps non-Reformed in the broad sense, since it is difficult to pin him down on that point), such as that of the churches “under the Cross,”<sup>66</sup> should revert back as soon as possible to the Moses-and-Aaron state of hierarchy. If the opposite is true, and the church is lacking in a particular

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62. We discuss the question of anticlericalism and Coolhaes in Chapter 8.

63. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 22Fijr.

64. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 43Lijr. See also: Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, 31-32.

65. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 43Lijr–44Liiijv.

66. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 82-85.

time or place, then the government must do the work of the “hand” of the church. Everything, therefore, depends upon the specific situation:

If a person has two healthy hands, he uses both. One hand helps another, one washes the other, and both hands help the whole body. But if through accident, or better, through the providence of God, one hand is cut off or unusable, then the other must do (as much as possible) the work and craft of both, so that the body ... does not remain un-served. In the same way both the government and the church servants serve and support the church of God. Because they are both there, they are both obligated to serve the church of God also in the governing of the church. But when one of the two is missing, the other is obligated to do its best, so that the church of God does not remain un-served.<sup>67</sup>

So, “as one hand washes the other, so both are clean.”<sup>68</sup> The church and the secular government must help each other.

Coolhaes addresses the task of another group of people: the church congregation itself. This is especially important, he feels, in the selection of elders, which is what the dispute in Leiden in 1579 was actually about. Along with the consistory and the magistrates, the body of the church also has a highly important role in elder selection: silent approbation. Coolhaes is sure that the people of the congregation could not take total charge of the election of church servants, since chaos would result. The average man in the community is like a child who thinks he is serving his guardians, when in fact they are serving him until he comes of age. So Coolhaes’ ideal in elder selection is that the consistory proposes candidates, who are ratified by the magistracy, and then approved by the congregation.<sup>69</sup> Although this congregational role may sound insignificant, Coolhaes believes it is actually important.

#### Drafting for order

Coolhaes describes an ideal church and state cooperation in *Apologia*: he would have liked to see the church servants proposing a course of action and the civil government ratifying it. This demonstrates the use of the church servants as the spiritual and practical stimulus to

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67. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 64 Qiiijv–folio 65Rv.

68. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 62Qijr. This expression, “if the one hand washes the other, they will both be clean,” was also used by Petrus Hackius, later Leiden broader Reformed preacher, in one of his sermons. Hackius eventually encountered opposition and was forced to leave his post in 1595, in a situation with many similarities to that of Coolhaes. For more informations, see Kooi, “Pharisees and Hypocrites,” 272.

69. *Stilzwijgende approbatie*. This whole sequence is detailed in Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 28 Giiijv–30Hijv.

action, and the authority of the civil government to approve and implement the action. Instead of calling him before a synod, Coolhaes feels, preachers who are worried about Leiden's example would have done better to have drawn up a church order and requested that the States would approve it. Then the preachers and churches would have known the pattern on which they had to build. If the States agreed, and put it into law, no individual would have been able to break it.<sup>70</sup>

What he was proposing was a national church order. This had been attempted. In 1576, the States of Holland was asked by William of Orange to draft one. It specified that preachers should be chosen by magistrates with the advice of preachers and that they should be tested as to their doctrine. However the Synod of Dordrecht in 1578 disagreed, voting that preachers should be chosen by the church and that magistrates could object within fourteen days.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, in 1581, the Ghent preacher Nicasius van der Schuere wrote defending the appointment of preachers by the government.<sup>72</sup>

Clergy selection belonged for Coolhaes together with a church order which addressed both liturgical and practical concerns. He wrote that "a certain form of prayer before and after the preaching, a form of baptism and serving Holy Communion, calling preachers, visiting the sick, burying the dead, a certain number of holy days, and so forth," should be written by the government and their subjects should keep to it, although with a certain amount of flexibility. He thought that a written order of services would be especially helpful for inexperienced preachers, although it should not be kept slavishly.<sup>73</sup> Coolhaes believed very much in accommodating liturgical ceremonies to local practices. He did not use the terms *necessaria* or *non-necessaria* or speak of *adiaphora*. Nevertheless, most practices to him belonged to the category of externals: the physical appearance and dress of the preacher, when and how preaching should happen, when and whether psalms and other songs should be sung, and whether there should be some unified forms of prayer, catechism, and baptism. In baptism, should the water be poured, and if so, how many times? Or should the person be

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70. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 51Nijv.

71. Pettegree, "Coming to Terms with Victory," 166-67; C. Hooijer, *Oude Kerkordeningen der Nederlandsche Hervormde Gemeenten (1563-1638)* (Zaltbommel: n. p., 1865) 121, 126-31. Selections translated from these documents in *Calvinism in Europe Documents*, nos. 46-50. See also Rutgers, *Acta*, 235.

72. Nicasius van der Schuere, *Een cleyne of corte institutie, dat is onderwysinghe der christelijcker religie* (Ghent, 1581), folio 94, in Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 238-39.

73. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 74Tijv-74Tijr.



immersed? In communion what type of bread (leavened or unleavened? wheat or rye?) and wine (red or white, or in its absence beer, mead or even water) should be used? Out of what material (gold, silver, pewter, earthenware) should the vessels be made? In all of these ceremonies, Coolhaes counseled freedom, since the Bible gives no clear directive for them. Also, he maintained, idols are easily made out of these sorts of customs.<sup>74</sup> They can attract people, but also can lead them to focus on earthly things or on people rather than on God. People may be tempted by adherence to them to believe that salvation lies in the externals.<sup>75</sup>

On the other hand, Coolhaes would not sweep aside all ceremonies. He defended and kept up certain established customs in his Leiden pastorate: funeral sermons, evening services, and the celebration of holidays on weekdays. He defended them largely because of continuity – the churches in Leiden had traditionally kept them. There is no reason in his mind to change them – even though because of that, he was accused of having Catholic sympathies. Coolhaes also found the structure of worship services to be a non-essential, something that is only external, and does not give the question much attention. For instance, he did not express an opinion about church music, in contrast to others such as Jean Polyander of Emden, who in the same year of 1579 complained about the Dordrecht church organs: “I really marvel that when other idols were removed, this noisy idol was retained.”<sup>76</sup>

Questions about schools could also be addressed by a national church order. Coolhaes did not speak about questions of lower schools, but the practice of teaching the Heidelberg Catechism in these schools would have certainly displeased him. Despite hailing from the Palatinate himself, like Coornhert he has nothing but criticism for the document. He especially opposed the way it was being used:

Isn't it true that they divided the catechism into fifty-two Sundays - not the Ten Commandments, Twelve Articles and Lord's Prayer, but their own explanations, and read it in place of the Scripture from the pulpit every Sunday, as if it were Scripture? The old "Sunday Gospels" (so-called) they have left out, saying they "stank of the papacy."<sup>77</sup>

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74. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 67Rijr–68Riiijv. The context of this passage is that Coolhaes is saying that the selection of preachers and elders in Leiden can be made differently, otherwise it can become a “ceremony,” and thus a tradition.

75. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 46Mijv-46Mijr.

76. Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 179, quoting Polyander to Cornelisz, 27 February, 1579, *Collectie Cornelisz*, 112, AD.

77. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Eijr.

He sees value in church orders, but will leave the responsibility for them with the government even after they were adopted. At the Synod of Middelburg, the fourth point in the second set of theses which he was made to sign involved the question of church order – that the duty of the government is to sanction the church order and help to carry it out. Everyone must be subject to this, until a following synod brings changes in it.<sup>78</sup> He certainly agrees with the first part about the government, but would have balked at any later changes made under a synod’s authority alone. After Coolhaes’ excommunication, another attempt at a church order was made by the States in 1583, taking into account both the excommunication and the controversy with Herbertsz in Gouda the previous year. In the new draft, preachers would be appointed by a committee of both magistracy and church representatives. This was soon adopted in Dordrecht, where teamwork between secular and ecclesiastical powers was working well, but not in most other places.<sup>79</sup>

#### Some common ground with Coornhert

We have seen that Dirck Volkert Coornhert defended Coolhaes at the request of the Leiden magistrates.<sup>80</sup> Many of the ideas he put forward in this connection are echoed in Coolhaes’ own works. We discussed this in the biographical sketch. Let us take a closer look at Coornhert for a moment within the context of the church and state relationship. Coornhert’s *Justificatie* (1579) included the story of the Leiden dispute up to the present, all pertinent documents, and passages from Calvin, Beza, Musculus, Gwalther and Bullinger thought to support the pro-magistrate party.<sup>81</sup> He spoke for the magistracy, describing the trials they had endured as a slanderous, evil blow.<sup>82</sup> Having thrown off the troublesome yoke of the

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78. See Chapter 3 for summaries of all of the Middelburg Theses.

79. Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 165, 168. For more detail about how this cooperation worked in Dordrecht, see also C.A. Tukker, *De classis Dordrecht van 1573 tot 1609. Een bijdrage tot de kennis van in- en extern leven van de Gereformeerde kerk in de periode van haar organiseren* (Leiden: Universitaire Pers, 1965), 126-40.

80. See Chapter 2.

81. For more about Reformed theologians being quoted against the views of stricter Calvinists by Coolhaes in his works, see Herman Anthonie Speelman, *Calvijn en de zelfstandigheid van de kerk* (Kampen: Kok, 1994), 214-19.

tyrannical Roman Church, they did not want any new yoke to be imposed on the shoulders of their community.<sup>83</sup> Although many complained that the magistrates wanted to rule over the church, in fact it was the ambition of one minister (he means Pieter Cornelisz) and some of the consistory to want to rule, as he put it, “at City Hall.” This ambition was like a smoking fire, which increased until the flames would be seen above all the houses of the city. The magistracy said they did not want to rule over the church, but wanted to prevent ministers or consistories from dominating wantonly over peoples’ consciences and bringing a new papacy to this free church.<sup>84</sup> The church could be “free” because of the Christian government of the magistrates and of William of Orange’s *Religions-vrede* (Antwerp, 1579),<sup>85</sup> which supported the co-existence of different religions.<sup>86</sup> Of course, some Reformed preachers disagreed with this point, thinking that their church was “free” only when they ruled.<sup>87</sup> But Coornhert and the Leiden magistrates maintained that the government should have authority over religion, because the government’s power over its subjects is even more than of a father over his children. On a less theoretical note, the magistrates had also been accused of neglecting Christian discipline, but *Justificatie* accuses the consistory of uneven application of discipline, disciplining some harshly, while favoring others who had committed blatant offenses, such as petty crimes, stealing wine, prostitution, and communicating sexually-transmitted diseases.<sup>88</sup> But Coolhaes was, Coornhert wrote, innocent of blame in all of these quarrels, except insofar as Coolhaes taught that ceremonial externals were less important to salvation than the internals of faith, with which Cornelisz disagreed.<sup>89</sup>

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82. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, title page; folio Aij, *een quat geclap*. Note: Unfortunately, the contents of Coornhert’s *Justificatie* and *Remonstrance* have not been given much attention by scholars. Secondary literature which discusses these works is meager to nonexistent. For this reason, my footnotes cite the works themselves exclusively.

83. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Aiiij.

84. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Aiiija-b.

85. Willem van Oranje, *De Religions-vrede: Gheaccordeert en gepubliceert binnen Antwerpen den xijde junij/ M. D. lxxix* (Antwerp: Christoffel Plantijn, 1579).

86. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio B.

87. For example, Pieter Corneliz himself could be free: “Pieter Cornelisz [was one] who stood up for the freedom of the church.” Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 33.

88. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Ciiij.

89. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Aiiij. This is also mentioned in *Verantwoordinghe van den dienaer*, 4-5.

Coornhert was asked to write again, and his *Remonstrance* (1582) was the result. Coornhert describes the danger of the present situation, using the metaphor of a great fire threatening to engulf the city and even the country.<sup>90</sup> This danger had been seen in earlier ages when Constantine in his zeal for the Christian religion put the Pope on his throne.<sup>91</sup> Coolhaes agreed with Coornhert in the belief in this theory of the decline of Christianity after Constantine. This zeal produces a false religion, imprisoning the freedom of the conscience.<sup>92</sup> Coornhert says that since Constantine the popes have been evil, and that Nicaea only strengthened the Arians. He traces history in this way to “prove” that the Synod of Middelburg took power rightfully belonging to the secular government – establishing themselves as a “new popery” (or, as some translate it, a “new papacy.”) Coornhert conflates freedom of religion with political freedom from Spanish oppression.<sup>93</sup> Here again, we can see the mindset of the *libertatis causa* group. The Synod of Middelburg, he complains, was not legal, as it had not been called properly; Leiden was a member of the States and had not given consent.<sup>94</sup> In any event, he continues, councils and synods have not been useful throughout history, and, as if the children did not have enough to study, now they will also be getting a new canon law based on all these decisions.<sup>95</sup> Is this what is meant by the word “Reformation,” a religion that must conform to synods and the loss of the privileges of the government?<sup>96</sup> No, those who read history know that liberty means the ability to speak out freely, whereas tyranny is marked by the inability to do so.<sup>97</sup> The secular sphere must remain

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90. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, folios Aijv–Aijr.

91. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, folio Aiiijv.

92. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, folio Aiiijr.

93. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, folio Aiiijv.

94. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, folio BB. Actually perhaps Coornhert was also referring to Coolhaes and the Synod of Middelburg 1581 in his *Synodus of vander Conscientien Vryheit* (1582). This view is proposed by James D. Tracy, “Erasmus, Coornhert and the Acceptance of Religious Disunity in the Body Politic: A Low Countries Tradition?,” in Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, Jonathan I. Israel, and G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes, eds., *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 55.

95. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, folio Bijr.

96. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, Biiijb.

97. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, Biiij.

under the political government; we should not open the door of mastery over the government to the ecclesiastics.<sup>98</sup>

Coornhert defended Coolhaes, and they had many views in common. However, Coolhaes did not follow Coornhert in everything, especially in these early days before Coolhaes' excommunication when he still had some sympathy for the Reformed Church. In 1580, after Coolhaes' *Apologia* had come out, he and Coornhert wrote to each other on the topic of church/state relations. Although the letters from Coolhaes are not extant, two remain from Coornhert.<sup>99</sup> Coolhaes received these letters from Coornhert sometime during 1580. It appears that they disagreed to a certain extent as to how important the civil government was to the establishment of a Christian society. In the first letter, Coornhert said that all governments claim that they are Christian. Whoever is reputed to be evangelical is busy trying to prove that his religion is the only true one, and that all other churches and religions are false.<sup>100</sup> In the second, he said that it is certainly not the task of a father to force his family to his religion, to forbid another religion or its practice (enticing, exhorting and reprimanding); it was in the same way not the task of a government to force its subjects to or from one religion or another.<sup>101</sup> Coornhert ultimately would have wanted a separation of church and state, and yet not an "intolerant" rule by the Reformed either – a hope which may well have been just too utopian to accomplish.<sup>102</sup> Coornhert criticized Coolhaes, since the latter in *Apologia* taught that Christian magistrates were the guardians of the church. Instead, Coornhert believed that true, spiritual pastors were the real guardians.<sup>103</sup> The magistracy, on the other hand, represents the whole community, the whole city, not just one religion.<sup>104</sup>

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98. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, Biiijb.

99. Coornhert, Twletters, folio 146BCD, UBL. For a short description, see Bonger, *Leven en werk*, 101.

100. "Wie heeft oock van alle diemen evangelische noemt, bewesen, dat hare kercke en de religie alleene de ware zy: Ende alle d'andere kercken ende religien valsche." Bonger, *Leven en werk*, 101.

101. Bonger, *Leven en werk*, 101.

102. "De spiritualisten waren in hun pleidooi voor scheiding van kerk en staat onrealistisch en utopistisch, hun opvattingen over de te volgen godsdienstpolitiek – gelijk die van Coornhert – waren in de praktijk niet uit te voeren, maar zij verwoorden niettemin hun afkeer van de intolerantie van de gereformeerden." Bergsma, "Calvinisten en libertijnen," 226.

103. Voogt, *Constraint on Trial*, 159-73; Coornhert, "Brieven-boek," Letter 96 to Coolhaes, in *Wercken*, vol. 3, folio 146BCD, UBL.

Nevertheless, some preachers are not true shepherds, but wolves, and so the magistrates must be involved:

No one should ignore that the magistracy is set up by God for the defense of the pious from evil, and that some preachers are wolves in sheep's clothing. It wouldn't be good for them to protect the wolves and kill the shepherds, as was done in Roman times. So the magistrate needs legal knowledge of what is going on in the sheep pen.<sup>105</sup>

Therefore, we see that Coolhaes and Coornhert were bound together by several key ideas.

The two shared an aversion to and even fear of too much church control by the Reformed preachers. They also were united by a spirituality which emphasized heart religion, rather than conformity. However, they did not agree on the scope of the magistrates' task.

Coornhert saw the magistrates as civil rulers, but pastors as the true guardians of society, whereas Coolhaes wanted the magistrates to be spiritual men – ideally broad, yet Reformed.

For Coornhert, the magistrates were grudgingly admitted to hold a spiritual role in the absence of prophetic, spiritual church leaders. For Coolhaes, on the other hand, spiritual magistrates should be the rule, not the exception.

#### Sermons from Gwalther

Coolhaes also bore a notable resemblance in some areas, including on the church and state question, to the Zurich theologians. After his excommunication, he translated sermons by Rudolf Gwalther (1519-1586)<sup>106</sup> into Dutch and also added his own introductions and thoughts. Gwalther was the successor of Zwingli and Bullinger as Reformed bishop in Zurich – a student of Bullinger and a son-in-law of the late Zwingli. His influence extended to England, where he was able to speak in favor of the “single-sphere” church and state model of Zurich.<sup>107</sup> The book which resulted from Coolhaes' translation, *Van de Christelijke discipline ende excommunicatie*, demonstrates his indebtedness to Gwalther and the Zurich point of view. These are short excerpts which deal with Erastian church and state relations

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104. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Biiijr.

105. Coornhert, *Justificatie*, Biiijr–Biiijv.

106. More about Gwalther's influential contacts and correspondence can be found in Kurt-Jacob Rüetschi, “Rudolf Gwalthers Kontakte zu Engländern und Schotten,” in *Die Zürcher Reformation: Ausstrahlungen und Rückwirkungen. Wissenschaftliche Tagung zum hundertjährigen Bestehen des Zwinglivereins 1997*, ed. Alfred Schindler and Hans Stichelberger (Bern: Lang, 2001), 351-73.

107. J. Wayne Baker, “Gwalther, Rudolf,” *OER*, vol. 2, 203.

and the problems of too-severe discipline, supplemented by Coolhaes' own writing. Coolhaes was obviously inspired by Gwalther's opposition to excommunication as a form of Christian discipline. We will address that aspect in Chapter 8. Coolhaes also wanted to demonstrate that he is not alone in the Reformed world in holding his convictions about the primary role of a Christian government in ruling the church.<sup>108</sup>

The Dutch translation was confiscated by government order; even the Leiden magistracy was unable to overlook this disobedience to the order from the States that Coolhaes after his excommunication would not write more books. However, they reimbursed him for his printing costs. Van Hout knew and cooperated with printer Andries Verschout, and it may have been Van Hout who paid for the printing of the controversial book.<sup>109</sup> The book was eventually reprinted twice.

As we have said, Coolhaes' view comports with that of Zwingli, who did not bifurcate society, but described it as a single sphere.<sup>110</sup> Zwingli gave Christian magistrates an important position in relation to the church, creating what has been called a "theology for urban oligarchs."<sup>111</sup> A consistory was not needed.<sup>112</sup> During the time of Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, the church and magistracy is said to have worked together without a consistory.<sup>113</sup> Bullinger, a key developer of covenant theology, taught that preachers are the heirs of the prophets. Magistrates, on the other hand, descend from the Old Testament kings, and they must "establish" religion.<sup>114</sup> Coolhaes' emphasis on Moses and Aaron fits with this well.

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108. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, unpaginated 4b.

109. Bostoën, *Hart voor Leiden*, 39-40.

110. J. Wayne Baker calls this the "proto-Erastian" position, claiming that the Zurich reformers were "Erastians before Erastus." J. Wayne Baker, "Erastianism in England: The Zurich Connection," in *Die Zürcher Reformation*, 327-49.

111. Robert C. Walton, "Zurich," *OER*, vol. 4, 312.

112. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 14. See also J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980), 107-140; W. P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldreich Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 286-89.

113. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 13-14. On the other hand, Kaplan mentions, in the context of the history of Utrecht, that the consistory there was concerned over this point which the Libertines asserted, and sent the then-Calvinist Wtenbogaert to Zurich, where he consulted with Gwalther and brought back documentation that this was untrue. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 77.

114. J. Wayne Baker, "Bullinger, Heinrich," *OER*, vol. 1, 228-29.

Thomas Lüber (1524–1583), better known as Erastus, was a close associate of Bullinger and defended the Zurich model of civil authority rather than Calvinist church discipline and banning. Erastianism became known for its opposition of ecclesiastical control and discipline (especially excommunication), and for the idea of secular government of the church.<sup>115</sup> This view found root in England, where, after the Elizabethan Settlement (1559), the monarch headed the state church as well as the government. Together the monarch and the parliament created a church order and liturgy, and selected bishops for consecration.<sup>116</sup> This caesaropapism meant that the church was completely under secular control. Considering the previous violence of the English Reformation, such a step was understandable. Gwalther had helped to propagate the Zurich view of the civil government's rule over the church in his many contacts with English exiles in Switzerland in the mid-1500s,<sup>117</sup> who were familiar with Erastian views. Coolhaes, on the other hand, did not discuss the queen of England or the English church, aside from his disapproval of the Earl of Leicester. However, his condemnation of Calvinist discipline, excommunication and banning, even before his own excommunication, shows a strong affinity with the view of Erastus.

In contrast with the Zwinglian position, Calvinism took the view that the church must have the authority to reform society, free from the control of a government which may be insufficiently Reformed or even downright hostile. This is also logical, seeing that in both France and the Netherlands early reformers were being persecuted. In Geneva, the elected city council appointed ministers, elders and deacons. Calvin, however, according to Höpfl, wanted the Genevan magistrates to act as “tame instruments of the clergy,”<sup>118</sup> reluctantly

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115. Sigrid Looss, “Lüber, Thomas,” Hans J. Hillerbrand, trans., *OER*, vol. 2, 456-57; J. Wayne Baker, “Erastianism,” *OER*, vol. 2, 59-61.

116. Mout, *Kerk en staat in een turbulente samenleving*, 13.

117. He wrote to Queen Elizabeth on January 16, 1559, congratulating the English church on the good mother which they had gained in her, and exhorting a reform according to God's Word and not with forms derived from the papacy and mixed infelicitously with the Gospel. This concern with papal forms foreshadows Gwalther's later contributions to the English Vestment Controversy. See Rüetschi, “Rudolf Gwalthers Kontakte zu Engländern und Schotten,” 360, 365.

118. Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 267. For more about Calvin in Geneva, see also: Robert Kingdon, “John Calvin's Contribution to Representative Government,” in *Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of H. G. Koenigsberger*, ed. Phyllis Mack and Margaret C. Jacob (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987), 186; Harro Höpfl, *The Christian Polity of John Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 123, 196; Gillian Lewis, “Calvinism in Geneva in the time of Calvin and Beza (1541-1605),” in *International Calvinism 1541-1715*, ed. Menna Prestwick (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 39-70.



allowed Geneva's civil government to participate in the choosing of clergy, elders and deacons. In the Netherlands, the Reformed Church believed that "the appointment of ministers was the touchstone of the independence of the church. Thus, in this respect, perhaps due to different political circumstances, Dutch Reformed Protestants adopted a stricter attitude than Calvin."<sup>119</sup> The "theocratic pretensions"<sup>120</sup> of the Calvinists meant that the magistrates should protect and support the church as its patrons,<sup>121</sup> not rule it. Reformed thinkers also came into disagreement with Mennonites over the role of the secular government. Mennonites sought to limit the government's activities in religious affairs.<sup>122</sup>

Coolhaes found much with which to disagree in these Calvinist ideas. He was not alone. Although on the one hand the Revolt had a strongly Protestant character, on the other state-builders and civil government worried about giving away too much power to a Calvinist church hierarchy. The States of Holland had countered the Calvinists with a church order in 1576 which gave city government authority to hire and fire preachers. The Leiden magistracy also sent their concerns to the States in the form of an *Advies* in 1579.<sup>123</sup> Magistrates and others who opposed the firm rule of the preachers spoke out against what they called the "Genevan Inquisition."<sup>124</sup> However, Calvinists considered it both their right and their duty, during this time of church-building, to oppose the interference of the government.<sup>125</sup>

Coolhaes also affirmed the Belgic Confession, at least insofar as it directed that the government should have authority over the clergy in the areas of doctrine and church order. The Confession addressed the issue in article 36, saying that God had "placed the sword in the hands of the government to punish evil people and protect the good," including destroying idolatry and keeping peace. The Confession specified that government must carry out its tasks "while completely refraining from every tendency toward exercising absolute

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119. Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 267, referring to Höpfl, see above footnote.

120. Bergsma, "Calvinisten en libertijnen," 209-337. See Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 59-65, for an expanded section on the theocratic ideas of Calvinists.

121. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 9.

122. Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 240-41.

123. Overvoorde, "Advies," 117-49.

124. Mout, "Kerk en staat in de zestiende eeuw," 17.

125. Hofman, *Eenich achterdencken*, 14.

authority.”<sup>126</sup> Coolhaes often referred to the Belgic Confession, especially to quote “One must obey them [the government] in all things that are not in conflict with God’s Word,” although he does not advocate punishment.

