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# The Reformed Church and the Regulation of Religious Literature in the Early Dutch Atlantic World

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Catechisms, Bibles, and other printed works were critical for the successful plantation and growth of Dutch religion and culture in the seventeenth-century Atlantic world. This essay examines the provision, regulation, and various controversies surrounding religious books and pamphlets in that period. Under the joint supervision of the West India Company and the Dutch Reformed churches of the Netherlands, colonial clergy were supposed to teach everyone from Company soldiers and officers to European settlers, from Africans and African slaves to Native Americans. And the clergy certainly had some missionary achievements, especially where the Company's power was greatest. However, colonial clergy and churches also faced tremendous difficulties and fell short of their original plans and goals. Studying the different tools they had at their disposal—studying the creation (and destruction) of their printed materials—helps us see the church's own culpability in these difficulties and failures. Early seventeenth-century Dutch Calvinism was restrictive enough and the churches of the Netherlands worried enough about deviance and heterodoxy that they unintentionally undermined their own mission and reduced the Dutch footprint overseas.

**Keywords:** Dutch Atlantic, Brazil, New Netherland, Dutch Reformed Church, Calvinism, mission, printing, books, censorship.

In April 1641, a manuscript for a trilingual catechism arrived in Amsterdam from Dutch Brazil. Written in Dutch and translated into Portuguese and Tupi, the manuscript signalled the progress the Dutch were making in their most important Atlantic conquest. It showed that the missionaries, in little more than ten years, had begun to acquire the language skills necessary for a place as diverse as Brazil, and it suggested a growing interest in Protestant literature in the predominantly Catholic colony.[1]

Reactions to the catechism were mixed. On the positive side, the directors of the West India Company (WIC) were quite enthusiastic about it. Shortly after its arrival they wrote to the author, David à Doreslaer, to inform him of its pending publication

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and commend him and other colonial clergy for the work they were doing with the Tupi.[2] But initial assessments in the Dutch Reformed Church were far more tepid, even alarmed. Deputies of the Amsterdam classis, which shared responsibility for colonial affairs with the Walcheren classis in Zeeland, complained that the new catechism diverged too much from the standard Heidelberg Catechism. Its questions were too long and its answers too short, they said. And Doreslaer had modified the formularies for baptism and other rites. Another church council, the synod of South Holland, condemned the work and declared that colonial clergy should not do *anything* important without review and consent from home.[3] Other councils and individual ministers began demanding copies, and soon the entire church was involved. The Tupi catechism seemed to confirm everyone's fears about disorder in foreign churches and the potential corruption of Calvinist traditions and doctrines in distant colonies. Despite Doreslaer's impassioned defence of his alterations and abbreviations as necessary, the church balked at publication.[4]

Because the WIC used the same books everywhere, they could, in a sense, connect the different parts of the empire: psalms sung on one continent were echoed on the rest; prayers and sermons read on one side of the ocean were also read on the other, often by clergy who had travelled and worked in those other locations before. From Amsterdam to West Africa, from the Company's forts and settlements on the Hudson River in North America to its various territories in South America and the Caribbean, religion and the written word reached across huge distances and offered familiarity and union to scattered believers.[5]

As Doreslaer accidentally proved in 1641, books could also be very divisive, both in the Dutch Republic and its colonies. Comparatively speaking, writers and printers in the Republic had a great deal of freedom. But it was an "unenlightened," reluctant, contested, and limited freedom, according to historian Craig Harline. Most public officials felt that the discussion of political and religious affairs was their special prerogative, and they bristled at unsanctioned commentary, sometimes going so far as to ban troublesome books and punish their authors with fines and jail time. If authorities failed to control the presses more than they succeeded, Harline writes, "it was not for lack of trying."[6] And religious leaders tried harder than anyone, even demanding that church members submit all manuscripts for approval by a special council prior to publication. Then they pestered political officials to take action when someone ignored their strictures by publishing a provocative work. The Republic's relative freedom was not the product of any widespread commitment to a free press, but of Dutch particularism and the independence of individual provinces and cities. A book banned in one city might be sold perfectly legally in another; an author fleeing one province might work with perfect security in the next. The Dutch love of local power—their jealous protection of traditional, local privileges—trumped the Dutch fear of an uncontrolled press, however real and strong the latter.[7]

The controversy over Doreslaer's catechism reflected the same fears and attempted controls, extended in this instance to America. Censorship was potentially more effective there because, while there were printing presses in America, including one in

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Mexico from 1539 and one in Massachusetts from 1638, both were highly regulated, and Dutch colonies had no presses of their own. They depended wholly on European suppliers and printers for their book needs.[8] Compounding that dependence in the ecclesiastical sphere, colonial ministers were in a unique position, split in their allegiances between local colleagues and councils on the one hand, and on the other, the classes and synods that had first called them and issued their instructions from the Netherlands. They remained in some sense subordinate to the churches at home even in the rare cases when they organised their own classes and synods.[9]

My purpose in this essay is to review the provision, regulation, and use of books under the WIC, then to explore the Doreslaer controversy alongside other moments of literary creation and destruction in the Dutch Atlantic. More broadly, I am interested in the intersection of print and religion, the relationship between books, censorship, the Calvinist mission, and the struggles of the Dutch in spreading their influence and institutions in America. In that regard I am only employing the topic of print—and even, to some degree, the topic of religion—to explore larger issues and questions about Dutch expansion and the successes and failures of the early Dutch empire, bridging scholarly conversations that don't usually occupy the same space. Early modern books and pamphlets are mixed up in most studies of the empire, of course, because they serve as critical sources of information and provide stories about the past. But in this essay the book is the source *and* the subject, which is somewhat different.[10] Book production and the controversies and debates surrounding new publications reveal a widespread interest in overseas developments and a deep concern among Calvinist leadership that potential new societies on other continents be the right kind of society.

With their careful, worried management of foreign affairs, the Dutch Reformed churches of the Netherlands ultimately contributed to religious problems and colonial shortcomings that West India Company enemies—and subsequent historians—liked to blame on other factors, like the WIC's greed and neglect.[11] If the colonial churches faced great difficulties, it was not just because the Company neglected them; it was not just because they functioned under the authority of a large corporation that had to balance ecclesiastical needs against the health of the business. Having only recently decided a number of critical disagreements about their principal beliefs and powers in the Netherlands, the churches there went to great lengths to ensure that colonial clergy accepted the authorised doctrines and resisted the "irregularity" that flourished especially in "those far-flung lands," as one critic put it.[12] The clergy at home were undoubtedly eager to spread their faith, and no one today will be surprised that they wanted to protect it from any perceived threats. But their sensitive, rigid supervision hampered the mission and, in the long term, reduced the Dutch footprint in America.

## The Colonial Library

The first decades of the seventeenth century were troubled ones for the Dutch Reformed Church and for the Netherlands in general. The problem had serious

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religious, political, and economic components, all of which tended to blend together in complicated ways. The country was still at that point fighting Spain, its former master, but having waged war and survived for roughly forty years, independence was no longer a question. Likewise, the country was by that point Protestant, so religious differences were not about Protestantism versus Catholicism, but a kind of final settling and determination of particular Protestant doctrines and the relationship between the public church, the state, and the people. On one side was the minister Jacobus Arminius and his supporters, who questioned common Calvinist teachings on predestination and grace, and on the other were the "strict Calvinists," as they are usually known today. Calvinists also favoured a more independent church, supported by the state but free of too much secular influence, and they wanted restrictive membership requirements.[13]

The Calvinist–Arminian debates and the confusion of religious with political issues go far beyond the scope of this essay. A few details on the intense drama and outcomes of the divide are, however, necessary for understanding early Dutch activities in America. Most critically, the temporary truce with Spain (1609–1621) pitted the province of Holland, which favoured the truce for commercial reasons, against the noble House of Orange, which opposed the truce because the Orangists knew they were more likely to grow their power when Spain and the Netherlands were at war. On the matter of religion, each side came to dislike the other so much, and each felt so strongly about its own position, that Calvinists and Arminians began organising separate councils and even a separate church in Amsterdam. In August 1617, the province of Holland decided to skirt the power of the States General, the national legislature, and raise an army, ostensibly to keep the peace. This provincial army was the fatal development, because Maurits of Nassau, the Prince of Orange, then cast his lot with the Calvinist faction and marched his own army to The Hague, where he and his allies in the States General arrested, tried, and eventually beheaded the Arminians' most prominent supporter. More important for resolving the ecclesiastical dispute, an international synod met in the city of Dordrecht in 1618, and there the Calvinists defeated the Arminians. They heard, refuted, and banned Arminian doctrines, and Dutch authorities banned the publication and sale of Arminian books shortly thereafter.[14]

