

1 Dutch Roman Catholics in a time of transition. Calm amidst the stormy waves.

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Introduction

Saevis tranquillus in undis ('calm amidst the stormy waves') was the motto of William of Orange, the 'Father of the Fatherland', among others.¹ He helped the fledgling ship of state to maintain a steady course during the stormy weather of the Eighty Years' War in which the Republic of the Netherlands gained its independence.

The waves were stormy for the Netherlands once again after the Second World War, whipped up by the stiff winds of change. First of all, the wide-ranging debate about the future of democracy and how to deal with the legacy of the Occupation. Who could lay down the law in the Netherlands, what kind of government was best suited to this situation, and what response was appropriate to the question of 'crime and punishment' in connection with those who had failed to be true to the Fatherland in its time of need? And then, the problems of national reconstruction demanded hard political choices. It was not only the physical reconstruction that had to be considered here: moral aspects, such as the kind of society to be built up, were important too. It would be wrong to suggest, as many have done, that the social debate in the first twenty years after the War was pale and tame compared with what was to come in the 1960s. It is true that this last-mentioned period did usher in a true cultural revolution that shook all pillars of society on their foundation and in a few cases even caused them to topple. But to regard the post-War period simply as one characterized by the 'smell of boiled sprouts' – often used to symbolize the good behaviour, spirit of self-denial and social cohesion and blinkered mentality that typified the Dutch people at that time – is to disregard the real conflicts of interest, with very high stakes, that also existed then.

Dutch Roman Catholics made a spirited contribution to the debates of the 1940s and 1950s, were under fire – not just from their enemies; there was 'friendly fire' too – in the 1960s and 1970s, and were on the defensive in subsequent decades. The present essay, intended to provide some of the background of the themes covered in this report, aims to give a picture of the position of Catholics within the framework of the political and social relationships prevailing in Dutch post-war history. In view of the limited space available, only the main lines will be touched upon. Academic discussions, for example about whether the term 'emancipation' or 'revival' best describes the developments in the Catholic community during the period in question², will be avoided. Special attention will be paid to the Catholic 'pillar' and the process of its disintegration, which started as early as around 1950. [Dutch society from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century has often been described as 'pillarized', in the sense that many important social structures such as political parties, schools, hospitals and the media were duplicated for the various religious and non-denominational groups in the country, the total of such provisions for a given group being referred to as a 'pillar' – *Translator*.] The Roman Catholic pillar suffered the most of all Dutch pillars from the violence of the waves, especially during the revolution that led to the hegemony of the 'spirit of the 1960s'. In a disconcertingly short time, not only was the structure swept away but an end also came to the flourishing of Catholic traditions and rituals, especially in the south of the country, known as '*het rijke roomse leven*' (the rich Roman life) that not long before had seemed about to come into full bloom.

The tensions in Catholic circles began to make themselves felt during the post-war Reconstruction period. A power struggle was under way in the Netherlands, which may be regarded as the final phase of rival emancipations against a backdrop of uncomplaining hard work. Not only the social democrats but also the Catholics and the members of the Reformed Church (perhaps it would be more accurate to refer to the last-mentioned group as the Protestants who did not belong to the traditional upper echelons of the Reformed Church) had to a certain extent to find their place in society after 1945. It seems clear in retrospect that these three population groups that were in the process of emancipation, which had already made some progress in making an entry into the social and political elite but were still struggling to make further advances, had no reason to complain about the results achieved. In the first few years after the War, however, everything was still in a state of flux. As far as the Catholics were concerned, it may be stated that while the results of their efforts were slowly but surely becoming visible, the cohesive effect of their shared religion and culture gradually became less important for a variety of reasons.

After that, another kind of conflict began to raise its head in the 1960s that would have an effect on practically every sector of Dutch society. It set one generation against another across the whole of society, conservatives with a small 'c' against progressive left-wing groups, different styles of culture against one another and churches against their congregations. The Dutch Catholic world was not immune from this turmoil. The internal differences of opinion degenerated into a free-for-all, partly as a result of the defensive reaction of the highest authorities within the church itself. The 'spirit of the 1960s' posed a mortal threat to the Catholic pillar in the Netherlands and the community of the faithful. Neither the political leadership of the pillar nor the Dutch episcopate, nor the pieces into which 'the Catholic part of the population' – which had always represented the strength of the pillar because of its numbers and its traditionally obedient character – fragmented remained '*tranquillus*' (calm and unshaken), as William of Orange had claimed to be in the motto cited at the start of this essay. On the contrary, all concerned were the very opposite of 'calm amidst the stormy waves' as each in his own way tried to find an answer to the questions of the new age.

It should be remembered in this connection that it had been the church itself that had initiated this process of renewal. Just as Mikhail Gorbachev's preaching of *perestroika* (restructuring) in the Soviet Union starting in 1985 released a spirit from the bottle whose effects could no longer be controlled, Pope John XXIII brought a message of *aggiornamento* (bringing up to date) to the Roman Catholic Church a quarter of a century later. Born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, a simple farmer's son, he rose to be Patriarch of Venice and Pope from 1958 to 1963. It was during this period that he convened the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The council was not just a random idea, or an ill-conceived plan of an inexperienced prelate. Pope John knew – or thought he knew – what he was doing, and it was his intention to throw a stone into the pond, to cause ripples. During the final years of his predecessor Pius XII's pontificate, an 'integralist'³, negative approach to modernity had increasingly gained the upper hand. John XXIII realized that he was taking risks, but he thought the time had come to bring about a more constructive approach in the Vatican. His initiative might perhaps also be seen as an attempt to give people within the Catholic Church (who were born into the church, unlike the case in the Protestant churches where membership is a matter of personal commitment) the feeling that they were members of a community.

Whether or not it had been the intention, the Dutch laity did initially become more involved. It is one of the tragic aspects of this story that this feeling of togetherness then turned into its opposite. The

Dutch Catholic Church, which in the 1950s had been the 'strongest' in Europe, characterized by an allegiance that was the envy of the clergy in other countries, became one of the weakest in the world.

Chronology

Post-War Dutch history might in broad lines be divided up as follows, in terms of the social and political relationships involved. The period of Reconstruction was characterized by intense competition between the different 'pillars' behind a façade of harmonious cooperation and peaceful consensus. This was followed by a period of social and political polarization, the beginning of which more or less coincided – though with only a very weak causal link – with the retirement of prominent politicians like Willem Drees from the left-wing PvdA (Labour Party), Carl Romme from the KVP (Catholic People's Party) and Jan Schouten of the ARP (Anti-Revolutionary Party). The following generation of political leaders, represented by Norbert Schmelzer of the KVP and Joop den Uyl of the PvdA among others, were less averse to confrontation. The general elections in 1977 marked a turning point. Although the voters did not criticize the course followed by the cabinet led by Den Uyl (his own party, the PvdA, won 10 seats in the election), the new cabinet was a centre-right coalition led by Dries Van Agt of the CDA (Christian Democratic Appeal, formed at that time by a merger of the KVP with other denominational parties) and Hans Wiegel of the liberal VVD. This cabinet lasted from 1977 to 1981. In the period between 1977 and 1989, the turn to the left in government policy that had been initiated in the 1960s was replaced by retrenchment and a 'no-nonsense' policy. The Wassenaar Agreement of 1982 between the Dutch government, employers' organizations and the trade unions helped the three cabinets led by Ruud Lubbers (1982-1994) to pursue a policy of wage restraint. The end of the 1980s saw a return to a higher level of consensus in the formation of the governing coalition. The cooperation between left-wing and right-wing parties reached a peak in the 'purple years' (red for left-wing + blue for right-wing = purple) of the cabinets led by Wim Kok (1994-2002). The elections of 2002 brought a sudden end to this situation. CDA, which had been left out of the coalition for the first time in many years in 1994, returned to the cabinet – but at a price: it had to come to an accommodation with the populists. Thanks to the contribution of Pim Fortuyn (while alive and perhaps even more so through his dramatic death) this new political group, with views that were completely at odds with the old vision of pillarization, made enormous gains at the polls. Even though the new party known as the Pim Fortuyn List (L) went into rapid decline less than a year after its first striking success, the populists remained a force to be reckoned with, as appeared in 2010 when the VVD was only able to form a cabinet with the aid of a 'support agreement' (*gedoogakkoord*) with the populist Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*) led by Geert Wilders.

After this very brief résumé of Dutch history since the end of the Second World War, we will go back to square one and describe events, and in particular those affecting the Dutch Roman Catholic Church, at a more leisurely pace.

Liberation and Reconstruction

The destruction brought about by the Second World War and the painful feeling among the Dutch that they might have some reason to reproach themselves concerning the recent past led to rapid and radical national reconstruction after the liberation in May 1945. The period 'from May to May' [from 10 May 1940, when Germany attacked the Netherlands, to 6 May 1945 when the liberation of the country as a whole was completed] had been a sad and frustrating experience. The Netherlands

mourned a relatively large number of victims – nearly a quarter of a million in total – of whom the Jews who had been deported and murdered made up a substantial part. It goes without saying that post-War Dutch society struggled with the question of how the country could have been so ill-prepared for war, why it had been defeated so quickly, why it took so long for an effective Resistance movement to develop and – worst of all – how the deportations could have happened, even though open discussion of these topics only occurred sporadically in the first fifteen years after the Liberation. The bold front people put on when talking about the War hid a great deal of uncertainty, angst and self-recrimination.

The fate the Jews had suffered even led to a certain amount of ‘blaming the victim’. The taboos surrounding the Holocaust contributed to a temporary revival of anti-Semitic feelings – self-recrimination can play funny games. It may be said that the general rush to claim victim status by various groups within the Dutch population turned out badly for the Jews. They had been the sole target of the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis. It is hardly surprising that they pointed this out, and this was in no way an attempt to claim some kind of ‘privileged’ status. Their complaints were not well received, however. In a society where everyone still had to come to terms with the unparalleled total disruption brought about by war and most people were still full of their own victimhood, what was regarded as excessive parading of one’s unhappy lot and attempts to claim ‘exceptional’ status often led to hard feelings.⁴

The reactions of Catholics formed no exception to this rule. The excesses of anti-Semitism were recognized as such, certainly by the bishops (who had condemned all forms of right-wing extremism as early as the 1930s, had refused the sacraments to all supporters of the pro-Nazi NSB party during the War and had protested against the initial acts of deportation on 20 July 1942⁵), but the Catholic laity did not play a leading role in combating anti-Jewish prejudice. Roman Catholics had a long tradition of anti-Semitism, partly due to the fact that two offshoots of the same stem (both religions are Bible-based, and share a hope in the coming of the Messiah) tend to have more bitter feuds than people who have nothing in common. But other factors were involved too. Some Catholics regarded pacifists, democrats, Communists and Jews in much the same light in the period between the two wars. A number of young Catholics got caught up in radical right-wing movements at this time, driven by their anger about the economic ills threatening society and their antipathy towards a ‘democracy’ that could devise no solution to the problems, towards Communism with its antireligious stance, towards the compromises that their own political party (the Roman-Catholic State party – RKSP in Dutch) kept on making in order to be able to play a role within the Christian coalition and towards the Jews, whose international links were seen as ‘attacking the national community at its very roots’. According to these excited and vociferous young Catholics, many of whom were students, the only way to call a halt to this ‘modern corruption’ of society was to take the wind out of the sails of all these ‘aliens in our ranks’. They believed that the opportunism of the Catholic establishment had to make way for a radical Catholic struggle to restore the natural order of society. The most extreme supporters of this idea of a natural order – along purely Catholic lines – had no hesitation in calling themselves Fascists. They admired Mussolini, among other things because he had signed the Lateran Treaty of 1929, which had put an end to the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Italian state.

The above-mentioned Catholic circles were not the only ones to doubt whether democracy was the best way of tackling big national problems. Such views were widespread. Authoritarian parties such

as the NSB (National Socialist Movement; founded in 1931 and banned in 1945) had flourished in such conditions of uncertainty. The fascist *Zwart Front* (Black Front), founded by the ex-seminary student Arnold Meijer (1905-1965) was particularly popular among Catholics – though not popular enough to win a seat in Parliament. The anti-Semitism of the *Zwart Front*, which changed its name to National Front soon after the start of the German occupation, rivalled that of the NSB. It was not based so much on ideas of race as the German version. Judaism was regarded mainly as a ‘cultural risk’, like Marxism, Capitalism and Freemasonry. When the Germans banned the National Front in 1941 (because it represented too much competition for the NSB), its members dispersed in various directions. Some became collaborators, while others turned against the Germans and joined the Resistance.

The most rabid forms of Catholic anti-Semitism disappeared into the background after the War. Milder variants still continued to exist, however. To mention just one example⁶, *De Linie* – a Catholic weekly that propagated strong anti-Communist views – was unwise enough to allow the known anti-Semite Albert Kuyle (pseudonym for L.M.A. Kuitenbrouwer, 1904-1958) to appear in its columns under an assumed name even though he had been sentenced for aiding and abetting the enemy and had had a publication ban imposed on him as part of this punishment.

There was a general desire in the Netherlands for as complete as possible a return to normal constitutional relationships – but not without some political changes. The pre-War system of pillarization (characterized by the paradoxical fact that the political parties allowed their elites to work together, but otherwise cherished their isolation as a source of strength) was discredited. It had not found a way out of the Depression, nor had it thought up an answer to the associated ‘democratic crisis’. Since the totalitarian systems had clearly failed, people thought better of democracy after the War. It should be noted, however, that authoritarian tendencies sometimes have a long life; that proved to be the case here too.

How should the Netherlands adapt to the new times against the background of recent history? Opinions differed on this point. The Head of State Queen Wilhelmina, who had quite strong authoritarian leanings in her own way, had very decided ideas about the future. She regarded decisive action as more important than the constitutional structure or democratic purity of the post-War government. This led her to strive almost compulsively for ‘renewal’, a concept that she returned to again and again without ever defining what she meant by it. As her biographer Cees Fasseur put it, she saw renewal in the first place as a way of life, and regarded anyone who tried to analyse this idea as a sower of political discord.

The first cabinet after the War bore a royal signature. Queen Wilhelmina made prudent use of the constitutional vacuum that existed as long as no elections had been held. At her instigation, a cabinet of ‘recovery and renewal’ was formed. She couldn’t do without the old political parties altogether, so they were represented in the cabinet too, for example in the person of Willem Drees of the SDAP (Social Democratic Workers Party). Louis Beel, a Catholic who would gain the particular confidence of the House of Orange (he became prime minister twice, vice-chairman of the Council of State and for many years the provider of first aid after political accidents) was Minister of the Interior. Wilhelmina’s royal hand could be traced in the fact that the cabinet contained no fewer than five ministers who did not belong to any political party – though several joined the Dutch Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid* - PvdA) when it was formed in February 1946. Willem Schermerhorn, the Prime

Minister (the Queen's personal choice for this position), had himself been one of the leaders of the Dutch Popular Movement (*Nederlandse Volksbeweging* - NVB) that had been formed at the hostage internment camp Beekvliet in Sint-Michielsgestel during the War and that in its turn gave rise to the PvdA. Schermerhorn was a man after Wilhelmina's heart because his aim was political union on a 'personalistic' basis. The influence of personalism was short-lived, but at the time it was seen as a democratic alternative to the totalitarian ideologies (National Socialism and later especially Communism) that had afflicted the Netherlands.

The PvdA embraced personalism even before it was formally founded, moving – at least on paper – towards the new kind of politics envisaged by the Head of State. As the successor of the NVB, the PvdA had to present itself as a party where all progressive Dutch citizens would feel at home. To this end, symbols such as the red flag and the singing of the *Internationale* were banned. The new unity party was finally formed by a merger between the Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP), the Liberal Democratic Party (VDB) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The major confessional parties categorically rejected this attempt to get away from the old pillarized relationships, which had been given the name '*de doorbraak*' (the breakthrough), though they could not prevent some of their members from joining the PvdA on an individual basis. The RKSP, which had become the KVP (a very minor renovation of the pre-War party) and the bishops were convinced that there was still a task for a Catholic unity party. The number of Catholics who had joined the PvdA was however large enough to permit the formation of a substantial 'Catholic Working Community' (KWG in Dutch), a kind of separate chapter within the PvdA, which according to its statutes had the official form of a federal organization.⁷

The fact that no more Catholics had taken part in the 'breakthrough' was due to the well-thought-out strategy of the episcopate. The bishops in the south of the country, which had already been liberated before the winter of 1944-1945, had already taken steps to ensure the restoration of Catholic organizations by writing a pastoral letter in which the faithful were clearly instructed that they were under an obligation to start work on the recovery 'now and without delay'. As soon as the north of the country was liberated in May 1945, similar instructions were given to start reconstruction work there too. These pastoral letters bore fruit, largely because the bishops had come out of the War with unblemished authority thanks to their firm anti-German stance during the occupation. They might even have been able to go even further and instruct Catholics explicitly not to join the PvdA, but they decided not to do this on the basis of the recommendations of their advisor Father J. G. Stokman. This fairly progressive Franciscan priest was a great believer in Catholic political unity, but he understood the tensions that would be caused if progressive young Catholics, of whom there were many in the RKSP – as had already become clear on several occasions before the War – were not allowed to follow their natural urge to vote for a progressive party. That was the real reason why the KVP was created as a normal political party willing to enter into coalitions with other parties (called a *programpartij* in Dutch) and not a testimonial party ('*beginsepartij*') that focuses on its general principles and is unwilling to modify them in response to local or temporal issues. In line with this, it should have been open to non-Catholics, but this proved not to be feasible in practice. It was then up to Carl Romme, the chairman of the KVP parliamentary party, to reconcile the irreconcilable. He had to keep the progressives on board, avoid giving the conservatives any reason to abandon ship, and work together with the PvdA without giving his voters the idea that the PvdA was a decent enough party to be worth voting for directly. Last but not least, he also had to achieve 'Catholic political objectives'. His subtle manoeuvring allowed him to achieve these objectives reasonably well

for a number of years, but it seemed inevitable that it would end either in internal conflict or in a collision with the PvdA in the long run.

But initially the cooperation between the Catholics and the Socialists in parliament – often referred to by Dutch commentators as *rooms-rode* (Roman/red) – was reasonably harmonious. The parliamentary elections of 16 May 1946, nine years after the previous ones on 26 May 1937, were highly disappointing for the innovators in the PvdA. They had expected to win at least as many seats as the parties that had merged to form the PvdA had gained before the War, and had secretly hoped to do better than that – but the reverse was the case. The PvdA won 29 seats, as compared with a total of 31 seats (out of 100⁸) for the constituent parties before the war. The experiment of the ‘breakthrough’ – the end of the ‘antithesis between the faithful and the unbelievers’ as Abraham Kuyper (the founder of the Anti-Revolutionary Party and Prime Minister of the Netherlands from 1901 to 1905) had put it – was a failure ... at least for the moment. There was still life in the confessional parties. The pillarized structure of the Netherlands resisted the attacks of the modernizers. The result was a coalition between the KVP and the PvdA as its only members, with Louis Beel as Prime Minister. The only ‘real’ Roman/red cabinet in Dutch political history.

Demographic gains and loss of faith

The number of Catholics as a percentage of the Dutch population after the Second World War (as determined by the 1947 census) was several per cent higher than at the start of the 1930s. There was hardly anywhere in the Netherlands where an absolute growth in population was a cause for concern; however, the relatively high birth rate within the Catholic population group did worry some people. Commentators had extrapolated these statistics avidly in the 1930s. The reason for this was the competition between the various ‘pillars’ of Dutch society. The relative size of the different groups was an important aspect of this competition. Which group was the biggest – and would it stay that way? The statistics seemed to forecast that the Catholics would be in the majority by 1960. Perusal of the liberal and Protestant press from that period shows a striking amount of fairly undisguised anti-Catholic feeling in articles about the expected population trends. Many Dutch Protestants, from all sides of the political spectrum from left to right, were aghast at the prospect of Catholic advancement. The RKSP was well aware of this. Catholic politicians were torn between pride and satisfaction about the demographic prognoses and reluctance to discuss this matter in public. They were particularly keen not to arouse any fears of ultramontanist influences in the Netherlands. Just as the explanatory notes to the new RKSP manifesto of 1936 did their best to make it clear that a Catholic party was only inspired by the Catholic faith of its members, and did not aim to incorporate some kind of ‘political Catholicism’⁹, the leaders of the party were careful not to express any triumphalism whenever population data were discussed. This kind of ‘cowardice’, a symptom of what L. J. Rogier called ‘capitulation to the camouflaged dictatorship of one strong man’ (Colijn), was one of the factors driving the above-mentioned radical young Catholics out of the RKSP into the arms of right-wing movements.¹⁰

The post-War statistics were in fact such as to calm Protestant fears – at least if one took the trouble to look beyond the birth figures and the results of the 1947 census. The number of Catholics would have been much larger if part of the demographic gains had not been wiped out by secularization,¹¹ which was especially marked in the big cities. There were a number of reasons for this. One was the fact that many Catholics who moved in search of work from the south of the country (where

Catholicism was the dominant religion) to the predominantly Protestant north were unable, or did not wish, to maintain their Catholic identity in their new environment. The number of people who were lost to the Catholic Church in this way may be estimated at between one and two hundred thousand. The imprecision is due to the lack of accurate data. It makes a lot of difference whether someone who calls him- or herself Catholic is accepted as such or whether one adopts stricter criteria such as attending church services (and taking Communion) at Easter as the Church requires, and going to Confession.¹² In general, the post-War drift away from the church was greater among Catholics than among Protestants. The opposite trend had been observed before the War. One fairly definite piece of evidence for this loss of faith was the drop in the number of people who felt the call to train as a priest or to enter the monastic life. A number of religious orders and congregations suffered so much from this trend that some monasteries or convents had to be closed, and it gradually became difficult to recruit enough priests to carry out the pastoral duties of the Church.

