The Twentieth Century
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# 1 From the cradle to the grave (1914-1941)

## 1.1 The First World War and its consequences

### 1.1.1 World War I

When war broke out in August 1914, Europe was divided into the two warring camps of the Central Powers and the Allies, while a number of countries remained neutral, including the Netherlands. The Russian Revolution and the entry of the United States into the conflict, both in 1917, caused a shift in the static front line of the war, and on November 11, 1918 this culminated in an armistice. According to the peace concluded in the Treaty of Versailles (1919), Germany was declared guilty of causing the war. Many a dynastic house disappeared from the scene. Constitutional democracy became a common political system in Europe, but in addition to Russian communism another alternative presented itself from 1922 onward, namely Italian fascism.

The Netherlands suffered economically from the war, but remained neutral. This contrast with the warring neighbors distracted the attention to the fact that the Netherlands in its mental and cultural outlook, experienced the same the impact as the countries involved in the war. The dominant impression that this war produced was one of moral and political dislocation as well as meaninglessness. For this reason, the war had an impact on Christianity in Europe, which lost its self-evidence. Alongside the anti-Christian communism the rampant bloodshed (Herman Bavinck: 'The battlefield has become a slaughterhouse'), warfare with gas, tanks and aircraft declared from the rooftops that Christian civilization had been swept away by a modernity of the masses and mechanization. The moral order of Christianity seemed defenseless against the realization of futility and emptiness, classically expressed in Erich Maria Remarque's story of the front lines, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (*Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1928).

In the decade after the war, the effect of the First World War was visible in the Netherlands. Between 1909 and 1930 the unchurched tripled to 14 percent. While other churches between 1920 and 1930, retained about the same percentage of the Dutch population, the Netherlands Reformed Church (whose members we will call Netherlands Reformed or Reformed) lost almost 7 percent. Church attendance had a temporary rebound in the first phase of the war, but quickly returned to the status quo. The churches did not choose sides, but prayed for peace. The war strengthened the eschatological sensibility and prompted a call for repentance, but the churches did not consider the war as an indictment of Christianity, though theologians did worry about its proximity and cruelty. As a pacifist the Reformed minister Bart de Ligt was considered an eccentric, and as a Christian-socialist almost a traitor. After the attempted revolution by the Social Democratic leader P.J. Troelstra (1860-1930) in 1918, the Christian Netherlands expressed their allegiance en masse to Queen Wilhelmina and the existing social order. Dutch nationalism retained a Christian color and the Social Democrats were not *salonfähig* until the thirties.

### 1.1.2 The Cultural Change

Entering the First World War, Europe left behind almost half a century of peace and prosperity. Since the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, Europe had been free from armed conflict, and after the rebound from the economic crisis of the seventies Europe was the cultural center of the world. Communication improved rapidly: the telegraph and telephone, along with the steam locomotive and steamship, allowed the world to be viewed clearly as a whole for the first time. Many were working hard to bring the blessings of this European culture elsewhere in the world; a strong development of missions and missionary endeavors

gave ample testimony to this. Around 1900 the ideal prevailed that within a generation the gospel would be preached all around the world. The Netherlands also had been consumed by this spirit of globalization and idealism: the Kuyper cabinet (1901-1905) promulgated an ethical policy for the colonies, the worldwide association of Protestant missionary students was established in 1896 and got a Dutch department, the NCSV, and Abraham Kuyper's conviction that God had not abandoned this world despite the its Fall and corruption, but rather had left many good and beautiful things intact ('common grace'), was rooted firmly in the former attitude to life. World War I dispensed with this optimism.

Also in the Netherlands the awareness dawned that the sweet world of goodness before 1914 was over definitely, and that modern culture had broken its orbit, and now seemed adrift. From where should the new rules come, now that modernity had declared Christianity bankrupt? What would be left of social ranks and bourgeois culture, when they were crushed, as became a reality in the Russian revolution of 1917? Christianity was not outside this cultural shift, but was abundantly part of it: it was *Christian* morality that was declared bankrupt; it was the *Christian* worldview that went under. Even when the minister or the priest did not bother their church members and parishioners with all these new questions, they were eventually impossible to avoid.

For the nineteenth-century, the world was knowable, describable, was explainable and had been manageable. But Einstein disproved the classical laws of nature with his theory of relativity, Freud undermined it with his theory about the uncontrollable morality, Bergson questioned the objectivity of time, and Nietzsche broke with the assumption that there was one fixed meaning for a word. The modern worldview that had broken through had three characteristics that strongly distinguished it from the old one: it was dynamic, that is, there were no fixed benchmarks any more, such as reason or revelation; it was not clear, that is, there proved to be not one axiom that could claim general validity; and it needed manipulation, that is, in a certain sense it was acceptable for a person to create his own worldview. For the generations of the 1920s, this break with the familiar idiom was very drastic. The contact with reality was radically disrupted. Since then the device was: Look, you do not see what you see, and read, but it is not what it says. How could one live without certainties?

### 1.1.3 Churches and cultural change

The churches sought for an understanding with this new world. It was not just achieving the right tone, it was a new language, because modern culture could no longer be classified as Christian. The attempt of the young modern theologian K.H. Roessingh to relate church and culture, spoke to young people. Liberalism — as theological modernism was now called — in the years of the Great War emphatically chose in favor of church and tradition. The NCSV and the Liberal Christian Student Union (*Vrijzinnig Christelijke Studenten Bond*) focused stronger on society, with a certain sympathy for the social democracy, and maintained an open attitude towards other beliefs. Also many Calvinist students expressed a stronger civic engagement than was customary up to this point among the Calvinists, and young ministers, such as K.H. Miskotte and K. Schilder reflected on modern social ideas.

But within Protestant churches as a whole there was a marginal social commitment. The Netherlands Reformed Church with its more or less organized tendencies was a was a divided house. Dissatisfied with this situation, under the leadership of the theologian Th.L. Haitjema (1888-1972) and in the spirit of Hoedemaker, the Confessionals (of the *Confessionele Vereniging*) proposed the reorganization of the administrative structure of the Reformed Church, an endeavor other tendencies eventually got involved in as well. In this context there was little attention for society and its moral caliber. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (whose members we will call Calvinists) warned against an 'ungodly spirit' in society and the smaller denominations displayed the same picture of shielding themselves and orienting inward. Here and there, however, there arose in Protestant circles a focus on the engagement of Christianity with socialism. In 1902, some liberal ministers established the movement The Joyful World, while in 1908 the

Woodbrookers organized themselves, an allied organization of alumni from the Woodbrooke Quaker center in England. This resulted in 1919 in the Work Community of Woodbrookers (*Arbeids Gemeenschap der Woodbrookers*), with a conference center at Barchem. In 1931 a small Dutch branch of the Quakers from England was organized. In these circles, where dialogue between worldviews was strongly emphasized, William Banning (1888-1971), a Reformed minister and religious socialist, played a major role.

The Protestants presented no comprehensive vision of society in response to comprehensive social-democratic ideas. Many held to the idea postulated by Kuyper of the respective responsibility of government, school, business, church, and other groups in society. This idea was systematized and elaborated in the twenties by the Free University (VU)-philosopher H. Dooyeweerd. But precisely in the socio-economic sphere, where the social-democratic commitment to corporate socialization stimulated the formation of ideas, his elaboration was perceived as too rigid. The Roman Catholics, however, did develop a comprehensive vision. Backed by the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and later *Quadragesimo anno* (Pius XI, 1931), they strove for a strongly corporative organization of society inspired by the medieval guild system: there should be no class struggle, but cooperation between the classes (solidarity). Some considered Fascist Italy or at least the corporative Portugal under the Salazar dictatorship as examples. Such social views were expressed at the Roman Catholic Trade College (*R.K. Handelshogeschool*) in Tilburg, established in 1927 by the leading economist J. H. Cobbenhagen, as well as at the Technical College in Delft by the young *enfant terrible* of the Roman Catholic State Party (*R.K. Staatspartij*), J.A. Veraart.

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1.2 Social issue, trade unions and class organizations

Meanwhile the emerging industrialization ofthe late nineteenth century persisted: in 1930 more than a third of the labor force was occupied in the industrial sector and more than 40 percent in the service sector. Mechanization and rationalization had demonstrated their ‘success’ in the war, and in the postwar economy led to scale-up and massiveness. In reaction to the social democratic attempt to lure away the Christian workers, the churches and Christian social organizations closed ranks. Troelstra's failed revolution attempt was helpful in this respect. They attempted to fight the excesses of the capitalist system by seeking harmonious labor relations. During the administration of the Catholic Prime Minister Ch. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, it seemed a short time that the Labor Minister P. J. M. Aalberse would support the creation of statutory trade organizations (PBO) for joint consultation of employers and employees — with the government as a third partner. Veraart announced in 1919 in an Easter Manifesto to advance the creation of a Roman Catholic Central Board of Companies. In Protestant circles, H. Amelink and P. S. Gerbrandy, among others, strove for employee participation, although Dooyeweerd resisted the position that besides social participation also economic participation belonged to workers’ rights. He called it ‘legally sanctioned theft’. Employers helped to kill this initiative at every step. Protestant politicians offered no alternative but developed a legal framework to protect employees against the harsh economic laws, such as the consultative body of the government and business, the Supreme Council of Labor (1919), the Health Act (1929) and the Shop Hours Act (1930). Only in 1950 the Industrial Trade Act (Law on the PBO) was established.

Questions about the economic balance of power were awakened by the growing self-consciousness of the employees and this consciousness did not halt at the threshold of the churches. In the First World War, the Netherlands had to cope with mass unemployment due to the disruption of economic structure. The ecclesial poor relief (*diaconie*) was based on a paternalistic approach toward the 'poor', but the new category of skilled unemployed did not accept this approach. They resorted to the public poor relief or, as in the First World War, the Royal National Support Committee (*Koninklijk Nationaal Steuncomité*), which did not maintain any moral stance towards unemployed. The poor relief and deacons did not have sufficient means to cope with mass unemployment. In the twenties the conviction in Christian political and diaconal circles grew that the government should have an important role in poor relief. Roman Catholic St. Vincent Associations and Protestant social welfare work were considered a safety net for those who fell through the cracks of the public poor relief.

The significance of the class-based organizations and trade unions in the daily lives of the employees rose sharply in the interwar period. Especially the Catholic rank and trade organizations created an immense structure of youth organizations (The Young Watch, St. Joseph Companions), course work, insurances (Concordia), savings (Central People's Bank), press (Lumax, the *Volkskrant*), convalescent homes and sanatoriums. The Protestant and socialist unions also built a network of services and care. The unions grew considerably in the interwar period, in part due to their unemployment insurances in the thirties. In 1925 there were 498,000 employees affiliated with a trade union, in 1930 there were 625,000, in 1935, 752,000. The share of the Protestant CNV was respectively 27 percent, 21 percent and 22 percent, respectively, of the Roman Catholic RKWV 18 percent, 21 percent and 24 percent. But with 37 percent and two times 40 percent, the socialist NVV undeniably was the largest union. As for the structure, tasks and activities the CNV looked more like the NVV (of which also Protestants were members) than the RKWV, which as we saw was a double structure of rank and trade organizations. Opposed to social democratic views regarding a greater role of the state in social and economic life and to the Nazist pursuit of a corporate state, the CNV stressed the primacy of corporations in society. In July 1941, the CNV and the RKWV were nazified by the Germans. The members of the CNV then partly abandoned the union, but by direction of the bishops the members of the Catholic League pledged their membership en masse.

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1.3 Education

In the constitutional amendment of 1917 private education (*bijzonder onderwijs*) gained equal financial rights with public education (*openbaar onderwijs)* and since then both have completely equal legal status. Participation in education strongly increased in the interwar. The share of private education grew at the expense of public education, so the former eclipsed the latter in 1925. In 1930 a quarter of school children attended a Protestant and more than a third a Catholic primary school.

New legislation on industrial and agricultural education also was a major impetus for private education. Private industrial education offered the opportunity to form young workers in a Christian — read: anti-socialist — spirit. The Catholic and Protestant agricultural organizations founded agricultural winter schools and agricultural domestic schools during the twenties. As a result the modernization of agriculture (fertilizers and modern machines) took effect within their own religious philosophy and did not influence the traditional class thinking much.

For the Protestant part of the population, the growth of private schools meant a reinforcement of their identity. The Catholics also took their identity seriously. This identity needed hardly development: the primary and secondary schools were entirely led and staffed by sisters, brothers, and priests. But for the Catholic part of the population private education also offered the opportunity of intellectual emancipation. Poelhekke, director of a (public) HBS, gave the go-ahead in 1899, and since then in Catholic circles the number of secondary schoolchildren, students and professors was utilized for many decades as a bench-mark of their social emancipation.

Pedagogics made an entrance in education at the turn of the century. The GKN theologian Herman Bavinck pointed out the necessity of Christian pedagogy and didactics. Once introduced into private education, this theme became a central concern: teacher college education professionalized and there were educational journals and associations (Pedagogical Journal for Christian Education (*Paedagogisch Tijdschrift voor for Christelijke Onderwijs*, 1909), Association for Christian Pedagogy (*Vereeniging voor Christelijke Paedagogiek*, 1916), Journal of Psychology and Educational Teaching (*Tijdschrift voor Zielkunde en Opvoedingsleer*, 1918), *Dux* (1927)). Among Catholics the Brothers of Tilburg played a leading role with their own Roman Catholic Boys Orphanage publishing house (*R.K. Jongensweeshuis*, later Publishing House Zwijsen). Shortly after the First World War the first professors of pedagogy were appointed at five Dutch universities, among whom the Reformed Ph.A. Kohnstamm and the Calvinist J. Waterink developed a Christian pedagogy.

The Free University (VU) grew in the interwar period from approximately 200 students at the end of the First World War to over 600 in 1940. Her law professors occupied important social and political functions. In 1930 the university was expanded with a mathematics and natural sciences faculty. In the twenties the professors H. Dooyeweerd (1894-1977) and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven (1892-1978) developed a Calvinist philosophy (after a book title of Dooyeweerd also known as The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (*Wijsbegeerte der wetsidee*)), which offered a systematic elaboration of some of Kuyper's insights and intended to ground Christian scholarship by taking due account of the religious root of existence. In the interwar period the theological faculty was the largest faculty, but it harmed its position within the

university by involvement in conflicts within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. The Roman Catholic University at Nijmegen, founded in 1923, also had a theological faculty, in addition to faculties of law, arts, and Philosophy. The theological faculty was not born out of idealism, but from a lack of money. The university would have preferred to have a medical faculty, but the St. Radboud Foundation could not fund that endeavor. The theological faculty would continue until 1964 in a kind of neglected step-child relationship, with doctoral studies for priests only. Nevertheless, teaching at the University of Nijmegen was, like that of the VU, steeped in religion, but in this case Neo-Thomistic philosophy. In 1936, more or less analogous to the Radboud Foundation, established in 1905, which in the meantime had four endowed chairs, the Society for Calvinistic philosophy (*Vereeniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte*) was founded. This society, however, did not establish particular professorships at different universities until after World War II.

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1.4 Politics

1.4.1 Political power

The constitution amendment of 1917 exchanged the constituency voting system for memebers of the House of representatives for universal suffrage for men and passive suffrage for women; in 1919 active suffrage for women followed. The number of voters in 1918 increased from one million to one and a half million. The confessional parties and the Social Democrats were well equipped for this latest installment of the franchise, especially since they benefitted most of the expansion of their electorate whom they had succeeded in mobilizing and retaining. The liberals, even the left-liberals, to whom these changes were due in part, had not succeeded in speaking to these new groups of voters. In the re-organized social life of the interwar period the liberals played a ancillary role only.

**Comment [g1]:** Hoofdlettergebruik is niet consistent, ook inzake protestant, anti-revolutionary, synod, encyclieken, boektitels, etc.
Hetzelfde geldt voor de gedachtestreepjes in beide hoofdstukken, soms lang, soms kort, soms met en soms zonder spaties.

The Catholics managed to keep their voters mostly together in one party, but the Protestants spread their discord out for all to see in many parties: the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) with Kuyperian-Calvinist followers, the Christian Historical Union (CHU) with conservative, especially Netherlands Reformed supporters, the smaller Political Reformed Party (*Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij*: SGP) of pietistic Calvinists and, derived from the ARP, the progressive Christian-Democratic Union (CDU) as well as several other splinter parties inspired in part by Christian social ideals. The Catholics were the largest party in the House with 30 of 100 seats. Taken as a group, the confessional parties had the majority in the interwar elections. They formed the Ruijs de Beerenbrouck cabinet (1918-1922), the first government led by a Catholic Prime Minister. Due to his tactful behavior, he succeeded in naturalizing this novelty in a nation with a Protestant signature.

The confessional parties ruled, together with one of the liberal parties, virtually throughout the interwar period. The resolution of the School Struggle — the main reason for confessional party formation — did not mean the end of the 'ecclesial' parties. The society remained organized along religious lines.

The political power of the religious parties was reflected in the appointment policy of the government and the Christian stamp they and the liberals impressed on society. The Social Democrats and other anti-bourgeois parties had to conform to this pattern. The SDAP, which represented slightly less than a quarter of the electorate, shifted in the thirties its criterion of class to disposition and in this way joined in the ideological palette of society. The Plan of Labor, focused on the whole society, was a clear evidence of this change, which was sealed with its accession to the De Geer-cabinet in 1939.

1.4.2 Party Formation

The growing social and religious self-consciousness manifested itself especially in the internal tensions of the ARP and the creation of new parties. In the parliamentary elections of 1918 the ARP lost three seats to three splinter parties, which considered the policy of the ARP insufficiently Calvinist, social or democratic. In 1926 the newly established CDU joined this criticism of the ARP, added anti-militarism in 1929 to its party positions and acquired one seat in 1933 and two in 1937.

Despite the view on society as a 'temptation' the Reformed Congregations (*Gereformeerden Gemeenten*) came nevertheless to participation in this society with the establishment of the Political Reformed Party (*Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij*, SGP) in 1918. Rev. G.H. Kersten (1882-1948) wanted to convince his circle not only to oppose unbelief in the church but also in society. The ARP was rejected by these pietistic Calvinists, partly because of Kuyper's view — adopted by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands — that the state should not use its power to settle religious disputes. According to the SGP, the state had to defend Calvinist doctrine. Additionally the party resisted compulsory vaccination, social legislation, cooperation with Catholics, and the participation of women in politics. The ARP had also defended this position on women and advocated for head of household suffrage, but relinquished this position after the introduction of active women's suffrage. With 26,000 votes (0.9 percent) in 1922, the party won a seat in the House, which was occupied by Kersten. In 1925 a second seat was won at a doubling of votes, and a third in 1929. The SGP hit the bull's eye especially among voters in the Dutch Bible Belt, which runs from the Zeeland islands through the river regions and the province of Utrecht and over the Veluwe to Overijssel, where some 90 percent of its voters lived, mainly from the Reformed Alliance in the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Congregations. SGP's finest hour came in 1925 when a motion by Kersten, presented to abolish the embassy to the Pope, was adopted, and as a result the first Colijn-cabinet (1925-1926) collapsed.
In the interwar period the ARP had great difficulty to stay outside theological and ecclesial quarrels. These created tensions in the party and sometimes resulted in splits. Alongside the SGP two other parties were founded with similar objections to the ARP: the Calvinist Reformed State Party (*Hervormde (Gereformeerde) Staatspartij*) and the Christian National Action (*Christelijke Nationale Actie*).

Additionally, besides the perspective that the new political system of 1917 provided for independent party formation (little over 25,000 votes were sufficient at this time for a seat in the House), the debate provoked by the naturalization of Catholicism and the rise communism, fascism and national socialism regarding the foundations of society, was an important explanation for this proliferation within the Protestant political yard.

A Catholic political party was formally established in 1926, when the League of Roman Catholic Voters Associations (*Bond van R.K. Kiesvereenigingen*) was liquidated in favor of the new Roman Catholic State Party (*R.K. Staatspartij*: RKSP) — a name popularly used for long for the League (*Bond*). The Catholics did not have offshoot parties to the same degree as the Protestants — the political unity of the Catholic population was strongly promoted by the Church leadership — but because the RKSP was considered to represent all Catholics, regardless of rank or class, there was always a group who felt misunderstood and for some years founded a separate party. Due to lack of success and lured by a few concessions from the RKSP they returned to the mother party. Examples were the Catholic-Democratic Party (a coalition of dissident electoral associations, 1901), the New Catholic Party (1921) and RC People's Party (1922), which in 1933 merged with the newly founded Catholic Democratic League to the Catholic Democratic Party.

**Comment [g2]:** Zouden we al die dubbele ee's er niet uitgooien? Wat moet een buitenlander met die originele spelwijze en we zijn er toch al niet consequent in?

1.4.3 Church and Political Party

Most Protestant parties had no ecclesiastical connection and abstained from a preference for one of the denominations. The Netherlands Reformed Church kept politics on a distance, but there were many informal relations between the GKN (*Gereformeerde Kerken*) and the ARP; party leader Hendrikus Colijn (1869-1944) was highly regarded in the GKN and spoke at church gatherings. Church members who voted for another, usually Christian, party did not count for much. The close ties with the GKN often provided discomfort for the ARP, since for party members from other denominations this was a reason to claim also a place on the ballot for candidates from their affiliation. Part of the Netherlands Reformed voted CHU (although party leader Lohman was a member of the GKN), but most had different political sympathies. Netherlands Reformed constituents voted for the ARP, but also for the various liberal and Protestant splinter groups as well as for the Socialist SDAP, especially after its transition to a dispositional socialism in the thirties. Members of the Christian Reformed Churches voted mostly for the ARP or SGP whereas members of the Reformed Congregations and other small Calvinist denominations primarily voted for the SGP. The CDU was associated with the small Reformed Churches in Restored Union (*Gereformeerde Kerken in Hersteld Verband*, created in 1926), but the party found its supporters mainly in various other Calvinist churches.

The bishops dedicated themselves, as stated, fully to a unified Catholic party and kept a close watch on its orthodoxy. The Catholic politicians in turn sought therefore — to the extent their Catholic conscience would allow them — to keep a proper distance.

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## 1.5 Fascism, National Socialism, and Anti-Semitism

### 1.5.1 Social Criticism

The Protestant churches placed little emphasis on social engagement. They did not involve themselves in social issues and their social organizations did not interfere in ecclesiastical and theological questions. Neither did Catholic organizations, but the Catholic Church leaders for their part kept a close watch on the social organization of the faithful entrusted to them. In Netherlands Reformed circles a concern prevailed for the disintegration of society as a result of a ideology based organization of social activities (*verzuiling*), while among Catholic youth this compartmentalization was criticized for its superficiality and lukewarmness. Among a minority criticism of the lack of inspiration grew – they longed for an inspired faith and a vibrant engagement in society. 'Greatness of soul is not a necessary consequence of a lazily accepted heritage', judged the Catholic writer Jan Engelman. There was sympathy for a different relationship between church and organization, either tighter or looser. The Catholic intellectual elite, the 'youngsters' and their journals, did not keep silent: *Vocation* (*Roeping*), *The Community* (*De Gemeenschap*), and writers and poets such as Engelman, Pieter van der Meer de Walcheren, the brothers Gerard and Henri Bruning, Anton van Duinkerken and Henk and Louis Kuitenbrouwer (pseudonym: Albert Kuyle).

Moreover, the need for a different form of cohesion was alive and well in broader circles in society. The choice of the already well organized social democrats for a dispositional socialism was a token of it, but so also was the rise of National Socialism and the critique of democracy as a system that lacked an elite and, due to the multitude of opposing views, was powerless and subjected to the whims of the masses. In Protestant circles, there was less interest in a social reordering than among Catholics, where for this reason socialism, fascism, and National Socialism exercised some attraction. Of the Catholic 'youngsters' a part opted for right-wing politics, more or less for the same reasons why others grew into declared proponents of democracy. The National Socialist Movement (*Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging*: NSB) was established in 1931 by the Catholic Anton Mussert and especially between 1934 and 1937 was presented as a party with a Christian character. The writer Anton van Duinkerken, discounted the NSB radically in 1935 with his 'Ballad of the Catholic' (*Ballade van den Katholiek*).

### 1.5.2 Churches and 'new paganism'

The churches, trade unions and political parties reacted sharply and negatively to this totalitarian ideology, qualified as 'new paganism'. In 1934, the bishops immediately issued a warning against NSB views and two years later banned support for this party on pain of exclusion from the sacraments. In 1937 the fierce encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* of Pius XII was issued — unique in its use of German instead of Latin, clarifying even more what its subject was. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Christian Reformed Church, and the Reformed Congregations rejected the NSB in 1936 and 1937. That the ideologically organized society was at stake was proved by the simultaneous ecclesiastical condemnation of the CDU (*Christelijke-Democratische Unie*) for its criticism of this type of society. Only a few right-wing Calvinist splinter parties expressed sympathy for the national socialist unifying efforts of the NSB. In 1935, the Remonstrant Brotherhood turned against the totalitarian ideology, but the divided Netherlands Reformed Church, where the NSB had gained entrance, took no position. In 1934, 119 mostly Reformed pastors signed a public expression of sympathy for this party.

But when a breakthrough in the political relations was not realized, criticism of the connection between faith and politics increased within the NSB, and the German folk ideology replaced its Christian

character. In 1937, the NSB gained four seats in the House of Representatives, but was isolated there. In 1941 all political parties were banned by the occupying forces, except for the NSB. But because the Germans distrusted this party, the party could not overcome its isolated position.

### 1.5.3 Churches and Anti-Semitism

From 1937 onward, the NSB was openly anti-Semitic, but the churches did not target their criticism on this point. In the Christian churches a certain amount of anti-Judaism was common: the churches regarded themselves as the substitute of Israel as the people of God since the Jewish rejection of Jesus Christ. The solidarity with the Jews, reflected by various theologians of the Further Reformation, did not result in protest against anti-Semitism in pietistic Calvinist circles. Sometimes a hint of anti-Semitism was found precisely there, for example with Kersten and the Utrecht Reformed Alliance professor Hugo Visscher (1864-1947). When the terror against the Jews reached a first climax in Germany in 1938, it shocked believers as a social injustice, but above all it strengthened the realization that the hunted Jews definitely had to make choice for or against Christianity. The Jews had their destiny in their own hands— and the churches waited, wondering what it would be.

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## 1.6 Social and civic life

### 1.6.1 Healthcare

Under pressure from the Russian revolution and revolutionary unrest elsewhere in Europe as well as domestically (Troelstra), social laws and insurance were established at an accelerated pace. This affected social life, from labor (eight-hour working day) in 1919 to sickness (Health Act) in 1929. From now on the unions had a role in the negotiations on working conditions.

The increasing state intervention led to an institutionalization and professionalization of health care. The ideology based structure of this care remained unchallenged, though the tension between faith and professionalism was growing: the care of the sick became an ordinary profession instead of a vocation, although that was more noticeable in Protestant hospitals than in Catholic ones, where throughout the whole interwar period the majority of the staff were constituted by nuns.

### 1.6.2 Leisure

The legal regulation of working hours also meant that there was time for leisure. Protestant circles reacted accordingly by the distribution of literature. Sports had less of an entrance among Dutch Protestants than among Protestants in the Anglo-Saxon world, and also less than among Catholics and Social Democrats

in their own country. Sporting events on a Sunday were just as controversial among Protestants as they were among Catholics.

For family reading, illustrated weeklies were prevalent at the turn of the century. The *Katholieke Illustratie* had already been started in 1867, and in 1906 *The Mirror* (*De Spiegel*) was established, an 'entertainment paper for the Christian family'. Such papers offered news photographs, human interest stories, curiosities, stories and pictures of jubilating fathers and pastors, missionaries, sisters, sextons and schoolmasters, churches, associations and institutions – 'From the rich Roman life' was the title of the photo section in the *Katholieke Illustratie*. Newspapers were published regularly with supplements on individual themes. Periodicals were issued for different readers and themes — women's newspapers such as a *The Christian Woman's Life* (*Christelijk Vrouwenleven*, 1917) and the Catholic *Beatrijs* (1939) — and Catholic and Protestant organizations also distributed their members' journals. There must have been thousands.

More than the Catholics, the Protestants had a reading culture. Especially book series sold well. The VCL-Series of the Calvinist publisher J.H. Kok in Kampen offered subscribers four books annually for six guilders. The publisher Callenbach operated on the Protestant market with the Nobel Series, mostly novels. The Catholic publisher Helmond released more than 250 so-called 'penny books' for boys and girls. In 1909 the children's author W.G. van de Hulst made his debut. He introduced the modern children's book in Protestant circles, written from the perspective of the child.

Readers from confessional circles obviously made use of their own reading libraries which emerged throughout the interwar period, next to the public libraries, publicly funded since 1907. For pedagogical or moral reasons, the purchase of banned reading, which was assessed as contrary to faith or morals, was averted in confessional libraries. From the twenties onward, depending on the composition of the local population, also Catholic and - albeit less often – Protestant libraries were subsidized.

In the twenties the radio was introduced. At one point, when it looked like Dutch Wireless Broadcasting Company (*Hollandsche Draadloze Omroep*, later AVRO) would become the only Dutch radio, the socio-political pillars (*zuilen*) were up in arms. The Dutch Christian Radio Association (*Nederlandsche Christelijke Radio Vereeniging*: NCRV) was founded in 1924, the Catholic Radio Broadcasting Company (*Katholieke Radio Omroep*: KRO) and the socialist Association of Workers Radio Amateurs (*Vereniging Arbeiders Radio Amateurs*: VARA) followed in 1925, the Liberal Protestant Radio Broadcasting Company (*Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep*: VPRO) in 1926. Broadcasts initially concerned particularly edifying speeches and sacred music, but the formative and relaxation elements grew with the increase of airtime. Cultural activities from sympathetic circles — music and literature for example — received a prominent place alongside general cultural activities. Relaxation and education went hand in hand.

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## 1.7 Discipline and Orthodoxy

The increasing influence of the state on social life and the breakthrough of modern culture in the years between the wars posed a threat to Christian beliefs and lifestyles. For the first time the large denominations were confronted with people leaving the church on a broad scale. In the Netherlands Reformed Church, dechurching was obvious, but even the Roman Catholic Church lost many members, particularly among agricultural workers who left Brabant for the industrial areas in South Holland, and to a lesser extent this was also the case for the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. In the latter two cases, this abandonment of the church did not have a great effect numerically because the losses were largely compensated by a high birthrate. For the Calvinists and the Catholics especially, the dynamics of modern culture were primarily a struggle over the foundations of society, which required a mobilization with all their might. Membership of organizations was an appropriate instrument, and what also caught on was a guided confrontation with society that by all means had become complex. Book selection in confessional libraries, censorship and warnings against visiting the cinema were widely welcomed by Catholics and Calvinists, who saw a need for clarity in a confused time. In Netherlands Reformed circles a concern about the moral and social decay was shared, but this church was not strongly interwoven with Christian organizations. Netherlands Reformed were traditionally more nationally oriented and less attached to membership of organizations as an expression of Christianity. This difference among Protestants was could not only be noticed in their divergent political affiliations, but everywhere else in society.