The outcome of the truce and the timing and impacts of the Arminian controversy for the West India Company's image and leadership were significant. Founded just three years after the Synod of Dordrecht, the Company's potential for waging war against Dutch enemies in West Africa and America—indeed, the Company's very existence—was wrapped up in the same divisions and debates, resulting in a disproportionate Calvinist influence in the WIC and support for Calvinist politics even after the strict Calvinists began to lose control of Amsterdam and other corners of the Dutch Republic.[15] Church and Company leaders did not agree with each other in every instance. But they did share many hopes and plans for the Dutch empire, and they worked closely together to obtain clergy and other ecclesiastical needs for Dutch ships, trading posts, and other possessions.

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Vigilance regarding purity and "the word" began in the Netherlands during the colonial hiring process. Any clergy who wanted to serve abroad had to bring written testimonials from former professors and ministers attesting to the individual's character, history, and orthodoxy. Job candidates then went through different exams to test their knowledge of Protestant doctrines and see whether they could really preach, for example.[16] If they passed the exams and won an appointment, they signed their names to something called the *formulierboek,* which contained the Three Forms of Unity, or the three printed statements of Reformed doctrine in the Netherlands: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordrecht. The handwritten statement at the end of the *formulierboek,* the statement to which everyone had to sign his name, confirmed that each of the aforementioned works was in complete harmony with God's word, that he who signed it would teach the doctrine faithfully and oppose all errors, and, if he ever developed feelings contrary to the creed, he would not teach them but reveal them to church officials immediately.[17] What was unusual in this case was not the exams, nor the reading and signing of the Three Forms, because European clergy had to jump through the same hoops. Rather, some churches even made their colonial lay clergy sign the book, meaning their unordained readers and *ziekentroosters* (comforters of the sick). To drive the point home one last time before departure, the churches issued instructions never to deviate from any point of Calvinist doctrine or change any Calvinist rite, but to do everything exactly as it was done in the Netherlands.[18]

The discussions and arrangements for clerical personnel often involved discussions about book needs, too. Most WIC ships and fleets carried books, both for their own use and sometimes to deliver to a Company fort or colony. If they did not already own them, new clergy received a few titles when they were hired. But they had to pass on these "gifts" to other clergy when they eventually quit their post and returned to the Netherlands. When they lost books—or when books were destroyed in battle or spread too thin because of the Company's many conquests and rapid expansion—clergy simply wrote to the churches at home, reported their needs, and the church worked with WIC directors to provide more, the directors usually footing the bill.[19] So common were these small naval libraries that, in one instance, when the Brazil clergy complained about a lack of books in local forts, the High Council told them to visit the harbour and take whatever they wanted from the ships, provided they leave enough for the men who worked there. If there were still too few books, the Council promised to order more from home.[20]

Authors sometimes gifted books to the Company to curry favour with the directors or support the colonial religious mission. The minister Godefridus Udemans donated copies of his own tome, *'t Geestelick Roer van 't Coopmans Schip* (the spiritual rudder of the merchant's ship), the year after it was published (1638). As the title suggests, it was a kind of spiritual handbook for the maritime profession, arguing that Dutch commerce and Christ's kingdom would spread and grow together. Udemans dedicated *'t Geestelick Roer* to the directors of the East and West India Companies, and, as he probably hoped in giving them their first copies, both organisations eventually

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utilised it in their respective hemispheres.[21] The Udemans book never caused problems because he was a well-known, respected minister in the Netherlands, a leader in a movement called the Further Reformation (*nadere reformatie*). Other works from ministers of his stripe also appear on surviving WIC book lists, including some from foreign theologians: William Perkins in England, Wilhelm Bucanus in Switzerland, and of course John Calvin. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and his commentaries on the different Bible books were all popular titles.[22]

The most popular or common book under the WIC was the Bible, in some cases just the New Testament. Both were prevalent for probably obvious reasons: ministers used them for their private studies, and they were expected to read passages to Company employees and preach from them regularly. Starting in the late 1630s they often requested the new translation, the *Statenvertaling,* which the Company provided. When the directors sent the first batch of new Bibles in 1638, ministers complained that they were too small to read aloud from the pulpit. For public preaching and teaching, when one could not sit comfortably in a chair and hold a book close to one's face, they needed the larger folio editions, they claimed. So the Company had to purchase the more expensive Bibles.[23]

Next in importance were sermons, prayer books, and hymnals. The sermons appeared in large collections like *Huys-boeck* by Heinrich Bullinger (1582) and Abraham Schultetus's *Postille* (1621). Ordained clergy could write their own sermons, but the Company also employed many lay clergy, who did not have the same training and did not enjoy the same liberties. Twice per week, usually on Sunday and Wednesday, they stood before the congregation—or the sailors and officers, if they were at sea—and they read a sermon from the Bullinger or Schultetus collections. Judging from the length of each sermon, it would have taken about an hour; and both books were full of Protestant messages: the importance of studying the Bible, justification by faith, not putting one's trust in one's own good works (and so on). Perhaps intended especially for sailors, they also contained sermons about respecting one's rulers and messages about sin and repentance.[24] As for prayers, the *ziekentrooster* spent about five minutes reading them aloud every morning and evening from Johan Havermans's *Christelijcke gebeden en danck-seggingen* (Christian prayers and expressions of gratitude) and other small, portable works. The typical selection was full of praise for God's wonders, expressing thanks for blessings and asking for protection. Havermans's prayer for the travelling man was probably a popular choice on Dutch ships because it contained a request for profits and a safe return.[25]

Deeply rooted in Protestant traditions of communal worship, psalm-singing was another common activity in the Dutch Atlantic, and psalm books were another regular feature on WIC book lists. Lay preachers had to prove that they knew the psalms (and the tunes associated with them) before they ever left the Netherlands. And the church's gatekeepers were quite picky in this regard: Karel van Hartsteen, a schoolmaster in Amsterdam, was an "incapable singer," they wrote on one occasion. They told him to practice, and between 1639 and 1645 he returned four times, each time rejected for his voice. After the fifth exam they suggested that he simply stick with his

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current occupation. They told the tailor Dirck Hendrix, who also appeared more than once, that his singing was "very bad," that he had an "unpleasant voice." And they told Jan Schoon that he was "naturally deficient" in musical matters.[26] The merchant David de Vries probably did not care about the quality of singing aboard his ship as much as he cared that it was able to repel pirates. As they prepared their hearts and minds to fight one particular pirate group off the coast of Spain, De Vries and his crew sang the 140th Psalm, which contains King David's plea for protection. Reverend Selyns of New Netherland reported that his ship did not neglect religious worship either, but offered prayers and sang psalms every morning and evening. They read "the Holy Gospel" on Sundays and holidays, he wrote.[27]

For instructing non-Reformed employees, indigenous proselytes, and children in colonial towns, ministers and schoolmasters also carried and disseminated the Heidelberg Catechism. It was, like other Christian catechisms, a summary and explanation of basic doctrines, containing in this case 129 questions and answers on God, the sacraments, and related topics. West Africa was never the most fruitful missionary field for the Dutch, but clergy sometimes found uses for the catechism even there. Reverend Bartholomeus IJsebout organised weekly catechisation meetings for Company employees at Elmina, the main Dutch fort on the Gold Coast. He brought so many Catholics and Lutherans to the Reformed faith, he was able to organise an ecclesiastical council called a consistory, which was a rarity in Africa. And he convinced Calvinists in nearby Danish and English forts to celebrate the Lord's Supper with him at Elmina.[28]