The secularization was accompanied by a weakening of the status of the clergy. The hierarchic structure of the church, perceived as authoritarian by some, began to feel restrictive – even for loyal Catholics. The faith and the rituals through which it was experienced became increasingly democratized. Tasks that used to be the exclusive province of the clergy were now gradually being taken over by the laity. Priestly and ecclesiastic authority became less relevant in these fields. Laypersons could be ‘experts’ too. It should be remembered in this connection that many Dutch priests had not received an academic training – and neither had the majority of their teachers in the seminaries. Laypersons quickly began to be better educated than the clergy. The founding of the Catholic University of Nijmegen in 1923¹³ and the Roman Catholic Business School at Tilburg in 1927¹⁴ made a significant contribution to this process. The various forms of professionalization contributed by the vanguard of Catholic laity sometimes overshadowed what used to be the decisive ‘professionalism’ of the clergy. J.M.G. Thurlings describes this development in *De wankele zuil* (The unsteady pillar), a study in which he suggests on the basis of ample evidence that the crisis in the Catholic Church was due mainly to internal causes and less to external influences. It manifested itself as a revolution within the ‘hierarchy of prestige’.¹⁵

In his study *Andere katholieken* (Other Catholics), Paul Luykx described various situations where Catholic laypersons felt strong enough (in other words, had acquired enough prestige) to refuse to let the Church lay down the law to them any more as far as their position in society was concerned. Of the detailed examples he gives, that concerning Rotary, an international organization of service clubs founded in 1905, is one of the most interesting. Catholics were advised not to join Rotary in 1929. While Rome waited until 1951 to make this prohibition official, the Dutch bishops did so as early as 1930. The issue was most pressing in the Catholic south of the Netherlands – the part of the country where it was most likely that business and professional leaders (the class from which Rotary clubs drew their members) would also be Catholic. And it was here (in Maastricht, to be precise) that a number of people who had been affected by this prohibition refused to comply. The Catholic employers’ association AKWV and the *St. Adelbertvereniging* (an association of Catholic intellectuals) made a case for the prohibition on Rotary membership to be lifted. The aspirant members of Rotary put forward all kinds of arguments, even one with a hint of missionary zeal (which may not have been intended to be taken entirely seriously): would it not be wonderful if Catholic members of Rotary, operating from within the organization, were able to cultivate a better understanding of their religious beliefs? After a prolonged debate, the protagonists of Rotary membership got their way in 1955. As long as it could be guaranteed that the person in question was firmly enough grounded in

his Catholic faith to be able to hold his own in that liberal environment, an exemption to the ban was possible. This dispensation was almost automatic for someone who was well off or in some other way had an established position in society. But what the modernizers really wanted was to have the ban lifted completely. This took some time, since the Church authorities were worried that if that were done, questions might be raised about the validity of the prohibition contained in the bishops' letter of 1954. If everyone was allowed to join a Rotary club, what was to stop them from joining the trade union federation NVV (then still regarded by the Catholic establishment as a hotbed of Socialism)? The bishops finally stated in the second half of the 1960s that they no longer considered it necessary to apply for an exemption. This came down to lifting the ban completely.¹⁶ This story shows how the emancipation of the Catholic laity could proceed independently of issues relating to religious faith or crises within the Church, allowing laypersons to deal with the Church authorities on a more equal footing. They no longer isolated themselves from wider society, no matter what the bishops thought on this issue.¹⁷

It should be noted that these developments were well under way before the big revolution of the 1960s. Anyone who is prepared to take an unprejudiced look at the facts can see that the grisly tales of domination of Dutch Catholics from Rome were vastly exaggerated, even shortly after the end of the War; one important factor here was that the Catholic clergy themselves were clearly tending to want to make the members of their congregations more independent and better able to stand up for themselves in society. A large part of the outside world tended to see things from a different perspective, however, focusing on the power of the KVP and the political interventions of the bishops. A pastoral letter from the synod of the Reformed Church in 1950 continued to paint the old picture of the Catholics as faithful ultramontanists, with the Vatican in the same role as that played by the Kremlin in the Communist world. According to the synod, Rome tried to bring every aspect of Catholics' life under the tutelage of the Church, or 'where that is not possible, to create its own state-within-the-state'. It must be admitted that if the synod's vision was based on a misunderstanding, this was a perfectly comprehensible misunderstanding. In that same year, Pope Pius XII did all he could to confirm the picture of a church that wanted to conquer the world, with an encyclical like *Humani generis* (a forceful rejection of a number of elements of Protestant doctrine, among other things) and the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven, body and soul.

There was not much the Dutch episcopate could do to correct this image. Cardinal De Jong, who had grown up and who worked in what was generally called a Protestant country, was well aware of Protestant sensitivities and had tried all his life to take them into account. He had also warned his ecclesiastical province to do all they could to avoid hurting Protestant feelings. The strong words from Rome undermined all his efforts. The rest of the Netherlands continued to regard the Vatican as the Catholic Church, and *vice versa*. Professors from the Catholic University of Nijmegen, the Centre for Political Education (*Centrum voor Staatkundige Vorming* – CSV – the academic department of the Catholic People's party (KVP)) and many other individuals and organizations protested against this caricature of the Catholic Church propagated by the synod, but in vain. L. J. Rogier, one of the professors from Nijmegen who got involved in the debate, wrote later in his book *Katholieke herleving* (Catholic revival): 'Endless facts, figures and statistics could be cited on this topic. It is possible to conclude on this basis that Rome had launched an imperialist offensive, but all that really appears from these graphs and tables is simply the Catholic revival. No Dutch Catholic, or even Dutch bishop, has ever received an order from Rome compelling him to do the things that were done. The

Catholics had to battle to achieve all they did, and battle is never possible without building up a power base.¹⁸

Morality

There can be no doubt that the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church were particularly influential in the wide field of morals. Why this should be so is a fascinating question; it would take us far beyond the scope of this essay to try to provide an answer. One thing that is clear, however, is that these all teachings were permeated by a hesitancy to deal with the issue of sexuality. It has often been suggested that the reason for this taboo on anything related to eroticism is the obligation on all dignitaries of the Church to lead a celibate life. Any discussion of this topic would be a minefield. The sin of lust was close to many – after all, even prophets have to eat bread. There was a void for which no language existed between not talking about this topic at all and devoting weighty tomes full of strict moral-theology arguments to it. Besides, the Church was still man's world, with theoretical but no practical experience of sexuality. This circumstance created its own taboos, of which intimate relationships between men was by far the greatest. The Church's furtive approach to this topic, describing the practice in terms that were as veiled as possible while using learned phraseology to explain and dictate the theory, is probably the most striking aspect of this chapter of Catholic moral theology.

There is a connection between this observation and the issue of sexual abuse within the walls of Catholic schools, which will be addressed in somewhat greater detail below. A passage from a study by the American John T. McGreevy relating to the facts discovered in his own country may illustrate this:

'Only a small fraction of the sexual abuse cases involved true paedophiles, or men specifically attracted to small children. [...] More typically, the cases made public over the past decade involved priests abusing teenage boys. [...] The existence of homosexual priests (celibate or not) was hardly news, but homosexual priests as late as the 1940's might not have used the term, since they worked in a society (and certainly a church) where sexual orientation was not consciously perceived as central to personal identity. The gay awakening of the late 1960s and 1970s created a different climate. One result was a gay clerical subculture, as many priests and seminarians began to understand their own identity in the sexual vernacular of the larger society.'¹⁹

The Church created a serious problem by its unwillingness to discuss such phenomena as homosexuality completely openly or to give them any place at all within its own culture. Not homosexuality as such touches the core of a number of issues painfully confronting the Church, but the yawning gap between the real life of homosexuals who have chosen to serve God and the Church and the doctrine that prescribes to them how they should be. The sexual liberation of the 1960s and 1970s was bound to penetrate the Church sooner or later. Unfortunately, the culture of silence, repression and denial that prevailed there meant that this had to lead to great tensions.

It is true that the views of the Dutch Catholic Church about sexual matters were long broadly in line with those of society as a whole, apart from a few left-wing non-denominational circles. There was wide support for the 'fight against immorality', which opposed birth control among other things. It is perhaps almost inconceivable nowadays, but then 'neo-Malthusianism' aroused just as much hostility in the Netherlands as abortion and prostitution. As late as 1929, the New Malthusian League

(*New-Malthusiaanse Bond* - NMB) failed to win government approval. Apart from the question of whether the objectives of the association (the provision of information about means of contraception) were morally and legally acceptable, the minister of Justice J. Donner considered that 'in any case the activities of an association of this kind [...] constitute a risk to public order and morals'. Non-recognition did not mean that these activities were absolutely prohibited, but they had to be performed under the cover of other organizations such as health centres.

The Dutch Society for Sexual Reform (*Nederlandse Vereniging voor Sexuele Hervorming* – NVSH), a direct successor of the NMB, was founded in May 1946. There was still a lot of opposition to its aims, but the objections were not so extreme among Protestants. The NVSH, with its 'naturalistic' views about morals (apparently including the idea that sexual desire could be regarded as the greatest good), was still the object of suspicion in Protestant circles; nevertheless, the Reformed Church gradually began to accept 'eroticism' as an essential element in a normal marriage. Protestants rejected the idea that sexual intercourse was only permissible with the objective of procreation. By the 1950s, a majority in these circles believed that sexual activity between responsible adults was normal. The same applied increasingly to contraception: if the one was not reprehensible, neither was the other. Moreover, it was 'not difficult to conceive of situations where a smaller family was in line with God's will'. All in all, a wide and deep gulf came to exist between the Protestant churches and the Catholics. The fact that voices were raised in the Catholic community in favour of strengthening the laws aimed at safeguarding public morals made it easier for Protestant denominations to adopt a more flexible stance, on the basis of the argument that any reasonable person would want to avoid such a rigid attitude.

A report from the CSV (the KVP's Political Education Centre) on Government and Public Morals from 1950 clearly reiterated the message that Catholic morals reject contraception as unnatural, and listed the economic arguments against it too. A people that put neo-Malthusianism into practice will undermine the will to work, frugality and spirit of entrepreneurship.²⁰ Similar arguments applied, *mutatis mutandis* to mixed swimming (an example of 'contact between the sexes that without the slightest doubt is a direct occasion for sin'), mixed camping and dancing. The pastoral letter of 1954 further stated that consultation of a clinic linked to the NVSH was 'not allowed', since the NVSH represented 'a direct attack on our moral teachings about sexual relations and marriage'.

Homosexuality – at any rate, giving in to this proclivity in any way – was regarded as an even greater evil. The four-year prison sentence that an adult could be given for committing this indecent act with a minor of the same sex – only males were considered in this connection; homosexual acts between women were unthinkable – was insufficient punishment. The CSV report had the following to say about homosexual acts between adults: 'even though it may be true in certain cases that a person is only attracted to persons of the same sex, a right to homosexual intercourse [...] [can] never be granted'.²¹

A long list could be given of statements by church authorities or authorities related to the church on the subject of all kinds of temptations in the field of sexuality. Such statements, which now seem to have come from another planet and a time that lies many centuries in the past, sound shocking or ridiculous to us today. In order to avoid anachronistic distortion, it is sufficient to note that these statements must have been made in good faith, but have demonstrably led to many different kinds of upset and struggles of conscience. The Church seemed to want to interfere with the details of

people's lives, creating a parallel universe in which other laws applied than those governing the ordinary world. The Church demanded the impossible. It could have been predicted that the Church's attempts to negate the sexual autonomy of the individual would lead to a moral battlefield full of denial, lies, sanctimoniousness, shame, feelings of guilt, loss of self-worth and above all unbridled improvisation in the hope of gaining a blessing against all odds.

The only solution the Church offered to those who wanted to limit the number of children they had was periodic abstinence. This demanded a certain degree of practical discipline, but that was not the real problem. Even periodic abstinence involved a moral choice, and those who practiced it assumed a heavy responsibility. Moreover, it often didn't work and then the woman got pregnant anyway. As a result, the method has 'certainly also contributed to the maintenance and even reinforcement of an unnatural, legalistic and moralizing Catholicism,' as Jan Roes put it.²² Women in particular were the victims. They felt humiliated, reduced to instruments of church policy. Roes regards their frustrations as one of the causes of the subsequent revolutions within the Church. Anger and bitterness often made it difficult for these mothers to bring their children up as good Catholics, as they were supposed to.

The Church was capricious too. The Terruwe affair is a good example of the twists and turns it could make in dealing with issues of moral theology in the field of sexuality. Anna Terruwe²³ was a Catholic psychiatrist; when she started her practice, she was the only female psychiatrist in the Netherlands. She came into serious conflict with the Catholic Church in the 1950s, especially with the conservative forces within the Church that were in a strong position due to support from Rome in the final years of Pius XII's reign. As described by Rogier,²⁴ Rome stretched out its hand in judgment over the Netherlands in response to the declining popularity of the Pope there. Pius's conservative supporters had complained to the papal nuncio in The Hague about the degeneration of the ecclesiastical province. This led to an official 'visitation', which seems to have collected enough evidence to justify a series of 'remedial measures' in the establishments training young men for the priesthood.

Terruwe, who had spent a short period in a convent (the Capuchin Poor Clares in Duivendrecht) before the War and who remained 'a monastic in the world' after leaving the order, came under attack because as a psychiatrist she tried to reach a compromise between Freud's teaching on psychotherapy and the views of the Church.²⁵ According to the Church, neuroses were a question of (sexual) morals: the believer had strayed from the true path and could cure himself by prayer and by strict adherence to the rules of the Catholic Church. In Freud's opinion, however, abnormal behaviour in sexual or other fields was the result of a lack of freedom. Health and freedom went hand in hand. Giving a person more freedom of choice would promote his healing, and the cure would in its turn promote 'normal' behaviour. Because Terruwe also included monastics and priests among her patients, the ecclesiastical authorities kept an eagle eye on her publications and clinical practice.

The views of Terruwe, which were distorted and simplified by the Church to 'don't let others impose constraints on you, follow your natural urges more', initially met no more than strong criticism but not yet a ban on their expression. In 1956, however, she was officially called to account. She and W.J.A.J. (Willem) Duynstee were forbidden to have any contact with one another. (Duynstee was a Redemptorist and professor of Criminal Law at the Catholic Nijmegen, who had devoted much of his free time alongside his academic work to pastoral work among clergy with emotional problems. He

had inspired and supported Terruwe's work, and the two had built up a close working relationship.) Members of the clergy were no longer allowed to consult her. Duynstee was 'exiled' to Rome, where he remained under supervision, while Terruwe's reputation as a psychiatrist was damaged. Fortunately, this was not the end of the story. Duynstee and Terruwe were rehabilitated in the 1960s through the initiative of Cardinal Alfrink, and Terruwe was granted a personal audience with Pope Paul VI as a sign that she was no longer out of favour. The fact that she had markedly conservative views on birth control and the moral aspects of marriage certainly helped in this connection. When she died in 2004, Bishop A. L. M. Hurkmans of 's-Hertogenbosch celebrated the funeral mass. On that occasion, *Trouw* (a Dutch daily with a largely Christian readership) described her as 'a candidate for sainthood, unconditionally loyal to her Church, from which she had deserved much better'.²⁶

The Catholic Church was not particularly open to science – especially not the kind of science that 'dares to examine holy cows'. It is however prepared to accept scientists whose views are in line with Church doctrine – or do not necessarily conflict with such doctrine – and certainly scientists who actually help the Church to perform its task on earth. The example of Anna Terruwe, a woman who after having been rejected because of her 'heretical' views was actually found to embody an acceptable compromise, is very revealing in this context. Various Catholic scientists managed to overcome the suspicion of the Church either by their close adherence to the tenets of the faith or by exhibiting such a high level of academic excellence that their position was unassailable, even though their views did differ somewhat from Church teachings. The psychologist F.J.J. Buytendijk (1887-1974) was a good example of the latter category. Together with pupils like C.J. Trimbos, he managed to perform scientific studies of the most sensitive areas of Catholic ethics and to report his results without being brutally called to order. The Catholic community was able to learn about modern views on mental health and the treatment of abnormal behaviour (including sexual aberrations) 'under the protection of his authority'. The strongest criticism of Buytendijk's ideas came not so much from the Church as from members of the Catholic Medical Association (*Katholieke Artsenvereniging*), whose adherence to classical doctrines caused them to lag 'a decade behind' psychologists in such fields as birth control.²⁷

As far as contraception is concerned, it must be said that the Roman Catholic Church has not yet adapted its teachings in such a way as to bring it into line with what is regarded in the Netherlands as 'acceptable' – let alone 'normal' – practice ... even among Catholics. The encyclical *Humanae vitae* of 1968 slammed the door tentatively left ajar in the Netherlands by Bishop W.M. Bekkers of 's-Hertogenbosch in March 1963, when he said during a talk on the TV that married couples were the only people could decide how large their family should be. ('This is a matter of conscience that is up to them alone and in which no one else may interfere. Members of the clergy, doctors or anyone else who is consulted must leave them as free as possible to decide this matter on the basis of their own conscience.') Dutch Catholics do not seem to have paid much attention to this diktat from Rome, in view of the fact that there has long been no significant difference between the fertility of Catholic married couples and the national average.

This section on ethical standards would not be complete without some mention of the sexual abuse scandals that were widely reported a decade or so ago. This crisis, which has shaken the Church on its foundations, erupted shortly after the turn of the century. It started in the United States, where stories about sexual abuse of pupils in Catholic day schools and boarding schools had been appearing in the press since 1985. It seems that damages had been paid to victims in Louisiana, Texas, New

Mexico and Illinois. Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago was personally accused of abuse by a former seminarian in 1993. When the latter withdrew his charge some time later, the uproar relating to this topic calmed down for a while.

An even worse storm broke out in 2002, however. It was announced in January of that year that a large number of cases of sexual abuse had occurred in the Archdiocese of Boston, and it soon became apparent that similar events had taken place throughout the United States. All kinds of clergy, both secular and religious, had abused pupils entrusted to their care (sometimes young children, more often adolescents; real paedophiles formed a small minority among the offenders). The scandal escalated to enormous proportions within a few months. Hundreds of priests were relieved of their duties under the pressure of the press and public opinion. The Church was taken to court and heavy damages were claimed. Three bishops resigned, a number of priests who had been accused of abuse committed suicide and one offender was murdered by his victim.

The scope of these practices – which were incorrectly represented in the media as a purely Catholic affair – shocked the outside world. What attracted public attention even more than the abuse itself was the way the Church appeared to be responding to it. Misdeeds were covered up, for fear of damaging the image of the Church and from a distorted kind of prudishness. Most offenders were given a second or even a third chance without receiving effective treatment and/or punishment, and without having to give full details of what had been going on. In most cases, all that was done was to give them a severe reprimand, move them on to another position and relieve them of duties that would have brought them into contact with potential victims. Only in exceptional cases were the cases reported to the legal authorities.²⁸

As news of these events in America spread around the world, questions were raised about whether similar things had happened elsewhere. The moral crisis in Ireland, Germany, Belgium and Austria assumed alarming proportions. Dutch bishops were also called to account, partly because of the increasing numbers of victims who came forward. This introductory essay will not deal with the further course of these discussions.

Rome was also put in a very embarrassing situation. The Catholic Church was revealed as a house within whose walls things had happened that should never have been allowed to occur, and where the firm measures that should have been taken in response by those with an organizational, legal and moral duty to do so had been lacking. This was a double blow to the moral authority of the Church, since this was the body that had been preaching the highest moral standards for centuries. Some reactions from within the highest levels of the Catholic Church expressed deep regret for what had taken place and sincere sympathy with the victims, but others – for example that of Capuchin priest Raniero Cantalamessa, a member of the Pope's inner circle, who compared the 'vilification campaign' against the Church to anti-Semitism – were like pouring oil on a fire. Be that as it may, despite all the well-intended denunciations of the misdeeds that have been committed, the worldwide Church has not yet shown any sign of seeing the need for fundamental self-examination.

Monastic life

Any discussion of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church must make a distinction between the ecclesiastical province of the Netherlands, which is governed by the episcopate with the Archbishop of Utrecht as its head, and the 'provinces' – the terminology varies somewhat – of monastic orders

and congregations that are in principle separate from the above-mentioned ecclesiastical province. The latter may, but need not, coincide with the geographical territory of the Netherlands. Nationally, each such province is headed by a provincial, while the international leadership is usually provided by a Superior General – who is often, but not always, located in Rome. The monastic orders and congregations are subject to the general authority of the Church, but they do not answer to the bishop of the diocese where they are located and they have a fair degree of freedom in giving shape to their own spirituality and devotion. The name given to members of such provinces vary. Those belonging to a monastic order are usually called monks or nuns, though the generic term ‘monastics’ is also used, while those not belonging to an order are often referred to as secular clergy.