Coolhaes’ views also show some similarity to Lutheran ideas. The “Christian prince” was, for Luther, an irreplaceable part of Christian society, and the source of authority that had previously resided with the papacy and the bishops.<sup>127</sup> The secular authority should rule in the physical world, but not in the ecclesiastical one, although it should keep the peace and protect the church – the *landesherrliche Kirchenregiment*.<sup>128</sup> The church on the other hand should possess no powers of jurisdiction or punishment, although Luther’s conviction on this was shaken after the violence of the Peasants’ War (1524-1525). After the Peace of Augsburg (1555), rulers of the Evangelical and Catholic regions superintended the reforms in those regions.<sup>129</sup> Coolhaes reflects these ideas: for him, the magistrates and States are clearly the equivalent of the princes, although he himself does not make this comparison.

One final idea should be mentioned briefly in this section: the possible differences in Coolhaes’ view between the local city magistrates and the Prince and States. Both groups are a form of civil government; both often found themselves in opposition to the ecclesiastical government of preachers and synods. However, it can be seen that Coolhaes distinguished between them. We mentioned in the biographical sketch that Coolhaes invariably sided with the local magistrates over the States and Prince; still, he spoke of the latter with respect and subservience, and dedicated one of his books to the Prince. One is reminded of a Calvinist “popular magistrate,” or Monarchomach idea,<sup>130</sup> or the the “lesser magistrate” or “resistance theory” as described in the Lutheran *Magdeburg Confession* in 1550.<sup>131</sup> These are variations

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126. English text of the Belgic Confession can be at [www.reformed.org/documents](http://www.reformed.org/documents) (accessed January 27, 2016).

127. Eric G. Jay, *The Church: Its Changing Image Through Twenty Centuries* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), 167-69; Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 40-48.

128. Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, “Two Kingdoms,” trans. Hans J. Hillerbrand, *OER*, vol. 4, 184-88; Luther, Martin, *Temporal authority: To What Extent it Should Be Obeyed*, 1523, [www.pages.uoregon.edu/sshoem/323/texts/luther~1.htm](http://www.pages.uoregon.edu/sshoem/323/texts/luther~1.htm) (accessed May 22, 2014).

129. Mout, “Kerk en stad in de zestiende eeuw,” 9-10.

130. Calvin, *Institutes*, VI.xx.31, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.i.html> (accessed January 26 2016).

on the belief that if the supreme, imperial ruler is not ruling Christianly, lesser civil authorities may rise up and even overthrow the supreme power in the name of religion. These are ideas which were brought up during the Dutch Revolt as justification for the right of provinces to rebel. Coolhaes, however, would be using these ideas very differently, if they were in his mind. He would be making distinctions not between tyranny and freedom fighters, but more nuanced distinctions between different Reformed bodies. He therefore is probably not truly advocating or acting according to this sort of view, even though some of his actions hint at it, as we have occasionally seen in the biographical sketch. He never speaks of these sorts of distinctions in so many words, and his higher obedience to the close-at-hand city magistrates can just as easily be attributed to the advantage they could give him. Also, he was not always consistent: we mentioned that in his early 1571 debacle in Essen, he sought the support of the populace, rather than the magistrates. Any possible connection of his ideas or actions to a thought-out view of greater and lesser magistrates, therefore, is only speculation.

In summary, we have seen that Coolhaes' views on church and state center on the importance of the civil government, especially the magistrates, to oversee and foster the church, and to set the society a godly example. This does not mean, however, that they should rule with an iron grip or be deaf to exhortation from the church when it is needed. Ideally, there should be a good cooperation between the government and the church. Coolhaes held some views in common with Coornhert, and his ideas also show a similarity to aspects of Lutheranism and Zwinglianism/Erastianism. He opposed the rule of a Calvinist order which could dictate to the civil government. The struggle between the Leiden magistrates and its Calvinist preachers and consistory members, the "Coolhaes affair," associated Coolhaes forever with church and state conflict. However, for a well-rounded view of his eclectic ideas, two more topics need to be examined in the following chapters: clergy as "good preachers" and the diverse congregation of an inclusive visible church.

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131. R. B. Wernham, *Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, 1559-1610* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 98. See also John R. Stumme and Robert W. Tuttle, eds., *Church and State: Lutheran Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2003).

## Chapter 8: The clergy: what makes a good preacher?

We continue to explore Coolhaes' ecclesiology by passing from his belief that civil government should foster, guard and guide the church, to the question of clergy. Good preachers are part of Coolhaes' ideal church. What he would like to get rid of, if he could, would be preachers who are not truly called - or are, as he would say, hypocritical.

Coolhaes was a critic of all church confessions, pointing out illogical or unbiblical practices or attitudes - a characteristic which he shared with other Spiritualists, latitudinarians, and "libertines." He criticized freely and frequently. His writings are full of points of criticism of all churches, especially the Reformed. Coolhaes leveled most of these criticisms against the clergy, the "church servants," a category including both preachers and elders. Preachers and elders, in his eyes, can perpetuate either truth or error, and teach biblical values or drive non-biblical practices. The visible church in his writings is not an abstract, theoretical institution. It is nothing more than a body of individuals, who are easily led (or led astray) by preachers.

Coolhaes' criticisms of certain preachers and elders are lengthy and repetitive. He is preoccupied with their errors. It is easy to become weary with his criticisms and miss what he says about good preachers. These positive points are clear in his writings, although they could easily be overlooked amidst the emotional floods of critical rhetoric he employs against those others he believes are in dangerous error. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that he believes that good preachers could and should exist. He exhorts those preachers and elders who are willing to follow his advice to lead the visible church in a biblical and sensitive way. In this chapter we will look first at his instructions for good preachers, and then at his main criticisms of other clergy.

### Faithful servants

Coolhaes believes that good preachers exist in the visible churches: "But I do not say that there are not good preachers to be found – the Lord answered Elijah that there were still seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal."<sup>1</sup> In defense of the office of preacher, he states that:

[Preachers] do well and serve their office faithfully if they preach the Word without adding or subtracting anything, and bring people to the Heavenly Jerusalem (who is Mother of us all). They are worthy of double honor.<sup>2</sup>

If Coolhaes had designed the sort of church he had wanted, therefore, he would have wanted good preachers in it, preaching the Word. But, he also would have been particular that clergy, both preachers and elders, either ordained or un-ordained, in any confession, would have specific spiritual qualifications for their ministries.

First, the lifestyle of preachers, elders, and even deacons must conform to biblical guidelines set out by Paul for bishops and deacons.<sup>3</sup> Coolhaes said that the Apostolic Church chose preachers who were unimpeachable of life, who had long practiced godliness and were able to rule their own houses. To keep the Apostolic Church pure, no one was ordained hastily, so that no one shared in sin. The Holy Spirit wanted no one to be a deacon unless he had a good testimony and was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. So, Coolhaes reasoned, no church should call someone lightly to be a preacher or teacher, because church servants should be an example in their use of the Word, and in their lifestyle.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, many in Coolhaes' time thought that allowing unfit communicants to the Lord's Supper made the church "impure." Here Coolhaes, who as we will see believes in open communion, assigns the blame for a possibly impure church to impure clergy instead.

Second, preachers and elders must be called by God. When Coolhaes speaks of "call," he means three aspects: a subjective sense of assurance,<sup>5</sup> correct preaching as a sign that one is truly called, and confirmation by a call by the secular government. All must be in place. No one has done any good in the church, Coolhaes maintains, unless he has been chosen and called – called as the Old Testament prophets were, as Jesus was, as John the Baptist and all the teachers in the New Testament were.<sup>6</sup> This calling apparently can be absent at one point, but come to a preacher later. Coolhaes admits that he himself was guilty of "walking too soon," before being truly and properly sent by God. "We were all too fiery and had un-

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1. Coolhaes, *Summa*, C2b.

2. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folios 2Aijv–Aijr.

3. 1 Tim. 3:1-13.

4. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 7.

5. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio 20Eiiijv.

6. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 202.

ripened fervor, caring more for our own honor and profit, than that of God. I cannot deny that I was this way when I first came to the knowledge of the Gospel.”<sup>7</sup>

So, preachers must be preaching the Word actively, which will curb evil. One can stop something bad most easily in the beginning. The fire metaphor which Coolhaes and Coornhert both use appears again here. A village or a whole city can burn down, but it could have been put out easily when it was just a whisper of smoke. Preachers can blow it out by faithfully preaching. If not, evil increases. Coolhaes said, using a different metaphor, “Satan starts off being a prior, and ends up as the abbot.” But timely intervention is still possible, with faithful preaching of the Word.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, preachers must have the gifts for this teaching and preaching, including the gift of understanding the Word. Without these gifts, they will not succeed. This does not mean that they are expected to know the answers to all theological or biblical questions. In the Apostolic Church, Coolhaes maintains, preachers were selected who had gifts from God to teach, rebuke evil, and instruct gently those who opposed them.<sup>9</sup> In his own life, we see that Coolhaes encouraged young, gifted preachers, especially those like himself who had come from the German Palatinate. Johannes Hallius lived in his house and was protected by him. We hear that Hallius preached well.<sup>10</sup> Coolhaes also encouraged Jan Janszoon, a man with desire and gifts in preaching, to develop his gifts and be considered a preacher.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Coolhaes showed preaching ability to be important to him when he commented favorably on his colleague Hesper’s preaching, regardless of their conflict.<sup>12</sup>

He compares the preacher to the father of a family, who teaches the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the basics about baptism and communion to his children as soon as they can speak. This emphasis on these basics is reminiscent of a catechism – especially of Luther’s catechism, which includes the texts of the Commandments, Creed and Lord’s Prayer to be learned, more than the Genevan Catechism

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7 Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Aijj.

8. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Dijb; see also Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, Aijv–Aijr.

9. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 7.

10. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 36Jiiijv.

11. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 2r.

12. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 8r.

does. As children get older and more mature, the parents “sharpen” the teaching – in other words, explain the concepts. If the parents cannot do this, it is the office of the preachers. A preacher with a gift can explain his subject so well, that he is flexible and creative in teaching it:

In this teaching of the children, as well as in the explaining of the Scripture for older people, no one should be bound to a certain form of words, such as is done these days by all parties. For he would have to be a bad preacher, yes, even unworthy of his preacher’s office, who could not do it without special books and a special method.<sup>13</sup>

Coolhaes assumes that these gifts include the gift of biblical interpretation. While newcomers to faith, and children in understanding, cannot divine the meanings of all of Scripture, especially in places which should be understood allegorically, God has given some preachers and teachers a gift for this. However, even they receive the Spirit in only a limited amount, and cannot explain everything in the Bible.<sup>14</sup>

Lastly, preachers should show mercy, love and gentleness to those in sin or suffering. Such sinful or suffering people are in need of spiritual healing, and the good preacher or elder is engaged in the cure of souls, not in checking off points on lists of rules. Preachers have the authority to treat those who are spiritually sick, not according to their own opinions, not “with waters which we ourselves distill” (it is interesting to note the distilling reference and metaphor, since Coolhaes was just beginning his trade as a distiller of fortified wines and medicinal “waters” at the time he wrote it, as we saw in the biographical sketch) but instead with the oil of kindness which the Lord has given. It should be like a wine to cleanse their wounds, not a corrosive to “bite their flesh out.” Gentleness is often better than force. It is better to treat “visible swelling” with soft bandages – even though amputation is sometimes necessary to save a life.<sup>15</sup> The visible church should seek to heal that which is sick or injured. Coolhaes means by this not just physical suffering, but also the persistent sinful practices or

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13. “In deser leere van den kinderen, so wel als oock in der uytlegginghe der heyliger Godlicker Schrifture voor de bedaechde luyden, en mach voorwaer niemant, aen een sekere forme der woorden gebonden zijn, so hedensdaechs by alle partyen gedaen wort. Want hy moeste een slecht Predicant, jae ooc des Predicants-ampts niet waerdich zijn, die het selve niet en soude doen connen, sonder bysondere boecken, ende een bysondere manier van doen daer toe te hebben.” Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 81.

14. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio 22Fij.

15. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Biiijr.

unrepentant natures which some of his critics would have condemned and treated more harshly.

### False and hypocritical

Although Coolhaes fills many dozens, perhaps even hundreds, of pages with his criticism of clergy, his actual problems with them are few in number. First, he believes that many preachers and elders are hypocrites, and thus are false teachers – not truly called by God. Second, this can be seen in that they produce or revere human writings which they consider to be authoritative, so authoritative that these writings threaten the authority of Scripture. Third, they build a “new papacy” by consolidating their influence and authority through consistories, classes and synods. Fourth, they use the harsh and unbiblical method of excommunication as a discipline. Fifth, they argue about what he considers difficult and esoteric theological ideas, rather than teaching the basic Gospel. Ultimately, they are lacking in love, which for Coolhaes calls even their very conversion into doubt.

The term “hypocrite” is, of course, not at all unique to Coolhaes. It is a biblical idea, and then also has been used by many critical voices through the ages, including the Reformers. For Coolhaes, hypocrites were worse than those who are merely not called. They were much more destructive. The idea of hypocritical preachers bothers Coolhaes continually. He mentioned them in his earliest known writing, the “Glaubensbekenntniss” of 1571, in which he calls them “many false Christs; members of the Devil.”<sup>16</sup> Later, after the Synod of Dordrecht in 1574, he reported that most of the preachers present were inexperienced. Others, he judged, were hypocrites – former priests or monks who, he says, had not left Catholicism – it had left them. Because people were poor and could no longer pay for Catholic services, these preachers turned to the Reform, he alleged. Like the untrustworthy manager of Luke 16 (“I cannot dig, and I am ashamed to beg”) they now were doing more damage with their preaching and the “reformation” of their churches than they ever did with their masses. Hearing mass was good for people, he said (a rare pro-Catholic statement from Coolhaes), but hearing the preaching of these preachers led to hate, party-spiritedness and many evils. Better that they had stayed priests and monks, than to preach the

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16. Coolhaes, “Glaubensbekenntniss,” 6r.



Gospel but not be in the truth.<sup>17</sup> These false teachings and the hate they produce was worse even than a plague. In a physical plague the bodies are destroyed, but with the plague of false teaching, the souls are also destroyed.<sup>18</sup> This hate has produced war between Christians in every Christian country.<sup>19</sup> Those whom God has not called or sent are driven by Satan (changed into an angel of light) to destroy the church of God.<sup>20</sup>

By 1574, Coolhaes said, many artisans and tradespeople (he names clothes-makers, shoemakers, weavers, locksmiths, and so forth) had become preachers. He accuses them of not being truly called or converted, but of seeking an easy life and a salary, while appearing to be pious and zealous. Meanwhile, the martyrs of the earlier sixteenth-century persecutions – priests, monks, trades people, women and young people alike – had sacrificed their lives for the truth.<sup>21</sup> Were these allegedly hypocritical preachers truly “saved?” Coolhaes is unclear on this, but maintains that if they have not been truly converted, they cannot preach true conversion.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes he allows that they merely possessed a “mistaken zeal.”<sup>23</sup> Perhaps it would have been better if they had never been converted from Catholicism, since they have remained the old, sinful “Adam.”<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the Spirit of God had worked in them in vain, because with mistaken fervor they were making schisms – they will let the wolf and the lion (the Devil) back into the sheep pen (the visible church).<sup>25</sup> Although Coolhaes does not use the expression *ex opere operato*, he would surely disagree with it, in the sense that for him it is the spiritual condition of the preachers, not any ordination, which determines their effectiveness in ministry.

Other churches than the Reformed are not spared his criticism. He compares preachers of differing confessions to competing wine-merchants, calling out the value of their

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17. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 11-12.

18. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio BB.

19. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio Bijr.

20. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 202.

21. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 10-12, 33-34.

22. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Biiij.

23. “verkeerde ijver.” Coolhaes, *Een Christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Aij.

24. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 87iijv.

25. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Dijr.

masters' wines, not because they are the best wines, but because they want to be paid, all the while saying, "Look, here is Christ."<sup>26</sup>

Coolhaes also criticizes the situation in the Roman Catholic Church. Candidates for the priesthood are not even asked about the virtues of the Holy Spirit which Paul requires for a bishop. Many are ordained who do things which attract slander and thus are contaminated. Also, in order to seem to be following Paul's injunction that a bishop be the husband of one wife, some Catholic unmarried priests have only one church, which they call "the wife of the teacher." However, other Catholic bishops sometimes have four, five, ten, or even twenty churches from which they receive a yearly pension.<sup>27</sup> The implication is that these Catholic clergy do not obey Paul's guidelines, but instead twist them in order to acquire more income.

Coolhaes believed in the virtue of the office of preacher. However, he criticized many preachers harshly. Was he anticlerical? Anticlericalism, before and during the Reformation, was a reaction against the power and corruptness of clergy. Violent actions on the part of laity often accompanied anticlerical feelings. Complaints were made against priests and monastics, often about their alleged lack of morality, honesty and godliness.<sup>28</sup> Anticlerical rhetoric was widespread, throughout the sixteenth century. For instance, Erasmus had been critical of clerics and deemphasized church rules and regulations. To him, a secular Christian could be as holy as a monk.<sup>29</sup> During Coolhaes' own time, Duifhuis of Utrecht, another outspoken critic, said that preachers used their learning "to monopolize spiritual authority." Duifhuis preferred to see himself as just one believer among many.<sup>30</sup> In the time after Coolhaes, the Collegiants, for whom he may have been one inspiration, opposed clergy, church discipline, and church authority.<sup>31</sup>

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26. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 10-12, 33-34. This is an allusion to Matt. 24:23, and a well-known reference, especially in the seventeenth century among Collegiants.

27. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 7.

28. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "Anticlericalism," trans. Michael G. Baylor, *OER*, vol. 1, 46-51.

29. J. Trapman, "'Erasmianism' in the Early Reformation in the Netherlands," in Mout, Snolinsky and Trapman, *Erasmianism*, 170.

30. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 93-95.

31. Jonathan I. Israel, "Spinoza and the Religious Radical Enlightenment," in *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy, 1600-1750*, ed. Sarah Mortimer and John Robertson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 182.

It is important here to define anticlericalism as it relates to Coolhaes. Anticlericalism can mean that all clerics are rejected. It can mean that the office of cleric is judged to be superfluous or even harmful. It can also mean that clerics are merely criticized. A helpful insight is that various historical examples of anticlericalism are not uniform:

At certain times [anticlericalism] limited its opposition to clericalism in the restricted sense, at others it spilled over into militant irreligion. On occasion it distinguished carefully between the secular clergy, which it claimed to hold in high regard, and the religious orders, against which it concentrated its fire. These differences make it possible to establish a sort of hierarchical scale, according to the intensity of the polemic and the passions involved...<sup>32</sup>

So, in light of this hierarchy, it would be best to call Coolhaes' anticlericalism "restricted" or perhaps "limited." He maintained the importance of clergy, if they were "good," while deploring those he deemed hypocritical.

Coolhaes, like Erasmus and subsequent Reformers, encouraged the spiritual maturity and holiness of all members of the church, not just the clergy. However, unlike Duifhuis, he considered his calling and the calling of the preacher in general as a good and praiseworthy thing.<sup>33</sup> Coolhaes, in a sense, was anticlerical. He opposed the power of Reformed clergy, and spoke out against corruption. But he would not have condoned any sort of violent uprisings against preachers. He did not call them immoral, although some he did find lazy, and many he judged for being lacking in love.

Another question which arises, is this: did Coolhaes obsess over the "hypocrites" so much because of the conflicts he had with his colleagues, and because of bitterness over his excommunication? Perhaps, although it is difficult to say, since his earliest writings on this topic (the 1571 "Glaubensbekenntniss" and the 1580 *Apologia* and *Breeder bericht*, all before the excommunication) were composed in the heat of disputes, and are already defensive in posture.

Coolhaes could look past any sin except spiritual pride. Those who lived in what was considered a sinful way, or whose doctrinal understanding veered from what was considered correct, he was content to call merely immature. However, he had no sympathy for the Pharisical sins of pride and presumption on the part of the "hypocrites." In Coolhaes' eyes,

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32. René Rémond, "Anticlericalism: Some Reflections by Way of Introduction," *European Studies Review* 13 (1983): 124.

33. For example: Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 16Diiijv. He is saddened by those who accuse him of gluttony and other sorts of worldiness, which would discredit both the Word and the office of preacher.

this disqualified them from the “true, invisible” church, in much the same way that in the eyes of many Calvinist preachers, the fleshly sins and doctrinal errors disqualified “sinners” and “heretics” from the visible church. It certainly did not help that those very preachers opposed him. In any event, however, spiritual pride runs counter to grace, a central Protestant tenet. Sinners elected and saved by grace have no room for boasting. So, for Coolhaes, there was one group of people for which he seems to hold out very little hope of redemption – the hypocrites.<sup>34</sup>

### More than the Bible

Coolhaes also criticized preachers for the creation and excessive use of “man-made” writings: confessions, catechisms and synodal decisions. He believed that in practice these were being revered above the Bible.

These writings were a part of increasing confessionalization. Many saw the process of confessionalization as positive and natural – one which would spread truth and do good in society. One’s confessional membership held great importance to most in the sixteenth century, who “thought in a strictly confessional way”<sup>35</sup> and saw those who did not as fanatics and extremists. This was no abstraction – many were so loyal to their confession that they were willing to suffer and die for it. Many *had* done so – whether Calvinists, Lutherans, Anabaptists or Catholics. So this was an almost-holy allegiance, “written with the blood and tears of family members and friends ... inviolable.”<sup>36</sup>

At one point, early in his career as a preacher, Coolhaes had complained about the inattention of the congregation in church during the expounding of the catechism.<sup>37</sup> As time went on, however, catechisms and other writings themselves became his target. Coolhaes did not think much of confessional categories, and opposed most of these writings, which he alleged were becoming as important as Scripture to their adherents. Coornhert had called them “heathen gloss-books”<sup>38</sup> and objected to the Heidelberg Catechism in particular – a

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34. This belief that they would not be redeemed is implied in *Concilatio*. See Coolhaes, *Concilatio*, Gij.

35. Cornelia Boer, *Hofpredikers van Prins Willem van Oranje, Jean Taffin en Pierre Loyseleur de Villiers* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 15.

36. Boer, *Hofpredikers*, 15.

37. These visits are mentioned by Van Dooren, “Caspar Coolhaes: het een en ander uit zijn leven,” 174.

“new monstrence in which the Calvinists want to incarcerate Christ.”<sup>39</sup> As Coornhert put it, these things, even the Heidelberg Catechism, were *landszaken* – issues which should concern the whole nation.<sup>40</sup>

Coolhaes agrees with Coornhert. He states that commentaries and explanations by godly men have their usefulness, but only Scripture has the witness that gives life.<sup>41</sup> Catechisms are superfluous, serving only to cause disputes.<sup>42</sup> Ironically, Coolhaes uses another “human” document, the *Belgic Confession*, to attack them. The seventh article of the *Belgic Confession*, he notes, emphasizes the primacy of the Scripture and the inadequacy of human writings, regardless of how holy they are, how long they are, how old they are, or how their authors were persecuted. In his view, its seventh article should be understood to apply to all acts and decrees of councils, synods, consistories and classes, including the first article of the Synod of Dordrecht (1574) and all the ecclesiological meetings in Emden, Dordrecht, Middelburg, and Haarlem.<sup>43</sup>

It was Dordrecht 1574 which angered him most. Article 39 forbids the preaching of the “Sunday Gospel” (the appointed lectionary Gospel reading). Article 42 prescribes the forms of prayer, Article 43 the Psalms and songs. Article 44 specifies the words for the prayer for noon, and the prayer for the sermon of the catechumens. Article 45 says what one may read or sing on Sundays – “canonical books.”<sup>44</sup> Article 47 would take from the government the responsibility for Sunday buying, selling, working, drinking, walking, and so forth, and put it on the preachers. Articles 48, 49 and 50 make prescriptions about organ-playing after the sermon and thanksgiving, about whether people may stay in the church after the service, and selling found items. Coolhaes compared this to Jesus’ saying that the scribes

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38. Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 35, 37.

39. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 101.

40. The word “landszaken” is used for this reason in the original title of Marianne Roobol, “Landszaken: De godsdienstgesprekken tussen gereformeerde predikanten en D. V. Coornhert onder leiding van de Staten van Holland 1577-1583” (Amsterdam: Unpublished dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2005), and discussed by her on pages 15-16. See also: Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 101.

41. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folios 14Dijj–18Eij.

42. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 53.

43. Kamphuis declares that Coolhaes appealed to this article in error. For Kamphuis’ reasoning that things revealed by God can be considered to be understood as under that word, see Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 54.

44. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 93-94.

and Pharisees strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel;<sup>45</sup> in other words, that attention is paid to *minutiae*, but the essentials are being overlooked. Although Jesus and the Apostles preached in the temple, on the street, indeed anywhere that people gathered, he noted, Article 51 forbids open-air prayers and funeral sermons, even though, he mentioned, Scripture says that it is right to mourn. Article 53 forbids all holidays, except for those on Sundays – including Christmas and Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. Coolhaes went on to mention his objections to Article 54 against days of prayer and fasting, and to Article 90 which says that consistories and classes, rather than the government, may decide who is to travel to a synod.<sup>46</sup>

This all mattered to Coolhaes because of his conviction of the authority of the Old and New Testaments over everyone, including preachers. The Prophets and Apostles (in other words, the writers of Scripture) received God’s Word directly, whereas contemporary human teachers receive it indirectly, mediated through the Prophets and Apostles.<sup>47</sup> If preachers preach the Ten Commandments, the listener hears Moses, and, by extension, God. But if they preach what Coolhaes would call “human opinion,” the listener does not hear God.<sup>48</sup> Such preachers have drastically overestimated their own call and gifts, convinced by Satan and by their own pride to think they have received prophetic and apostolic power and authority. Thinking they have this authority, and meaning well, they add to the Scripture their own catechisms, commentaries, laws, regulations and special doctrines. In doing this, they misuse the keys of the kingdom,<sup>49</sup> in other words, the prerogatives of the true Apostles and Prophets who were inspired to write the biblical texts.