Finally, WIC libraries contained manuals for ministering to the sick and dying. That was the activity for which *ziekentroosters*—comforters of the sick—were named, though they bore all other ecclesiastical responsibilities as well. Their handbooks contained short lessons about death and related topics to teach the unfortunate person in need of their expertise. Reading the lessons now, they seem calculated to propagate the image of the stern Calvinist, because they were not very cheerful. They taught the depravity and misery of man since the Fall of Adam and submitting to God's will, allowing him to inflict punishment as he saw fit. More comforting, they also taught about resurrection and eternal life in Jesus Christ. *Ziekentroosters* told the sick to desire death because it would free them from earthly trouble, and they reminded them to avoid behaviour that may or may not have had anything to do with their illness, like drunkenness and sexual misconduct. In their sorry condition they should not lose faith, but strive patiently against the Devil until the final hour. *Ziekentroosters* were also encouraged to read comforting passages from the Bible, especially the Book of Psalms, and sing and pray with their charges. Prayers for the sick in Reformed literature asked for forgiveness and sometimes taught that one's illness was a direct consequence of his transgressions. According to the catechism, he deserved much worse than he was then suffering.[29]

In each case—sermons, prayer books, hymnals, catechisms, *ziekentrooster* manuals—the Dutch in Africa and America used titles that would have been familiar to Reformed believers in the Netherlands. European counterparts expected that colonial

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clergy would use these books and no other; they expected them never to diverge from what was typically taught and done at home. According to Dutch law, rulers could not ask private individuals to think or believe in particular ways, especially in their own homes; nor could they compel church attendance. But Company officers had greater coercive powers among subordinates and employees. During any religious service, sailors and soldiers had to sit quietly and pay attention. An officer called a *provoost* kept an eye on them and intervened if anyone laughed, clapped, or hindered the minister in the execution of his office. The *provoost* withheld alcohol rations from sailors who missed prayers and sermons, then imposed a one guilder fine and whipped them for subsequent unexcused absences. Any lay preachers who taught unacceptable doctrines were summarily dismissed. Men who raised questions and started "Religious disputes" were confined for three days on bread and water. They all began their employment by taking an oath to abide by the WIC's various laws and articles, and the *provoost* read them aloud periodically in Company ships and forts. The oath and the articles served as extra reminders about the power of the word and the official preference for certain words and ideas over others.[30]

## The Trilingual Catechism

At the heart of the West India Company's plans and campaigns was a Portuguese sugar colony called Brazil. The WIC captured Salvador de Bahia, the Brazilian capital, with its first "Grand Design" (*Groot Deseyn*) in 1624. It lost the city the next year, but the Dutch soon returned, and in 1630 they took Olinda and eventually other towns in northeastern Brazil. At its peak, the zone of Dutch control stretched nine hundred miles along the coast, incorporating parts of seven provinces, tens of thousands of Portuguese colonists, and many Native Americans and African slaves. Never the wealthy, stable asset the Company hoped to foster, the colony demanded the lion's share of WIC attention and resources for about thirty years altogether. It also demanded the lion's share of ecclesiastical resources: roughly 165 of 360 total Company clergy served in Brazil at one time or another, far more than any other region or colony.[31]

The conquerors had to make some religious concessions and grant some rights of worship in their peace treaties with colonists, yet Portuguese power and Catholic influence in Brazil still tended to wane in proportion to the growing power and influence of the Dutch and their church.[32] Reflecting these relationships and shifting fortunes was the fate of local book collections, which underwent the destruction, upheaval, and displacements of the invasion like everything and everyone else. In December 1631, Company directors in the Dutch province of Zeeland discussed the arrival there of an unspecified number of Latin books from a library at Olinda. The man who had sent them, a certain Captain Patter, had intended them for his personal collection. But the directors decided at first to keep them, then, upon the request of two local ministers, give them to the library in Middelburg.[33] At the same time the Company was starting to build its own collections in Brazil with the titles

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discussed above. Especially valuable was a persistent little volume listed on Company book lists either as *Catholique Reformados* or *Gereformeert Catholicus* (the reformed Catholic). The historian Frans Leonard Schalkwijk argues that they were actually two different books by different authors, united in title and purpose: to attack so-called "papist" ideas and promote Protestant ideas and rites. To better protect and store all the new books, colonial ministers asked the High Council to build bookshelves in the room where they held their consistory meetings in Recife, the new Dutch capital.[34]

The Reformed mission did not begin in earnest until the pacification of the province of Paraíba (1634) and the restructuring of secular and religious leadership starting in 1636. The import of written records, translations, and printing is clear in the flurry of requests and literary activities that took place in that period. For their own understanding of ecclesiastical decisions in Europe and their ability to govern the colonial church, clergy began asking for the meeting minutes of the North Holland synod, not just from recent years, but going back at least fifteen.[35] The first-known translation request came from Reverend Jodocus à Stetten, who had served the Company in different places since before the invasion. He wrote a letter to the directors in July 1636 in which he acknowledged the receipt of certain books and asked for others. Of particular importance, he wrote, was a Portuguese Bible, printed in Lisbon. He went on to explain that "Castilian" (i.e., Spanish) was not much use in Brazil, and he described his own efforts to learn Portuguese. Yet Portuguese books were lacking, he continued. He hoped that the Heidelberg Catechism might also be translated into Portuguese, as well as other religious works. Again he clarified: "I am speaking of Portuguese, not Castilian, as your honours had the others translated." What Stetten meant by "the others" is not clear, but the directors had apparently sent some early materials in Spanish. This confusion over Iberian languages and the poor quality and scarcity of Protestant works in Spanish and Portuguese would continue to plague the Dutch for the rest of their short Brazilian experience.[36]

The first major religious outreach among the Tupi Indians and the first translation assignment that would lead to the trilingual catechism occurred in the same month of Stetten's request for Portuguese literature. Until that point the only permanent clergy in Tupi villages were Jesuit priests and, after the Company expelled the priests, Protestant lay preachers. Then in July 1636, Reverend Daniel Schagen toured the villages, teaching the Lord's Prayer and "other short lessons in our religion." According to the High Council member who accompanied Schagen, the Tupi enjoyed the lessons and requested continued instruction. Whether they really enjoyed or immediately understood the sometimes-nuanced differences between Catholic and Protestant theology is, of course, debatable. But there is no doubt that they had suffered a great deal under decades of Portuguese control, and they now saw the Dutch as an opportunity to distance themselves from the Portuguese and change their circumstances for the better. The Dutch did not yet appoint permanent ordained clergy to the villages, but the Council did ask Schagen to begin work on what they were then calling a "Compendium teologicum" of the first principles and

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fundamentals of Protestant Christianity. They had not instructed the Tupi properly before, the Council explained, because of the war.[37]

Local ministers built on these beginnings by organising a classis in Recife, then a second classis in Paraíba and a colony-wide synod. Uniting a bunch of formerly disjointed, scattered ministers and consistories, the classis was the best missionary tool available, a prerequisite to all others, for it was a powerful forum for cooperative planning and organisation to complement the work of the Reformed classes on the other side of the ocean.[38] For language and translation needs the classis abandoned Schagen—who sullied his reputation and lost his position in several scandals—in favour of the newly arrived Vincentius Soler. Reverend Soler was a good choice for the assignment because he was a Spaniard and former Catholic priest who could communicate in at least four languages: Dutch, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. He was soon preaching regular Portuguese sermons for colonists in Recife and Olinda, and he interacted with the Tupi in the capital, occasionally visiting their villages to preach and perform baptisms. Within one year of his arrival he had written a tract either in Spanish or Portuguese called *A Short Explication of the Christian Religion.* The Recife classis intended the publication for use with colonists, black slaves, and Tupi Indians, so Soler probably wrote it in Portuguese.[39]