The fact that bishops only have a limited degree of formal authority over monastics, monasteries and nunneries, convents and fraternities does not preclude effective consultation or even a certain extent of crossing from one hierarchy to the other. For example Ad van Luyn, Bishop of Rotterdam (until 2 July 2011, when he retired and was succeeded by Hans van den Hende) is a Salesian.²⁹ The gap between religious and secular clergy is not difficult to bridge in practice. Bishops only have no authority over members of religious orders if the latter are not involved in pastoral care – which occurs quite regularly. Any activities at parish level do fall under the responsibility of the diocese.

Until the 1960s, Dutch priests received their training in minor seminaries (*kleinseminaries*) at secondary-school level and major seminaries (*grootseminaries*) where they were given their philosophical and theological education; these establishments were certainly to be found in all large Dutch dioceses. Monastic orders and congregations tended to have their own ‘filosoficum’ and ‘theologicum’, depending on how large they were and on the financial resources they had at their disposition; they would in any case want to keep the philosophical education in their own hands, as this was the way they passed on the spirituality characterizing their own denomination to the novices. It became clear in the course of the 1960s, however, that this fragmentation of educational resources was no longer financially viable or desirable. The number of vocations to the priesthood fell, partly because potential candidates were put off by the introvert, unworldly atmosphere of the training establishments. This realization led to a large-scale clean-up of the whole system, after which the academic training of priests was concentrated in the theological faculty of the Catholic University of Nijmegen and the *hogescholen* (universities of applied science) in Utrecht, Heerlen, Tilburg and Amsterdam. It was not uncommon at this time for priests to renounce their vocation and get married. As a result, some of the educational establishments training young men for the priesthood had ex-priests among their teaching staff. Bishop Gijzen of Roermond regarded this situation as such a disgrace that not long after his controversial installation in 1972 (discussed in greater detail below) he set up his own seminary in Rolduc. It was his intention to upgrade the institution in due course to a major seminary, so that all stages of the training of the priests-in-spe would be under one roof and under his supervision. Gijzen’s unilateral action was an affront to his fellow bishops, who had only completed the difficult restructuring of the system for the training of priest a few years before. As it happened, even Rolduc was unable to keep the real world outside its doors. It was involved in a scandal when the news leaked out of ‘affective relationships’ between students and even between a student and a teacher. On the other hand, this type of seminary has become the general model for the training of priests in the Netherlands.³⁰ Nijmegen and the *hogescholen* delivered too few priests – at most a limited number of ‘Catholic theologians’. The solution was sought in the form of small communities in which all facilities for the training of priests was concentrated.

In fact, joining a monastic order or a congregation was always to a certain extent a leap in the dark. No one knew in advance whether he or she was really suited for this kind of life, which made high demands on one's stability of character and personal faith. The choice had to be made at a phase in one's life when nothing was certain. The intellectual, political, social and sexual identity of the young people concerned was not yet determined, or in any case not yet fully formed. It was very difficult to know whether they really had a vocation for the priesthood. The only way to find out was to take the plunge. Once the vows had been taken, the only way out was to renounce the vows, leave everything behind and start a new life. It is hardly surprising that things sometimes went wrong, leaving the person concerned in mental and spiritual turmoil. This was especially true of the 1960s, when events in the outside world also had an impact on closed communities (where people also watched television from time to time) and the intrusive 'spirit of the 1960s' sometimes conflicted totally with the ideas on which the decision to opt for a monastic life had been based. In response to these conditions, the Central Advice Bureau for Priests and members of Religious Orders (*Centraal Adviesbureau voor Priesters en Religieuzen* - CAPER) was set up in 1967. This body offered advice and support to all who requested it. It was prepared to tackle any moral or spiritual conflict, but the help provided to ex-priests could also be very practical. While engaged in this 'healing, supportive, guiding and atoning' task, CAPER sometimes found itself obliged to depart somewhat from the official line on 'affective relationships' between the persons concerned. Both within religious communities and outside them, all kinds of homosexual and heterosexual relations that conflicted with the vow of chastity were found to occur. It was impossible to close one's eyes to them.

As soon as Bishop Gijzen of Roermond realized what kind of organization CAPER – which was partly funded by his diocese – had turned into, he cut off all financial support for it.³¹ We may close this section with the remark that while members of Dutch religious orders were often on the right wing of the church before the 1970s, this was no longer the case later. The demoralizing effects of the counter-revolution in the Dutch ecclesiastical province were buffered by religious spirituality and idealism.

Dutch politics in the 1940s and 1950s

While the KVP and the PvdA worked in relative harmony on the reconstruction of the country after the devastations of war and the preparations for – and sometimes implementation of – social legislation, the 'Indonesian question' gave rise to cracks in the coalition. After a period in which agreement seemed to have been reached with Sukarno's nationalists in Yogyakarta, the Dutch government finally decided to try to reach a solution by means of force in July 1947. Operation Product (a name intended to underline the aim of bringing about a resumption of normal production and trade) was called a 'police action', but by any reasonable standard it was a colonial war. Many left-wing members of the PvdA were horrified by the events that took place during 'Product'. Some members of the KVP, on the other hand, were strongly in favour of military intervention. They believed that Dutch politics had become much too Socialist, and tried to get their party leadership to widen the cabinet and to turn the coalition from 'centre-left' to 'centre' or preferably 'centre-right'.

The KVP thus struggled – as sketched above towards the end of the section entitled 'Liberation and Reconstruction' – with the fact that as a people's party that they had to keep not only their working-class members but also the relatively small numbers of upper-class Catholics in the party happy. The situation was further complicated by the fundamental uncertainty of a party that felt it still had to

prove itself as part of the national Dutch establishment. It was perhaps too well aware of the virulent distrust of the Catholic section of the population, which had only been able to make full use of the power of its numbers after the break with Colijn in 1939 (putting an end to six years of cooperation between the ARP and the KVP that enabled Colijn to head five successive cabinets, and paving the way for the post-War cooperation with the PvdA) and thus still counted to a certain extent as a political newcomer. As a result, the KVP felt the need to deploy a policy that demonstrated that the Dutch constitution was really safe in its hands. The KVP therefore manoeuvred, almost against its better judgment, to acquire some key positions in dealing with the Indonesian question, such as the High Representative of the Crown (Louis Beel) and the minister for Overseas Territories (E.M.J.A. Sassen, followed by J.H. van Maarseveen).

Romme continued to prefer to work together with the PvdA for the moment, because this guaranteed a moderate progressive social and economic policy. The cabinet could not be allowed to veer too far to the left, however, as that would cause the Catholic employers to rebel. The difficulty of keeping the Catholic elite in line was illustrated by the course of the 1948 elections. A small new right-wing party (known provisionally as the Welter List) led by Charles Welter, who had been minister of Colonial Affairs for the old Roman Catholic State Party, campaigned against the cabinet's lack of an aggressive policy on Indonesia and gained just one seat at that time.

The 1948 elections had been made necessary by the changes in the constitution brought about by the developments in the Dutch East Indies. During the formation of the new cabinet, KVP party leader Romme showed that he had heard the message of his right-wing adherents ('you'd better listen to what we say, or we'll ensure that Welter gets more seats'), by deciding that the KVP would no longer govern with the aid of the PvdA alone, but would broaden the base of the cabinet by adding ministers from the liberal *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (VVD) and the Christian Historical Union (CHU). (The VVD would be replaced by the ARP in subsequent cabinets, after 1952). The country did get a social-democrat Prime Minister, however. Willem Drees would remain in this position for ten years, and would go down in history as the father of the Dutch welfare state thanks to his ministerial performance in the period from 1946 to 1958. This title is not undeserved, as the Emergency Retirement Provision (*Noodwet Ouderdomsvoorziening*) – known colloquially as the *noodwet-Drees* (Drees's emergency legislation) – which he introduced and which started its passage through the House in November 1946, represented a breakthrough in thinking about social welfare. It was replaced in 1957 by the General Old Age Pensions Act (*Algemene Ouderdomswet* – AOW), which still forms the basis for the Dutch old age pension system today.

The father of the welfare state did not manage to be the father of a peaceful separation of Indonesia from the Netherlands, however. This was beyond the power of the coalition. The above-mentioned Welter List became a real political party, the Catholic National Party (KNP), in December 1948. In itself a fairly insignificant event, perhaps, but it illustrates the fact that the room for manoeuvre the KVP had as the party of government, and the scope for bringing the Indonesia question to a satisfactory conclusion, were limited. Even with a social democrat at the helm, The Hague found itself obliged to have recourse to military force again. The second 'police action' (Operation Crow, December 1948 to January 1949) did lead to a forced resolution of the conflict – but not the one that had been intended. Since Sukarno's army (Tentara Nasional Indonesia - TNI) had helped to suppress a Communist rebellion against the Republican government in Madiun, Central Java, in 1948, the United States regarded him as an acceptable leader of an independent Indonesia. The Netherlands could

argue as loudly as it wanted that Sukarno was a Communist himself, America had made its mind up and forced Drees and his followers to accept the *fait accompli*.

Which political party was the strongest in the Netherlands at this time, Romme's KVP or the PvdA? It was hard to say. The broadening of the base of the cabinet that Romme had demanded in 1948 had been intended to prevent the PvdA from dominating cabinet policy. His primary aim, however, was to ensure unity in the ranks of his own party. But in the long run his balancing acts were having hardly any effect. The transformation of the Welter List into a real party, the KNP, after the 1948 elections was a clear sign that Welter's hunger for increased influence on Catholic politics had not yet been sated. In 1952 the KNP won a second seat in the *Tweede Kamer* (the second chamber of the Dutch Parliament), while at the same time an increasing number of Catholics voted for the PvdA in the local and provincial elections. Confronted with a loss of voters on both the left and the right wing, Romme felt that he had no option but to call in the help of the bishops as an emergency measure.

The background of the pastoral letter of 1 May 1954 will not be discussed in detail here. The primary initiative came from the most conservative of all Dutch dioceses, that of Roermond. It was forced through against the will of a minority of the bishops, including Bernardus (later Cardinal) Alfrink who was Bishop Coadjutor of Utrecht in 1954 but actually ran the archdiocese himself due to the illness of the incumbent, Archbishop De Jong.³² It goes without saying that the protagonists of the hard line knew that they were taking a risk. As a precautionary measure, they tried to persuade a number of prominent Catholic members of the PvdA to leave the party before disciplinary measures resulting from the pastoral letter could be taken against them. 'If you continue along these paths, you will have done the Church irreparable damage in thirty years,' Bishop Coadjutor A. Hanssen of Roermond said to Sjeng Tans (subsequently chairman of the PvdA) in October 1953, to warn him of the kind of reaction he could expect.³³ Tans remained unruffled by the rebuke, and continued to promote inter-party dialogue and deconfessionalization for decades.

The pastoral letter stated categorically that Catholics were not allowed to be members of the Socialist trade union (NVV), to attend Socialist meetings, to read Socialist newspapers or periodicals or to listen to programmes from the left-wing VARA broadcasting association.³⁴ The bishops called Socialism and Humanism serious 'threats'. They did not dare to prohibit membership of the PvdA, but they did 'strongly discourage' it. The bishops showed that, as always, they were willing to do their best to promote Catholic unity. They had already issued a loud, clear appeal for unity in 1953, a year before the pastoral letter was sent out, during the celebration of the centenary of the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in the Netherlands. 'What we have achieved in the past, in particular in the field of public life, is due to our unity in our relations with those outside the Church,' said Cardinal De Jong³⁵ in a speech that he made a couple of years before the end of his life. He realized that this unity would come under increasing pressure as the emancipation of the Catholics progressed, putting all their gains at risk. 'Our own Catholic organizations throughout the public sector have enabled and promoted our emancipation in the past, and they will be just as necessary and important [...] in the future – not just for the flourishing of religious life among us Catholics, but also to make a positive contribution [...] to the building of a Christian society in the Netherlands. Therefore, beloved members of my flock in the Netherlands, be one and remain one.'³⁶

Large parts of Dutch society were highly critical in 1954 of this appeal, which they saw as an attack on the separation of church and state. The Catholic voters, to whom the appeal was primarily addressed, were only marginally convinced. As far as may be concluded from the election results, the pastoral letter did little or nothing to make the PvdA any less attractive to working-class Catholics. The members of the KNP, who were more responsive to the authority of the Church, decided to disband their party and return to the bosom of the KVP. The whole affair did however have a disastrous effect on relations within the Roman-red coalition. Anti-Catholic feeling in the Netherlands was boosted by this manifestation of 'Catholic politics', and the relations between the PvdA and the KVP would never be the same again. But ironically enough – in view of the predominantly hard line taken by the bishops – the relationship between Rome and the Dutch ecclesiastical province also suffered. The Vatican was not unaware of the division within the ranks of the Dutch episcopate, and was encouraged by these events to resume a mode of operation that had long been relegated to the background: the winning of information not only via the formal communication channels passing via the nunciature and the episcopate but also by listening to what informal sources such as individuals and lobby groups had to say on a wide variety of topics. The fruits of this approach would have deeply disturbing effects in the 1970s and 1980s; in the 1950s and 1960s, they were mainly responsible for an increasing amount of annoying noise on the communication line. The reorganization of the ecclesiastical province in 1956, including the (re)creation of the dioceses of Groningen and Rotterdam, was one project in which the Vatican failed to listen to the objections of Bishops Alfrink and J. P. Huibers (not to mention Cardinal De Jong, who died a few days after hearing the news ... some say because of it). Fed by increasing scepticism about affairs in the Netherlands, they were very selective in their choice of the signals they listened to from this source.³⁷

The post-War reconstruction period – in which the loss of the Dutch East Indies, against all expectations, merely represented a minor episode – was later, as indicated above, mainly characterized by with lack of imagination, materialism and incredibly high anti-Communist feeling. The row about the bishops' letter in 1954 is indicative of the kind of feelings aroused. These were also eventful times beyond the field of party politics and the divisions between democracy and Communism. The challenges to be faced were enormous, almost epic in scope. Relinquishing neutrality, integrating in Europe and joining NATO (in 1949) demanded far-reaching changes. The Netherlands was becoming a modern country in a very short time. Alongside the above-mentioned big reforms such as the building of a complete social welfare system, employer-employee relations were radically changed and the whole of Dutch business life was reorganized. It is true that the 1950 Business Organization Act (*Wet op de Bedrijfsorganisatie*) did not have the effect expected at the time, but the Social-Economic Council (SER) has played a significant role. It was intended to head a corporatist sectoral business organization under public law (*Publiekrechtelijke Bedrijfsorganisatie – PBO*), which has only very partially been implemented. It does however provide a platform for consultation between employers, employees and neutral members of the SER appointed by the Crown on a wide range of social and economic issues. Since the SER was founded on 21 July 1950 as the 'institutional face of organized business life' in the Netherlands, it has grown into by far the most important advisory body of the Dutch government. This success was to quite a large extent a success for the Catholics too, since they in particular had been advocating the implementation of a democratic form of corporatism since the 1930s.

The 1960s: from the fall of Cals to the rise of Den Uyl; the deconfessionalization issue

While as indicated above the 1940s and 1950s were definitely not uneventful, the 1960s saw the start of really major changes. A new generation of young people took the scene who – to mention just one example – were much less worried about the anti-democratic reputation of Communism. It was time, they thought, to take a sensible attitude to the Cold War and get out of the trenches. It did not take long for this no-nonsense attitude to change into a lack of understanding for the anti-Communist past and a tendency to ridicule it. The youth saw the Cold War as a conflict that was past its 'sell by' date. Older people continued to see it as an as yet undecided struggle between progress and regression, freedom and bondage. This was one of the main causes of the generation gap that has been held to be so characteristic of this period.

The essence of the 1960s was the fact that new insights about democracy, authority, morals, style and culture won the day. The generation gap was bridged by unilateral concessions from the older generation. How did this rapid social acceptance of the spirit of the 1960s come about so quickly and easily? Of all the academic interpretations of the developments in the Netherlands during the 1960s, one has come to be generally accepted as the most logical. In his doctoral dissertation at the University of Iowa in 1995 (*Building new Babylon: cultural change in the Netherlands during the 1960s*), the American historian James Kennedy (whose interest in the Netherlands was doubtless largely derived from the fact that his mother is Dutch, from Rotterdam) concluded that the new trends were actually based on old traditions. Although Dutch society has tended historically to have a style of government that was more paternalistic than democratic, it has always been averse to violence. Pluralism and consensus, which are deeply rooted in Dutch history, make hard confrontations unlikely. Tolerance and flexibility in dealing with issues of justice and public order are regarded as highly desirable. Thus, when suddenly confronted with strong opposition to established social norms in the 1960s, the authorities adapted to the changes as far as possible instead of resisting them. But there was another important factor, according to Kennedy. When the 'spirit of the 1960s' appeared on the scene, Dutch society was actually already convinced that the time had come to give freedom, openness and emancipation a chance. The 1960s generation should – if Kennedy is right on this point – thus not be so proud of its achievements. It was not its perseverance or its courage that brought these big changes about. All the demands it made were 'variations on themes to which the dominant culture was already responsive'. A little push was all that was needed to bring the whole social structure tumbling down.

Quite apart from the games played by the Dutch Provo movement and its spiritual descendents, who certainly changed the face of society quite radically – long hair, informal dress and a more relaxed style of dealing with others became the rule rather than the exception – other changes took place in the Netherlands at a hitherto unknown pace. The key words here were 'autonomy' and 'individuality'. Both of these concepts encapsulate the high degree of personal liberty that became common from this time, in the field of standards and values, and was reflected in the feeling that one was free to decide whether one wanted to belong to a community or not and in one's approach to personal conformity – including the whole area of sexuality. The pillarization of Dutch society, much of the content of which had eroded away over the years but whose external structure was still largely intact, came to an abrupt end. Deconfessionalization (the relaxation of religious doctrine by churches, or the movement of people away from the church) and secularization (the tendency of people to make their faith less absolute or to give it up altogether) engendered or reinforced one another – though it is difficult to say which was the chicken and which the egg. These trends were

felt throughout society, but most strongly in the political arena. The confessional parties suffered a dramatic loss of voters.

The political establishment as a whole was struck by a credibility crisis from about 1965. After the fall of the cabinet led by Victor Marijnen of the KVP when they lost a vote on the broadcasting issue (to what extent should commercial interests be allowed to operate within and alongside the public broadcasting system?), a second cabinet was formed on the basis of the 1963 election results. It was led by Jo Cals, also from the KVP. He selected a team of ministers not only from the KVP but also from the PvdA and the ARP. This could be considered to a certain extent as a resumption of the old Roman-red partnership. The portents for Cals were not favourable, however. The PvdA had suffered significant losses in the 1959 and 1963 elections (losing a total of eight seats) and thus felt under pressure to assert its individuality. The KVP was doing well in the elections (it was the biggest party with effect from 1959, and had gained one more seat in 1963), but knew that it had to do all it could to maintain its lead. The sudden appearance of the Farmers' Party *Boerenpartij* (a party representing agrarian interests, with a strongly conservative outlook and a populist appeal – the first anti-establishment party elected into the *Tweede Kamer* after the Second World War; it won three seats in 1963) showed that voters were losing their allegiance to the old pillarized system. The cabinet, full of powerful men, developed ambitions that conflicted with the manifestos of the parties that supported it. Within a year, both the KVP and the PvdA wanted to get rid of Cals. His fall became inevitable after what is known in Dutch political history as the 'Night of Schmelzer', 13 - 14 October 1966. Norbert Schmelzer, the chairman of the KVP fraction in the *Tweede Kamer*, put forward a motion rejecting the government's 1967 budget, on the grounds that it was inadequately covered. Although he stated that it had not been his intention to force the cabinet to resign, this was the effect the motion had. While the PvdA secretly breathed a sigh of relief, it publically criticized Schmelzer's 'betrayal'. The social democrats then launched a successful campaign against the 'disloyal' KVP, and relations between the two biggest political parties in the country were completely soured for a number of years.

A third cabinet was formed on the basis of the 1963 election results, this time under the leadership of Jelle Zijlstra of the ARP. This was given the task of governing till the 1967 elections. The period between 1963 and 1967 was the last time in Dutch political history that new elections were not called automatically after the fall of a cabinet. In 1967, the voters took revenge for their exclusion, and taught the politicians a lesson in proper political behaviour. The two major parties, KVP and PvdA, suffered severe losses at the polls. The politicians learned their lesson. Since then, it has been an unwritten rule that the electorate will always be consulted if a coalition breaks down.