### 1.7.1 Experimentalism

Certain groups among the Calvinists — in the Reformed Alliance in the Netherlands Reformed Church (*Gereformeerde Bond*), the Christian Reformed Church (CGK), the Reformed Congregations (GerGem) and the Old Reformed Congregations (*Oud Gereformeerde Gemeenten*) — were averse to Kuyper's views. They identified with the ‘old writers’ and clung to a pietistic faith, which emphasized personal conversion, an awareness of the coming judgment and a shunning of culture rather than on the common witness in and commitment to society. These experimental or pietistic Calvinists were usually loosely organized, also within their denominations. The emergence of the well-organized Neo-Calvinists on the one hand and their opposition to compulsory vaccination, social legislation, and increasing state influence on the other, resulted in some rapprochement of both groups of Calvinists. Kersten organized the pietistic Calvinists. After he established the Political Reformed Party (*Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij*) in 1918, he proceeded with the formation of the pietists by issuing the political monthly *The Banner* (*De Banier*, 1921), which from 1929 to 1941 was published as a daily newspaper and had a circulation of 10,000. In 1919 he founded the periodical *The Binder (Saambinder)* for the Reformed Congregations. Talks of these congregations with the CGK in the interwar period failed, because the former doubted the centrality of God’s election in the preaching of the latter denomination. The Reformed Congregations accentuated their position on this issue in 1931 with a synodical declaration on the doctrine of the covenant. Kersten tried to counter pietistic excesses in his denomination and therefore founded a Theological School (*Theologische School*, 1927) in Rotterdam. He stressed the theology of the Further Reformation. When an objection was lodged against his countering, he somewhat mitigated his opinions.

From 1922 onward, Kersten was a member of the House of Representatives for the SGP. The party's apex was the parliamentary elections of 1933, when the SGP got over 93,000 votes (2.5 percent) — enough for three seats. Kuyper's initiative for the formation of a Christian phalanx in society found a following here, although the intention in this case was more for a consolidation of their own beliefs than a re-Christianization of society.

Kuyper's optimistic re-Christianization efforts suffered their final shipwreck around World War I. This had an impact on the Reformed Churches (*Gereformeerde Kerken*), where in response to the uncertainty of the times, the Pietistic tradition held a certain attraction. Some members went over to the up till then sluggishly growing Christian Reformed Church (CGK), including in 1920 the famous orator of the period G. Wisse (1873-1957), who taught at their Theological School in Apeldoorn from 1925 onward. The Reformed Congregations however profited the most: their membership doubled in ten years to over 40,000 in 1930. This border crossing with closely related churches was a sensitive issue. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands regarded themselves as the primary Calvinist denomination. Their attitude towards the Reformed Alliance in the interwar period was somewhat condescending, but because of these transitions their attitude towards smaller Calvinist denominations also was more sharp. The right of existence of the CGK was regularly challenged and Kersten's positions were criticized time and again.

The need for an intimate and personal experience of faith was also reflected in the influence of the Netherlands Reformed evangelist Johannes de Heer (1866-1961). In support of his evangelizing work and following English examples he published the *Hymnal* (*Zangbundel*, 1905) with simple, personal and encouraging Christian songs, which became very popular among Protestants. With his message of reconciliation, fulfillment of God's promises, and expectation of the Second Coming he reached many inside and outside of the church, especially due to his song hour on NCRV radio. In 1919 he started his biweekly periodical *The Searchlight* (*Het Zoeklicht*), which in the interwar period had a circulation of tens of thousands, and in the thirties even 40,000, which at that time was a very high number for a Protestant periodical. His message and theological baggage was criticized within the churches, but the fact that this happened persistently, also illustrated how popular De Heer was among church members and how he met a need for simple piety and consolation. Besides Johannes de Heer, the Netherlands Reformed minister and evangelist J.H. Gunning JHzn. (1858-1940), served with its widely circulated periodical *Pniël* – he was read in Protestant denominations all over - this undercurrent within the Protestant churches. Gunning, who was disappointed with the church and sympathized greatly with the evangelizing work of De Heer and the Salvation Army, edited the magazine for fifty years until his death in 1940. He wrote edifying stories, biblical reflections, poems, thoughts, and all this in a very candid, intimate tone.

Furthermore, as evidence of a movement emphasizing personal faith, the Pentecostals had been active in the Netherlands since 1907. This small group — around 1940 the movement only had about 3,000 followers — initially wanted to effect a revival within the Protestant churches, but when there seemed to be no room for them, independent Pentecostal churches were founded. Another, less church-related expression of the need for personal faith was the international Oxford Group of the American evangelist Frank Buchman (1878-1961). This revival movement, which operated in the Netherlands as of 1923, was initially focused upon personal religious conversion, which would appear from deeds. Thus others would be influenced to convert to a conscientious Christian faith. Confessing one's sins to one another within a small group got a strong accent. The movement reached primarily highly educated people on the periphery of the church. Under the influence of the threat of war, the call to religious conversion got a stronger social dimension in the form of a plea for military disarmament and a campaign for moral rearmament. The emphasis stayed on conversion of the individual, not a change of the social system. The aim of moral rearmament came under strong pressure with the outbreak of the Second World War, and finally failed in the Netherlands when the Germans invaded the country on May 10, 1940.

### 1.7.2 The Geelkerken Case

The theology of Abraham Kuyper also did not satisfy those members of the Reformed Churches (GKN), which had a compassionate attitude towards the surrounding culture and advocated an open relationship with related churches. From 1911 onward some leading Ethical-Reformed (*ethisch-hervormden*) and Calvinists collaborated in the journal *Voices of the Time* (*Stemmen des Tijds*), but the Reformed Churches were suspicious of such contacts. For fear of dilution, the Amsterdam pastor J.G. Geelkerken (1879-1960) was deposed in 1926 because of his suggestion that the first chapters of Genesis may not bear a historical character, which resembled too much the Ethical theologians' position on biblical criticism. He founded thereon with about 5,000 sympathizers the Reformed Churches in Restored Union (*Gereformeerde Kerken in Hersteld Verband*) which, unlike Geelkerken himself, soon took on a Barthian signature and in 1946 merged with the Netherlands Reformed Church. With Geelkerken a number of critical 'youngsters' disappeared from the Reformed Churches. Others temporarily paused and went into hiding within their own community. The iconic figure of this new church was Rev. J.J. Buskes (1899-1980), who in the thirties made a name for himself with his criticism of the social policy of the Colijn-cabinets (1933-1939) and his pacifism. Pacifism was an old feature within Christianity, which had remained alive in Mennonite circles. In 1928 the Remonstrant Professor G.J. Heering (1879-1955) breathed new life into pacifism with his sensationally disturbing book, *The Fall of Christianity* (*De zondeval van het christendom*). Pacifism was in the political program of the CDU, which Buskes co-founded in 1926. The pacifist momentum shriveled up, however, in view of Hitler's aggressive expansion policy and was buried when the Swiss-German theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968), who was influential in the Netherlands, in 1938 indicated that Christians were demanded to armed resistance against Nazi Germany.

### 1.7.3 Generational Differences: 'youngsters' in Protestant and Catholic circles

After the First World War, young people received full attention. In 1919 a state commission investigated what should be done for youth development. There was an exhibition in the Hague concerning the education of youth, so that according to some it seemed to be 'the year of the youth'. Youth also were the focus of attention in the churches. There the concept signified not only an age but also a mentality of renewal. Youngsters believed that Christianity had not been dismissed by the cultural crisis, but had to be associated with modern culture anew and in a different way. According them the churches were to blame for the gap between Christianity and culture, which had continued breaking into a piercing lament about their godless environment. A new and different relationship with the culture had to be forged, true and specific. In Catholic circles this manifested itself especially in literary circles in a powerful striving to rescue culture from its crisis through Catholicism. A revival of Catholic literature, according to young people such as Anton van Duinkerken, would lead to a new religious fervor in the culture and for social renewal. Catholic writers started, in literary magazines such as *Vocation* (*Roeping*, 1922) and *The Community* (*De Gemeenschap*, 1924), the discussion with non-Christian modern literature, whereby the Catholic writers reproached the non-Catholics for their focus on form over content, the message of their work — the so called '*vorm of vent*' (manner or man) discussion. All the same Catholic writers contributed to modern literature also in their style. In the visual arts the influence of the '*Stijl'* or of *Jugendstil* (symbolism) was apparent among many Catholic artists. The convert Jan Toorop, known from his *Art Nouveau* poster for Delft oil salad dressing and later for his many portraits of (Catholic) celebrities, is a good example. The cultural criticism among the literati remained mostly verbal, but the same commitment to re-Christianization of culture adopted among intellectual (sometimes even PhD) young women took the form of two associations, the Women of Bethany (*Vrouwen van Bethanië*) and the Women of Nazareth (*Vrouwen van Nazareth*). Especially the latter attracted attention, leading the girls' movement The Grail (*De Graal*), which used the latest novelties, from film to famous crowd plays.

In the arts, Protestants confined themselves primarily to church architecture and literature. There were hardly ministers who were literati as well, a sign that the churches and the culture had grown apart.

Protestant literature emancipated itself from the minister and from denominational divisions, but still missed the connection with modern literature. There was a private, lively circle around periodicals such as *Our Periodical* (*Ons Tijdschrift*, 1896-1914) and *Upward Ways* (*Opwaartsche Wegen*, 1923-1940). In this circle such 'young Protestants' as Gerrit Achterberg, Willem de Mérode, and C. Rijnsdorp published. In the thirties Roel Houwink and H M. van Randwijk advocated, in the line of dialectical theology (see below) and their Catholic colleagues, an art that was less addressed to established Christianity. They stood opposite K. Heeroma, who suggested that the literary arts should be in the service of the ecclesial community.

After a dull time within the Netherlands Reformed Church since the *Doleantie*, in the early twenties some theologians brought a new impetus. The theologians O. Noordmans (1871-1956) and K.H. Miskotte (1894-1976) were fascinated by the protest of the theologian Karl Barth against the self-evident relation between Christianity and culture. In reaction he separated the faith of the human experience and stressed that faith had its origin in God. God was the 'wholly Other' ('ganz Andere'), who is qualitatively different from his creation and whose revelation was a judgment of this world. For many young Protestants the emphasize on the fact that God is enthroned in heaven against man on earth, was a way out of a culture that had encapsulated religion. The religious impotence of man stressed by Barth actually liquidated the problem of the relationship between Christianity and culture: a synthesis between faith and culture was simply not possible. The revelation of God did not join human experiences, but interrupted them. The Barthians shared in the suffering of the world, expecting nothing of any Christian culture-program, but only expected salvation from 'outside', from a transcendent God who was free and whom man could not possess. This so called dialectical theology was a theological treatment of the fading notion in Western culture of God's presence. In the thirties Barthianism gained influence in the Netherlands Reformed Church. The reformed theologian Jo Eijkman (1892-1945), inspired by the dialectical theology, worked in Amsterdam as a youth worker at the *Amsterdam Society for Young Men* (*Amsterdamse Maatschappij voor Jonge Mannen*). He worked there, not from a Christian organization, but from a Christian attitude towards life. The church with its message, in his eyes, had been cocooned by a web of organizations, and had become too far removed from society. The shell of organizations around the church had to be broken and the government too had to take more moral responsibility for society. He experimented with different forms of cohabitation and considered the AMVJ as his 'breakthrough laboratory'. The Barthian oriented new impetus got shape within the NCSV and other places. This student association developed in the twenties under the lead of the sensitive Utrecht theologian and NCSV Secretary, Maarten van Rhijn (1888-1966), from a pious, mission-oriented organization to an open movement oriented to society and its various ideological streams.

A painfully divided Netherlands Reformed Church could hardly contribute to the discussion of Christianity with culture . Much depended on the outcome of the efforts to overcome its divisions. Only then the Church could authoritatively face the culture. In 1931 the Church Construction Society (*Vereniging Kerkopbouw*) was established, which would renew the church inwardly, to which Noordmans committed himself. He sympathized with the in 1930 in Confessionalist circles established league for Church Restoration (*Kerkherstel*), but gave prevalence to the spiritual character of the church over its legal character: according to a known saying of him, the confession was a staff to guide you, not a stick to hit the other. A joint reorganization plan by the two movements was not accepted by the 1939 Synod however, so the church remained impotent in society.

The Reformed Churches (GKN) also realized that they had turned into a different phase. The re-conquest of culture, which occupied an important place among the Kuyperian Reformed (*Gereformeerden*), continued to be an important issue, but youngsters confronted their co-believers that even a well-rounded theology and definite political principles offered no conclusive answers to the new demands of modern culture. After the death of A. Kuyper in 1920 and H. Bavinck in 1921, the Calvinists realized that their ideas had become a heritage. Bavinck in his last years had already stressed the need for innovation. The

results of nineteenth-century thought from principles were proved disappointing, or obstacles to modern thought, in which the dynamic character of reality was central. Youngsters followed Bavinck's track, though they stumbled into opposition with the churches. In 1920 they founded the weekly magazine *The Reformation* (*De Reformatie*). Barth's emphasis on the objective nature of faith and his criticism of human pride spoke to them, but his opposition to a Christian culture vision provoked resistance.

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1.8 Theology

1.8.1 Tendencies in the Netherlands Reformed Church

In the Reformed Churches (GKN) the theologians were dominated too much by internal ecclesiastical matters to exercise any influence on the culture. The Netherlands Reformed Church tried to overcome this handicap. Four tendencies emerged in this period. The Confessionalist tendency was the oldest, organized around the Confessional Association (*Confessionele Vereniging*), established in 1864 by amongst others Groen van Prinsterer. These Netherlands Reformed, led by Haitjema, did not want to give up the ideal of a unified national church (*volkskerk*), therefore they wanted to renew the church from within. Their outlet was *The Reformed Church* (*De Gereformeerde Kerk,* 1888). The Reformed Alliance in the Netherlands Reformed Church, founded in 1906, was Calvinist in character and sought to trace the church back to the program of the Further Reformation and the governance structure existing before 1816. Politically, they often chose Kuyper's side, yet they regretted Kuyper's collaboration with the Catholics; well-known anti-revolutionaries from this circle were the theologians and Union presidents Hugo Visscher and J. Severijn (1883-1966). Unlike Kuyper, the Unionists also wanted to restore the church from within. Their publications were the *Friend of Truth* (*Waarheidsvriend*, 1912) and the *Reformed Weekly* (*Gereformeerd Weekblad*, 1896). In 1906 the *Association of Liberal Reformed* (*Vereeniging van Vrijzinnig Hervormden*) was established, which in the interwar period represented a strong current within the modern tendency that sought to connect closer to church and tradition. With the Remonstrant Brotherhood, the Dutch

Protestants League (*Nederlandse Protestantenbond*) and Liberal Baptists and Lutherans, this Liberal organization collaborated in the 1923 founded Central Commission for Liberal Protestantism (*Centrale Commissie voor het Vrijzinnig Protestantisme*), which among other things had a hand in the creation of the VPRO. In between these Netherlands Reformed groups stood the weakest organized group of the Ethical theologians (*ethischen*) With the Liberals they shared a common interest in culture, and with the Confessionalists (*confessionelen*) the attachment to church tradition. Their publication was entitled the *General Weekly for Christianity and Culture* (*Algemeen Weekblad voor Christendom en Cultuur*, 1924). Around 1920, the Ethicals and Confessionalists comprised almost 60 percent of the church, the Reformed Alliance comprised about a fifth. The Leiden theological faculty was predominantly Liberal, the Utrecht predominantly Ethical and Confessionalist, while the Groningen and Amsterdam faculties were mixed. The Reformed Alliance established its own chair at Utrecht in 1931. Also thanks to this addition to the theological palette, the Utrecht faculty fulfilled an ecclesiastically pivotal role.

1.8.2 In the shadow of Karl Barth

Barth's second version of his *Römerbrief* (1922) was known in the Netherlands by around 1924 and exercised a great influence primarily upon students and academics, although the book was never translated into Dutch. For Noordmans it was an important correction to the possibility of natural knowledge of God and the tension-free relationship of church and culture. In response to the natural theology of the *Deutsche Christen*, who looked for a connection with Hitler's Nazism, Noordmans stressed in the thirties a sober doctrine of creation, reduced to a 'spot of light around the cross'. He was difficult to classify in one of the Netherlands Reformed tendencies. The artistic theologian Miskotte was an outspoken Barthian, who apart from that, like Noordmans, also remained fascinated by Gunning. Annoyed by a bourgeois Christianity early on, Miskotte asked in the early twenties whether the Christian faith could have a place in the modern world. Initially Miskotte thought that Barth did not take the questions of modern man about God seriously, but soon he became his main supporter in the Netherlands. In the thirties he, like Barth, warned against Nazism, and cried out against this paganism in choosing the Torah as 'charter of humanity'.

For many Netherlands Reformed theologians Barth and his dialectical theology was the redemptive response to the dominance of Kuyper's theology and social vision. Learned through Barth's criticism of any association of human affairs with God's purpose they condemned Kuyper's theology of culture and disqualified the formation of Christian organizations as an expression of religious pride. This view had considerable influence within the Dutch Reformed Church during the interwar years.

1.8.3 Kuyper forever?

The transitions to pietistic Reformed denominations and the condemnation of Geelkerken accentuated the Kuyperian profile of the Reformed Churches (GKN), which was reinforced again by the emergence of a reformist movement that offered an elaboration of the Neo-Calvinist ideas. The aforementioned Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven developed a Calvinist philosophy from 1926 onwards at the Free University. Within these churches the Kampen dogmatician Klaas Schilder (1890-1952) gave a fresh impetus. Reflecting on the cultural crisis he emphasized the existential character of theology and the responsibility of man in his relation to God and creation.

While Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven argued from Kuyper's Neo-Calvinist worldview, Schilder, nourished by the tradition of the *Afscheiding*, took the visible church as his starting point. In a secularizing culture, the church had to operate as a community, having a faith that claimed the entire life. His objection to Kuyper was that the function of the church in society had been taken over by the Christian organizations. He bound church and organization closer together and granted more dynamics to their relationship. Moreover, he was less optimistic than Kuyper about culture and moderated Kuyper's

conception of common grace, which blurred the difference between church and culture. Schilder also proceeded to confront the theology of Barth, who in his opinion believed Christian action is impossible, and the ideology of Nazism, which also claimed the entire life and therefore posed a real threat to the church. Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven, and Schilder trained a group of assertive and active Calvinists who adhered to personal responsibility to God (thinking in terms of the covenant ), characterized by their spiritual independence and were especially active in the church.

Schilder's criticism of Kuyper's theology caused unrest in the Reformed Churches (GKN). His fellow dogmatician at the Free University, V. Hepp, agreed with Schilder that Kuyper's theology had to be further developed, but judged that Schilder treatment of Kuyper's theology was too one-sided and therefore amputated his theology of culture.

1.8.4. Catholic theology

While Protestant theology was alive and well, Roman Catholic theology suffered greatly under the effects of anti-modernism. The major seminary at Warmond nevertheless experienced several decades of theological prosperity. The canon lawyer Th.M. Vlaming (1859-1935), the dogmatist G.C. van Noort (1861-1946), and the philosopher J.Th. Beysens (1864-1945) formed a mutually inspiring trio which on the basis of the best Roman textbooks produced its own canonical, doctrinal and philosophical textbooks, which would continue to be utilized after World War II in many major seminaries. Van Noort presented a theology that gave the clearest possible explanation of what was considered to be the theology of Thomas Aquinas, but in which all its 'ifs' and 'buts' were eliminated. The students of Van Noort asked themselves in good conscience, 'if there really could be spoken of an unfathomable mystery?' Beysens as a philosopher confronted the modern philosophies, which he studied first hand, and joined the open Neo-Thomism that the later Cardinal D. Mercier taught in Louvain. The trio, however, soon fell apart: the Haarlem bishop Callier, sensitive to anti-modernist intrigues, 'promoted' both Vlaming and Van Noort to pastorates while Beysens, thanks to an honorary doctorate from Louvain in 1910, could move to a professorship at the University of Utrecht. The seminary professors' colleagues had been warned. Still, the manuals of the three were utilized because they were the best available, and ultimately contained not one inappropriate word. It was only in the course of the thirties that Catholic theologians developed an eye for historical-critical exegesis — under the guise of 'confrontation with the unbelieving bible researchers' — and other philosophies than Neo-Thomism: the course 'History of Philosophy' was expanded. But Neo-Thomism remained the mandatory framework.

At the Nijmegen faculty of theology Thomism was taught by the Dominican G.P. Kreling (1888-1973), but from Thomas Aquinas own texts. He simultaneously emphasized the divine mystery that no theologian could ever approach, and the intellectualism of Thomas, which resulted in a rigorous division between believing and knowing. Thus he created a space between theology and philosophy for a bold scientific endeavor. Several of his students would play an important role in Dutch Catholic theology of the fifties and sixties.

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## 1.9 The life of Faith

### 1.9.1 Simultaneously en masse and domestic

As far as the Catholic portion of the population is concerned, the interwar period has become known today as the period of the 'Rich Roman Life' (*Rijke Roomsche Leven*). But the sense of this expression equally applied to the Reformed (and the socialists). Like the masses were an important factor in a political system with universal suffrage and in modern culture, so confessional life was expressed in mass meetings. Encouragement meetings (*Toogdagen*) and union days, political party meetings, happenings, mission celebrations, Catholics' Days and pilgrimages were fixed parts of the annual program, especially on Ascension Day and on Easter Pentecost Mondays. From 1922 Johannes de Heer convened the Searchlight-Maranatha (*Zoeklicht-Maranatha*) conferences and from 1929 the Salvation Army held nationwide Field Days (*Velddagen*). Anniversaries such as the fiftieth anniversary of the Dutch Salvation Army in 1937 and of the League of Young Men's Associations on Reformed Principles (*Bond van Jongelingsvereenigingen op Gereformeerde Grondslag*) in 1938 were celebrated en masse in the Amsterdam RAI Convention Center. The Catholic organizations with great regularity held regional, diocesan, and national Catholics' Days (*Katholiekendagen*) that were massively attended, and the Catholic girl's movement *The Grail* presented colorful mass games in stadiums throughout the thirties. The Salvation Army with its uniforms, flags, and bands did so with great ostentation, and Catholic manifestations also were graced with uniforms, flags, little brides (*bruidjes*), and of course episcopal purple. Apart from the banners, such display was absent from Protestant mass meetings, but also there a pastor or theologian to address the crowd was a standard provision. The commemoration of the *Afscheiding* of 1834 in 1934 was accompanied by an exhibition of books and pamphlets. The accent in Protestant circles was upon the spoken and printed word, or as prime minister Colijn summed up Protestant life in a few words: 'On sunday a good sermon, the Bible every day at the table, and furthermore every day a good laugh'. Faith was passed communally in the church and in the organizations, but religious experience was also reflected in domestic life, which among Protestants, with their Bible reading, prayer, reading and singing at the harmonium, was more sober than among Catholics. For the Roman Catholics, their faith defined their daily life not only in morning and evening prayer (with the rosary), but also by church feasts, such as First Communion, Mary's Month (*Mariamaand*), and fast rules, such as no meat on Fridays, but fish. A Protestant house had a tear-off calendar for each day with a

**Comment [g3]:** Rooms is niet goed te vertalen, dat wordt Romeins. Ik zou daarom kiezen voor Catholic.

short meditation, and a text from the Bible or a devotional verse and a portrait of Kuyper or a minister on the wall. A Catholic home was recognized by the crucifix, images of the Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart in the living room and holy water vials in the bedrooms. The family rhythm was also determined by regular church attendance — for Catholics also throughout the week, for Protestants twice on Sunday — as well as catechism and religious associations. The focus on personal religious experience was subordinate to communal experience and subject to social control. In the Reformed Churches (GKN) group formation occurred through the church periodical press. In the Netherlands Reformed Church this was less the case, since the tendencies were not strictly organized and the congregation had a much larger number of marginal members. But the tendencies played a decisive role in church meetings via preachers and professors. The church, the church press and church meetings in Protestant circles were the only area where pastor and theologian still enjoyed a natural authority. Their social position declined further when the boards of Christian organizations were increasingly taken over by professionals. Their political role also disappeared more and more.

The authority of charismatic leaders played an important role in religious group formation. They embodied the identity of the group. Kuyper remained an authoritative name in Neo-Calvinist circles after his death, among the Confessionalist and Ethical groups in the Netherlands Reformed Church Gunning was invoked as an authority and his work was reissued in the twenties. But the increasing diversity within the major Protestant churches made it impossible for anyone to assume their dominant position. Each group had its own man. In SGP-circles they thrived the awareness of being condemnable to God (*doemwaardigheid*), but also there Kersten was worshiped and sang to with Psalm 134:3: 'May the Lord's blessing descend upon you'. The only one who managed to assume a leadership above the parties was Colijn. He was not a religious leader, but in the thirties grew up into a figure with a sober and theologically undefined Christianity, and therefore enjoyed great authority and found wide recognition. In the Catholic Church the formation of groups was less theologically defined and less oriented to individuals, but was mainly determined by an extensive parish life and activities in class-based organizations. That did not prevent the Catholics from identifying with their own leaders, like the Franciscan preacher Borromeus de Greeve ('God's megaphone') or his cousin, the Jesuit Henri de Greeve, with his 'beacon lights' (*Lichtbakens*) on the radio and his League with no Name (*Bond zonder Naam*), founded in 1938.

1.9.2 Liturgy

After the turn of the century a liturgical movement commenced in both Catholicism and Protestantism. This movement drew attention to the design of worship, by distinguishing the ministry of the Word and the service of the table, as well as speaking about the ritual and church building. A return to the liturgical sources played an important role, whereby Anglicanism influenced Dutch Protestantism. This movement paid attention again to the cycle of the liturgical year, from Advent to Pentecost. According to the internationally renowned Dutch Reformed liturgical historian and phenomenologist, and later Minister of Education, Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890-1950), who provided this movement a theological basis, this cycle stressed the relationship between time and eternity. In 1938 the Netherlands Reformed Church published — for the first time since the *Vervolgbundel* (1866), an appendix to the 1806 *Evangelische gezangen* hymnal — a new collection of Psalms and 306 hymns for worship, a joint product of the various ecclesiastical tendencies. The lay-out of this new hymnal was no longer defined dogmatically, but liturgically. The hyms bore an ecumenical character and the accent of the whole was less heavenly oriented and world-averse (*wereldmijdend*) than previous collections. Given the diverse group that had worked on the composition, not everyone could agree with the mixture of orthodox and activist hymns. In reaction to the focus of the liturgical movement on the sacrament, Noordmans and others emphasized the central importance of the proclamation of the Word.

**Comment [g4]:** What is meant is the Lord's Supper or the actual Mass.

The liturgy of the Reformed Churches (GKN) was sober and placed a strong accent upon the preacher and the doctrinal sermon which occupied at least half of the ninety minute church service. Kuyper's liturgical insights, elaborated in *Our Worship* (*Onze eeredienst*, 1911), went over the heads of the Neo-Calvinists. Around 1920 there were attempts to enrich the liturgy of these churches with hymns, in which Geelkerken was also involved. These attempts, however, were dismissed as unjustified criticism of the service. After Geelkerken's conflict, when the Reformed Churches in Restored Union (*Gereformeerde Kerken in Hersteld Verband*) were formed, a hymnal of good quality was compiled there. The Reformed Churches (GKN) finally achieved some minor liturgical changes in 1933. In the Catholic Church the liturgical movement meant renewed emphasis on the sources in the first place, especially the restoration of the Gregorian chant, but there was also more attention for the sacraments as 'present mysteries' (*Mysteriengegenwart*, O. Casel), the communal character of the liturgy (R. Guardini), and the active participation of the faithful. Pope Pius X encouraged frequent participation in communion and in 1910 reduced the age for First Communion from twelve to seven years. The involvement of the faithful was promoted in the interwar period by parishes regularly holding 'mass-weeks', in which the liturgy was explained, Gregorian antiphonal chants were rehearsed and a devotional attitude towards the Blessed Sacrament was stimulated.

### 1.9.3 Church Building

Church-construction reflected the changing liturgical ideas. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the demolition of old churches was hampered by the government and restoration became the watchword. Because the Netherlands Reformed had kept most church buildings after the introduction of religious freedom in the late eighteenth century, it was this denomination that primarily directed itself towards restoration. The Catholics and the Calvinists (*gereformeerden*) were dependent on newly build churches and Abraham Kuyper therefore gave extensive advice in *Our Worship* (*Onze eeredienst*). He gave the architects elbow room to create a work of art, but stressed that it was not the building, but the congregation that had to worship. He pointed to the centrality of the pulpit and the position of the congregation in a semi-circle around it. Social democrats dedicated themselves to social housing, the Reformed to church construction, and the Catholics to both.

Since the Housing Act of 1901 town councils had to design a plan in the case of expansion. In his expansion plan for South Amsterdam the architect H.P. Berlage took as his starting point squares, in which churches were situated, 'for a square without a public building is not square'. For the same reason church buildings served as a landmark for new districts, for example by its high roofs. Municipal expansion plans were incentives for denominations for strategic planning and the timely reservation of suitable land. Catholics thus developed a fixed pattern of operation. Up to 1940, the Calvinists (*gereformeerden*) built nearly four hundred buildings, twice as many as the Netherlands Reformed Churches in the same time span, preferably with a tower and usually in an eclectic style, such as the expensive Keizersgrachtkerk in Amsterdam (1888). The architect Tjeerd Kuipers, who was influenced by Kuyper's ideas, built over fifty Calvinist churches, in which he broke with the various neo-styles of the nineteenth century. Even the Catholics in the interwar period broke with the Neogothic style. The Delft School led by the conservative convert M. Granpré Molière — the episcopal oracle on church architecture — fell back on a closed Romanesque style. Other architects built in the expressionist style of Berlage's Amsterdam school, such as the Reformed B.T. Boeyinga and the Catholic A. Kropholler — also a convert — who oriented himself to the liturgical movement within his Church.

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## 1.10 Faith and morals

### 1.10.1 Marriage, family and sexuality

The economic development of the beginning of the twentieth century made it possible for proportionally more Dutch to get married, and they did so at a younger age. The unmarried were a pitiful phenomenon and in ecclesial circles divorce was taboo, even though the number of divorces of the un-churched grew rapidly. Marriage became a key moment in life. It was concluded civilly but confirmed in church. The churches attached great importance to 'holy matrimony', despite the large numbers of priests, friars, sisters, and brothers in Catholic circles that provoked at least the suggestion that celibacy was actually of a higher order. Marriage regulated sexual intercourse — adultery and extramarital sexual relations were counted as the gravest of sins. The Netherlands in these decades was a pronouncedly prudish country. Especially among Catholics and Calvinists, the number of children per family was large. Between 1850 and 1890 a quarter of children from infancy to preschool age died. In the fifty years that followed, the number of children per woman diminished, because of declining economic necessity and family planning — propagated by the neo-Malthusian League (later the NVSH)— made its entry. But because the infant mortality rate plummeted at the same time, these changes had only a slight impact on the demographics. The national birth rate in the interwar period was under three children per couple. In religious circles this was different. For Catholics reproduction was the main purpose of marriage and family planning was rejected as contrary to humanity's God-given nature. When in the thirties the Catholic doctor J.N.J. Smulders developed a natural method of birth control, namely periodic abstinence, he encountered considerable resistance, not only among the clergy, but even more so among Catholic doctors. In Protestant circles there were divergent views on this issue. In 1902 Kuyper counted Neo-Malthusianism among the 'demonic influences', and in 1907 the Netherlands Reformed Church called for resisting this 'sin like a devouring cancer'. But the practice urged a more realistic position and by about 1930 warnings against an overly rigorous opinion on reproduction were also heard. Periodic abstinence was no longer rejected and *Sexual life governed by psychology and religion* (*Het sexueele leven beheerscht door psychologie en religie*) by the English minister Leslie Weatherhead, in which the use of contraceptives

was accepted, was a bestseller in the thirties among Protestants. This view was not commonplace. The high birth rate of Catholics and Calvinists contributed to the flourishing of their denominations and for the time being masked that there was also a large amount of apostasy.