Colonial clergy first learned that the churches at home might become obstacles to the mission, sacrificing ease-of-instruction and ecclesiastical growth for unity and orthodoxy, when they sent Soler's manuscript to the Netherlands. The request for North Holland's synodal minutes and his *Short Explication* arrived there at a time when the Company and church were already discussing book needs and catechism options. The directors quickly agreed to pay for the copying and sending of minutes, but Soler's book was a bigger problem. Before they showed it to the Company—before they even knew what it contained—classis members in Amsterdam decided that, for the sake of "uniformity," it should not be published. The colonial churches were dependent on the church at home, they said, and the two ought to use the same materials.[40] When they conveyed their decision to the directors, the directors pushed back, pointing out that they had so far examined two catechism options in Spanish, and both had translation errors and other issues. They asked whether Soler's book could at least be used for private study. Yet the church persisted in its position, translating *Short Explication* from the original Spanish or Portuguese into Dutch, then announcing that it was too short and "dangerous" in some unspecified manner. Instead they identified a third Spanish catechism that did not have all the same issues as the first two, and the WIC began sending copies to Brazil.[41]

The man whose book caused the greatest commotion, David à Doreslaer, had arrived in Brazil in late 1636, just in time to witness these different requests and early experiments. He was not otherwise involved except insofar as he was a member of the colonial classis that approved plans and made appointments. Because he, too, spoke Portuguese, in January 1638 the classis assigned him as the first ordained minister to work permanently among the Tupi, residing in his case in the main Tupi village of Mauritia and travelling regularly to a number of others. Not yet having learned the

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fate of Soler's book, in October of that year the classis asked him and Soler to work together on a new project that they described as "a short, fundamental, and clear instruction in the Christian religion," presumably this time in the Tupi language.[42] One year later the classis reported that Doreslaer's communication skills were improving, and that he could "speak somewhat … with the Brazilians." By 1640 he and his potential neophytes, living and working now with other ordained ministers, had progressed enough that Doreslaer was able to organise the first Calvinist Communion service among them. And he was clearly writing in Tupi the same year, for he had finished his trilingual catechism at least by November.[43]

I began this essay with the story of how Doreslaer's book was received in the Netherlands: with enthusiasm in the WIC, with alarm in the church. But the divisions were not actually quite as neat as that. In the Dutch Reformed system, church leadership was a mix of ordained clergy and male lay members serving temporary, revolving stints as elders and deacons. Four Company directors from the Amsterdam chamber were sitting on their consistories and classes as elders and deacons the very year the catechism arrived and became a topic of lengthy discussion and debate in the same consistories and classes, and nine directors served on their consistories the next year, when it was still being debated.[44] Furthermore, the man who oversaw its publication was a long-serving, distinguished minister from the town of Enkhuizen: Abraham à Doreslaer, father of David. Even the ministers in Amsterdam did not claim in their first report that the catechism could never be published. They just wanted continued communication with the Recife classis to deal with their concerns about brevity and their worries about the changes Doreslaer Jr. had made to the formularies for baptism and Communion. Only gradually did the discussion become the widespread, impassioned controversy described above.[45]

The intensity of feeling and eventual condemnation of the trilingual catechism was in part a matter of unfortunate timing. In 1641 the churches of the Netherlands were in the midst of a different but related debate about the supervision of colonial religion. The classes of Amsterdam and Walcheren had always had the greatest global role because their borders corresponded with the borders of the most active, powerful Company chambers. But other clergy and other churches wanted to be involved, too. They saw Dutch influence growing on other continents; they saw the damage the major trading companies were then inflicting on Spain's and Portugal's foreign possessions (and by extension, on the Catholic Church). At the same time, they heard occasional reports about the many problems and challenges their own church faced abroad, and they wanted to do something about it. One other possible consideration was that the Amsterdam and Walcheren classes benefitted fiscally from their relationships with both companies, because the latter gave alms to their local deaconries—but not the other deaconries—on a regular basis. For all these reasons the discontented churches mounted a widespread, divisive campaign involving municipal and provincial governments and even the Dutch States General. They hoped to create a permanent, national ecclesiastical body to oversee colonial religion.[46]

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When the churches without power learned about Doreslaer's catechism, and when they learned that the West India Company might move ahead with its publication, they seized on the issue to advance their other agenda. Going before the States General, they hammered on the catechism, using it as evidence of the disorder in foreign lands and the special dangers there of doctrinal contamination. The catechism confirmed everyone's fears, they said, about the risk of expansion, distance, and colonial diversity. Not that they opposed expansion *per se.* They made clear that they, too, were excited about the new opportunities for missionary work. That was precisely the point: they wanted to be involved in missionary movements to ensure their safe and orderly foundation and development.[47]

To say that the political atmosphere amplified the reaction to the catechism is not to say that the controversy was only about power, charitable resources, and ecclesiastical jealousies. Compared to Soler's book, which had been rejected for similar reasons, Doreslaer's book may have generated far more heat. But their shared fate, years apart, demonstrates a consistent concern for religious deviation and a desire to quash necessary but imperfect literature, even without the other controversy. The Amsterdam classis had been the first to express its discomfort with the trilingual catechism, and although the classis opposed the proposals for a new national council, fearing that the council would be too sluggish and inefficient, the classis never stopped working with the other churches (its opponents in the supervision debate) to hinder the Doreslaer book. On that subject the majority of representatives in the majority of ecclesiastical councils seemed to agree: The publication of the trilingual catechism would be a joint defeat for all the Reformed churches of the Netherlands.[48]

In the end, everyone "lost" in some sense. The discontented, powerless churches never got their national council, even after years of organised advocacy. The Dutch could not agree on questions of necessity, funding, travel, the irregularity of meetings, and other potential obstacles to efficiency, especially when the supervisory function of the Amsterdam and Walcheren classes seemed in fact to be working well enough.[49] Amsterdam and Walcheren thus got what they wanted on that front, but they lost the fight to stop the catechism. Upon the recommendation of Abraham à Doreslaer and others, the WIC published the book, probably in late 1641. Still the churches tried to stop the Company from shipping it to Brazil, and still the Company persisted in its designs. After all, the directors could claim some ecclesiastical support; and they refused to abandon a much-needed publication that represented a significant investment of time and money on their part and the part of clerical employees in Brazil.[50]

Doreslaer Jr., the Company, and the Dutch Reformed mission also lost in the sense that the churches at home had the reach and influence to obtain their will by other means. What had once been a sluggish transatlantic conversation and give-and-take about best missionary practices was now a simple series of worried directives and lectures from Europe to America. In its first major message to the Recife classis about the catechism after publication, the Amsterdam classis expressed its original alarm and condemned the book for the "mutilated," "scrapped," and "abandoned" bits in the formulary for Communion. Yet the classis only gave one example: that Doreslaer

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had failed to explain that sinners were justified not only through Christ's suffering and death, but through his obedience and life, which God mercifully imputed to them through no action of their own. Classis members could think of no possible reason for leaving the idea out. They explained the widespread concern for the catechism in the Netherlands, reaching even the synodal level, and they went on to compare Doreslaer's efforts with another heterodox catechism printed years before by the hated Arminians. They said they did not blame the whole Recife classis, but they did wonder about the author's beliefs and purpose, suggesting a nefarious connection with Arminians.[51]

After the Soler and Doreslaer incidents, the churches of the Netherlands continued to create problems for colonial clergy, raising questions about their judgement and commitment both because of the books and because they had formed their second classis and synod without consent. All the colonial clergy tried to distance themselves from Doreslaer, including the men who were on the classis when his catechism was approved and sent for publication. At first he defended the work as a mere summary of the Heidelberg Catechism, for the Tupi language, he explained, did not have all the necessary words and ideas for a direct translation. He used "a more childish manner of instruction" befitting a "barbaric" language, Doreslaer wrote. So afraid was he of the hubbub his book had caused, so surprised at the controversy, he began to lose his enthusiasm for the mission, and he returned home early to defend his reputation and prove his orthodoxy.[52] Similarly, Fredericus Kesseler, probably the most influential minister in the colony in the late 1630s and early 1640s, left Brazil for the Netherlands in May 1643 to save his own reputation and, rather disingenuously, deny his role in creating the synod. The churches at home had robbed the colony of two important, gifted ministers exactly when it was struggling most to maintain sufficient numbers of them.[53]