Therefore, these human teachers should not be believed without discretion. A true teacher will not add or subtract anything from Scripture in his teaching. This “not-adding or subtracting” is the only true sign that the person is called and sent to the office of preaching/teaching. It is even a sign to the preacher himself of his vocation, in case he is in doubt.<sup>50</sup> The antichrist, on the other hand, puts himself in God’s temple by adding to or

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45. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 94-95. Matt. 23:24.

46. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 97.

47. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, 18Eij.

48. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio 3Aiiij.

49. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Aiiij.

50. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, Eb.

subtracting from God's Word, bringing in strange doctrine, constricting human conscience and denying Christian freedom.<sup>51</sup>

The preacher's context I: Order or power?

Synods, classes and consistories made up the Reformed Church system, which was often accused by Coolhaes and others of becoming a "new papacy"<sup>52</sup> – a monolithic, inflexible, powerful, top-down structure, filled with rules and run by clergy. Coolhaes opposed synods and other Reformed organization, especially when the excuse for order was misused to gain power.

Early, scattered Reformed congregations, often under persecution, had found that they were able to remain connected via Calvinist church government – the "Presbyterian" system.<sup>53</sup> However, the Reformed love of order seemed to go deeper than mere necessity. According to Daneau, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*, "Nothing [is] as beautiful as order."<sup>54</sup> Calvinists took an "almost sensory pleasure" in order. Order is sacred, reflecting the order of God's creation. Disorder equals sin.<sup>55</sup> However, what many Calvinists called "disorder" is precisely what Coolhaes regarded as "Christian freedom." He was content in his early Leiden tenure to work within that Reformed system, but in time grew more and more critical of it.<sup>56</sup>

Coolhaes cited misuse of this organizing impulse. When a tiny, new church is founded, an entire complement of elders and deacons is appointed, who flaunt their newly acquired office but have no idea what it means. Often these new elders do nothing but cause

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51. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio 21F.

52. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 42 Lijv-Lijr. See Kamphuis' negative comments on Coolhaes on this point: Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 28-29.

53. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 39.

54. Fatio, *Nihil pulchrius ordine*.

55. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 44.

56. De Wildt, "Ambt, Doop en Avondmaal in de Oudste Leidse Kerkenraadsacta," 19. De Wildt opens his introduction to the translation of the Leiden *kerckenraadacta* with a quotation from Coolhaes that defends the work of the consistory ("The true religion cannot exist ... without the meeting of church servants... to speak and deal with church business," De Wildt, 19, my translation). This is a quotation from Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 61Qr, in which Coolhaes is laying forth his nuanced view that consistories are not "bad" but also need not meet frequently. Its use here as a foundational statement for the history of the Leiden church council of this period is ironic considering that Coolhaes would soon be writing even more negatively about consistories: quoting Gwalther and adding his own agreement that a consistory is unnecessary and even irrelevant in a city with Christian magistrates. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 30.

disputes. If the preacher can do the visiting as well as the preaching himself, he may not need elders, or at least not so many.<sup>57</sup> New deacons may also be unnecessary. A problem may arise if the newly-appointed deacons are suddenly superseding those in that town who under the Catholic system were previously caring for the sick and poor. Not everything in the old Catholic system, he said, is inherently evil. *Abusus not tollit usum*: “Take the misuses away, and keep the right usages, remove the evil and keep the good.”<sup>58</sup>

Much of the difficulty, Coolhaes maintains, is that the preachers and elders feel an excessive or misplaced zeal.<sup>59</sup> The “free” (post-Catholic) church has loaded the people with more rules than the Jews had in the Old, he says, and regards them more highly than the true law of God.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the acts, synods, and theology of the Reformed Church are no different than the papal councils and doctrines had been, and may be even more destructive in the future. People have scarcely had the time to use their freedom of conscience between the time of the old laws and regulations (i.e. before the Reformation) and the new ones (i.e. the Reformed rules).<sup>61</sup>

In Leiden, Coolhaes held consistory meetings only “when the need, usefulness or welfare of the church demands it,” rather than weekly.<sup>62</sup> Classes should meet only when necessary, rather than every month or six weeks, and this was how he ran the Rijnland classis. Anything else, he claimed, would result in superstition, disputes, disunity, and even excessive eating and drinking.<sup>63</sup> During the Leiden “schisms,” Coolhaes declared himself willing to attend classical and synodical meetings, and even to be “corrected” from God’s

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57. Kamphuis mentions Coolhaes’ views about “ruling elders.” The Leiden schisms were about the selection of elders; in Kamphuis’s view Coolhaes equates elders with preachers almost completely, which in practice eliminates the elders as a different category (Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 24). However, the very term *kerkdienaars* (a commonly-used term in this period) used for both preachers and elders implies this already. Reformed elders and preachers were in this sense really one group or category.

58. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 25Gv–25Gr.

59. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 41Lv.

60. Coolhaes, *Een christelijke vermaninghe*, folio B.

61. Coolhaes, *Een christelijke vermaninghe*, folio BB.

62. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 62Qijr.

63. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 63 Qijr.



Word, but would not bow to decisions made by classes and synods.<sup>64</sup> It seems likely, however, that others would have seen this as his way to keep control.

The Reformed clergy of the Netherlands worked hard to fashion their church out of whole cloth despite the war which raged around them. The Synods of Emden (1571), Dordrecht (provincial, 1574, 1578, and national, 1618-1619), and Middelburg (1581) were the basis for “the triumph of Calvinist church-order.”<sup>65</sup> Coolhaes, however, objected that these bodies use what he calls the “papist” method of creating a majority and voting down the minority who are born after the Spirit of the Lord and have received divine understanding.<sup>66</sup> Voting does not determine truth; more preachers do not make a decision more correct. Coolhaes cited the examples of Berengar of Tours and Jan Hus, who were unjustly condemned by majorities. The godly should not worry that they are not the majority, or keep looking for the “true church.” It is not the number of members which signifies the trueness of the church.<sup>67</sup>

At the Middelburg Synod, Coolhaes stated his willingness to be convinced of any errors from God’s Word. But he would not accept a majority vote.<sup>68</sup> He complained through the character Theophilus in *Apologia*:

God’s Word commands us to be obedient to the government in all things that are not against God’s Word. But it does not command us to be obedient to five or six, ten or twenty, even one hundred or one thousand preachers, who come together and make statutes about something.<sup>69</sup>

In *Sendtbrief* (1582), he complains that the Synod of Middelburg was not a lawful national Synod, because it was not called by the government or attended by its commissioners. Even had the Synod been legal, it would not have had authority over religious affairs or matters of

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64. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 7v.

65. Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 213; Duke, “The ambivalent face,” 127.

66. This view is also expressed by Jan van Hout and the Leiden magistrates in their 1579 *Advies*; article 8/23; see Overvoorde, “Advies,” 134.

67. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Bijjr.

68. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 133, evidently quoting [Cornelisz?], *Cort eenvoudich ende waerachtich verhael*, 27.

69. “Gods woort ghebiet ons der Overheyt in allen dinghen die niet teghen Gods woort en strijden, ghehoorsaem te zijn. Maer het ghebiet ons niet dat waer vijf ofte ses, thien ofte twintich, ia hondert ofte duysent Predicanten te samen comen, ende wat statueeren, datmen dien even soude moeten ghehoorsaem zijn.” Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 48Miiijr.

conscience, because a majority, even of a hundred or a thousand, does not give authority; the truth of an idea must not be established by the abundance of supporters.<sup>70</sup>

Also, synods and councils seemed underhanded to Coolhaes. They undermine the proper rule of the Christian government, and yet hide behind the secular government they claim not to need. Just as the high priest could not condemn anyone to death, Pilate had to become the executioner and kill Christ.<sup>71</sup>

However, Coolhaes admits that there could still be a place for synods. They should not be courts where people are judged, but occasions in which brothers could gather to confer in a friendly and egalitarian manner.<sup>72</sup> Synods, councils, classes and consistories should handle church business exclusively, and gather with consent of or in response to the civil government.<sup>73</sup>

Consistories, or church councils, should be strictly limited in terms of power. Coolhaes agreed with Erastian Rudolf Gwalther that where there is a Christian magistracy, a consistory or church council does not need to exist at all. There is no foundation for it in God's Word; it is problematic and not at all profitable.<sup>74</sup> Coolhaes and Gwalther were not alone in opposing consistories. Proposed church orders which would ban consistories had been suggested in May 1575 by court preacher Jean Taffin, who suggested in a letter to Arent Cornelisz that the States of Holland would add a clause to ban consistories completely in the

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70. In the case of this idea, Rogge quotes Coolhaes as saying, "De veelheid van personen geeft geen gezag, want de waarheid moet niet uit de veelheid harer aanhangers bewezen worden." Rogge, *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes*, I, 237. In *Sendtbrief*, the statement to which we refer in the text above, is similar but longer: "Want soudet daerom des te meer autoriteyts ende gheloof hebben, dattet een vergaderinghe is van velen, der waren dan hondert oft duysent, soo moest de waerheyt wt de veelheyt harer aenhangeren beweert werden: daer van is waer het teghendeel." See Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, Dij.

71. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, 3b–unpaginated 4v.

72. Kamphuis, who defends the Reformed *kerkverbond* and criticizes Coolhaes, says that to form a confession of faith requires synods and other gatherings which are authorized to make decisions. "Want symboolvorming vooronderstelt een *besluitvaardige* vergadering." Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 30.

73. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 72Siiijv.

74. "Rodolphus Gwaltherus over het 5. Cap., Corint.5. schryft benefens anderen ooc dese navolgende woorden: inden welcken hy wel deuchtlic leert ende bewyset, dat inden Kercken daer een Christelicke Magistraet is, gheen Consistorium ofte Kercken-raet en behoort te wesen. Dat deselve gheenen grondt en heeft in Godes woort: ende daerom seer periculeus, maer nergens toe profijtelic sy." Coolhaes, *Van de Christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611, p. 30. In quoting Gwalther on this topic, Coolhaes is much more definite and negative about church councils than he was in the pre-excommunication *Apologia*, in which he admitted the value of church councils in some cases. See Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 62Qv, 63Qijv.

church order they were drafting. The preachers kept up their opposition to such a step. William of Orange was opposed to this politically, as it would take too much away from the church at a critical moment.<sup>75</sup> Later, in 1583, there was a new initiative to consider such a church order; however, it was never actually accomplished. Prince William seems to have been angered by the disagreements of the preachers and discouraged in his hopes for reconciliation with the Southern Netherlands by the more radical Calvinist elements.<sup>76</sup>

Another important question is: who should be free to preach? Preaching by non-clergy threatened the power structure of the Reformed Church. Coolhaes believed that preaching and preachers must be “free” – the freedom of the individual preacher to preach as he has been enlightened by the Spirit, and the freedom of the listener to accept or reject that preaching according to the enlightenment which he or she experiences. In the Apostolic Church, prophecy was free.<sup>77</sup> Anyone thinking that they had the gift to prophesy on or to clarify the Scripture, prophesied or clarified the Scripture freely and frankly without contradiction. No one was forced to accept or believe it, but everyone tested<sup>78</sup> the message, ignored what they thought was not true, and kept the good.<sup>79</sup> To clarify, preaching, even by non-clergy, should be permitted. Coolhaes gives many biblical arguments for this. He believes that some preachers do not have these gifts, but preach and teach anyway.<sup>80</sup>

But whoever has received the gift to explain Scripture is obliged to use it to serve his neighbor. Coolhaes says this repeatedly about himself. He continues to write, despite prohibition, because he believes that he must use the “talent” (*pondje*, from the parable of

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75. Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 172.

76. Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 173.

77. In other words, preaching, the proclamation of the Word. Coolhaes does not use the word prophecy in a predictive sense. 1 Cor. 14:33; see Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 195.

78. “proefde.”

79. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 4.

80. Summary of Coolhaes’ biblical arguments: Priscilla and Aquila, despite being tradesmen, explained the gospel to Apollos, the gifted preacher. Stephen and Philip were deacons, not preachers, but they had the gift of prophecy and were able to explain the gospel. Even if it was the Apostle Philip who preached to the eunuch, it is written that he was an evangelist and had four daughters who prophesied. 1 Corinthians 14 makes it clear that not only preachers have the gift of prophecy, and that no one is hindered in using their gift for the service of the church. Paul commands his readers not to quench the Spirit. Everyone should know what gifts he has been given, so that he can encourage them in himself and thus serve his neighbors.

talents) which he has been given.<sup>81</sup> He was tempted to resign his office, but the example of Jeremiah encouraged him to persist; the Lord had after all called him to his office of preacher.<sup>82</sup> Later we see Coolhaes persist in his “call,” writing and considering himself to be a teacher, albeit only in print, despite his defrocking.<sup>83</sup>

It should be noted that these views resemble the later Collegiant movement, which can be traced from Warmond near Leiden after 1619, when a Remonstrant preacher Christian Sopingius was asked to leave his congregation. The congregation went on meeting secretly, discussing the Scripture readings, rather than listening to a sermon. Later, when preachers were offered to them, their leader Gijsbert van der Kodde encouraged them successfully to refuse one. To avoid the imposition of a preacher, they moved to nearby Rijnsburg (they were also called “Rijnsburgers”). It is logical that their movement, along with other Spiritualists and fringe groups, was begun after the Synod of Dordt, when many would have been disenchanted with Reformed dogma and strictures. Collegiants spread to other cities in the Dutch Republic throughout the seventeenth century. The Collegiants referred to their practice of open discussion of the Scriptures in their services as “free prophecy.” Congregants were free to add anything without rebuke during this portion of the service. At first it appears that they believed that the inspiration by which they discussed was proof of the Holy Spirit’s work among them; however, later in the seventeenth century, they began to emphasize the role of reason in their exercises.<sup>84</sup>

It is tempting to wonder if Coolhaes, who defended free preaching and who preached in Warmond, may have been an influence on the later Collegiants. However, there are also significant differences. Coolhaes never advocated that kind of absolutely free, unstructured service. He never recommended that congregations go on without pastoral leadership, only that preaching should not be confined to those who were officially recognized as preachers. Also, although his criticism of the preachers around him was fiery, and the concept of “free preaching” and acceptance of non-clergy in the pulpit by Coolhaes are implicit criticisms of

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81. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folios Fijv–Fiiijr.

82. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 53Ov; see also Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 141-43.

83. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio 10Cij.

84. Andrew C. Fix, *The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 37-39, 164-66. See also Voogt, ““Anyone who can read may be a preacher,”” and J. C. van Slee, *De Rijnsburger Collegianten* (Haarlem: Bohn, 1895, reissued Utrecht: H & S, 1980).

ordained ministry, Coolhaes cannot be judged to be completely anticlerical. According to him, it was possible to be a good preacher, and good preachers are needed – preachers who are called, who preach the Word, and who teach and heal. These things, for Coolhaes, are what all preachers should know how to do.

#### The preacher's context II: Amputation and other discipline

To Coolhaes, many of the stricter Calvinist preachers did not display the love of Christ. They cared more about, as he would put it, the externals, which were not that important, than about invisible essentials. For instance, the first thesis of church order from the Synod of Middelburg directed that communicants must be examined by the church servants and sign their names before gaining access to the Lord's Table. In this, Coolhaes accuses the preachers of being less merciful than God, who does not remember the sins he has forgiven.<sup>85</sup> Coolhaes remarks that if it were possible, and the government in places was not so reasonable, the cruel preachers would set the "heretics," along with their wives and children, "out on the dike."<sup>86</sup> Intolerance and lack of love on the part of the preachers is not just another sin, but the evidence that they have not accepted the grace which would enable them to live in a Christian manner. Coolhaes defined a "good work" not so much as the initial decision of a person to follow Christ, but as continuing to live in a Christian manner. This means a loving and tolerant attitude; its absence is more evidence for him, as we saw above, that these preachers may not have been converted at all.

Further, such preachers want to use excommunication as Christian discipline. Some call excommunication "cutting off branches" which are not bearing fruit; we have seen that Coolhaes referred to excommunication as "amputation" from the Body of Christ.<sup>87</sup> Petrus Hackius, another Leiden preacher, experienced similar treatment. Hackius came after Coolhaes, in many ways in his footsteps, and was suspended for three years – the victim of the discipline he had opposed.<sup>88</sup> Even though we have seen above that in *Sendtbrief*, Coolhaes writes that "amputation is sometimes necessary to save a life,"<sup>89</sup> Coolhaes abhorred

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85. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Jijj.

86. Coolhaes, *Een christelijke vermaninghe*, folio Djjr.

87. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Biiijr.

88. Kooi, "Pharisees and Hypocrites," 276.

this practice, even before he experienced it himself. It removed the “sinner” from the church, when being in the church was, in Coolhaes’ opinion, the best place for the sinner to make his way back to God. This is very much what Coolhaes saw as the proper, positive ministry of preachers – healing a wound rather than amputating a limb,<sup>90</sup> as we saw earlier in this chapter.

### The preacher’s context III: Education versus spiritual preparation

The place of learning and education for preachers is another area in which Coolhaes differs in opinion from many of his Reformed colleagues. Reformed Church practice in the manner of training prospective preachers in the sixteenth century meant either the apprenticing of a young man with an older preacher for practical training, or, increasingly, a course of higher theological education.<sup>91</sup> Formal education was becoming more and more of a requirement in the Reformed Church throughout Coolhaes’ lifetime,<sup>92</sup> but he did not think that it should be a requirement for preachers. On the other hand, he did insist that those who taught in the church should be more “learned” than those they teach, in the sense of being spiritually mature in their walk with God, and prepared, gifted and called for their office.<sup>93</sup>

Except for his “foundation” of the Bible and Apostles’ Creed, Coolhaes does not want theological conformity and indoctrination into confessional theologies, whether informally or in schools or universities. He opposes the rule of most churches that a preacher must show this doctrinal conformity before being allowed access to the pulpit. He also is also against disputes between preachers, which increase discord and lack love, such as that between Arminius and Gomarus at Leiden University.<sup>94</sup> He reports that most churches believe that erudition and language proficiency (Hebrew, Greek, Latin) are needed to understand and explain Scripture. If churches accepted someone as a preacher who is inexperienced in

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89. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Biiijr.

90. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Biiijr.

91. Karin Maag, “Preaching Practice: Reformed Students’ Sermons,” in Janse and Pitkin, *The Formation of Clerical and Confessional Identities*, 134-35.

92. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 54.

93. See Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folio Hiiij.

94. Coolhaes addressed this conflict in two letters to the theologians, which we discuss in depth in Chapter 5.

languages,<sup>95</sup> especially in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, they do it reluctantly and only because of a shortage of preachers.<sup>96</sup>

However, he does not proclaim that study is useless for a preacher, or for any Christian.<sup>97</sup> He desires his opponents to reason with him from Scripture; in other words, comparing verses and passages to prove points and correct one's view or the views of others.<sup>98</sup> This sounds as if he approved formal disputations, which were a feature of theological study, if they are based primarily on Scripture. His book *Toutzsteen* was written in something of a disputational style. But it is untrue, he feels, that one cannot understand the Scripture (at least insofar as is needed for salvation) without study, especially of the languages. If one has the Holy Spirit, one will be led into all truth, even if one knows no language but one's mother tongue. Many people can understand their mother tongue as well as foreign languages, but cannot understand spiritual things.<sup>99</sup> Those who go out to France, Italy, Spain, England, or Turkey to preach the gospel will want to learn the language of the people they teach. But in their own country, their mother tongue is enough.<sup>100</sup>

This does not mean that Coolhaes thought that no preparation was necessary. Spiritual knowledge and experience formed an essential preparation. Study is important, but the importance is not just in the intellectual,

. . . but in the true essence, which exists not just in the letter, but also in the Spirit. No one can have true essential and living knowledge of a city or country or anything, just from reading or hearing it told about. Not just in the sight of it, but diligently going in and looking through it and industrious observation must be used. Otherwise, knowledge derived from reading or listening is a dead and vain thing to people. It is the same with the Holy Scripture.<sup>101</sup>

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95. Perhaps some of the Calvinist tradesmen, who fled to the northern Netherlands from the southern Netherlands and France, were in his mind here.

96. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 7.

97. Unfortunately, Coolhaes does not discuss the "hedge preachers" of 1566 anywhere; it would be interesting to know what he thought of their level of preparedness.

98. For example, at the Synod of Middelburg 1581-1582.

99. Coolhaes gives examples of Bible characters who probably knew only their mother tongue.

100. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 7.

101. "Maer int waerachtighe wesen: Welcks, niet alleen in die letter, maer oock inden Gheest bestaet: Gelijck niemant van eene Stadt, lant, ofte wat het oock voor een dinck sy, ware wesentlijcke ende levendighe

Coolhaes in this emphasizes personal experience and investigation, with sincerity more important than knowledge:

And I would rather be ignorant with Nathaniel, a true Israelite in whom there is no deception, but who did not know that the prophets had foretold that Christ would be a Nazarene, than with the scribes who could show minutely where that same Christ would be born.<sup>102</sup>

So, it is not enough to know only scriptural or doctrinal facts; one must have a true and essential knowledge which is experiential. One must learn from the Holy Spirit and have him open one's eyes of understanding. This emphasis on the Spirit harks back to his Spiritualist foundation. There exist two types of learned people: the *Schriftgelehrten* and the *Gottesgelehrten*. This distinction was also Schwenckfeld's teaching, and the teaching of many other Spiritualists. The former have "head knowledge" and have learned from men, whereas the latter are taught by God through experience, and live their knowledge out practically.<sup>103</sup>

So preachers do not need formal education *per se*, but they do need to "study" in what Coolhaes called "the school of the Holy Spirit and the Cross." As preachers (and others) study longer in this "school," they will become more mature in spiritual things,<sup>104</sup> growing from "children," to "half-mature," to "adults" in faith.<sup>105</sup> Repentance is the key aspect of this education and includes a strong component of suffering. As he tells us in *Apologia*:

If I could have seen clearly, I would have seen that it was not God's will to go [for a visit to Deventer]. But I stayed here this year, was bravely sifted through the sieve, and studied further in the school of the cross to become even more broken, so that the Lord would make me more fit to serve him and my neighbors. For I consider that for all Christian people, especially those who will teach others, nothing is as necessary as

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kennisse hebben can, alleen wt het lesen ofte hooren seggen ende vertellen; maer het gesicht, Ja niet alleen het gesicht, maer een vlytich in ende doorsien, met een naerstich opmercken, moet daer toe comen, Want anders is die kennisse, soomen wt het lesen ofte hooren seggen heft, een dootd ende ydel dinck, inden Menschen: Also ist ooc met die Godlijke Schriftuer." Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folios Biiij-Biiij.

102. "Ende ick soude liever met Nathanael een waer Israelijt, ende alles bedroechs vry zijnde, in onwetentheyd staen, des by den Propheten voorgheseyden woordts, dat Christus een Nazareer soude genoemt werden: als met den Schriftgeleerden op een minuyt weten te wijsen de plaetse, waer de selve Christus soude geboren werde." Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Diiij.

103. Erb, "The Beginning and End," 83-84. See also Gilly, "Das Sprichwort 'Die Gelehrten die Verkehrten,'" 229-375.

104. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 68Riiijr-69Sv.

105. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 69 Sr-70 Sijv. Here he alludes again to 1 Cor. 3:10-15.



the cross and as setbacks; for the cross is the true school of the Holy Spirit for disciples.<sup>106</sup>

This idea of spiritual development as a school is not unique in this period. For instance, Duifhuis also spoke of the concept of a school of the Holy Spirit.<sup>107</sup> Schwenckfeld's "School of Christ" (Christ is the schoolmaster, in the individual heart as well as with others)<sup>108</sup> is similar, as well as Coornhert's "Jacob's ladder" to perfection, although he relied more on effort than repentance.<sup>109</sup> David Joris, a Spiritualist so different from Coolhaes in so many ways, was nevertheless said to be "an inspired preacher but an obscure writer who paid special attention to the Holy Cross and the sufferings of Christ, and considered the sacraments of secondary importance."<sup>110</sup> At least in this, some connection between Coolhaes and Joris' ideas may exist.

As Coolhaes wrote of this "school," its simplicity contrasts with a theological education that was more focused on the intellectually heavy doctrines of predestination and other theological topics which Reformed preachers were teaching. For Coolhaes, the preachers are putting the cart before the horse. A person who wants to learn to read and write must first learn the letters, then learn to spell, then learn to read, and finally learn to understand. In the same way, a student in the school of the Holy Spirit,<sup>111</sup> who desires to study under the one teacher, Christ Jesus, must climb four steps: admitting one's own sins, grieving over them, praying earnestly to the eternal God for forgiveness, and then, trusting in one's heart that God, because of grace, through Christ Jesus, has forgiven them, resolving to better one's life and live according to Christ's example – in other words, continuing to "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Without climbing these steps, and remaining on the

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106. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiijv.

107. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 96.

108. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent*, 175. For more about "Schwenckfeld and the "school of Christ," see Joachim Wach, *Types of Religious Experience, Christian and Non-Christian* (Chicago: Literary Licensing, LLC, 1951), 19.

109. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 182-84. Coolhaes quotes Heb. 5:11-14; Those who are mature are able to eat solid food. For "the mature" he uses the word "perfect," *volmaeckt*. In contrast to Coornhert, who develops and explains his views of human perfectibility, this is the only place in all of Coolhaes' works in which even a hint of this idea can be found.

110. Woltjer and Mout, "Settlements: The Netherlands," 391.

111. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Aiiijv.

highest, all is lost.<sup>112</sup> Here we see again the emphasis on repentance, which we mentioned in the biographical sketch as typical of the synergist position.

