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Pleading for diversity : the church Caspar Coolhaes wanted

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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 state¹ 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,² 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.³ 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.⁴ 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

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.⁵ 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).⁶ 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.⁷ 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

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.⁸ 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 1574.⁹ The conflict finally came to a head in 1579 (“the Coolhaes affair”) in connection with the process of choosing elders.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

The Leiden magistrates had already made their point of view clear in the *Advies*¹² 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

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.¹³ 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."¹⁴ 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."¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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."¹⁷

Now let us look at his views in detail.

13. Overvoorde, "Advies," 124-25. Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*, 73.

14. "...daeromme dat ick na uytwysen der godlicker schrijffturen, 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.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ This had been Coornhert’s point in *Justificatie*,²⁰ 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.²¹ 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.²² 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.²³ The magistracy must guard and guide the church, and protect it from undue influence by preachers, theologians, and professors of theology in the universities:²⁴ 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.

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.²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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”²⁷ 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.²⁸ He objected to their expectation that the government would “play the executioner,” i.e., carry out the preachers’ disciplinary decisions.²⁹ 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.”³⁰ Coolhaes’ opponents, the Calvinist preachers Cornelisz and Van der Corput, answered this in their *Antwoord der dienaaren des woords ... op de remonstrantie by de overicheydt van Leyden*.³¹ 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’

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 christelijke discipline ende excommunicatie*, 1611 edition, folio unpaginated 4v. He borrows this idea from Coornhert, *Justificatie*, folios Aijv-Aijr.

31. Cornelisz, *Antwoorde der dienaaren des woords*.

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.”³² 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.”³³ Zwingli had taught that New Testament elders could be compared to the magistrates of modern cities.³⁴ 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,

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 predicanen, 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”³⁵ 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.³⁶ 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.”³⁷ 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.”³⁸ 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).³⁹

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.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹

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.⁴² They should see “that God’s Word is preached purely, that people are obedient to it, and that willful lawbreakers are rebuked.”⁴³ 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.”⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ 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.”⁴⁶ He also insists that the magistracy take the lead in the selection and approval of preachers and elders. This is all because the government

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 23Fijv–23Fijr.

44. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 22Fijr.

45. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folios 31Hijr–31Hijv.

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.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹ 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

47. “Een cray crabt der anderen gheen ooch vit.” Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 23Fijv.

48. Coolhaes, *Apologia*, folio 23Fiiib, folio 63 Qiiia, and folio 64Qiiiib.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.⁵⁰

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.⁵¹ 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.⁵² 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.⁵³ 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.⁵⁴

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

50. Coolhaes, *Toutzsteen*, folio Q.

51. Coolhaes, *Een noodtwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, Aiiijr.

52. Coolhaes, *Een noodtwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, B. Indeed, Coolhaes discusses this question and practice very similarly in *Apologia*, folio 21Fv.

53. Coolhaes, *Een noodtwendighe broederlijcke vermaninghe*, Dijr.

54. Coolhaes, *Een noodtwendighe 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.”⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ 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.”⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸ 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 1596.⁵⁹ Coolhaes, despite his distaste for rules and forced discipline, joined with the preachers in this desire for a more moral, godly and ordered

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 schriftmatiche 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.⁶⁰ 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,⁶¹ it is also too easy to categorize Coolhaes as merely

60. Coolhaes? *Cort ende Schriftmatiche gevoelen der kercken Christi, van de gemeynschap ende onderscheyt, dwelck tusschen die politische ende kerckelijcke regieringe is*. In Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke besluitvaardigheid*, 81-82.

61. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 62-63.

anticlerical⁶² without looking at the nuances of his church and state view which call for cooperation between secular and ecclesiological 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.⁶³ 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.”⁶⁴

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.⁶⁵ 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,”⁶⁶ 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

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.⁶⁷

So, “as one hand washes the other, so both are clean.”⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹ 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

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.⁷⁰

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.⁷¹ On the other hand, in 1581, the Ghent preacher Nicasius van der Schuere wrote defending the appointment of preachers by the government.⁷²

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.⁷³ 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

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.⁷⁴ 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.⁷⁵

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.”⁷⁶

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."⁷⁷

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.⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹

Some common ground with Coornhert

We have seen that Dirck Volkert Coornhert defended Coolhaes at the request of the Leiden magistrates.⁸⁰ 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.⁸¹ He spoke for the magistracy, describing the trials they had endured as a slanderous, evil blow.⁸² Having thrown off the troublesome yoke of the

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.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴ The church could be “free” because of the Christian government of the magistrates and of William of Orange’s *Religions-vrede* (Antwerp, 1579),⁸⁵ which supported the co-existence of different religions.⁸⁶ Of course, some Reformed preachers disagreed with this point, thinking that their church was “free” only when they ruled.⁸⁷ 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.⁸⁸ 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.⁸⁹

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 dienaar*, 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.⁹⁰ This danger had been seen in earlier ages when Constantine in his zeal for the Christian religion put the Pope on his throne.⁹¹ 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.⁹² 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.⁹³ 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.⁹⁴ 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.⁹⁵ 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?⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷ The secular sphere must remain

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.⁹⁸

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.⁹⁹ 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.¹⁰⁰ 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.¹⁰¹ 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.¹⁰² 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.¹⁰³ The magistracy, on the other hand, represents the whole community, the whole city, not just one religion.¹⁰⁴

98. Coornhert, *Remonstrance*, Biiijb.

99. Coornhert, Twletters, folio 146BCD, UBL. For a short description, see Bongers, *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." Bongers, *Leven en werk*, 101.

101. Bongers, *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.¹⁰⁵

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)¹⁰⁶ 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.¹⁰⁷ 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

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 Stickleberger (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.¹⁰⁸

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.¹⁰⁹ 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.¹¹⁰ Zwingli gave Christian magistrates an important position in relation to the church, creating what has been called a "theology for urban oligarchs."¹¹¹ A consistory was not needed.¹¹² During the time of Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, the church and magistracy is said to have worked together without a consistory.¹¹³ 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.¹¹⁴ Coolhaes' emphasis on Moses and Aaron fits with this well.

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.¹¹⁵ 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.¹¹⁶ 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,¹¹⁷ 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,”¹¹⁸ reluctantly

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."¹¹⁹ The "theocratic pretensions"¹²⁰ of the Calvinists meant that the magistrates should protect and support the church as its patrons,¹²¹ 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.¹²²

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 1579.¹²³ Magistrates and others who opposed the firm rule of the preachers spoke out against what they called the "Genevan Inquisition."¹²⁴ However, Calvinists considered it both their right and their duty, during this time of church-building, to oppose the interference of the government.¹²⁵

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

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.”¹²⁶ 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.¹²⁷ 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*.¹²⁸ 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.¹²⁹ 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,¹³⁰ or the the “lesser magistrate” or “resistance theory” as described in the Lutheran *Magdeburg Confession* in 1550.¹³¹ These are variations

126. English text of the Belgic Confession can be at 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 (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.

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).