What happened to the trilingual catechism? In November 1642 the High Council in Brazil gave twenty-four copies to Dionisius Biscaretto, who had started out in the Tupi villages as a lay teacher and assistant to Doreslaer, then became a minister and missionary in his own right. But a 1645 Company book list shows thousands of copies sitting unused in a warehouse in Recife, apparently never distributed more widely to the many villages and allies who were then still working with missionaries like Biscaretto. Colonial clergy possibly feared using the books because they had seen what happened to Doreslaer; they did not want to risk upsetting anyone whose good opinion was critical for any future appointment in the Netherlands and its colonies.[54]

## The Megapolensis Catechism

Both owned and controlled by the Dutch, Brazil and New Netherland were different in countless other respects. Where the first was central to the West India Company's plans and Grand Designs, the second was an afterthought, inherited by the WIC at its founding. Where the Company and the States General poured endless resources into Brazil, New Netherland got the leftovers. The WIC sent a handful of ships and

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colonist groups to the latter colony in the 1620s. But the directors tried too long to maintain their monopoly on the fur trade there, only finally giving it up, then creating other serious inducements to immigration, starting in about 1640. New Netherland may have also benefitted in a roundabout way from the 1645 Portuguese revolt in Brazil, because Brazil's long, slow downturn eventually contributed to a scattering of people and resources elsewhere in the Dutch Atlantic.[55]

Reverend Johannes Megapolensis learned that increased attention, though good for New Netherland in so many ways, came with increased oversight and ecclesiastical controls. He arrived in the colony at the very start of these important transitions and lived there for many years afterward, so he experienced a bit of both realities. He had expressed "a great desire" to work in America and "spread the gospel of Jesus Christ among the blind heathens" before he ever left Europe.[56] And his employer and patron, Kiliaen van Rensselaer, tried to assist him in his duties by sending him with a small library of about twenty-five titles, including a Bible, a Bible concordance, eight of John Calvin's works, and other books, mostly religious in nature. Exceptions were a history of Rome, a course of philosophy, two books on mathematics, and a commentary on Aristotle. The non-religious books may have been for Megapolensis in his dual role as preacher and teacher, or they may have been for general use by van Rensselaer's other officers and subordinates. None of the books—religious or otherwise—would have been much use with Native Americans because few if any of the colony's indigenous neighbours could speak or read Dutch, and Megapolensis did not know their languages.[57]

Megapolensis tried to address his linguistic deficiencies, but isolation and native resistance got in the way. Setting aside schoolmasters and lay preachers, the only other minister in New Netherland, Everardus Bogardus, lived too far away for joint councils and regular meetings between the two men. When Megapolensis arrived in 1642, Bogardus was stationed at New Amsterdam, the Dutch capital on Manhattan Island, while Megapolensis ended up in Kiliaen van Rensselaer's village on the upper Hudson. In Rensselaerswijck he was at least better positioned to interact with the Iroquois, who travelled for days from the west and north to trade their furs with the Dutch at Fort Orange.[58]

Translation and publication were some of Megapolensis's first concerns. He described meeting and walking with the Iroquois and other Indians deep in the woods, hours from any settlement. "They sleep by us, too, in our chambers before our beds. I have had eight at once lying and sleeping upon the floor near my bed, for it is their custom to sleep simply on the bare ground." The Indians attended the minister's sermons in groups as large as twelve, and he began compiling a vocabulary in the hopes of becoming "an Indian grammarian." Neither he nor anyone else commented on the fact—indeed, no one seemed to realise at first—that the natives of New Netherland did not have the same history with the Portuguese and the same incentives as the Brazilian Tupi for cultural union and conversion. But Megapolensis discovered the problem soon enough, and he began expressing his frustration at the Indians' scepticism, disbelief, and obfuscation. "When we pray, they laugh at us," he

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wrote, and some of them "despise it entirely." Megapolensis actually concluded that Indians were stupid because he could not convey his meaning in the broken trade pidgins the Dutch and Indians were still using in the 1640s. He slogged away at his vocabulary, but he made little progress. When he asked for the names of different objects, Indians either refused to tell him or gave him different answers for the same object, never letting him get too close. One long-time resident of the Fort Orange area told the minister that the Iroquois must adopt a whole new language every few years.[59]

Megapolensis eventually saw at least two of his writings in print, including *A Short Account of the Mohawk Indians* (1644) and a catechism for the youth of New Netherland (date unknown). Only reaching about twenty pages in the original edition, the first did not inspire any controversy because the author did not intend it for religious, instructional purposes. He simply described New Netherland's flora and fauna, the Indians' physical appearance, and some of what he had seen of their spiritual beliefs and cultural traditions. He did not, in fact, know that his description would be published. According to colonist Adriaen van der Donck, who would one day write a much longer description of the colony, Megapolensis "wrote about the subject in a letter to his friends," and they published it "contrary to his intentions."[60]

The Megapolensis catechism was more problematic. The minister's wife, Machtelt Willemsen, carried the manuscript to the Netherlands when she travelled there temporarily in late 1648. Called *Examination or Confession for the benefit of those who are inclined to approach the Lord's Table,* no copy survived, but again, the book *was* printed. Company directors approached the Amsterdam classis and expressed their willingness and desire to do so, maybe even send the book to Brazil, they said. The classis discussed the question and resolved, not surprisingly, that the church would rather send the standard catechism.[61] However, almost two months later, the directors having sent repeated requests for feedback, the classis had still not informed them of the decision. The reasons are suggested in a letter from the directors to their governor in New Netherland, when they reported the delay and explained that Reverend Kesseler, the beleaguered minister who had returned from Brazil right after Doreslaer, had been serving on the classis committee that oversaw colonial affairs in Amsterdam, first as scribe, then as president. Clearly he had succeeded in clearing his name of any wrongdoing in the different Brazil controversies! But Kesseler was dead, the directors reported, which was "likely to retard the matter somewhat." Having experienced what he did in Brazil, was Kesseler able to change his colleagues' minds? Did he convince them of the use and necessity of alternative publications in America before he died?[62]

Historical sources are silent on these questions, but we know the catechism was printed because when Megapolensis sent a revised manuscript to the Netherlands a few years later, he asked that it be *re*printed.[63] He had by that point used the first edition both with the children of New Netherland and probably with at least one Native American proselyte. The latter was an unnamed chieftain ("sachem") who briefly revived the missionary dream when he settled in New Amsterdam and

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accepted a Bible. He learned to read and write "tolerably well," memorised the Ten Commandments, and "publicly joined in recitations on the catechism by christian children." Megapolensis had recently moved from Rensselaerswijck to the capital, and he had brought his own catechism with him, possibly utilising it in this case. But the chieftain's religious knowledge was still thin, the minister wrote. And when the man pawned his Bible and took up drinking, the Dutch decided that he would not be the Christian emissary they had imagined.[64]

Whether because of Reverend Kesseler's death or just because of New Netherland's growing wealth and importance in the Dutch Atlantic, the colony enjoying far more attention now than it had in the past, the Amsterdam classis took a more firm position on the second edition of the Megapolensis catechism. Renamed *A Brief Method of Instructing the Youth in the Principles of the Christian Religion,* the manuscript passed between Company and church like so many potential books before it. Once again the classis resolved to "hinder and prevent" publication, and once again the classis shared their will with the directors, who in this instance conceded the issue without a fight.[65] Though his effort was admirable, classis deputies wrote to Megapolensis, it would not be wise to use any book in the colonial churches —the "dependent churches"—that was not used in the Netherlands. The classis that had worked so hard to prevent a national gathering during the Doreslaer affair now explained that any major change like the one Megapolensis was proposing required the approbation of all the Dutch churches at a national synod. The classis continued: the Heidelberg Catechism had been tested and found worthy, and anything else might lead to schism and confusion. In doctrine and liturgy, they should all strive instead to live in unity.[66]