For Coolhaes, Christian discipline is not excommunication or anything that preachers or elders can require; this “school” is the true discipline of the believer from God himself, including at times teaching, instruction, rebuke, and even sometimes physical punishment, poverty, terror, or need. For that reason, he feels, a church where God’s Word is preached cannot be said to be without discipline.<sup>113</sup> In other words, God disciplines the church. Whereas before we saw how Coolhaes rejected the harsh discipline many preachers were employing, here we see what he would put in its place. Therefore, truly spiritual preachers are not always the most learned, but are those who have suffered much, endured many battles, and had victory in Christ. They have learned meekness and humility. They have learned to bear with evil and not speak back. They are, he thinks, a minority.<sup>114</sup> The “rule of love,” which he describes as the gentle rebuke which one believer gives to another whom he sees is in need of it, is also a discipline which should be used between clergy and people alike.<sup>115</sup>

To sum up, there is no doubt as to Coolhaes’ views about what makes a good preacher, and what criticisms he had for preachers, elders and deacons. He was not completely anticlerical, since he believed that good preachers could and should exist in the visible church, but he criticized many preachers and elders for their hypocrisy, lack of call and giftedness, adherence to man-made writings, their drive for power through their organization, and their lack of mercy toward sinners. He disagreed with the way Christian discipline was mostly being done, feeling that true discipline comes both from God to the church and from the loving exhortation and even rebukes of one Christian to another. In the next chapter, we will continue to look at Coolhaes’ views about the visible and the invisible church, and especially about how the visible church should look – that it should be a diverse body, and that its members should possess Christian freedom. We will see that Coolhaes believed that such an open visible church would benefit the state politically, and its members spiritually.

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112. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 178-82.

113. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 75Tijr–76Tijr.

114. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 7.

115. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, 90Zija–90Zijr.

## Chapter 9: The congregation: pleading for diversity

How should the church look? How should it be governed? We have seen that Coolhaes wanted it to be overseen by benevolent civil government and served by preachers and elders who were truly called. But what people should be in the church? Coolhaes, who built his ideas on the bipartite concept of the visible and invisible church, believed that diversity was vital in both groups.<sup>1</sup> Tolerance of various opinions and toleration of others<sup>2</sup> were both essential.<sup>3</sup> This understanding was mystical in that the diversity of the invisible church is unseen but real, and that true believers are connected in the invisible church by a bond which will be eternal. It was also Spiritualist because he believed that the work of Reformation was not finished, that religious diversity and freedom, the Spirit, and love should be given a greater place than they had in the churches of his day. The invisible church – the true church through time and space – is already diverse, including people from every confession and nation.<sup>4</sup> Although for him the invisible church is the more important, since it is eternal, the visible church is also important. In much of his teaching, he exhorted the visible church. The invisible church is already diverse; he pleaded with the visible church, which has not yet achieved this, to embrace diversity also. So the correct way to ask the question is: how should the visible church look, and who should be included?

The visible church, in Coolhaes' definition, is the group composed of all who call themselves Christian and includes all Christian confessions and smaller groups – what one would call, in English, “Christendom.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, he does not mean only the Reformed

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1. Dirck Volkertzsoon Coornhert's views of the importance of the binary model of visible and invisible church were very similar to Coolhaes'. It is not known if Coolhaes attended the debate between Coornhert, Arent Cornelisz and Reinier Donteclock in Leiden on April 14, 1578, when the question of the visible church versus the “true” church was disputed, but it is hard to believe that he would not have been present, as we discussed in the biographical sketch. For a full account of this debate, see Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 9, 19, 28-29, 39-42, 78-79, 99-101, 110-11, 123, 126, 138-59, 286.

2. There is a very large body of literature on tolerance and toleration; covering it all is beyond our scope. For an introduction to tolerance and its political ramifications throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see the introduction to Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner, *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-12. For questions of tolerance of minority groups in the Netherlands (Mennonites, Catholics, Jews, witches, homosexuals, and slaves), see Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, ed., *Een schijn van verdraagzaamheid. Afwijking en tolerantie in Nederland van de 16e eeuw tot heden* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1989).

3. For an explanation of the differences between the concepts of “tolerance” and “toleration,” and my use of the terms, see my footnote 4 in the Introduction.

4. For a more complete discussion of the importance of the invisible church to Coolhaes, see Chapter 6.

church. In the visible church, Coolhaes advocates diversity. Although he identified as Reformed, he undervalued or devalued confessional distinctives so much that it is not wrong to call him anti-confessional. In fact, he would have been happier to see the process of Reformation continue in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries with an unraveling of confessional identities, rather than a tightening of them. Coolhaes was mocked for his seeming indifference to confessional boundaries in this heavily polarized period. In his *Vermaninge aan Jaques Mercijs*,<sup>6</sup> he relates that he was called by some during this period a “Neutralist,” which was a term he never called himself, preferring at that time the term “impartial.” He defends impartiality as a characteristic of all pious Christians who had studied in the School of the Holy Spirit, rather than in the school of the devil.<sup>7</sup> Wijnant Kras, his former friend turned opponent, used the term “Neutralist” for Coolhaes.<sup>8</sup> He writes in the form of a little rhyme,

What are these Neutralists?  
Not Beggars; nor Papists.  
Not Anabaptists, not even Christians.  
In the Scripture one can find no trace of them.<sup>9</sup>

So, Coolhaes never said that different confessions should dissolve or cease to exist. Still, ultimately he was, in a sense, anti-confessional. He would not oppose them, but did not want to encourage them. He did not condemn confessional differences, but desired religious diversity in the state, and also in freedom for diversity of views within a confession. He believed that a broad and open visible church, made up of diverse groups (including the

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5. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 11Cijr.

6. Coolhaes, *Vermaninge aan Jaques Mercijs* 1601. Note: *Vermaninge aen Jaques Mercijs* is mentioned in Coolhaes, *Een noodwendighe broederlijke vermaninghe*, folio Erf. Assumed non-extant.

7. Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 85.

8. In context, it seems that Kras is referring to Coolhaes’ religious impartiality by this term. We also mentioned this term in the biographical sketch in relation to Coolhaes’ co-author, Rolwaghen. However, *neutralisten* were connected by Abel Eppens, farmer in Groningen, to *spannisierten* – Hispanicized people, Catholics or Catholic-sympathizers, see Wiebe Bergsma, *De wereld volgens Abel Eppens. Een Ommelander boer uit de zestiende eeuw* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff/Fryske Akademy, 1988), 114, 122. See also Pollmann, “No Man’s Land. Reinventing Netherlandish Identities, 1585-1621,” 257-58. However, Kras does not seem to mean this – he says *neutralisten* are not “Papists.” See the following note for his words.

9. “Wat is te segghen Neutralisten?  
Sy en zijn noch Geusen, noch oock Papisten,  
Noch Doopsgesinden, noch oock geen Christen,  
Want men in der Schrift van haer noyt en wisten.”

Wijnant Kras, *Antwoort op een faem-roovende boeck*, folio Gijr.

public Reformed Church but not limited to it), would benefit the state politically and its members spiritually. He also thought that the freedom of individuals to hold differing and diverse views within a confession or local congregation was healthy and reflected the idea that absolute truth of doctrine was in many cases very hard to be sure of.

In this chapter, we will see his definition of “visible church,” how through sacraments and excommunication people were included or excluded from that church, and why Coolhaes believed that the sacraments should be free, open and accessible. We will see that he did not view the visible church through the grid of Bullinger’s covenant theology as much as through the belief in continuous “reformations” through church history. We will glance at the historical and political contexts, and then look at the political benefits Coolhaes saw for a state which encourages confessional diversity. Also, we will note the personal benefits he saw for individuals living in what he called “Christian freedom.”

#### Visible foundation and biblical interpretation

To Coolhaes, the diverse visible church is a house for all, a ship at sea, an army in which all soldiers should fight on the same side.<sup>10</sup> It includes people of both greater and lesser spirituality and Christ-likeness. God has ordained its existence, however, so despite the impurities present in this *corpus Christi mixtum*, it will remain in the world. Also, the visible church is good for society. Despite not being the true church, or being fully holy, it possesses, Coolhaes said, a sort of righteousness. Its righteousness is “political righteousness” – the creation of peaceful and honest citizens.<sup>11</sup>

This visible church, he specifies further, is made up of all who are baptized in Christ, and who build on the same foundation:

As far as religion and faith go, we know that faith is not from man’s thinking, but is a gift of God, and that our office is not to force everyone to it, nor those who do not know everything, for we know what we know, understand what we understand, believe what we believe (excepting the articles of faith) to be right. As long as others build a foundation with us; that is, a turning from sin and toward God, only trusting in Christ Jesus and holding him as the only redeemer, savior, mediator, way, door to eternal life, seeking salvation nowhere else – not in his worthiness or holiness, but in the mercy of God – and willing and prepared with all his heart to do the will of the

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10. Coolhaes unpacks these metaphors in Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Aiiiijv.

11. Coolhaes, *Basuynne*, folios Biiijr–Cijv.

Lord, as far as his weak ability allows, and so forth, we should not condemn, despise or pester them.<sup>12</sup>

In expanding this definition, he uses and interprets Paul's analogy of building in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.<sup>13</sup> Each preacher, each confession, is building a "house" with stronger or weaker materials, which will be tested by fire on the Last Day. Coolhaes interprets the foundation to be the Old and New Testaments (to which he refers as the "prophetic and apostolic Scriptures"), the Apostles' Creed (also known as the "Twelve Articles"),<sup>14</sup> and the sacrament of being baptized in (or affirming) Christ. He does not engage in detailed exposition of the meaning of the Creed's articles, as Luther does in his *Catechism*. The form of baptism also does not matter to him in the context of this definition; it matters that the members have identified themselves as Christians and affirmed the faith. Thus, he is a reductionist, but his limited "foundation" is not unusual for those in any age who struggle to combat confessional exclusivity with irenicism.<sup>15</sup> Erasmus had also emphasized the Bible and the Creed as the most fundamental base for theology, although he also looked to tradition, general councils and the Fathers.<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that this simple foundation is similar to Coornhert's, in encompassing only the Bible and the Creed.<sup>17</sup> The term "foundation," while certainly from the Bible as we have said, also echoes *fundamentalia* versus *adiaphora*, the famous Erasmian distinction held by irenicists.<sup>18</sup>

Confessional differences in teaching and doctrine, therefore, are the different ways of building. All who build differently, including groups which to some may seem to be on the

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12. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 18Eijv.

13. There are many places where Coolhaes discusses this. An early one is Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 85Yv.

14. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Er.

15. One other sixteenth-century example is Wilhelm Klebitz. Klebitz' "foundation" was even smaller – just affirmation of Jesus Christ, not even the necessity to believe in the articles of the Creed, the virgin birth, or Christ's divinity. Wim Janse, "Non-conformist Eucharistic Theology: The Case of the Alleged 'Zwinglian Polemicist' Wilhelm Klebitz (c. 1533-68)," *NAKG/DRCH* 81.1 (2001), 5-25.

16. Payne, *Erasmus*, 15-27.

17. This is mentioned in Voogt, "Anyone who can read may be a preacher," 422; and Voogt, *Constraint on Trial*, 83. This reference to this foundation to which Voogt alludes is found in a chapter entitled "Ruygh Bewerp eender onpartydiger kercken onder verbeteringhe," in *III. deel van Dirck Volckertsz Coornherts wercken*, by Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert (Amsterdam: Colom, Jacob Aertsz, 1630), folios Aijv - Aijr.

18. Gary Remer, *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 50.

fringes of “orthodoxy,” are included in Coolhaes’ visible church – not only all official Protestant confessions, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, but also Schwenckfelders, David-Jorists, Franckists and others even further away from what his Reformed colleagues would approve of. Occasionally, Coolhaes even mentions “Arians” as a part of the visible church.<sup>19</sup> This is, in fact, illogical of him, given that the Apostles’ Creed, part of his essential foundation, is Trinitarian. However, his inclusion of them in this list shows his desire for diversity in the visible church, and he evidently wants them to be included despite a difference in theology. He is opposed to exclusion of religious minorities, not just because of a desire for their toleration, but because he wants intentional diversity as the goal and reality of the visible church in the world. The visible church is big, and broad, and heterogeneous – the great ship, the spacious house – and should be recognized for all of what it is.

The Bible and its interpretation is a vital part of Coolhaes’ foundation. His doctrine of Scripture can be summarized in three points. First, he feels it important to affirm that the writers of the Old and New Testament books were inspired in their writing. He writes, “And God has laid his holy Word in their mouth, and confirmed it with signs and wonders.”<sup>20</sup> By this he means that the miracles which the apostles were enabled by God to do in the Apostolic Age demonstrated the authority of those apostles to write the New Testament.

Second, he teaches that allegorical interpretations are often the legitimate interpretation of passages. Many passages in the Bible can be understood literally, but many must be understood not according to the letter, but according to the meaning of the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> Coolhaes would have agreed with Coornhert when the latter, recalling Augustine, had said that literal interpretation would not give much to the soul. To use an allegorical interpretation makes it possible to give meaning to passages that would have been difficult if taken literally. This question of methods of interpretation was fairly controversial at the time. The practice of allegorical interpretation ran counter to a more purely historical approach of hermeneutics which had replaced the medieval *quadriga*, or four-fold method of

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19. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1585 edition, folios Bijv–Bijr.

20. “Ende dat Godt selfs syn Heylighe Woordt in haren mondt gheleydt hebbende, dat selve met teychenen ende wonderwercken becrachticht heeft.” Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio Aijr. See also folio 14Dijj.

21. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 13Dv; Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio Fij.

interpretation, which had included both literal and allegorical elements, and allowed more than one “meaning” of a text.<sup>22</sup>

Third, Coolhaes believes that correct interpretations of the Scripture exist, although they are sometimes very difficult to be sure of. The best method is comparing hard texts to clearer texts, a practice which Luther restored.<sup>23</sup> His belief in an ideal, correct interpretation is seen by his statement that errors in biblical interpretation lead to many of the sects.<sup>24</sup> However, it is often difficult to find the correct interpretation, and because he is skeptical about hermeneutics, seemingly insoluble and divisive questions do not bother him. “One tries to understand the letter. Everyone has the same letter, but if they all understood it the same way there would be no differences anymore. So this is at the present time hidden in the counsel of the Spirit.”<sup>25</sup> The role of the Holy Spirit is essential in interpreting Scripture.<sup>26</sup> In addition, even though a correct interpretation must exist, the diversity of opinion which the difficulty of interpretation creates is actually better for society. To return to Coolhaes’ metaphors, different preachers are busy building differently on the foundation. They are often therefore in opposition to each other. Coolhaes goes on to use a seafaring metaphor. Because the visible church is like a ship, the preachers of various confessions can be compared to its sailors. The sea of disunity, as well as the differences of opinion of the sailors who cannot agree even on the points of the compass, threaten to sink this ship, which would surely have happened but for God’s grace. So, diversity of opinion is a safer way to sail the ship of Christendom than division, which could lead to upsetting the vessel, or falling into the hands of the enemy.<sup>27</sup>

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22. Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 38. The *quadriga* allowed passages to be interpreted literally, anagogically (in reference to future prophetic events), typologically, or tropologically (drawing a moral).

23. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, folio D/25.

24. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 13Dv.

25. “Men vraecht naer verstant van die letter: die letter heeftmen wel al ghelijck, maer verstont mense al ghelijck so en souder geen verschil meer zijn. So is dit dan nu inden raedt des geestes verborghen.” Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Cr.

26. “So it is untrue that one cannot understand the Scripture (at least insofar as is needed for salvation) without these philosophical arts and various languages.... And when one has the Holy Spirit, one will be led into all truth, even if one knows no language but one’s mother tongue.” Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Rijr.

27. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Aiiijv. See also Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 190.



In regard to this, the book *Apologie oft verantwoordinge Vanden Grave van Essex 1603*,<sup>28</sup> published in Middelburg, is attributed to Coolhaes, but expresses some views which seem unlike him. It would be odd that Coolhaes would publish something in Middelburg – a center for the stricter Reformed, and the place of the Middelburg Synod of 1581. The book is said to have been translated from English, a language that there is no other evidence for Coolhaes having known. While the language seems similar enough to that of Coolhaes, none of his usual themes are present. On the contrary, the one passage in this political book which deals with religion advocates a unified state religion as the only way of creating unity and political strength in the state.<sup>29</sup> This idea of one religion is reminiscent of Coornhert, as well as of the stricter Reformed, but as we have seen Coolhaes advocated diversity of opinion as the safest way to “steer the ship.”<sup>30</sup>

To summarize, therefore, it is important to him to assert that the Bible is both inspired and at least partly allegorical, allowing of various interpretations which are partly hidden and partly revealed by the Spirit. Also, although he believes that correct interpretations of various texts exist, he also thinks that the true and final meaning of many matters is difficult to be certain of. Therefore, diversity of theology should characterize the visible church. As we will see in the next section, diversity will also be Coolhaes’ answer to the question of who should be included in the visible church.

### Inclusion and exclusion

Coolhaes includes all confessions in his definition of the visible church. It is broad and no one should be excluded. To defend this inclusivity, he employs two well-known parables: the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24-30) and the parable of the five wise and five

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28. Coolhaes? *Apologie oft verantwoordinge vanden grave van Essex, techen de ghene die hem jaloerselijck ende ten onrechten schelden als beletter des vredes ende ruste zijnes vaderlands, Door hemselven beschreven int Iaer 1598. ende uyt het engelsche exemplaer (Ghedruet tot London by Richard Bradocks 1603). Overgheset by C.C. Tot Middelburgh, voor Bernaert Langhenesse, wonende op den hoeck vande Gistrate inde vier winden* (Middelburg: Langhenesse, 1603).

29. Caspar Coolhaes? *Apologie oft verantwoordinge van den Grave van Essex, techen de ghene die hem jaloerselijck ende ten onrechten schelden als beletter des vredes ende ruste zijnes Vaderlands, Door hemselven beschreven int Iaer 1598 ende uyt het Engelsche exemplaer (Ghedruet tot London by Richard Bradocks 1603). Overgheset by C.C. Tot Middelburgh, voor Bernaert Langhenesse, wonende op den hoeck vande Gistrate inde vier winden, 1603* (Middelburg: Bernaert Langhenesse, 1603), 14/Ciiijb-15/D.

30. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Aiiiv. See also Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 190.

foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). In the first parable, the wheat and the weeds grow up together. To pull out the weeds would destroy the good wheat, so the master lets them both grow together until the harvest. In other words, the time for judgment is not yet. It would be premature for Coolhaes, therefore, or for anyone, to judge a person's qualifications for membership in the community of Christ, since eventually that judgment will be made by the man who sowed, i.e., the Son of Man. This interpretation of the parable was already a well-known argument for toleration in the sixteenth century which had also been made by Augustine, Erasmus and others.<sup>31</sup> In the second parable, ten girls with lanterns had been waiting in the dark a long time for a wedding reception. Some ran out of oil and so could not go with the procession and were ultimately shut out of the party by the bridegroom. This parable is interpreted by Coolhaes, in line with his view that it is not up to humans to judge, to mean that the bridegroom, Christ, will ultimately judge some to be included and some to be excluded. It is not the task of people in the present to make those judgments, since they cannot know yet who *will* be included. However, Coolhaes does not advocate a passive attitude which waited to see evidence in peoples' lifestyles before admitting them to the church, evidence that would prove without a doubt that they were part of the elect. No, all people should be included in the visible church as much as possible and not turned away, and then be taught and nurtured. As he states, "I have always thought, as I still think, that we must be diligent to bring as many people to Christ as possible, and to shut no one out from Christ's community prematurely, but to establish them in the truth."<sup>32</sup>

This willingness not to judge was not in line with the stricter Calvinists. Many judged a person's inclusion by his or her conformity to a set of beliefs as well as living what was seen to be a godly lifestyle. Most confessions had strict membership criteria which excluded people by definition. For instance, Calvin had affirmed in the *Institutes* that the invisible church contains all saints alive and dead, but it is the visible church which is the "mother" of

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31. "Augustine, Sermon 23 on the New Testament," New Advent, [www.newadvent.org/fathers/160323.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/160323.htm) (accessed January 27 2016); Roland Bainton, "The Parable of the Tares as the Proof Text for Religious Liberty to the End of the Sixteenth Century," *Church History* 1 (1932): 67; Roland Bainton, "Religious Liberty and the Parable of the Tares," *Collected Papers in Church History*, vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 95-121.

32. "Soo hebbe ick ghemeynt als ick nog meyne, dat wy ons voornamelick hier in to beneerstighen hadden, om de Heer Christo so veel ons mogelick is veel volcx toe te brengen, ende niet om yemant onrijpelic buyten Christum te stellen, de welcke inden waerheyt wel daer in wesen mochte ." Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Biiijr.

believers, and thus the only way to enter into eternal life.<sup>33</sup> The Reformed Church saw their visible church as the “true” church and led them to introduce the third mark of the true church: discipline, based on periodic examination, to keep the church pure. This purity could be sullied by allowing disreputable or sinful persons access to communion, and this in turn would affect the purity of all the members. For example, George de Montigny, Lord of Noyelles, military leader, ally of William of Orange, and defender of Leiden, was not allowed to come to communion by the new Reformed consistory of Leiden during the first siege against the Spanish. He was considered to be unfit, having the reputation for licentiousness and drunkenness.<sup>34</sup> In the Reformed model, therefore, the visible church can be called the true church because it is pure. The invisible church could also be called the true church, because it is composed of the elect.<sup>35</sup>

As we have mentioned earlier, according to the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, only members could participate in the sacraments. *Liefhebbers* were those who chose to be part of the church community but did not take the step of membership. They could listen to the sermons, but not participate in the sacraments. We mention this again here, because we are highlighting the question of inclusion and exclusion. In a sense the *liefhebbers* were excluded, but generally by their own choice. But the Reformed Church restricted others from the Lord’s Supper from time to time because their lifestyle or views did not comport with the standards of their local consistory. In cases of stubborn sin or “heretical” beliefs, members could be excommunicated, as of course Coolhaes was. The Reformed Church was not alone in excluding divergent theological opinions and lifestyles – the Mennonite movement in the Northern Netherlands practiced excommunication, and divided into smaller groups in their efforts to retain purity. By 1557, there were at least six major groups of Dutch Mennonites.<sup>36</sup>

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33. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, section 5, 2283-84, [www.ccel.org/ccel/ccel/calvin/institutes.i.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ccel/calvin/institutes.i.html) (accessed January 27 2016).

34. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 53; J. van Vloten, *Nalezing, aantekeningen, en bijlagen op Leidens beleg en ontzet* (Leiden: D. Noothoven van Goor, 1867), 4-5; *NNBW*, vol. 5, 380.

35. Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 51-58; Stackhouse, *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* 179-80, 190.

36. The eventual groups by 1625 included the Waterlanders, the High Germans, the Old Frisians, the Young Frisians, the Old Flemings, and the Young Flemings. In 1630, a unification of the Flemings, Young Frisians and High Germans produced the United Congregations. See Samme Zijlstra, “Anabaptism and Tolerance: Possibilities and Limitations,” in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112-31.

Coolhaes, in summary, used biblical arguments for inclusivity in the visible church. The crux of his teaching is that God, not man, must judge who is ultimately included in the invisible church, and so as many as possible should be encouraged to enter the visible church in the hope that they will learn and grow in faith. Struggling to assure the purity of the visible church by excluding people is not useful, in contrast to the practice of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands.

#### Visible signs of inclusion: physical sacraments

Both Protestant sacraments, baptism and communion, were usually seen as the sign that someone was included in the visible church. Baptism was seen as the gateway to inclusion. For Coolhaes physical baptism was less important than what he termed “spiritual baptism,”<sup>37</sup> as we mentioned in Chapter 6. It is difficult to separate the two in his writing. For him, baptism is not righteousness itself, but a seal of righteousness.<sup>38</sup> When one buys a house, one receives a seal and a deed which testifies to the purchase. Baptism is a seal, as circumcision was a seal in the Old Testament. To use another metaphor, it is not the new birth, but a “bath of new birth” which is a witness of that new birth.<sup>39</sup> Physical baptism should be given to anyone who desires it. Coolhaes cites Gwalther that John the Baptist allowed everyone without exception to come to baptism.<sup>40</sup> The sacraments are visible signs of the invisible but true things.<sup>41</sup> A sacrament contains the visible and the invisible, the physical and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly.<sup>42</sup>

Coolhaes holds loose views on the physical act of baptism itself. As we saw in Chapter 3, he affirmed infant baptism but did not find it a problem if someone was

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37. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 3.

38. The use of “seal” is part of the Zwinglian view; see Sanders, “Consensus Tigurinus,” *OER*, vol. 1, 414.

39. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 95Aaiiia-b.

40. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio 25. Ironically, John the Baptist rebuked the hypocrites, whom he called a “generation of vipers,” for coming out to him in the desert to be baptized, judging them to be insincere (Matt. 3:7-9; Luke 3:7-9). Coolhaes and Gwalther do not follow the texts to make that point, but emphasize that “all” may come.

41. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, 95Aaiijr.

42. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, 97 BBr.

unbaptized, for example the older children of Jan Janszoon whom he mentions in *Breeder bericht*.<sup>43</sup> At the Synod of Middelburg, he was unwilling to state that unbaptized children who died were lost, although this relates more to covenant theology and Bullinger – the view that a single covenant throughout history means that the efficacy of Christ’s redemption reaches not only forward but backward in time.<sup>44</sup> He sympathized with the plights of the Mennonites, especially in Friesland, and advocated fair treatment of them in several of his later works. However, he disagreed with their view. Mennonites, he writes, misunderstand the Bible by insisting on the baptism of adults only, but they should not be condemned because of this conviction. Their interpretation is flawed, but they are weaker and should be born with by the stronger in faith and wisdom.<sup>45</sup> Adult baptizers should be accepted as “brothers,” that is, be allowed to commune together with infant baptizers, he feels. The basis of this brotherhood is not a vague feeling of kindness, justice or tolerance, but the commonality between the two types of baptizers of one Christian foundation of belief. Creating schisms over baptism is wrong.<sup>46</sup>

The second Protestant sacrament, communion, was usually the most important continuing sign of inclusion in the visible church during this period in history. We talked about Coolhaes’ Spiritualist theological views of the Lord’s Supper in Chapter 5; here we will address the question of who, to his mind, may and should be present and receive the sacrament. Coolhaes’ view that all should be admitted to the Lord’s Table, is what is called “open communion.” Open communion had been proposed by the States of Holland in the draft church order of 1576. They recommended four communion services per year at which all would be free to commune. However, the Reformed Church never agreed to this.<sup>47</sup> As we saw above, the exclusion that the Reformed Church used as discipline, was in practice exclusion from the sacrament of communion. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church had used *interdict* as a discipline (although of course for Roman Catholics

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43. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folios 2v–5v.

44. Wandel, “Zwingli,” *OER*, vol. 4, 322.

45. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 71Sijiv-r.

46. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 96 Aaiijr-97 BBv.

47. Pettegree, “Coming to Terms with Victory,” 171-72. Coolhaes did not use the term “open communion,” however.

there are more sacraments than just communion and baptism from which one can be excluded).

For Coolhaes, all this exclusion is deplorable. Open communion should be practiced because one cannot know the true spiritual state and destiny of any individual, at this point in time. Communion is salutary, and should not be forbidden to anyone who desires Christ enough to desire it also. To bar the sinful and struggling from the sacraments by temporary or permanent ban or excommunication is especially harmful, for then they lose what might help them to come closer to God again. Even stubborn public sinners might still repent, even at the eleventh hour, so to speak, and become part of the true church.<sup>48</sup> To Coolhaes, when someone comes to church, either to the sermon or communion, he is no longer exactly in the category of “sinner” and one must hope for the best for him. If one sees no immediate improvement in his life, Coolhaes believes that it may still happen today, tomorrow, or even next year. One never knows what God will do.<sup>49</sup> This is reminiscent of Erasmus and, influenced by him, Castellio, who “believed that the renunciation of theological speculation and the practice of an exemplary *imitatio Christi* would eventually bring the heretics back to the evangelical truth and to religious consensus.”<sup>50</sup>

Those of differing opinions as regards the Lord’s Supper should be held as brothers and can commune together, because of the common Gospel “foundation” which he assumed all confessions held.<sup>51</sup> This diversity at the Lord’s Supper was not acceptable to Coolhaes’ opponents. Allowing indiscriminate, unexamined people to the Lord’s table was seen as “giving the holy to dogs and throwing pearls before swine.” It was also seen as dangerous and contaminating to the whole church. However, Coolhaes found this objection illogical for two reasons. If sacraments are holy, surely the Word of God is holier still. Also, his opponents would allow an unexamined person to come to hear a sermon, but not to take communion. Even non-Christian foreigners would be encouraged to come into church to

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48. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 20Eiiijv-r.

49. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 5. We mentioned in Chapter 5 that this idea can be found in both Franck and Bullinger.

50. Guggisberg, “Castellion,” *OER*, vol. 1, 272.

51. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 98 BBr-99 BBijv.

listen to a sermon, in the hope that God's Word would convince them as to the truth of the Gospel.<sup>52</sup>

Coolhaes is aware that some are judged as being godless non-Christians because they are not communicant members of the public church. In fact, this is one of the main charges leveled against the Leiden magistrates. However, he argues, some people do not take communion because they have an overly strong consciousness of their sins,<sup>53</sup> others because they are reacting against a view that taking the physical elements is the source of faith.<sup>54</sup> If one cannot use the physical elements in actuality, the "good intention" or "spiritual use" is sufficient. As a matter of fact, if the sacraments are "done wrongly," he opines that it is better to refrain from them, rather than model that wrong use to others.<sup>55</sup> This is the opposite of those who would advocate a Nicodemism that would fit into the Catholic Church or any other place. Sacraments should not be made an idol. On the other hand, they should not be neglected.<sup>56</sup> Despite this, as we mentioned earlier, Coolhaes never suggested dispensing with the practice of physical baptism, and never taught a Schwenkfeldian *Stillstand* of abstinence from the physical bread and wine.

#### Not covenants but reformations

We have seen, then, that Coolhaes defines the visible church as diverse and heterogeneous. We have looked at his ideas of inclusion and exclusion as they affect individuals. On a larger level, inclusion in the church during the sixteenth century was being seen by Reformed thinkers as relating to the predestination and thus election of certain people. The idea of various covenants of God with mankind throughout history was also developing. It will be helpful here, in connection with these overarching theories of predestination and covenant theology, to take a brief look at Coolhaes' ideas of the history of the visible people of God through the ages.

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52. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 5.

53. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 18Eijv-r.

54. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 19Eiijv-r.

55. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 94Aaijr–95Aaijv.

56. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 95Aaijv.

We said earlier that Coolhaes' view has been called "conditional predestination."<sup>57</sup> He affirmed that God's grace operated in a person at the beginning of the process, but that the individual was obliged to accept the offered gift. This fits in well with discussion of covenants throughout Old and New Testament history. The covenant concept emphasizes that God's grace precedes the human decision, but the role of the human is then in assenting to it. "By using the covenant idea, theologians shifted emphasis from the eternal decrees of God, central High Calvinist teachings, to God's relationships with man, without abandoning predestination."<sup>58</sup> It includes ideas such as the requirement of hearing the proposed covenant before agreeing to it, and a decision-making process in time. People can participate and "prepare for grace."<sup>59</sup> Some have gone so far as to say that this "softens the rigid structures of post-Calvinian predestination doctrine."<sup>60</sup> It would not be illogical for Coolhaes, as a broader Reformed thinker, to have therefore embraced more of covenant theology.<sup>61</sup> However, as with so many other ideas, he picked and chose only a few federal concepts to add to his eclectic ecclesiology. He did not discuss the various different covenants found in the Old Testament – the Noachic, the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and so forth. He did not use the concepts of God's covenants with humankind as a connecting thread for all his ideas, as others were doing in his time.<sup>62</sup> He did not write about covenants much at all, but we can surmise that his inspiration from Bullinger and other Zurich theologians for his church and state views, might extend to some acceptance of one Adamic covenant, and the view that Christ's death justifies sinners both backward and forward in time. Bullinger was very much read in the Netherlands during Coolhaes' time, and later at the National Synod of Dordt (1618-1619) he would be used by both the Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants to support their views. Despite his polemic against Swiss Anabaptists, for the Reformed he could be

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57. This term used for Coolhaes' views by Stanglin and McCall, *Jacob Arminius*, 44. See also Chapter 5.

58. Everett H. Emerson, "Calvin and Covenant Theology," *Church History* 25 (1956): 138.

59. Emerson, "Calvin and Covenant Theology," 140. See also David Zaret, "Calvin, Covenant Theology, and the Weber Thesis," *The British Journal of Sociology* 43 (1992): 369-91.

60. Lyle D. Bierma, *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age. The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 24.

61. This is not to say that covenant theology was not used later by various groups, including stricter Calvinist ones – for instance, the Westminster Assembly.

62. For examples, see Bierma, *German Calvinism*, 11.



called a “conciliatory theologian”<sup>63</sup> in a period in which irenicism was hard to find. Because of the unity of this one covenant, believers in God before Christ could be justified by the cross just as believers after it could.<sup>64</sup> In fact, this seems to be the intent behind the first three Middelburg theses.<sup>65</sup> Whether or not Coolhaes believed this, he did not say in so many words. But this is the most logical explanation for the wording of these three theses, that he was believed to hold it. This, then, could be the reason that while he affirmed infant baptism, he did not seem too worried about whether it was done or not in specific cases in his congregation. Despite the general controversy about his views of baptism and the fate of unbaptized children, he did not write much about it. He does not, in fact, draw any parallel between “Old Israel” (circumcision) and “New Israel” (infant baptism), as one might expect.

He did, however, as we have seen, employ “covenant” to describe the relationship between the Old and New Testament people of God. The church was present in the Old Testament, both the visible church and the “true” church (in other words, those who are also members of the invisible church) – Cain and Abel, Noah and his family, Ishmael and Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. Each of these little groups represents the visible church of its time, and contains within it the true church, which is often pursued and persecuted.<sup>66</sup> However, not all of the circumcised are the true children of Abraham, that is, members of the covenant.<sup>67</sup> The visible church is not the same as the “true” church, and will never be.

Coolhaes’ view came to the forefront at the Synod of Middelburg, when he was asked if those in the Old Testament were saved without a knowledge of Christ.<sup>68</sup> His view was different than that of his opponents, and he complained that the Synod had misunderstood his response.<sup>69</sup> He elaborated later that all who are saved are saved through Christ, from Adam until the end of the world. However, in the Old Testament, people did not have such literal

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63. Janse, “Ik wil liever blijven bij den wortel van den boom, dan hoog klimmen,” 121-22.

64. Wandel, “Zwingli,” *OER*, vol. 4, 322.

65. See summaries in Chapter 3 for all Middelburg theses.

66. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, 10b. See also Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 42.

67. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 197-201.

68. For discussion, see Chapter 3.

69. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Aiiijv-r.

knowledge of Christ – all they knew was that the seed of the woman would break the head of the serpent. Still, it was enough for them that they believed the promise of God and did not doubt. They saw Christ from afar as through a dark cloud. Nevertheless, all in the Old Testament who were saved were held by the same faith as Christians have now.<sup>70</sup> Coolhaes denied that he meant to minimize the role of Scripture in an attempt to argue for perfectibility; he just meant that one should not be condemned for not knowing everything.<sup>71</sup>

He also implied the idea of “covenant” in one other important way. As we have seen, he called the invisible, true church “the heavenly Jerusalem, the Mother of us all.”<sup>72</sup> He did not elaborate about this in so many words, but it should be noted that to use that verse, Gal. 4:26, is in itself a statement about covenants. Paul was making a comparison between the child of the slave woman, Hagar, who is identified with Mount Sinai, which symbolically means with the Law, with the child of the free woman, Sarah, who is identified with Jerusalem, and thus symbolically with grace and freedom. Paul taught here that they represent, in fact, two covenants. Scholars of the time were positing all sorts of covenants based on the influential men of the Old Testament, but here Paul identified two, based on two key women.

Although Coolhaes did not connect all the dots of the ideas found in these verses, it is clear that he was saying that if Jerusalem is the Mother of the invisible church, then the invisible church and its members are born in grace and freedom, not law and slavery. By extension, one might suppose that he also meant that it is the visible church which could be compared to Hagar, and is concerned with law and is not free. Therefore, as Galatians 5:1 says, we have been set free and so should not return to slavery. The church is now in its period of freedom from law, and must not submit again to “a new papacy.” Galatians, as we have seen, was the book that we know Coolhaes lectured on in his brief time as an instructor at the University in Leiden, and his interpretations of these verses were clearly foundational to the ideas he had about what the covenants were.

Instead of covenants, he preferred the view that God sends continual “reformations,” complete with teachers and opportunities for repentance and renewal. This is why the

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70. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Diiijr.

71. Coolhaes, *Conciliatio*, Eij.

72. Coolhaes, *Een christelijke vermaninghe*, folio Aijb; Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folios 2Aiiijv–Aiiijr.

disunity of the visible church in Coolhaes' own time saddened but did not surprise him. It was also part of the Spiritualism which we have discussed that Coolhaes was dissatisfied with the results of the Reformation and found it unfinished. The Old Testament Israelites (to which he also refers as the "church") fell away from the pious heritage of the Patriarchs, and needed a reformation through Moses and Aaron out of slavery, through the desert and back into the footsteps of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.<sup>73</sup> In New Testament times, God sent Jesus Christ and John the Baptist to begin another "reformation," which was not about particular laws but about preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins.<sup>74</sup> The Apostles continued this "reformation." Coolhaes believed that the church has never been better or more Reformed than during the golden age of the Apostles.<sup>75</sup> But then the church was corrupted. The devil set up his kingdom after the death of the Apostles, persuading preachers and teachers to take more authority than they had received from God.<sup>76</sup> The Council of Nicaea had only mixed value. He speaks well of Constantine, whom he sees as the rightful ruler of the secular government, but paints the attending bishops as being hate-filled and superstitious. The Roman Church then became the powerful archenemy of the salvation of all mankind.<sup>77</sup> It held an unjust authority over people's faith and consciences for centuries. The Reformation was a triumph over the Roman Catholic Church: the process by which God bound Satan, who had been working through the "terrible darkness of the Papacy."<sup>78</sup>

During the time of the Reformation, when the church was "free," it should have used this freedom of conscience.<sup>79</sup> However, it did not. Satan had somehow escaped his chains and changed into an angel of light so subtly as to deceive the Reformed Church to follow him into a darkness even worse than that of the earlier centuries.<sup>80</sup> The true preachers' "fiery love for

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73. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 18-20.

74. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 20.

75. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Bij.

76. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Aiiij.

77. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Aiiijr.

78. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Bij.

79. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio BB.

80. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Aij–Aijr.

God and for their neighbor” was suppressed.<sup>81</sup> In churches and in universities, where disputation became the norm, the visible church “died out and nothing is left but its bare and powerless name.”<sup>82</sup> Meanwhile, repentance and the Spirit are responsible for reformations recorded in the Bible, not arguing and disputing.<sup>83</sup> Luther, Zwingli and Calvin disputed about the Lord’s Supper before God had raised up a church worthy of receiving it. They disputed about baptism before people had heard enough preaching of the Law to mourn their sins. Therefore, this “hard food” of difficult questions (the nature of God, the nature of Christ, the incarnation, predestination) sticks in the throats of simple believers and makes them doubt, err, and even die.<sup>84</sup> The “free church” (the post-Reformation Protestant churches) had loaded the New Testament with more rules than the Jews had in the Old.<sup>85</sup> This created a party-spiritedness with a deceptive appearance of godliness – the work of the same devil, who has “merely put on another cap and coat to avoid detection.”<sup>86</sup>

Toward the end of his life, Coolhaes felt that perhaps confessional division had lessened. He wrote, “It appears that the time described by John in the Revelation - the healing time – is close at hand. The Beast and the false prophet will be caught and thrown into the lake of fire. This is what is promised to believers in Christ Jesus.”<sup>87</sup> He does not mention a tribulation; he predicts positive developments – a defeat of evil and a time of healing. The party-spiritedness was not as great as it was twenty or thirty years ago, he found.<sup>88</sup> Despite ever-increasing confessionalization, he hoped that the ill-feeling of the various groups toward each other was lessening. It is hard to see if this was merely wishful thinking on his part, or if he did not understand his time. As history shows, Coolhaes could not have been more wrong. His prediction of the lessening of party-spiritedness in the Netherlands did not come to pass. Confessional strife would erupt into full-blown political and ecclesiastical turmoil in the

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81. Coolhaes, *Summa*, folios B-B2.

82. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, folio Aij/3.

83. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 55-59.

84. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, folio BB/10.

85. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folios B-BB.

86. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folios Aiiijr–Aiiijv.

87. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 192-93.

88. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 194.

young Republic in less than five years between the two groups of the Reformed Calvinists, which would become the Remonstrants and the Contra-Remonstrants. In the period immediately following Coolhaes' death, the Republic attempted to create a society based on religious uniformity according to the National Synod of Dordt of 1618-1619. The stricter Calvinists saw it as a triumph. Diversity was not valued; many were excluded. Coolhaes would have found it a dark time indeed.

### From violence to toleration

Coolhaes was preaching the value of diversity and freedom in religion, while the Dutch Revolt was a fight for individual liberty and for freedom of conscience as well as for political freedom.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the terms “freedom,” “liberty,” “tolerance,” “toleration,” all feature prominently. A complete discussion of all these terms and factors is beyond the reach of this dissertation. Still, it will be useful at this point to provide some historical and political context for the questions of religious freedom and toleration. Of course, political context is also relevant to other aspects of Coolhaes' ecclesiology, such as his church and state views. But here, we will focus on the aspects of the context that will help clarify his views of diversity and freedom.

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89. Originally: “Wij strijden voor de vrijheyt van onse consientien, van onse vrouwen en kinderen, van onse goet ende bloet.” Statement from the States of Holland in 1572, *Sendbrief in forme van supplicatie aen de Conincklijke Maiesteyt van Spaengien* (Delft, 1573), folio A3, as quoted in Martin van Gelderen, *De Vrijheid van Consciëntie: Het vrijheidsideaal van de Nederlandse opstand 1555-1610* (Gouda~Stichting Fonds Goudse Glazen, 1996), 9. Also see: Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 228. See also other recent sources for various aspects of study of the Revolt: Maria Francisca Davina Eekhout, “Material Memories of the Dutch Revolt: The Urban Memory Landscape in the Low Countries, 1566–1700” (Leiden: Leiden University unpublished dissertation, 2014); Marjolein 't Hart, *The Dutch Wars of Independence: Warfare and Commerce in the Netherlands 1570-1680* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2014); Anton van der Lem, *De opstand in de Nederlanden 1568-1648: de tachtigjarige oorlog in woord en beeld* (Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Vantilt, 2014); Johannes Martin Müller, “Exile Memories and the Dutch Revolt: The Narrated Diaspora, 1550–1750” (Leiden: Leiden University unpublished dissertation, 2014); Geert H. Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic Exile in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Petra Groen, ed., *De tachtigjarige oorlog: van opstand naar geregelde oorlog, 1568-1648* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2013); Simon Groenveld, *De tachtigjarige oorlog: opstand en consolidatie in de Nederlanden (ca. 1560-1650)* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2012); Raingard Esser, *The Politics of Memory: The Writing of Partition in the Seventeenth-Century Low Countries* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Jasper van der Steen, “Goed en fout in de Nederlandse opstand,” *Holland: Regional-Historisch Tijdschrift* 43 (2011): 82-97; Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, *The Dutch Revolt through Spanish Eyes: Self and Other in Historical and Literary Texts of Golden Age Spain (c. 1548-1673)* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008); Judith Pollmann, “‘De gemeente stond malkander bij’: katholieken en de Nederlandse Opstand,” *Leidschrift: Historisch Tijdschrift* 24 (2009): 33-49; Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Judith Pollmann, “Internationalisering en de Nederlandse opstand,” *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffend de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 124 (2009): 515-35.

Many in the regions where the Spanish had been routed had “tasted how sweet and lovely religious freedom is.”<sup>90</sup> They were free now *not* to be Catholic, but to be Protestant. To many of the Reformed, freedom meant exactly that. To others, a greater freedom and more independence was desired. Toleration of diversity was assisted by the independence of the Dutch cities and the high regard in which their established, medieval, constitutional “privileges” and earned charters were held.<sup>91</sup> The States as a constitutional body was composed of lords and princes who had sworn to preserve these privileges.<sup>92</sup> This gave the different cities and regions the ability to make slightly different choices regarding toleration of various religions.<sup>93</sup>

Also, being tolerant has been, since the sixteenth century, part of Dutch self-definition.<sup>94</sup> “Erasmianism” is almost a synonym for “tolerance” in the Dutch context, signaling a hate for persecution and love of tolerance toward peaceful dissidents.<sup>95</sup> In the earlier decades of the sixteenth century, heretics were punished by death. In Rotterdam in 1558, executioner and mayors had to flee when a mob freed four Anabaptists sentenced to death. In Antwerp the burning of Calvinist preacher Christophorus Fabricius, in 1564, led to unrest. In 1562 forty executions were carried out in Flanders and Tournai with inquisitor Pieter Titelmans. However, after 1553 there were no more executions in Amsterdam, and after 1559 none in Friesland.<sup>96</sup> Although opposed enough in many cases to other confessions

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90. This phrase is quoted from Coolhaes?, *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck*, folio A2. For discussion of the authorship of this work, see Chapter 5.

91. However, the “privileges” of cities did not always have “a firm basis in law or fact, and what they entailed was not always crystal clear.” See Kaplan, “‘Dutch’ Religious Tolerance: Celebration and Revision,” 10.

92. Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 263.

93. This recalls Luther’s opinion: “Now tell me: How much wit must there be in the head of a person who imposes commands in an area where he has no authority whatsoever? Would you not judge the person insane who commanded the moon to shine whenever he wanted to? How well would it go if Leipzigers were to impose laws on us Wittenbergers, or if, conversely, we in Wittenberg were to legislate for the people of Leipzig! They would certainly send the lawmakers a thank-offering of hellebore to purge their brains and cure their sniffles.” Martin Luther, *To What Extent it Should Be Obeyed*, 1523, <http://pages.uoregon.edu> (accessed 22 November, 2014).

94. Benjamin Kaplan, “‘Dutch’ Religious Tolerance: Celebration and Revision,” in Hsia and Van Nierop, *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*, 9.

95. Mout, Smolinsky and Trapman, *Erasmianism*, 2.

96. Woltjer and Mout, “Settlements: The Netherlands,” 396; Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 261.

to curtail their privileges, Reformed opposition did not go as far as physical persecution. They felt their kinship with persecuted Calvinists “under the cross,” although ironically in the new Republic they were the favored religious group and could in theory persecute others. Although they followed Calvin in teaching that the civic government was to foster the “true religion” and discourage the others, they also (perhaps grudgingly) accepted that according to the Union of Utrecht (1579) in article 13, an individual’s conscience should not be tampered with by means of physical violence.<sup>97</sup> This was not a guarantee of freedom of choice; in practice the provinces managed the religious life of their citizens as they saw fit, sometimes resulting in the repression of non-Calvinists. Thus, although some (including Coolhaes) accused the Reformed Church of being as rigid as the Roman Catholic Church, the truth is that the Dutch Reformed were already showing more tolerance than their Catholic forebears by refraining from violent punishment, inquisition or coercion.

Despite religious disagreement and accusations of heresy from the various sides, William of Orange had said, in the 1560’s, that persecution was not a good solution for religious dissent, quoting Sebastian Castellio to this end.<sup>98</sup> He opposed the bloody tactics of Philip II. Heretics were no longer facing execution in France and Germany, and he and his noble allies questioned it on Dutch soil. The religious views of William of Orange had become more inclusive.<sup>99</sup> He opposed persecution of and the death penalty for heretics, and in 1578 he had proposed freedom of religion for minority groups of one hundred or more households.<sup>100</sup> William was pragmatic, rather than idealistic, in his growing openness to toleration of religious diversity, including Roman Catholics, and in 1566 attempted to win back support of the Catholic Church if Margaret of Parma would allow hedge preaching.<sup>101</sup>

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97. Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 268.

98. Mout, *Kerk en staat in een turbulente samenleving*, 15; Jonathan I. Israel, “The Intellectual Debate about Toleration in the Dutch Republic,” in Berkvens-Stevelinck, Israel, and Posthumus Meyjes, *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic*, 4.

99. Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*, 262.

100. Mout, “Kerk en staat in de zestiende eeuw,” 9-19.

101. Mout, *Kerk en staat in een turbulente samenleving*, 13. See also Gustaaf Janssens, “Margaret of Parma,” *OER*, vol. 3, 6, and Charlie R. Steen, *Margaret of Parma: A Life* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). The question of William of Orange’s own religious affiliations and beliefs, and the changes in those beliefs over time, is a much-discussed topic and outside the scope of this study. For more information on Willem’s life in this period and beyond, see R. H. Bremmer, *Reformatie en rebellie: Willem van Oranje, de calvinisten en het recht van opstand – tien onstuimige jaren: 1572-1581*. Franeker: Uitgeverij T. Wever, 1984; A. Th. van Deursen, *Willem van Oranje: een biografisch portret* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 1995); Philip Heylen, et al., *Willem van Oranje, Philips*

Still, many Calvinists fought for freedom – the freedom not to be Catholic. As the freedom-fighting Beggars are said to have shouted, “Rather Turkish [i.e., Muslim] than Catholic!”<sup>102</sup>

The struggle also included various groups other than the Reformed. Toleration was desired by every group for itself and its distinctives. The Reformed Church, nevertheless, dominated in this heterogeneous situation; “Only the Calvinists knew exactly what they wanted, and that gave them an advantage.”<sup>103</sup> But the paradox of “the ambivalent face of Calvinism in the Netherlands” is that the Reformed Church played a public role, despite limiting its membership. The church thereby made itself from the first day a minority church.<sup>104</sup> It is thus no wonder that questions of ecclesiology were pondered and debated. Even those stricter Calvinists<sup>105</sup> such as Arent Cornelisz and Saravia were wrestling with how open a public church should be. Arent Cornelisz may not have preferred a narrow church, but may have found that being a minority was the most realistic. He and other preachers may have suspected that a “minority strategy” while striving to make the Reformed Church into a national church (*landskerk*) was what would lead to enduring victory.<sup>106</sup>

### Confessional diversity

Against this background Coolhaes pleaded for political and religious diversity in the visible church. To him, this is certainly not *cuius regio, eius religio*. He taught that various religious groups should live, worship and interact in the same cities, in the same nation. He believed that diversity was logical and was good for society. This openness to diversity is what is commonly called Coolhaes’ “confessional indifference.” However, Coolhaes was not actually indifferent, but had his own dogmatic beliefs, as we have seen. Confessional diversity is a

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*van Marnix van Sint-Aldegonde en hun strijd voor de vrijheid & verdraagzaamheid* (Antwerp: Stad Antwerpen, 2012); and Olaf Mörke, *Willem van Oranje (1533-1584): vorst en “vader” van de Republiek*, trans. Jan Gielkens, ed. Luc Panhuysen (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2010).

102. “Liever Turks dan Paaps!” Quoted in H. A. Enno van Gelder, *Vrijheid en onvrijheid in de Republiek: geschiedenis der vrijheid van drukpers en godsdienst van 1572 tot 1798*, vol. 1 (Haarlem : Tjeenk Willink, 1947), 48.