The new political party D'66 (later renamed D66 without the apostrophe), which had been the strongest critic of the recent political shenanigans, stating that their objective was now 'to blow up the whole system', came out of the elections with 7 seats. So did the Boerenpartij (up from 3). The VVD won one seat, bringing their total to 17. The party of the alleged 'traitor' Schmelzer, the KVP, lost eight seats (bringing it to 42). The PvdA lost six (down to 37), and would not be in government again for the next five years. Present-day readers might not raise their eyebrows at such shifts, as there have been plenty of swings and roundabouts in the Dutch elections since 2002. In 1967, however, the news came as a shock. It represented the end of the old system. All parties, even the biggest and those based on the longest political traditions, would have to fight for the favour of the voters. The KVP in particular ended up in free fall, losing seven more seats in 1971 and another eight

in 1972, thus almost halving their presence in the *Tweede Kamer* in the space of five years. Less than half of those who called themselves Catholics still voted for the Catholic People's Party. It should be noted in this connection that the fact that voting was no longer compulsory – the change came into effect in 1971 – was probably favourable for the KVP (their results would have been even worse if this change had not been introduced), as Thurlings argued.³⁸

To add to the complications, a new party (the Radical Political Party – Dutch abbreviation PPR) consisting mainly of KVP and ARP dissidents was formed in 1968, and the PvdA passed an 'anti-KVP motion' during its 1969 party congress. The period after the 'Night of Schmelzer' is described, not incorrectly, as one of polarization. Coalition cabinets of the kind to which the Dutch had become accustomed during the reconstruction era were out of the question now that cooperation between the PvdA and the KVP was temporarily impossible. However, work was going on behind the scenes to build up a left-wing alliance consisting of the PvdA, D'66 and PPR.

The left finally made a comeback in 1973. The cabinet headed by Joop den Uyl of the PvdA, formed after 163 days of painstaking negotiations (a record at the time), was the most left-wing in Dutch history. Government policy was based on a manifesto entitled *Keerpunt '72* (Turning Point '72) drawn up in 1972 by the shadow cabinet of the three progressive parties. It breathed a spirit of renewal, and advocated 'greater equality of income, education and power'. The left-wing parties did not have a ruling majority in 1972, however (only 56 seats out of the total of 150), and had to come to terms with confessional parties to form a coalition. That explains the unusually long formation procedure: the left demanded a lot of concessions from the KVP and the ARP, and allowed them hardly any say in the ultimate government policy. The fact that a cabinet was formed at all can be attributed to – some might say that 'blamed on' was a better way to put it – the willingness of some members of confessional parties to accept a minister's post on a more or less personal basis, thus facing their parties with a *fait accompli*. The cabinet was described as 'red with a white fringe', where white represented the rather meagre confessional input.

It was clear from the start that the cabinet was not going to have an easy time. Known as a 'fighting cabinet' (because of its frequent internal conflicts, not the energy with which it addressed external issues), the team led by Den Uyl had to cope with the consequences of the 1973 oil crisis, granted independence to Suriname in an over-hasty process (and flooded it with development aid to help it to cope with the initial period of independence, probably to the long-term detriment of the fledgling state), and was marked by unpleasant exchanges within its own ranks – in particular between prime minister Den Uyl and the deputy prime minister and minister of Justice Dries van Agt from the KVP – and fierce debates between the executive and legislative arms of government. The left-wing parties gained eight seats on balance in the 1977 elections (PvdA won 10 and D66 two, but PPR lost four). What was more important for the course of the cabinet formation process was the relatively greater success of the VVD and the fact that the three main confessional parties had managed to stop their reverses at the polls by combining to form one big umbrella party, the Christian-Democratic Appeal (CDA). This merger, which had already been under discussion since the start of the 1970s, was appreciably speeded up by attacks from the left. The confessional parties realized that combining forces in a new party (the CDA was officially formed in 1979) was the only way to slow down the disintegration of pillarized Dutch society – at least for a while.

The confessional politicians were able to take part in the negotiations with the progressive parties about the formation of a new cabinet under Den Uyl with renewed confidence. The talks took even longer than before: no less than 208 days – an as yet unbeaten record for the Netherlands (though fading almost into insignificance compared with Belgium, where it took a staggering 541 days after the 2010 elections before the cabinet could be sworn in on 5 December 2011!). In the end, CDA leader Dries Van Agt found that he could no longer accept the escalating demands from the left and he took the initiative to form a coalition cabinet with the VVD, with himself as prime minister; this new formation process took hardly any time at all.

The Church after the Second Vatican Council

The closing ceremony of the Second Vatican Council took place in Rome on 8 December 1965. Pope Paul VI (the successor of John XXIII) celebrated the mass in the presence of 2400 bishops. The changes introduced by the Council were felt in many different branches of Catholic life throughout the world. The liturgical changes – among the first to be approved – were particularly striking. The decision to celebrate the mass in the vernacular rather than in Latin came as a complete cultural shock for the faithful. Placing the priest so that he faced the congregation, with the altar in front of him (i.e. between him and the congregation) was another major change. In the old set-up, the altar had usually been placed near the front of the choir, far away from the congregation: church-goers knew more about what went on there from books than from their own observations. The Latin mass did not disappear completely, but became a rarity – usually celebrated only in the form of a high mass. This fortunately enabled classical church music, often written by famous composers, to continue to play a role in the liturgy.

The celebration of the Eucharist was made more democratic in various ways – at least in practice. The priest and the faithful were given a great deal of freedom to place their own stamp on the service. It remains the question whether this development really brought church-goers any closer to the church, or to their faith, and if so how. Frits van der Meer (1904-1994), a Catholic priest and a renowned professor of Liturgical and Art History at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, expressed his doubts about this in the mid-1960s – and was not optimistic about future prospects. He could appreciate the low mass in the vernacular, in a small, intimate church and celebrated by a devout congregation: it was not so spectacular, but it could be deeply felt and lively.³⁹ All in all, however, he thought that there were more losses than gains. 'Part of our worried clergy have rushed out of the Latin cathedral with all flags flying, suddenly feeling called on to express themselves in conventicles that are somewhere between revival meetings and Sunday schools, where the rump of the Eucharist is embellished with songs and an attempt at mass choreography bearing the stamp not so much of the Eternal Church as of the local impresario,' he wrote. The priests-turned-directors no longer knew how things ought to be done: they spoke at moments when tradition prescribed silence, and turned 'the wine of powerful writings into water'. According to Van der Meer, who had disinterred the concept of the '*trahison des clercs*' (treason of the intellectuals) and applied it to the priests-turned-directors who allowed 'the fashion of the moment' to hold sway ('It's no longer the masses who are the iconoclasts: they had exerted no pressure in that direction, they hadn't asked for it'), a 'liturgical tragic-comedy' was being played out. The entire liturgical culture was being sacrificed 'in the hope of winning a single soul'. In brief, Van der Meer was convinced that the changes in the form of the liturgy were largely based on illusion. The priests-turned-directors wanted to introduce a Protestant-style service of the Word in a Catholic environment of 'relative indifference and a level of ignorance

that was taken for granted'. This attempt was doomed to disaster in Van der Meer's opinion, because what Catholics really longed for – and needed – was 'the secret of our liturgy'.

Van der Meer seems to have taken too sceptical a view of the developments. His alternative, to go on feeding the flock with a diet of mysteries, was in any case in direct opposition to the spirit of modernization aimed at by the Vatican Council. One group who could certainly not be accused of ignorance were the participants at the Pastoral Council set up by the Dutch bishops to allow representatives of the clergy and laity to discuss in concrete terms the consequences of the Second Vatican Council for the Netherlands. The discussion took place in small working groups, starting in November 1966. Six 'plenary sessions' were held between 1968 and 1970 in the former minor seminary De Leeuwenhorst in Noordwijkerhout. The Pastoral Council was widely welcomed, since it promised to give everyone in the Church a voice in sketching the future of Dutch Catholicism.

It would go beyond the scope of this essay to touch on all points discussed at the Council. Some led to a great deal of argument, and one (the question of celibacy) was so divisive that the Council as a whole must be regarded in retrospect as a deeply dramatic event. Not so much during the Council but shortly after it, the discussions held (particularly on the subject of celibacy) brought the ecclesiastical province of the Netherlands into a situation of crisis from which it has never completely recovered. A majority of the participants at the Council were in favour of allowing married persons to be priests. The bishops and the cardinal prevaricated, afraid of a critical reaction from the Vatican. The course of events led some observers to believe that the participants at the Council had been an unruly band of radicals. Dramatic reports in the foreign press only made things worse. Rome became worried. The suspicions of the Curia and other circles close to the Pope were fed by complaints from conservative Dutch Catholics that had their own channels for communication with Rome.

As a result, the Dutch episcopate, some of whom had been in favour of opening up this fundamental question to debate, ultimately felt the need to completely reject the conclusions of the Pastoral Council, claiming that the reasons for maintaining the link between the priesthood and celibacy were 'still valid today'. In particular the way the episcopate had bowed its head to the dictates of Rome left many participants at the Council with the feeling that they had been left in the lurch. Instead of admitting openly that they had given in to pressure from the Vatican, the bishops pretended that nothing had happened, that maintaining the celibacy of the priesthood under all conditions was the most normal thing in the world.

A chill conservative wind blew through the Dutch Catholic Church in subsequent years. It came from Rome, where the opinion reigned that a 'silent majority' of well-thinking Catholics needed assistance. One way of providing this was to appoint conservative bishops, who would cure the Dutch episcopate of its persistent laxity.

The first was A. J. Simonis, who was installed as Bishop of Rotterdam in December 1970, even though his name was not on the list of nominees put forward by the diocesan chapter. His appointment led to a real pandemonium. All the deans in the diocese protested, as did the heads of the diocesan services. The sphinx-like nuncio Angelo Felici and his close associate Johannes Dyba (later bishop of Fulda) even caused a diplomatic row by openly accusing progressive forces in Rotterdam of 'manipulation'. This led to parliamentary questions, when two Catholic members of Parliament asked in the *Tweede Kamer* whether the nuncio had been guilty of interfering in the domestic affairs of the Netherlands. As might be expected, the whole row gradually fizzled out. Simonis ignored the call not

to accept the appointment, and wasted no time in making it clear that he was not going to be a docile member of the Bishops' Conference.⁴⁰

The next papal nomination rubbed yet more salt into the wound. The above-mentioned Joannes Gijzen, a man who was only known to and appreciated by a few regional conservative pressure groups, was 'parachuted' into Roermond. His candidacy was opposed by both Cardinal Alfrink – who had hoped that the Vatican would have learned from the Rotterdam affair – and by 'the other Dutch cardinal' (Willebrands, head of the Vatican's Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity). The nuncio and his superiors in the Vatican were deaf to the Dutch complaints. Gijzen was not liked by most of the other bishops and by a majority of the faithful in his diocese, right from the start. He did not let anyone deter him from forceful conservative action. His consecration in Rome by the Pope himself was intended to enhance his status, but in fact his performance always fell below expectation – even those who had welcomed Gijzen with open arms had to concede that. He was too idiosyncratic, too self-satisfied, not pastoral enough; all his initiatives aimed at returning the Diocese of Roermond to purer forms of Catholic life ended in failure, one by one. His arrival in Roermond did not spark new anti-revolutionary fervour, as Rome had intended. Even a special synod of Dutch bishop in the Vatican in January 1980, convened by the Pope in order to make it clear that all those wild ideas about church renewal that were growing in the Dutch experimental polder would have to be radically uprooted, was unable to restore the consensus. The display of power did not impress the Dutch bishops and the two representatives of religious orders called to Rome, and in effect only served to increase the division.

Some of the changes brought about by the Pastoral Council were thus nipped in the bud. Certain innovations introduced by Vatican II had a longer life, however. They may have been less noticeable, but like the liturgical revolution they did help – despite everything – to bring the Catholic world more into line with modern times. One such change was the disappearance of the notorious Index, the list of books that Catholics were not allowed to read. In 1966, the Pope announced in his encyclical *In motu proprio integrae servandae* that the Congregation of the Holy Office, which had traditionally been in charge of the Index, would henceforth be called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Alongside this change of name, the Index lost its compulsory nature and only retained an advisory function in the field of morals. Catholics could now make up their own minds about what they wanted to read, though it remained the task of bishops and priests to warn them against certain reading matter. The Church did continue to do this for some time. While censorship was formally done away with, the articles concerning the publication of books added to Canon Law in 1918 as part of the struggle against modernism still applied. These rules regulated the way decisions were taken about which books or other reading matter were fit for publication and could thus bear the declaration *nihil obstat* (no objection) or *imprimatur* (let it be printed). In the Netherlands, a Reading Information Service (*Informatiedienst inzake Lectuur* - IDIL) was set up in 1937, at the height of the 'rich Roman life', in order to support the implementation of this part of Canon Law. The task of this service consisted in reviewing books and other publications to check their compliance with Church guidelines. This 'reviewing service' was felt to be superfluous in the early 1970s, and shut itself down. That meant in practice that the sections of Canon Law referring to books and other publications were no longer applicable. A new more general reviewing service that focused on 'difficulty levels' rather than on the old church-related moral and theological considerations took over the task of IDIL.⁴¹

Another kind of moral meddlesomeness that was dropped was Catholic film censorship. There had been a Central Film Censorship Board (*Centrale Commissie voor de Filmkeuring* – CFF), with powers to order offensive passages to be cut from films, in the Netherlands since 1928. At the instigation of certain groups in the provinces of Limburg and Noord-Brabant in the south of the country, steps were taken in 1929 to set up a Catholic counterpart known as the Catholic Film Centre (*Katholieke Film Centrale* – KFC). The KFC raised the bar for the approval of films, and introduced different age categories. As a result, throughout the years hundreds of films that had been passed by the CCK were banned or classified as ‘inadvisable’ by the KFC. The KFC was finally disbanded in 1968, when it was obvious that it no longer served any useful purpose. Not long after, the authorities – which had always followed a more permissive line – adopted a new policy. The aim would no longer be the preservation of public morality, but the protection of viewers. Since adults (18 years old or above) no longer needed any protection and children only needed protection under the age of 16, government measures to protect viewers as laid down in the 1977 Film Screening Act (*Wet op de filmvertoningen*) only dealt with this last-mentioned age-group.⁴² The CDA played a pivotal role in guiding this whole process of change. Not a single Catholic member of the CDA opposed these measures.

The 1970s, fruit of a complex series of previous developments

The Catholic organizations the Dutch bishops zealously – perhaps over-zealously – tried to protect in their pastoral letter of 1954 had either disappeared or lost their identity twenty years later. For example, their crown jewel the Dutch Catholic Trade Union (NKV) merged with the Dutch Trade Unions Association (*Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen* – NVV) in 1976 to form the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (*Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging* – FNV); the merger was officially finalized in 1982. The Catholics’ own political party, the KVP, which had done so much to promote Catholic emancipation, was as mentioned above a committed part of the CDA by that time. And another prized possession, the Catholic broadcasting association KRO, while still Catholic in name only made a token gesture from time to time to confirm its identity.

The changes that had been developing during the past decades crystallized out in the 1970s. After the end of the Reconstruction period, the Netherlands became more left-wing and the fragmentation of Dutch pillarized society accelerated. The Catholic community had also lost much of its cohesion. One of the factors that contributed to this was that the seemingly complete emancipation of the Dutch Catholics had removed the justification for a separate Catholic ‘pillar’. The old inferiority complex and the battlefield mentality associated with it (‘Shoulder to shoulder into the strife, brothers!’), as Van Heek has described it, were things of the past.⁴³ When there was no longer any need for protection against the outside world, and the Catholic ‘pillar’ moreover did nothing to promote upward mobility, enthusiasm for the cause vanished into thin air. All that was left was the religion. And even that failed to provide the necessary inspiration when the structures in which it was embedded dissolved under the influence of Vatican II. The enormous disunity within the Catholic Church exacerbated the malaise. All the energy released by the Pastoral Council had come into fatal collision with a conservative opposition that had suddenly appeared – seemingly out of nowhere. The most frustrating element was the shadowy nature of the confrontation. While everything that happened at the Pastoral Council had been in the full light of day, it was impossible to guess how closely Rome was involved in the counteractions. Did the Vatican really know what was going on? Did it have a distorted picture of the events? Who had whispered what into who’s ears behind the scenes? No one knew.

Besides, was Catholic emancipation really complete? Not for example if the absence of distrust against Catholics is taken as the criterion, or the fact that anti-Papism has become so old-fashioned that it can be regarded as eradicated. There was no taboo on anti-Papism in the Netherlands for decades after the War. Examples are not hard to find. One controversial case was the Protestant outcry – and the associated constitutional crisis – that arose when it was announced in 1964 that Princess Irene was going to marry the Spanish Prince Carlos Hugo of Bourbon Parma and that she had converted to Catholicism, having been secretly baptized into the Catholic faith by Cardinal Alfrink. Part of the outcry was directed against the princess's Catholic baptism, which implied that her original Protestant baptism at birth had not been valid – an implication that many Dutch Protestants found particularly hard to swallow. Alfrink had performed the baptism (in Rome) *sub conditione* – an old formula that may be roughly translated as 'just to be on the safe side'. Emergency baptisms were often performed in the old days, for example after difficult deliveries when it was feared that the child might die. An official baptism *sub conditione* was then performed later, just in case all the necessary formalities had not been complied with the first time. Cardinal Alfrink could have investigated whether there was any need for Irene's baptism to be repeated according to Canon Law; the outcome of such an investigation would doubtless have been a resounding 'No'. His failure to do his homework was one of the reasons for the commotion.

However, the greatest and most vociferously expressed grievances referred to the fact that Irene as a member of the Protestant House of Orange had committed the sin of choosing the side of her country's traditional enemy, Spain. Rogier later described the salvo of angry reactions a 'bitter goodbye to a princess turned Catholic'. Fortunately for those who no longer accepted Irene as a potential monarch under any condition after her conversion to Catholicism (she had been second in line to the throne before this event) but did not want to be labelled primitive anti-Papists, there was another plausible reason for her exclusion: the fact that Carlos was a one of the pretenders to the Spanish throne (though his claims rested on rather dubious credentials). This dynastic problem could also be cited as grounds for not granting parliamentary approval to Irene's marriage.⁴⁴

A documentary in the late 1970s about Dutch Catholics made by the well-known presenter Netty Rosenfelt, for the VPRO broadcasting association (originally a Protestant organization called the *Vrijzinnig-Protestants Radio Omroep* – hence the VPRO – but later with a more generally progressive voice) unleashed a lively debate about whether (neo)anti-Papism still existed. Opinion was undecided at that time. However, the events surrounding the Pope's visit to the Netherlands in 1985 made it clear that anti-Papism was still far from dead.

John Paul II had many Dutch critics, who saw him as an unduly conservative Pope. The Dutch bishops were well aware that he would not get a very friendly reception, but since he was planning to visit Luxembourg and Belgium, it was difficult to avoid inviting him to the Netherlands too. The most pessimistic predictions about the Pope's visit turned out to be true. There were no big crowds out on the streets to greet him: only in the closed environment of the Trade Fair building (*Jaarbeursgebouw*) in Utrecht was he welcomed by the faithful in an atmosphere that was normal in open-air mass meetings when the Pope visited other countries.

A few months before the Pope's visit, a number of critical Dutch Catholics had got together to set up a platform for initiatives round the Pope's visit (*Platform Initiatieven Pausbezoek* – PIP), in order to circumvent the aim of the bishops to avoid spoiling the atmosphere of the visit by critical voices.

They had organized a big demonstration in The Hague on 8 May, the day before the Pope was due to arrive. Some twelve thousand Catholics, including many members of the clergy (both secular and religious), gathered on the Malieveld (the park near the centre of The Hague that is traditionally the venue for political and other demonstrations), under the motto 'The other face of the Church'. They protested against the refusal of the Church even to consider the ordination of women and an end to celibacy. Edward Schillebeeckx, the renowned Belgian Catholic theologian who had been a professor at the Catholic University of Nijmegen since 1958 and who had a long history of controversy with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, gave a speech in which he criticized the 'voices that tell us that all the developments that have been achieved by a process of trial and error in the Netherlands and elsewhere since the Second Vatican Council are doomed to piecemeal destruction'.⁴⁵ After the Pope's visit, the PIP was transformed into the 'Eighth of May Movement' (*Acht Mei Beweging* - AMB), an informal organization that would continue to exist until 2003. The AMB, which had strong links with the generation that had been inspired by the Pastoral Council, finally 'got tired of demonstrating'. The structural opposition of the Church wore it down. It is true that Bishop Van Luyn of Rotterdam and Bishop Muskens of Breda did attend an AMB demonstration in 1995 'in a personal capacity' and there had been similar vague attempts at rapprochement in 1996 (by Bishop Möller of Groningen, and Bishop Muskens again), but that was all. The good advice the bishops had received from an internal commission to 'mix with the faithful more' was not taken up to any substantial extent.

Back to the Pope's difficult visit to the Netherlands. During a question-and-answer session with participants from a number of Catholic organizations, John Paul II was asked a critical question by Hedwig Wasser, a member of the Board of the Mission Council (*Missieraad*). This was less embarrassing for the Pope himself than for the hosts. Of course, all the incidents mentioned above have nothing to do with the tide of (neo)anti-Papism that swept the Netherlands, since they occurred in Catholic circles. However, the avidity with which the outside world greeted these signs of internal division and the disparaging tone in which commentators spoke about the Pope are clearly indicative of the climate of opinion. Any aspect of Catholic life was fair game for attack. The violent demonstrations against the Pope by a wide range of different rioters were even more unpleasant, and the infantile songs poking fun at the Pope on Dutch radio together with the satirical programmes on Dutch television were extremely embarrassing too. The episcopate – and indeed the whole of civilized Dutch society – heaved a sigh of relief when the Pope left the Netherlands on 15 May. It did not take long for the coarse ridicule to disappear, now that its target had gone.

