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Pleading for diversity : the church Caspar Coolhaes wanted

Gottschalk, Linda Stuckrath

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Author: Gottschalk, Linda Stuckrath

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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,¹⁹⁴ 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

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.¹⁹⁵ 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.

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.¹⁹⁶ 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.”¹⁹⁷ 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.¹⁹⁸ Coolhaes exemplifies all of these characteristics but the fifth.¹⁹⁹

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.²⁰⁰ 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.²⁰¹ 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.²⁰² Spiritualist themes were well-represented in the plays of the Chambers of Rhetoric.²⁰³ 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."²⁰⁴ This Spiritualist mysticism emphasized the unseen and the invisible. Therefore, the study of Spiritualist sources is not straightforward, because the sources tend to

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 Bündlerlin, Christian Entfelder, Johannes Campanus, Valentin Weigel, Dirk Volkertszoon Coornhert, Hans Denck, Ludwig Hätzler, 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.”²⁰⁵ 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.²⁰⁶ Other scholars highlight the difference between Anabaptists and “Evangelicals.”²⁰⁷ Some trace *Täufer*, Spiritualists, *Schwärmer*, and anti-Trinitarians.²⁰⁸ Other terms brought into the categorization attempts are “Charismatics” such as Thomas Müntzer, “Sacramentals” such as Schwenckfeld, and “Noetics” (metaphysicians) such as Franck.²⁰⁹ Still others use additional terms such as libertines, Unitarians, and “egocentric prophets.”²¹⁰ 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”

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.²¹¹ 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.²¹²

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.²¹³ Schwenckfeld reasoned that the

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.²¹⁴

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.²¹⁵ 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.²¹⁶ 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.²¹⁷ Also, Franck “privileged Spirit over Scripture.”²¹⁸ 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.”²¹⁹ Franck emphasized the role of the Spirit, as we mentioned earlier, enough for the “Word” to come “loose” from the Bible,²²⁰ which allows it to be interpreted in all sorts of different, non-traditional, non-orthodox ways.

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.²²¹ 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.”²²² 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...”²²³ 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.²²⁴ 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.²²⁵ Schwenckfeld and his colleague Valentin Crautwald’s discussion of the “creatureliness” of Christ’s humanity, and what happened to it after his glorification,²²⁶ 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.²²⁷ Coolhaes does not discuss or defend these related ideas, despite, as we will see, his similarities to some of Schwenckfeld’s eucharistic views.

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.²²⁸ 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.”²²⁹ 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.²³⁰ Also, Niclaes held a variant of perfectibility that man can become divine, or be “godded” in connection with baptism.²³¹ 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.²³² 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.²³³ Castellio,

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,²³⁴ and Coolhaes resembles them in this. Also, Aggaeus van Albada, the only influential Schwenckfelder in the Netherlands,²³⁵ 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.²³⁶ He translated Schwenckfeld's *German Theology*.²³⁷ 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.²³⁸ 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

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.²³⁹ 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.²⁴⁰ These are similarities to Spiritualists such as Sebastian Franck,²⁴¹ 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.²⁴² 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.

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.²⁴³ 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.²⁴⁴

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.²⁴⁵ 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,

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.²⁴⁶ 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,²⁴⁷ despite his openness to a friendship with Erasmus Johannes,²⁴⁸ 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

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.”²⁴⁹ 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,²⁵⁰ and through him, Zwingli.²⁵¹ 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.²⁵² It is the “true heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all, the true Bride of the Lamb, the one, holy universal Christian church.”²⁵³ “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.²⁵⁴ In other places, relatedly, Coolhaes refers to the

249. Van Veen, *De kunst van het twijfelen*, 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*),²⁵⁵ 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”²⁵⁶ of God, by taking up their cross.²⁵⁷ 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.²⁵⁸ 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.²⁵⁹

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

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.”²⁶⁰

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.²⁶¹

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.”²⁶² 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.²⁶³ 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.²⁶⁴ So in his emphasis on the interior Christian

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.”²⁶⁵ 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.”²⁶⁶

Baptism is one of the requirements for inclusion in the visible church.²⁶⁷ The invisible church also has a spiritualized baptism.²⁶⁸ 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.²⁶⁹ 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.”²⁷⁰ 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

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.²⁷¹ 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.²⁷² 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.²⁷³ 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.²⁷⁴ Satan can also tempt members of the invisible church by his deception to forget about their "sure shelter."²⁷⁵ 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.²⁷⁶ *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.²⁷⁷

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"),²⁷⁸ is mentioned by Coolhaes in his *Wederantwoort*²⁷⁹ and *Grondlicke waerheyt*.²⁸⁰ 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.²⁸¹ 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

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.²⁸²

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.²⁸³ 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.”²⁸⁴ 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

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 *Grondlicke waerheyt*. He definitely intended the figures in the print to be coming to Christ. Kamphuis apparently did not see *Grondlicke 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.²⁸⁵

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,²⁸⁶ 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.”²⁸⁷ 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.²⁸⁸ 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.²⁸⁹

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

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.²⁹⁰ 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.²⁹¹ 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.²⁹² Calvin believed that Christ was truly present to believers in a spiritual way, but not in a physical way.²⁹³

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.²⁹⁴ 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,

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 Hoen [Honijs] 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.²⁹⁵

Coolhaes was not too worried, on the other hand, about eucharistic ceremonial details. The Synod of Dordrecht (1578) had recommended communion every two months,²⁹⁶ and in Leiden during his ministry in the mid- and late 1570's, the church had communion about that often.²⁹⁷ 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.²⁹⁸ 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.

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.²⁹⁹

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).³⁰⁰

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."³⁰¹ 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

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.’³⁰²

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.³⁰³ Coolhaes is more similar to Calvin than to Zwingli, since Calvin also can be said to have held a sort of “spiritual eating.”³⁰⁴ 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.

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.³⁰⁵ Therefore, the true sacrament is eaten spiritually. Coolhaes made this very point in his earliest writing in Essen in 1571.³⁰⁶ 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.³⁰⁷ 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.³⁰⁸ This treatise “seemed to condemn the gross, ‘Capernaite’³⁰⁹ eating of the body of Christ and interpreted this eating instead as spiritual (*manducatio spiritualis*).”³¹⁰ 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.³¹¹

Since Coolhaes was writing about similar ideas in 1571, it seems possible to that he

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.³¹² 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.³¹³ 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.”³¹⁴

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.³¹⁵ Zwingli had remarked that Hoen’s interpretation of *hoc est corpus meum* actually came from popular speech and ideas.³¹⁶ 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.”³¹⁷

Schwenckfeld and the non-physical flesh

Coolhaes also shows some marked similarities to Caspar Schwenckfeld in terms of his

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.”³¹⁸ 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.³¹⁹ Schwenckfeld may have been influenced by Wessel Gansfort.³²⁰ 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”³²¹; 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.³²²

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

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.³²³ 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.³²⁴

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.³²⁵ 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.³²⁶ A closer connection cannot be found in Coolhaes’ written books or biographical details. Nevertheless, this unusual eucharistic view links the two.³²⁷ 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.³²⁸

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.

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.³²⁹

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

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.”³³⁰ 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.”³³¹

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

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.