

*Religious Minorities and Cultural Diversity in the Dutch Republic: Studies Presented to Piet Visser on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday.*

August den Hollander, Alex Noord, Mirjam van Veen, and Anna Woolstra, eds. Brill's Series in Church History 67. Leiden: Brill, 2014. x + 286 pp. \$128.

This valuable Festschrift presents recent scholarship in the English language on Anabaptism in the Netherlands. Often such material is in Dutch, and accordingly accessible to a much smaller readership. The sixteen studies concern Dutch Anabaptism or Bible editions, mostly connected with Visser's areas of expertise. Visser's *ex libris*, a drawing borrowed from Jan Luyken, which he uses in his private book collection, is pictured on the front cover.

One study by Willem op 't Hof relates to Visser's major work on Jan Schabaelje, and especially to the *Lusthof des gemoets* (Pleasure garden of the heart), best known in English as *The Wandering Soul*. Op 't Hof compares the Mennonite *Wandering Soul* with a Reformed best seller, the pietistic *De Practycke ofte oeffeninghe der godtzaligheyt* (The practice of piety, originally in English by the Puritan Lewis Bayly), and concludes that the great popularity of both works, far surpassing other books, demonstrates the importance of "a culture of piety" in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.

Anna Woolstra in a groundbreaking essay deals with two levels of membership among Dutch Mennonites. After an initial lack of clarity, Menno established the meaning of baptism as the entrance into the church of God, the outward sign of the covenant with the true, visible congregation. Menno scorns the idea of an invisible church (Menno Simons, *Complete Writings* [1956], 747). The spiritualizing Waterlanders developed a second meaning — that baptism could give entrance into a general (invisible), Christian church without being part of a specific local body. This view of two meanings or levels of baptism was especially espoused by the liberal Lamists and their persuasive minister Galenus Abrahamsz, also leader among the Collegiants. The Collegiants were an interchurch group who fellowshiped on the basis of an inner commitment, baptized, shared communion, but held that the true church no longer existed. Each Collegiant wrote his own confession of faith. (Is this the origin of modern Dutch Mennonite practice?) Thus without any commitment to a definite set of beliefs and practices, basic church discipline lost significance. Yet restoration of a faithful church, separation from the world, and Christian morality, guarded by discipline, were major, distinguishing characteristics of early Anabaptism.

Fred van Lieburg's discussion of "Mennonite Preachers on the Dutch Pastoral Market, 1650–1865" also contributes to the understanding of the ongoing loss of original positions of the Mennonites in the Netherlands. He traces the gradual increase of professional ministers among the Mennonites through the negative influence of the seminary established in the eighteenth century. The number of professional ministers went from none to "mainly . . . educated ministers by 1865." These new ministers

introduced the doubt of the Enlightenment current in the universities, which was at first puzzling to the much less sophisticated members. And so a shift in identity continued in the Dutch congregations.

George Harinck presents a closing essay, "Henry E. Dosker's Calvinist Historiography of Dutch Anabaptism." Dosker's book *The Dutch Anabaptists* (1921), one of the few early discussions of Dutch Anabaptism in English, is interestingly portrayed. What Dosker's background was and how he should happen to write on this subject had always been difficult to uncover. The study relates this Dutch American's life, his changing views, and his use and admiration for the ten volume *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica* published in 1903–14. The many other essays in this volume, including those by Gray Waite, Mirjam van Veen, Alastair Hamilton, Mary Sprunger, and Yme Kuiper, help the scholar to an understanding of a minority church. Brill has provided an attractive, waterproof cover for the book, but, considering its price, one is dismayed by a new binding already breaking apart and some awkward translations. This slender volume fittingly celebrates the extensive contribution Piet Visser has made to the study of Anabaptism in the Netherlands.

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