The classis took a gentler, more conciliatory tone with Megapolensis than they had with Doreslaer, and the New Netherland minister does not seem to have feared the same for his job or reputation. Yet he did witness the reach and influence of the Amsterdam classis on his own son-in-law, Wilhelmus Grasmeer, in the same period. Grasmeer had replaced him in Rensselaerswijck after Megapolensis moved to New Amsterdam. The problem was that, because of an ongoing, unresolved quarrel with his wife, Grasmeer had left the Netherlands without the proper dismissals and permissions, using his family connections in America to skirt the usual hiring process.[67] His old Alkmaar classis worked with the Amsterdam classis first to stop him and then, when they learned of his departure and appointment, make him return to Europe. In the next months they held a slew of meetings and sent numerous letters and warnings. Do not let Grasmeer officiate in any office, they instructed their American counterparts.[68] More than once they wrote to Governor Stuyvesant, the New Amsterdam consistory, and even the people of Rensselaerswijck, imploring them to end their relationship with Grasmeer and deport him. Four European supporters defended him at North Holland's next synod, blaming the whole fiasco on his allegedly angry, violent wife, but the synod maintained a united front. Finally, almost two years after leaving Holland, Grasmeer succumbed to pressure and gave up his position. With ten months of additional meetings, apologies, a reunion with his wife,

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and on the strength of strong testimonials from colonists, he cleared his name. By that point, though, the Dutch Republic was at war with England, and fearing for his safety, he chose not to risk a third crossing.[69]

The Grasmeer episode was unlike the Doreslaer and Megapolensis episodes in that he was not trying to publish anything questionable. But his story does show again the lengths that the churches of the Netherlands would go to guard and control colonial religion. And in losing Grasmeer, New Netherland suffered a temporary clerical shortage like Brazil's shortage after the Doreslaer/Kesseler departures, each attributable to the church, not the Company. Although Grasmeer had the support of his old consistory in the Netherlands, although his new American congregation was happy with his appointment, none of it was enough. The division between him and his wife and classis—and his evading the usual channels of authority—were violations of such magnitude that the church could not ignore them. No matter one's talents and no matter the distance, it would not tolerate men who escaped the vetting process or flouted printing policies.[70]

## The Limits and Impact of Control

The ability of any institution or any individual in Europe to influence American events only extended so far. To this point I have shown how the churches of the Netherlands successfully quashed Soler's book, but not Doreslaer's, how they first opposed the Megapolensis catechism but either changed their minds or were ignored by the WIC or Megapolensis family. Distance and the diffusion of power in the federalist Dutch state, the Dutch church, and the West India Company did not allow the churches at home to exercise as much control as they clearly would have done under other arrangements.

These limits are illustrated further in the later history of Brazil and New Netherland. In March 1650, just four years before the WIC left Brazil for good, Reverend Johannes Apricius wrote to the High Council from his position among the Tupi Indians to request three dozen ABC books, two dozen psalm books, three dozen Brazilian catechisms, a ream of paper, and ink. The "Brazilian catechisms" could have only been Doreslaer's book, suggesting that, with the passage of time and abatement of the original controversy, colonial clergy were less hesitant to dust off and utilise what their colleagues at home had tried so hard to stop.[71] Likewise, two different sources confirm the use of Megapolensis's catechism in 1661, five years after the church said that the Company had agreed not to publish it. In July 1661 the New Amsterdam consistory charged a new schoolmaster there to "rehearse the youth at once in the questions and principles of the Reverend, godly, and very learned father [Johannes Megapolensis]." A few months later the consistory confirmed that these were not just leftover copies of the first edition of the Megapolensis catechism, because they bore the new title. Clergy were using them then in New Amsterdam, Brooklyn, and for catechisation meetings at the governor's farm, including the instruction of slaves and former slaves.[72] At some point in those five years the

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Company had reversed its position on publication, or perhaps Megapolensis's friends and family, as they had done with his Mohawk book, published the catechism on their own.

The purpose here is not to place the whole responsibility for missionary problems and outcomes on the church, nor even to criticise it for the choices it made. To expect that Dutch Calvinists could have been less worried about their doctrine and less controlling and exclusive is to expect them not to *be* early seventeenth-century Dutch Calvinists. Ultimately there were many additional factors that impacted the mission, from the WIC's late entry in the Atlantic world to the expense of its privateering and wars, from the Portuguese revolt in Brazil to the Company's horrible finances afterward. A lack of experience and missionary tools, indigenous choices, and clerical isolation all played their part as well.

But none of the above can change the fact that the answers to this very religious question are also found in the attitudes and policies of the church that oversaw religious matters in the early Dutch Atlantic. And none of the above were strictly "secular" in nature, divorced from ecclesiastical considerations and influence. On the matter of war, for example, the church tended to support the WIC's belligerent, militaristic, costly approach, so damaging in the end to Dutch interests and the Company's ability to fund missionary projects. Clergy in Brazil also supported reform efforts in that colony and, with their outspoken anti-Catholicism, exacerbated differences between the conquerors and conquered, which contributed to Portuguese discontent in the years before the revolt.[73] As for a lack of experience and tools, they tried to compensate with the translations and publications described in this essay. With those books they were starting to bridge language gaps, overcome cultural barriers, and build a toolkit to meet the demands of very diverse colonies, where memorising the 129 questions and answers of the Heidelberg Catechism in Dutch (or perhaps bad Spanish) was not really a feasible condition for membership. Yet they seemed to meet with more interest, excitement, and encouragement from Company directors than they did from the hesitant clergy of the Netherlands.

At the risk of departing too far from the question of printing, consider also the causes of clerical isolation. That Dutch colonies sometimes experienced clerical shortages, it is true, and sometimes the blame fell on the Company and Company finances. Yet responsibility should have also belonged to the church, not just in the sense described above, when it pressured ministers like Doreslaer, Kesseler, and Grasmeer to relinquish their positions. The church also refused to consider relinquishing its grasp on exams and appointments, rarely allowing colonial clergy and councils to ordain men locally, which colonists did suggest and request from time to time. Local appointments probably would have done more than anything to address shortages and isolation.[74] Nor could the church in New Netherland create a classis. It was no coincidence that the mission in Brazil only began with the formation of a classis. Because of translation needs, printing, travel costs, and other complications, missionary endeavours required intensive planning and coordination. New Netherland finally had enough clergy to consider a classis around the time of Brazil's

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collapse, but the churches at home resisted the idea of colonial councils because of controversies like the one surrounding the trilingual catechism. When a former Brazil minister named Johannes Polhemus complained about communication in New Netherland and suggested a classis, the Amsterdam clergy just instructed him and his colleagues to write to each other more. They would not allow the first American classis (since Brazil's) until the late eighteenth century, more than a hundred years after New Netherland became New York.[75]

Other WIC outposts and colonies had fewer people than Brazil or New Netherland, but the same exclusionary attitudes and issues of control existed there. At Curaçao, Reverend Johannes Backerus decried the "papist superstition" that gripped the hearts of Indian church-goers who had, before the Dutch took the island, been Catholics. He only baptised children because their parents were Christians, he wrote. He did not like doing so when the parents did not really know Protestant doctrines, and he could not imagine "that they are included in God's covenant."[76] Reverend Adriaen Beaumont harboured the same misgivings in 1660 after performing a number of marriages and baptising fifteen children, also on Curaçao. His superiors in Amsterdam responded to his explanations and justifications with a mild rebuke. Adult slaves and Indians must make a confession of faith before baptism, they said. He should not baptise any more children until their parents abandon "heathendom" and embrace the Christian lifestyle in its entirety, *even if parents were previously baptised by Catholics.* In his apology, Beaumont showed the same submissiveness and concern for his career that had driven Doreslaer and Kesseler home from Brazil. In fact he confessed to acting too boldly in this case *because* of Brazil, probably meaning that the ease with which the Dutch had won Tupi converts caused misunderstandings about conversion and Native Americans in general. Now he promised to exercise even more caution in his work with non-Europeans.[77]

Brazil continued to haunt the Dutch long after they lost the colony. The minister who had requested the ABC books and trilingual catechisms from the High Council in 1650, Johannes Apricius, dabbled in the work of Tupi translation for years after he returned to the Netherlands. He first came to the Amsterdam classis three years after Brazil fell, having spent that time among Anglicans—though not participating in certain objectionable Anglican rites, he claimed—on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean. At the same time he handed over his own "Dutch-Brazilian dictionary" and promised to give the classis a translation of the Heidelberg Catechism and a Tupi grammar in the future.[78] Eight years later—in March 1665—he was serving an English congregation in The Hague, still clearly working on the catechism, because he wrote the classis to ask for his dictionary and make additional promises of future manuscripts and publications. More than just a sad, pathetic glance backwards to their missionary glory days, even at that late date Dutchmen like Apricius held on to the hope that they might get some part of Brazil back in negotiations with Portugal or, failing that, create a "new Brazil" in Guyana. Apricius himself led a small group of settlers to a short-lived colony in Guyana in 1675, probably bringing his books and translations with him.[79]