The churches were therefore largely family communities. The family was the preferred environment for religious socialization. This conception linked the woman to the family as mother. A professional life of the mother – previous a frequent necessity – was no longer spoken of. The confessional parties were committed to child allowance. In this way the economic need for mothers to work would fall away. But the caring, supportive and helping role of women in the interwar period had also a social dimension. They had their own moral task 'corresponding with their feminine nature': the religious education and the transmission of values to children (and to her husband) and in general the 'feminization' of a society dominated by the market and power.

The churches made continual use of the assisting services of women in diaconal work, catechesis, as well as in missionary and pastoral work, but they tried to keep the married woman outside the economic life. They thus reacted to the first wave of feminism, which in secular circles accomplished that the woman acquired a more independent position. In evangelical para-church movements such as the Salvation Army, the woman had a more equal position alongside the man than in other denominations, but this was also true in the liberal churches (Mennonites, Remonstrants) where women got more influence and could become a pastor. In 1911 the Mennonite A. Zernike was ordained as the first female minister in the Netherlands. In 1922 the Netherlands Reformed Church granted women the right to vote, but in the more orthodox-minded churches women had no official position until well after the Second World War.

At the height of the first feminist wave the periodical *The Christian Woman's Life* (*Christelijk Vrouwenleven*, 1917) was published and in 1919, the Dutch Christian Women's League (*Nederlandsche Christen Vrouwen Bond*) was founded. After the introduction of women's suffrage in 1919 the Christian political parties faced reality. In 1922 Frida Katz became a member of the Second-Chamber for the CHU. This result fueled the political and social aspirations of Christian women. Liberal Protestants advocated for a greater social role of women, but this was rejected by many Christian women. The economic crisis of the thirties forced women once again to give way their place in professional life to men. In 1935, the government decided to dismiss female civil servants when they got married — which in Catholic institutions, especially in education, was already more or less the rule — and Christian women's movement focused back upon family and charity.

### 1.10.2 Youth and Upbringing

The upbringing of children was largely the responsibility of the parents and of confessional education, where the same values were shared as at home. Religious, moral, and intellectual formation was generally given more attention to than leisure and play. That was also the case in spare time activities meant to keep the youth off the street, such as Catholic patronages — updated after 1928 to the Youth Watch (*Jonge Wacht*) and the Crusade (*Kruisvaart*) — and Protestant boys and girl clubs. After finishing school, around their sixteenth year, young people were often members of a youth league and girls league or youth class organizations, which were relatively independent organizations for young adults. With the rise of the age of marriage in the thirties the significance of these organizations increased. At that time it was estimated that half of the youth of the Reformed Churches (GKN) were active in such organizations. Besides declamation, folk dancing and singing, religious topics were dealt with, and political and social themes for the boys; for the girls, educational and domestic issues were on offer. For Protestant youth there was also the catechism until their confession, usually around the age of 21. This structure generally existed in the interwar period, though in liberal circles this was more loosely applicable and in Calvinist and Catholic circles more strictly so. The youth organizations often had adult advisors, also because in the interwar period the youth became more autonomous and less law-abiding. The Neo-Calvinist theologian

J. Waterink (1890-1966) was an authority in the field of education. His Pedological Institute, connected to the Free University, focused on maladjusted children, and was a phenomenon among experts. He became popular with the magazine *Mother. Practical magazine for the woman in the family* (*Moeder. Practisch tijdschrift voor de vrouw in het gezin*, 1934-1957), in which he gave parenting advice. Duet o the rise of sociological and psychological perspectives on youth the young people developed into a separate group.

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## 1.11 Propagation of Faith

### 1.11.1 Domestic missions and the domestic apostolate

Although the statistics suggest only a slight dechurching (*ontkerkelijking*) in the first half of the twentieth century, it could hardly hide what was occurring in the industrialized and urbanized areas of the Netherlands. With only a 'Covenant Prayer for the conversion of Protestants in the Netherlands' this development could not be halted. In the interwar period, there were various organizations and associations for the proclamation of the Gospel in the Netherlands, whether or not under the auspices of the churches, such as the Apologetic Association Peter Canisius (*Apologetische Vereniging Petrus Canisius*, 1904). Through street preaching, special services, periodicals, brochures and youth clubs they tried to spread the ecclesial message. Their impact was low: in Catholic circles, the street preachers of the Guild of Clear Truth (*Gilde van de Klare Waarheid*) were referred to as 'God's clowns'. The pretentious, if not megalomaniac Committee for the Conversion of the Netherlands (*Comité voor de Bekering van Nederland*, 1919), in which the colorful Jesuit Jacques van Ginneken played a role, was defunct within five years. For Protestant churches, evangelism and domestic missions were like an unwanted stepchild. In 1913 and 1916 in Calvinist circles, evangelism congresses were held, and after the First World War a strong compassion for the masses alienated from God was alive and well within the traditionally missionary NCSV and the newly created Reformed Student Movement (*Gereformeerde Studenten Beweging*). The youth camps of the NCSV, where students offered relaxation in nature for urban children in a Christian atmosphere, were well-known. But overall this missionary enthusiasm in the church and in

the student world ebbed quickly. The churches were too introvert to be missionary. Unconventional evangelists were more successful, such as Johannes de Heer with his tent evangelism and the Salvation Army with its combination of social welfare and evangelism. The Salvation Army soldiers visited prisoners, regardless of their religious affiliation or belief — unlike pastors and priests. In the late thirties the Salvation Army already had dozens of professional probation employees and employed 35 probation brigades. Not only the royal family sympathized with this gospel of deeds, many church members did as well. When the Salvation Army in 1931 introduced the clothing week, in which clothing was collected for the needy, its success outgrew the Army. In many places clothing for the Army was spontaneously collected, so much that only in the big cities thousands of families could be helped. The Army itself won no members, but its positive reputation was definitively established.

1.11.2 Foreign Missions

The mission areas of the Protestant churches and missionary organizations were in the overseas territories, the current Antilles, Indonesia and Suriname. The correspondence of the mission fields and the colonies marked the missionary endeavors as part of imperialism and explains her complicated position when in the 1910s national indigenous movement emerged in the Dutch East Indies. For the Catholic mission, this was much less the case because the territorial distribution of mission areas was made by Rome, and the mission was not entrusted to a country, but to a religious order or congregation. Dutch Roman Catholic missionaries therefore did not labor in Dutch colonies only, but all over the world. In the colonies sometimes considerable competition could develop between Catholic and Protestant missions.

In the Netherlands the various Protestant missionary organizations formed the Cooperative Mission Corporations (*Samenwerkende Zendingscorporaties*), with a center in Oegstgeest (1917). There were several Catholic organizations. The Pontifical Mission Societies raised money through diocesan and parochial mission committees. They suffered from the competition with missionary orders and congregations who collected for their own mission works. They kindled on the homefront with exhibitions and mission pamphlets, and painfully collaborated within the United Missionaries (*Vereenigde Missionarissen*, 1920).

Through the influence of the Ethical theology on missionary reflection, more appreciation developed for the indigenous traditional culture and religion. Since the mass conversions after the pacification of the outer provinces of the Dutch colonial empire most indigenous Christians lived outside the mission fields. The mission of the Reformed Churches in Muslim Java led to more gradual results. But in the meantime hospitals and schools were founded.

Health care and education were an important part of the Catholic mission also. Among the Catholics in the Netherlands there was way more enthusiasm for missions than among the Protestants. In the interwar years ‘the great mission hour’ truly arrived. In 1918 there were 1,174 priests, brothers and sisters active in mission work, by 1930 there were already 3,734, and in 1940, 6,293; on average one of 565 Dutch Catholics was a missionary or mission sister. They totaled around 11 percent of all Catholic missionaries worldwide, and the Catholic Netherlands — only 2 percent of all Catholics in the world — was therefore repeatedly and expressly praised by the pope. The Catholics brought in millions a year for mission societies in general, and for mission workers from their own family or neighborhood in particular.

The philologist Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965), send out through the Dutch Bible Society (*Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap*) pled in the thirties to support the emerging national self-expression in the Dutch East Indies in critical solidarity and to judge the government’s policy accordingly. In the collaborating Netherlands Reformed missionary corporations, within the Calvinist (*gereformeerde*) and Catholic missions, many thought like Kraemer. The missionaries did not deny that the Netherlands as a colonial power had accomplished positive things in the colonies, but they recognized that self-government of the

Indies was preferable to good governance by others. The Dutch churches and the Christian political parties did not lend their ear to this opinion. This Dutch position cohered with the difficulty for Protestant churches in the Dutch East Indies to become independent. But it did succeed with the churches in Central Java and in the Toraja region founded by the mission of the Reformed Churches. In 1935 the separation between the state and the Protestant state church in the Indies was realized, paving the way to independence of the East Indian churches. Within a few years the churches founded by the various missionary societies became independent. The formation of indigenous churches would also occur in the Catholic Church, but not until well after World War II.

1.11.3 Ecumenism

The ecumenical movement was an international Protestant response to the divisions within Christian Europe that were revealed in the First World War. When after the war the League of Nations was founded, it was suggested that for its inspiration this international organization would be accompanied by an international Christian organization. The high-minded Universal Conference on Practical Christianity (*Universele Conferentie voor Praktisch Christendom*, 1925) under the leadership of the Lutheran Archbishop Nathan Söderblom (1866-1931) argued that doctrine divides, but service unites. The movement resulting from this conference, *Life and Work*, met with no response for its idealism amidst international political antagonisms. The world conference on *Faith and Order* (1927) also aimed at unity, but soberly began with an inventory of the differences in doctrine and church order among the hundred participating churches. The second conference in 1937 blazed the trail to to world council of churches. The Dutchman W.A. Visser 't Hooft (1900-1985) was secretary of the general board. The ecumenical endeavor achieved much acclaim worldwide and left a stamp on the church history of the twentieth century.

In the Netherlands, the ecumenical ideal before the Second World War was divisive in the first place. Ecumenical initiatives were echoed within the Netherlands Reformed Church, but the Reformed Churches (GKN) rejected them because of their non-confessional basis. Internationalism under the Reformed took the form of an International Federation of Calvinists (*Internationale Federatie van Calvinisten*, 1932), an association of Reformed churches and movements in Europe, the USA, and South Africa. The Catholic Church was opposed to th ecumenical movement and took the traditional view that the Protestants had to return to the Mother Church. The Apologetic Association Peter Canisius therefore mainly provided education material. Yet there were informal contacts between Catholics and Protestants, for instance the Circle of Catholic and Protestant Professors (*Kring van Katholieke en Protestantse Hoogleraren*), founded in 1931 by Van der Leeuw and the Nijmegen professor Gerard Brom, with well-known Protestant members such as Noordmans, S.F.H.J. Berkelbach van der Sprenkel, and J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, and among others G. Kreling OP, J.H.E.J. Hoogveld, and the Utrecht lawyer W.P.J. Pompe on the Catholic side. There were also ecumenical contacts within the NCSV.

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## 2 The delayed breakthrough (1940-1965)

### 2.1 The churches in the Second World War

With the German invasion on 10 May 10 1940, the Netherlands became involved in the Second World War. Many a denomination had shown concern and outrage about the developments in Germany after 1933, and in 1936 and 1937 the Catholic bishops and some Reformed denominations had officially spoken out against the Dutch Nazi party NSB (*Nationaal Socialistische Beweging*); for Catholics even party membership was forbidden. From the beginning of the occupation, therefore, it was clear that the churches stood against the occupiers and their ideology. With respect to any German measure henceforth the most appropriate response was considered to be tactical silence or principled protest, whether public or not. The churches could benefit from the fact that the occupiers initially preferred to be as peaceful as possible in their attempted ‘nazification’ (*nazificatie*) of the Netherlands, preferring to avoid overt confrontations. However, this was not an established fact for the church leaders. In this new and uncertain situation mutual consultation was desired. Already on 25 June 1940, the Protestant churches — except for the Reformed Congregations (until early 1941) and the Old Reformed Congregations — banded together to form the Convent of Churches, which in 1942 was renamed the Inter-Church Consultation (*Interkerkelijk Overleg*: IKO), which was also joined by the Roman Catholic Church, under the leadership of the resolute Archbishop J. de Jong (1885-1955). Countless times they sent protest letters and telegrams to the occupying power or expressed public protests.

#### 2.1.1 Liquidation of confessional organizations

After the German invasion, political life virtually came to a standstill. The cabinet and queen had fled to London and all political activity was banned, although the political parties were not formally discontinued by the Germans until the end of 1941. In this vacuum a triumvirate was founded in July 1940 called the

Dutch Union (*Nederlandsche Unie*) consisting of L. Einthoven (Chief Commissioner in Rotterdam), J. Linthorst Homan (Protestant, Queen's Commissioner in Groningen) and J.E. de Quay (Catholic, Professor in Tilburg). They built upon the 1930s-era critique of democracy, and cherished naive and hardly concrete ideas about a new social order — a mixture of democratic solidarism and authoritarian corporatism. Under pressure from the occupying Germans, the Union kept silent about the House of Orange. The Dutch Union soon had about 800,000 members, especially from the southern part of the country, a membership that arose from the protest against the occupation rather than out of principle. Politically the Union was powerless, partly because it lacked the support of the bishops, and the antirevolutionaries and members of the Christian-historical union (CHU) repudiated the Union in August 1940. The Germans watched the development of the Dutch Union, but when its role stayed limited, it was prohibited at the end of 1941.

Especially for the Catholic Church and the Reformed denominations, the German-controlled non-confessional unity organizations were a threat. They rivaled with the Christian organization that protected church members from ideological threats — before the war specifically liberalism and socialism, now especially Nazism. In October 1940 the Catholic bishops had already published a pastoral letter on this subject. The 'equalization' of the not yet prohibited confessional organizations — i.e. forced assimiliation into uniform, 'neutral' organizations controlled by Germans or the NSB, aiming at the nazification of the Netherlands — in the late summer of 1941 therefore led to a well-coordinated confessional counteraction. In an anticipatory move the bishops early 1941 forbade the membership of such organizations, and when these organizations were subordinated to a NSB commissioner — the workers' organizations were first — they assigned the Catholics, , to terminate their membership. The bishops put the Catholic organizations concerned on the list of banned organizations. The occupier thus had only the remaining 'empty shells' in their hands. In Protestant circles, after hesitation about the posture to be taken, in 1941 the Germans put an end to most organizations. Some organizations, such as the ARP and the CNV, retained an underground consultative structure. But because it was not the church but the members themselves who decided about their membership, the detachment from unified organizations in Protestant circles was generally less than the Catholics. There were also pietists in various Protestant churches who believed that opposition to the government was not allowed. They held that the occupation had to be endured as God's judgment.

Throughout the war the Germans kept their hands off of the strictly ecclesiastical organizations — dealing roughly with them they regarded as too heavy a provocation. That restraint gave the Catholic Church the possibility of continuing a part of the necessary activities of emptied organizations by recognizing several institutions and organizations as ecclesial and continuing their work under the banner of Catholic Action. Catholic Action was a set of associations prescribed by Rome, organized by class and gender, to encourage lay people in their religious involvement. In neighboring countries Catholic Action had flourished since the thirties, but in the Netherlands it had hardly caught on because the Catholic Netherlands were already so thoroughly organized. The result of the wartime conditions was that Catholic Action started to play an important role in Dutch church life. Furthermore, the bishops established a Special Needs Fund (*Fonds Bijzondere Noden*), which included the salaries of dismissed Catholics or those in hiding.

The Protestant churches could not offer the organizations such a protective mantle. Neither did they resist offensively against the national-socialist societal structure, partly in the belief that this was the task of the

organizations themselves. However, the occupying authorities could be prevented from interfering in diaconal work and successfully refused cooperating with German poor relief structures, such as the Winter Relief. During the course of the war resources of the deacons' fund for 'special needs' were used to support the resistance. Youth work also was able to remain out of German hands. The Liberal Christian Youth Association was empty in early 1942, disappeared under the roof of the Dutch Reformed Church and grew from 10,000 to 25,000 members during the war. But the ecclesial weeklies were almost entirely eliminated by the Germans in 1941, for reasons of scarcity of paper, so said the Germans. The Protestant churches did support the endangered confessional schools, but could not field a vigorous protest against compulsory labor service for the occupier. Much depended therefore on the way more vulnerable personal initiative. In 1940 the Reformed theologian K. Schilder had already experienced the detriment of an individual action against the occupier. When he called for a resilient attitude in his weekly *De Reformatie*, he was put in prison for several months and the periodical was banned. Given these consequences, just like elsewhere in society, accommodation was a more common response within the churches than resistance.

2.1.2 Protest and Resistance

Yet a minority in the churches and organizations chose the path of resistance. In the summer of 1940 the *Lunterse Kring* came into being, an informal group of theologians and active church members, mainly from the Netherlands Reformed Church . Acquainted with the church struggle in previous years in Germany, they realized the Nazi regime was not promising anything good for the churches, and contemplated spiritual resilience,. This circle published some important cautionary pamphlets, and also had a strong influence on the national management of the Netherlands Reformed Church. In 1940, the Netherlands Reformed Synod appointed K.H.E. Gravemeyer (1883-1970) Secretary, who was in fact just as aware as the *Lunterse Kring* of the inevitability of the confrontation of the church with the occupying power.

**Comment [gh5]:** Wat moet cursief en wat niet?

For many, the *Lunterse Kring* was a preparation for the resistance that spread throughout church circles after 1942. In Neo-Calvinist (*gereformeerde*) circles a resistance organization was built on their tight social structure, which, although their organizations had been abolished bythe Germans, persisted as an informal network through the many personal connections throughout the country. Heleen Kuipers-Rietberg (1893-1944; camp Ravensbrück), as main board member of the League of Reformed Women's Associations, had a dense network of contacts. The same was true for the minister F. Slomp (1898-1978), who before the war devoted oneself to victims of the Nazi regime and after May 1940 called for resistance in sermons and lectures. In 1942 together they founded the informal National Organization for Assistance to People in Hiding (*Landelijke Organisatie voor Hulp aan Onderduikers*: LO), which grew into the largest resistance organization. This network of 20,000 men and women hid over 400,000 people, keeping them from the hands of the Germans. When in September 1944 the task of hiding virtually ceased, the LO remained a network of sympathizers, which was active in the railway strike of 1944, in maintaining the food supply, and functioned as an inexhaustible reservoir for resistance activities.

In pietist-Reformed circles — partly in the Reformed Alliance and also in the smaller Reformed churches — the German occupation was interpreted as a 'judgment of God', and any resistance was mostly incidental. The same was true of the evangelical churches and groups. From August 1943 onward the resistance — initially strongly Protestant colored — cooperated with the Catholic resistance. Partly

because of the attitude of Archbishop De Jong, the Catholic clergy generally supported the large and small resistance, and was also quite actively involved, especially in the diocese of Roermond — due to its vast borders that were quite suitable for smuggling refugees and Allied pilots. The Nijmegen professor Titus Brandsma OCarm. (1881-1942) traveled as a spiritual advisor of the Roman Catholic Journalists Association (*RK Journalistenvereniging*) through town and country to encourage Catholic journalists to keep their head up. He died at Dachau. There at Dachau the Nijmegen student moderator Robert Regout SJ (1896-1942) also died, who had been arrested in 1940 as a notorious opponent of the Nazis.

The underworld of the Protestant opposition — which also included the illegal Calvinist newspaper *Trouw* that had been established in 1943 and the *Landelijke Knokploegen* that committed sabotage, stole food stamps, and freed prisoners — maintained an uneasy relationship with the upper world of ecclesiastical organizations and structures that the Germans left undisturbed. On one hand, they found their relationship network often through church circles and used the church as a cover. Meetings of the resistance frequently took place under the guise of bible studies in consistory rooms, and at the Keizersgrachtkerk in Amsterdam, the resistance maintained a weapons cache there without the knowledge of the pastor T. Ferwerda. With its discovery in 1944, he and the sexton were both shot by the Germans. On the other hand, the governing bodies of the churches especially were extremely cautious and inward. The resistance often felt misunderstood and let down.

In 1942, when the Germans interfered themselves with the appointment of teaching staff at primary schools, an open confrontation between the churches and the occupier was likely. Within the Protestant and Catholic educational organizations the Germans encountered a broad-based resistance. The possibility of a new ‘school conflict’, which the bishops threatened in their pastoral letter of March 1, 1942, brought the churches ever closer together and was the immediate cause for the participation of the Catholic Church in interdenominational deliberation.

2.1.3 Churches and persecution of the Jews

When in the Autumn of 1940 the Germans took measures that formed the precursors for the massive persecution of the Jews from 1942 to 1943, the Convent of Churches protested — with the exception of the two Lutheran denominations, who at that time still wanted to refrain from affairs of state. The churches had difficulty distinguishing between Jews and Christian Jews and to regard the racial hatred as such as a great evil. In the Fall of 1940 the bishops even could not agree to protest against the *Ariërverklaring* (a declaration the Nazis required every government official to sign, stating they were not Jewish), as Archbishop De Jong desired. For De Jong this was for the remainder of the war a motive to take action ‘on behalf of the bishops’. But from the beginning the bishops supported Catholic baptized Jews. Later, when Jewish children were forcefully removed from public and private schools, Catholic bishops also protested, and prohibited school boards to cooperate. Within Protestant circles initially there was no protest against the persecution of Jews at an administrative level.

When civil servants almost innocently and en masse had acceded to the German call for the *Ariërverklaring* in the autumn of 1940, one of the members of the *Lunterse Kring*, the Netherlands Reformed minister J. Koopmans, awakened people’s consciences with his pen. In the illegal pamphlet *Almost too late!* (*Bijna te laat!*, November 1940) — distributed in an edition of 50,000 copies — he pointed out the implication of these and other anti-Jewish measures: Jews were removed and eliminated. He called for resisting the further exclusion of ‘our Jewish compatriots’. Through these and other protests

the realization slowly grew that the anti-Semitic politics of Nazism would be consistently implemented in the Netherlands.

With an audience (17 February 1942) that was predictably doomed to failure of church representatives at the *Reichskommissar* in the Netherlands, A. Seyss-Inquart, who pled for mercy towards the arrested Jews, the churches put off their strict wariness. When the Germans threatened the Netherlands Reformed synod with measures if a report of this audience would be read in church services, the IKO still reconciled itself to the situation. But a conflict was inevitable. When in the summer of 1942 the mass deportations of Jews began, there was a protest, this time also signed by the Reformed Congregations, in the form of a telegram from the IKO to Seyss-Inquart on July 26, which was read in most churches, with the exception again of the Netherlands Reformed Church, which was put under pressure from the Germans again. There was a harsh German reprisal: the Catholic Jews were now arrested and deported as well. The Protestant Jews were left alone for the time being, by way of repaying the Netherlands Reformed conciliation, but also because the Germans hoped to drive a wedge within the IKO. Meanwhile sermons resounded from the pulpits, with an eye to the hunted Jews, regularly calling for hospitality.

An even sharper protest against the increasing lawlessness and 'the persecution unto death of Jewish fellow citizens', accompanied by a ban upon cooperating with injustice - actuality a call for civil disobedience - was read in the churches in February 1943, with the exception of the Reformed Churches (GKN), where the organizational structure necessitated to a delay of certain Sundays; then also a more guarded wording was employed. The church leaders were never able to effect a softening of the persecution, although their public protests — alas! too late —did reach their church members, who became more aware of the drama that was playing out before their eyes. Besides the Jews, the Jehovah's Witnesses were the hardest hit community of faith, but their fate escaped the churches. In 1940 the Jehovah's Witnesses numbered about five hundred members. More than 450 of them were arrested, and of those arrested, more than 300 who were deported to extermination camps, and 130 died.

2.1.4 Pulpit and chancel

For ministers the sermons and public prayers formed by far the most important means to protest and to encourage their believers. With respect to intercession for the Queen there has been much ado. Both the Netherlands Reformed and the Convent of Churches suggested praying for her as well as for the occupying power, but the Reformed Churches in 1941 chose to pray explicitly and only for Queen Wilhelmina. This did not lead to problems in most cases, but it was the reason for the arrest of many a minister. Additionally the messages that the churches read throughout the war from chancel and pulpit were an important means of protest. A church meeting in wartime was not only one of the few remaining outings, it could also be quite interesting. The riskiest messages were often distributed at the last minute and delivered by courier to the local churches. The most important letters were the episcopal Lenten Letter of 1941, in which the ideas of Christianity were sharply confronted by those of not explicitly mentioned philosophies, the illegal pamphlet entitled *What we do and do not believe* (*Wat wij wel en wat wij niet gelooven*, 1941) by Miskotte and others among the *Lunterse Kring* - inspired by the *Barmen Declaration* (1934), known from the German church struggle - which included a Christianity contrasted with anti-Semitism and the totalitarian state ideology. And there was the pastoral letter of the Netherlands Reformed Synod of October 1943, in which National Socialism was characterized as a pagan religion, attractive to the natural man, but incompatible with the Christian faith.

When in the course of the war the living conditions of the population became increasingly difficult, a constant call for mutual support resounded from pulpit and chancel — on New Year's Eve 1944, the bishops in no uncertain terms took a stand against the black market; in February 1945 the Netherlands Reformed Church followed — and the church leaders clearly informed their priests and pastors to give a good example. At the same time, after Mad Tuesday (*Dolle Dinsdag*, 5 September 5 1944, when the Germans fled the Netherlands after rumors had been spread that the war had been lost) the bishops were the first to encourage the clergy to prevent a popular fury after the liberation. Protestants did the same at the time of the liberation in May 1945. The occupied northern Netherlands in the final phase of the war additionally was plagued by famine. The last protest of the IKO against the occupying Germans was an indictment against terror, looting, and emaciation (November 1944). On diaconal request Martinus Nijhoff wrote the poem 'A Miraculous Feeding' about the demonstration of the Church's mercy in these hungry months, including these lines:

Again, as we are without a shepherd,
We found ourselves in a desert.
This destitute realm did not offer food,
And buying elsewhere we could not.
But He was with us in that place.
'Give them something to eat', resounded his phrase.
[...] - And what might barely
be enough for a family,
appeared, when they began to apportion,
to be enough for a whole nation.
Thou hast done for us great things.
We thank You for Your mercy,
Our Father, who art in heaven.

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## 2.2 Renewal Trends

### 2.2.1 The Breakthrough Movement

When in the course of 1942 with Allied successes in Russia and North Africa, it became clear that the end of the war and occupation gradually was coming into view, people started to reflect broadly on how the religious and social life after the war could be rebuilt again.

In the Brabant seminaries at Haaren and St. Michielsgestel in 1942-1943 several hundred prominent Dutch men were interned by the occupiers as hostages. Besides a large number of officials of the Dutch Union and other political leaders, there were also leading intellectuals among them. In this group, the future of the Netherlands was frequently discussed. In line with the Dutch Union's ideas, their thoughts turned towards a breakthrough inspired by Christianity from pillarized structures and to a socio-political structure somewhere in between collective socialism and individualistic liberalism, which was designated 'personalism', a term coined by the French Catholic philosopher Emmanuel Mounier. The social democratic Netherlands Reformed minister Willem Banning was the eloquent interpreter of this personalism. When the hostages ended these thoughts were developed in the illegal periodical *Je Maintiendrai*, and were also the basis for the postwar breakthrough movement, which attempted to cross the dividing line between Christian and non-Christian parties and resulted in the reform of the SDAP into the Labor Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*).

The liberation of the Netherlands by the Allied forces — the southern Netherlands in September 1944, above the great rivers in the Spring of 1945, complete with the German capitulation on 5 May — was accompanied by high expectations for a renewal of society and of church life. Now a perfect opportunity was offered to change the political and social structure to meet the objections of decades to frozen democratic power relations. The good relationship between the churches in the IKO, and countless points of contact between Catholics and Protestants, liberals, socialists and communists resulting from emergencies and the resistance, seemed to provide opportunities for the desired political 'breakthrough': that Christians would vote for a non-religious political party. A breakthrough, but of a somewhat more authoritarian cut, was also pursued in London circles around Queen Wilhelmina and by the military authority that in September 1944 took a vaguely defined control over the liberated south.

An organized breakthrough movement, however, was only established after the liberation of the northern Netherlands, with the establishment of the Dutch National Movement (*Nederlandse Volks Beweging*: NVB) in May of 1945. The NVB was a political party in the spirit of Banning, based on both Christianity and humanism. The innovators had awaited the liberation of the rest of the Netherlands in order to avoid giving the movement too heavy a Catholic stamp, moreover, the situation in the south was extremely confused for a long time. Meanwhile the bishops of Den Bosch, Breda, and Roermond however 'already now and without delay' strongly recommended the restoration of all Catholic organizations. After the establishment of the Labor Party, the NVB lost its significance as a political party and the impact of the breakthrough was limited. Up to 1963 more than 50 percent voted for a Christian political party in national elections and in the sixties the Catholic National Party (KVP) was the largest party in parliament — the only Christian party that lost at each election between 1948 and 1963 was the ARP.

2.2.2 Netherlands Reformed Élan

For the two largest Protestant denominations, a restoration of the situation prior to May 1940 was unthinkable. Amid the ongoing church reorganization debate the Netherlands Reformed missiologist Hendrik Kraemer shortly after the outbreak of the war put forward his plea for a 'new course'. The reorganization of his church had been too much a matter of ministers and professors. He preferred to motivate parishioners to transform the church into apostolic congregations, directed to their environment and responsible for a humane world. The war convinced the Secretary-General Gravemeijer of the Netherlands Reformed synod of the necessity of such a lay apostolate. As a minister, he had broken with Kuyper's conceptions and reverted to Hoedemaker, who had in view 'the whole church and all the people', and to Kohlbrügge's emphasis on Christ over against ungodly man. In his sermons, he urged this momentum upon the congregation, while behind the scenes he put to work various committees for the renovation of the church. The General Regulations (*Algemeen reglement*) of 1816 had always been a hindrance to this sort of revival. From 1942 onward a first project by a synodical commission was to create a Work Order. This new order would indicate the path to replace the General Regulations with a new ecclesial law. The jurist Paul Scholten proposed this process, for a church in which the voice of the congregation was not heard, could impossibly renew. The Work Order was accepted by the church and immediately put into action. This meant that in 1945 a synod was convened at the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, which was composed of representatives of the classes, in order to create a new church order that would sustain the renewal of the confessional character of the Netherlands Reformed Church at the center of the society. In 1951 a new Church Order was introduced. The hierarchal nineteenth-century constitution was replaced by a Presbyterian polity. In this new order the lay apostolate was central. In the postwar years a great amount of attention was paid to edifying the congregation. Only after having spoken about the apostolate the Church Order dealt with the confession. The Netherlands Reformed Church professed faith 'in communion with the confession of the fathers' — and not 'in conformity' with that confession, as the Reformed Alliance had advocated.