It may be commented in this connection that, as J. Bosmans indicated in his inaugural lecture as professor of Contemporary History at Radboud University Nijmegen in 1991, there have been times during the history of Catholic emancipation when Catholics were over-sensitive to anti-Papism. They saw ghosts where none existed, both before and after the War – though it should be noted that real anti-Papism was more common during the inter-war period than after 1945 and as a logical correlate it happened more often during this former period that pin-pricks were experienced as dagger blows. One key incident, the Oss affair of 1938-1939 (in which the minister of Justice Carel Goseling of the RKSP was stated by a parliamentary committee to have behaved inappropriately when he deprived the division of the *Koninklijke Marechaussee* – the national police force – in the little town of Oss of their powers when, after dealing very successfully with local criminality they turned their attention to the activities of the upper echelons of society in Oss), had a highly detrimental effect on Catholic self-confidence. The affair led to an enormous political row at national level. Goseling had made

mistakes, but the question was blown up out of all proportion in a way that Catholics – not unjustly – regarded as discriminatory.⁴⁶ It made many people in the Catholic section of society hypersensitive.

A second comment. Anti-Papism needs ‘papists’ as its target. Who could still be considered as papists in the closing decades of the twentieth century? The definition of ‘Catholic’ became very blurred in the mid-1970s. The row that arose after the appointment of Bishop Gijsen in Roermond, a decision by the Pope that was seen by all progressive Dutch Catholics as a snub aimed directly at them, revealed the fault lines clearly. Even a number of Dutch bishops showed that they found the ‘provocation’ from Rome difficult to digest. Many Dutch Catholics were so concerned that they let it be known that they no longer wished to be called Catholics.

In the meantime, many young Catholics sought refuge in places where the Church had no authority, for example in the Taizé community led by Brother Roger Schutz.

This ecumenical monastic order, founded during the War years by Brother Roger in the village of Taizé in eastern France, still attracts many young people of many different denominations every year for prayer, Bible study and communal work. A ‘Council of Youth’ was set up there at the end of August 1974; it was claimed at that time, as a challenge to other councils, that it ‘would never close’. The Catholic Church did not know what to do with Taizé, which offered many the inspiration they could not find elsewhere. Rome and its representatives in the Netherlands were jealous of the popularity of Brother Roger and the community he had created. They did their best to find other ways of attracting young people. Normally suspicious of an ecumenical approach on the basis of the conviction that such blurring of the boundaries always leads to a ‘zero-sum game’ with losers as well as winners, the Catholic still sent a few delegates to the Council of Youth in Taizé, ‘the international Babylon, where a new miracle of Pentecost took place’.⁴⁷ The council was even graced by the presence of the Dutch Cardinal Willebrands, the senior prelate of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity at the Vatican. But neither denunciation nor ‘repressive tolerance’ helped the official Church to regain the confidence of the youth. Clearly, Taizé and the countless other interconfessional initiatives had the future.

Any sketch of the events of the 1970s – to avoid fragmentation, the boundaries of this period have been interpreted very flexibly – would be incomplete without some mention of the press. The Dutch Catholic press could not complain of a lack of interest among subscribers and readers before the mid-1960s. After that, the situation quickly became much more critical. The minimum number of subscribers a newspaper needed in order to cover the growing production and distribution costs rose rapidly. The Catholic daily *De Maasbode* from Rotterdam had merged with its Amsterdam counterpart *De Tijd* in the late 1950s, the resultant newspaper being called *De Tijd / De Maasbode* for a number of years. In 1965, the year when the *Volkscrant* officially announced that it was no longer a Catholic newspaper, *De Tijd / De Maasbode* dropped the second half of its name. This daily, once regarded as ‘the parish priest’s newspaper’ and appearing alongside a whole series of Catholic newspapers, each with its own niche group of readers, now enjoyed a monopoly as the only Catholic evening paper in the Netherlands. This monopoly was relatively short-lived, however: nine years later, the paper was in serious difficulties. Despite all kinds of campaigns mounted by its supporters (‘We will carry on with *De Tijd*,’), the publishers VNU (*Verenigde Nederlandse Uitgeversbedrijven* = Federated Dutch Publishing Companies) decided to call it a day. The demise of their last daily paper does not seem to have bothered Catholic readers much. Statistically, there were more than enough

Dutch Catholics to support a newspaper of their own. Apparently, more was needed to justify a subscription to a Catholic daily – even one that no longer would have to cater exclusively to conservative Catholic tastes. The same applied to the weekly *Katholieke Illustratie*, which ceased publication in 1968. The Protestant daily *Trouw* is in better condition. It has gone through difficult periods from time to time, but has never been at any real risk of closure.

De Tijd changed from a daily to a weekly with effect from the first week of September 1974. The old motto *Dieu et mon droit* still appeared in the logo, without any further description of the kind of publication that readers could expect – apart from the statement ‘Founded as a daily in 1845’, suggesting that the new weekly was carrying on the tradition of the original paper. Exactly six years later, in September 1990, the paper gave up the struggle for an independent existence and merged with the *Haagse Post* to form the weekly *HP/De Tijd*. This publication, which has only managed to survive thanks to a regular search for new publishers to keep it afloat, no longer bears the slightest sign of Catholicism.

Catholic prime ministers

The steady rise of the political power of Catholics in the Netherlands over the years has not been substantially due to an unbroken succession of strong governments led by Catholic prime ministers. The first cabinet led by Louis Beel of the KVP (1946-1948) did not last long, while the second cabinet under his leadership (1958-1959) was a transitional body charged with organizing the coming elections. Then came Jan De Quay (1959-1963), Victor Marijnen (1963-1965) and Jo Cals (1965-1966). Of these, only the cabinet led by De Quay, the first post-War coalition not to include the PvdA alongside the KVP, completed its term in office without too many mishaps. Four of the subsequent cabinets with Catholic prime ministers (Piet De Jong [1967-1971], Dries van Agt I and II [1977-81 and 1981-1982 respectively] and Ruud Lubbers I, II and III [1982-1986, 1986-1989 and 1989-1994 respectively] served their full term. There has been no Catholic prime minister since 1994.

It was the VVD under Hans Wiegel that helped Van Agt out of a sticky patch in 1977. This marked the start of a new period in which centre-right governments set the tone. Joop den Uyl of the PvdA was allowed to make a brief come-back as Vice-premier and minister of Social Affairs and Employment under Van Agt between 1981 and 1982, but there were so many tensions in particular between Den Uyl and Van Agt that this experiment was doomed to failure. Ruud Lubbers of the CDA then headed three cabinets, the last one of which (1989-1994) relied on the PvdA again – among other parties – for support. Den Uyl had already been replaced by Wim Kok as leader of his party, well before his death in 1987, which made for more harmonious relationships between the two biggest parties.

A record number of 6700 Dutch companies went bankrupt in 1982, and the unemployment level rose to a post-War high of more than six hundred thousand. The whole world was still suffering the effects of the second oil crisis, which started in 1979 as a result of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The Netherlands with its open economy was hard hit by the crisis – though the developing countries with no oil production of their own were the hardest hit. This was a moment when employers and employees needed to work together. It saw the birth of the ‘polder model’ – a catchy slogan based on the idea that the Netherlands is like a polder, land reclaimed from the sea, where close cooperation is essential to stop people from getting their feet wet. The Wassenaar Agreement of November 1982 between employers, employees and the government ushered in a long period of prosperity, often referred to as the ‘Dutch miracle’. Like the success of the SER in the 1950s, this

miracle was largely made possible by the confessional party in the middle of the political spectrum – the CDA. It should not be thought however that the polder model was something completely new – though its name was. Any student of the last hundred years of economic development in the Netherlands will know that the unbridled freedom of Dutch entrepreneurs in the first three decades of the twentieth century seldom led to excesses. All companies, small and medium enterprises as well as big ones, put their trust in moderate development models, hard work and responsible management – including a reasonable wage for employees. The next period, round the time of the Second World War, was extremely challenging for the economy. The companies that survived did so mainly by making careful use of the opportunities open to them and going with the flow of the consultation-based economy, shaped after 1945 by the SER and the Labour Foundation (*Stichting van de Arbeid*), which provided a platform for the discussion between employers and employees of issues in the field of labour and industrial relations. New problems arose in the 1960s and 1970s. The profits derived from the Groningen gas field brought not only benefits (in the form of increased financial room for manoeuvre for the government) but also disadvantages (a rise in the value of the guilder, leading to inflation). Dutch companies lost their competitive edge on the world market, and wages rose more than the market could bear. This phenomenon was known abroad as the ‘Dutch disease’.

While the ease with which the 1982 Wassenaar Agreement that put an end to spiralling wages was reached was surprising, the underlying idea of the need for unity at times of crisis was not as new as it might have seemed at the time. The wide acceptance of the view that improvement of companies’ efficiency and profits was the key to full employment was reminiscent of the best days of the confessional era.

‘Purple’ cabinets

‘We run this country,’ Joost van Iersel – a Catholic member of the CDA in the *Tweede Kamer* – said in an unguarded moment a few years later (in 1986). Shocked by the reactions to this claim, he hastened to explain that when he had said ‘run’ he meant that it was the CDA that tackled the country’s real problems: its motto was ‘not words, but deeds’. But the harm had been done: the CDA was revealed once more as too big for its boots and taking its position for granted. Maybe it was time for the party to go back into opposition and learn what that felt like. This public mood, and the extremely clumsy CDA campaign in the run-up to the 1994 elections, caused the party to lose twenty seats in the new parliament. The PvdA and VVD, which had never yet been in a coalition without confessional partners, decided that the time was ripe to give it a try. The result was a ‘purple’ cabinet, with ministers drawn from the PvdA, VVD and D66. With the benefit of healthy economic conditions and relatively good relations between the political parties, the coalition completed two full terms of office (eight years) without difficulty. The only noteworthy incident was one that came to be given the name ‘the Night of Wiegel’ (18/19 May 1999). This concerned a proposed constitutional amendment that would have made it possible for ‘corrective referendums’ to be held that would allow the Dutch population to annul unpopular legislation that had been passed by Parliament. D66 in particular had been a strong advocate of this idea. During the second reading in the Senate, this bill failed to be passed by one single vote, that of Hans Wiegel of the VVD (who had become a member of the Senate in 1995). This incident inevitably led to a break between D66 and the other parties, which could however be healed soon after.

After eight seemingly successful years of 'purple' government, it was time for new elections. In the run-up to 15 May 2002, a fiery debate suddenly broke out between a group that wanted to see a 'liveable Netherlands' and the governing parties. The new opposition, led by the academic and writer Pim Fortuyn, claimed that the 'purple' government had left the country in a mess and that many public facilities in the Netherlands were well below par. But the debate focused in particular on political correctness and taboos. Fortuyn and his followers criticized the lack of opposition in the *Tweede Kamer*, where the only opposition party of any significance, the CDA, was too stunned by its electoral losses to do much more than lick its wounds. Since the two former fighting cocks, the PvdA and VVD, were now happily installed in the cabinet and were making one compromise after another, Parliament was as quiet as the grave. As a result there was no longer any safety valve for widespread social disquiet about such issues as the rapid increase in immigration. According to opinion polls, there was a huge following for Fortuyn's accusations. Then he was assassinated shortly before the elections, by an animal rights and environmental activist. The rest is history.

The Hague from 2002 to the present day

The CDA was the only one of the big parties that was not decimated at the polls in May 2002. In fact, it gained 14 seats to bring it to a total of 43. As a result, Jan Peter Balkenende, the leader of the party, became prime minister. The party that had been in opposition between 1994 and 2002, thus forming an exception to the rule established in 1918 that all Dutch cabinets had at least one confessional element, was now paid out the wages of its exile. The CDA's electoral gains underlined the fact that it was not only the deed committed by Volkert van der Graaf (the assassination of Pim Fortuyn on 6 May 2002) that had electrified the Netherlands. The support for Fortuyn's views had been growing for months, if not for years, before that fateful day. Apart from the unease felt by some voters about the 'monstrous league' between the two parties to the left and right of the CDA that had led to an absence of serious political debate, existential doubts due to the end of the Cold War – and above all to the recent world-shaking terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 ('9/11') – also played a role. Voters cast doubt on what had previously been taken as certainties. Everything had seemed to be going well, but was that really so? Had the political parties not merely been papering over the cracks?

As it turned out, the worst of the upheavals on the Dutch political scene were relatively short-lived. It proved to be so difficult to govern with the Pim Fortuyn List that new elections were called within the year – in January 2003 to be precise – as the only way out of the impasse. The LPF lost 18 of its 26 seats, and hence its place in the cabinet. The second cabinet under Jan Peter Balkenende formed on the basis of the electoral results looked much less unusual than its predecessor had done. It is true that the combination of CDA, VVD and D66 had never occurred in government before, but it raised no eyebrows. A third cabinet under Balkenende was formed in 2006, and a fourth in 2007. This last one included the PvdA and the Christian Union (*ChristenUnie*) alongside the CDA. The Dutch government seemed to have got into calmer waters after the storms of 2002. In fact, however, trouble was brewing under the surface, as the European elections of June 2009 clearly demonstrated. The PvdA scored lower than ever before, while the populist Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid* – PVV), which had taken part in these elections for the first time in 2006 and gained nine seats at that time, did even better in 2009. This spectacular success was repeated in the Dutch national elections of June 2010, when the PVV won 24 seats, only two less than the LPF had scored in 2002. The PVV is a right-wing party in many respects, but its social and economic policies are often

left-wing, for example in the way it has reacted to the credit crisis that erupted in 2008. Its most controversial views, however, are those relating to what it sees as the 'threat of Islam'. Just as with the LPF, with which it is often compared, it is difficult to explain precisely where its apparent great popularity comes from. Take the case of the Dutch province of Limburg for example: the PVV is now the biggest party in nearly all municipalities in this province, where the KVP and after it the CDA used to be all-powerful. The Islamic presence in Limburg is relatively low. So what are people reacting against in the local elections there? Is it a feeling that the province is not getting a fair deal compared with the rest of the country? And is that also the reason for the PVV's striking success in such regions as Zeeuws-Vlaanderen? Or is it somehow related, in a way that is difficult to pinpoint exactly, with the traditionally Catholic background of these regions?

Be that as it may, the CDA has been the principal victim of the success of the PVV. With only 21 seats in the present coalition, this party suffered a historic defeat in the last elections. Comparison of this result with that of 1963, when the KVP alone was good for 50 seats while the parties that would later merge to form the CDA won a total of 76, shows clearly how much ground the confessional political parties have lost since the War. Voters in general have serious concerns at present, to which they want to see a meaningful response from politicians. It seems that many feel that a vote for Wilders is the best way to achieve this end.

Concluding remarks

It is difficult to characterize the current situation in the Dutch ecclesiastical province as good or bad. Some trends may be seen as bad: people are much less religious nowadays; active participation in church services and other activities has also fallen off sharply, churches have had to be closed and parishes have had to merge, church activities in general have to be streamlined because of a substantial drop in incomes, there is a shortage of priests and vocations to the priesthood, and widespread divisions still exist within the Church. But there are encouraging signs too: some groups within the Church – progressive, conservative and middle-of-the-road – retain their enthusiasm and are working hard to restore confidence in the future. Is it a pity that some people have given up their membership of the Church because of the sexual abuse scandal? Some think it is; others argue reassuringly that this is just a formal confirmation of changes that have already taken place, and remain optimistic about what a leaner but still energetic Church that believes in itself and in its mission can achieve. Does it really matter that Catholic education is no longer Catholic in anything but name?

That for example the Dutch secondary schools originally founded by Jesuits (Canisius College in Nijmegen, St. Ignatius College in Amsterdam, St. Maarten College in Groningen, Aloysius College in The Hague and others) to rear generations of Catholic leaders have lost much of the prestige among Catholics they enjoyed fifty years ago and are now hardly distinguishable from other schools? And that the Catholic universities now only pay lip service to their 'Catholic inspiration'? That is all a question of perception and personal preference. Should it be concluded that the evidence given above shows that Catholic emancipation in the Netherlands – and that is what it was all about, surely? – is now complete ... or that it has failed? These introductory remarks can do no more than reflect the personal judgment of the author.

The leading role played by Catholic politicians in the post-War Dutch political system makes it tempting to consider Catholic emancipation to have been already complete in 1939 – the year when

the Roman Catholic State Party (RKSP), the first Catholic political party of any significance in the Netherlands, really set its stamp on Dutch politics by breaking with Colijn and his ARP, thus ending an unbroken series of four cabinets under his leadership and opening the way for the social democrats (SDAP) to enter government for the first time in Dutch history. In practice, however, while the Catholics had indeed achieved formal equality by this time, their perception of equality and emancipation still rested on a very shaky foundation and in part was no more than a hopeful future prospect. There was still plenty of work for the Catholic pillar within Dutch pillarized society to do in this direction, and this quest for full emancipation probably remained the *raison d'être* of many Catholic organizations for many years to come.

It was not however the increased power of the Catholic pillar but the blending of the increasingly emancipated and educated Catholic individuals with their surroundings and the gradual break-up of the whole pillarized society that caused the problem to disappear into the background, if not to be completely resolved. Before that happened, all kinds of conflicts arose within the Catholic pillar between the leadership, who were afraid that too light a hand on the reins would put all the gains achieved during the struggle for emancipation at risk, and individual Catholics who considered that their personal emancipation was best served by more contact with those who held other beliefs – in other words, by more freedom. Paul Luykx gives a number of telling examples of this desire for greater leeway in his book *Andere katholieken* (Other Catholics).⁴⁸ That concerning the possibility of Rotary membership for Catholics has already been discussed above. In Luykx's opinion, the idea that all Dutch Catholics during the pillarization era were like sheep meekly following their shepherd is exaggerated. 'There were all kinds of manifestations right from the start of the pillarization period that Dutch Catholics were unhappy with a system that they often regarded as imposed – not to say forced – on them from above'.⁴⁹ Opposition to the shackles of conformity was never far below the surface. 'In many respects, Catholics were non-conformist in their mentality and attitude [...].'

Individuals were making their own choices more and more often, without reference to the commandments of the Church. This was almost inevitable, given the situation. The enormous increases in communication between previously isolated population groups, for example through the arrival of television, was in itself enough to open up a new world where only a very strong faith could maintain itself unsullied. Dutch viewers could watch television every evening of the week from 1960, while a second TV channel arrived in 1964. It was too much to expect people to restrict themselves to their own Catholic (KRO) programmes, as had been common in the old days when the wireless was all that was available. The other programmes on offer were much too tempting – or even hypnotic. If television did tend to impose a certain uniformity in people's attitudes and behaviour, the standards inculcated were certainly not Catholic. The type of morality to which viewers was exposed was liberal, on the whole.

The various forms of secularization described above were a general Western European phenomenon. The free fall of the Dutch Catholic Church was however exceptional in this context. One of the main factors contributing to this rapid liberalization of the Church was its previous high level of conformity, or as Jan Roes, the director of the Catholic Documentation Centre (KDC) in Nijmegen called it, its 'herd mentality'. During a congress held in 1994 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the KDC, he discussed one important negative aspect of this herd mentality that had been imposed on Dutch Catholics. During the glory days of the Church, they regarded themselves as the best Catholics in Europe. This excessive expectation led to a highly disciplined stance and a lack of self-

criticism. The pendulum had to swing back sooner or later. The modernization campaign of the 1960s changed everything. While the hierarchy of the Church hoped – and believed – that Catholics could continue to be obedient even in these modern times (Jan Roes said: ‘as the faithful entered the church, they were supposed to be able to switch their brains off and set their gaze on infinity’), in fact things developed in quite a different direction. The emancipated Catholic tended increasingly to take the Church, and ultimately also his or her belief, for granted.⁵⁰

There is little point in discussing here who was ‘to blame’ for the spectacular decline – collapse might perhaps be the better word – of the Dutch Catholic Church. Can we, or should we, speak of a ‘*trahison des clercs*’ (treason of the intellectuals)?⁵¹ ‘Treason’ is perhaps not the right word, as it suggests a deliberate act of betrayal. The academics are still far from having made up their minds whether it was indeed ‘opportunistic’ clergy and intellectuals, as is sometimes claimed, who took the lead in destroying the ecclesiastical institutions from within. And if it was the intellectuals who ‘destroyed the Church in order to save it’, was that a social, academic or ecclesiastical elite, or all three together?

One statement may be made without the slightest fear of contradiction: the Dutch Catholic Church has changed beyond all recognition in the past half century.