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Whether Dutch ministers in Asia faced the same interference from Dutch Reformed Church authorities in the Netherlands is doubtful. The churches at home still called the large majority of the East India Company's clergy, and they still worried about orthodoxy and sent regular instructions. But again, the church in Asia, based in Batavia, enjoyed more independence than the African clergy and American churches. The Batavian church called itself a synod and, as the name suggests, it became what Recife had only briefly been for the Dutch Atlantic: a decision-making and distribution centre for ecclesiastical supplies and clerical assignments for locally-trained men and newly arrived ministers from Europe.[80] With joint support from the Netherlands and Batavia, the East India Company was able to promote the Dutch Reformed Church and operate extensive missions, especially in island cultures where indigenous power was not as great or where, like the WIC in Brazil, the Company inherited a large, preexisting Christian population. For instance, after taking the island of Ceylon from the Portuguese, the Dutch faced the daunting task of providing worship services for the 250,000 Catholics already living there. Starting with just one minister and five lay clergy, by the end of the seventeenth century they had as many as thirteen ordained ministers who oversaw the instruction of 38,000 children in 119 schools. Their task was made easier by a locally-created, simplified catechism of the type that Soler and Doreslaer tried to make for Brazil and Megapolensis for New Netherland, approved and printed in this case in Batavia, not the Netherlands.[81]

The West India Company was founded right after the great religious divisions of the early seventeenth century, at a moment of Calvinist ascendance and power. The church was at that point extra sensitive to anything that smacked of heterodoxy and any apparent challenge to its newly settled and accepted doctrines. Books posed one of the greatest threats because of their portability and durability, not to mention their use in teaching. If controlling the presses was impossible in Europe, the church could at least stop some unwanted publications in Africa and America, which did not have printing presses and depended on the church at home for most of their ecclesiastical needs. Unfortunately for the colonial churches and the interests of the Calvinist mission in general, their colleagues saw threats and enemies even among those who should have been friends, among those who were simply trying to cope with a situation for which they had no experience and no missionary traditions and tools. The great irony of the situation is that Calvinists had split with Catholics during the Reformation in part to escape the hierarchical, top-down arrangement of power. Ultimately their suspicious, anxious, meticulous management of colonial affairs was an obstacle to planting their religion in the Atlantic world.

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## Notes

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1 Schalkwijk, *Igreja e Estado.* The book was translated and published in English (and used for this essay) as Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church.* He covers the trilingual catechism in chap. 11. For religion in Brazil, see also Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil,* and De Mello, *Nederlanders in Brazilië.*

2 NA OWIC 8:368.

3 SAA ACA 4 (25 February, 8 April, 1 July 1641); NA, archive of the Dordrecht classis 83, article 13 (1 July–3 August 1641).

4 Noorlander, "Serving God and Mammon," 57–62.

5 For printing and books in the Dutch Atlantic, see Edelman, *Dutch Language Press*; Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*; van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic*; Jacobs, *The Colony,* 221–3; and the limited literature on education in New Netherland: Kilpatrick, *Dutch Schools*; Gehring and Zeller, eds., *Education in New Netherland.* For the production and publication of maps, see Zandvliet, *Mapping for Money.*

6 Harline, *Pamphlets,* 131.

7 Harline, *Pamphlets,* 1–22, chaps. 4–6; Weekhout, *Boekencensuur.* High literacy rates and political and religious interest among a large reading public also contributed to the proliferation of printing. See Spufford, "Literacy, Trade and Religion." On the difficulty of controlling the print media, see van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic.*

8 Edelman, *Dutch Language Press.* For printing and its regulation in English colonies, see Hall, *Cultures of Print,* chaps. 3–4; Amory and Hall, *History of the Book.* The Dutch tried once to found a press in Brazil, but it came to naught. See van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic,* 4.

9 Noorlander, "Serving God and Mammon," 261–2.

10 For some notable exceptions, see the titles listed in note 5. Schmidt's and van Groesen's books both show the reception and impact of Dutch Atlantic colonies in the Netherlands (via print). Some scholarship also exists on individual seventeenth-century publications. See, for example, Safier, "Beyond Brazilian Nature," and Eekhout, "The Mauritius."

11 The "neglect" theme is old, beginning with angry settlers in the seventeenth century. See the remonstrance in Corwin, *Ecclesiastical Records,* 1:254–60 (hereafter *ERSNY*). For the repetition of the idea in modern scholarship, see Brodhead, *History,* 224; Elias, *Voorspel,* 122; van Dillen, "West-Indische Compagnie"; Smith, *Religion and Trade*; Smith, "Guilders and Godliness"; Condon, *New York,* 116–43; Nissenson, *Patroon's Domain,* 156–60; van der Zee, *Sweet and Alien Land,* 9, 40–1, 494; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson,* 77, 92, 228–9; and Rink, "Private Interest."

12 NA OWIC 59:40.

13 Van Deursen, *Bavianen,* 227–74; Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam,* 1:216–50; Bangs, "Dutch Theology." Because Arminians elaborated their views in a written appeal to the States General, they were labelled Remonstrants and their opponents Contra-Remonstrants, which is often used

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interchangeably with "Calvinist." My use of Calvinist and Calvinism is for clarity's sake, since Contra-Remonstrant and Contra-Remonstrantism are wordy and confusing to readers who are not familiar with these events.

14 Ibid. (all titles). For the banning of Arminian books, see Weekhout, *Boekencensuur,* 43–44.

15 Van Hoboken, "Dutch West India Company"; Noorlander, "Maintenance"; Noorlander, *Heaven's Wrath.*

16 Hundreds of exams are scattered throughout SAA AKA 3–7; SAA ACA 3–7, 157–58, 163–65. I describe them in more detail in "Serving God and Mammon," chap. 3, and *Heaven's Wrath,* chap. 1.

17 For the *formulierboek,* see SAA ACA 32. See the Walcheren book in ZA ACW 45—though the Walcheren classis did not ask Indies ministers to sign until the 1650s.

18 The North Holland synod thought *ziekentroosters* should sign: *ERSNY* 1:79–81; the church in Rotterdam did make them sign. See Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, archive of the Rotterdam consistory 1a and 1d (both at the back of the book). Enkhuizen might have done the same: SAA ACA 3:120. For "instructions," see SAA ACA 19 (9 Sepember 1632).

19 The first book arrangements are found in SAA AKA 5:136.

20 NA OWIC 68 (23 February 1638).

21 For Udemans's book in the Dutch Atlantic, see NA OWIC 23:128, 180; and the booklist at NA OWIC 60:80. For Asia, see the Westfries Archief, archive of the Hoorn consistory 584 (6 and 13 November 1642). Another example of a minister gifting books to the Company is found in NA OWIC 21:62.

22 WIC book lists consulted for what follows include Ratelband, *Vijf Dagregisters,* 367–9; ZA ACW 73 (1624 list); NA OWIC 53:26; NA OWIC 60:80; and *ERSNY* 1:155.

23 NA OWIC 68 (23 November 1640); ZA ACW 73 (17 October 1641); SAA ACA 157:75–6.

24 Also appropriate for the WIC was the sermon on violence/war. See Bullinger, *Huys-boeck,* 64–8.

25 Havermans, *Christelijcke gebeden,* 307–11.

26 SAA ACA 157 (5 August and 4 October 1639, 13 August 1640, 6 August 1641, 8 October 1641, 25 February and 19 August 1642, 5 April and 30 October 1645).

27 For De Vries, see *Korte historiael,* 17–18. For Selyns, see *ERSNY* 1:487–89. See also Spranckhuysen, *Triumphe,* 56; Teellinck, *Ecce Homo,* 4–12.