The Netherlands Reformed Church with its ideal of re-Christianization interfered in the general debate on the renewal of society. The opacity due to the pillarized society and a divided church during the war had, in large portions of the church, made a place for faith in a new national community based on Christianity. The Liberal Reformed and the members of the Reformed Alliance however, were for various reasons reluctant regarding the theological character of the innovations. The Liberal Reformed were strongly involved in the church in these few years. For some the turn towards orthodoxy as a result of the renewal went too far. In opposition to this 'shift to the right' the Zwingli League (*Zwingli Bond*), founded in 1948, promoted the Liberal Reformed principles, and would turn against the new Church Order. Banning however, no longer believed in the old optimism of Liberal Protestantism that a synthesis was possible between the church and de-Christianized culture and opted for a Christ-confessing national church (*volkskerk*). The Reformed Alliance was critical of the new Church Order, because the autonomy of the local church had been denied and the administration was still too centralized.

In particular, the Association of Liberal Netherlands Reformed (*Vereniging van Vrijzinnig Hervormden*) and the Reformed Alliance remained critical of the effect of the apostolic rationale. The Middle Orthodoxy (*middenorthodoxie*) — the Netherlands Reformed of Confessionalist and Ethical tendency, but also Liberals — became the supporting part of the church, which, in a Barthian spirit, related critical to culture: the 'Netherlands Reformed-imperialism' was influenced by the idea that the church knows what

is good for the world. This large group tried to moderate the old contradictions within the Netherlands Reformed Church by talking about complementary modalities instead of mutually exclusive tendencies. In this moderation a danger of drabness and dullness was never far away, as the pamphlet by the theologian Hendrikus Berkhof (1914-1995), *The crisis of Middle Orthodoxy* (*De crisis der middenorthodoxie*, 1952) warned. Berkhof was rector of the Netherlands Reformed Seminary Church and World in Driebergen and from 1960 onward also a professor of dogmatics at the Leiden theological faculty. Berkhof had an optimistic vision of the culture-changing power of the gospel and stood for the spirit of the Netherlands Reformed Church in the 1950s with his book *Christ the meaning of history* (*Christus de zin der geschiedenis*, 1958).

The new Protestant impetus towards society assumed an organizational form in the establishment of ecclesiastical councils, including for education, and in ecclesial coordination of youth work, among other things. The Liberals had difficulty with this 'ecclesialization'. Until then Mennonites and Lutherans took part in these now exclusively Netherlands Reformed youth organizations, and the Reformed Liberals wanted to maintain contacts in all directions, also to the Scouting and the General Society for Young Men (*Algemene Maatschappij Voor Jongeren*: AMVJ). The Netherlands Reformed élan also became concrete when seven Amsterdam Netherlands Reformed pastors joined the SDAP. Although Buskes and Miskotte in *What inspires them?* (*Wat bezielt ze?* 1945) explained that the socialist movement had discovered Christ as a Savior for the oppressed and exploited, the consequence of this choice - a critical attitude towards Christian organizations - went many Netherlands Reformed too far. The Netherlands Reformed minister A.A. van Ruler (1908-1970) continued the political tradition of some pre-war Protestant splinter parties in his opposition to the neutral state and his difficulty with Catholics. When he and his Protestant Union did not win a parliamentary seat in 1946 and he in 1947 he was appointed professor of theology at Utrecht, he turned away from politics.

There was also a new focus upon Israel: a shift from the theme of mission to encounter. Before the war Miskotte had pleaded for attention to Judaism and Van Ruler stressed the importance of the Old Testament for the church, to which was added the New Testament like 'a little list of foreign words as explanation.' More and more, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity was seen as a schism within the church. J.H. Grolle (1899-1974), who grew up among the Jews of Amsterdam and for many years was the Secretary of the Council for the Church and Israel (*Raad voor Kerk en Israël*), hoped for an encounter with Israel not so much to convert the Jews but to renew the church. Additionally in 1951 the Catholic Council for Israel was established under the leadership of the priest A. Ramselaar, who advocated an open dialogue with Judaism, based on a theology of 'the mystery of Israel', in which the Jewish people were assigned a redemptive function even now.

2.2.3 The 'Liberation' (*Vrijmaking*) and its consequences

Like the Netherlands Reformed Church, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands could not continue the prewar situation either, because they split during the war. In 1942, after a synodical compromise on divergent valuations and interpretations of Kuyper's theology, a new conflict broke out over the authority of the synod and on the text of the compromise itself. Especially the Kuyperian understanding of the doctrine of covenant and baptism in this compromise (on which a more balanced compromise had been accepted in 1905), was rejected by a large group of 'concerned' churches. Their main spokesmen, the Kampen professors S. Greijdanus and K. Schilder, claimed that the Synod itself conferred too much

power, and considered themselves not bound by the compromise. When the synod declared the compromise — unlike in 1905 — binding, Schilder called on the churches to defend their freedom. The conflict over church authority and freedom occurred in the years 1943 and 1944. For many concerned church members, the struggle against the synod mirrored the struggle of the Dutch resistance against the Nazi terror. Since the parties could not agree with each other — partly hampered by the lack of a free press and the protagonists being in hiding — the Synod, chaired by the theology professor G.C. Berkouwer (1903-1996), resolved the issue by deposing Schilder as both a minister and professor. Instead of resolving the problem, the deposition was counterproductive. Schilder utilized his deposition as new evidence of an over-reach of synodical powers. In August 1944, he therefore liberated himself of the Synod and its decisions and called on churches to do so as well. One argued in this way relying on Article 31 of the Church Order, on the acceptance of Synod decisions unless contrary to God's Word. In 1944 and subsequent years about 90,000 church members, or 12 percent agreed with Schilder and formed the Reformed Churches 'upholding art. 31' (later: *Vrijgemaakt* or Liberated). In the *Vrijgemaakte* churches the doctrine of the covenant from the Calvinist *Afscheiding* tradition predominated, which emphasized the acceptance of the promises of the covenant in the obedience of the faith, and took baptism as the seal of those promises. The *Vrijgemaakte* members watched the renewal of the Netherlands Reformed Church with interest, but, agitated by the synodical behavior and assertive as Schilder himself, opted for an independent ecclesiastical live, immediately founded their own Theological School at Kampen and maintained the prewar perspective on organized Christian action in society. Their criticism on Kuyper had been that the organizations were pushing the church to the margins of society. The *Vrijgemaakten* now corrected him by — just as the Netherlands Reformed Church had done — placing the ecclesiastical institution central and binding the political and social organizations to it. Soon there appeared a *Vrijgemaakte* newspaper (the current *Nederlands Dagblad*) and in 1948 a *Vrijgemaakte* political party, the Reformed Political League (*Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond*: GPV).

The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands had enough of Schilder after 1944. After some serious but unsuccessful attempts to bridge the gap with the *Vrijgemaakten*, they let the matter to rest. Because a large part of the active church members had opted for the *Vrijgemaakten*, the traditional élan of the Neo-Calvinists became muted. The defensive contribution on the Calvinist side in the debate on social and spiritual renewal was therefore weak and likely to increase the success of the breakthrough. But rather than continue grieving about the damage, also in the Reformed Churches (GKN) sounded a call for renewal and charisma towards modern society, including in *Calvinists, to where?* (*Gereformeerden waarheen?*,1951) by Thijs Booy. The church leaders distanced themselves yet from such efforts.

2.2.4 Restoration of the Catholic Pillar

The conservative Catholic and Calvinist attitude created a trend that would become stronger. The expectations for a renewed society were high, but the NVB failed to convert expectations to organization. The NVB not only lacked the support of the bishops, but also of many who returned to their posts as directors of the pre-war organizations and institutions, who considered a return to the prewar relations after the war primarily as a rehabilitation. The result of the breakthrough movement was therefore just that the Roman Catholic State Party, recently renamed the Catholic National Party (KVP), moved a little in a progressive direction, while the SDAP liquidated itself in favor of a new, moderate progressive Labor Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*: PvdA). It presented itself as the envisaged party of the breakthrough movement, but failed to attract many Catholics or Protestants. Nevertheless a Protestant and especially a

Catholic study group remained in the PvdA as a sign that the absoluteness of the confessional closed-mindedness was over.

2.2.5 The Indonesian question

The postwar renewal efforts seemed like a luxury compared to the difficulties which the Netherlands experienced in the Dutch East Indies (present day Indonesia), where Achmed Sukarno (1901-1970) in August 1945 declared Indonesia an independent republic. Despite military intervention — at the expense of 6,000 Dutch and 100,000 Indonesian dead — and negotiations, the situation could not be reversed and the island state became independent in 1949, with the exception of New Guinea. On one hand, in church and politics there was indignation about the uprising and the restoration of Dutch authority was advocated. 'Authority is authority and a rebel is a rebel', declared the ARP. This party, different from the Catholics, had had a strong hand in Dutch colonial policy before the war and embarked on a sharp course with respect to the Indonesian question. ARP-leader Jan Schouten (1883-1963) believed that the Indonesian republic was in chaos and its leaders unreliable. On the other hand, especially in missionary circles there was sympathy for the new republic. The Calvinist missionary S.U. Zuidema (1906-1975) was one of the few exceptions with his rejection of the Republic of Indonesia. The Catholic mission, under the leadership of the Dutch mission bishops, remained aloof in this discussion. Only the one Indonesian bishop plainly opted for Sukarno. When the missionaries and missionary sisters had to make a choice between Indonesian citizenship or departure after Indonesia became independent, most chose the latter option. 1,600 missionaries and sisters received a new nationality.

The disposition of Calvinist missionaries, like Johannes Verkuyl (1908-2001), was sometimes provocative in their own circles and provided more fireworks than recruitment. These missionaries were accused of committing treason, not only with respect to the political policy, but also to Christian principles themselves; Verkuyl for this reason was 'excommunicated' by the daily *Trouw*. A number of Calvinist missionaries in fact did step out of line, but in doing so it thus evoked the question of how Christianity should obtain its stature in a changing society. The ARP was opposed because it was firmly against the colonial policy, but it was also alone and rigid. In 1946, for the first time since 1918, the anti-revolutionaries were no longer part of the government and the party had to watch the Catholics, inexperienced in colonial affairs, dictate policies, together with the anti-colonial social democrats. In this conflict the question of the sustainability of renewal ideals was also at stake. The ARP suggested that a society without principled politics would be cast adrift — in their opinion the end result of the Indonesian question – independence of Indonesia in 1949 -was considered proof of that thesis.

On the Indonesian question, the ARP defended much more than a few decades of colonial policy. Now that not only the churches shifted places in society, but other moral questions were raised which could no longer be answered with reference to authority or the antithesis, it seemed Neo-Calvinist certainties faded. For example, in response to comments on the colonial policy of anti-revolutionary politicians and the *Trouw* newspaper the traditional appeal to the Bible as a book of principles was questioned. The vision on Christian politics and the organization of society was the real theme of the political struggle — over against the breakthrough, but also over against dissidents in their own circles.

The Netherlands Reformed Church was more receptive to the changing relationships between Christian and alternative visions of society, not least because of the contingent of Barthian theologians in their midst. The CHU gave more support to the government policy, in 1948 joined the Roman-Red (Catholic-

Socialist) coalition, and was open to a vision of society that was less determined by principles than by the apostolate, and would not shut in the church by organizations, but provided her an open access to society. Netherlands Reformed like Buskes, frequently aimed criticism at the Neo-Calvinists on this point.

At the time of the Indonesian question the Netherlands Reformed Church was busy bringing missionary societies into the Mission of the Netherlands Reformed Church (*Zending der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1951). This ecclesialization meant that new missionary ministers now had to follow an academic program and it awakened the expectation of greater involvement of congregations and a stronger financial base. The Netherlands Reformed synod was now closer involved with missions than ever before and in 1949 expressed its concern about the Dutch 'police action' against the Indonesian Republic and, in the spirit of Kraemer, chose for a handover of sovereignty, listening 'to Him who also speaks to us in the shifts within earthly power relations'.

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2.3 Restoration and reconstruction

### 2.3.1 Return of the pillars

The prewar pillarized social structures were quickly restored, despite all the criticism that occurred in the interwar period and, during the war, by the Dutch Union and the intellectuals of St. Michielsgestel. These intellectuals were only a small group, and the organizations were indeed disabled for a number of war years, but the social structures and networks that supported them, had continued to function. Moreover, the Netherlands had suffered heavy war damages and was faced with the first and dominating task of economic reconstruction. All organizations from orthodox to liberal were rapidly re-established, albeit often with less emphasis on their religious or ideological connection than before the war, and therefore often under a new name. The SDAP became the PvdA„the R.C. State Party became the KVP, and the R. C. Workers Union was renamed the Catholic Workers Movement (*Katholieke Arbeiders Beweging*: KAB). The ARP and CHU decided not to merge, despite an initiative started by *Trouw* to form a Protestant National Party.

This gave the first decade after the war a double character. On an intellectual level, there was a sense of thwarted renewal. This frustration generated renewed criticism of 'pillarization' — in those years it became a widespread term to denote an objectionable societal structure based on worldviews. When the breakthrough was delayed, it grew into a supposed panacea for all social ills. But socially the familiar patterns returned, stronger than ever and more ubiquitously, notwithstanding the passionate 'breakthrough bible', *Church and world in crisis* (*Kerk en wereld in de crisis*, 1947) by the Barthian chemist C.J. Dippel (1902-1971). The census of 1947 clearly portrayed the dual nature. The proportion of Catholics and Calvinists had grown compared to 1930 had — Catholics were now 38.5 percent of the Dutch population — but the Netherlands Reformed had lost again, even though the Netherlands Reformed Church realized a steady growth of members from pietistic Reformed denominations. In addition to the 31 percent Netherlands Reformed the un-churched in the Netherlands now counted 17 percent, an increase from 1930 of nearly 3 percent. From further analysis of these figures, it is clear that the process of dechurching in these years already had set in, especially among the Catholics. This was still counterbalanced however, by a high birth rate. That there was indeed such a decline was somewhat reflected in the church attendance figures. In 1966, 14 percent of Catholics did not attend church on Sundays, something that had become much more common among Protestants as well (42 percent). Among the Calvinist denominations 17 percent did not attend church every Sunday.

### 2.3.2 Reconstruction

Of the Western European countries, the Netherlands suffered the most material damage from the war. From 1945 onward the impoverished, damaged and ransacked country was able to get back on its feet socio-economically with effective government support. Social services introduced by the occupying forces were maintained in order to strengthen the economic resilience of the poor, and the Labour Foundation (*Stichting van de Arbeid*, 1945) and the Socio-Economic Council (*Sociaal-Economische Raad*, 1950) were founded. Such national bodies and the growing government influence in the socio-economic life in general raised the need for national consulting structures for each worldview-based community. In particular, the Catholic pillar was further harnessed with overarching structures and moreover largely professionalized.

The reconstruction and economic recovery that took place in the years 1945-1950 were largely successful; a persistent housing shortage aside. In 1950, the Dutch economy was back at pre-war levels, and

continued a steady growth that would continue until the oil crisis of 1973. Backed by the American Marshall Plan and strong government involvement — until the sixties there were tight wage policies — a massive industrialization program was initiated. Attention was focused mainly on the regions where industrialization had lagged behind, especially the Catholic provinces of Brabant and Limburg. There was a shift in these 'years of discipline and asceticism' (J.C.H Blom) from a still agrarian society to a predominantly urbanized one. In 1960, the percentage of farmers in the Dutch population had fallen to 10 percent, 43 percent of the population was employed in industry, and 45 percent in services.

The social security system was mainly established in the fifties, after already in 1939 the Child Supply Act had been introduced followed by a Health Insurance Decision in 1941. Under the Drees Cabinet in 1947 the famous emergency law on Retirement Provision was established (commonly referred to as *van Drees trekken* or support by Drees), in 1956 it was transformed into the General Seniority Law or AOW (*Algemeene Ouderdomswet*). From their original endeavor of 1945 to strengthen the role of the state to, the social democrats moved to corporatist options. In the Social Insurance Organization Act (*Organisatiewet Sociale Verzekering*, 1952), the Catholic and Protestant corporatist principle of a joint implementation of the social services by employers' and workers' organizations was established, with the government as its regulator. In practice this resulted in mixtures between the different regulation principles. The difference between a state pension and compulsory insurance by the AOW (1958) was only discernible for the ideologically astute. Along these lines, in the fifties national insurance was established, culminating in the General Assistance Act (*Algemene Bijstandswet*) of 1963.

With the emergence of the welfare state the collaboration between Catholics and Social Democrats was of great importance. When the Christian Coalition was terminated in 1939, the so-called 'Roman-Red' collaboration (a coalition between the Catholics and the Social Democrats) dominated politics in the decade after the war. After some try-outs in social planning in the interwar period the partners worked well together. The right-left opposition in politics no longer coincided with the difference between Christian and non-Christian parties, but with the difference between less and more government influence in society. The KVP — with the help of the Protestant parties and the liberals, reorganized in 1948 in the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, VVD) — mitigated Social Democratic plans to intervene in business, limited the role of the Social Planning Bureau (SCP), and reduced the role of government in the implementation of social insurance to monitoring. The churches played a minor role in these developments, but there was a Christian stamp upon society and the Christian political parties kept the pillarized structure of society intact.

**Comment [g6]:** Hoofdlettergebruik bij politieke groeperingen is niet consequent doorgevoerd, evenmin als wel/geen spaties tussen initialen bij persoonsnamen.

2.3.3 Concerns about the youth

Besides reconstruction, the attention of Dutch society — not only of the churches, but equally of the innovators in the NVB and of the government — focused upon the 'moral level' of the population. Alarmed by the 'debauchery' of mixing with the allied troops in the summer of 1945, the great increase in movie theaters, the escalating acts of revenge, and the black market, restoring morals was high on the agenda. In the years 1945-1946 the bishops devoted two pastoral letters to the moral reconstruction of the working youth, and the Catholic Workers League (KAB) actively continued in this endeavor. Just like after the First World War, it was the youngsters who worried the ecclesial authorities most. Protestant and Catholic organizations immediately after the war cooperated in the organization the Dutch National Restoration (*Nederlands Volksherstel*), which was active in the promotion of an enhanced family life and

the moral recovery of the population, under the motto ‘restoration of the family brings restoration of the nation!’

This first ‘offensive’ would not take away the concerns about youngsters. Shifts in the labor market, growing participation in education, and a new pedagogical climate made the youth more self-confident. The authority figures — parents, churches, and government — talked about the ‘mass youth’ and assumed that it had a ‘banal, materialistic morality’, a ‘vulgar hedonism’, and an increased, even an unacceptable sexual activity. In fact during the fifties the ‘beatniks’ appeared on the street scene and jazz and rock and roll were introduced from America — the aid from the Marshall Plan was not obtainable separate from American culture. The fact also was, however, that the youth generally were just as sexually reserved as before the war. It is true that the participation of youth in the organized youth movement decreased, but at the same time it never had been as great as is sometimes thought. In Calvinist circles the significance of the young men and girls associations suffered after a peak in the interwar period. In the fifties the overarching leagues in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (*Gereformeerde Kerken*) lost 40 percent of their members. The Liberal Christian youth work sharply decreased short after the war, leading to a gap between youth work and the church. In 1955 the Liberal youth work accepted government subsidy and other church youth organizations soon followed that same path. Due to this development the control of the adults on the morals and leisure of youth reduced firmly. But the educators also changed. The League for Reformed Youth Organization (*Bond voor Gereformeerde Jeudorganisatie*) realized in the early fifties that in education too little attention had been paid to the development and individuality of the child, and that too much emphasis had been placed upon the acquisition of values. That the Synod of the Reformed Churches (GKN) in 1952 explicitly warned against couple dancing, Sunday sports, and the cinemas highlights the broad interest of church members in these forms of entertainment. Church attendance suffered.

The most important youth organizations in the fifties in Catholic circles still were the class-based youth organizations, especially for the working class youth (Catholic Workers Youth (*Katholieke Arbeidersjeugd*) and Women’s Catholic Workers Youth (*Vrouwelijke Katholieke Arbeidersjeugd*)) and for young farmers, while the significance of the scouting organizations increased. The religious and socio-pedagogical formation led by adults within these organizations, however, gradually disappeared into the background in favor of independence and self-development. In 1965 the Catholic workers youth organizations were transformed into the Catholic Working Youth (KWJ). In Protestant circles gender-based organization of youth work disappeared in the larger churches in the fifties. The relationship between the along religious tendencies organized Netherlands Reformed youth movement and the Netherlands Reformed Church had been loose before the war, but as a result of the new religious fervor, youth work in 1941 came under ecclesial wings with the establishment of the Netherlands Reformed Youth Council (*Hervormde Jeugdraad*). Neo-Calvinist (g*ereformeerde*) youth work on the contrary lost its ecclesial character, and in 1965 became the National Center for Reformed Youth Work (*Landelijk Centrum voor Gereformeerd Jeugdwerk*) established for all forms of childhood pedagogy. When around 1960 the baby-boom (*geboortegolf*) generation became the object of organized youth work, a decline was already occurring down the whole ecclesiastical line.

2.3.4 The psychologizing of morality

Under the influence of the postwar 'morality offensive' and efforts to 'national recovery' social work, youth work, and mental health withdrew from the pre-war atmosphere of charity and pastoral care. A rapid professionalization took place, stimulated by government funds. In 1952, the government established a Department for Social Work, which dealt with the socio-cultural development of the population. While formerly a doctor, priest, or pastor, and charitable organizations guided individuals or families— although 'led' is probably a better word — this was now the domain of an increasing number of psychiatrists, psychologists, pedagogues, and social workers. On the Catholic side, this whole complex of youth care, family care, marriage bureaus, alcoholic agencies and psychiatric precaution and aftercare was coordinated by the Catholic National Office for Mental Health Care (*Katholiek Nationaal Bureau voor Geestelijke Gezondsheidszorg*, KNBGG) founded in 1954, which was established under the energetic leadership of the psychiatrist Cees Trimbos (1920-1988) and the economist and later State Secretary of Health, A. Bartels (1915-2002). A sector of coordinated care of this magnitude was never established among non-Catholics. Part of the work in the field of mental health was conducted by the local health services. But especially in the large cities also Netherlands Reformed, Calvinist, and Jewish mental health care offices were established. This whole 'psy-complex' was, in the spirit of pillarization, headed by a National Federation that distributed public funds among the pillars. The excessive pillarization in this field hardly existed for more than a decade. In 1964 the KNBGG launched a plan that within a few years led to the establishment of the religiously neutral Regional Institutions for Mental Health Care (*Regionale Instellingen voor Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg*: RIAGG's).

The impetus for the emergence of these professional culture of care was, as has been mentioned, the concern for mental health. In 1948 this concern led the Catholic Charitable Association for Mental Public Health (*Katholieke Charitatieve Vereniging voor Geestelijke Volksgezondheid*) to be renamed the Catholic Central Association (*Katholieke Centrale Vereniging*). It was established under the chairmanship of the Utrecht professor F.J.J. Buytendijk (1887-1974), who was from a Netherlands Reformed home, later became Calvinist (*gereformeerd*) and then Catholic in 1937, and even before the war had taught at the (Calvinist) Free University (VU). Buytendijk was a phenomenological psychologist and the center of what would soon be called the 'Utrecht school', to which also the famous pedagogue M.J. Langeveld (1905-1989) belonged. There were also Protestant organizations in this field — the Netherlands Reformed Foundation for Mental Public Health (*Nederlandse Hervormde Stichting voor Geestelijke Volksgezondheid*) and the Association for Mental Public Health on Calvinist principles (*Vereniging voor Geestelijke Volksgezondheid op Gereformeerde Grondslag*), but their activities were significantly less. At the same time, at the VU the phenomenologically trained H.C. Rümke (1893-1967), like Buytendijk working at Utrecht University, became fascinated with the meaning of psychiatry for the modernized world and thus also was engaged in the fields of mental health and health care. He made a name for himself in wider circles with his book *Character and talent related to unbelief* (*Karakter en aanleg in verband met het ongeloof*, 1939).

From the mid-fifties on the group of researchers around Buytendijk exercised a major influence upon the thinking about traditional religious morality. Until the late sixties, phenomenological psychology defined the thinking of Catholics and Protestants about mental health, youth and education, marriage and sexuality. Instead of a common rigid mindset in which morality was seen as a matter of obedience or disobedience, ideas developed about moral growth, personal circumstances, and spiritually unhealthy consequences of a strict morality. Although in 1954 the pope personally spoke out against this 'situational ethics', this 'psychologizing' of morality was ineluctable, it brought liberation to many — and sometimes

even a departure from the church. The Calvinist theologian R. Schippers (1907-1989) with a view to the social changes in *The Reformed custom* (*De gereformeerde zede*, 1954) placed group culture under the microscope. He did not argue normatively, but displayed the ability to empathize and left room for subjective feelings. The Calvinist youth work in these years broke with the 'ethical Procrustean bed': the starting point was no longer taken in the norm, but in the life and world of the youth.

In connection with the rapid population growth and its socio-economic impact, the Netherlands Reformed Church in 1952 issued a pastoral letter on marriage, which besides periodic abstinence emphatically accepted the use of contraceptives. In 1964 the Reformed Churches (GKN) spoke in favor of a 'responsible family planning', following the practice of its members regarding the use of 'means'. The Protestant churches believed that the information of the Dutch Association for Sexual Reform (*Nederlandse Vereniging voor Sexuele Hervorming*: NVSH, 1946) was quite focused on the experience of pleasure and in 1957 some churches and organizations, therefore, founded the Protestant Foundation for the Promotion of Responsible Family Planning (*Protestantse Stichting ter Bevordering van Verantwoorde Gezinsvorming*). The dissemination of liberal moral positions in Catholic circles can be followed in study days of Catholic Action, in educational magazines such as *DUX*, but also in the articles of the later comedian Fons Jansen in the soldiers' newspaper *G-3* or on the radio and later television, including through the 'chats' of the Catholic psychiatrist Trimbos. The 's-Hertogenbosch bishop W. Bekkers on 21 March 1963 made a deep impression when he in a televised speech stated that the number of children was a matter of conscience for married people. Many Catholics concluded that contraceptives 'thus' were allowed.

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## 2.4 The churches years of recovery and awareness

### 2.4.1 Churches and Society

It seems that largely the Catholic portion of the population, plus the Calvinist portion, promoted the restoration of the pillarized social structure, furthered by the bishops. They stressed that only recovery of the internal unity of the Catholic faithful could distract from the temptations of the modern world. In essence, their policy since the start of the Catholic pillarization had not been changed. Also their attitude during the war had been determined by rejecting ungodly influences such as liberalism, socialism, national-socialism, and communism. Cooperation with other Christian churches in the IKO was motivated by common interest, an interest that subsided with the end of the war. These contacts therefore were not pursued further. The Protestant churches on the other hand did take the IKO track further with the establishment, on Netherlands Reformed initiative , of the Ecumenical Council (*Oecumenische Raad*, 1946), joined by the Netherlands Reformed Church , the Evangelical Lutheran Church (*Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk*), the Old Catholic Church (*Oud-Katholieke Kerk*), the Remonstrant Brotherhood, the General Mennonite Conference, and the Moravian congregations (*Evangelische Broedergemeenten*). The Calvinist denominations, however, remained aloof. However, in 1946 the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) joined the the cooperative Dutch (Protestant) Missionary Council (*Nederlandse Zendingsraad*, 1929), which now got its own office, developed ecumenical activities and promoted theological reflection. In Calvinist circles, the missiologist J.H. Bavinck (1895-1964) offered a contribution to the reflection on missions. Unlike Barth, Bavinck recognized that God left not himself without witness among the peoples, but that in non-Christian religions this manifestation was repressed and replaced by their own idols.

The driving force behind the Protestant cooperation was the Netherlands Reformed Church, which in its new church order set itself an ecumenical task. In these years, the Netherlands Reformed Church endeavored to to enter into a new relationship with society, opposing and evading pillarization. The antithesis, stemming from the Neo-Calvinists, should be replaced by efforts of re-Christianization. This was not about a political but a spiritual theocracy of a Christianity that permeated society. In 1945, Eijkman's prewar plan for an ecclesiastical center that would systematically work towards the re-Christianization of modern, industrial society, was realized with the creation of the foundation 'Church and World' (*Kerk en Wereld*). Here unofficial workers in church work or *wika's* (*werkers in kerkelijke arbeid*), were trained, until in 1953 this training went on at the College of Social Studies De Horst. From

**Comment [g7]:** Hoofdletters of kleine letters for deze stromingen?

the outset there was a certain tension between ‘Church and World’ and the Netherlands Reformed Church regarding the apostolic character of the church, which according to the former had to be much stronger. The church was accused of conservatism and in the course of the fifties the *wika’s* grew increasingly critical of the church. They followed the line of thought of J.C. Hoekendijk (1912-1975), who rejected the theocratic thinking of his fellow Utrecht professor, Van Ruler, and stressed that the Church did not exist for itself, but for the world. In 1965 the training of *wika’s* ended and ‘Church and World’ targeted stronger on society.

The Netherlands Reformed Church may have been too conservative in the eyes of apostolic Reformed, it still remained coherent with its new mission statement speaking out on social and political issues, also after the war. This endeavor was in line with the general sentiment in Western Europe that, in response to the totalitarian derailment of the thirties and forties, churches and governments must take more responsibility for society. The World Council of Churches (WCC) translated this in its pronouncements about the ‘responsible society’ and Dutch politics in the first Company Councils Act (wet op de Ondernemingsraden,1950). Then in 1956 tensions developed with Indonesia over the continuing Dutch rule over New Guinea since 1949. The Netherlands Reformed synod advocated to abandon cherished, but dangerous ideas about the Dutch responsibility in the East. The political tensions in subsequent years resulted in missionary activities shifting from the former Dutch colonies to other continents. The outspoken anti-colonial position of the Synod aroused indignation. This did not withhold the Synod from speaking out on issues like the Cold War and Dutch participation in NATO. In the breakthrough monthly *Wending* Dippel defined in 1958 the resistance of atomic weapons a Christian calling. The systematic theologian and church historian A.J. Rasker (1906-1990), who was amenable to the messianic projection that he read into Marxism, opposed thinking in terms of Eastern and Western blocks in these years. While the GKN Synod in 1957 ventured only into the discussion of the pros and cons of the use of atomic weapons, the Netherlands Reformed Synod in 1962 declared ‘nay without yeas’ against it — in politics this view was only cherished by the Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP, 1957) and the Communists. More than other proclamations, this position on nuclear weapons, together with that regarding New Guinea, generated a great amount of controversy in the Netherlands Reformed Church. The social commitment collided with an aversion to a leftist political course.

**Comment [g8]:** Er is inconsequentie in het gebruik van soorten aanhalingstekens.

2.4.2 Growing openness

The vision of a society organized along the lines of different worldviews was still dominant in the fifties, but the vitality was with the new vision, which in all respects postulated the communal character of society, from politics to worldview. The struggle between the two visions was not settled, but the power of the old view was only recognizable in Calvinist circles. Members of the Reformed Congregations (GerGem) started their own teacher training college in 1944, the Liberated Reformed and the orthodox branch of the Netherlands Reformed followed in the early fifties. It was the beginning of the Calvinist direction in education, which grew against the social trend, supported by a guiding and eventually even funding government. This renewed separate organization formed an ideological counter-movement in an era where the churches specifically looked for an adjoining function in modern society.