103. J. J. Woltjer, “Revolt of the Netherlands,” *OER*, vol. 3, 428.

104. Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 29; Alastair Duke, “The ambivalent face of Calvinism in the Netherlands,” in Prestwick, *International Calvinism 1541-1715*, 113-16, 128.

105. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 6.

106. Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 30.



better term. Confessional diversity means toleration by the state for different religious groups. This is the freedom of different confessions to worship and live among each other in the same geographical space.<sup>107</sup> This freedom means that both legal toleration is necessary, as well as an attitude of tolerance which characterizes the general public.

This toleration (legal) and tolerance (personal) – or better, confessional diversity – which Coolhaes advocates, is not the same as religious concord. Scholars have drawn a distinction between the ideas of tolerance and concord. In the view of some, Erasmus was more of an advocate of concord than of tolerance.<sup>108</sup> Attempts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to create or restore concord meant to create a unified faith, doctrine and practice, which harken back to the kind of unity enjoyed by the medieval Roman Catholic Church. In Reformation times, various thinkers – Roman Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran - advocated various ways in which concord could be achieved, either within one confession or between confessions. Tolerance, on the other hand, means “an attitude of indulgence, the readiness to admit that others may act and think in a manner different from ours,” “the permission or recognition of something which is forbidden.” Castellio, who has already been seen to have been a probable inspiration to Coolhaes, is noted for this, in that he maintained the desirability of two religions in France in the face of the Huguenot-Catholic struggles, rather than just one.<sup>109</sup> In other words, concord wants to encourage unity or at least uniformity, whereas tolerance means that what some disapprove nevertheless exists and will continue to exist. A plea for concord is not necessarily a bridge to tolerance; on the contrary, it may discourage it.<sup>110</sup> Using these definitions, it is clear that unity is the last thing Coolhaes would look for in religious life. It is diversity in religious matters which he advocates.

Diversity of confessions is good for society, Coolhaes maintains. Here again he shows his allegiance to the ideals of *libertatis causa*. The conflicting claims of the churches lead to separation and hatred of those who are different.<sup>111</sup> But Coolhaes, living during a time of war,

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107. Tracy, “Erasmus, Coornhert and the Acceptance of Religious Disunity in the Body Politic: A Low Countries Tradition?,” 50.

108. Nathan Ron, “The Christian Peace of Erasmus,” *The European Legacy* 19 (2014): 32,

109. Turchetti, “Religious Concord and Political Tolerance,” 16, 18, 20.

110. Winfried Schulze, “Concordia, Disordia, Tolerantia. Deutsche Politik im konfessionellen Zeitalter,” *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 3 (1987): 77-78.

111. Coolhaes, *Een christelijcke vermaninghe*, folio Bij.

believed that toleration of differences in a state is healthy and will actually protect it politically, rather than harming it, whereas a Roman Catholic-like Calvinist legalism would be divisive, not only religiously, but also politically (as it in fact turned out to be during the future Remonstrant/Contra-Remonstrant conflict). Any church could and has given in to the temptation to be violent when it is given political power, he maintains, adducing many historical examples. It would be better if all confessions would unite and resist the Spanish, the common enemy of the Fatherland. The freedom which would result would not produce atheism or Epicurianism (which latter is the term Coolhaes uses for a “godless” libertinism), but would create godliness and all the fruits of true religion.<sup>112</sup> But the “fire of religious disunity burns ever more strongly, until the whole land is destroyed by it and the ground is tainted.”<sup>113</sup> Coolhaes meant that in 1574, at the Synod of Dordrecht, disunity began, and increased in 1579 with the Union of Utrecht, which allowed only the Reformed Church in Holland and Zeeland. He restated this sentiment again in his old age: “The strong Lion, who has long guarded the garden of Holland with his sword against enemies, has been attacked in his sleep and struck dead, and the whole garden destroyed, dug up, and tainted.”<sup>114</sup>

Diversity is also philosophically logical. This is because, according to Coolhaes, logic proves that there is no one “true church.” Others were already arguing that the “true church” could not be clearly identified. Court preacher De Villiers, for instance, had written in article 11 of his theses about the catholicity of the church that no church, Roman Catholic or Reformed, can identify itself as the true Catholic Church.<sup>115</sup> Coolhaes here showed some affinity with De Villiers, and extended this idea to argue that all churches together have the right to be part of the visible church in society. He used philosophical arguments to make a case for this. Trying to recognize the true church by looking to right preaching, correct sacraments and Christian discipline is self-defeating, since each church thinks that the *notae*

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112. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folios Dr–Dijv.

113. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, title page, 3-5; Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio Ddijr; Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, 3r.

114. “... ende de stercke Leeu dus langhe met sijnen sweerd den Hollantschen Thuyn also bewaert hebbende, datter niemant vanden vyanden, totten dach van heden toe en heeft connen in comen: nu als slapende, van den genen die daer heymelick ingecropen zijn, overvallen, doot geslagen, den geheelen thuyne verwoest, ende inden gront soude moghen omgewoelt, ende bedorven worden.” Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 5-6.

115. These theses were probably written at the end of 1576 or first half of 1577, after the Pacification of Ghent. See Nijenhuis, “Varianten binnen het Nederlandse Calvinisme in de zestiende eeuw,” 364. The Staten-Generaal may well have hoped that they would be able to protect the rights of the Catholics. See J. J. Woltjer, *Op weg naar tachtig jaar oorlog* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2011), 423.

*ecclesiae* are only rightly present in itself. The Roman Catholics consider themselves to have inherited the Apostolic Church, the Lutherans are the evangelicals, the Calvinists consider themselves to be Reformed, and the Mennonites pride themselves on a pure church. However, none of these churches succeed even in fulfilling their own self-chosen distinctive.<sup>116</sup> Pitting each church against the others, he found them to contradict each other, and declared that they therefore invalidate each others' claims.<sup>117</sup> Either none of them is the church, or all of them together are the (visible) church.

This way of reasoning resembles a skepticist strategy: when all disprove each other; arguments of equal weight and reasonableness mean one must be skeptical of all. This is the reasoning particularly of Sextus Empiricus. Pyrrhonian Skepticism was revived in the sixteenth century with the reprinting of Sextus Empiricus in 1569. Skeptical arguments were seen by some to be “the perfect answer to Calvinism” because they questioned dogmatic conclusions and left one free to focus on revelation or to build one's faith fideistically.<sup>118</sup>

Perhaps Coolhaes was inspired by this. On the other hand, he attributes this reasoning to Sebastian Franck,<sup>119</sup> who drew on “late medieval nominalism, a popular distrust of the learned, the *via negativa* of the mystical tradition, Cusa's *docta ignorantia*, Agrippa's *De incertitudine et vanitate* of knowing, Luther's *Deus absconditus*, and Erasmus' classical Skepticism” to say that knowing was impossible.<sup>120</sup> All of these ideas, including the Skepticism of Sextus, lead in some way to a reluctance to assert dogma without doubt. Coolhaes may have thus been indebted to Franck for this way of reasoning. He may also have been inspired by Coornhert in this, who maintained that there were no signs by which the true church could be tested, because the *notae ecclesiae* were the very things under debate, and the authority vacuum at that moment meant that every religious question reverted to truth premises.<sup>121</sup>

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116. For a short description of different disputational styles and their development from the Middle Ages into the sixteenth century, see Roobol, *Disputation by Degree*, 63-64.

117. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, Jijr–Jiiijv.

118. Richard H. Popkin, “Skepticism,” *OER*, vol. 4, 66-68.

119. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio 7Biiij.

120. McLaughlin, “Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld: Two Spiritualist *Viae*,” 74.

121. Roobol, *Disputation by Decree*, 34-35.

## Christian freedom

In the state, therefore, confessional diversity is both wise and logical. On the personal level, for Coolhaes, Christian freedom is the corollary to confessional diversity. Christian freedom means that individuals (both teachers and laypeople) may hold divergent views on theological questions and lifestyle issues, without fear of judgment or persecution – either as part of a minority religious group, or as a dissenting voice within a confession. Some might see this as merely “libertinism,” or an excuse for license or selfishness. Coolhaes, however, wants individuals to contemplate the essentials and disengage from confessional distinctives, rather than build upon them. Confessional diversity is what a nation should have; Christian freedom is what individuals should have. This plays out practically in freedom from ceremonies and love of one’s neighbor.

He may well have been reflecting Luther’s use of “Christian freedom,” and also Schwenckfeld’s,<sup>122</sup> and/or Coornhert’s.<sup>123</sup> Luther’s *On Christian Freedom* of 1520 emphasized the freedom Christians have to love others, especially clergy, who should serve rather than rule. In the inner man, the Christian should have liberty. Luther meant especially to discuss the Christian’s freedom from the law in relationship to his justification, while at the same time eschewing antinomianism, while Coolhaes takes the idea further in the direction of freedom for diversity. Schwenckfeld, in his *Discourse on Freedom of Religion, Christian Doctrine, Judgement, and Faith* (c. 1561), taught that Christians must not squander the freedom which they have obtained in Christ, but examine everything no matter who the teacher is. Schwenckfeld took the term “freedom” from Luther and reinterpreted it to mean that the Spirit was free to blow where it would, and humans could do nothing to help or hinder it.<sup>124</sup> Coolhaes’ view is very similar to this idea that the Spirit is free. Coornhert, with

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122. McLaughlin, *The Freedom of Spirit, Social Privilege, and Religious Dissent* 59.

123. Coornhert, “Ruygh Bewerp,” folios Aijv - Aijr; Voogt, ““Anyone who can read may be a preacher,”” 422.

124. McLaughlin, “Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld: two Spiritualist *Viae*,” 77. For another view of Christian freedom, see William R. Stevenson, Jr., *Sovereign Grace: The Place and Significance of Christian Freedom in John Calvin's Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

this term, taught freedom in participation or non-participation in the Sacraments,<sup>125</sup> which Coolhaes of course also reflected.

To Coolhaes, Christian freedom should also have been a reason for peace among the Reformers. Here again we see that he believed that the Reformation was not yet complete. The Reformers were brothers and should not not have been obligated to accept each others' interpretations. None was master over the others.<sup>126</sup> Luther should not have commanded over Zwingli or Karlstadt; Calvin should not have commanded over Castellio or Servetus. Menno should not command over others; no one should command over Catholics.<sup>127</sup> Satan sowed the seed of discord - especially between Luther, Zwingli and Karlstadt. If this had not happened, they would have been as united as the Apostles and people would have been freed from the Roman Church and its pomp.<sup>128</sup> When the Reformers had disagreements, their followers separated, and their writings spread these disagreements far and wide. So it is not ultimately the fault of the Reformers, but of their followers. If the people had been more focused on God, truth, and God's kingdom, God would not have allowed Satan to create this division.<sup>129</sup>

As we saw earlier in regard to confessional diversity, Coolhaes' conviction was that sanctification and spiritual insight will flourish in a free atmosphere. Assuming the Bible and the Apostles' Creed are held as the foundation, Christian freedom means freedom from ceremonies – in other words, specific customs and habits, both liturgically in the church service and in general – and love of one's neighbor, rather than hate or judgment.<sup>130</sup> Compulsory ceremonies, as they were being laid down by the synods, were “externals,” rather than “essentials.” Coolhaes had maintained that the Leiden church was “obliged to consider as brothers, those who agreed with us as to fundamentals and who also wished to live with us peacefully.”<sup>131</sup> This flew in the face of the attitude of many in the Reformed camp who saw their distinctives as indispensable for true religion. In his early Leiden years,

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125 Coornhert, “Ruygh Bewerp,” folios Aijv-Aijr; Voogt, ““Anyone who can read may be a preacher,”” 422.

126. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, folio Db/27.

127. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, folio Dijb/28.

128. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, folio Bij/11; Coolhaes, *Summa*, folio C3b.

129. Coolhaes, *Naedencken*, folios Biiij-13–Biiij-15.

130. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 84 Xiiijv. See also folios Biiijv–r.

131. Coolhaes, *Breeder bericht*, folio 3v.

we have seen that he showed tolerance of certain ceremonies but not others. Many issues which seemed essential to his opponents were really not that important to him. Also, freedom frees one to love one's neighbor. Coolhaes asks:

Why do we not we all humble ourselves and repent more, together and individually, leave off from evil and do good, in order to serve the one, true God and his Son Christ Jesus with a good and pure conscience. To love him with all our soul, with all our power and strength, to call upon him in spirit and in truth, to thank him, and so forth, and to love our neighbor (who is an individual, whether he is our friend or our enemy, whether believer or unbeliever, Christian, Greek, Tartar, Turk, Jew, and so forth) as ourselves. If we about this or that have a better belief or understanding than our neighbor, let us shine our light in front of them, so that we may educate them with a spirit of gentleness.... But if it is the case that he cannot understand, let us not hate, despise, judge or condemn him, for perhaps the Lord has not given it to him.<sup>132</sup>

Different churches are children of the same Father; hence, they should get along. The different monastic orders, Coolhaes claims, had many different customs, but loved one another, did not slander each other, and were all under the rule of the Pope. Christians, with one heavenly Father and one Savior Jesus Christ, should do the same, even if some believe imperfectly, are still small in understanding, or are fallen in some sin. For none of us is as perfect or unimpeachable as we should be.<sup>133</sup>

Christian freedom is also necessary because all truth cannot be known certainly. Coolhaes does not believe that it is possible. Therefore, individual, subjective judgment is important in theological matters:

Who would dare to say that a theologian or preacher really understands everything from God's Word? Should a preacher really want his teaching to be held as the same as Scripture? And to give their listeners no freedom to judge this teaching? Augustine and others clearly testify that people should not hold their teaching the same as the Scripture, because they were human and could err. But foolish and rash listeners and readers do not take that seriously, and accept the teaching of supposedly pious teachers without discretion as though it were from God. And condemn those who do not agree. It is even worse than a plague, because in a plague the bodies are destroyed, but with this the souls are also destroyed.<sup>134</sup>

However, to many, incorrect belief equaled heresy. As we have seen, Coolhaes dislikes calling anyone a heretic. A person, no matter what confession or religion, can only believe and say what is in his heart and mind – anything else would be hypocritical and

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132. Coolhaes, *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1585 edition, folio Bijr.

133. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 63-65.

134. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folios Aiiijr, 4B, BB (i.e., consecutive folios).

wrong. He or she must say what they believe, and the listeners must decide whether to accept or reject it.<sup>135</sup> What many call “heresy,” he sees as allowable and even, as we have seen, as desirable diversity. “For who is a heretic,” he wonders, “other than someone who has been declared to be one? And what are sects, but people who stand on their own opinion and despise others?”<sup>136</sup> Just having assurance does not mean one is always right. There are people in every confession who are absolutely sure that their doctrines are correct. However, here again is entanglement in a logical circle. Each group regarded their own teachers as pious, and those of other groups as heretics. No useful decision could be made that way.<sup>137</sup>

Correct knowledge cannot be the requirement to be saved or to please God, he asserted, since there are many examples of how Jesus’ own disciples misunderstood his words.<sup>138</sup> If the “historical knowledge” of these things had been necessary for salvation, the disciples would not have been saved – they did not have “the faith” in the sense of correct knowledge, and thus would not have pleased God.<sup>139</sup> But they received the Spirit – they were with Christ and, aside from Judas the traitor, pleased him. How then can people dare to drive someone away from the community of the Holy Spirit if that one does not have “the wisdom of the external signs”? How can they be denied membership?<sup>140</sup> Coolhaes denigrated the outward signs, the conformity to rules and regulations. “But in themselves the signs have no capability, power or life to lead to the path of life, being only signposts and marks of the grace which bring us to and keep us in life.”<sup>141</sup> When someone has misunderstood God’s Word, he should be reasoned with: “one should have patience, suffer, and bear with [others], and with the spirit of gentleness and kindness seek to win our neighbors.”<sup>142</sup>

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135. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Liiijr.

136. Coolhaes, *Seeckere punten*, folio Dr.

137. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 4.

138. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Cijr.

139. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, Cijr.

140. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Cijr.

141. “Maer dat in haer selfs die teeckenen niet en vermogen, ende gheen cracht noch leven tot den wech des levens hebben, wesende alleen aenwijzers ende meercken der ghenaden, die ons totten leven brengende ende behoudende is.” Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Ciiijv.

142. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 72Siiijv.

## Predestination and “TULIP”

To many of the stricter Reformed, a divergent lifestyle or views meant that the person in question was not elect. Denigrating the outward signs was tantamount to rebellion against God. But Coolhaes’ view of Christian freedom contradicts that. One’s election or lack of election cannot be seen reliably by outward signs. However, Coolhaes still hopes that a person will use his or her freedom to repent and live a godly life.

Although Coolhaes complained about the Leiden professors’ obsession with “hard” teachings, it is no surprise that he nevertheless did hold views about predestination and free will which were closer to Arminius and the Remonstrants than they were to Bezan Calvinists and the Contra-Remonstrants. As we have pointed out, Coolhaes never denied predestination.<sup>143</sup> However, his “conditional predestination”<sup>144</sup> can be described as God’s grace operating in a person at the beginning of the process, and then the individual responding as the process continues. This ties in with the freedom upon which he insists.

We have seen, in the biographical sketch, that in 1571 in Essen he was accused of holding Melancthonian synergism, a belief that salvation was a synergistic process between God and the believer. We have seen how this unwillingness to name God as the author of sin or the one who condemns is reflected in Coolhaes’ problems with original sin.

As we have also seen,<sup>145</sup> at the Synod of Middelburg Coolhaes claimed to believe in original sin. However, he denied in his writings that unbaptized children would be condemned. Perhaps he believed that original sin was real but would be wiped away by the sacrifice of Christ in “single sphere” of the past and the present. On the other hand, his reply at the Middelburg Synod may not have come down to us accurately, or perhaps he was more positive about original sin to the preachers there than he might otherwise have been, owing to the pressure of the situation. Or, his view may have developed over time, but this cannot be seen in his written works. If he truly did not hold to original sin, this would be yet another

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143. See the Introduction. See also: Wtenbogaert, *Kerkelicke historie*, 214b; J. Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid* (Groningen: Uitgeverij De Vuurbaak, 1970), 12.

144. This term used for Coolhaes’ views by Stanglin and McCall, *Jacob Arminius*, 44.

145. We mention this in Chapters 3 and 6.



similarity between his views and those of Coornhert. So, his views on original sin are hard to pin down. It remains an intriguing question in relation to his views.

In any event, Coolhaes' views on predestination and free will hang on his definition of the invisible church, rather than the visible. For Coolhaes, the invisible church is the true church. Like Zwingli, the invisible church potentially counts as members individuals whom Christians would classify as "heathen,"<sup>146</sup> although Coolhaes seems to believe that they will come to faith in Christ at some point, as we see from his use of the parable of the workers in the field. We have seen that Bullinger also "hopes for the best" for those who are seemingly condemned, who do not believe.<sup>147</sup> The following quote about Zwingli is very similar to Coolhaes' view:

The true church comprised all who believed in the life and death of Christ as Zwingli had explicated them from Scripture. He would not allow that the faithful might be discerned from the unfaithful by word or act: rituals did not delimit its membership, nor did professions of faith or works.<sup>148</sup>

If we briefly evaluate Coolhaes on the basis of the simplified popular summary of the Contra-Remonstrant position codified at the National Synod of Dordt, 1618-1619, known widely by its English acronym "TULIP,"<sup>149</sup> even though he did not know these terms and did not use them, we will be able to see how much he differed from them. The "T" is the clearest of the five for us to see. Coolhaes' conviction that a human aspect in the salvation process, in the form of response to or acceptance of the gift – in other words, to do "the good" of responding to God – means that he cannot be said to have held human "total depravity." Whether he would have held "unconditional election" is difficult to say from his writings, but he certainly always maintained that only God knew which individuals were "elect" and members of the invisible, true church. If, at the end of the day, God had elected certain individuals unconditionally, Coolhaes did not know about it. Further, he did not address anything that could be called "limited atonement." "Irresistible grace" and "perseverance of the saints" seem problematic, since Coolhaes warned believers not to fall away. A doctrine of

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146. See Locher, *Zwingli's Thought*, 179; George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 128-29.

147. Janse, "'Ik wil liever blijven bij den wortel van den boom, dan hoog klimmen,'" 121.

148. Wandel, "Zwingli," *OER*, vol. 4, 322.

149. "TULIP" stands for: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. This is a popular-level, modern formulation in the English-speaking world of basic Calvinist doctrine. It can be criticized for inaccurately representing the subtleties of the Canons of Dordt, but is used here simply for the purpose of making a quick comparison between the Synod's major ideas and those of Coolhaes.

assurance can be seen in Coolhaes' writings only in the sense that he taught that membership in the invisible church is sure, if one did not fall away. In other words, God would not exclude one who wanted to be included. The intention of seeking God is more important than doctrine: "all who adhere to false religion and idolatry are not condemned, since [those] seeking God single-heartedly, will in time be saved out of them."<sup>150</sup> But one could, by one's own will, exclude oneself. So we see that Coolhaes' views are almost completely different from the "TULIP" summary. His insistence on Christian freedom thus relates to both the beliefs and lifestyle as well as the eternal destiny of individuals, who by responding to God's grace cooperate in including themselves in the invisible church.

### Personal consequences of freedom

Coolhaes emphasizes that the Holy Spirit will bring the weak – in other words, those who err – to understanding, driving them always forward towards the good and the knowledge of God and his Word.<sup>151</sup> But this Christian freedom also puts a lot of responsibility on the individual for his or her own decision-making, as we mentioned above. If one hears a teaching, one believes and is convinced oneself. But if after considered thought one cannot accept a teaching, one should let it go, even if it comes from a favorite teacher or preacher, otherwise one is believing lies and delusions.<sup>152</sup> And if, even after prayer and thought, one cannot come to a decision, one must continue to believe and hold to the Scriptures despite uncertainty as to specifics. Better that than to commit to a view with which one cannot come to peace.<sup>153</sup> There is no guarantee that yielding oneself to Christ in repentance will give perfect knowledge. A spiritual person and true child of God cannot know everything, but can know what is necessary for salvation. He will understand the Scripture as far as God opens his understanding, and not farther.<sup>154</sup>

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150. "... dat 'alle menschen wt onverstant stekende in soodanighen valschen Religie ende Afgodendienst' niet verdoemd zijn: 'want van herten Godt soeckende, sullen tot haerder tijt daer wt verlost worden.'" Moes and Burger, *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers*, 64. This is a quote from Coolhaes, *Grondleijcke waerheit*, 109.

151. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 79 Uijv.

152. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folios Mr-Mijr; article 4.

153. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 4.

So Coolhaes wanted all to bear patiently with those who are fellow believers but of different theological views.<sup>155</sup> He wanted to remain with the church of God: the “catholic,” i.e. universal, not particular, Christian church; the communion of saints.<sup>156</sup> Far better, he resolved, to have a possibly “messy,” broad, open visible church, which includes the weak, the childish, even the “dirty,” and where the older help the younger and parents teach and help their children, than a homogenous church built on strict rules and run by hypocrites.<sup>157</sup>

This, then, is the sort of diverse congregation he pleads for in the visible church. As various people have different gifts from the same Spirit, so various people have different degrees of spiritual maturity. Not all of the children of one father are the same age, or of the same size or strength. Inevitably some are older, stronger, and bigger. It is the same with Christians, Coolhaes reasons. Christians should not argue and split from each other when they all have the same God and call the same Christ their Savior. Maturity takes time to reach. Coolhaes continues the analogy by saying that a person just born from his mother’s body is nevertheless a complete person, with all his parts, both internal and external. But he is not in any way an adult. Oh no, he says ironically - that requires much more time, trouble, cost and work.<sup>158</sup> Just so, the attainment of spiritual maturity, made possible through Christian freedom, is anything but a simple or quick process.

In summary, then, Coolhaes has numerous desires for the visible church. He defines the visible church not as the true church, but as all bodies which have the same foundation of the Scripture and the Apostles’ Creed. Since it is inevitable that confessions exist, they each build differently on this foundation. Confessions should be inclusive, since it is impossible to be sure of hermeneutical rightness in every case. People should not be excluded from the congregation; exclusion makes their restitution to the body all the harder. God works with the visible church in each age not so much by covenants but by sending reformations to revitalize the people of God and challenge them. Society and the visible church should therefore be confessionally diverse, while individuals should have the Christian freedom to

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154. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, article 1.

155. Coolhaes, *Sendtbrief*, folio Biiijr.

156. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 86 Yijv.

157. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 86 Yijv.

158. Coolhaes, *Cort, waerachtich verhael*, 60.

think and choose for themselves. This freedom includes responding to the grace extended by God in Christ. It also comes with responsibility for others.

Finally, it should be noted that Coolhaes believed in the necessity for the visible church. Some might, because of this, question my assignment of him to the ranks of the Spiritualists, seeing that he thought that the visible church was inevitable and even useful. However, in his thought the visible church always remained second in importance to the invisible one. No matter what the visible Church may choose to do, he would say, the invisible church remains spread through the world and time as a sure shelter for all true believers. The ultimate reason why Coolhaes pleaded for diversity in the visible church was so that more people would enter its physical doors. Once inside, they would be exhorted to repent, grow, and mature. Perhaps eventually, even if not until “evening,” they will enter and become true members of the invisible church also.

## Conclusion

### A profile of a tolerant, Reformed, Spiritualist

We have looked with great attention at Coolhaes and his life and views. It remains for us to draw out the conclusions which we have reached throughout this study.