NOTES

1. It is inscribed on his mausoleum in the New Kerk (New Church) in Delft.
2. See in this connection Jan Roes, 'In de kerk geboren. Het Nederlands katholicisme in anderhalve eeuw van herleving naar overleving', In: *Jaarboek van het Katholiek Documentatie Centrum 1994*, 1994, pp. 61-102.
3. Integralism was a reactionary trend within the Roman Catholic Church, opposed to modernism and dating from the start of the twentieth century. It was supported, though not openly, by Pope Pius X. The term 'integral' refers to the standpoint that Catholics should be guided by faith and the dogmas of the only true church not only in their religious life but in their day-to-day life too.
4. Diennek Hondius, "'Thans dienen joden hun dankbaarheid te tonen"; antisemitisme vlak na de bevrijding', In: Hansje Galesloot and Margreet Schrevel (Eds'), *In fatsoen hersteld. Zedelijkheid en wederopbouw na de oorlog*, 1987, pp. 135-149. It is only during the past few decades that the persecution of the Jews has become the key element in the retrospective consideration of the War. During the period immediately after the War, the fact of this persecution was recognized but it was not subjected to analysis because of the many unanswered questions it generated.
5. S. Stoleman O.F.M., *Het verzet der Nederlandsche bisschoppen tegen Nationaal-Socialisme en Duitse tirannie*, 1945, pp. 249-251.
6. Marcel Poorthuis and Theo Salemink, *Een donkere spiegel. Nederlandse katholieken over joden. Tussen antisemitisme en erkenning, 1870-2005*, 2006, pp. 561- 566. De Linie went through a crisis in the summer of 1953 resulting from a conflict about a number of issues, including the allegedly fascist leanings of some members of the editorial board and the board of management. The order of Jesuits, which had exerted a strong influence on the weekly since its inception, was also seriously divided by this conflict. B. R. C.A. Boersema, *De Linie, 1946-1963. Een weekblad in handen van jezuïeten*, 1978, pp. 299-310.
7. Apart from the KWG, the PvdA also had a Protestant Working Community (PCWG in Dutch) and a Humanist Working Community.

8. The Upper House and Lower House of the Dutch Parliament had 50 and 100 seats respectively until 1956. The corresponding numbers at present are 75 and 150.
9. The precise wording was that what the party propagated was not 'political' or 'politicized' Catholicism, not a 'dogmatic straitjacket', but politics based on the principles of natural truth (= Catholic values).
10. L.J. Rogier, 'Kroniek van vandaag en morgen', *De Tijd* (13 September 1974). Ludovicus Jacobus Rogier (1894 – 1974) was initially a secondary-school teacher of Dutch, later a prominent historian, professor, and Rector Magnificus of the Catholic University of Nijmegen. Many of his historical publications dealt with the history of the Dutch Catholics.
11. This tendency, initially referred to as 'geloofsafval' (loss of faith) by Dutch religious commentators, tended to be called 'onkerkelijkheid' or 'ontkerkelijking' (which may both be translated as 'secularization') from the end of the 1950s.
12. The distinction between those who attend Easter services and those who do not is crucial according to some views.
13. Called Radboud University Nijmegen since 2004.
14. The name was changed successively to Katholieke Economische Hogeschool in 1938, Katholieke Hogeschool Tilburg in 1963, Katholieke Universiteit Brabant in 1986, Universiteit van Tilburg in 2001, and the institution is now officially called Tilburg University.
15. J.M.G. Thurlings, *De wankele zuil. Nederlandse katholieken tussen assimilatie en pluralisme*, 1971. Thurlings was professor of Sociology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen.
16. The general view in canon law was that a ruling was no longer valid if it had not been applied for a long time.
17. P. Luykx, *Andere katholieken. Opstellen over Nederlandse katholieken in de twintigste eeuw*, 2000, pp. 77-116 (Katholieken en Rotary in Nederland, 1930-1964). Paul Luykx was Associate Professor of Contemporary History at Radboud University Nijmegen.
18. L.J. Rogier, *Katholieke herleving. Geschiedenis van katholiek Nederland sinds 1853*, 1956, p. 628.
19. John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom. A History*, 2003, p. 291.
20. Gé Nabrink, *Seksuele hervorming in Nederland. Achtergronden en geschiedenis van de Nieuw-Malthusiaanse Bond en de Nederlandse Vereniging voor Seksuele Hervorming 1871-1971*, 1978, p. 417.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
22. Jan Roes, 'In de kerk geboren', pp. 92-93. Jan Roes (1939 – 2003) was director of the Catholic Documentation Centre and professor of History of Dutch Catholicism at the Catholic University of Nijmegen.
23. Anna Alberdina Antoinette Terruwe was born in Vierlingsbeek in 1911 and died in Deurne in 2004.
24. 'Rome heeft katholiek Nederland nooit goed begrepen. Verontruste verklikkers kregen te veel aandacht', *De Tijd* [a Dutch Catholic daily that ceased publication in 1974], 13 September 1974.
25. A.M.A.J. Driessen, 'Anna Terruwe, 1911-2004, psychiater', In: *Biografisch Woordenboek Gelderland*. http://www.biografischwoordenboek gelderland.nl/bio/6_Aнна_Terruwe.
26. P. van der Ven, 'Van verschoppeling tot goeroe', *Trouw*, 2 July 2004.
27. Willem Berger and Jacques Janssen, 'De katholieken en hun psychologie. De geschiedenis van een problematische relatie', In: *De identiteit van katholieke wetenschapsmensen* (a publication of the Catholic Publication Centre KDC, Nijmegen, and the Thijmgenootschap, 1980, pp. 25-41; the passage cited is taken from p. 29.
28. John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom. A History*, 2003.
29. Van Luyn attended the particular synod of January 1980 in Rome on behalf of Dutch religious clergy.

30. Even Rolduc-type seminaries can lead to unacceptable conditions, however, as appeared in 1999 when the Ariënskonvikt in the Archdiocese of Utrecht, which had been considered to be a progressive establishment, was closed by Bishop Eijk.
31. J.Y.H.A. Jacobs, *Werken in een dwarsverband. Een portret van de gezamenlijke Nederlandse priesterreligieuzen 1840-2004*, 2010, pp. 178-180.
32. Alfrink was made Archbishop of Utrecht and 'primate' or 'metropolitane' of the Dutch Roman Catholic Church in 1955. In 1960 he was made a Cardinal. The fact that the Netherlands got a new Cardinal only five years after the death of Cardinal De Jong (who had preceded Alfrink as Archbishop of Utrecht and had been the first Dutch Cardinal in residence since the Protestant Reformation) was not only a personal honour for Alfrink but also a sign of the Vatican's respect for Dutch Catholicism.
33. Annemieke Klijn, *Onze man uit Maastricht. Sjeng Tans, 1912-1993*, 2001, p. 95.
34. The episcopate withdrew the prohibition on membership of the NVV on 9 September 1965. At the same time, the bishops urged the faithful 'on the basis of their sense of pastoral responsibility' to continue to join Catholic social organizations.
35. The Cardinal was too frail to be present in person in the stadium in Utrecht where the centenary was celebrated on 16 May 1953. His speech was relayed to the stadium via loudspeakers.
36. 'Eeuwfeest van het herstel der bisschoppelijke hiërarchie in Nederland. Toespraken bij de nationale viering in Utrecht en Nijmegen gehouden benevens enige pauselijke en bisschoppelijke brieven', 1953, pp. 47-48.
37. For a detailed description of the events leading up to this reorganization see: Tjebbe T. de Jong, *Katholiek leven in Noord-Nederland, 1956-2006. Vijftig jaar bisdom Groningen*, 2006, pp. 67-95.
38. J.M.G. Thurlings, *De wankele zuil. Nederlandse katholieken tussen assimilatie en pluralisme*, 1971, pp. 136-138.
39. De Tijd [a Dutch Catholic daily that ceased publication in 1974], 13 February 1965. See also Frits van der Meer, *Feestelijke gedachtenis. Beschouwingen over het kerkelijk jaar*, 1995, pp. 164-171.
40. Richard Auwerda, *De kromstaf als wapen. Bisschopsbenoemingen in Nederland*, 1988, pp. 69-83.
41. For the history of IDIL, see: C. van Eijden-Andriessen, *Moralinezuur en voorlichting. De twee gezichten van Idil in het katholieke debat om de moderniteit 1937-1970*, 2010.
42. J.H.J. van den Heuvel, *De moraliserende overheid. Een eeuw filmbeleid*, 2004.
43. F. Van Heek, *Het geboorteniveau der Nederlandse Rooms-Katholieken. Een demografisch-sociologische studie van een geëmancipeerde minderheidsgroep*, 1954.
44. J. Bosmans, Vondel in Leiden [inaugural lecture, Nijmegen], 1991, p. 19. The quotation from Rogier is also to be found here.
45. J.Y.H.A. Jacobs, *Werken in een dwarsverband. Een portret van de gezamenlijke Nederlandse priesterreligieuzen 1840-2004*, 2010, p. 221.
46. Ibid., pp. 19-22.
47. Theo Koekhoven, 'Taizé is een kruis', De Tijd [a Dutch Catholic daily that ceased publication in 1974], 13 September 1974.
48. P. Luykx, *Andere katholieken*. Opstellen over Nederlandse katholieken in de twintigste eeuw, 2000.
49. Ibid., p. 41.
50. Jan Roes, 'In de kerk geboren', 1994, p. 97.
51. Julien Benda (1867-1956), *La trahison der clercs*, 1927.

2 Discretion and Expertise. Exploring the role of Roman Catholic psychiatrists in the approach and response of the Roman Catholic governing bodies to the sexual abuse of minors (1945-1970)¹

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Introduction

Research projects in the US on the sexual abuse of minors by members of the Roman Catholic clergy have focused on the role played by psychiatrists and psychologists in the approach and response of the Roman Catholic governing bodies to this problem. Usually, the responsible authority enlisted the aid of clerics who had experience of caring for priests and members of religious orders who had perpetrated such abuse.² The US studies showed that the treatment these people received from psychiatrists and psychologists was part and parcel of a 'closed culture' in which it was known in the 1950s and 1960s that members of the Roman Catholic clergy were sexually abusing minors. This culture was characterized by 'institutionalized secrecy', which encompassed both ecclesiastical circles and treatment providers outside the immediate church hierarchy.³

In the United States in the 1950s and 1960s this closed culture was closely entwined with efforts by priests and members of religious orders to gain treatment programmes for fellow-clerics with psychological problems and to include a psychological examination in the admission procedures to the priesthood and the respective orders.⁴ Academically qualified psychiatrists, members of the laity in the eyes of the church, were part of this culture together with similarly academically qualified priests and members of religious orders who specialized in religion and psychiatry. A few special treatment centres were set up for priests with psycho-sexual problems – including priests who had sexually abused minors.

Very little is known in the Netherlands about the role of psychiatrists and psychologists in the treatment of clerics who had sexually abused minors⁵ or about the relationship between the treatment providers and the governing bodies in the church. These questions lie at the heart of a study that was based on an archive search requested by the Commission of Inquiry. The aim was to ascertain whether, in the period between 1945 and 1970, ecclesiastical and religious governors in the Netherlands took advice from medical experts who were not in the line of command of a diocese or a religious community and whether a 'closed culture' existed similar to the one described in the US.

The departure point for the study was the story of a priest from the Diocese of Roermond who had sexually abused minors. The incidents took place between the 1930s and the early 1950s and they illustrate the way in which ecclesiastical authorities acquired knowledge of the phenomenon of sexual abuse. It appears that, during this period, the church governors

made increasing use of psychiatrists as sounding boards when deciding what to do with perpetrators of child abuse from their own ranks.

It was possible to derive a picture of the vicissitudes of this priest by piecing together information from different archives. He was a serious problem case, which explains the existence of a voluminous and fairly detailed collection of files in the Roermond diocese. Together, his own personal files and the files about him in the Vatican Secret Archives fill more than seven crates. Access was also granted to his medical files at the St Willibrordusstichting psychiatric hospital in Heiloo, where he was admitted for treatment.

Perpetrators of child abuse do not normally leave such detailed track records, not even those who, like the priest in this case, have undergone psychiatric treatment. The Commission of Inquiry carried out a random study of historical patient files on the basis of the names of abusers and suspected abusers that had turned up during the archive search.⁶ The organizations that took over (Roman Catholic) psychiatric institutions usually have historical patient files in their possession, either as a continuous series or as a random but therefore representative collection.⁷ The professional legacies of freely practising psychiatrists who had also been actively involved in the assessment and treatment of child abusers since the 1950s were not part of the study. The papers had either been disposed of or were not available for research.

The case of the priest from Roermond sets the scene for a broader evaluation of the role of psychiatrists in the treatment of clerics who sexually abused minors in 1950-1970. Psychiatrists helped to keep ecclesiastical and religious governors informed of the exact condition of priests and members of religious orders who had committed sexual abuse. As a result, the church governors were better equipped to decide which measures were desirable or necessary. The expertise of the psychiatrists enabled them to expand their traditional but one-sided religious and moral frame of reference with psycho-pathological insights. They added medico-psychiatric assessments to their framework of moral interpretation – assessments that, in a broader context, were directly connected with the administration of criminal justice for sex offenders in the Netherlands. Sexual abuse changed from being a morally deplorable phenomenon to an element in a psychiatric syndrome which clerics could suffer from just as much as anyone else. It was a disorder that required treatment – also in their case.

There was no question of an entirely 'closed culture' in the Netherlands in the first half of the 1950s. At that time priests and members of religious orders with psychological problems were an item on the conference agendas of the bishops and the major superiors of religious orders and congregations. The church governors also looked to Catholic psychiatrists for information and insisted on absolute discretion, which they justified on the basis of the specific status of (diocesan and religious) priests as patients. Catholic psychiatrists, in turn, had pinpointed the Catholic doctrine, culture and teachings on morality as neuroses-inducing factors. They pleaded in public for better organized mental healthcare by

highlighting, amongst other things, the disproportionate percentage of Catholics involved in sexual offences in general. They pointed out that the core members of the Roman Catholic Church, priests and members of religious orders, were not immune to neuroses associated with religion.

The archive search suggests that psychiatrists were increasingly excluded in both the assessment of the suitability of candidates for the priesthood or religious orders and the assessment of individuals who were experiencing difficulties – also sexual difficulties – in adapting to the demands of clerical life. This exclusion stemmed primarily from the influence of directives from the Holy See, which had insisted from the mid-1950s that any such assessments be conducted within ecclesiastical confines. If external specialists had to be called in, they had to subscribe unequivocally to the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.⁸ These directives were entirely at odds with the practices that had evolved in the Netherlands, whereby external psychiatrists were not recruited first and foremost for their moral principles but rather for their professional expertise.

Piecing together the problem

In 1953 the vicar-general of Roermond, Frans (F.J.) Feron (1896-1958), requested the medical records of a priest from his diocese.⁹ He had agreed to provide the medical director of the St Willibrordusstichting psychiatric hospital in Heiloo, one of the Roman Catholic psychiatric institutions, with an overview of the treatment and treatment providers in this case. The report goes back to the pre-war years and is written retrospectively with very little detail. Feron extracted the incidents that he regarded as relevant and rewrote them as a continuous narrative. His account reveals how much the governors of the diocese knew in 1953 and shows that they had been closely observing this priest since the early 1930s. In 1940 the diocese decided that the priest was no longer fit for pastoral duties and had taken steps to withdraw him from active participation in parish life.

The priest that emerges from Feron's account was congenitally burdened and had some fairly complex psychological problems – from compulsive disorders, depression and deviousness to 'abnormal sexuality'. Feron could have spared himself the trouble of writing this history since the priest had been admitted to the St Willibrordusstichting ten years previously and his medical records from that time were far more accurate. It emerged that he had been sexually molesting children since he was a student. Before his ordination he had fondled his ten-year-old niece and two much younger girls aged four and five. After this came to light he was appointed to the post of assistant rector at an institution for males with special needs. The assumption that he was only interested in little girls proved misplaced; he was removed that same year after he had molested two boys.

The Bishop of Roermond then reassigned him to a parish in central Limburg, where he began to exhibit different, but still inappropriate sexual behaviour – particularly for a priest. It was said that he had sexual relations with housekeepers and that he masturbated compulsively,

preferably above *De Maasbode*, which, because of its complexity and dreariness, was better known as ‘the priest’s newspaper’. He had to leave that post too when it became known that he had fondled a girl by placing his hand up her skirt. Though he tried to pressurize her into keeping silent – ‘You’ll be committing a grave sin if you tell anyone about this’ – she reported the incident to her father, who duly warned the pastor. The priest was transferred to a monastery and placed under supervision. The bishop then tried to find another place for him, this time as a curate in a parish. When it again transpired that he could not stay away from little girls, the bishop had him admitted for observation to the St Willibrordusstichting in Heiloo at the expense of the diocese.

Hospitalization and treatment

In the early 1940s a psychiatric treatment programme was being run in Heiloo under the supervision of Dr J.A.J. Barnhoorn, the medical director at that time. The fact that Barnhoorn was able to acquire information about this priest from psychiatrist H.J. Schim van der Loeff, director of the St Anna psychiatric institution in Venray, indicates that the diocese had sought advice earlier from psychiatrists who had examined the priest and may even have treated him for a while. Schim van der Loeff was unequivocal in his judgement: the priest in question was notoriously unreliable and could no longer be assigned to spiritual duties. The diagnosis in Heiloo was ‘psychopathy’.

At that time the term ‘psychopathy’ embraced a motley collection of psychiatric ailments and conditions: bipolar disorder, mythomania (pathological lying), paranoia, alcoholism, homosexuality¹⁰, exhibitionism and paedophilia.¹¹ ‘Psychopath’ was a blanket term that also included sex offenders, who were usually labelled ‘hypersexual’.¹² Amongst them were exhibitionists, paedophiles and homosexuals. It may not have been entirely by chance that the Bishop of Roermond sent the priest to Leiden professor and psychiatrist Eugène A.D.E. Carp (1895-1983) for treatment, when he took another turn for the worse in the early 1940s after being discharged from Heiloo. Carp, a Catholic convert, was a well-respected leading academic in Dutch Psychiatry.¹³ He was a regular contributor to the in-house periodical of the Association of Roman Catholic Physicians, also writing on contested topics, such as the significance of Freud and psychotherapy.¹⁴ In 1934 he published a book on psychopathology (*De psychopathieën*) which was a standard work until well into the 1960s.¹⁵ It was the first comprehensive manual on the subject and was re-issued three times.¹⁶ Though Carp’s exact diagnosis for the priest from Roermond is unknown, his manual offers some general guidelines for the assessment and treatment of sex offenders in the period covered by the archive study, 1945-1970. These guidelines must also have exerted an influence on the way the ecclesiastical and religious governors assessed this specific problem case.

Psychopathy and psychopaths

Carp defined psychopathy as an ‘adjustment defect’. The core element in his interpretation of psychopathy was a ‘defective aptitude for emotions’, which may originate from a

‘disorder of the temperament’ or ‘maldevelopment’. It could therefore be hereditary or the result of circumstances, particularly in early childhood. It could involve endogenous and exogenous factors and it was characterized by a ‘diffuse entanglement of neurotic and psychopathic responses’. In other words, there was no clearly defined clinical pattern. Inevitably, this had implications for the treatment and its chance of success. According to Carp, the treatment had to focus first and foremost on the ‘forms of response’ through which the maladjustment expressed itself and which caused the problems in social relationships. Provided the underlying diagnosis was sound, the condition could be treated with ‘invasive types of psychotherapy and rigorous re-education’. Psychopathy as such was untreatable – this is one of the key factors that distinguished it from neuroses. But Carp was again reluctant to draw sharp dividing lines: he maintained that ‘psychopathic and neurotic problems could not be regarded separately’. He added that it was a two-sided problem which, moreover, had grown (note that Carp was writing in 1934) into one of the greatest problems facing society.¹⁷

Carp was acutely aware of the tension between norm and deviation and the value-laden nature of the division between the two.

Though an exact diagnosis was complicated by all sorts of factors, he wanted to prevent ‘psychopathy’ from becoming a cover-all for undefinable symptoms. A diagnosis of psychopathy would then be simply relative, i.e. it would be a diagnosis of exclusion. Moreover, it was subjective. The question on Carp’s agenda as a psychiatrist was to determine the extent to which this subjectivity was reasonable and fair. In answering that question it was important to consider not only the interests of the patient but also the interests of the community. In the case of the latter it was essential to assess the risk that an individual with a diagnosis of psychopathy posed for other people.¹⁸ The vision of ‘risk’ stemmed from the widely held belief that people who were classified as abnormal ‘could bring discord (i.e. threats) into the community orchestra and even disrupt the general harmony’.¹⁹ This is why it was so important when dealing with patients in this category to ascertain if it was the individual who suffered most from the disorder or whether the environment and the ‘general harmony’ were at risk of disruption.

Carp himself was not adverse to some value-laden terminology on the question of who should be classified as psychopathic. In his opinion, the adjectives ‘anti-social and asocial’ in the broadest sense could apply not only to ‘tramps, layabouts, drunkards, rabble-rousers, fantasists and liars but also to artists, scholars, charlatans, conscientious objectors, sect builders and other idealistic enlighteners of the human race’. Clerics are not explicitly included in this list, but priests were, however, on the list of experts alongside child psychiatrists, child psychologists, parents, teachers, school doctors and juvenile magistrates who had to pool their professional strengths in the battle against problems in the upbringing and social environment that could lead to neuroses and psychopathy.²⁰

In principle, psychiatrists such as Carp counted priests among the mentally healthy people who helped individuals who were diagnosed as neurotic or psychopathic. Carp differentiated between 'criminal' and 'non-criminal' psychopaths. It is not inconceivable that priests and other clerics with a diagnosis of psychopathy fell into the category of 'non-criminal' and were regarded as excellent candidates for psychiatric rehabilitation programmes precisely because of their priestly state and formative background. The 'religious experience' together with 'the pursuit of community ties' played a key role in Carp's theories on the rehabilitation prospects of psychopaths. Rehabilitation was based on the 'reconstruction of the personality'. But Carp warned against 'false optimism'; 'a sense of responsibility and self-discipline' were essential building blocks in this 'reconstruction'. And that is exactly what the Church and the State expected 'in equal measure from its members'.²¹

Perpetrators and their problems

The case of the priest from the Diocese of Roermond shows that church governors such as Feron realized only too well that such behaviour could not be tolerated. The fact that they turned to psychiatrists for advice also suggests that they knew they were powerless to comprehend the situation alone. The steps taken since the 1930s show that knowledge was growing about sexually inappropriate behaviour and the psychological conditions that could precipitate it. Carp's standard work on psychopathy testifies to the utmost caution and circumspection with regard to diagnoses and therapies.