In the private lives of church members during the fifties there was more space to relate religious morality and personal considerations and conditions with each other at one’s own discretion. After the war, French writers and philosophers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, gained influence with their anti-

metaphysical view of reality and their emphasis on the individual, choosing person. Around 1950, in ecclesiastical circles a debate engendered whether their existentialism could contribute to the renewal of Christianity — led by the Catholic philosopher Bernard Delfgaauw (1912-1993) and the Calvinist philosopher C.A. van Peursen (1920-1996). While the pillars expanded in society, internal criticism increased. In journals such as the Catholic *At the Eleventh Hour* (*Te Elfder Ure*) and the Protestant *Time and Task* (*Tijd en Taak*), breakthrough ideas remained alive and well, and raised the question for the need of a pillarized society. In the sixties the alumni organization of the Calvinist student union SSR began with a series of high-profile annual congresses led by the historian and publicist G. Puchinger (1921-1999), where instead of deepening and defining their own position, the meeting with Netherlands Reformed, Catholics and non-Christians and the conversation about mutual differences was the policy. These approaches were also present among many young priests and ministers.

Illustrative in Netherlands Reformed circles in the early fifties was the conflict about the foundation of a Christian school in Hardegarijp which was halted by the local Netherlands Reformed church council. The Netherlands Reformed Council for Church and School (*Raad voor Kerk en School*) opted, in conformity with the new apostolic course in the Church , to take the side of the church council, much to the annoyance of the Reformed Alliance (*Gereformeerde Bond*). The Netherlands Reformed theologian G.C. van Niftrik (1904-1972) supported this choice and in 1952 the Netherlands Reformed Synod decided: 'At this current point in time, the Church may not generally make a choice that is applicable to all between the existing public schooling and the existing Protestant Christian one'. Because middle orthodoxy emphatically did not want to make any choice, the spiritual and moral autonomy of the congregant was stressed, yet by doing so the moral significance of the church in the practice of daily life eroded. The pillarized structure of society was jeopardized. In particular, the Reformed Alliance had trouble with this elaboration of the re-Christianization ideal.

In confessional literary circles after the war, there was a large trend of openness towards society, so that it was difficult to establish their own organizations and journals. In Catholic circles it did not result in group formation, but in Protestant circles in part despite opposition from the Barthian side this succeeded until 1964, in the journal *Encounter* (*Ontmoeting*). In the Catholic and Protestant newspapers, philosophical literary criticism was offered (Kees Fens in *De Tijd*, C. Rijnsdorp in *De Rotterdammer*), but in Dutch literary circles Christians as such hardly played any role, partly because the gap between church and culture had become so broad that many writers felt they had to choose between their Christianity and their artistry. Moreover Catholics and Protestants nurtured moral objections to the literature without illusion of W. F. Hermans, Anna Blaman, and Gerard Kornelis van het Reve. One exception was the Catholic Godfried Bomans (1913-1971), one of the first writers who made the newspaper his podium and in the sixties updated that to television, and according to Van Duinkerken in the year 1962 he was the most widely read Dutch author.

2.4.3 Television and proclamation

In 1954 the American evangelist Billy Graham visited the Netherlands. Protestant church leaders thought his Christianity did not have enough content (calling it 'ready-to-wear religion'), but an audience of 40,000 came to hear him in the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam, which suggested rather that the intellectual character and solid forms of the church did not engage the people. The evangelical movement in the United States, after a phase in the nineteenth century in which criticism of capitalism and liberalism

was practiced, regrouped at the grassroots of the churches. In the fifties it appeared again as a mass movement, now as an orthodox movement with strict personal ethics. The authority of the Bible was fundamental, as well as the emphasis on personal faith and evangelism. The movement was anti-institutional and organized in a Congregationalist way. They did not have any synods and were appreciative of the existing churches as slumbering institutions only. The evangelicals focused on the ordinary believer and did not develop intellectual power. In the academic world, where evangelicals did not gain a foothold within the SSR and NCSV, they evangelized via their own student movements such as Ichthus (1960) and the Navigators (1966). Thus the informal evangelical movement began its advance in Dutch society. In 1958 the American evangelist and faith healer Tommy L. Osborn visited the Netherlands and attracted an audience of 120,000 people at the Hague Malieveld. His use of television was innovative. The movement was characterized by an emphasis on the authority of the Bible, personal faith, and evangelism; it rejected the orthodox doctrine of election and stressed the importance of a personal choice for God. The movement was anti-institutional and anti-theological, which was why the ecclesiastical orthodox were initially critical. But the Pentecostal movement was boosted by the appearance of Osborn and stimulated the revival movement 'Streams of Power' (Stromen van kracht) of Karel Hoekendijk (1904-1987). Also Johan Maasbach (1918-1997), Osborn's translator, and the organization 'Power from On High' (Kracht van omhoog) promoted the growth of Pentecostal Christians. In these and other evangelical circles, partly as a result of Johannes de Heer and the Maranatha movement, there was a widespread focus on the return of Christ and a great amount of sympathy for the Jews as God's people. The founding of the state of Israel in 1948 was seen as a fulfillment of biblical promises and strengthened the religious expectation.

The churches were troubled by adult baptism by immersion and the faith healing within evangelical circles, but they shared the interest in the emerging mass medium of television. Before World War II, the KRO, NCRV and the VPRO broadcasted church services on the radio. Part of the new course of the Netherlands Reformed Church was its desire for a national church broadcast during the war. Immediately after the war, this ideal took shape in the Interchurch Consultation on Radio Matters (*Interkerkelijk Overleg in Radioaangelegenheden*: IKOR), in which various Protestant churches and the Old Catholic Church participated. The Catholic Church sided with the KRO, and the Calvinist denominations deemed the broadcast of church services was not an ecclesiastical task, and cooperated with the NCRV. Thus the IKOR did not become a national broadcast network, but it did give shape to the ecumenical idea. In 1954 the IKOR broadcasted the first televised worship service. The broadcasts in the initial years had a static, recorded character. The growing importance of this medium brought Calvinist and evangelical churches together in 1957 in the Convent of Churches (*Convent van Kerken*), a more orthodox version of the IKOR, that broadcasted church services.

### 2.4.4 Ecclesiastical Sociology

Reconstruction and industrialization posed major problems for the churches. The problem of the recovery from war damage was due to population growth, economic expansion and urbanization quickly followed by the challenge of establishing parishes and congregations, especially in the new housing districts. Moreover the churches feared the negative influences of the socio-economic developments on morality and perhaps even apostasy. The Catholic Church in particular had not forgotten how it had suffered in the nineteenth century with the migration of workers to the city. Nor had it forgotten how a focused, village-style construction and carefully constructed community had prevented this situation in the Limburg

mining area. Like the government and humanistic circles, the churches also requested advice from the young science of (ecclesiastical) sociography and (religious) sociology on the nature of the rapidly changing society and how they could manage it. Both the Catholic and the Netherlands Reformed Church and later also the Calvinists founded their own sociological institutes (Catholic Socio-Religious Institute (*Katholieke Sociaal-Kerkelijk Instituut*: KASKI), the Sociological Institute of the Netherlands Reformed Church (*Sociologisch Instituut van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*) derived from 'Church and World', as well as the Reformed Sociological Institute (*Gereformeerd Sociologisch Instituut*: GSI) (respectively, from 1946-present, 1952-1964, and 1954-1966), who not only gave specific advice about the layout of parish and town, but also reported on church and society, including *The religious and social aspects of industrialization in the Netherlands* (*De godsdienstig-sociale aspecten van de industrialisatie in Nederland*, KASKI, 1952) and *Changing Tide. Structural changes in the Netherlands and their implications for church life* (*Veranderend getij. Structuurveranderingen in Nederland en hun consequenties voor het kerkelijk leven*, GSI, 1961-1962). The GSI was not an ecclesiastical institution and directed by members of the Reformed Churches (GKN), the Christian Reformed Churches, the *Vrijgemaakte* churches and of the Reformed Congregations. It was founded in 1954 as the new established Ministry for Social Work wanted to conduct investigation into the Dutch society along ideological lines. The churches put all the emphasis on invoking the help of social scientists on maintaining morality and preventing apostasy.

Together with the entrance of psychiatrists, psychologists, pedagogues, and social workers into church life, the foundation of these sociological institutes demonstrated ecclesiastical recognition of the importance of the concrete world and the subjective experience of church members. This approach downplayed the position of theology in the church, and within theology it meant a withdrawal from dogma in favor of ethics, practical theology, and congregation building.

2.4.5 Reconstruction and church building

During the war, many churches were destroyed or damaged, as well as a quarter of the Dutch housing market. After the war the government gave priority to housing. Due to a shortage of materials for some time it was not even permitted to build a church. The postwar Catholic church building, but sometimes also the Reformed and Netherlands Reformed, was influenced in the first few years by the Delft School of architecture centered around the Catholic architect M.J. Granpré Molière. The style can be described as traditionalist: in line with the historical style of the late nineteenth century. But soon the Bossche School blossomed primarily in Catholic architecture, led by the Benedictine H. van der Laan, where pragmatic concerns influenced the style of the church building. The Bossche School hearkened back mostly to early Christian motifs, mostly of an Italian basilica style.

Meanwhile the population explosion urged building activity. The postwar baby boom — comparatively highest in Calvinist and Catholic circles — fueled the optimism of the fifties quite a bit: the 700,000-members Reformed Churches in the Netherlands estimated that it would register its millionth member in 1980. So churches had to be built. In the municipal expansion space was reserved for church buildings, from the idea that the new districts should not be bedroom communities and therefore had to have full cultural facilities. Many new Protestant churches also functioned as community centers of the new districts for the churched and un-churched, and the design of the building focused on multifunctional use by adding auditorium spaces. On the political side, the Christian social democratic ideas of the

breakthrough inspired this development, while the re-Christianization ideal of the Netherlands Reformed Church played a role on the ecclesiastical side.

Just as it was the case in other areas of church life and thought, so it was believed in the mid-fifties that affiliation with modernization, in this case the functionalist style in the many housing developments, was given precedence over a traditional architecture. There were many churches built in the functionalist spirit of the *New Building* (*Nieuwe Bouwen*) style—utilizing concrete structures. The Netherlands Reformed and Calvinist church architecture followed this track in the sixties, which in Netherlands Reformed circles had a stronger tendency to maintain a modest exterior, and a cozy, residential interior. Catholic churches after the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council also increasingly thought to express the community ideal, which with respect to the interior could have the effect of 'house with a a sunken sitting area' (Peet).

The government provided the churches with financial support in the Church Building Allowance Act (*Wet Premie Kerkbouw*, 1962-1975), which initially offered a thirty percent construction grant. At the same time the Roman Catholics, Netherlands Reformed, and Calvinists jointly carried out the church building action 'Answer of '64' (*'Antwoord '64'*), the first interdenominational fundraising action. Joint church building was considered by Netherlands Reformed and Calvinists but was not implemented.

2.4.6 Emigration

After the Second World War there was a large group of Dutch that after the economic crisis and war years no longer saw any prospects at home. In 1948, a third of Dutch households considered emigration. Besides the economic motive the continuing war threat (the Cold War) also played a role and — in the case of the Calvinists — religious discontent. But the wealth of possibilities that the countries of emigration seemed to offer in comparison to the Netherlands was decisive. Between 1945 and 1967 nearly half a million Dutch emigrated, encouraged by a government faced with a surplus of labor. North America and Australia were among the most popular emigration areas. The emigration was largely coordinated by the government in collaboration with the various worldview-based emigration organizations. Interestingly, one third of the emigrants to Canada were Calvinist. Besides the vast agricultural area of Canada, the Protestant Christian Emigration Office (*Christelijke Emigratie Centrale*) and the Christian Reformed Church in North America — sister church of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, founded in 1857 in the first emigration wave — also played an important role organizing an emigration which included housing and employment of the emigrant. Smaller Calvinist denominations sometimes founded their own emigrant churches or strengthened their ties with existing churches in the other continent where their church members could be enrolled. For many, a trusted ecclesiastical structure was the starting point for a new life in another world. The Catholics were more reserved towards emigration and pointed to the threats to faith and morals in the new environment. For this reason, the Catholic Emigration Office promoted group emigration.

2.4.7 Welfare

The miracle of the fifties was that poverty seemed to be conquered. This also meant the end of the traditional ecclesial poor relief. The standard of living of most Dutch advanced in such a way that hardly any appeal was ever made. Moreover the demonstration of mercy from the church created a dependence that had been settled in the social legislation in which the right of citizens with limited means to financial

benefits was central. Most social tasks of the parish had been transferred to professionalized public institutions for social work. The organizations themselves orchestrated this development, including the possibility of utilizing government subsidies. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) accepted this situation in 1955 and shifted the focus from individual care for the poor by deacons to congregational and world diaconate. The Catholic poor relief was transformed into the Parochial Charity Institutions (*Parochiële Charitas Instellingen*) — pure funds providers — and the overarching National Social Charitable Centre (*Landelijke Sociaal Charitatief Centrum*) in the late sixties focused on community building as National Centre for Social Development (*Landelijk Centrum voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling*). As far as there were any objections to this development in Protestant circles, they could mainly be found in the conservative wing, in SGP and GPV and in the small Calvinist denominations. The 'state dirigism' was regarded there as the shadow of Russian communism fallen over the Netherlands. The Hungarian Revolution (1956) confirmed them in their fear of the loss of freedom. The Calvinist churches provided little in exchange. Despite these objections, the *Vrijgemaakte* churches built diaconal work with public funds by creating in 1952 a Foundation for Calvinist Child Welfare (*Stichting Gereformeerde Kinderbescherming*). Typical of the Kuyperian thinking in the ARP was that it was not the church but the political party that was regarded as the 'dyke that must protect the polder, in which the Christian organizational life flourishes, from the external storm surge' (ARP-re-organization report, 1952).

The churches in the fifties were encircled by a ring of new organizations, this time not political or social, but welfare-oriented. Religion in the Netherlands on various fields existed in an organizational form. But now that the churches became less inspiring sources and professionalized organizations took over their tasks, also the relationship between worldviews and the organization became more vague. The organizations took on their own dynamics and their ideological character became easily compromised. The Roman Catholic bishops in 1954 issued an episcopal charge on this issue.

### 2.4.8 The Episcopal Charge of 1954

The Episcopal Charge that was published in 1954, and the subsequent reactions are striking evidence of both pillarization and criticism. It had been the intention to enact this piece on the occasion of the centennial commemoration of the 1853 restoration of the episcopal hierarchy. Precisely because the bishops were not able to agree, its publication was postponed. Instead Cardinal De Jong from his sickbed urged to those Catholics present at the jubilee mass meeting in the Utrecht stadium: 'Remain as one, one!' Meanwhile, a group of priests and laity, with the consent of the bishop of Haarlem, J.P. Huibers, developed a concept-charge that breathed an open mind. The concept, however, was rejected especially in Limburg, and finally resulted in the issuing of a charge that is primarily attributed to the influence of the Roermond vicar, J. Feron. Key themes of the admonition were: one-ness within the own subculture, and from that point collaboration with others. Catholics were forbidden to listen to the socialist VARA broadcasts or to become members of the socialist labor union NVV and the Dutch Society for Sexual Reform. Membership of the social-democratic political party PvdA was strongly discouraged.

The Dutch Catholics generally accepted the charge obediently, at least in public: 'This is a dictatorship, but on God's authority', as one priest expressed it. Nevertheless, there were Catholics who continued their membership of the PvdA, despite heavy moral pressure. The NVV found in the charge a reason to break its cooperation with the Catholic labor union KAB (*Katholieke Arbeiders Bweging*). The charge had a

boomerang effect, proved in 1957, when the St. Willibrord Society for ecumenism in its report *Openness and Closedness of Dutch Catholics* (*Openheid en geslotenheid van de Nederlandse katholieken*) in a graceful manner swept the floor with the episcopal piece. In 1965 the bishops lifted the ban on membership in socialist organizations.

2.4.9 Being a Christian in society

In 1955 the Netherlands Reformed Church in response to the Catholic charge offered its vision of the relation of church and society in the pastoral letter *Being a Christian in Dutch society* (*Christen-zijn in de Nederlandse samenleving*). With this piece, the church again demonstrated that since the war it had taken over the leading role within Protestantism from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. The Netherlands Reformed Church rejected, as it had done earlier in the Hardegarijp issue, the explicit link between the church and Christian organization: 'Doing God's will at this time in the Netherlands is not identical with the practice of one of our political parties'. Someone's social stance was called a matter of personal conscience, but also a rather relative perspective that would turn the denial of the good right of other choices into a sin. Opposed to the antithesis, the committed breakthrough theologian Banning's emphasis on community and solidarity was adopted. Against this pastoral letter, the agitated Reformed Alliance (*Gereformeerde Bond*) in these years grew both in size and self-awareness as a dissident movement within the Netherlands Reformed Church. One of its spokesmen wrote in 1954 that in the Church finally only two tendencies could be distinguished: the Alliance's and everyone else's. The protest of the Alliance in these years was, however, clearer than its positive ecclesial vision.

In the charge the bishops had also called for new reflection on Catholic social teaching. Under the leadership of the priest and sociologist J. Ponsioen, SCJ (1911-1977), professor at the Institute of Social Studies, in the first half of the sixties a series was published on *Prosperity, Welfare and Happiness. A Catholic view of Dutch society* (*Welvaart, welzijn, en geluk. Een katholiek uitzicht op de Nederlandse samenleving*). In a similar way as the Netherlands Reformed pastoral letter the authors relativized pillarization: it was not 'the' doctrine, but 'a perspective': a more powerful relativizing of the pillar could not be expressed in a book title. The five parts moreover could not be sold.

The stance of the Netherlands Reformed Church contributed to the depillarization. But what seemed an 'erosion from the inside' of the pillars, and especially in the Catholic pillar, in the fifties the 'eroders' perceived themselves rather as quite the opposite. It was not only the religious leaders, but also the laity that felt increasingly involved in church life and capable of co-responsibility. The changing character and new structure of their organizations was seen as the development into a new Christian society. In the fifties and the first half of the sixties many magazines and weeklies were published which related the ecclesial and civil engagement; in Catholic circles, there was *De Nieuwe Mens*, the *Linie, Streven*, and in Protestant circles there was *In de Waagschaal* and *Wending*. They represented the *Bildungs*-ideal of the Breakthrough: the formation of the Christian into a responsible citizen. In Catholic circles it was spoken of as 'the hour of the laity', yet at the same time there was a concern that the traditional pastorate would not suite the requirements of a modern, industrialized society with increasingly higher educated church members. A team of priests and laity raised this problem already in 1950 in the collection *Unrest in the Pastorate* (*Onrust in de zielzorg*).

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## 2.5 Religious Life

### 2.5.1 Liturgy

The influence of the liturgical movement within the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Catholic Church continued to broaden after the war and was, as far as concerns the Catholics, legitimized and stimulated by Rome. Its efforts to raise the awareness of churchgoers of the content and meaning of the liturgy had already been identified in the interwar period. In particular, the encyclical *Mediator Dei* of Pius XII (1947) wanted to encourage active participation of the faithful. For this purpose, in the forties and fifties a set of practical rules were promulgated: the allowance of evening Mass, and the vernacular for certain prayers (a possibility that was utilized very little in the Netherlands, however), the renewal of the liturgy of the Easter vigil, and an easing of rules of fasting before participation in communion, in order to stimulate communion during the celebration of the Mass.

In the Netherlands Reformed Church - in collaboration with other Protestant churches - a new psalter was produced, which was completed in 1967. Various poets labored on this psalter, including the lyricists Willem Barnard and Jan Willem Schulte Nordholt. From 1959 onward, they also participated in the composition of a new hymnal. Both projects resulted in 1970 in the *Hymnal for the Churches* (*Liedboek voor de Kerken*), that was received into official use three years later by the denominations of the Netherlands Reformed, the Neo-Calvinists (*gereformeerden*), Baptists, Remonstrants, Lutherans, and the Dutch Protestants League (*Nederlandse Protestantenbond*). In the early fifties a draft service book was introduced in the Netherlands Reformed Church in order to acquaint the congregations with different liturgical forms. There was more focus on the sacrament, but the preaching was still the central moment in the church. In the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands calls for a renewal of the liturgy also echoed. Some sought an ecumenical connection with the Netherlands Reformed, where the liturgical movement had produced results. But apart from the introduction of rhythmic singing, modernizing the language, and gowns for ministers, this denomination stuck to the church order of 1933.

### 2.5.2 Protestant Orthodoxy

The new Bible translation of the Dutch Bible Society (*Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap*), undertaken in the interwar period by Netherlands Reformed and Neo-Calvinist exegetes, was introduced in 1951. Its introduction occurred without much difficulty, but it marked the formation of the pietistic Calvinists as an autonomous group in society, starting in the interwar period with the creation of the SGP. These Calvinists were relatively well represented in the countryside, especially in the so-called Bible Belt. Here the SGP had its main supporters. In the smaller Calvinist churches liturgical changes did not occur with any frequency. The States Translation of the Bible (*Statenvertaling*, 1637) and the psalter of 1773were cherished among the pietistic Calvinists, but with the introduction of the new Bible translation and in the seventies of the *Hymnal for the Churches* in other denominations, these once common things became a shibboleth. After the war a number of Reformed Congregations, which still adhered to the sixteenth-century psalter of Dathenus, transitioned to the newer version of 1773. There soon developed more differences with the other Calvinist groups. While the wearing of head coverings by women and girls in

Reformed church services greatly decreased after the war, it remained in use among the pietistic Calvinist circles. These Calvinists also rejected the use of television.

This formation of separate groups was accompanied by a further theological definition and codification of pietist religious doctrine. This demarcation had started in the interwar period and led to religious tensions after the war. Kersten, who died in 1948 and had served as a guiding teacher and writer in the Reformed Congregations, was succeeded by Rev. C. Steenblok (1894-1966), but he lacked Kersten's unifying charisma. At Steenblok's instigation, Rev. R. Kok, who was supposed to champion a wider offer of the promise of salvation, was suspended in 1951. The Reformed Congregations, the largest group of pietistic Calvinists after the Reformed Alliance, was torn asunder partly due to the tensions of Kok's suspension and with Steenblok's resignation as a teacher in 1953. More than ten thousand church members who completely hid the offer of grace behind election, united to form the Reformed Congregations in the Netherlands (*Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland*). These churches were reluctant to work together with other Protestant denominations, just like the in 1948 established association of various loose, partly Ledeboerian congregations into a closer union: the Old Reformed Congregations (*Oud-Gereformeerde Gemeenten*). This group had 18,000 members in the late sixties. These small pietistic denominations did collaborate, mainly on education and family care. The attention of the pietistic Calvinist churches focused on the personal relationship with God, and the social issues were reserved for the SGP. There were serious reservations against breaking through the ecclesiastical — and to some extent also its social — isolation, because of fear for conformity to the world. An important segment of this conservative Calvinist stream was united loosely in 1963 in the Calvinist Contact Board (*Contact Orgaan Gereformeerde Gezindte*, COGG). They dismissed theological modernization, were opposed to the ecumenical movement, and in varying degrees were even opposed to modern society. The percentage of growth of this convicted group was larger than that of Dutch society in general. When after the war young people from this circle went to study at the universities, the pietistic Calvinist or Reformational national student union *Civitias Studiosorum in Fundamento Reformato* (CSFR) was established in 1951, with local chapters in the university cities.

### 2.5.3 Ecumenism

While some Calvinist denominations in the forties and fifties experienced schisms, the Netherlands Reformed Church took the initiative for closer cooperation between churches. The church order of 1951 explicitly mentioned participation in ecumenical work at home and abroad. Apart from Christ's call for unity, there was also the desire to make the church the central element in world history and not a by-stander. This created a powerful motive for such work. An important milestone was the establishment of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Amsterdam in 1948, where the Netherlands Reformed Church played an active part. Amid the great tensions that the Cold War between East and West evoked, Karl Barth in Amsterdam called for abandoning the idea people had to sustain this world, because that was the cause of all disorders. At the second assembly at Evanston (1954) the WCC called on churches to temper the tension in the world. The third assembly was held in 1961 in New Delhi. Here for the first time the third world was setting the trend; meanwhile the Eastern Orthodox churches joined. In New Delhi also the first official observers from the Roman Catholic Church were present — the Catholic ecumenicist J.G.M. Willebrands (1909-2006) was present in 1948 in Amsterdam as a 'journalist'. In this broad movement Visser 't Hooft played a key role as Secretary-General. Alongside the WCC other international and ecumenical bodies were active: the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1877), the Lutheran World

Federation (*Lutherse Wereldbond*, 1947), the International Council of Christian Churches, (Amsterdam, 1948) as an orthodox counterpart of the WCC, and the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (*Gereformeerde Oecumenische Synode*, 1949) formed by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Christian Reformed Church and their sister churches around the world. Within the Netherlands the Ecumenical Council originated from the precursors to the WCC in 1946. The Catholic Church and the Calvinist denominations abstained from this; the latter gathered in the COGG. From the Ecumenical Council, in 1968 the Dutch Council of Churches came forth, in which the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Catholic Church actually participated.

In 1946 the Netherlands Reformed Church merged with the Reformed Churches in Restored Union (*Gereformeerde Kerken in Hersteld Verband*). In 1952 the Evangelical Lutherans and Restored-Lutherans united after a hundred and fifty year separation into the Evangelical-Lutheran Church (*Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk*), prompted by the Lutheran Professor W.J. Kooiman (1903-1968). The church took on a confessional character and updated the liturgy with a new hymnal, the *Gezangboek* (1955). The Netherlands Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church opened dialogues. They came to the consensus that their mutual doctrinal disputes did not prevent ecumenical coexistence. This consensus has had an impact on the Leuenberg Concord (*Leuenberger Konkordie*, 1971), a formula of concord between Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Calvinist denominations in America and Europe. In 1966 an ecclesiastical relationship also developed with the Remonstrant Brotherhood, since mutual conversations had been held after the early fifties, especially on predestination, the breaking point in the seventeenth century. It was agreed that the issue was dominated by schemes of thought that have become obsolete, so that they no longer had to divide over the doctrine of election.

The toughest dialogue the Netherlands Reformed Church conducted - ongoing since 1949 - was with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, with whom there were important differences on binding to the confession, the doctrine of Scripture, Church discipline, and the vision of society. In the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands there was also the matter of the Liberation (*Vrijmaking*) of 1944, a controversy that still had not entirely died down. Part of the church members continued to hope for restoration, but in 1959 a new attempt was rejected by the Liberated Churches. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands now turned away. The conversation with the Netherlands Reformed Church in 1961 was initiated this time by the congregations individually following an initiative of ‘Church and World’ that drafted a declaration by a group of eighteen ministers from both denominations that the separate activities of Churches no longer could be tolerated. This initiative was enthusiastically received and youth from both churches spoke together at regional meetings and composed reports entitled ‘Together on the Way’ (*Samen op weg*).

The talks between Protestants and Roman Catholics remained informal for a long time. During the war there had been contacts between theologians. From these contacts the Laren Circle (*Larense Kring*), a discussion group of Catholic and Protestant theologians, arose immediately after the war, and in the following years would increasingly become a representative model of ecumenical conversation circles. Members of the original circle included the Utrecht professor S.F.H.J. Berkelbach van der Sprenkel, N.K. van den Akker, H. van der Linde, W.H. van de Pol, J. Willebrands and F. Thijssen. The last two were also involved in founding the Secretariat for Unity (*Secretariaat voor de Eenheid*) that was established in Rome in 1960, where Willebrands was the first secretary, and later would become its president. During

the fifties, the number of ecumenical circles numbered in the hundreds. Catholics and Protestants carried out the first tentative explorations on each other's turf.

Members of the Laren Circle were also involved in the ‘palace revolution’, in which the Apologetic Association of Peter Canisius (*Apologetische Vereniging Petrus Canisius*) was transformed into an association for ecumenicalism: the St. Willibrord Society. The fact that the membership of several hundred in 1948 had risen to 60,000 ten years later is evidence that this transformation caught on among Catholics. On the initiative of the Netherlands Reformed minister J. Loos, Netherlands Reformed and other Protestants discussed the relationship between ‘Reformation and Catholicity’ at the Hilversum Convent (1947-1955), which exhibited Catholicizing tendencies under a strong Anglican influence. When Loos and other members converted to the Roman Catholic Church, the Convent fell apart.

2.5.4 Theology

The careful critique of religious morality, of social doctrine, the pillars, and the denominational boundaries, as have already been mentioned, had their counterparts within Catholic theology in the French *nouvelle théologie* and the German *Verkündigungstheologie*. The Catholic theology had been dominated up to this point by traditional, Neo-Thomist manuals, which explained and defended the Church’s teaching. The German theology tried to escape these through its emphasis on the proclamation, and thus ’to translate’ the Church’s teaching. The *nouvelle théologie*, especially connected with the names of the French Dominicans M.-D. Chenu and Yves Congar, went back to the roots of Catholic theology and found that the expression of faith in the course of centuries had rather varied and undergone development. Establishing a relationship between doctrine and its circumstances thus literally brought a relativization of ecclesiastical doctrine on their heels. Although the *nouvelle théologie* was condemned in 1950 in the encyclical *Humani Generis*, her march was unstoppable. In the Netherlands *nouvelle théologie* was introduced by teachers in the major seminary at Warmond, not coincidentally that of the most urbanized diocese of Haarlem. In particular, J.C. Groot and Klaas Steur, both students of the Nijmegen professor Kreling, set the tone. Again someone became a victim: Klaas Steur was appointed a pastor. Groot however, went on to play an important role in the Catholic ecumenical movement. Soon this new theology also set the tone at other priest training institutions. It was set down in treatises composed by teachers and mimeographed by students, which were used in addition to traditional textbooks. From the early sixties, theology, like the Catholic and the Protestant psychology, was also affected by the phenomenological philosophy, in which Flemish theologians and philosophers were important pioneers.

The Flemish Dominican Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2009), who was appointed to the University of Nijmegen in 1958, followed this theological path further and became one of the most famous contemporary Catholic theologians. His theology is called ‘culture theology’ (*cultuurtheologie*). For Schillebeeckx theology is not a science that focuses on a reality behind our world, where we would have access only through the Church’s teaching, but a science aiming at the concrete historical reality as its terrain. ‘The creatures are the stage of human knowledge of God’, he said already in 1952.

No one ventured to do a complete dogmatics anymore — except the Jesuit P. Schoonenberg (1911-1999), who defended his *The faith of our baptism* (*Het geloof van ons doopsel*, 1955-1962) with the words ‘they will learn of what faith they apostatize’.

In Protestant circles the theological changes were closely related to the orientation towards the theology of Karl Barth, although in Netherlands Reformed circles also the views of Hoedemaker and Kohlbrügge asserted themselves in. Already before World War II Barth had strongly influenced the consciousness of Netherlands Reformed circles, but after the war his theology dominated their Church. Central to his theology was the idea that we do not know God, but that he has made himself known to us in Jesus Christ. This meant a rejection of the liberal conception of the religious man, but also of orthodoxy that had captured and defended Christianity in dogmas and creeds. In line with this thought, Barth's rejection of the formation of Christian organizations as religious pride gained wide entrance. And where the question of the human situation received more attention compared to the question of the will of God — amidst the many social and cultural changes the latter was so difficult to discern, that one spoke of an eclipse of God (*Gottesfinsternis*) — it was acclaimed that Barth rather stressed an antithesis between God and man than a dividing line running through this world and passing through every human heart. This development offered a modern theological argument for the objection that many Netherlands Reformed traditionally had against Kuyperian organizational aspirations. Later, the theocratic thinker Van Ruler, who had great influence on the text of the Church Order of 1951, at this point distanced from the Christocentric theology of Barth and advocated an organic Christian culture as the actual, whole humanity and creation encompassing intent of God's salvation plan. Characteristic for the new theological tendency of the Netherlands Reformed Church was that no longer was spoken of confession, but of confessing. Confessing was not about the defense of certain formulations, but actualizing in varying concrete situations in this world that Christ is Lord, and vindicating the commandments and promises of God to humankind and to the powers. This service to the world, the so-called apostolate, was the core idea of the renewed Netherlands Reformed Church.