28 SAA ACA 210:214–17; and 158:92.

29 Van Hille, *Ziekentroost.* For prayers, see Havermans, *Christelijcke gebeden,* 144–47, 319–23, 354–63. See also De Niet, *Ziekentroosters.*

30 NA, archive of the States General II 5759, 209–24; Cau, *Groot placaet-boeck,* 626–54. For the *provoost,* see Ketting, *Leven,* 103–6, 188. For "summarily dismissed," see Westfries Archief, Hoorn consistory 584 (3 May 1629).

31 General histories of Brazil include Boxer, *Dutch Brazil,* and De Mello, *Nederlanders in Brazilië.* See also van Groesen, *Legacy* and *Amsterdam's Atlantic.* Total numbers of clergy (and locations) are my own calculations. See Noorlander, "Serving God and Mammon," chap. 3.

32 Noorlander, "Reformers."

33 NA OWIC 21:86.

34 Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church,* 152–67. For the bookshelves, see NA OWIC 70 (16 January 1645).

35 SAA ACA 4:65.

36 NA OWIC 51:85.

37 NA OWIC 68 (2 July 1636). For the Tupi experience and motives, see Hemmings, *Red Gold,* chaps. 2–5, 7; Meuwese, "For the Peace and Well-Being of the Country," especially chaps. 1–2; Meuwese, "Dutch Calvinism"; De Mello, *Nederlanders,* chap. 4.

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38 Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church,* 88–92. For the Dutch classis system, see van Deursen, *Bavianen,* 5–7; van den Broeke, *Geschiedenis van de classis.*
39 Utrechts Archief, archive of the Utrecht synod 212:5–16. See also De Mello, "Vincent Joachim Soler," and Teensma, "Brazilian Letters."
40 SAA ACA 163:28, 30–32.
41 Ibid., as well as SAA ACA 163:33 ("dangerous") and NA OWIC 23:106. Once again, because of the slippery way the Dutch used the word "Spanish," it is not clear if the new catechisms were in Spanish or Portuguese.
42 Utrechts Archief, Utrecht synod 212:25–32.
43 NA OWIC 68 (10 October 1639); NA OWIC 55:116.
44 Noorlander, "Maintenance."
45 SAA ACA 4:230. For Abraham (a delegate to the Synod of Dordrecht), see also *Biografisch Lexicon* 4:121–2.
46 Joosse writes a bit about this campaign in *Scoone Dingen,* chap. 5. See also Noorlander, *Heaven's Wrath,* chap. 1.
47 These issues appear in the North and South Holland synodal minutes (and other synodal minutes) over a matter of years. See especially the 1642 communication of various churches to the States General at NA, archive of the Teding van Berkhout family 121; and the records of the four corresponding synods at Utrechts Archief, Oud Synodaal Archief 321:29–40 (3–8 May 1642).
48 For the Amsterdam/Walcheren position on the national council, see, for example, ZA ACW 3:33.
49 Though it took some time afterward for all the synods to accept it, the final plan or agreement for overseeing foreign churches was worked out between North and South Holland in 1642. See Noord-Hollands Archief, archive of the North Holland synod 4 (12 August 1642).
50 SAA ACA 163:91; 157:61, 63–64, 67.
51 SAA ACA 163:96–99.
52 SAA ACA 157:79, 90–92; 4:268. For Doreslaer's return, see NA OWIC 69 (26 November 1642); NA, Dordrecht classis 83, article 12 (6–25 July 1643); Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church,* 221–3.
53 SAA ACA 4:312; NA OWIC 69 (2 February 1643); 58:268. Johan Maurits said he could have persuaded Kesseler to stay in Brazil if not for the controversy.
54 NA OWIC 69 (18 November 1642), 60:80 (9 June 1645). Schalkwijk and van Groesen interpret the book list the same way. See Schalkwijk, *Reformed Church,* 223; van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic,* 117.
55 Klooster, "Place of New Netherland," in Goodfriend, *Revisiting.* General histories of the colony include Jacobs, *Colony*; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*; Shorto, *Island.*
56 Noord-Hollands Archief, archive of the Alkmaar classis 3:42. See also *ERSNY* 1:146. Gerald de Jong wrote a brief biography of Megapolensis in "Dominie Johannes Megapolensis." For the colony's religious history, see Haefeli, *New Netherland*; Smith, *Religion and Trade*; De Jong, *Dutch Reformed Church.*
57 *ERSNY* 1:155–6. For van Rensselaer and his village/patroonship, see Venema, *Kiliaen van Rensselaer.*
58 For Bogardus, see Frijhoff, *Wegen.*
59 Megapolensis, "A Short Account," in Jameson, *Narratives,* 172–8. The original Dutch title was *Een Kort Ontwerp, vande Mahakvase Indiaenen, haer Landt / Tale / Statuere / Dracht / Godes-dienst ende Magistrature* (Alkmaar, 1644).
60 Van der Donck, *Description,* 36.
61 Gehring, *Correspondence, 1647–1653,* 89; *ERSNY* 1:276.
62 Gehring, *Correspondence, 1647–1653,* 209; SAA ACA 5:201–2; *ERSNY* 1:287, 296. For Kesseler on the Indies committee, see also SAA ACA 157:235.
63 SAA ACA 157:353.
64 *ERSNY* 1:326–27.
65 SAA ACA 157:353; SAA ACA 6:13. For the title, see van der Linde, *Old First,* 31.
66 SAA ACA 157:357–9; *ERSNY* 1:348–52.

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67 The story unfolded in Grasmeer's classis: Noord-Hollands Archief, Alkmaar classis 4 (27 November 1647 to 16 April 1652). See also the 23 November 1649 letter about Grasmeer in the same collection, inventory no. 20.

68 SAA ACA 164:93–94. For this and what follows, see also SAA ACA 5:151, 198; 157:134; 164:64–5, 97–8, 99–101, 102–4; Noord-Hollands Archief, North Holland synod 4 (16 August 1650, 15 August 1651, 12 August 1652); Westfries Archief, archive of the Enkhuizen classis 2 (28 July 1652).

69 Some of these Grasmeer sources are also available in *ERSNY.* See 1:272–3, 284, 288–95, 307.

70 Two other examples are Machiel Zyperus and Petrus Wachtendorp, both of whom were investigated and kept from colonial callings. For Zyperus, see SAA ACA 157:415, 425, 432–3; 224:11–13, 17–21. For Wachtendorp, see SAA ACA 213 (1661); SAA ACA 6:265, 268, 301–2, 345, 371; 157:435; 158:4–5.

71 NA OWIC 74 (18 March 1650).

72 Van der Linde, *Old First,* 23, 31. For black Christianity (and the governor's farm), see Bonomi, "Swarms of Negroes"; Goodfriend, "Black Families."

73 Noorlander, "Reformers."

74 Utrechts Archief, Utrecht synod 212:5–16. See also SAA ACA 4:347–9.

75 SAA ACA 6:336; *ERSNY* 1:525–6, 533–4; SAA ACA 158:14–15. See also De Jong, *Reformed Church,* chap. 11.

76 NA OWIC 24:4–5; SAA ACA 4:335. Calvinist restrictions on heathen baptism and marriage were not new: See SAA AKA 4:309; Gehring, *Curacao Papers,* 5; *Livre Synodal,* 13 September 1656, article 19.

77 SAA ACA 157:415, 425, 432–3; 224:11–13, 17–21; 6:229.

78 SAA ACA 6:59.

79 SAA ACA 6:366. Henk den Heijer disagrees with me on the import of religion, but for Apricius in Guyana, see Den Heijer, "Over warme en koude landen," 84. For Dutch-Portuguese negotiations, see van de Haar, *Diplomatieke betrekkingen.*

80 The most thorough overview of the Dutch church in Asia is van Troostenburg de Bruyn, *Hervormde Kerk.*

81 Koolen, *Seer Bequaem Middel,* 186, 192–200; Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power,* chap. 10. For Batavia's publishing history, see Zuiderweg, "Nieuwsgaring in Batavia." For other missions, see van Troostenburg de Bruyn, *Hervormde Kerk*; Joosse, *Scoone Dingen*; Kuepers, *Dutch Reformed Church.* They are not strictly about religion, but one also gets a sense of Dutch mission in Asia in Niemeijer, *Batavia*; Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*; Knaap, *Kruidnagelen.*

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