Coolhaes has been seen to have been an energetic and eclectic religious figure during a turbulent and exciting period of history in the region of the German Palatinate and the Northern Netherlands, the latter of which was becoming the Dutch Republic, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Although leaving no specific church or followers behind, his long life and persistent writing of theology allowed him to inspire others in this “plastic” period of rapid religious and political change. We have seen that he persisted in identifying as Reformed and writing about theology, even after his excommunication and defrocking and then his self-transformation into a distiller and shop-keeper in Leiden and Amsterdam. Despite this persistence, he held his own views loosely, as we have seen, for the sake of his desire for diversity in the visible church. His fiery criticism of the confessional groups and leaders around him remained a constant throughout his life.

An accurate picture of him includes his openness and positivity to underdogs such as the Mennonites, certain Socinians, such as Erasmus Johannes, and Jesuits, whom he painted sympathetically in some of his fictional works. He is sometimes assumed to be confessionally indifferent, but this is too simplistically stated. He holds clear views on many doctrinal issues. His own views, expressed in his writings throughout his life, are characterized by a reliance on the Bible as generally interpreted by the major Reformers: the Trinity, salvation through Christ’s death and resurrection rather than through sacraments, the centrality of grace, and especially the need for personal repentance. He did not deny predestination *per se*, but emphasized that it was more important for the individual to choose the good which was extended to him or her. Because of the personal calling he felt from God to be a preacher, and his concern for individuals to make that decision to choose that good, his main preoccupation was the church, both visible and invisible. All of his writings and actions contribute in one way or another to his effort to make the church what it should be.

We have said that Coolhaes was “eclectic.” This is because his views rest on a Spiritualistic foundation, not unlike that of Sebastian Franck, Schwenckfeld, Castellio, and other Spiritualists, which they received originally from mystical medieval Germanic and Dutch thinkers who saw reality as sharply split between the visible and invisible and expressed this in metaphorical language. Luther and the other magisterial Reformers were also influenced by those mystical sources, but for Franck, Schwenckfeld, and Coolhaes, the invisible becomes primary. Coolhaes should be considered to have been an individualistic, critical, and tolerant Spiritualist, a member of Cornelis Augustijn’s “fourth stream.” His Spiritualistic beliefs are the prism through which his other eclectic ecclesiastical views are reflected and can be analyzed.

It is not his Spiritualism which makes Coolhaes eclectic, however, but the combination of other beliefs which he also holds. Despite Coolhaes believing that in fact the invisible church is the true church, unlike Franck he still believed in and worked for the visible church. He combined and overlaid the Spiritualism with Melancthonian synergism and the need for repentance, and with an idea of sanctification like that of Coornhert, expressed as a ladder to climb towards virtue. This, in short, means that as a Reformed preacher he was “broader” than many of his colleagues. He held an Erastianism which also reflected a Lutheran-like respect for secular power. However, unlike Luther, he maintained a Zwinglian “single-sphere” idea which brings church and state together as well as the past and future of salvation history and covenant. He holds the importance of a Spiritualist “spiritual eating” in communion, similar to Schwenckfeld and earlier Dutch thinkers. In this his view he also resembles in part the mystical eucharistic view of Calvin, but without Calvinism’s need to keep the visible church, as the true church, pure, by keeping impure people out. He seems at times to have baptized infants and then at others not to have insisted on physical baptism. Unlike the magisterial Reformers, both before and after his own excommunication he opposed the punishment or even disciplining of “heresy.” This caused him to be regarded as a “libertine.” Like Castellio, he held that more than one religion in a state was desirable. Further, he insisted that diversity of opinion be tolerated not just in society but even in each individual confession. All of these ideas we have traced and explained in the preceding chapters. Taken together they show the profile of Coolhaes the Spiritualist as tolerant and eclectic, yet still Reformed.

## The ideal church

Coolhaes was inspired by a variety of figures and thoughts. His central concern was the church. Our guiding question throughout this dissertation has been: If Caspar Coolhaes could have designed a church for the young Dutch Republic, what would it have been like? Coolhaes, of course, never found himself in a position to determine the nature of the visible church of his adopted homeland. However, if he had, we have seen that he would have wanted the visible church, which he defines as all of the Christian confessions and groups, to be guarded and guided by benevolent Christian magistrates, to contain sincere and spiritual clergy, and to encompass diversity in theological opinions and allow freedom for the individual. These are the three major areas which we have identified in his writings as most important to him. We took a look at his life to inform our discussion. Then, we focused on his ecclesiology in three areas.

First, his Erastianism. His ideal visible church would be watched over and fostered by the civil government, which, if possible, should be a benevolent and Christian one. Coolhaes sees secular authority on two levels: local city magistrates, and state- or nation-wide higher rulers. He inevitably sides with the more local government over the national, but with both or either over the ecclesiastical. In any event, whether national or local, all civil rulers should lead reasonably and biblically. The higher government should institute church orders for the whole nation or province. On the purely local level, magistrates would oversee the operation of ecclesiastical affairs, including broad guidance about many aspects of church life. This could include attendance at consistorial meetings, selection of preachers and elders, and leadership in the area of schools and in providing for the care of the poor and needy. These civil rulers would also punish offenses, but only those affecting public order and life. Despite Coolhaes' dislike for too many rules, he nevertheless wants a moral and peaceful society. On the other hand, "Christian discipline," as the Reformed understood it, would not be part of the responsibility of the secular rulers. While non-church crimes might be punished by secular rulers, ecclesiastical ones would not be. Whether these rulers were magistrates, members of the States, or even princes and kings, it was to be hoped that they would rule Christianly, regardless of their membership or non-membership in a church confession. In other words, they should rule by their godly examples as much as by their words and decrees.

The second important issue concerns the clergy. We saw that Coolhaes' church would contain good, that is, not hypocritical, preachers. Those he deems hypocritical he criticizes severely, but we prefer to call Coolhaes' anticlericalism "restricted" or perhaps "limited," since despite this criticism, he would not have wanted to abolish the office of preacher, and would have wanted preachers in his ideal church. Elders, on the other hand, would have been optional, as well as the consistories, classes, and synods which together make up the Reformed "Presbyterian" polity structure. Coolhaes' ideal clergy, whether just preachers or preachers and elders, would work together in concert with the civil government, following the directives of those secular authorities as a general rule. They could, however, suggest biblical courses of action when needed, but would then be prepared to accept the decision of the rulers God had placed over them. In dire circumstances, however, they could also occasionally rebuke the rulers. Also, if the civil government was not Christian or was hostile to Christianity, the clergy would have to pick up many of the duties best done by the civil government. Otherwise, they should faithfully preach the Word, endeavor to bring people to Christ and to the "Heavenly Jerusalem" which is the invisible church. A pure and holy life is a given – by this is implied marital/sexual faithfulness, as well as lack of greed, gluttony, pride, etc. Also important is a subjective call of God to ministry, as well as receipt of a legal call by the civil government. Preachers should show a gift for preaching and teaching, and emphasize repentance, mercy, love and gentleness. Like physicians, they should treat and heal the spiritually sick. Christian discipline should be limited to exhortation and occasional rebuke, but never include excommunication or banning. At the same time, they would hold "ceremonies" and the physical sacraments loosely – as optional, not essential. Clergy would occasionally convene for synods, but they should use those occasions to support each other and discuss things as brothers, not to make binding decisions or to judge others like a court. Preaching would be "free": anyone who felt called to preach, could do so. Preachers did not necessarily need university-level theological education, or a knowledge of Hebrew, Greek or Latin, but needed to be perpetual students in the "school" of spiritual growth and sanctification.

The third issue has everything to do with diversity and freedom. The congregation – indeed, all the people in the whole visible church, which is made up of all confessions and groups – would in Coolhaes' ideal church and society embrace diversity. For Coolhaes, this means, primarily, theological diversity. His ideal church would agree on a reductionist



foundation: the Old and New Testaments and the Apostles' Creed. Other than that, various doctrines, on any topic at all, could be freely discussed, believed, or rejected. This would not turn the churches into a messy, libertine "pig pen," because the Spirit and spiritual leaders would guide them wisely. Indeed, the truth about many of those matters cannot be truly known, and so the visible church should have an attitude of acceptance of this theological diversity. All should be welcome at the sacraments, because they help the believer to grow. Struggling individuals should be guided gently, even rebuked if necessary, because this "rule of love" of kindly correction by one believer to another is the true Christian discipline. One should never give up hope for stubborn cases, because even at the eleventh hour a sinner may repent and come back to God. This diverse church, Coolhaes believed, is not marked by covenants of God's promises as much as it is brought back to true worship of God in various ages by continual "reformations." These reformations are led by godly men, but are caused by the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit is working in history, but people can thwart his efforts by their division, as the Reformers did. So, diversity and tolerance should mark the visible church in all its forms. This is good not only for the churches themselves, but also for society as a whole. In fact, Coolhaes would want many different Christian groups to be free to worship in the same cities, in the same geographical areas. Peace should reign among them. Aside from that, each congregant or member of the visible church, in any group, should have the Christian freedom to believe and live as he or she chooses. Coolhaes would not think that all of those choices were equally valid or biblical, but would nevertheless insist on the right of the individual to choose them, until such time as the Lord would make a better way clear to them – in other words, indefinitely.

These pieces of his thought fit together. Links can easily be made from one of these ideas to the others. For example, Coolhaes wanted a diverse church. His Erastianism means for him an increase in tolerance, freedom, and diversity. He was more interested in the individual than in the institution, while he believed that the Reformed preachers in general were the opposite, and so for him the state should protect its citizens' religious rights as well as their political liberty. From another perspective, that tolerance, freedom and diversity fit logically together with Coolhaes' version of Spiritualism. This is because a devaluing of the visible, external and external, in favor of the invisible, internal and unseen, means that visible differences should mean less. Therefore, because visible differences are not essential, there is room for freedom. Christian freedom, and its corollary, confessional diversity, should make

up the visible church and lead to living without fear of censure or persecution, but in brotherly love and tolerance. “Open communion” is also a mark of this. Because the invisible is what is essential, outward conformity is not nearly as important as many of the Calvinist preachers – who were often, in Coolhaes’ experience, using it to gauge a person’s election – were making it. So because no one can be sure who is elect, as Coolhaes believed, all should be able to come to the Lord’s Supper while at the same time continuing to hold their individual views. In Coolhaes’ mind, all of this contributes to religious diversity, which he felt is good for society, and aids the stability of the state. The stability of society brings us back to the centrality of the secular government and their role and rule. So we can see that Coolhaes’ main views, though eclectic, are truly all different sides of the same “prism.”

#### Relationship between life and thought

Coolhaes’ life events, in a way, foreshadowed and echoed his views, although they cannot be said to have caused or changed them. The themes of anticlericalism, Spiritualism, theological conflicts, free will, Erastianism, religious liberty, and diversity were present from his earliest writing. In our biographical sketch we traced his path, which led through two countries, three confessions, several cities, and a few significant public theological conflicts. He began in Cologne, a place of Spiritualists and theological diversity, as a Roman Catholic. From there he spent time as a silent Carthusian. Through various influences, which may have included Johannes Monheim, he eventually embraced a Protestant view. In his travels between the Palatinate and the Northern Netherlands he seemed to preach in the space between Lutheran and Reformed. In 1571 he said he wanted no confessional name but “Christian.” Already, too, he was being accused of talking about “dark,” Spiritualist ideas, as he traveled throughout the Dutch-German regions which birthed medieval mystics as well as sixteenth-century Spiritualists. In addition, the Lutheranism he gravitated towards was, as we have said, Melancthonian synergism, which gave more space for the believer’s cooperation in salvation. So, the views which would perhaps inspire Arminius were already present before he came to Leiden in 1574.

Coolhaes had already been involved in disputes, as well, especially the Essen questions about him and his coworker Von Isselburg, which necessitated the intervention of the theological faculties of Leipzig and Wittenberg. In Leiden, the “Coolhaes affair,” which

ostensibly focused on his Erastian view that the civil government should lead the church, rather than the preachers, consistories and synods, was of course also about all of his “broader” theological views. These combined with his Spiritualism (for example, that the metaphorical fire of hell was worse than any physical fire), his pleading for diversity and freedom (which directly opposed the Calvinist “love of order”), and his persistent outspokenness, to lead to his excommunication and defrocking. The irony is that he had opposed excommunication as a discipline since his early days in ministry, long before it happened to him. Naturally, this excommunication and defrocking soured his feelings for the Reformed Church and its preachers to a certain extent, but not enough to make him leave it.

It is surprising but true that his views did not change or develop much throughout his life. He continued to associate with and defend people who were of different views than himself, to write about his convictions, and to live on the edge of the Reformed congregation in Amsterdam, as a distiller and, as we put it earlier a “rogue writer of theology.” Nevertheless, we can mention a few small ways in which his later views were different from his earlier ones. One is that in a sense he became less critical of the Reformed Church after his excommunication, in that he began to criticize all the other confessions equally - Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Mennonite. Another is that in his early days in Leiden he was largely indifferent to most popular church practices, but in his old age opposed any practice or superstition that seemed too “Catholic.” In addition, he wrote theology all his life, but as he got older, he focused in general on more potentially popular projects, such as the texts for emblems (engravings), dialogues, and Reformed almanacs. He wrote fewer weighty, *Toutzsteen*-type tomes. He experimented with various literary styles. Finally, whereas he worked with consistories at the beginning of his Leiden ministry, later he said that consistories should be optional. Still later, he wrote that they were really totally unnecessary. These are all relatively small changes in comparison to his major views, which he held throughout his life after his conversion to Protestantism. His fundamental beliefs are all present in the Essen statement of faith of 1571 and in his first two books, *Apologia* and *Breeder bericht* of 1580; and as far as we can see by his words and actions he kept them till his death in 1615.

In his time and beyond

So we have shown that Coolhaes resembled various figures in his own time, and inspired others beyond it. He held views about predestination and free will which were similar to those of Arminius and the Remonstrants. God gives grace to all to choose to do the good. Coolhaes wants above all to keep from making God the author of evil, and so blames the lack of response of those who do not come to God, on human failure, not God's election. We have seen that although, nevertheless, a one-to-one parallel between Coolhaes and Arminius cannot be made, Rogge was right in naming Coolhaes as one of the forerunners of the Remonstrants. The Remonstrants were clearly inspired by Coolhaes and others to pursue a broader Reformed faith, and in the desire for toleration and diversity, as well as on the question of the relationship between church and state. Arminius himself, however, while surely retaining some inspiration from Coolhaes and others in the Erasmian tradition of an emphasis on free will, was not merely a "Coolhaesian," but a much more far-reaching, complex theologian.

We have also spoken above and throughout this study about Coolhaes' similarities to Sebastian Franck, to Schwenckfeld, Coornhert, Castellio, and other who have already been recognized as Spiritualists, but also about certain differences from all of them. We have also mentioned that Coolhaes is one of a group of "libertine" preachers in the Netherlands, including Herman Herberts, Tako Sybrants, Cornelis Wiggerts, Cornelis van Braeckel, Pieter Hackius, Herman Duifhuis, Petrus Anastasius Hyperphragmus Gandensis, and Michiel Andrieszoon. He is not exactly like any of them, but he is similar to all of them in certain ways. We can see that libertine, broader ideas related to many, but to label him as the follower of just one other figure, as Kamphuis did in labelling him primarily as a follower of Franck, is far too simplistic.

What, then, is the importance of Coolhaes himself? What is the importance of his ecclesiological vision? Coolhaes was a controversial, consistent voice for a broader Reformed Church and a diverse society in the "plastic" times of post-Spanish occupation, in the new, academically-enhanced and influential Leiden, and on the fringes of the Reformed Church in Amsterdam. He, and others like him, stood at a religious crossroads. The Dutch Republic was in the process of self-definition; secular and ecclesiastical bodies were struggling for supremacy and decision-making power. In the churches, the push for confessionalization was creating new realities. Some, however, were embracing a non- (or less-) confessional,

“libertine” spirituality. Some of these were *liefhebbers* of the Reformed Church; some would identify with Remonstrants or other groups as development continued. A modern society built on religious pluralism was emerging, although it would first go through a period of tightening of Reformed doctrine. Indeed, if libertines and critics had succeeded in creating one broader church earlier, the conflict between Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants might not have happened. However, this was not the case. Many Calvinist preachers were both tireless and relentlessly organized in their efforts to establish a “Reformed polity.” The fundamental split of the Dutch Revolt, the question of *religionis causa* versus *libertatis causa*, continued to divide.

Both before and after his excommunication, Coolhaes “disturbed” the narrower Reformed elements, in Leiden, Amsterdam, and beyond. Along with others who spoke for toleration and diversity, he doubtless helped to precipitate the National Synod of Dordt, 1618-1619, and all of the surrounding tumultuous political events of that period. This was important in the process of self-definition of the state and the visible church of the time. He had mobilized no formalized force of protesters. He had only attempted to convince through his writings, by biblical and logical arguments, and by appeals to love and diversity. Some might see him as sadly, perhaps even tragically, out of touch with his own time – preaching de-confessionalization in a confessionalizing era. On the other hand, he persisted in his views, which represented what he believed to be an ecclesiastical constellation true to Scripture, the Apostles’ Creed, and the spirit of the Reformation, and which allowed for the freedom and diversity of society and individuals. Despite his critical orientation against much of what was happening, he remained optimistic about the future. This is why his ecclesiological vision is important. It is an example of how a Reformed person could be theologically broader than the strict preachers around him, and still hold both Reformation beliefs about the Bible and Spiritualist and skeptical concerns, the latter set forth in his *Toutzsteen*, as we have discussed, in tension. His vision for the visible church in the Dutch Republic is a glimpse of a tolerant nation in which individuals can both hold strong views and allow variety and diversity.

Coolhaes, we have said, is one small early raindrop in the eventual thunderstorms bringing new movements and ideas. As we have seen, he did not look back, as Coornhert can be said to have done, to a situation in which the unity of one church would bring concord to society. Instead, he wanted the diversity of religious (and non-religious) opinion which has

become a hallmark of modern Western states. He and other Spiritualists, skeptics, libertarians, critics of clericalism and a strict rule of the Reformed Church, and advocates of tolerance and religious diversity, can in this way be interpreted as being forerunners of other broad, modern movements and ideas. We have already mentioned the Remonstrants. The Collegiants and Quakers, with their free preaching and reliance on the Spirit, are indebted in a small way to Coolhaes and to others who taught the same. The Pietists and their emphasis on affective religion and the primacy of the heart can trace their inspiration partly from Schwenckfeld and other Spiritualists, including Coolhaes. At the same time, Coolhaes' skepticism and unwillingness to be dogmatic, while not as extreme as that of Franck, may have even in some small way affected the future development of the religious skepticism of the Enlightenment. Coolhaes may have been out of step with his own time and place, but he is linked to the future.

Of course, the Calvinist Contra-Remonstrants won the battle in the short term, both politically and ecclesiastically. Calvinist-Bezan doctrine was defined and established in a way that would be decisive, for many, for centuries. Coolhaes would have been bitterly disappointed with the theological and political decisions of the National Synod of Dordt of 1618-1619. If he had been alive then, what would he have done? What would have happened to him? It is possible that, despite his long patience with the Reformed Church, he might have chosen to be called by the label Remonstrant and have gone into exile. One just cannot imagine him fitting in to a Contra-Remonstrant Church and nation. It also seems likely, judging from his life history and the affection he expressed for the Netherlands, that he might also have tried to return again from that exile as many did.

## Epilogue

Of all of Coolhaes' ideas, tolerance and diversity are the ones most likely to be interesting to present-day society. As in the late sixteenth century, so in today's world religious differences are often a cause of serious tensions. People are asking questions about diversity, pluriformity and tolerance. Is it possible for those of opposing religious views and political convictions to coexist peacefully and productively? Diverse religious environments struggle to find non-violent solutions while keeping some national identity, even as the definition of the latter is anything but clear to the members of and stakeholders in the society. The world as a whole, smaller than it was in the sixteenth century as a result of enhanced communication, travel and

media, resounds with these debates. Sectarian societies exclude others; more open societies attempt to embrace others and include them. Churches often still struggle with questions of exclusion versus inclusion. These are of course all very general and even superficial statements about large, vital issues. Still, concluding the study of Coolhaes and his view of diversity in the church of his time would be incomplete without a brief glance at the present. Mutual tolerance would help peaceful coexistence in the twenty-first century as much as it would have in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Coolhaes' message may perhaps still be useful today. In the divisive ecclesiastical world of his time, his was a voice pleading for tolerance and diversity.

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## Coolhaes' Printed Works

- Coolhaes, Caspar. *Apologia: een christelijcke ende billijcke verantwoordinge Caspari Coolhaessen, dienaer des goddelijcken woorts tot Leyden, daer in hy hem nootsakelijk sonder eenighe blamatie, met der waerheyt ontschuldicht, teghen eenighe quadtwillighe ende onverstandighe, die hem van valscher leer, ende onchristelijcken leven beschuldighen, ghestelt in forme eens dialogi van twee personen. Met een corte voorreden, ghestelt in forme eens dialogi van twee personen. Met een corte voorreden aen die edele erntseste, hochgheleerde ende wijze heeren, burgemeesters ende regeerders der loffelijcker vrije hanzestadt Deventer*. Leiden: J. Paets Jacobszoon and/or J. Bouwensz?, 1580.
- . *Breeder bericht van die scheuringe der kercken Christi tot Leyden, ende den negen questien die rechte voort heen ende weder om ghedraghen, ende na eens yegelijcken goetduncken werden geinterpreteert, welcke de selve zijn, ende tot wat eynde die ghestelt, ende door wien sy in yeder mans handen zijn ghecome, oock by wien het staet dat deze scheure tot deser tijt toe niet is gheheelt worden etc.* Leiden: J. Paets Jacobszoon and/or J. Bouwensz?, 1580.
- . *Sendtbrief Caspars Coolhaes, dienaer des godlicken woorts, residerende tot Leyden. Aan de dienaren des goddelicken woords in Suyt- ende Noort-Hollant, te samen ende eenen yeghelicken besonder. Om niet ontijdelick voort te gaen, int oordeel ghegheuen by de versamelinghe binnen Middelburch in iunio anno 81. ghehouden, die buyten recht voor een nationael synodus wt gaet. Waer wt oock yederman sal verstaen mogen, met wat onrecht de selue Coolhaes verleden sondach, wesende den 4. nu loopende martij, tot Delft (een weet niet of aen ander plaetsen meer) der gemeynte opentlick van den predictoel, als onboetuedriche erghenis met zijn schrijven aenghericht te hebben, met name voorghedraghen is, om met der scherphuyd van afsnijdighe teghens hem te proceduren. Waer van de summa breeder te vinden is int volghende blat.* N.p., 1582.
- . *Van de christelijcke discipline ende excommunicatie vanden kercken raedt ende ouerlinghen [sic], aen dien plaetsen daer een christelijcke magistraet is, het ghevoelen der kercken Christi tot Zurich, tot Bern, ende anderen dierghelijcken vermaerden steden ende plaetsen in Zwitserlandt, door den eerweerdighen welgeleerden Rodolphum Gwalterum, in verscheyden zynen sermonen int latijn beschriven, uit het latijn ouergheset door C.C.V.M.I.D.H.G.* Gouda: 1582. Reprinted in 1585 and 1611, with new forewords.
- . *Een christelijcke vermaninghe, aen alle onpartydighe predicanten: om te waecken, ende by tijts te voorsien, dat die Sathan gheen nieu pausdom, aen des ouden benaest vervallen plaets wederom oprechte.* N.p., 1584.
- . *Seeckere punten met die heylighe godtlicke schriftuur, ende vervolch vandien ghenomen: aenwisende het ghene, dat allen gheloovighen, bysonder doch den predicanten ende leeraren van allerhande partien, soorten, ofte exertitie van religien, wel aen te mercken, ende tachtervolgen van nooden is: ende grootelijcks, soo wel tot gherustheyt van eens yeghelicken menschen conscientie, als tot tijdtlijcken vrede, soude mogen dienen.* N.p., 1584.