Besides Groningen, Leiden, and Utrecht, in 1945 the University of Amsterdam also started a training for Netherlands Reformed clergy, and in 1950 the Netherlands Reformed seminary at Driebergen was founded. Shortly after the war for some time all the Netherlands Reformed university chairs were occupied by theologians sympathetic to Barth. The interest in the study of theology was — also in Calvinist circles — until the seventies numerically greater than ever. Theology played an acknowledged role in public debate, though the share of theological students decreased drastically in comparison with the postwar growth of the student population at universities and colleges.

The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, trained in Kuyper's theology, were outspoken critical of Barth's theology, until the VU-professor G.C. Berkouwer in 1954 no longer put forward Barth's critics of all human action, but stressed the triumph of grace as the core of his theology. With his searching approach and openness to the Protestants and the Catholics, Berkouwer played a key role in the development of Neo-Calvinist theology. While his teachers had reflected on the metaphysical question of the relationship between the religions and the revelation of the true religion, Berkouwer practiced dogmatics within the mutual commitment between the living Scripture and the responding man. This anti-metaphysical turn to the subject also led him to shift the accent in his doctrine of Scripture from the authority of the Bible as an objective given to the existential meaning of Scripture. It was a response to the Neo-Calvinist thinking in principles and to Barth's neglect of the subject. Berkouwer emphasized the existential character of faith and provided in the closed and confessional environment of theology and church space for the role of conditions and for personal religious expression. Berkouwer brought the Neo-Calvinist theology of Kuyper and Bavinck to a close. His disciples went new ways and were alienated from Calvinist theology, which was preserved in the smaller Calvinist denominations.

An important element in the Protestant theological reflection of the fifties was the doctrine of election. Given the focus on the subject and a non-dogmatic reading of the Bible this doctrine expressed in the Canons of Dort came under pressure. The doctrine was experienced as merciless determinism that did damage to human freedom and responsibility. The Netherlands Reformed Church in 1960 accepted a report which criticized the doctrine of election as a logical system. For the Reformed Alliance and the smaller Calvinist denominations this signaled a fault line between them and the modern theological insights. If faith and revelation became so interrelated that the one could not be understood without the other, then Christianity lost too much of its objective and normative character.

2.5.5 Second Vatican Council

For developments in the Dutch Catholic Church in the second half of the sixties, two things are important: the fact that after 1955 an entire generation of bishops was replaced, and the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

The generational change in the Dutch Bishops' Conference took effect in 1955 with the succession of Cardinal De Jong by his auxiliary bishop B.J. Alfrink. A year later Rome implemented a geographic reorganization of the dioceses and established new bishoprics: Rotterdam as an offshoot of Haarlem, with M.A. Jansen as bishop, and Groningen as an offshoot of the extensive diocese of Utrecht, with P.A. Nierman at the head. The Diocese of Roermond received a new bishop in 1959 in the person of P.J.A. Moors, in Haarlem next year J.A.E. van Dodewaard was appointed. Perhaps the most influential change proved to be the two Brabant bishops, the pastoral and ever-smiling W.M. Bekkers for 's-Hertogenbosch (1960), and the enterprising workers almoner G.H.M. de Vet for Breda (1962). The newly appointed bishops would all emerge as moderately progressive, or at least open to the changes in society and church.

In Rome in 1958 Angelo Roncalli (1881-1963) succeeded Pope Pius XII as John XXIII. Initially considered as an interim pope, he revealed himself as an amiable church leader ('the smiling Pope') and as an advocate of an 'updating' or *aggiornamento* of the Catholic Church. To everyone's surprise, he announced a new ecumenical council that would be known as Vatican II and was held from 1962 to 1965. The pope explicitly specified that it was not a dogmatic council, but should be a pastoral one. Initially there was resignation because of the very traditional draft documents prepared by the curia, but soon there were high expectations when it became evident that the bishops would be given ample opportunities to set aside these designs and draft new committees. Moderately progressive bishops, such as Cardinal Alfrink and Belgian Cardinal Suenens exercised a great amount of influence. Important documents from the Council are the constitution on the liturgy entitled *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which enabled further liturgical renewal, the dogmatic constitution on the church *Lumen Gentium*, in which the specific position of the laity and the common priesthood of the faithful received a large emphasis, especially when taken in conjunction with the decree on the lay apostolate *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, the decree on Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement *Unitatis Redintegratio*, and the declaration on religious freedom *Dignitatis Humanae*, which had an air of respect for the non-Catholic churches and religious freedom. Explicitly non-Catholic observers were also invited, including from the Netherlands the Calvinist G.C. Berkouwer and the Remonstrant L.J. van Holk. Especially the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, which met modern society open and optimism, impressed.

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## 3 Wrestling with the world (1965-2005)

### 3.1 Social developments

The abandonment of controlled wage policy by the right-wing De Quay Cabinet (1959-1963) in 1963 and the subsequent wage explosion marked the end of the reconstruction period. For ten years, until the oil crisis of 1973, the welfare state blossomed in its entirety. In the same year of 1963 the introduction of the General Assistance Act (*Algemene Bijstandswet*) was the finishing touch of the social security system established in the twentieth century. The five-day work week was introduced and provided a great amount of free time. For the generation of the reconstruction era it seemed the goal of a better world had been

achieved, especially when, after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the realization grew that the Cold War had passed its peak.

The generation that was born after the war (the baby boomers of 1946-1949) began stirring in the second half of the sixties. These young people grew up in an expanding welfare state, were often better educated than their parents, and also had a strong difference of mentality with adults. What for the elderly were achievements — that is, the ideals of bourgeois culture: welfare, social security, social and intellectual emancipation — were starting points for the youth towards personal and social liberation. Mental peers of 'My Generation' (*The Who*, 1965) became more important than kindred spirits within the own pillar. In 1961, the young United States President John F. Kennedy announced a 'new frontier'. Instead of a struggle between world powers, he spoke about a struggle for a more just society. Kennedy's name was symbolic for the possibility of change. Nationally and internationally the times were changing.

Building on the youth culture of the late fifties, mainly developed among the working youth (the *nozems*), young people began to challenge discipline and the ascetic established order, with 'noisy' music, but also frequently with playful pranks — meanwhile the authorities were too serious to be able to see the fun. The public domain was a matter of seriousness and responsibility. In Amsterdam the 'antismoking-magician' Robert Jasper Grootveld conducted 'happenings' from 1964 onward at a statue that a cigarette manufacturer donated, the 'Little Rascal' (*Lieverdje*) at Spui square in Amsterdam. In 1965 the Provos (provocateurs) originated from the context of Grootveld's 'happenings'. In the capital an explosive atmosphere arose, especially during the wedding of Princess Beatrix and Claus von Amsberg in 1966 (smoke bombs were thrown at the royal parade) and several anti-American demonstrations against the war in Vietnam ('Johnson murderer'). The Provo was a mix of an artistic-cultural and an anarchist-leftist political movement, but their platform was hardly pragmatic: in 1967 shortly after the Provo party mixed into local politics, the movement therefore became defunct.

In addition to the action-oriented Provo party, there was also, especially in Amsterdam, the hippie flower power movement with its prominent presence in the streets. Blown over from the United States, where San Francisco had been the epicenter a few years prior ('If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear flowers in your hair', Scott McKenzie, 1967), Amsterdam, and in particular Vondelpark, became the hippie center of Western Europe, *Damslapers*, people who slept on the stairs of the national World War II monument at Dam Square, included. Also this movement offered a playful alternative to the seriousness of the authorities and the formal nature of the public domain, and stressed the personal fulfillment of the individual. In musicals like *Hair* (1967) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) this movement was expressed and spread. This playfully presented and non-violent anti-bourgeois sentiment soon made way for polarizing criticism and confrontation with the existing order. The revolt in Paris (1968) and the riots in the United States occurred in the Netherlands in moderate form. An alliance between the fast-growing group of disgruntled young academics and their students led to a politicization of the youth in the big cities, especially among students. First this happened in Nijmegen (where Ton Regtien in 1963 had founded the Student's Labour Union (*Studenten Vak Beweging*)), then in Amsterdam and in all university cities, and even at the College of Social Studies *De Horst*, connected to the Netherlands Reformed Church, where not a few had been bitten by the Marxist-Leninist bug. The largest post-war demonstrations up to this point were the protests of trade union youth for the right to education or training for young workers (1969). After a fierce democratizing movement, an ideological critique of Western society based on Neo-Marxist ideas, support for liberation movements in South America, Africa and Asia,

and anti-capitalist commendation of 'really existing socialism' behind the iron curtain, the youth stabilized in the early seventies. Their progressive ideas spread in more moderate form throughout the country and among the older generations.

The turmoil of the decades around 1970 was reinforced when the student movement — or rather youth movement — in the late sixties was joined by the feminist movement and the peace movement. For the second wave of feminism, in which legal and economic equality was central, Joke Smit in *De Gids* gave the movement a 'kick start' in her article 'The woman's discontent' (*Het onbehagen bij de vrouw*, 1967). Together with Hedy d'Ancona she founded in 1968 the action group Man-Woman-Society (*Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij*). Later Mad Mina (*Dolle Mina*) ('masters of our own belly') and the 'Red Women' in the Labor Party followed.

The peace movement began in the mid-sixties and different from the student movement and feminism, this movement could explicitly rely on moral objections from the churches against atomic weapons, such as the pastoral letter, *The issue of nuclear weapons* (*Het vraagstuk van de kernwapenen*) by the Netherlands Reformed Church in 1962, in which nuclear armament was rejected in principle, and the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963), in which Pope John XXIII called for a ban on the possession of nuclear weapons. In ecclesiastical Netherlands the Utrecht liberal ethicist Hannes de Graaf (1911-1991) was a pioneer in the field of political ethics. He was an antimilitarist and attended the international (Prague) Christian Peace Conferences (*Christelijke Vredesconferenties*) from their start in 1958, with participants from the East and West. A stumbling block for these conferences, for him, and also for the liberal theologian Krijn Strijd (1909-1983), was that they criticized Western governments, but that participants from Eastern Europe continued to call the Soviet Army peacekeeping forces.

The first marches in the Netherlands protesting nuclear bombs were not organized by the churches, but by communist and pacifist political parties such as the PSP, which were negatively disposed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) between Western Europe and the United States. The PSP had quite some Christians among its members and was co-founded at the instigation of the peace movement, the Third Way, which attempted to overcome thinking in blocks of East and West and in which Strijd was one of the initiators. The result of these radical renewal movements was a more open and democratic society and a more informal public domain.

With regard to the churches, these years of polarization resulted in a loss of function in society for the ecclesiastical institution, which a younger, progressive generation did not perceive as a democratic institution. The churches did not sufficiently manage to translate its religious message socially. They belonged to the establishment and whoever wanted to change society, rarely saw an ally in the church anymore. As far as religion played a social role in the progressive generation, it served to transform society. The theology of the day was at the service of the liberation of man, and here a revival of Marxism took place. Opposite 'bourgeois religion' there was a criticism — sometimes an eschatologically loaded one — of the existing structures and western consumerism, and also an evangelical call for justice for the oppressed and care for creation, which regularly coincided with the aims and activities of leftist political action movements. The Bible was explained materialistically and became a socially critical book. The purpose of the churches should no longer be responsible citizenship, but disruption of the existing social structures. Progressive youth left the confessional parties and united in the Radical Political Party (*Politieke Partij Radicalen*: PRR, 1968). Founded in 1981, the Evangelical People's Party (*Evangelische*

*Volks Partij*: EVP) opposed the social and peace policy of the Christian Democrats (CDA) — the party that emerged in 1980 from a merger of the Calvinist ARP, the Protestant CHU, and the Catholic KVP.

On the other hand, within the churches there was grass root opposition to this socially critical form of Christianity, and there was a call for repentance and a return to the core truths of faith, a life in the Spirit, and the retention of traditional Christian morality. In Protestant circles the evangelicals emphasized personal experience, but they could not gain a footing within the existing structures of the church. Due to dissatisfaction with the resignation of the churches to the polarization and politicization in their midst, troubled church members organized themselves or went over to evangelical groups, where personal faith was central and where the focus on social issues was weaker.

The oil crisis of 1973, caused by the Arab oil producing countries protest of the pro-Israeli position of the Western countries in the Middle East conflict, put an end to a period of rapid economic growth. The eighties painted a picture of economic reorientation, coupled with serious cuts in public expenditure, as the social insurance system was under severe pressure as too costly of a provision. That successive governments in consultation with social partners managed to tighten their belt, was the result of the much discussed Dutch 'polder model' that was praised abroad.

The governmentalization of social organization in the Netherlands during the previous decade had had the effect of undermining the 'civil society' that could not take on again the tasks the government wished to divest. The churches at this time played no role in societal issues. Instead of confessional organizations now the social organization of the Netherlands increasingly became determined by commercial operating institutions. This commercialization was encouraged by the government in the expectation that competition would lead to lower costs for citizens. The commercialization of society meant that it became increasingly difficult for religious worldviews to make themselves heard on topics such as social solidarity, mental and physical healthcare, or education. The function of the churches thus became even more limited to the spiritual care of their own, shrinking group of believers.

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## 3.2 Depillarization and deconfessionalization

### 3.2.1 Depillarization in sizes and types

In the post-war reconstruction and the subsequent expansion of the welfare state there was an important role for the organizations of the different pillars — the social midfield or civil society. The rising government subsidies for organizations and institutions in the field of hospital and health care, social work, youth and family care, youth work and the like, led to an expansion of the organizations and the establishment of umbrella organizations that were needed as a negotiating partner for the government, and to a professionalization of the work because of the quality requirements of the society and government. This development in the sixties led to an increase in scale and brought the organizations more and more under state influence. The confessional administrative grip on the organizations weakened, the organizations' ideological colors faded and the voluntary contribution from the ecclesiastical side was supplanted. The worldview-based social organization persisted only at the – mainly orthodox-protestant - margins of society.

This process of depillarization started in the second half of the sixties: the numerous ideological organizations that together had formed the milieu where Catholics, Protestants, or social-democrats had grown up, declared that their ideological motivation had expired, merged with sister organizations or institutions and became 'neutral', or simply were eliminated. There are several reasons for this drastic operation. On the one hand, there was pressure from the outside: organizationally by state control and professionalism, and ideologically by a high tension between a still fairly strict ideological 'inner world' and a growing liberalism within society as a whole (a permissive society). In particular, the rise of television — 100,000 units in 1956, 3,000,000 in 1970 — also played an important role. Television programs and personalities took over the role of opinion making from religious organizations.

In addition, there was an erosion of the pillars from the inside. Among the Catholics this was very clear: in the years around the Second Vatican Council, when the religious and ethical beliefs of the majority of Catholics shifted rapidly in a progressive direction, the conviction grew that such organizations were ideologically no longer relevant. It was precisely the professionalization of organizations that promoted this process. The progressive views that Catholic intellectuals had developed during the fifties spread easily among broad sections of the Catholic population within their well-organized pillar. The pillar, built to protect Catholics, proved equally efficient functioning in reverse ('the inverse pillar operation'). The same process applied equally to the Protestant and Socialist columns, where 'The Lord will rise up to the battle' (Psalm 68) and the socialist hymn International was sung with less militancy. But in secularization there were also different sizes and types. In Protestant circles some organizations also disappeared, but many others underwent only a change of character, in which the ideological identity became more implicit or stronger directed towards society as a whole instead of the church and their own circle. While the Catholic daily press disappeared (*De Tijd*, 1974) or de-confessionalized (*de Volkskrant*), the anti-revolutionary *Trouw* in the seventies continued as a committed Christian newspaper, however at the expense of other Protestant newspapers like *De Rotterdammer* (1903-1971).

In the sixties the ARP redefined itself as a progressive and evangelical party and as a result in 1967, for the first time since 1948, gained seats, although traditional anti-revolutionaries were troubled by the new course. Christianity in these years was primarily translated socially as aid, justice, and liberation, and bestowed a highly moralistic visage upon Dutch politics, also outside the circle of the Christian parties,.

But when around 1970 the exodus in the KVP took on a dramatic size, the ARP, CHU and KVP carried out plans for mergers they had developed in the 1960s. In 1980 this led to the Christian Democratic Appeal (*Christen Democratisch Appèl*, CDA). The discussions took a long time. In 1966 the KVP stated in its report, *Foundation and Character* (*Grondslag en karakter*), that a Catholic party was not a matter of principle, but of effectivity. In 1967, the Group of Eighteen, composed of members of the three parties, delivered its first report. It breathed the 'air of the Reformed brethren. The Catholics did not know what they were reading' (Bosmans): they wanted an open and Christian inspired party. Meanwhile the ARP envisioned a progressive, evangelical party on biblical principles. The talks were complicated by tensions within the parties around strong progressive streams, but also stimulated by major electoral losses in the early seventies. Their collective vote count decreased from 49 percent in 1963 to 30 percent in 1972. Nevertheless, besides the input of the Neo-Thomist broker of a merger, Piet Steenkamp (1925), the progressive antirevolutionary enthusiasm also got its place in the first election manifesto of the CDA *Not by bread alone* (*Niet bij brood alleen*, 1976), primarily penned by the Neo-Calvinist economist B. Goudzwaard (1934). Goudzwaard soon left the party when it was apparent that the evangelical fervor in this moderate party had not gained enough of a foothold.

This evangelical fervor with strong eschatological accents took shape in the seventies, and was present in within the CNV and *Trouw* as well. It was partly spurred by the practical application of neo-Marxist ideals for a more just society. But the inspiration came prior, in part from Calvinistic philosophy and in part evidenced from about 1960 by a desire to direct the gaze outward after years of fruitless mutual polemic about the radicalism of the Neo-Calvinist persuasion, especially around the *Vrijmaking* and the anti-revolutionary political principles, which always hided an element of resistance against the establishment. With an appeal by some to this philosophy, the ARP summarized politics again as a spiritual battle, this time for new social-economic structures, defense, and foreign policy. In the same spirit the anti-revolutionary W.C.D. Hoogendijk in 1967, fought the tendency 'to interpret the Gospel from our establishment, instead of testing the establishment in the light of the Gospel'. Anti-Revolutionary was in this context sometimes a synonym for the contemporary term 'revolutionary'.

The de-pillarization reinforced the realization that a new social order had come: democratic, inclusive, globally focused and one that offered space for self-development. As a result of a critical review of the Second World War and the Holocaust many were attracted to the conclusion of and the shortcoming of theodicy as an explanation for evil. In theology the awareness of the responsibility of man had since the mid-century been given a much stronger emphasis, and from the sixties onward this shifted to ecclesiastical action in favor of a fairer economic and political world order.

For others de-pillarization seemed to indicate the end of Christian dominance and they sought to promote its development. The Protestant *Wending* in 1977 called for an exodus of Christians from the CDA. Especially in progressive political circles and in the progressive press during the seventies the expectation was that the Christian political parties would suffer a serious loss of votes, the emptying churches would disappear from the landscape, and the Netherlands would become a progressive country. In this sometimes euphoric climate, the leftist Den-Uyl (1973-1977) cabinet operated.

3.2.2 Professionalization and state control

In the second half of the sixties professionalization and de-confessionalization from within led to a fierce debate about the usefulness of denominational organizations and institutions, in Catholic circles referred

to as the ‘k-discussion’ or ‘Catholicity discussion’. Every self-respecting institution and organization at this time produced a report which concluded invariably that the field itself was available for Christian inspiration, but it was not so much the institutional posture that made it a Christian organization, as the personal, Christian demeanor of the employees. Subsequently, the confessional character almost always surrendered in mergers or federations. In the best case, the remains of the confessional heritage were housed in small study centers or study committees, which subsequently struggled chronically to justify their existence and keep their head above water. Thus it happened that the subsidizing of confessional institutions and organizations eliminated ecclesiastical involvement and bended the ideological tendency towards a pragmatic sensibility. The result frequently was that religion-based organizations — again for pragmatic reasons — were eliminated or merged. What remained was, particularly in the Catholic world, a state-controlled social playing field without any binding to organized religious worldviews.

These developments had a substantial impact upon the Catholic religious orders and congregations. For a century they had been the driving forces behind Catholic education, boarding schools, social care and hospitals. The professionalization and expansion, coinciding with a large number of leavings and a decline in vocations, forced the sisters, priests and brothers largely to withdraw from this work and to transfer it to lay professionals. For many orders and congregations this intensified the crisis in which they were situated by the ecclesiastical renewal movement (see below).

It was clear from all types of de-pillarization that a society organized along ideological lines had come to an end. With the completion of the social security system (Exceptional Medical Expenses Act, 1968) the confessional welfare work, derived from charity and deacons, lost a large part of its rationale. The specialized organizations federated or merged in the seventies with their non-Catholic sister organizations, while social work and family care were taken over entirely by the government. In healthcare the Cross Societies (the White-Yellow Cross (Catholic), Orange-Green Cross (Protestant), and the neutral Green Cross) professionalized and merged in 1973 to become the National Cross Society. After 1965 the Catholic hospitals no longer fell under the ecclesiastical charity regulations and were therefore no longer accountable to the bishops. Most denominational hospitals in the sixties took on names denoting a general Christian character, but it was the Calvinist hospitals especially that remained conscious of their world- and life-view. Confessional mental healthcare transitioned into regional, neutral centers (RIAGG’s); the world- and life-view affairs were monitored by the Catholic Study Center for the People’s Mental Health (*Katholiek Studiecentrum voor Geestelijke Volksgezondheid*), which increasingly focused on Protestants as well. Likewise, the worldview based youth work transitioned to an open youth work that proceeded into the work of clubs and community centers. The confessional scouting organizations for boys and girls merged in 1973 to form Scouting Netherlands (*Scouting Nederland*).

The professionalization of the advocacy of the workers led to a transformation of the Catholic Workers’ Movement (*Katholieke Arbeiders Beweging*) into the Dutch Catholic Trade Union (*Nederlands Katholiek Vakverbond*: NKV) in 1964. In 1976 the NKV, after a peak in 1968 suffering losses in membership, merged with the continuously growing social-democratic Dutch Association of Trade Unions (NVV) forming the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (*Federatie Nederlandse Vakverenigingen*: FNV). The Christian National Trade Union for a long time was involved in the merger talks, but ultimately did not join. The NKV in its mentality stood much closer to the NVV, so the CNV feared losing its Christian identity. The CNV membership felt — much more than the NKV members — personally bound to the Christian ‘C’ than to anything else. The democratization and de-pillarization of society stimulated the

CNV to new reflection on the basic motivations of Christian social thought, such as solidarity and justice. In line with Goudzwaard the CNV stressed the co-responsibility of employees to society. It therefore adopted in its *Vision Program* (*Visieprogram*, 1970) a more independent position relative to the Protestant political parties and chose a leading role in the reform of social structures and restoration of disturbed social relations. Some Catholic trade unions did not join the FNV, but instead crossed over to the CNV.

3.2.3 Remains of the pillars: education and broadcasting

Confessional education and broadcasters managed to avoid their own demise, but also had great difficulty with a new formulation of their identity. Education, especially primary education, was the basis for the Catholic and Protestant pillars in the course of the twentieth century. In the fifties and early sixties, almost all Catholic and Protestant children pursued confessional preschool and primary education. For secondary education, this rate was above 80 percent.

The idea that private religious education should serve an emancipatory purpose, was, however, abandoned in the sixties. Especially in Catholic circles the identity of the schools became blurred, partly because a lot of Catholics were shifting to the edge of the church, partly because in discussions on confessional-based education responsibility for religious education was (once again) laid upon the parents and the church. Experiments with ecumenical or 'cooperative' schools did not lead to structural changes in confessional education.

The 'Mammoth Act' (*Mammoetwet*) or Secondary Education Act (*Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs*, 1963), in which the government also pursued social goals through education, forced Netherlands Reformed, Neo-Calvinist, and generally Christian educational agencies to reorganize. In 1970 this resulted in the formation of the Administrative Board (*Besturenraad*) for Christian primary and secondary education. From the mid-sixties on the proceeds of the annual locally held Union Collection (*Uniecollecte*, which in 1978 was more than four million guilders), held since its establishment in 1879, for the most part went to Christian education abroad, mostly in developing countries. In 1968 the name of the union, which now became more of an organization for reflection, was converted from 'School with the Bible' to 'School and Gospel'.

Dissatisfied with the modern expression of the Protestant identity in education, in the fifties, sixties and seventies alongside the Liberated Reformed and pietistic Calvinist or Reformational training schools, such schools for primary and secondary education also arose. In these years the last public elementary schools with a Christian character also disappeared. The Liberated attached a close relationship between church choice and school choice, and thus financed the education on their own, until the government recognized this ideological tendency in education in 1960.

Regarding Christian broadcasters, the VPRO left its Protestant identity in 1968. A year before the Evangelical Broadcasting Company (*Evangelische Omroep*) had been founded because the NCRV neglected gospel preaching and the evangelical movement was outside its purview. In addition to its broadcasts from 1970, the EO also took on many other related activities such as the EO-Youth Days. This broadcasting company grew in the nineties to the most important Christian organization in the Protestant Netherlands, which around the year 2000 also addressed Catholics. The EO was not an ecclesiastical broadcaster, but it always faced the problem of ecclesiastical division among its constituents, just as was

the case decades before with many other Christian organizations. The EO did not want to become a church or identify itself with one, but functioned because of its size and reputation as a substitute community for Christians of different denominations. An institutional unity was out of the question, but from the nineties onward the EO promoted an 'ecumenism of the heart'. The Catholic broadcaster KRO from the nineties onward, paid more attention to its religious roots, more explicit then the Protestant NCRV did.

Since the sixties, both with regard to broadcasting and to education, the influence of the government increased. In education there were new pedagogical and didactic instructions, in addition to the accounting regulations for private religious education. In the seventies this resulted in the formation of state subsidized school counseling services per ideological tendency. The advent of commercial television in 1989 resulted in the government forming a stricter financial policy and interjecting itself more in the programming of public television. Around the year 2000, broadcasting unions had increasingly ceded their responsibilities to the administrators of the three public television networks.

The churches utilized the television through the individual broadcasters. The broadcasting of the Roman Catholic Church (RKK) occurred in cooperation with KRO. Many Protestant churches — including the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands — did so with the 1976 merger of IKOR and CvK into the Interdenominational Broadcasting Company of the Netherlands (*Interkerkelijke Omroep Nederland*: IKON). Most Calvinist denominations, which rejected the ecumenical movement, then formed the Broadcast for the Churches (*Zendtijd voor Kerken*) to broadcast their church services. The pietistic Calvinist churches rejected television broadcasts on biblical grounds all together.

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3.3 Church Renewal and Restoration

3.3.1 Progressiveness Everywhere

In the Catholic Netherlands, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) raised high expectations for the renewal of the Church as a whole and also for accommodating some of its own Dutch ways within it: the council had in fact emphasized the role of the local bishop in the local church. Even before the closing of the council the Dutch bishops announced in 1965 to convene a Dutch council to apply the decisions of Vatican II to the local situation. In the following years study committees and consultations were organized, led by the energetic Franciscan Walter Goddijn ('the Pope of the Netherlands'), which led to the discussion of a set of draft reports during six plenary meetings throughout 1968-1970. In these reports and meetings there was a strong call for a radical renewal of the church, with the abolition of priestly celibacy and space for radical ecumenical experiments as the most prominent themes. This Pastoral Council resulted in a widening gap between the Dutch church and Rome, and between progressive and conservative Catholics in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands Reformed Church also entered the sixties on a progressive course. It connected missionary work closely with social aid. It supported the Program to Combat Racism of 1969 from the World Council of Churches, and in 1967 opened all ecclesiastical positions to women. In order to meet the prevalent trends of democratization, it held a General Assembly of the Church in 1970 and 1971, where parishioners came to speak about alternative church structures. Points of criticism included the cumbersome bureaucratic church structure and the need for the participation of congregants, pluralistic confessions, and there was an emphasis upon an unencumbered ecumenism, but the therapeutic effect of this meeting was smaller than the Catholic Pastoral Council.

In these years the prevailing progressive atmosphere, both in the ecclesial and social arenas, gave rise to numerous 'grassroots groups' and critical congregations, often with an ecumenical character, within which there were experiments with alternative, often politically tinged liturgy, combinations of liturgy and social and/or political action and sometimes alternative forms of living together. One of the first, the Shalom Group (*Sjaloomgroep*), took the cover of the French weekly, *Paris Match*, in 1963 with its ecumenical agapè-celebrations. Ecumenism in this group gradually widened to human liberation from all oppressive economic and social structures, and the orientation was in the final analysis Marxist in character. Critical congregations such as the Amsterdam Students' Church (*Amsterdamse Studentenekklesia*), the congregation affiliated with the Amsterdam Dominicuskerk, the Citygroep Groningen, or the Zeist Boskapel gave shape to liturgical renewal; and the Rotterdam Calamagroep embodied solidarity with the South American liberation movements. In the late seventies, when the number of grassroots-groups was already declining, the Basis Movement of Critical Groups and Congregations in the Netherlands (*Basisbeweging van Kritische Groepen en Gemeenten in Nederland*) was organized. Here a close relationship grew with the movement Christians for Socialism, forthcoming from the NCSV that wanted to apply a 'materialistic exegesis' to the Bible and to represent socialism

within the churches. The movement was founded in 1973 after the coup against the Marxist President Salvador Allende of Chile.

Additionally, there was an initial impetus of a Catholic charismatic movement present in the Netherlands in the sixties, in the form of prayer groups in the Archdiocese of Utrecht.

3.3.2 Modern Theology

The feeling that (Western) civilization was changing, had an impact on theology. It joined what in the sixties was widely called 'secularization'. Following theologians like Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann (Entmythologizing) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer ('*etsi Deus non daretur*'), in the second half of the sixties the plea for a horizontally oriented theology from the Anglican Bishop John Robinson (*Honest to God*, 1963) attracted attention. The liberal Netherlands Reformed theologian P. Smits (1906-2002) shocked his Protestant co-religionists in 1959 with his statement that he as a contemporary Christian no could longer care that Christ died for his sins: 'Give my share to Fido'. Despite strong protests no disciplinary measure was taken.

Simultaneously, the secularization theology of the American theologian Harvey Cox (*The city of man*, 1966), and the God-is-dead theology of W. Hamilton and Th. Altizer influenced theological discussions. In the Netherlands, *The end of conventional Christianity* (*Het einde van het conventionele christendom*, 1966) was announced by W.H. van de Pol (1897-1988, converted from Protestant to Catholic). The Netherlands Reformed theologian Hoekendijk called for the church to live globally, and to accept a missionary posture of 'humble agnosticism'. The classical theistic image of God that Barth had emphasized, gave way to the image of the powerless God who is the contradiction of all that exists and in whose name a different future had to be sought.