Therapy was the preserve of the medical experts, but Carp embedded it in the wider framework of Church and State. 'Community' is the key concept in his theories; measures – judicial and therapeutic – that were adopted in relation to sex offenders were aimed at adjustment to that community. The idea was to 'strengthen the will', to build a bulwark that would stop 'a psychopathic nature' from succumbing to the 'vital and egoistical impulses' which had placed the community at risk. Religion and spiritual counsellors had a role to play here together with psychotherapy. This vision fitted in neatly with the moral frame of reference that determined the thoughts and actions of the ecclesiastical and religious authorities.

Amid this process of medicalization scarcely any thought was given to the victims of the abuse. At least, there are very few indications to that effect in the sources consulted by the Commission of Inquiry. The indications that do exist appear only in connection with the attention paid by treatment providers to their patients. The case of the priest from Roermond highlights this situation. The victims' names are noted in the medical records in Heiloo, in the personnel files and documents in the Secret Archives of the diocese, but apart from that, all that is mentioned is gender, age and location, along with a summary of the abuse and what followed. It was one case in particular that brought this priest to the attention of Vicar-General Feron. It prompted him to write a letter which shows how people thought in the mid-1940s about the damage that could ensue from the sexual abuse of minors.

Feron was convinced that the victims would be less troubled by what had happened to them if attention was kept to a bare minimum. The case involved a boy, presumably over the age of twelve; the abuse had taken place several years previously. Feron made confidential (*sub secreto*) inquiries about this boy through the head of the school where the abuse had taken place.

'I wish to inform you *sub secreto* that something happened to this boy in *materia sexti* [the sixth commandment: Thou shalt not commit adultery] for several years. The agent was [priest's name] who was there at that time. You know, this poor man is heavily neurotic and has made innumerable attempts to be cured in later years. [...] If the pupil [name] has grown into a well-balanced, calm and well-behaved boy, it seems to me better not to mention it to him. Only if you think that this history is having lasting effects might it then be prudent to say that [priest's name] was seriously ill with his nerves and is no longer performing duties.'

In this letter the perpetrator is dubbed a 'poor man' for whom the young victim is asked to show understanding – if he has been damaged by the incidents. Perhaps Feron was trying to free the victim from any feelings of guilt. Whatever the reason, this passage strikes modern readers as strange because the role of victim is reversed. The priest is described as someone who was 'seriously ill with his nerves' and who, despite constant attempts, was unable to get better. Feron seems to be only marginally interested in potential damage to the victim, who had to take comfort from hearing that the priest was no longer performing pastoral duties in the diocese.

At that time neither criminology nor psychiatry paid much attention to the victims.

It was not until the late 1950s, when criminologist Willem Nagel published his groundbreaking vision (for that time) in *Victimologie* (Victimology), that the plight of the victim was taken into consideration in the criminal justice process.²² In psychiatry the first indications that children are damaged by sexual abuse date from 1945. In an assessment of a priest from the Diocese of Haarlem who, as a curate, had sexually molested young boys, Heiloo-based psychiatrist Barnhoorn wrote: 'These things had such devastating implications for the future of these boys'.²³ Psychiatrist Kees Trimboos from Utrecht used less veiled language to describe the potential damage to children when he held an address on 'Homosexuality and Spiritual Care' for priests of the diaconate of Amsterdam on 15 November 1952. The text was printed in 1953 in the *Nederlandse Katholieke Stemmen*, a periodical for the priesthood.²⁴ In line with the state of knowledge at that time, Trimboos distinguished inborn or constitutional homosexuality from 'developed homosexuality' that could arise 'through some cause or another' during adolescence.

'This category includes, first of all, the tragic group of "messed-up" children – children who have been exposed to contacts with homosexual adults before adolescence and whose psycho-sexual development (before and during adolescence) slowly but surely edged towards homosexuality.'²⁵

In this address 'damage' was synonymous with the development of homosexuality. 26

There are signs of similar notions of damage in the correspondence of H.J. van Deursen, president of the major seminary in Warmond (Diocese of Haarlem). In 1956 Van Deursen had been approached by a curate about a parishioner who had been 'interfered with by a teacher when he was a boy at a minor seminary in North Limburg. The boy had understood very little of what was happening to him. The priest (teacher) had said it was not that bad, but the boy's respect for priests and the priesthood had been seriously dented'. The boy left the seminary four years later and 'drifted into the company of homosexuals' in Amsterdam. By this time he was convinced that it was because of the incidents at the seminary that 'he himself had developed sexually in the wrong way towards homosexuality'. According to Van Deursen 'only a good psychiatrist could reverse the course of sexual development, not priests'. He believed that this was within Trimbos's capability as a psychiatrist.

Behind the political scenes in the second half of the 1950s, while concern was growing about indecent behaviour in primary schools, the interests of minors was starting to figure more strongly in the judgements on child abusers. In 1956 a former friar from Tilburg who had been barred from teaching after being found guilty of indecent acts with children tried and failed to win the support of Siegfried Stokman, an influential politician in the Catholic People's Party. He asked Stokman to intervene on his behalf in his attempt to be reinstated as a teacher. Stokman contacted the superior at the Tilburg friary to find out more, but he could give Stokman no guarantee that the priest would not lapse into recidivism if he returned to teaching. For Stokman, the issue was cut and dried: this guarantee was essential in the 'interests of the children'.²⁷

Types of therapy

According to Carp, perpetrators of sexual abuse 'should not be equated with degenerates – those who were beneath contempt'. But they formed by their very nature a difficult group, amounting in his estimation to no more than two percent of the population, with only a tiny number who sought help themselves. He warned again that:

'only seldom can a physician bring about a cure for a fixed sexual aberration that can lead to criminal acts. All assertions that say otherwise should be treated with scepticism.'

What physicians could do, however, was try to 'instil a different attitude in the sufferer, to help him develop a greater degree of self-control, to strengthen his will, to accept his lot, to attain a deeper sense of responsibility and to reconcile himself to a mission which will provide compensation and satisfaction.'²⁸

Probation after a sentence or a course of psychiatric treatment as part of a TBR order was one of the methods employed by the criminal justice system to promote social reintegration. Carp stressed again in 1934 that 'the vast majority of probation cases concerned the sexual abuse of minors of the same or the opposite sex and indecent exposure'.²⁹

'People may think that things are still far from satisfactory and that this is just the beginning in many respects. This impression is entirely correct.'

Though he definitely cherished expectations for the probation system, Carp still believed that there would be cases that showed little or no improvement at the end.³⁰ There were barely any statistics and the ones that did exist offered – in his opinion – only 'an appearance of certainty, where in fact no certainty was possible'; for 'probation tasks are carried out in the well-understood interests of the community and with an awareness that we are fulfilling a duty to fallen fellow human beings. We should all understand better than ever before that those who have fallen deserve our help rather than our sympathy'.³¹

In *De psychopathieën* (The Psychopathies) he concentrated on the category of sex offenders who were so recidivist that they were deemed incurable, but not 'anti-social' and were therefore in need of help. Castration, already tried in Germany, Switzerland and the US, could be a 'remedy'.³² In 1938 the Ministry of Justice set out the conditions under which this surgical procedure could be performed as a therapeutic measure. These conditions echoed what Carp had said in his manual in 1934: such an operation could only be performed on a voluntary basis and provided the persons involved understood the consequences. After that, castrations were performed under his authority in the clinic of Leiden University.³³ Under no circumstances could the castration procedure be part of a punishment or a trade-in for a commuted sentence, a shorter prison term or a suspended sentence.³⁴ The 'sufferer-cum-offender' was not in a position to 'sufficiently comprehend' the actual extent of 'a therapeutic surgical procedure such as castration and all its consequences' [in italics in the original].³⁵ And it was not the physician's job to punish, but to stand vigil over the 'mental health' of the sufferer. Castration was a last resort, aimed at the prevention of 'acts which are catastrophic for the sufferer and the community'.³⁶

Under Carp's supervision the priest from Roermond underwent this therapeutic procedure in the early 1940s.³⁷ Initially, he refused to even consider Carp's proposal of castration as therapy. It seems to have become a serious option when he yet again molested a young girl during the period that he was receiving therapy from Carp. The operation did not, however, have the desired effect – on the contrary. Medical insights at that time indicated that castration only reduced the sexual urge and did not remove it.³⁸ It should have been followed by a hormone treatment programme, but no-one knew that at the time, so it was not applied.³⁹ The priest continued to display inappropriate sexual and other behaviour, only he was no longer fixated on minors.

'Such a pity about your nerves'

The report that Feron sent to the medical director at Heiloo in 1953 suggests that he was almost at his wits' end with regard to this priest. It also shows that the church leaders were assimilating medico-psychiatric terminology:

'As far as the rest of his personality is concerned, you could say that he is a good man, who does really want to remain a priest, not unintelligent, but nothing can come to fruition because of the fundamental disharmony.'

Feron's hope that the priest would be admitted to Heiloo was in vain. It was not a suitable place for him. By now, even though sexual abuse of minors was no longer the problem, he was a serious source of concern to the diocese. The next part of the story is still illustrative of the standpoint adopted by the authorities in the Diocese of Roermond in this notorious case. 'Such a pity about your nerves,' Feron wrote to him at the end of the 1950s in response to continued requests for a position in the parish or the ministry to the sick. Piet van Odijk (1912-1991), Feron's successor, inherited the case upon Feron's death in 1958. He took up contact with Carp and his fellow-professor of psychiatry in Nijmegen, J.J.G. Prick (1909-1978). Van Odijk told Carp that reassigning this priest to pastoral duties would be a 'huge experiment' – no matter how modest and subordinate the position. He wrote to Prick: 'I believe that this person is still very sick and unsuited to pastoral duties.' But if Prick recommended otherwise then he would accede. Prick agreed that 'active pastoral duties' were out of the question but added that it would be disastrous if a man with such an 'erratic personality structure' had nothing to do. Perhaps a supervised job in a library or among archives would offer a solution. 'Supervised' was apparently key, because in the letter accompanying the report and diagnosis Prick stated that the priest had also displayed 'inappropriate sexual behaviour' during his stay in the clinic.

Although this assessment offered no basis whatsoever for a new chance in a spiritual ministry, the priest was still given one in the early 1960s. Within a short space of time he had made himself impossible – not, as it happens, by inappropriate sexual behaviour towards minors. The diocese withdrew him, acknowledged that he was 'seriously ill' and 'too ill [...] to lead a parish'. It also recognized that 'people [could have] no respect for this priest any more, nor for the Church'. Although Prick, urged by his patient, tried one more time to get productive work for him, it was clear that after twenty years the diocese had had enough. Vicar-General Van Odijk wrote to Prick saying that the Bishop of Roermond would not drop the priest altogether, but that he did fall into the category where there was, unfortunately, 'no solution'. 'You cannot ask us to do something that we regard as totally irresponsible,' said Van Odijk, who had clearly drawn a line under any prospect of work for the priest in the diocese.

The Bless Report (1953)

In the same year (1953) when Feron tried without success to have this priest admitted to the St Willibrordusstichting psychiatric hospital in Heiloo, the Diocese of Roermond received complaints from priests who had been admitted for treatment to the Roman Catholic psychiatric institution of St Servatius in Venray. These complaints prompted Bishop Lemmers of Roermond to order an investigation. The aim was to ascertain whether there was a better way of treating priests with minor nervous and neurotic disorders than placing them in a

psychiatric institution. Priests could admit themselves voluntarily to St Servatius for tests and treatment but were loath to do so for fear of stigmatization.⁴⁰

Monsignor Lemmens asked H.J.F.M. Bless (1903-1974) to conduct the investigation. Bless had been a leading figure in pastoral psychiatry since before the Second World War. He had been rector of Voorburg psychiatric clinic in Vught since 1930 and taught at the major seminary in Haaren. Not only was the thick manual, *Pastoraal psychiatrie* (Pastoral Psychiatry), that he published on the subject in 1934 reissued in the Netherlands in 1945, a French translation appeared in 1936 with further editions in 1938, 1951 and 1958⁴¹, and in 1942 a Spanish version even appeared, based on the second edition of the French translation.⁴² Bless's work was also reviewed in prestigious international theological journals.⁴³ Needless to say, his reputation extended beyond the Netherlands.⁴⁴

In the Netherlands he is regarded as one of the pioneers behind the modernization of mental healthcare in Roman Catholic circles.⁴⁵ In 1951 the Dutch bishops appointed him mental health advisor to the Association of Roman Catholic Institutions for the Insane and the Mentally Disabled (*Vereniging van R. K. Gestichten en Inrichtingen voor Krankzinnigen en Zwakzinnigen*).⁴⁶ Bless had given lectures in the 1930s for the Association of Roman Catholic Physicians Employed in Mental Institutions (*Vereniging van rooms-katholieke Gestichtsartsen*) on 'the responsibility of sexual psychopaths' and had published papers on the subject in the *R.K. Artsenblad*, a journal for Roman Catholic physicians. In the 1930s he put his head above the parapet when he argued for psychiatric assessments for candidate priests.⁴⁷

Bless submitted his report on 18 December 1953 and Lemmens passed it on to his fellow-bishops early in 1954.⁴⁸ Although never intended for this purpose, the Bless Report came to play a role in a discussion on 'psychopaths' via the influence of Monsignor J.A. Geerdinck, the official at the ecclesiastical court of the Diocese of Utrecht, who used the term to describe priests who had engaged in so many acts of sexual indecency that they could no longer be assigned to active duties.⁴⁹ Both the report and the subsequent decision-making process are relevant factors in the attempts to address the issue of priests who had displayed inappropriate sexual behaviour.

This decision-making took place at the Dutch Conference of Bishops in 1954 and 1955 and in the very young umbrella organization of major superiors from some thirty religious orders and congregations of priests in the Netherlands. In addition, representatives from both bodies met to discuss the issue and the report.⁵⁰ The attention paid by both bodies to what were categorized as 'aberrant priests and brothers' is documented in correspondence, reports of meetings and confidential circulars. This was only one of the categories that Bless had addressed in his report. In fact, in the report it embraced a very small group which – despite its size – still posed a serious problem for the Archdiocese of Utrecht at that time. The fore-mentioned sources also provide an idea of the expectations and demands that the

church governors set for psychiatrists who were responsible for the care and treatment for this group.

According to Bless, thirty-four priest-patients were examined, hospitalized or treated every year in the seven Roman Catholic mental institutions which he had investigated in the Netherlands. He split this group into categories: patients with mild nervous disorders (neurotics) who benefited from a temporary stay, and chronic patients, whom he divided into geriatric and psychiatric – which included the ‘psychopaths’.⁵¹ Bless counted around fifteen patients in the first category. More suitable accommodation was now being sought for them. He placed the rest in the second category, without specifying numbers – not even for the ‘psychopaths’, which his report barely touches on, much to the chagrin of the Utrecht official Geerdinck: ‘And I was under the impression that this was exactly the problem that was worrying the bishops most: what on earth are we to do with these unfortunates?’⁵² All that Bless had said was that they should not be placed together, otherwise they would influence one another. Geerdinck advised Coadjutor-Archbishop Alfrink that the ‘bishops collectively’ should look for a ‘place where those priests in need of strict supervision could be accommodated in such a way that they no longer remain in the community; preferably in an existing psychiatric institution, firstly to keep up a certain appearance that these priests are "very stressed", that they are "psychopaths", and secondly because most of the cases really are of a pathological nature.’⁵³

‘Religiosi aberrantes’

On 11 May 1954 the Association of Religious Priests in the Netherlands (*Samenwerking Nederlandse Priestreligieuzen*) sent a circular to the major superiors about ‘the psychiatric treatment of priests’.⁵⁴ This topic had been on the agenda of the Annual General Meeting in October of the previous year. The circular stated that the question had also been discussed at the ‘most recent Conference of Bishops’. Reporting on these discussions, the circular connects ‘overstressed fellow priests’ with ‘sexual and other aberrations’: ‘The bishops discussed the difficulties presented by priests who could not be allowed to continue everyday duties because of sexual and other aberrations.’ According to the same report, the bishops discussed ‘collective accommodation in a psychiatric institution in the vicinity of a monastery, because a separate programme of spiritual re-education was desirable’. The second point of discussion was the ‘choice of a psychiatrist, who can prescribe the right kind of occupational therapy’.

The circular shows what Geerdinck was required to do *viz.*, find out whether bishops and superiors could arrive at a joint solution ‘assuming [...] that the superiors in the Netherlands are experiencing the same difficulties as the Esteemed Bishops with these kinds of patients’. The secretary, Th. Keulemans o.carm, specified the task further for the (vice-)provincials asking whether ‘[...] priest-patients (=psychopaths) who could not continue to work because of sexual aberrations were also a problem for the superiors [...]’. If the superiors felt they

needed a policy line in such matters, then they could always take a lead from the discussions at the autumn meeting in 1953:

‘It was deemed necessary to find a suitable psychiatrist with some knowledge of monastic life and an approach that respects the dignity of the priest, even those who may have committed a misdemeanour’.

The discussions on this subject during the General Meeting of the Association of Dutch Religious Priests in June 1954 are a relevant factor in the evaluation of the response of the church governors to these direct responsibilities. Though the higher superiors of religious orders and priest congregations were determined to shield priests with a diagnosis of ‘psychopathic’ from stigmatization, they realized that looking after them in their own monasteries would not be conducive to a cure – which was, after all, the whole point of the exercise. And whereas placing this group in a central institution in the Netherlands would lead to stigmatization, sending them abroad was hardly a solution either since cases ‘that had come before the criminal court would then fall outside the justice system and could not be compelled to spend time improving themselves in an institution’.⁵⁵ That was not what the provincials wanted in 1954.

As it was unclear what the bishops – represented by Geerdinck – really did want, the General Meeting asked two priest-psychologists from their own ranks, the Jesuit Paul Ellerbeck (1908-1987) and the Franciscan Wilbert Stoop (1914-1994), for recommendations.⁵⁶ This resulted in a report about the ‘religiosi aberrantes’ from ‘the advisory committee on psychiatric and other problems’ on 3 December 1954.⁵⁷ Both priest-psychologists may well have encountered cases from their own practice, but they would not be lured into making any statements about the size of this group or the diversity of the psychiatric problems within it. In a conversation with Keulemans, the Association secretary, Ellerbeck had again stressed that as these were ‘extremely delicate cases’ the treatment had to combine ‘professional expertise’ with ‘a deep love and esteem for the priesthood’.

In their view, monasteries were inappropriate places for this group since they were ‘neither mental-hygiene centres nor centres of religious rehabilitation nor nursing homes’. They saw more potential in a ‘central home in the vicinity of a monastery, with priests who are particularly suited to this kind of work and where proper and discreet medical help is on hand’. If the home also catered for priests in transit or geriatric priests, the risk of stigmatization would indeed be far lower. But they were still undecided, so they opted for the *Secours Sacerdotale* model which had been successfully tried in France. The *Secours Sacerdotale* model consisted of a group of priests, laypeople, lawyers (ecclesiastical and civil law), trusted medical staff and social workers, who took on the care of ‘such priests’ under the supervision of the vicar-general or the rector of a major seminary.⁵⁸ Exchanges and reciprocal help from the members of these small multidisciplinary support groups in combination with prayer formed the primary strategies for the priests in question.

Ellerbeek and Stoop felt that the model had a good a chance of success in the Netherlands, adding that it had a lot in common with existing private initiatives, run by priests – with some psychological training – who usually worked with psychiatrists who had proven themselves ‘suitable’ for this kind of work. Bundling such initiatives would improve the ‘prospects of help’ [for the priests]. In this system priests and members of religious orders who required special nursing or treatment would be cared for in houses ‘where specific religious guidance can be provided or specific medical treatment can be administered and where people in therapy can be nursed’.

Division into categories

Geerdinck studied the information and submitted a concrete proposal to the bishops on 22 January 1955.⁵⁹ This shows that the discussions in the separate bodies had, at all events, resulted in a sharper division between the ‘priest-psychopaths’ and the broader group of priests with milder and often temporary mental health problems. Geerdinck’s proposal was to look into and get advice on where and how the first and most problematic category could be treated. The St Willibrordusstichting in Heiloo was named as the preferred location and remained so. There was nothing in the decision-making to explain why.