- . *Toutzsteen tot een seecker proeve welcx in der waerheydt die apostolische, catholijcke, evangelische, gereformeerde reyne kercke sy. Allen leergierigen menschen, ten besten voor ooghen ghestelt, ende in handen ghegheven, door C.V.M.I.D.H.G. N.p.*, 1584.
- . *Conciliatio: dat is verghelijkinghe, van sekere punten der leere, ende disciplijn. Van C.C. gheschreven ende onderschreven, in diewelcke claerlijk is blijkende, met wat recht, die voornoemde C.C. in namen van allen kercken in Hollant gheexcommuniceert: ende met een wtghegheven boeck, van kettery ende der christelicker disciplijn verachtinghe, ghediffameert is worden. Gouda: J. Tournay, 1585.*
- . *Van seeckere seer costelijcke wateren diemen met recht soude mogen noemen aquae vitae: ende sommige wtgelesene olien den edelen en welruyckenden balsem olie, niet sonder redenen te vergelijken: der welcker cracht ende menichfoudige deuchden in dit boecxken cortelijc (wt den schriften sommiger hooghgeleerden ende experten doctoren ende professoren der loffelijcker medecijnen, welcker naemen op dandere zijde deses blats verhaelt zijn) beschreven worden. Met eener voorreden des distilateurs vanden stercken ende bernenden smaeck deser wateren. De welckemet Gods hulpe cunstelijck digereert. circuleert oft subtilizeert ende distileert worden . tot Leyden op Rapenburch, al waer men die te coop vintom eenen redelijcken prijs, ten huysse van Casper Coelhaes. Amsterdam: Barendt Adriaensz, 1588.*
- . *De mensch die eenvoudich is ende van ganser harten Godt suckt. [Amsterdam]: Willem Janz van Campen, 1591.*
- . *De waerachtige ende valsche aenbidder Godts. [Amsterdam]: Willem Janz van Campen, 1591.*
- [———?] *Verantwoordinghe van Sebastiaen Franck, jegens de onwaerachtighe beschuldiginghe, hem (onder meer andere) nu langhe jaren near zijn doot, opghedict, by Philips van Marnix, heere van St. Aldegonde, in zijn boecxken, ghenaemt, Ondersoekinghe ende grondelijcke wederlegginghe vande gheest-dryutsche leer. Met naeckt bewijs. Dat de wtghegeven schriften van Sebastiaen Franck niet en stricken tot oproer tethen de overheyden: noch tot wechneminghe van het wroegen der consciencien: nochte oock tot verachtinghe der h. bybelsche schrift. Rotterdam: D. Mullem 1596/1598.*
- . *Wederantwoort Caspari Coolhaes op een faemroovende boexken sonder naem des autheurs onder eenen gedichten ende versierden naem van een verantwoordinghe des dienaers. oulingen [sic] ende diaconen der kercken tot Leyden, voor seventhien jaren tegen die Justificatie van Leyden geschreven, ende nu eerst tot Rotterdam gedrukt by Jan van Waesbergen int jaer 1598. Rotterdam: Jan van Waesbergen, 1598.*
- . *Apologia Sebastiani Vranck: de welcke hy zelfs in synen leven gheschreven: ende achter syn boec van den seven zegelen: tot defensie van syn persoon ende schrijften, heeft doen drucken. Nu eerst in Nederduytsch over gheset door Caspar Coolhaes. N.p., 1598.*

- . *Grontlicke waerheyt op het min dan waerachtich schrijven van eenen, schuyllende onder t'decksel van die gereformeerde kercke, sonder ontdeckinghe zijns naems teghens die Wederantwoort Caspari Coolhasen*. [Amsterdam]: Peeter Gevaertsz, 1600.
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- . *Aenhechtsel aen t' boecxken of tsamenspreekinghe, ouer het regireus placcaet van Groninghen aldaer ghekondicht den 7. September. ouden stijl, 1601. Ofte antwoordt, op de opspraeck by sommighen ghedaen, teghen het drucken ende verkoopen des selfdes. Vervatet in een t'samenspreekinghe van drie persoonen, als boeckverkooper, partidich gereformeerde, ende een jesuwijt*. N.p., 1601.
- . *Missive van den authoor van die Apologia, over het placcaet ofte edict, eenes eersameen wijsen raets der stadt Groningen: in die welcke de voorschreven authoor na t'bevel der godlijcker schrijftuere, broederlijck met goeder manieren bestraft wordt, van t'ghene hy teghen den aert der christelijcker liefde, openbaerlijck voor alle de werelt, onder t'decksel van d'authoriteit desselven e. w. raedts, met grooter onwaerheyt, zijnen naesten onschuldich, van wercken des doots weerdich zijnde, beschuldicht, tot voorder bericht ende na-dencken, desselven e. w. raedts, ende des onpartijdighen lesers*. N.p., 1602.
- . *Een noodwendighe broederlycke vermaninge aen zijnen voor zeeckere jaren bekenden vriendt, ende nu ter tijt door zijn eyghen in druck wt ghegeven schriften zijnde onwetenden broeder, genaempt Wijnant Kras, woonende buyten Jan Rooden poort, opt Lijnbaens Pat*. Amsterdam: P. Ghevaerts, 1602.
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- , ed. *Summa, ende bekentnisse christelijcker leer der predicanten, die in Oost-Vrieslandt omtrent tachtentich iaren voorleden, opentlijck ghepredickt ende gheleert hebbe: met een supplication der selven, aen den welgheboren en edelen heere, Heer Enno, te dier tijt zijnde grave en heer van Oost-Vrieslandt, van woorde tot woorde gevolght het exemplaer, tot Embden ghedruckt Anno 1565. Met noch een schoone bekentnisse, schriftuerlijk inventeert, ende rethorijlijck ghecomponneert, by Johan Baptista Houvart, consilier ende meester ordinaris van die reeckeninghen des hertichdoms van Brabandt, beschreven in zijn boek van de vier wtersten des meschen, ende anno 83 t'Antwerpen ghedruckt by Christoffel Plantijn*. N.p., 1603.

- . *Comptoir Almanach: oft journal, op het jaer nae de geboorte onses Heeren ende salijmakers Jesu Christi, M.DC.VI. Warin achter aen plaetse van duslange gebruyckten ende mit de warachtighe prognosticatien, ofte practijcken, tot onderwijsinge ende stichtinge des lesers, het recht gebruyck eens yeghelijcken voornaemsten feestdaghs angewesen ende het misbruyck derselver, als oock de verscheyden Bachus feesten: vastelavont: vastedaghen: bededaghen ende vierdaghen uyt des Heeren woort bestraft worden, seer profijtelijck ende stichtelijck te lessen.* door C. Crambi-Lagon. t'Amstelredam: Jan Thennisz., 1606.
- . *Christelycke ende stichtelycke vermaningen aen plaetse van dus lang gebruycten, ende min dan waerachtigen prognosticatien ende practijcken, in de welcken het rechte gebruyke eens yegelijcken voornemsten feestdag aengewesen, ende het misbruyck der selven (als oock der verscheyden Bachus feesten vastelavonden, vastedaghen, bededaghen ende vijrdaghen) wt des Heeren woort aengewesen ende bestraffen worden tot dienst van alle den genen, die Christum Jesum, en in hem de eeuwige salicheyt van herten soecken.* N.p., 1607.
- . *Trouwe waerschouwinge voor den schandelijcken abuysen offte misbruycken der almanacken, de welcke (gelijk alle andere valsche godes-diensten) uyt de schatcamer der verscheyden pausen ghecomen zijn, ende daerom niet minder, reformation van doen hebben als de kerck en staende vol afgodische beelden, outaren ende dergelijcken: doch met minder moyte ende arbeyt vernielt ende in haer gheheel (ghelijck zij tallen tijden bij de kercken Gods gheweest zijn) gestalt zullen connen worden. Allen Godt-vresenden magistraten ende predicanten als oock eenenjegelijcken van herten Godt-vresenden menschen ter prove voor-gestelt door Casparvm Coelhaes.* Gouda: J. Migoen, 1607.
- . *Remonstrantie aen zijne prinslijcke excellentie, ende de edele (door Godes genade) zeer vermogende ende gereformeerde heeren staten ende steden der verreenighde ende gereformeerde Neder-landen, indewelcke (onder verbeteringe) aenghewezen wordt t'ghene, dat nootlick naer eysch der heyligher godlijcker schriftuere, ende ghereformeerde professie, ter eeren Godes ende stichtinge van veel duyzent menschen behoorde: ende met kleyne moyte verbetert zal kunnen werden.* Gouda: J. Migoen, 1608.
- . *Water-boecxken: het welcke aenwijst, hoe men seeckere edele ende seer goede spiritus, aquae vitae compositae, wateren, cracht-wateren ende gedistilleerde olien, tot een yeder cranckheyt ende ghebreken des menschen lichaems, die uyt kouden humoren ende catharen haren oorspronck hebben, so wel uytwendich als inwendich, met grooten nut sal moghen ghebruycken. Met een corte ende clare aenwijsing uyt des Heeren woort, hoe enn yeder selfs door Gods genade, achtervolgende het bevel des Heeren, veel ende verscheyden sware crankheyt ende gebreken can voor-comen: sijn leven niet verkorten: een geruste conscientie behouden: ende ten laetsten vrolijck in den Heere soude moghen ontslapen. Door Casparum Coolhaes. By des welcken soon, Adolf Casparsz. Coolhaes, die voorghenoemde wateren na rechter const gedistilleert ende verkocht worden tot Amstelredam, in de Warmoesstraet, in den vergulden Mortier, by Sanct Olofs Poort.* Gouda: Jasper Tournay, 1608.
- . *Naedencken of de disputatien vande Godtlijcke predestinatie, ende dergelijcken meer, des natuerlijcken menschen verstant verre te boven gaende, oorbaerlijck ende*

*stichtelijck ghetracteert, ofte verhandelt kunnen worden: Ende of Christus onse salichmaker: sijne h. apostelen ende propheten, op eene sodanighe manier van doen, de kercke des Heeren (dewelcke sy tot haren tijden geheel vervallen te zijn ghevonden) ghereformeert hebben, so men huynen-daechs, ende omtrent in de hondert jaren herwaerts te doen, onderstaen heeft. Den eerwaerdighen ende welgheleerden heeren Francisco Gomaro, ende Jacobo Arminio, beyde doctores ende professores theologiae, in de universiteyt tot Leyden in Hollandt: mitsgaders oock der gantscher kercken des Heeren Christi Iesu, ter proeve voorgesteld. Gouda: Jasper Tournay, 1609.*

- . *De basuyne ofte trompette Godes. De welcke sijn goddelijcke majesteyt, den propheet Esaia, ende allen sijnen h. profeten, apostelen, getrouwen herders ende leereren, sonder ophouden te blasen bevolen heft, om sijn volck voor haren erfvyandt, den duyvel, te verwaerschouwen, ten eynde dat sy van hem niet verrascht, ende met den eewighen doot geslaghen mogen worden, tot hunlieden eewich verderffnisse ende onderganck. Gouda: Jasper Tournay, 1610.*
- . *Eenvuldige vertooninghe, waer inne naectelijck wt de h. schrijfture aengewesen wort, dat Gods gemeente niet op eenigher mensen vroomheyt, oude gewoonten, traditien, ofte lange belevingen, dan alleen op den hoecsteen Christum, sijne heylsame leere ende onberispelijck leven ghefondeert staat. Ook hoe ende watmen op dat fundament timmeren moet, om selve een woonstadt Godts te zijn, als mede de waere kenteycken, der kinderen Godts ende der wereld. Eyndtlijck sommiger hier teghen strydende argumenten, verhaelt, ende weder leyt, alles tot opmerckinge vande eensgheloofsgezinde, nochtans verscheydene vergaderingen, ende ten dienste van alle die den Heeren begeeren te vreesen. N.p., 1610.*
- . *Een cort, waerachtich verhael van tsorgelicke vyer, der hatelicker, ende van God vervloecter oneenicheyt in religions saken, ontsteecken zijnde in Hollandt anno 1574: door wien het selve ontsteecken ende smoockende gheleghen heeft tot int jaer 1579: door wien, ende wat plaetsen in Hollandt, tselve op gheblasen, dattet brandende gheworden is: Des welcken vlam een weynich gedaelt zijnde, door wien tselve opt nieuwe weder op gheblasen, stercker ende grooter gheworden is, dan het te voren was: des welcken vlam oock metter tijt minerende, nu wederom met veel ende verscheyden, so grooten, als cleynen blaesbalghen, teffens op gheblasen wort om stercker te branden, ten eynde, dat het gheheele landt, door het selve vernielt, ende inden gront soude moghen bedorven worden: door wat mannen tselve vyer by tijts uytgebluscht, ende soo gheheel tot niet soude connen ghedaen worden, dat van tselve gheen coolken meer over blijven, van t'welcke men te besorghen mocht hebben, dat t'eenigher tijt, aen tselve, een nieu vyer soude moghen ontsteecken worden. Tot ghetrouwer waerschouwinghe, ende opwecken van den ghenen, der welcken ampt is, om tselve by tijts te remedieren. Leiden: N.p., 1610.*

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[——?] *Cort eenvoudich ende waerachtich verhael, waaromme Caspar Coolhaes: predikant gheweest zijnde binnen Leyden: eyntelick (na langhe handelinghe diemen met hem vander ghemeyner kercken weggen gehadt heeft) den 25 martij anno 1582 by den synode provinciael van Hollandt van der kercke Christi is gheexcommuniceert. Ghestelt van weggen der predicanten ende ouderlinghen in den voorsc. synode vergadert, tot noodwendighe verantwoordinghe der waerheyt, ende onderwijs der ghene, die vander saken qualick oft onrecht bericht moghen zijn. Waerinne verhaelt wort het beghin des twists binnen Leyden, ende wat neersticheyt ghedaen is, om dien neder te legghen, ende den voorsc. Casparen tot afstandt zijns onrechts ende dwalingen te brenghen*. Dordrecht: Jan Canin, 1582.

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## Summary

This dissertation focuses on the ecclesiology of Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes. Coolhaes (c. 1534-1615) was a Reformed preacher, a writer of theology, a critic of the churches of his day, and an advocate of religious diversity. Originally from the German Palatinate, he came to preach and live in the Northern Netherlands during the Dutch Revolt. He advocated a broader church than many of his Reformed colleagues. Although he died before the National Synod of Dordt in 1618-1619, there is no doubt that he would have opposed its decisions vehemently. His name was linked during that process with the ideas of Arminius, and it is no wonder that H. C. Rogge, his first biographer, took hold of and further established the idea of Coolhaes as the forerunner of Arminius and the Remonstrants.

Coolhaes opposed much of the building up of the organization of the Reformed Church in the Northern Netherlands and Dutch Republic in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries – the “Reformed polity” which the Calvinist clergy was pursuing with vigor. He was also critical of all other major confessions. The question we pose, therefore, is this: What sort of church would Coolhaes himself have wanted to design for the new Republic?

Coolhaes’ life and work are closely connected. Because of this, the first part of this dissertation (chapters one through five) gives a biographical sketch. This new treatment of his biography is needed, since new information, sources, and works by Coolhaes himself have been uncovered since Rogge’s nineteenth-century biography.

The first chapter treats Coolhaes’ life before his arrival in Leiden. Coolhaes grew up as a Roman Catholic and became a monk, but then went over to Protestantism. He came to the Netherlands in 1566, to Deventer, as a preacher. Later he fled back to Germany and preached in various cities, notably Essen. Eventually, he returned to the Northern Netherlands to preach in Leiden, arriving on October 3, 1574.

The second chapter is about the so-called “Coolhaes affair,” an important controversy between Coolhaes and the Leiden magistrates on one side, and his fellow-preacher Pieter Cornelisz and the Leiden consistory on the other. As one of the city preachers of Leiden, he argued with his stricter Calvinist colleagues and took the side of the magistrates against them.

In the third chapter, the focus is on the account of Coolhaes’ appearance at the Synod of Middelburg (1581). His insistence on a broader sort of Protestantism, as well as specific disagreements with the Leiden consistory and preachers, eventually led to his defrocking at

the synod of Middelburg (1581), and, soon after, to excommunication from the Reformed Church, the first person to be excommunicated by Dutch Calvinists. His writings from this period lay out his theological ideas, which would change very little throughout his life.

The fourth chapter offers a picture of the life of Coolhaes after the Middelburg Synod. To support his family, he learned the distilling trade, but continued to write in defense of religious diversity and tolerance, first in Leiden, and then in Amsterdam, where he later relocated.

The fifth chapter describes the last years of Coolhaes' life. He dedicated himself during this time to defending the ideas of the well-known Spiritualist Sebastian Franck. He also wrote to defend the rights of the Frisian Mennonites, and to criticize almanacs, popular superstitions, and the disputes about predestination at Leiden University between professors Jacob Arminius and Franciscus Gomarus.

In the second part (chapters six through nine), the ecclesiology of Coolhaes is central. What sort of church would he have wanted? He maintained that his ideal church would be watched over by benevolent, Christian magistrates, rather than clergy and synods. Its preachers should be loving shepherds, rather than power-hungry, quarreling leaders. Above all, such a church should be diverse and tolerant. Each chapter delves further in to the specifics of this ideal ecclesiology of Coolhaes.

The sixth chapter describes Coolhaes as a Spiritualist. Coolhaes was influenced not only by Zwingli and Calvin, but also by Luther and by sixteenth-century Spiritualism. In fact, his Spiritualism was foundational to his ecclesiology. Sebastian Franck was an important Spiritualist who can be linked with Coolhaes; there are also similarities in various degrees with, among others, Coornhert, Schwenckfeld, and Castellio. Spiritualists were a diverse group who were dissatisfied with the progress of the Protestant Reformation and were critical of established churches. Coolhaes can be said to have been a Reformed Spiritualist.

In the seventh chapter, Coolhaes' views on the relationship between church and state are examined. Coolhaes came from an Erastian perspective: the visible church should be guided and guarded by secular magistrates. In this, he showed a strong affinity with Bullinger and Gwalther. Nevertheless, Coolhaes also made space for the church to correct and rebuke the civil government in case of need. Ideally, church and state should cooperate.

In the eighth chapter, Coolhaes' criticism of preachers is laid out. He pleaded for spiritual teachers who would preach biblically on the basis of the Old and New Testaments and the Apostles' Creed, and who would care more about love than about any sort of external ceremonies.

The ninth chapter is about diversity and tolerance in the visible church. Coolhaes judged that visible, external matters were being wrongly emphasized, while the invisible, essential matters which were spiritual and internal were being neglected. He longed intensely for religious diversity within the visible church and within society in general. Every member of the visible church should have the "Christian freedom" to believe and live as he or she deemed right.

If Coolhaes had been able to create the church which he wanted, it would have been a diverse, broad church. It would have been Erastian, and would also contain church servants who were truly called, both by the civil government and by God. In this church, the emphasis would be on the invisible, which was seen by Coolhaes as essential. Finally, diversity, love, and tolerance would mark the church in all its forms.

## Samenvatting

“Een pleidooi voor diversiteit: De kerk die Caspar Coolhaes voor ogen stond.”

In dit proefschrift staat de ecclesiologie van Casper Janszoon Coolhaes (1534-1615) centraal. Coolhaes was een hervormingsgezinde predikant, auteur van theologische werken, kritisch beschouwer van de kerken uit zijn tijd en voorstander van religieuze diversiteit. Hoewel hij opgroeide in de Palts, preekte en leefde hij gedurende de Nederlandse Opstand in de Noordelijke Nederlanden. De Nationale Synode van Dordrecht van 1618-1619 maakte hij niet meer mee, maar we mogen aannemen dat Coolhaes zich met kracht zou hebben verzet tegen de aldaar genomen besluiten. Zijn opvattingen werden op deze synode in verband gebracht met de ideeën van Jacobus Arminius. Het is dan ook niet verwonderlijk dat Coolhaes door de Remonstrantse auteur H. C. Rogge, zijn eerste biograaf, wordt gepresenteerd als Arminius' inspirator en als voorloper van de Remonstranten.

Coolhaes verzette zich tegen de wijze waarop de jonge Calvinistische kerk in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de late zestiende en zeventiende eeuw werd opgebouwd. Deze organisatie werd door het kerkelijk gezag met kracht doorgevoerd. Daarnaast had hij ook kritiek op alle andere grote confessies. Hoofdvraag van dit proefschrift is hoe Coolhaes zelf de kerk voor de jonge Republiek had willen vormgeven.

Leven en werk zijn in Coolhaes' geval nauw met elkaar verbonden. Het eerste deel van de dissertatie (hoofdstukken één tot en met vijf) biedt een biografische schets. Een dergelijke schets is wenselijk omdat wij sinds de verschijning van Rogge's biografie over nieuwe informatie, bronnen en werken van Coolhaes beschikken.

Het eerste hoofdstuk behandelt Coolhaes' leven tot zijn komst in Leiden. Coolhaes, die Rooms-katholiek was opgevoed en monnik was geweest, ging over tot het protestantisme en kwam in 1566 naar de Nederlanden. Daar werd hij predikant te Deventer. Vervolgens vluchtte hij terug naar de Duitse landen en predikte er in verschillende steden, waaronder Essen. Uiteindelijk keerde hij terug naar de Noordelijke Nederlanden: op 3 oktober 1574 kwam hij als predikant naar Leiden.

Het tweede hoofdstuk gaat over de zogenoemde “affaire-Coolhaes,” een belangrijk geschil tussen Coolhaes en de Leidse magistraten aan de ene kant, en zijn collega Pieter Cornelisz en de kerkenraad aan de andere kant. Als één van de stadspredikanten van Leiden

raakte hij in conflict met striktere calvinistische collega's. Samen met de Leidse magistraten nam hij openlijk stelling tegen hen.

In het derde hoofdstuk komt Coolhaes' optreden op de synode van Middelburg (1581) aan de orde. Zijn aandringen op een bredere invulling van het protestantisme en meer nog zijn conflicten met de Leidse kerkenraad en met andere predikanten leidden uiteindelijk tot de ontzetting uit zijn ambt tijdens deze synode. Niet lang daarna werd hem, als één van de eerste calvinisten, het lidmaatschap van de gereformeerde kerk ontzegd. In zijn geschriften in deze jaren zette hij zijn theologische ideeën uiteen, die gedurende de rest van zijn leven niet veel zouden veranderen.

Het vierde hoofdstuk biedt een schets van het leven van Coolhaes na de synode van Middelburg. Om zijn familie te kunnen onderhouden werd hij destillateur en verkoper van sterke drank. In zijn geschriften wierp hij zich op als krachtig verdediger van religieuze diversiteit en tolerantie, eerst in Leiden en later ook te Amsterdam, waarheen hij met zijn familie verhuisde.

Het vijfde hoofdstuk behandelt Coolhaes' laatste levensjaren. In deze jaren wijdde hij zich onder meer aan de bekende spiritualist Sebastian Franck. Hij verdedigde voorts de rechten van de Friese Mennonieten, sprak zijn afkeuring uit over almanakken en bijgeloof, en zag met lede ogen de twist tussen de Leidse hoogleraren Jacobus Arminius en Franciscus Gomarus over de voorbestemming aan.

In het tweede deel van de dissertatie (hoofdstukken zes tot en met negen) staat de ecclesiologie van Coolhaes centraal. Wat voor soort kerk had hij voor ogen? Hij stelde dat zijn ideale kerk onder toezicht zou moeten staan van een christelijke overheid, niet van kerkenraden en synoden. Predikanten dienden liefdevolle herders te zijn in plaats van ruziënde en machtsbeluste leiders. Bovenal zou zo'n kerk gekenmerkt moeten zijn door diversiteit en tolerantie. Elk hoofdstuk van het tweede deel gaat specifiek in op belangrijke dimensies van deze ecclesiologie.

Het zesde hoofdstuk schetst Coolhaes als spiritualist. Coolhaes blijkt niet alleen beïnvloed te zijn door de ideeën van Zwingli en Calvijn, maar ook door die van Luther en het zestiende-eeuwse spiritualisme. Sterker nog, het spiritualisme mag als fundamenteel worden beschouwd voor zijn ecclesiologie. Zo is Sebastiaan Franck een belangrijke spiritualist met wie Coolhaes verwantschap vertoont. Daarnaast is er onmiskenbaar geestelijke affiniteit met



figuren als Coornhert, Schwenckfeld en Castellio. Spiritualisten vormen een heterogene groep van figuren die ontevreden waren met de voortgang van de protestantse Reformatie en die uitermate kritisch stonden tegenover gevestigde (staats)kerken. Coolhaes kan gelden als een gereformeerde spiritualist.

In het zevende hoofdstuk komt Coolhaes' visie op de relatie tussen "kerk en staat" aan de orde. Coolhaes dacht erastiaans: de zichtbare kerk diende door magistraten en andere wereldlijke machthebbers bestuurd te worden. Hij vertoont dan ook een sterke affiniteit met Bullinger en Gwalther. Toch gaf hij ruimte aan een corrigerende stem van de kerk jegens de overheid indien zulks nodig was. Kerk en staat zouden idealiter in harmonie moeten samenwerken.

In het achtste hoofdstuk valt Coolhaes' kritiek op predikanten te beluisteren. Hij pleit voor leraren die bijbels preken, op basis van het Oude en Nieuwe Testament en de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis. Ook beklemtoont hij dat kerkdienaren meer moeten geven om liefdevolle verstandhoudingen dan om uiterlijke ceremoniën.

Het negende hoofdstuk handelt over diversiteit en tolerantie in de zichtbare kerk. Coolhaes was van oordeel dat ten onrechte nadruk werd gelegd op zichtbare, externe zaken, terwijl de onzichtbare, essentiële zaken van het religieuze innerlijk buiten beschouwing werden gelaten. Hij koesterde een diep verlangen naar religieuze diversiteit binnen de "zichtbare kerk" en de maatschappij. Ieder gemeentelid van de zichtbare kerk zou de "christelijke vrijheid" moeten hebben om te geloven en te leven zoals hij of zij zou willen.

Zou Coolhaes inderdaad de kerk hebben gekregen die hij wenste, dan zou dat een kerk geweest zijn waarin pluralisme bepalend zou zijn geweest. Verder zou die kerk qua structuur erastiaans zijn en geleid worden door kerkelijke dienaren die zich daadwerkelijk tot hun taak geroepen voelden, zowel door God als door de overheid. In deze kerk zou de nadruk liggen op het onzichtbare, door Coolhaes als het essentiële gezien. Tenslotte zou zijn ideale kerk zich in alle opzichten kenmerken door diversiteit, liefde en tolerantie.

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## Curriculum vitae

Linda Stuckrath Gottschalk was born on March 20, 1959, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. She studied music (violin) at Carnegie Mellon University beginning in 1977, and graduated in 1981 with a Bachelor in Fine Arts in Music (with university honors), and in 1982 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music Education. In 1985, she studied systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, passing five courses (the “systematic theology sequence”). She continued her theological studies at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, from 1985 to 1986, and from 1989 to 1990. From 1986 to 1989 she lived in Yugoslavia (Serbia), learned the Serbian language, and researched medieval Serbian history. She graduated from Trinity School for Ministry in 1990 with a Master of Arts in Religion. Her thesis was titled: “Sava Nemanjić and his Role in the Creation of an Autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church.” She taught as part of a Serbo-Croatian-language theological school, the Eastern European Bible Institute (Vienna; Novi Sad), from 1992 to 1994. She moved to the Netherlands in 2000. In 2005, she began to read the works of Caspar Coolhaes. She continued her research and writing as an official external PhD researcher at Leiden University from 2008 to 2015. Since 2010, she also has been working at Tyndale Theological Seminary in Badhoevedorp, The Netherlands – since 2010 as librarian, and since 2013 as a regular faculty member.