Around 1970, the focus shifted from secularization to the role of Christianity in radically changing the world, and such theologies dominated the conversation: the 'theology of hope' (Jürgen Moltmann), the theology of revolution (Richard Shaull) and political theology (Dorothee Sölle, J.B. Metz) — theologies that sought inspiration in the neo-Marxism of the Frankfurt School and critical theory of Herbert Marcuse (*The One-Dimensional Man* ( 1964)) and did not seek to connect with culture, but to convict it as liberal and capitalist. In 1970 the Netherlands Reformed theologian G.H. ter Schegget (1927-2001), from the perspective of an eschatology, called to a revolution in the Marxist sense, against the religion and the oppressive forces. The church should become a partisan of the poor. In 1975 he defended the membership of church congregants in the Communist Party and thus attracted Verkuyl's speech-making reply *There are limits* (*Er zijn grenzen*, 1979).

For many theologians, the South American liberation theology of Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff, as well as the adjacent 'black theology' and feminist theology were an inspiration. This orientation was in line with developments in the WCC. In 1984 and 1986 Rome took a stand against liberation theology as too Marxist, but in the Netherlands in 1979 Gutiérrez received an honorary doctorate from the Catholic University of Nijmegen, his colleague J. M. Bonino received one in 1980 from the VU. The focus was therefore extended to right-wing dictatorships and left-wing liberation movements in Latin America and the Third World. The leftist dictatorships in Eastern Europe were viewed much more mildly by the leftist-political movement in the church and the ecumenical movement and regarded with some sympathy. In this context, the seventh Assembly of the WCC met in Nairobi in 1975. There however also the

prominent dissident voice of the evangelical John Stott could be heart: ‘The World Council listens very closely to the cry of the oppressed. However, do we hear the cry of the lost?’

The feminist theology arrived at theological institutions from the ‘Year of the Woman’ (1975) on, first to Catholic universities in Utrecht and Nijmegen (Tine Halkes,1920-2011). Theologically this feminism was oriented towards American theologians: Mary Daly, Rosemary Radfort-Ruether, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Arising from informal workgroups, in the mid-eighties the subject ‘women's studies’ acquired a permanent place in the theological curriculum. Supported by the women’s liberation movement and the rise of feminist theology at theological schools, in the early eighties the Women and Faith Movement emerged, a network of feminist-oriented women who were active in the churches. The report *The Revelation of the experience* (*Openbaring van de ervaring*, 1981) of the Catholic Council for Church and Society acted as a catalyst in Catholic circles. Several bishops ordained ‘woman and faith’ functionaries in their dioceses. Training Centers organized courses in ‘Woman - Church - Policy’ and served as meeting places in the women’s network. In 1987, the training center Church and World (*Kerk en Wereld*) organized the first ecumenical women’s synod. Partly under pressure from shrinking resources ecclesiastical attention to the women’s movement weakened in the course of the nineties.

They were all theologies critical of church and society, which also permanently affected conventional Christian theology. Within Dutch theology, where these developments were closely followed, it was strongly emphasized that any theology is determined by its own particular context. The inter-relatedness of context and the practice of theology — anywhere in the world — has been called ‘contextual theology’ since the nineties. The emphasis thereby lay on the liberating nature of the practice of theology.

Theologically these developments meant that in the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches the history of revelation received more attention than its theological content. H. Berkhof, in 1960 appointed at Leiden as the successor of Miskotte, accentuated not the essence, but the movement of God, in which He wants man to include and renew. The lack of an inspiring and normative kernel in the critical social commitment prompted him to write his main work *Christian Faith* (*Christelijke geloof*, 1974). The question of the meaning of God’s relation to man was central to his doctrine of God; he was more interested in God’s condescension to human beings than in His transcendence. In Catholic theology in these years Schillebeeckx set the tone. In his voluminous books *Jesus: an experiment in Christology* (*Jezus, het verhaal van een levende*, 1974) and *Christ: the Christian experience in the modern world* (*Gerechtigheid en liefde, genade en bevrijding*, 1977), he sought the significance of the meaning of the figure of Jesus in discussion with exegesis, the humanities, and critical theories.

With the emphasis on context and history, the focus on the individual and his situation strengthened in theology. The influence of the humanities upon theology became greater and within theology the attention shifted from dogmatics to ethics and pastoral or practical theology. In the sixties this regarded especially personal ethics, for example, of sexuality and family formation, and of personal counseling (pastoral counseling); in the seventies it was upon social ethics. At the end of the seventies, the focus shifted to building congregations.

3.3.3 Doctrine under discussion

In 1967 the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands retracted the statements of the Synod of Assen (1926) in the Geelkerken case and in 1980 a new relational view of Scripture was presented in the synodical

report *God with us* (*God met ons*). After the Netherlands Reformed report *Clear wine* (*Klare wijn*, 1966), this was a more innovative approach to the Scriptures, which discounted the human share in the Bible. In orthodox circles this report was conceived as a departure from the Calvinist confession that in the Bible men spoke inspired by God, and 'a complete splitting up of two theological worlds' was feared.

Such feelings were fueled by other theological developments. The Neo-Calvinist pastor Herman Wiersinga (1927) caused a sensation in 1971 when he defended his dissertation at the Free University *The atonement in theological discussion* (*De verzoening in de theologische diskussie*). He argued that Jesus' suffering and death did not accomplish the atonement, but that it called humanity to reconciliation. Here was an attempt to involve classical theological insights in concrete action. The Synod did not adopt this heterodox view, but it did not respond to the calls for disciplinary measures. From the seventies, the Neo-Calvinist theologian Harry Kuitert (1924) shifted the theological discussion from the emphasis upon Scripture to the Christian tradition. Until the end of the century he dominated Protestant theological debate. From lucidly written books, like *The generally doubted Christianity* (*Het algemeen betwijfeld christelijk geloof*, 1992) that were bestsellers among a large group of Christians who were alienated from traditional religious practice, gradually revealed that this tradition failed before Kuitert's examinations.

With its theological openness to the liberal side, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands left their Neo-Calvinist convictions behind. Due to their vision on Scripture, their ecumenical and progressive ethical positions, they could only be preserved for the GOS by reforming it in 1988 into a Reformed Ecumenical Council (*Gereformeerde Oecumenische Raad*). With these changes a Reformed lifestyle disappeared, to which belonged home Bible reading, church attendance twice on Sundays, hallowing of the Lord's Day, and associational life. Troubled voices were against these changes, as in the weekly *Truth and Unity* (*Waarheid en Eenheid*), but they hardly found a hearing — they hearkened too much to the past, were not a powerful organization, and furthermore offered no alternative but a return to the former lifestyle. The Reformed Churches had become a stranger in the midst of the conservative denominations of the Calvinist persuasion, and since 2001 they were no longer represented in the COGG. They were replaced by the Confessional Reformed Council (*Confessioneel Gereformeerd Beraad*, CGB) as a representative of the orthodox Calvinists in these churches.

Departure from tradition has been characteristic of the Reformed Churches (*Gereformeerde Kerken*) since the sixties. Now that the largest denomination dropped out as a valiant ally of the informal context of Calvinists in various denominations, a leading role seemed to be reserved for the Reformed Alliance (*Gereformeerde Bond*). Some hoped that in the polarized ecclesiastical climate of the seventies the Alliance would leave the Netherlands Reformed Church and that this shock would lead to a reunion process (like 'Together on the Way') with the smaller Calvinist churches. The Alliance excluded departure from the Netherlands Reformed Church, however. It was of the opinion that this church should focus on Calvinist denominations as an ecumenical partner in the first place.

### 3.3.4 Protestant Engagement

Of the Protestant churches, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands changed the most radically in the sixties and seventies, via a 'silent revolution' from conservative and orthodox to progressive and liberal. In 1961 they joined the World Council of Churches, in 1968 they joined the newly formed Dutch Council of Churches (*Raad van Kerken*). The Reformed Churches exchanged their juridical take on the church for an ecumenical approach. As of 1968, all the ecclesiastical offices became open to women. The liturgical

variation in churches increased, there were children services, and services were held on parenting issues, the problem of race and the like. In the highly developed mission activities of the Reformed Churches the emphasis shifted from faith-focused mission work, particularly in Indonesia, to aid to the third world, in which the world diaconate held an important place. The congregation was actively engaged in the church service and the dominant role of the preacher declined. Society and the world were given much more attention in the churches than previously. In 1968, a dozen denominations conducted an aid campaign for developing countries 'Come across the bridge' (*Kom over de brug*) and in a few days netted 28 million guilders.

The Netherlands Reformed synod supported the economically oriented anti-racist programs of the WCC for several years, including financial support for violent liberation movements. The Netherlands Reformed synod also stuck to this line in 1978, despite protests against this political choice on the part of the Confessional Association (*Confessionele Vereniging*) and the Reformed Alliance (*Gereformeerde Bond*). The Salvation Army abandoned the World Council of Churches in 1981 for this reason. Christians for Socialism (*Christen voor het Socialisme*), created in 1973, was sympathized by teachers and students at the theological faculties. This polarization manifested itself strongly in relation to the South African apartheid policy, which until about 1970 was primarily an issue among Calvinist churches in the Netherlands and South Africa. But when the World Council of Churches and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands explicitly condemned apartheid in 1970, the issue became politicized, including calls for an economic boycott and divestment by the Netherlands Reformed Synod (1975) and the Dutch Council of Churches as well as suspension of ecclesiastical contacts with white South African churches and institutions. The honorary degree that the VU granted in 1972 to the white South African Calvinist pastor and opponent of apartheid politics, C.F. Beyers Naudé (1915-2004), fitted into this pattern. In the seventies a relatively large group of black South African students studied at the Theological School of the Reformed Churches in Kampen. A turning point in the broken relationships arrived once the abolition of apartheid occurred in 1990.

3.3.5 Jews and Christians

In 1965 the book *Perdition. The persecution and extermination of Dutch Jewry 1940-1945* (*Ondergang. De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse jodendom 1940–1945*) by the historian Jacques Presser was published, of which 140,000 copies were sold that year. The persecution of the Jews and the shame of it were tucked away, but it returned in the sixties in Dutch society like a boomerang. The reflection of the churches on the Jews initially concentrated on the question of the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, which the Netherlands Reformed Church regarded as a kinship shortly after the war. Until 1966 the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands sent out monthly evangelistic materials to 12,000 Jewish addresses, but then stopped doing that. The idea gained ground that the church must strive to a worthy meeting with the synagogue. In 1970 with the guide *Israel, folk, land, and state* (*Israel, volk, land en staat*), the Netherlands Reformed Church offered a starting point for theological reflection on this theme that had been complicated by Auschwitz and the Middle East conflict. Following the wars in the Middle East (1967, 1973) the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands expressed co-responsibility for the creation of this war situation, without choosing sides in the political conflict.

In the seventies, the realization dawned in the churches that with Auschwitz 'sin had become full grown' (C. Rijnsdorp) and that a new era had dawned upon the church, synagogue, and world. Auschwitz from

this time onward became the moral criterion of society and the churches developed a strong sense of guilt about what they had inflicted upon the Jews for centuries and especially in the war. The long history of Christian anti-Semitism was chronicled by Hans Jansen in his *Christian theology after Auschwitz* (*Christelijke theologie na Auschwitz*, 1981-1985). In 1979 the foundation Christians for Israel was established, whose goal was to wake up awareness of the significance of the Jewish people in God's dealings and called for solidarity with Israel. As a result of the ecclesiastical and theological shifts and amidst the political entanglements in the Middle East in 1981 the joint Consultative Body of Jews and Christians (*Overlegorgaan van Joden en Christenen*: OJEC) was established on the ecclesiastical side by Catholics, Netherlands Reformed, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Christian Reformed Churches, and Lutherans. During the eighties this body initiated dialogue, discussion, and renewal of the relationship between the churches and the Jewish community.

### 3.3.6 Conservative Reactions

The Catholics that could not identify with the ecclesiastical innovations — sometimes neither in those of the Vatican Council — organized around magazines like *Confrontatie* (1964) and *Truth and Life* (*Waarheid en Leven*, 1969) or in the Michael Legion (*Michael-Legioen*, 1968). They were strongly in favor of fidelity to the traditional dogmas — especially Marian dogmas — and the traditional, preferably Latin liturgy. Rome was kept informed by these groups of expressions of actual or supposed heterodoxy on the left. In the Netherlands Reformed Church there were strong reactions to the innovations. In 1967, 24 ministers ruled in an open letter that since the war the apostolic themes of 'church and world' had dominated everything in the church. Justice had been sought too emphatically in the horizontal plane at the expense of the reconciliation of man with God through Jesus Christ and the pure preservation of the faith. In 1971 this was followed by the *Testimony* (*Getuigenis*) drafted by Professor Van Niftrik, emanating from among others the Confessional Association and the Reformed Alliance. In the same spirit it protested against the current 'politicizing and socialization of salvation in the sense of a revolt against the established order'. In contrast, personal faith was accentuated, as well as the source of salvation from above, from God. Unlike similar critics in the Catholic Church and in Calvinist circles of the interdenominational Reformed association Scripture and Testimony (*Schrift en Getuigenis*, 1982), this *Testimony* clearly resonated in the Netherlands Reformed Church, but especially among those who already harbored this opinion. The *Testimony* only voiced the anxiety, but did not yield any new momentum.

### 3.3.7 Episcopal Appointments

The boisterous renewal movement, which caused the Catholic Church and many Protestant churches to tremble in the late sixties and early seventies, was not immediately followed by an orthodox reaction in the Catholic Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, but primarily just by a stabilization of the situation. Liberal ideas and especially relativizing of ecclesiastical authority in the second half of the seventies was common among church members.

In the Catholic Church a reaction against the reform movement was imposed from above, by the appointment of conservative bishops. The appointment of chaplain A. Simonis as bishop of Rotterdam in 1970, who was profiled as a conservative during the Pastoral Council, and that of J. Gijsen as bishop of Roermond in 1972, marked the beginning of two decades of sustained and visceral polarization within the Dutch Catholic Church. The appointment in 1976 of the moderate Ecumenicist Cardinal J. Willebrands,

who in the meantime had become president of the Roman Secretariat for Christian Unity, to Archbishop of Utrecht signaled that Rome unmistakably attempted to toss oil on the waves, but without success. Eventually Pope John Paul II (Karol Woytila, 1920-2005), who was elected in 1978, personally attempted to bring the Dutch bishops into line by an Extraordinary Episcopal Synod in 1980, but even that proved in vain. In 1983 Cardinal Willebrands resigned, and he was succeeded as Archbishop by the Rotterdam bishop Simonis. The appointment of the conservative bishops R.Ph. Bär for Rotterdam (1983), H. Bomers for Haarlem (1983) and J. ter Schure for 's-Hertogenbosch (1985) did not simplify Catholic relations in the Netherlands, nor did the tightly directed visit of the Pope to the Netherlands in 1985. The Pope's visitation was the occasion for which more than one hundred (moderately) progressive organizations and institutions joined hands and on May 8, 1985 demonstratively met at the Hague's Malieveld under the motto 'The other face of the Church'. The success of this meeting led to the establishment of the Eighth of May Movement, which annually organized a crowded event until the late nineties.

3.3.8 Secularization

The innovations in church and theology did not produce the hoped for renewed motivation among the great mass of believers. On the contrary, the innovations drove away many forms and content of the faith that was familiar to churchgoers and gradually alienated them from the church. Secularization, already underway in the fifties among the Netherlands Reformed, expanded in the sixties to other churches. Most striking was secularization among the Roman Catholics, and then among the Neo-Calvinists. Even small churches in the liberal corner of the church saw their membership dwindle. Liberalism had thrived well in a society built on a sense of responsibility and such *Bildung*-ideals as knowledge, understanding and culture. That bourgeois culture disappeared in the sixties. In a progressive, individualistic society the liberal range of ideas of Protestants, Calvinists, Lutherans, Baptists, and Remonstrants could take on any ecclesiastical or social form. But affiliation with the culture got lost. With the decline in the significance of the church in community building and the disappearance of personal responsibility for the affairs of society liberalism vaporized as a group endeavor in the eighties.

Among those who remained in the churches (albeit for a much larger proportion than previously on the edge of it) the personal interpretation of theological and ethical views prevailed and brought an end to their religious involvement. In 1966, 77 percent of church members regularly attended church; in 1996 it was only 44 percent. In 1999 45 percent of the Netherlands Reformed, 8 percent of Catholics, and 25 percent of the members of the Reformed Churches attended church once a week. In 1970, these percentages were 80, 60 and 30 percent respectively. As an expression of increasing individualization, believers were selective in what they accepted as true doctrine and prescribed morality. This development was for the first time demonstrated by the pioneering survey 'God in the Netherlands' (*God in Nederland*, 1966), commissioned by the women's magazine *Margriet*. Subsequent similar studies showed that this was an irreversible development.

Between 1970 and 2006, the un-churched in the Netherlands climbed from 24 percent of the population in 1971, to 38 percent in 1990, to over 60 percent in 2002. The rate of those who had left the church was particularly high among Catholics: in 1990 nearly half of those who were raised Catholic had left the church.

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## 3.4 Religious Life

### 3.4.1 Catechesis in motion

The changing power relations in a democratic society with informal social relations required the churches to adopt other forms of education and training. The Catholic religious education in the mid-sixties was adapted to the requirements of modern didactics. Until then it had been given by a parish priest on the basis of a catechism grounded in Neo-Scholastic theology in questions and answers. In 1964 on the authority of the bishops, the *Higher Catechetical Institute* (*Hoger Katechetisch Instituut*: HKI, founded 1954) published *Ground rules for a renewed school catechesis* (*Grondlijnen voor een vernieuwde schoolkatechese*) which provided a redemptive-historical catechesis in the form of projects, carried out by the teacher. The teachers could thus be supervised by district catechists. This also honored a separation between the church and school. In subsequent years the emphasis shifted from a catechesis that sought to increase one's knowledge of the content of faith to bolstering the attitude of one's faith (*ervaringskatechese*). The bishops repeatedly expressed their criticism for such a catechetical method, which finally would lead to the disbanding of the HKI in 1990.

In addition to such new methods school-catechetisms, in 1966, there was the *New catechism. Proclaiming the faith for adults* (*Nieuwe katechismus. Geloofsverkondiging voor volwassenen*). The image of the Catholic Netherlands in those years as very progressive gave the *New catechism* a great amount of publicity and it was translated into seventeen languages, including even Korean, Japanese and Bengali. There were objections, however, from Rome and the theologians' committee formulated a number of corrections and additions, which were printed in 1969 as a separate publication.

In the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches until the sixties the Heidelberg Catechism was a fairly general manual for the weekly instruction of young people, on their way to admission to the Lord's Supper as a communing member. Both of these Reformed denominations replaced this textbook in the sixties with contemporary material that was less dogmatic and more adjusted to the environment of the catechumens. When their number drastically decreased and the Lord's Supper was opened for children in the seventies, catechesis became more a matter of the congregation as a whole and the course was diversified and focused on categories other than just the young. In the nineties catechesis disappeared almost entirely. In the orthodox Calvinist denominations new teaching materials and other teaching methods were developed and it was no longer obvious that the minister was the one who had to be the catechist. The Heidelberg Catechism, however, was the structure of the educational forms and it was also preached every week from the pulpit.

### 3.4.2 Liturgical renewal

From the second half of the sixties in almost all churches, important changes took place in the liturgy. The introduction of the *Service Book* (*Dienstboek*) in the Netherlands Reformed Church in 1955 was a new beginning rather than an end in the discussion of liturgical renewal. The pastor W. Barnard (1920-2010) and the musician F. Mehrtens (1922-1975) experimented with forms and arts in which Scripture played a central role, while at the synodical level they worked on new songs and psalm settings. The Reformed

Churches in the Netherlands recognized itself in the closer relationship between Scripture and liturgy and around 1960 became hooked on this development. The Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands grew together in this area for the first time, in the sixties also in the reflection on the afternoon service, for which interest declined. An effort was made to avoid the afternoon or evening service being a repeat of the morning service, but in many cases the reflection resulted in the afternoon service being discontinued in the eighties. Liturgically in both churches there was found a *resourcement* in the tradition of the church and alongside of this more unity into the liturgy was accompanied by a greater variety of forms, in which the word and the preaching were central. Around 1970 the ecumenical perspective in the liturgy became more important to the Neo-Calvinists, while the contemporary element claimed a place beside the historic connection and the declining catechism preaching. In 1970 the Reformed Churches appointed a professor of liturgical science at the VU (G.N. Lammens), who more directly engaged the contemporary liturgy with the Scriptures. For children their own song repertoire was created, some of which penetrated into the liturgy. Between 1966 and 1979 Hannah Lam and Wim ter Burg composed four songbooks, named for their classic *Everything will become new* (*Alles wordt nieuw*).

In orthodox circles liturgical developments occurred in the psalm and the song. In a part of the Reformed Alliance congregations as well as a part of the Christian Reformed Churches the psalter of 1773 was replaced in the seventies by the *Songbook for the churches* (*Liedboek voor de kerken*). In the Liberated Reformed Churches during those same years the psalter of 1773 was replaced with a new psalter, partly from their own circle, and in the nineties a *Reformed church book* (*Gereformeerd kerkboek*) followed with its own selection of songs, partly from the *Songbook*.

In the Roman Catholic liturgy in the first half of the sixties a series of innovations was introduced, based on the constitution on the liturgy from the Second Vatican Council, , such as the reversal of the altar, so the pastor stood with his face to believers, a partial introduction of the vernacular, and the introduction of the Saturday evening mass. In several places, however, much further reaching innovations were implemented, most of which eventually would become commonplace. Pioneering in this field were the Amsterdam university chaplains Jan van Kilsdonk (1917-2008) and Huub Oosterhuis (1933). The songs of the latter were often put to music by Bernard Huibers (1922-2003), later by Antoine Oomen (1945). Due to their quality and distribution, their compositions, even in Protestant churches, contributed significantly to the development of a Dutch liturgical vocabulary. The sobering of the Catholic liturgy was least appreciated by churchgoers. Such austerity did not take place in the Old Catholic Church (*Oud-Katholieke Kerk*), which in other ways was inspired by the Second Vatican Council in its liturgical renewal.

In the first half of the seventies the Catholic bishops started, partly at the instigation of Rome, a policy of approving and disapproving liturgical texts and songs. Many parishes nevertheless took the liberty of using forbidden texts and songs, or even to derive liturgical texts on their own.

### 3.4.3 Bible Translations

The changes in church and society in the second half of the twentieth century, including not least a trend towards a less formal and dignified language, did increase the need for a new Bible translation. In the Catholic Church this need had been felt since around 1960, when the vernacular in the liturgy was introduced. Here, between 1961 and 1972 the Willibrord translation was prepared. In most Protestant

churches the new 1951 translation by the Dutch Bible Society (NBG) was read. The NBG and the Catholic Bible Foundation (*Katholieke Bijbelstichting*: KBS) produced a Great news Bible (*Groot nieuws Bijbel*) together in 1972 (New Testament) and 1983 (the whole Bible) in daily speech, but for liturgical use this translation was not considered appropriate. The NBG, the KBS, and the Flemish Bible Foundation therefore took the initiative in the early nineties for a new translation, which was initiated in 1993 and published in 2004. The Dutch bishops had already decided though in 2003, to publish their own Bible, because the New Bible translation (*Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling*: NBV) was not declared suitable for liturgical use. Besides these translations, between 1996 and 2003 the Netherlands Reformed minister Nico ter Linden published a widely read, freer adaptation of the Bible under the title *The story goes* (*Het verhaal gaat*). There was also opposition to the new translations, beginning with the 1951 NBG. Against the NBG in 1966 the Reformed Bible Foundation (*Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting*) was established to promote the use and dissemination of the 1637 *Statenvertaling*. In 2010, a revision of this classic Dutch Bible translation was published.

3.4.4 Crisis of the ministry

Although both the priesthood and the monastic life did not come under discussion until the sixties, there was evidence at the beginning of the fifties that their attractiveness had declined. The ‘effectiveness’ of the seminars declined and after 1960 the number of applications did as well. The tension between traditional training and secularizing society led to a major crisis in the office in the early sixties. In 1964, eighteen priests left the office, by the end of the decade there were nearly 250 per year. To the great disappointment of many, Pope Paul VI (1897-1978) in the encyclical *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* (1967) maintained the mandatory celibacy, which was often viewed as one of the main causes of the crisis. This was not altogether correct: it was rather a crisis of identity. Many viewed the sacred nature of their consecration and hierarchical, authoritarian power of the church as no longer compatible with their own, more pastoral conception of the ministry as well as the expectations of the faithful.

The religious orders and congregations were also in crisis. It was not simply that too many left the monastery, but that they also had lost most of their traditional functions, such as health care and education. The professionalization of the sector and the lack of personnel forced them to give up this area.

In line with developments in society there was also a professionalization of the church’s ministry. In 1966-1967 Catholic major seminaries were eliminated and merged into theological colleges (later universities). Besides the existing Theological Faculty in Nijmegen, the Tilburg Faculty of Theology, the Catholic Theological University Amsterdam and the Catholic Theological College Utrecht — which in 1992 merged into the Catholic Theological University, Utrecht (KTU) - and the School of Theology and Pastoral Care in Heerlen, which in 1992 merged with the established Nijmegen faculty, were established. Both the Catholic and Protestant ministry training was expanded with pastoral training and social science techniques. This development of professional skills reinforced yet again the tendency to a de-sacralization of the ministry.

In Protestant churches during the sixties a strong current arose that wanted to eliminate the distinction between the ministers and the congregation in favor of the gifts and commitment of the ordinary parishioner. The minister disappeared entirely from the public domain and became a pastor that had to serve the diverse religious needs of believers. The theological faculties from the seventies onward experienced a growing tension between classical theology and a theology that was primarily oriented

towards society, its issues, and modern lifestyle. This latter form of practicing theology — Schillebeeckx was the great inspiration in Catholic circles as Kuitert was in Protestant circles — was considered by most theologians as the most appropriate, and attracted the most students. In particular, the Roman Catholic bishops, however, proposed a doctrinally oriented theology as a condition for the training for the ministry. Earlier, beginning with bishop Gijsen, bishops set their own training, either in the form of a seminary, or as a convict, affiliated with an academic theological training program. Around the year 2000 the theological faculties began to focus increasingly on the un-churched society that no longer was interested in Catholic or Protestant theology, but only in religion in general. Eventually the traditional and new target groups of the faculties varied so considerably, that it came to a split into a faculty of Religious Studies (Nijmegen, 2006). In 2007 the KTU at Utrecht merged with the Theological Faculty of Tilburg, after which a religious studies department (within the Tilburg Faculty of Humanities) and a Faculty of Catholic Theology (with locations in Tilburg and Utrecht) were formed.

Since the seventies ecclesiastical theological training was subsidized by the government. The theological schools of the Liberated-Reformed Churches (till 2010) and of some smaller churches of the Calvinist persuasion did not make an appeal to these government funds.

The government insisted, on the basis of the 1989 report of the Investigative Committee of Theology (*Verkenningscommissie Godgeleerdheid*), on reducing the number of theological training institutes, primarily because of the decline in student enrollment. The 'Together on the Way'-churches (Netherlands Reformed Church, Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and the Lutheran Church) followed the advice of the academic visitation committee on Theology from 1997 to limit the number of classical Protestant theological institutes to three. They concentrated their courses at the universities of Kampen, Leiden, and Utrecht. Organizationally, the PKN combined these institutes as one Protestant Theological University (PThU), which the PKN founded in 2007. In 1999 the theological faculties of the Universities of Groningen and Utrecht, the University of Amsterdam, Leiden University, and the Free University (VU) thus lost their relationship to training for the Protestant ministry. The Amsterdam department was eliminated and the Groningen, Leiden and Utrecht Faculties were further contoured in the direction of cultural and religious studies. The faculty at the VU stayed theological in character. The VU developed since then a study curriculum of Islamic theology and accommodated and facilitated the training of the Baptists, the Restored Reformed Church (*Hersteld Hervormde Kerk*), and the Pentecostal churches. In 2010 the PThU relocated at the VU and Groningen. The ecclesiastical programs of the Old Catholics, free-evangelicals, Baptists and Lutherans are housed at the Utrecht Department Religious Studies and Theology. In the nineties the Theological Colleges of the Liberated-Reformed Churches in Kampen and the Christian Reformed Churches in Apeldoorn entered into a partnership. Numerically in all cases they were small faculties.

3.4.5 Ecumenism

The openness of the Second Vatican Council in relation to other churches, and the fact that the Dutch ecumenical pioneer Willebrands was appointed the first secretary of the Roman Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in 1960 were incentives for the ecumenical relationships between Catholics and Protestants in the Netherlands. In 1961 both the Dutch bishops and the General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church published guidelines for ecumenical behavior, which made it clear that they wanted to meet each other. A major expansion of the staff of the St. Willibrord Society headed by secretary H.A.M.

**Comment [g9]:** General Synod met hoofd- of kleine letters?

Fiolet, OFM was another indication. The conditional rebaptism of Princess Irene at her conversion to the Catholic Church in 1964 — an 'ecumenical industrial accident', Cardinal Alfrink later remarked — led to a storm of protest, but also to official conversations for mutual baptismal recognition between the Catholic Church and the Netherlands Reformed Church (1967), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (1968), the Evangelical Lutheran Church (1968) and the Remonstrant Brotherhood (1974). There also appeared several joint declarations on religious intermarriage. The relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Old Catholic Church improved significantly. In 1966 Cardinal Alfrink and Archbishop A. Rinkel (1889-1979) met for the first time in a joint vespers celebration. In 1968 the Ecumenical Council was converted into a Council of Churches, whereof the Catholic Church was a member, and in which Fiolet became secretary in 1970. The report 'The unity which the Lord makes' (*De eenheid welke de Heer maakt*, 1970) of the Pastoral Council, prepared by Catholic and Protestant theologians advocated a far-reaching ecumenical openness at the base, but that went too far according to the bishops. The early seventies had created polarization within the Catholic Netherlands which also had a negative impact on the ecumenical contacts. These contacts were not altogether broken, but it did result in a clear delay in the conversations. In particular, the discussions in the committee Intercommunion and Office (*Intercommunie en ambt*, since 1970) yielded reports but as of yet no concrete recognition.

3.4.6 Together on the Way

As far as there were future prospects for the large Protestant denominations merging was generally regarded as conditional. After the 'Together on the Way' (*Samen op Weg*) process had started in the sixties by the Neo-Calvinist and Netherlands Reformed youth as an ecumenical project, the synods took over the task of the association. In 1973 for the first time a joint Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands was held and in 1986 both churches declared that they were 'in a state of reunification'. In 1990 the Evangelical Lutheran Church joined this process. The Remonstrant Brotherhood, who had participated from 1988 as an observer, withdrew in 1993 because the counter-Remonstrant Canons of Dort would be maintained in the new church.

In 1990, within the framework of the 'Together on the Way' process, the drafting of a new church order was initiated for the future church, which was completed within the decade. Administrative issues dominated the meetings of the Synod of the three churches (called ´Triosynod´) and organizational consultants walked in and out. Again the polder model flourished: practical solutions and not principled choices characterized policies. A concern for society or even church renewal remained outside its field of vision.

After the war the Reformed Alliance already had an unpleasant experience with renewal of the church order and was on its guard. The Alliance braced itself for the sake of the Calvinist character of the Netherlands Reformed Church, which they saw threatened due to the arrival of the Lutherans and the now liberalizing Reformed Churches. The Alliance had objected to the Leuenberg Concord (*Leuenberger Konkordie*), because in this international confession of Lutheran and Calvinists the differences between the two branches of the Reformation were no longer considered relevant. Nevertheless the Lutheran confessions also received a place in the church order. The Alliance at this stage repeatedly asserted that it could not go along with the merger. The attachment to the Netherlands Reformed Church, however, was so great that even this objection was swallowed, as long as the 'Together on the Way' process did not lead to a human construction of the church, but a continuation of the Reformed Church as 'God's planting'

from the sixteenth century. The Calvinists and the Lutherans were expected to come into the Netherlands Reformed house. This sentiment also existed widely outside of the Reformed Alliance in the Netherlands Reformed Church and found expression in the *A Reformed Plea* (*Hervormde pleidooi*, 1994), in which W. Aalders (1909-2005), professor emeritus of Protestant theology at the Catholic University, fought the proposed merger. Thirty-eight prominent Dutch Reformed signed the manifesto. The discussion focused next on what the name of the new church would be. In 1998 it appeared that the Reformed Alliance was rewarded for its decision two years earlier to go along with the merger, when the Netherlands Reformed synod held on the word *hervormd* (Reformed) in the name. The Lutherans, who were the smallest partner in the merger, had a relatively large contribution, however, and did block the Netherlands Reformed efforts. The name finally chosen was the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (*Protestantse Kerk in Nederland*). The Reformed Alliance also acquiesced to this decision and in 2004 the merger occurred. The new church had 2.1 million members, approximately 13 percent of the Dutch population.

Some of the supporters of the Reformed Alliance and a group of Netherlands Reformed to the right of the Alliance remained outside of the merger. For formal reasons these more than fifty thousand members of the old Netherlands Reformed Church could not keep the old church name, and they continued the 'planting of God' on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity under the name the Restored Reformed Church (*Hersteld Hervormde Kerk*).

The merger process was watched with great interest by the smaller Protestant denominations. The General Mennonite Conference (9000 members) and the Remonstrant Brotherhood (6500 members) rather retained their independence, but in 2004 with a graying membership their perspectives were little. Of all the Calvinist denominations, the Liberated Reformed Churches were the most in motion since around 1990. Participation in the 'Together on the Way' process was out of the question. Local contacts with the Christian Reformed Churches and the Dutch Reformed Churches (*Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken*, a split off of the Liberated Reformed Churches, established in 1969) quite often led to a degree of cooperation, but on a national level discussions were stiff.

3.4.7 Revival of Orthodoxy

In the 'Together on the Way' process, it was evident that especially the Calvinist modality in the Netherlands Reformed Church was a non-negligible factor. There had been an exodus of Liberals from the Netherlands Reformed Church: in 1925 about one fifth of the denomination identified themselves as Liberal, in 1985 it was down to three percent. The moderate orthodox had become more liberal and rather indeterminate, while the share of the Reformed Alliance had increased significantly since the seventies — by a constant influx from the pietistic Calvinist churches.

The Reformed Alliance became not only influential, but in light of the ecclesiastical and political developments also more assertive and together with the Confessional Association it opposed the removal of the exclusive Calvinist confessional basis of the Netherlands Reformed Church. In its role, the Reformed Alliance took more responsibility for the Netherlands Reformed Church as a whole then before the 'Together on the Way' process. Features from the tradition of the Further Reformation gave way to those of the Reformation period. In reaction in 1982 arose the stream of The Bruised Reed (*Het gekrookte riet*), which wanted to remain closely associated with the eighteenth-century old writers and their accentuation of election, and in 1986 there was the periodical *Kontekstueel* that wanted to update the Calvinist confession. The theologian C. Graafland (1928-2004), who from 1972 occupied the Alliance´s

academic chair at Utrecht, promoted the openness of the Alliance to his ecclesiastical environment and was aware of the risk of a petrification of the Calvinist tradition that could hamper the 'virgin' reading of the Scripture. On women in the ministry, ethics, and liturgical renewal the Alliance took a conservative stance.

Thus the Netherlands Reformed Church became relatively more orthodox while society secularized. Since the introduction of the presbyterian church structure in 1951, the congregations enjoyed more freedom to call their own ministers. Since then the Alliance florished. In 1974, 18 percent of the over 1,700 Netherlands Reformed pastorates belonged to the Reformed Alliance, in 2003 it was 26 percent. From the smallest modality organization within the Church the Alliance became the largest after the sixties, although in the eighties its boundaries became more diffuse, especially those with the confessional tendency, whose organization weakened after 1970; in 1985 9 percent of the clergy were member of the Confessional Association. In the nineties there seemed to be an end to the rise of the Reformed Alliance. The issue raised by the EO (*Evangelische Omroep*) television network of the gap between the biblical message and society occupied the orthodox Protestant circles But is was the church, not the broadcaster, that had moved farther away from the society and lacked the intellectual and practical tools to bridge it. The theological language had become jargon and the church had become a closed circuit. Calvinist theology in the twentieth century had made 'no advance, let alone booked progress' (Van de Beek). Faith and everyday life were two spheres difficult to connect.

Within the orthodox Protestant churches around 1970 there was a tendency, consciously deviating of the innovations in the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, not to give in to the *Zeitgeist*, but to defend themselves against the theological and social changes, as was the case in the Reformed Alliance in the Netherlands Reformed Church. After the first decade of having worked across from and alongside each other, the orthodox Protestants and evangelicals came together in this arrangement. From this stance a social and ecclesiastical regrouping occurred. In the Liberated Reformed Churches, a disagreement among theologians about whether the church should have a programmatic character towards the culture and towards other churches resulted in a schism. Around 1969 the Dutch Reformed Churches were created, which numbered about 30,000 members. In 1971, the *Reformatorisch Dagblad* was founded in response to the changing nature of the *Trouw* and the disappearance of other Protestant newspapers. The newspaper played an important role in the formation of a pietistic reformed pillar and grew to nearly 60,000 subscribers. In the mid-eighties this antithetical endeavor was moderated and various Liberated Reformed organizations dropped their church membership prerequisite. More mutual contact arose among those of the Calvinist persuasion at formal and informal levels. The influence of the evangelical movement — especially among young people — and the EO contributed to this. Around 2000 the *Nederlands Dagblad* had about 30,000 subscribers. Up to 1992 this was a Liberated Reformed daily, but has since developed into a newspaper for a broader Christian public of an orthodox cut.

When the Free University (VU) transformed its Calvinist character into a general Christian character and more strongly emphasized service to society, the plans for a new Christian university failed, but in 1972 and 1974 several Calvinist social colleges were founded. Out of these institutions and the previously formed orthodox teachers training centers arose Neo-Calvinist, Reformational, and Orthodox-Protestant colleges of Higher Vocational Education at Zwolle, Gouda and Ede — the foundation of the latter institution in 1974 was a response to the leftist radicalization of the College of Social Studies De Horst,

where at that time religious workers were trained. From 2003 these training colleges together appointed lecturers. In 1975 the Reformed Political Federation (*Reformatorische Politieke Federatie*: RPF) appeared on the political stage. This party was represented in parliament since 1981. In 2000, the RPF merged with the GPV into the Christian Union (*ChristenUnie*), the parties had at that time respectively 2 and 3 seats. In the seventies also Reformational and Liberated Reformed educational pillars were developed for primary and secondary education, which are quite strong in their own right.

In the nineties the growth in the smaller Calvinist denominations diminished. Transitions from Netherlands Reformed or Neo-Calvinist churches were rare — it was not the degree of orthodoxy, but rather the tightness of the social network of these churches that was often an obstacle. Also the birth rate in these circles took off. The Reformed Congregations grew constantly from 85,000 members in 1980 to over 100,000 in 2005. The Christian Reformed Churches experienced no growth since the eighties and in 2005 numbered 75,000 members, while the growth of the Liberated Reformed Churches stalled in 2005 at just over 125,000. Cautious exercises in interdenominational contact sometimes led to cooperation, but no ecclesiastical associations emerged.

In these years the Roman Catholic Church (4,406,000 members in 2005) for the average believer remained primarily a church in the middle, but its appearance was undeniably orthodox. This was not necessarily because of the ongoing appointments of conservative bishops. On the contrary, it seemed Rome pursued a policy of a balanced episcopal college. In Haarlem in 1983 the conservative missionary bishop H.J.A. Bomers CM was appointed, and after his death in 1998 and a vacancy for three years, the conservative auxiliary bishop J.M. Punt was appointed. The diocese of Den Bosch in 1998 had Ter Schure followed by conservative A.L.M. Hurkmans. In Roermond F.J.M. Wiertz in 1993 was the successor Bishop Gijsen. In Groningen W.J. Eijk was appointed in 1999. These bishops placed a strong emphasis on orthodox Catholicism. The bishops of Rotterdam and Breda, both appointed in 1994, the Salesian A.H. van Luyn and M.P.M. Muskens were much less conservative. Both showed great sensitivity to important social issues such as poverty, AIDS and at-risk youth. Bishop Muskens drew attention several times with his provocative statements about the right of the poor to steal bread or to use a condom in heavily AIDS-infected areas of Africa.

The orthodox appearance was, of course, reinforced by an exodus to the left, as was the case with the Netherlands Reformed Church,. The critical Catholic movements created in the seventies and eighties were suffering from an aging membership. In 2003 the Eighth of May Movement was disbanded after its annual events were no longer well-attended.

### 3.4.8 Evangelical movement

However, the significance of so-called new religious movements grew much in the Catholic Church. It seems a connection had been found with an evangelical inspired faith, which had increased in importance in Protestant circles for some time.

What applied to the Protestant evangelical movement also applied to the new Catholic movements: they were not very interested in a reordering of society, but more in personal conversion. Theology was less to the fore than religious experience; the theology was traditional and orthodox. The Protestant evangelical movement grew rapidly. In the shadows it sought its way, often inspired by American evangelicals. The evangelical movement had been present in the youth world since the fifties through international

organizations such as Youth for Christ (1946); it appeared momentarily on the scene in the late sixties as the Jesus Movement within the hippie movement. There were also large youth festivals (such as the annual Flevofestival, 1978-2012), coffee bars were opened as theological, social and cultural harbors for young people and in 1973 Yought with a Mission (YWAM) started. The nationwide evangelism campaign of 1982 'There is hope' was a sign that the evangelical movement had branched out widely and no longer could be ignored. The mouthpiece of this movement in the media from 1967 was the Evangelical Broadcasting Company EO. This broadcaster started defensively. Against the polarization of the left, the evangelical and orthodox Protestant circles represented a polarization of right. The broadcasting network grew rapidly, and in 1992 received an A-status, which meant maximal broadcasting time within the public television structure, and set aside its antithetical stance towards the culture. Elly and Rikkert, coming from the hippie culture and converted to Christianity in 1976, made through this broadcast craze with contemporary Christian songs and musicals for children and adults. Billy Graham and Tommy Osborn appeared to be not an incident in the Netherlands. The Salvation Army had already blazed the trail for the evangelical movement and had built up a fair amount of goodwill. How much the Salvation Army had become part of Dutch society turned out again in 1965, when 'Major' (in fact Lieutenant-Colonel) A.M. Bosshardt (1913-2007) led Princess Beatrix, who was incognito, around the Amsterdam Red Light District to show her the circumstances of the prostitutes and to show the work that the Salvation Army did among them. In the eighties and nineties, Bosshardt rose to become the figurehead of the Salvation Army and its compassion for the dropouts of society. The Army was considered the authority on modern, professional care for this group and was a key informant for the government on the bottom of society.

In the Netherlands, the term *evangelisch* got a narrower meaning than *evangelical* does internationally, where 'evangelical' also implied Anglicans, Baptists, and Neo-Calvinists like Kuyper. Characteristic of this movement is its evangelistic nature, the informal liturgy in its meetings, the popular Christian song culture and, often under the influence of the charismatic movement, an exuberant faith. For orthodox congregants in the larger Protestant churches, the para-church evangelical movement formed an important addition to their religious life and often evangelical groups were even an alternative. The Pentecostal Movement (Pentecostal, Full Gospel Churches, but also many independent churches) grew rapidly from 7,500 members in 1960, to 70,000 in 1989, to 120,000 in 2007. The movement has an estimated 900 congregations. In 1979 the separate groups united under the umbrella organization of the Evangelical Alliance (*Evangelische Alliantie*). The evangelical movement was visible in society, schools, publishing, and in missionary organizations. The relations it had with the churches gradually improved and from the seventies onward there arose interest in society and politics. Evangelicals generally considered opposition to the arms race as far too optimistic in tone and because a woman had an equivalent status as a man as well as her own distinct role, the movement was not interested in feminism.

Similar movements arose now in Catholic circles. In the mid-seventies, the Catholic charismatic movement began its advance around the magazine and commune *Building a New Earth* (*Bouwen aan een Nieuwe Aarde*). It currently has about 150 prayer groups. Furthermore in the course of the eighties foreign movements settled in the Netherlands, such as the French Emmanuel Movement, the Italian Focolare and the Neocatechumenal Way that even established two priest training centers in the Netherlands. The scope of these Catholic movements, although resembling the evangelical current in Protestantism, however, did not nearly extend as far, especially not in Netherlands.

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## 3.5 Church and modern society

### 3.5.1 Ethical issues

The rapidly increasing permissiveness in Dutch society from the sixties on had its impact on Christian ethics. In the sixties the focus in this discipline was on personal ethics: marriage and divorce, sexuality and reproduction, and abortion. It was the Catholics especially — and later members of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands — that developed liberal positions at a fast tempo. In the late sixties the increasing number of divorces became a matter of pastoral care instead of condemnation. Many couples viewed the Catholic Church’s ban on the use of contraception as an outdated perspective. There was a great amount of indignation when Pope Paul VI again vocalized this ban in 1968 in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. The Dutch bishops proclaimed what in 1963 Bishop Bekkers had previously pronounced, that the personal conscience in this case was ultimately decisive. Christian opinions about homosexuality in these years grew also broader. With regard to abortion and euthanasia, the bishops, the one more absolute than the other, took a negative stance. The gap between the official teaching of the Catholic Church and the beliefs of many believers meant that the traditional confessional practice within a few years completely fell into disuse.

The large Protestant churches no longer prescribed an unambiguous Christian lifestyle, as revealed on issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and homosexuality. The aim to decriminalize abortion met with resistance from predominantly orthodox Protestants on the right wing of the Netherlands Reformed Church, the small Calvinist denominations, and the Roman Catholic Church. In 1981, during the Van Agt Cabinet, the Termination of Pregnancy Act (*Wet Afbreking Zwangerschap*) was adopted, in which an abortion was still a criminal act, but if the pregnant woman declared her situation as an ‘emergency’ this excluded the criminal liability of the physician. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Reformed Church followed this government policy. The abortion rate — the number of abortions per thousand females of childbearing age — fell from the seventies to the relatively low number of 5.2 in 1990. The Association for the Protection of the Unborn Child (*Vereniging ter Bescherming van het Ongeboren Kind*), with more than 100,000 members in 2000, set up an assistance network. Developments in medical science entailed that from the mid-eighties the number of ethical issues significantly expanded as well as its complexity. Surrogacy, artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization, artificial life extension, euthanasia and such topics were the subject of medical ethics discussions. Suffering, viewed in light of medical facilities and the modern image of an impotent God, was increasingly perceived as unjust and useless. Harold S. Kushner's *When bad things happen to good people* (1983), the best-selling non-fiction book in 1984 and 1985 in the Netherlands, presented religion against evil as a means of personal development. In the Netherlands, euthanasia has been legally regulated since 1985. Worldwide it was the only country to do so. The Catholic Church spoke out against these developments, but the Protestant churches did not comment, although there were those on the orthodox

side that watched anxiously. The legal recognition of all forms of cohabitation, and in particular the introduction of gay marriage in 2001, led to public debate, in which the churches played no prominent role. In 1995 the Netherlands Reformed Church accepted the homosexual lifestyle principally and completely.

The increase in the number of complex ethical issues and the reluctance of the major Protestant churches to address them, created space for J. Douma (1931) and W.H. Velema (1929), ethicists from respectively the Liberated and the Christian Reformed Churches. They published from an orthodox point of view, but also with a willingness to compromise, extensively on current ethical issues. They took on these issues in a public role in such a way that their influence did extend further than their own ecclesiastical circles.

3.5.2 Individualization

In the background of such discussions, there was an increased individualization in Dutch society. There was thus a widespread belief that individuals about all kinds of issues, also about ethically controversial issues, had to decide for themselves. For many, not least political and religious leaders, this individualism called into question whether or not the Dutch have shared norms and knew them, or whether the Christian basis of society, such as had got shape from the end of the nineteenth century, must not be reappraised, and how a transfer of values from one generation to the next could be encouraged. Also within the Protestant churches individualism became stronger, which was partly attributed to the penetration of the ideas of the evangelical movement in the churches. The growth in number of non-Christian religions in the Netherlands, and especially of Islam and Hinduism, did not make answering such questions any easier. When moreover the world was shocked in 2001 by an attack by radical Muslims on the Twin Towers in New York, the discussion was intensely polarized from time to time due to feelings of being threatened.

From the Catholic Church, the emphasis was therefore placed again on the transmission of norms and values through the still existing Catholic private education. In a 'Values and Norms Campaign' (*Waarden en normen campagne*, 2002-2003) Cardinal Simonis emphasized in addition to the own Catholic values also the importance of respect and open discussion of such matters.

Alongside the church one now returned to civil society as a vehicle for the much desired unity. What there was left of a Catholic civil society united in the eighties in the Association of Catholic Social Organizations (*Verband van Katholieke Maatschappelijke Organisaties*; 2004: Catholic Centre of the Netherlands / *Katholiek Centrum Nederland*). In 1982 there was also a Catholic National Association for Social Activation Work (*Katholieke Landelijke Vereniging voor Maatschappelijk Aktiveringswerk*) established to encourage volunteering. The Catholic broadcaster KRO, especially as of the nineties, was both in the programs as well as at events very active in creating a new Catholic sense of solidarity under the motto 'the feeling that you want to share'. The broadcast started in 1998 by order of the bishops the website www.katholieknederland.nl, by far the most extensive ecclesiastical site in the Netherlands, and together with the Focolare movement was the driving force behind the manifestation 'Catholic with heart and soul', held in 2003 — one hundred and fifty years after the restoration of the episcopal hierarchy — held in the Utrecht Jaarbeurs. Appeals to continue these modern 'Catholic Days', however, got no response until now.

3.5.3 War and Peace

The atmosphere of progressivity in the sixties and seventies, which was expressed through particular attention to the peace movement and the Third World liberation movements, did increase interest in Christian social ethics again. Especially under the influence of neo-Marxism, the belief grew that in the Bible 'preferential treatment for the poor and oppressed' was a central topic, and that accordingly Christians ought to behave in this way in society.

In 1966 the Catholic Church, the Netherlands Reformed Church, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and smaller non-Calvinist Protestant churches founded the Interchurch Peace Council (*Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad*: IKV). The IKV provided 'peace education' for church members, organized an annual church Peace Week, but also committed itself to disarmament and human rights. In response to NATO's plans to station new nuclear weapons in Europe, in 1978 the campaign 'Stop the neutron bomb' was initiated, in which both communists and church organizations participated. In 1979 opposition to the deployment of cruise missiles pooled together in the No Cruise Missiles Comittee (*Komitee Kruisraketten Nee*, KKN), in which the IKV also participated. When the Second Chamber agreed that year against the NATO plans, it was internationally spoken of as 'Hollanditis'. This virus was in no small measure spread by the churches, which drew from the consequences of the WCC policies against the arms race, advocated since 1954. The episcopal letter *Peace and justice* (*Vrede en gerechtigheid*, 1983) tended to be an absolute 'no' to nuclear weapons. The Netherlands Reformed synod in 1980 not only condemned the use but also the possession of nuclear weapons. The IKV led by the Neo-Calvinist physicist Mient Jan Faber (1940), who from 1974 was its secretary for thirty years, became an influential social movement in whose shade the churches stood. The KKN impressed by the organization of two mass demonstrations (Amsterdam 1981, 400,000 people, and The Hague 1983, 550,000 people) and a petition with 3,750,000 signatures. One's position on the peace movement was a religious shibboleth. The Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands raised the placement of NATO missiles in 1984 to a confessional issue, but the Reformed Alliance published an open letter against the Netherlands Reformed synod and warned against Marxist influences. Those aggrieved against the political course of the churches did not develop great power with alternatives such as the Inter-Church Committee Bilateral Disarmament (*Interkerkelijk Comité Tweezijdige Ontwapening*), which was much more critical to the socialist ideology and stood for bilateral disarmament.

While the international climate relaxed, the Netherlands definitively decided to place the new NATO weapons in 1985. The peace movement collapsed and the tensions surrounding the political discussions of the church declined. Five years later the moribund Russian empire collapsed and the socialist Christians lost their dream of the 'really existing socialism' and their criterion for anti-capitalist critique of their own society. Some churches as well as those involved in Christians for Socialism recognized that they wrongly expected a renewal of the regime itself and had directed too little attention to the oppressed people. Something of a *mea culpa* was heard in the nineties from those who had focused in their socially critical theology too much on the social structures, to the detriment of the individual and community.

In 1983, the WCC announced a 'conciliar process for peace, justice and the integrity of creation'. It was an attempt to grasp at new social movements — women, peace, and the third-world environmental movement — in church structures. The conciliar process was primarily reflected in the Netherlands, where the churches after losing their grip on the peace movement were in need of a new social engagement. The initiative was taken by the Netherlands Council of Churches, in which unlike in many other countries, the Catholic Church also participated. Numerous groups devoted themselves to one or

more of the topics identified by the Council: power imbalance between men and women in the Netherlands, impoverishment, hunger in the Third World, enmity between East and West, racism in the streets and at home, waste, pollution and the destruction of natural resources. The ecumenical Church Day 1989 (*Kerkendag* 1989, 18,000 visitors) was entirely devoted to the conciliar process. In 1992, 1997 and 2005 Church Days were held again, but the momentum had waned.

### 3.5.4 Weakened position

The involvement of the churches in the political issue of the deployment of nuclear weapons was the last time they played a major role socially. Within the churches it had entailed a high degree of commitment, however, which waned quickly when in the second half of the eighties the change in the European political climate came. On the other hand, the left-orientated commitment of the churches left many church members alienated from their local congregations and from ecclesiastical authorities. They kept silent in their churches or moved on to churches and circles where there was no political commitment and classical theology was held in esteem. The strongly political engaged Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, shrunk since its peak of 880,000 members in 1974. In fifteen years it lost one hundred thousand members and was faced with an increasing plurality in the congregations. They thus joined to the older dechurching pattern of the Netherlands Reformed Church. After this heated period discussing the nuclear arms, it became clear to the latter church that talking about the Christianization of society had been too ambitious. In the pastoral guidance *Being a congregation in a global society* (*Gemeente-zijn in de mondiale samenleving*, 1988) the bitter pill of secularization was swallowed. The reality was that the Netherlands Reformed Church throughout the century had not been solicitous and had face a continuously decrease in committing co-citizens. In 1971 this denomination still accounted for 23 percent of the Dutch people, but was now in free fall that in the remaining decades of the century proved unstoppable. The church had become a marginal phenomenon in Dutch society and the emphasis in the pastoral guidance was therefore to take shelter together in the church. The world was still under observation through international assistance and advocacy for democracy and justice in a secular culture, but the church's engagement in the Netherlands had no social profile. The Council of Churches tried with little success to appeal the churches and the government for solidarity and stewardship in society.

In 1983, as a sign of weakened social position of the church, the last remnants of the ties of the Netherlands Reformed Church with the central government disappeared; money still flowed from the local governments to the congregations, especially for the maintenance of the old church buildings. In January 1972, the Netherlands Reformed Church held a nationwide action called Church Balance (*Kerkbalans*), a financial house-to-house action among congregants, which yielded a revenue increase of 30 percent. The action was a mental boost for the church and has been repeated annually cooperatively as an action of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Netherlands Reformed Church, the Catholic Church and some smaller denominations. Compared to the declining membership the proceeds of this action were surprisingly positive. The administrative attention to the 'Together on the Way' process in the nineties cloaked the fact that it was unclear what held the Netherlands Reformed Church together.

### 3.5.5 Missionary Activities

In the field of missions and missionary activities there were major changes. The missionaries were faced with a growing self-consciousness of the third world countries, and often engaged alongside of the locals — especially in the case of the South American basis communities and their liberation theology — , not

always to the satisfaction of the local rulers. They realized that Europe now had itself become a mission field. The Catholic mission furthermore had to deal with decreased personnel: by decreasing vocations, retirement, and aging, the number of missionaries and missionary sisters steadily declined (8806 in 1963, 7608 in 1972). Simultaneously under the influence of secularization the interest of the public in the Netherlands shifted from missionary activities to development projects. This led to the reorganization of the mission activities in the Netherlands at the beginning of the sixties. In 1964, the Central Mission Commissariat (CMC) was the executive body of the joint orders and congregations; the government grants were distributed by the CMC. The missionary consciousness of Catholics was stimulated by the Dutch Mission Board (*Nederlandse Missieraad*, 1967).

In the first half of the seventies Catholic thinking about missionary activity changed considerably. The decree *Ad Gentes* of the Second Vatican Council was based on the idea of missionary duty and 'church planting', but now one assumed more and more a 'reciprocal missionary assistance' between the 'old churches' and the 'young churches'. To avoid the looming one-sidedness, dioceses started concrete ties with sister dioceses, and also to invite them to come take a critical look at the Dutch diocese.

Increasing cooperation with the Protestant missionary organizations was reflected in the merger of Catholic and Protestant missiological journals such as *World and Mission* (*Wereld en Zending*, 1972) and from 1972 in a joint annual fundraising action under the slogan 'Come across the bridge' (*'Kom over de brug'*). The financial position of missionary activities improved significantly throughout the post-war period, but especially in Protestant circles it remained a marginal phenomenon. Dutch Protestant missiology made some contributions internationally, but in terms of scope and level the mission lagged behind compared to for example, Germany and England.

The fact that Dutch missionaries could not go to Indonesia from 1958 to 1962 because of the conflict between the Netherlands and Indonesia on New Guinea, caused the Protestants to move their mission areas to Asia, Africa, and South America. In 1970 the missionary seminary of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands merged with the Netherlands Reformed missionary college Hendrik Kraemer Institute (HKI) in Oegstgeest. The HKI was also the training center for missionaries from the smaller Calvinist churches. National cooperation was expanded in 1982 through a partnership between the Netherlands Reformed Council for Mission (*Raad voor de zending*) with the Dutch Reformed world-diaconate, the mission of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (*Interkerkelijke Organisatie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*: ICCO, 1964). This cooperation as a starting point a mitigated form of Hoekendijk's understanding that the church was the tool and the world was the purpose of missions. The mission focused less on the individual and more collectively, less on direct evangelism and more on support, while the relationship with other religions was less antithetical then before. In the Netherlands Reformed Church the Reformed Mission League (*Gereformeerde Zendingsbond*), beside the church mission an influential organization, opposed these views, as did the Interior Mission League (*Inwendige Zendingsbond*). But even in these circles at the turn of the century, shyness broke through against the transmission of the Gospel in a secular culture and rigidity threatened its reflection,. This resulted in a repetition of positions that could only be understood by its own supporters.

In response to the pluralism and relativism of belief in the Dutch Missionary Council (*Nederlandse Zendingsraad*), in 1972 the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (*Evangelische Zendingsalliantie*) was

founded, largely of evangelical, para-church missionary organizations. The evangelicals focused less on interchurch aid than on reaching people who have not heard the gospel. Apart from these organizations some denominations operated their mission efforts independently such as the Liberated Reformed Churches, the Reformed Congregations, and the Pentecostal Churches.

As a result of the intensifying global migration movements, from the fifties onwards groups of Christians from other parts of the world arrived in the Netherlands, who often organized an ethnically-based denomination. After the independence of Suriname in 1975 the Moravian congregations grew explosively through the influx of Surinamese. In 1997, about fifty churches of Christians from Africa, Asia, Central and South America united into Church Together in the Netherlands (*Samen Kerk in Nederland*: SKIN), with the aim of finding a place in Dutch society and to be recognized in their missionary commitment. Among these migrants there were also many Muslims, who in 2000 composed 5 percent of the Dutch population. At the turn of the century the rise of Islam and that of secularization formed the greatest challenges for missionary work.

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## 3.6 Conclusion

In the formation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands the church and state were separated in principle, but the two centuries since then have proceeded to yield a history in which we see mutual involvement, influence, and inspiration. The hundred years between roughly 1860 and 1960 were a period in which — not only in the Netherlands — the Christian churches penetrated deeper into the personal and social life than perhaps ever before. Admittedly, before that time the Netherlands was a Christian nation, but in the nineteenth century the Christian churches independently played a new role and searched for their own form within the new national framework. The separation of church and state as shaped in 1848, was a powerful incentive to do so. The church as the community of Christians was the most appropriate form and role in this new situation. This community was reinforced by Christian organizations in the field of education, politics, social life, health and culture and leisure. For Catholics, the separation between church and organizations was not strict: both were part of a whole Catholic milieu. In Protestant circles it was partly due to the ecclesiastical divisions that there was much debate about whether organizations had to be connected with the church or had to be independent companies of Christians. But both Catholics and Protestants committed their forces in this 'century of the church' through organizations and church in order to give a new shape to the *corpus Christianum*, as the one that had dominated Europe for centuries. Partly due to this commitment of the church communities, society got its modern face.

More and more it became clear that re-Christianization ideals gave a strong impetus to Christian action in society, but also that the Christians never would bring society under the church's control again. After 1800 the church no longer represented the order of this earthly reality, but became one of the competing parties within society. Given this subordinate position, the Christians in the Netherlands succeeded for a long time in holding influence in the public domain. But at the state universities theology lost its prominence already in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

After World War II the Christianization efforts did not lose their size but rather their elasticity. These efforts were increasingly perceived as a constraint, and the reality of individualism and a mixed society of non-Christians and Christians won the normative visions of the Christian communities. In the sixties and seventies the churches threatened to become an enclave of outdated bourgeois and once more they undertook a major effort to involve the church in society through its message via a progressive twist in order to present the church as an engine for social change. Theology became a small academic discipline in which only a few theological personalities succeeded even to reach a large audience. Since then, both the church and society tired of all of the ideological approaches. Society chilled and the churches turned inward. This introspection was attributable in part to the evangelical response within church circles to the secularizing trends of the sixties and seventies.

Since the nineties, although smaller in size and more orthodox than previously, it was not so much the churches as the religiosity manifested outside their walls that attracted attention. According to the *Atlas of European Values* (2005), more than 60 percent of the Dutch refer to themselves as religious. Thus the national Book Week in 1997 was dedicated to the theme 'My God', and History Week in 2006 to the theme 'Faith and superstition'. The newspaper *Trouw* owes a large part of its existence to its coverage of faith and religion in the broad sense.

Most of these Dutch that are calling themselves religious are convinced that there is some sort of God, spirit or life force. Belief in a personal God is considerably less widespread. Belief in miracles or in reincarnation, however, is widespread and is often accompanied by a cultivation of 'self-spirituality': meditation and humanistic-psychological therapeutic techniques. The need for rituals is back with a vengeance, as evidenced by the organization of silent marches and the cultivating places where a murder or a fatal accident occurred. Not only in these secular forms, but also processions and pilgrimages are blooming again, as befits a time when for many belief is something that one cannot do without, but is preferably done outside the church.

Around 2000, people within the churches pensively raked the leaves of the heyday together. The intertwined, but leafless crowns of church and society cut bare against the sky. There was no indication that a new season awaits them.

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