However, several reasons may be inferred. Since the late 1940s medical director De Smet had been running an interdisciplinary team, which included non-medical staff. The St Willibrordusstichting set itself apart from other psychiatric institutions/hospitals by differentiated and specialized treatment.⁶⁰ The Ministry of Justice also sent TBR patients there. The aim of the treatment was to bring about a ‘responsible return to society’.⁶¹ The staff at the St Willibrordusstichting had been gaining experience in this field since 1930 by treating forensic patients in the Paulus Pavilion. Since the 1950s there had been places there for fifty of the – on average – 560 males sentenced to TBR every year, around 250 of whom were Catholic. Most of those who were admitted to the St Willibrordusstichting were sex offenders under the age of thirty. De Smet had worked out in 1951 that the average stay of these patients was only eighteen months and that only 15 percent or so were recidivists. In other words, the St Willibrordusstichting had an excellent track record in the mid-1950s, precisely at the time when bishops and superiors had to decide what was to be done with people from their own ranks who had displayed sexually inappropriate behaviour.⁶²

Alfrink passed on Geerdinck’s proposal to the other bishops in his letter of 26 January 1955.⁶³ The attached notes of the Ordinaries of Roermond, Den Bosch, Breda and Haarlem suggest that the bishops were well-disposed towards it. Monsignor Lemmens of Roermond re-emphasized that the priests themselves still enjoyed a ‘certain freedom’ in this matter, just as every diocese ‘had the freedom’ to determine its own policy.⁶⁴ On 12 April 1955, Alfrink officially thanked Geerdinck for his efforts on behalf of the bishops. They appreciated his proposals, he said, but reserved the right to decide for themselves on a case-to-case basis whether to use the team at the St Willibrordusstichting. Alfrink stressed again, also on behalf of the other bishops, that this team would employ the utmost discretion. Autonomy and

discretion appear to be key terms in interactions with priest-patients who could not be kept in office because of 'sexual aberrations'.

The efforts of the Association of Dutch Religious Priests to establish a separate facility came to nothing because the target group was too small to justify the costs. Contrary to Geerdinck's recommendations, no real distinction was drawn between patients with a diagnosis of psychopathy and other psychiatric patients. Hence, the term 'psychiatric patients', when used in this circle, could harbour a whole myriad of mental health problems. There was a strong tendency towards subjecting 'every deviant person to a thorough examination', preferably at the St Willibrordusstichting, where there was a skilled, multidisciplinary staff. The costs of this examination, which would last an estimated six weeks, were offset against the recommendations. In many cases it would be 'cheaper [...] than shutting a patient away somewhere for a fixed period of time'. The bills were sent to the respective religious community or diocese. The recommendations 'from the St Willibrordusstichting' formed the basis for further treatment which would surely be available in another five or six institutions.

Residential care was not necessary in the cases that the St Willibrordusstichting regarded as 'eligible' for castration.⁶⁵ Superiors had to stay in regular contact with people who were 'to all intents and purposes, interned'. 'A few centres with a team (doctors, psychologists, lawyers) that could advise and warn would be desirable for cases which had only recently become a threat.' Secretary Keulemans saw opportunities here for collaborative efforts by bishops and provincials.⁶⁶

Sex offences, religion and the mental healthcare debate

As mentioned earlier, the Bless Report was commissioned by Bishop Lemmens of Roermond who had received complaints from priests about the residential conditions and treatment in the psychiatric institution of St Servatius in Venray, founded in 1905.⁶⁷ The medical director F.M. Havermans (1907-1984) had been appointed in 1944 and was a lawyer as well as a psychiatrist. In the same year as the Bless Report, 1953, he rekindled a debate that had been vigorously waged between lawyers, criminologists and moral theologians prior to the Second World War: the nature of the relationship between criminality and religion.⁶⁸ Havermans published a book called *Over criminaliteit onder katholieken* (Criminality among Catholics)⁶⁹ in which he referred to the annual address by F.J.J. Buytendijk, professor of psychology at Utrecht University, at the annual meeting of the Central Catholic Association for Public Mental Health (*Katholieke Centrale Vereniging voor Geestelijke Volksgezondheid*) in Utrecht on 5 June 1952.⁷⁰ Upon this occasion the new Catholic National Centre for Mental Healthcare (*Katholieke Nationale Bureau voor Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg, KNBGG*) was set up – with diocesan approval. This organization would play a direct role in the 1960s in the development of help and support for priests and members of religious orders with mental health and other problems.⁷¹

Buytendijk strengthened his case for developing mental healthcare for Catholics by pointing to the relatively high crime figures in this community. One notable detail is that he borrowed these figures from earlier publications by Havermans⁷² who, as a member of the committee for R. C. Physicians Employed in Mental Health Institutions, was part of the same board for the Catholic National Centre for Mental Healthcare, a sub-division of the very influential, not to mention fairly conservative Association of Roman Catholic Physicians. He was also a member of the National Mental Health Board (*Nationale Commissie voor Geestelijke Volksgezondheid*). Hitherto, the idea that a connection might exist between religion and crime had really only been discussed privately in academic circles or in professional publications.⁷³ Buytendijk's address, however, was reported in the press and led to some indignant headlines.⁷⁴ His views were rendered all the more contentious by his suggestion that there may be a connection between moral standards and the way Catholic children are raised by parents, priests and religious brothers at school: an unsatisfactory upbringing could cause psychological immaturity which could in turn lead to an increase in crime.⁷⁵

Havermans had suggested this as *one* of the explanations – summarized under the heading 'spiritual immaturity among Catholics' or 'psycho-infantilism'. He connected this 'immaturity' directly with the power and control exercised by priests and other clerics on the Catholic community and culture. He had built his theories on the basis of one thousand reports which, in his capacity as a forensic professional, he had compiled for the Ministry of Justice about Catholic – or self-styled Catholic – delinquents in Limburg.⁷⁶ In his thesis he points out that there is a disproportionately high percentage of Catholics – mainly from Limburg – among criminals and sex offenders. The sexual offence statistics were higher in Limburg and Brabant than in other parts of the country and fifty percent of crime nationwide was committed by Catholics; a disproportional share, since Catholics accounted for around 38 percent of the population.⁷⁷

Ever since the end of the 1940s the crime statistics and the percentage of sexual offences within these statistics had been giving cause for concern in the Netherlands. Limburg was indeed top of the list.⁷⁸ In 1949 A.P.Th.M. Kneepkens, deputy public prosecutor in Utrecht, said in an interview that he could not say how the crime figures for the district of Utrecht compared with the national figures, but he did describe the number of sex offences in Utrecht, especially those involving young children, as 'alarming'.⁷⁹ Although Havermans' ideas on crime among Catholics were not always consistent or convincing they certainly managed to reach a wider audience. There was immediate disquiet in Catholic circles. A debate among a few sociologists of religion revolved entirely around the figures that Havermans had used.⁸⁰ *Credo*, the diocesan newspaper of Roermond, filled by Monsignor Feron, spoke of uneasiness in Limburg and reported the first vehement rejoinders to Havermans' analysis.⁸¹

Two aspects of Havermans' work are relevant when evaluating the influence of medically trained psychiatrists on the approach and response of the Roman Catholic Church to sexual

abuse. In 1951 he published explicitly and again for a wider audience his experiences as a forensic psychiatrist.⁸² He argued that the courts depended on psychiatrists when reaching judgements on neuroses and psychoses; the same applied when they had to decide on the nature, level and duration of supervision.⁸³ Essentially, what Havermans was describing is now established practice in the Dutch justice system. This information is also important when considering the actions of the church governors and leaders of religious orders. The archive search for cases of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church revealed that ecclesiastical and religious governors were likewise dependent on psychiatric expertise when deciding what to do with priests or members of an order who had sexually abused minors. If prosecution was imminent, the psychiatrists were an important link as they advised the investigatory judge. Moreover, the sentences sought by the public prosecutor were based on the psychiatrist's report on the defendant's mental state. The archive search also revealed, however, that the agencies in question – the investigatory judge, the public prosecutor, the probation services, the consultant psychiatrist – also involved the ecclesiastical and religious governors in their deliberations and assigned them a role in the execution of a (suspended) sentence or a provisional dismissal.

Here is an illustration. In the summer of 1959, J. van Baar, medical director of Huize Padua, assessed a Jesuit priest at the request of the investigatory judge in Roermond. The priest had been arrested because he had removed all the blankets and clothing belonging to young boys who were guests at the Jesuit boarding house, thus ensuring that their genitals were exposed. This had happened within forty-five minutes, during which time he had entered more than forty rooms, switching on lights here and there. 'Anyone who does something like that must definitely be disturbed,' was Van Baar's conclusion. But the priest was not sexually aroused, he 'didn't even have an erection'.

'He encroached on the masculinity of the boys only insofar as was necessary to see them naked. In all probability this was not an act of sexual molestation in a homosexual or paedophile sense. What the accused wanted was to see as many genitals as possible.'⁸⁴

Van Baar had recommended that the case be provisionally dismissed provided the individual in question underwent psychiatric therapy for as long as the consultant psychiatrist deemed necessary. Then he could be re-assigned a position in agreement with the generals, which would remove all fears of a repetition. In his opinion there was a chance that the psychiatric treatment could free the priest of 'the unhealthy symptoms that induced him to commit the acts. If he were sentenced the prognosis would be poor because he would have to leave the society.'

The investigatory judge told the psychiatrist, however, that if the Jesuit was found unfit to plead he would be unable to pass sentence and the case would not be provisionally dismissed as Van Baar had suggested. The plea was then changed to 'diminished responsibility'. The Jesuit was placed in Huize Padua at the expense of the order and remained there for almost a year. There are no reports of recidivism.

The contribution of publishing psychiatrists such as Havermans to the way the sexual abuse of minors was addressed also included profiling for potential offenders. Havermans' work illustrates a shift in the profile of the perpetrators of child sex abuse between the early 1950s and the start of the 1960s.⁸⁵ In his *Opstellen over forensische psychiatrie* (Essays on Forensic Psychiatry, 1951) most paedophiles were heterosexual and intellectually challenged, either congenitally or through old age. More than ten years later he revised this profile in *Vijfduizend verdachten* (Five Thousand Suspects, 1963) by identifying the 'priest-teacher' as a potential paedophile.⁸⁶ Around this time, child safety was becoming more of a public issue. In 1965 the Catholic women's magazine *Beatrijs* reported that around 70 percent of sexual offences were committed by someone known to the child. These included people 'of standing' in society. Youth leaders and teachers were among the high-risk categories. Anyone who committed such an offence was 'a psychopath, a lunatic, a man who should be sent to an institution for treatment'.⁸⁷ Parents could arm their offspring against sexual abuse by adults by providing a close-knit family environment and proper sex education.

Moral responsibility and competing competencies

Professional practitioners such as Havermans and Buytendijk identified some fairly elementary problems in their own Catholic circles while the Roman Catholic mental healthcare system was under construction. Neither observed the discretion that the church authorities deemed desirable in these matters. Bless, and the priests Ellerbeck and Stoop, on the other hand, stressed the need for the utmost discretion regarding the psychiatric treatment given to priests and members of religious orders in general. They described the treatment programmes as personal and delicate (Bless Report) or they spoke of extremely delicate cases (advice by Ellerbeck and Stoop) in which psychiatrists should apply 'professional expertise' combined with a deep love and esteem for the priesthood; for even though they were, technically speaking, patients, they were still priests, who were higher in the divinely ordained socio-religious hierarchy than the psychiatrists who were treating them.⁸⁸

Within that scheme of things the treatment providers were members of the laity and would always remain so. Accordingly, the priests – also as patients – were set above the brothers who owned and managed the psychiatric institutions until the late 1960s and who were responsible for nursing them. When priests in St Servatius found that they were sharing a ward with lay persons and were being nursed by lay professions they complained to Monsignor Lemmens who duly asked Bless to investigate.

Medico-psychiatric discussions on psychiatric problems, including psychopathy, touched directly on the question of assuming moral responsibility for one's own behaviour and on questions of competencies between spiritual counsellors and psychiatrists. These questions cast a direct influence on the decision-making on psychiatric patients by the priesthood and religious orders, also on those who had sexually abused minors. During the years that the

Dutch bishops and the major superiors deliberated on what was to be done with these patients, a much broader question was playing in the background: did people with psychological and psychiatric problems actually have a free will? This was definitely not a side issue, for the principle of free will was the lynchpin in the whole system of Catholic morality. Was it right to hold an individual responsible for acts that were not committed out of free will? And when did diminished sanity and hence diminished responsibility come into play?

The same questions were being discussed in France and Italy.⁸⁹ At the end of the 1940s the tension between the principles of mental health and morality in the Netherlands was thrust into the foreground by the Terruwe Affair – which was inseparable from the more general issue of psychiatric treatment for priests and members of religious orders. That was also the reason for the direct interventions from Rome. A summarized version of the Terruwe Affair is provided below.

In 1949 the Bishop of Den Bosch, Monsignor Mutsaerts, ordered an inquiry into the views of Nijmegen lawyer and moral theologian Willem J.A.J. Duynstee c.s.s.r. (1886-1968) and his protégée Anna Terruwe (1911-2004). Terruwe, who had studied medicine in Utrecht and specialized in psychiatry, had just been awarded a PhD for a thesis entitled *De neurose in het licht van de rationeelpsychologie* (Neuroses in the Light of Rational Psychology) in which she tried to link the Catholic image of Man as conceived by the mediaeval theologian Thomas Aquinas – Man as a rational being who pursues God's will through reason – with the repression theories of Freud. Freud had not been well-received in international Catholic circles because of his ideas on pansexuality and determinism. Terruwe defended her thesis with a Catholic theory on neuroses under the supervision of Carp, the previously mentioned professor of psychiatry at Leiden University. She built on what her mentor Duynstee had written on repression in 1935.⁹⁰ Duynstee, who was professor of penal and criminal procedure law, and later jurisprudence, at the Roman Catholic University of Nijmegen had a lively confessional practice which, like the treatment practices of Terruwe, had been under investigation by the church since 1949.⁹¹

Duynstee and Terruwe used the principle of free will to refute Freud, who maintained that individuals were at the mercy of their own desires. However, their Thomistic theories on repression prompted some moral theologians – followed by Catholic doctors – to comment that they may have taken individual moral responsibility to irresponsible extremes.⁹² These comments were rebutted by a four-man committee instituted by Monsignor Mutsaerts and chaired by Frans Feron, president of the major seminary at Roermond and vicar-general of the Diocese of Roermond. The other committee members were Vicar-General W.M.J. Koenraadt (1896-1973) from the Diocese of Breda, who had lectured in moral theology at the major seminary in Hoeven for twenty years, the president of the major seminary in Warmond (Diocese of Haarlem), H.J. van Deursen (1896-1958) and Bernard van den Hurk (1905-1964), who taught at the major seminary in Haaren (Diocese of Den Bosch).⁹³

The responsibility for this investigation rested with the Dutch bishops. However, the Holy See in Rome was keeping a watchful eye on developments and sent a letter in December 1949 saying that it wished to be informed if no solution or remedy could be found through the authority vested in the bishops.⁹⁴ This implied that the Holy See recognized the authority of the Dutch bishops in the matter and would only act if necessary.⁹⁵ The letter from Archbishop De Jong of 28 December 1949 shows however that the responsibilities were somewhat complex. The bishops had instructed the above committee to conduct the investigation but the Holy See demanded that it take place behind closed doors. De Jong informed the Holy See that that the people that the committee wanted to question, both priests and doctors, either did not want to be questioned at all or did not want to be questioned by this committee.⁹⁶

The committee concentrated on determining whether Duynstee and Terruwe – pleading the interests of the patient’s mental health – had given counselling that contradicted Catholic moral teachings. Several complaints had been submitted to this effect; they were said to have encouraged people to perform sexual or sexually tinted acts, such as masturbation or looking at images of naked women. In the case of Duynstee the committee focused on the lively confessional practices that he ran for students and Catholics. In Terruwe’s case it focused on the psychotherapy that she had been practising in Nijmegen since 1945. In a statement in February 1950 Duynstee explained to the committee chaired by Feron that he believed it was permissible to engage in technically sinful acts such as masturbation provided they were in the interests of mental health. They would relieve the anxiety which caused or exacerbated neurotic symptoms. Fuelling this anxiety by constantly stressing that such acts were sinful would only have an adverse effect and increase the tension further.

Duynstee, in passing, delineated the competencies of priests and psychiatrists, saying that priests should not be too ready to sit in the psychiatrist’s chair.⁹⁷ At this juncture it was impossible for the committee to circumvent the question of where the division lay between spiritual care and mental healthcare, between morals and psychiatry. It conveyed Duynstee’s line of argument in the report it presented to the Dutch bishops in April 1950.⁹⁸ Duynstee is described in this report as impeccable in theory and practice and better equipped than anyone to treat the most delicate cases, not least through his association with ‘good Catholic psychiatrists’. He did a lot of good for ‘distressed souls’, according to the committee. Terruwe was also considered ‘good in all respects’, in person, theory and practice. According to the report, in her case, the inquiry revolved around a complaint that she had encouraged a patient to masturbate. Terruwe had replied that she never encouraged her patients to engage in objectively sinful acts. In this specific case the patient had asked her if, by masturbating, he had committed a mortal sin. She had said that he was not, because a mortal sin was committed out of free will and he was not acting out of free will because of his mental state. The committee was satisfied with this answer, which again highlighted the weak and even unfounded nature of the complaints that had prompted the inquiry.

Dependence of the ecclesiastical and religious governors on psychiatrists

In the first half of the 1950s the ecclesiastical governors and superiors turned to Catholic psychiatrists for enlightenment when confronted with serious problems relating to novices, priests or religious brothers under their responsibility. These problems were varied but usually bundled together under the heading of 'neuroses' or 'neurotic ailments'. Terms such as 'nervous exhaustion' or more commonly 'troubles' also appear in correspondence and files. It emerged from the Bless Report and from exchanges at the highest level of governance within the ecclesiastical province and the consultative body of the major superiors of male orders that such generalizations were sometimes used on purpose to shield individuals who had been diagnosed as 'psychopathic' by psychiatrists. It was nigh impossible to discern the nature of the problems in each case on the basis of the available material. In cases where this could actually be done there were no clear indications of sexual abuse. The psychiatric consultations as a whole should also be interpreted with caution. Again, these did not necessarily relate to problems of a sexual nature or sexual abuse.

The church governors sent their problem cases to Catholic psychiatrists with their own independent practices and to Roman Catholic psychiatric institutions. There was not much choice in the first half of the 1950s. There was a general shortage of Roman Catholic doctors, particularly specialists – including psychiatrists. The Catholic psychiatrists referred to in the sources are often the same people. Some were the medical directors of institutions with their own small practices, such as Havermans (St Servatius, Venray) and G.B.J. Janssens (Voorburg, Vught), who were both employed as forensic psychiatrists. There is also regular mention of professors of psychiatry such as Carp (Leiden) and Prick (Nijmegen) besides privately established or practising psychiatrists such as Anna Terruwe and Kees Trimbos, who rank among the 'spiritual liberators' of Catholic Netherlands.⁹⁹

In 1955 Trimbos criticized mandatory celibacy.¹⁰⁰ Two years previously he had drawn attention to 'some forms of paedophilia among members of religious communities who, acting from a misunderstood and misplaced prudence, sometimes display an otherworldliness in sexuality that, humanly speaking, is bound to lead to a fixation at a very immature and infantile level'.¹⁰¹ By the mid-1950s the news that psychiatrists were advising church governors and superiors in administratively awkward – sometimes painful – problems had leaked to other countries. This may partly explain the tighter controls on this practice from 1956 (discussed in detail below). The archive search, ordered by the Commission of Inquiry, revealed that a number of international orders and congregations from the Dutch province were entirely open towards the governing bodies about the involvement of psychiatrists. It was known internationally that novices and members of these organizations consulted psychiatrists about mental problems, which included difficulties with and violations of the vow of chastity. Such consultations could also be taken on board in the selection of candidates who had given superiors cause for doubt. Psychiatrists were also consulted by individuals who wished to leave the community – either of their own accord or

because they were strongly advised to do so by their superiors. In the first half of the 1950s recommendations and arguments from psychiatrists were still being freely applied in requests to be relieved of vows, a necessary precondition for leaving an order.

Usually two experts were called in: the father confessor and the psychiatrist. In religious orders, congregations of priests and brothers established under canon law, any requests to be relieved of vows had to be ratified by the superior general, who was also informed when a psychiatrist as well as a father confessor had been involved in the preliminary process.

There is one classic example that shows how this knowledge travelled beyond the Netherlands to the superior general in Rome, where the part of the Holy See that was responsible for religious orders was closely monitoring events. In 1952 a brother from the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in the Brakkenstein provincialate was arrested by the police.¹⁰² The arrest took place at the request of the police in Amsterdam, where the brother had allegedly sexually abused young boys. His psychiatric records revealed that the incidents involved sexual contacts with male prostitutes under the age of 21.¹⁰³ There was, in effect, no question that the brother had abused his position or was guilty of sexual abuse. What is particularly relevant in this case, however, is the communication between the provincial superior and the superior general in Rome, who reminded the Dutch provincial superior that the Roman congregation for the religious order insisted on greater vigilance. He further stressed that, as superior general in Rome, he should be kept informed of 'difficult cases' like these. Finally, this case is also relevant for the practical, but informal allocation of tasks among psychiatrists. The provincial superior had sent the individual in question to Terruwe, who quickly called a halt to the treatment because he was, in her opinion, 'psychopathic' and would be better placed in the St Willibrordusstichting psychiatric hospital in Heiloo.¹⁰⁴

In the first half of the 1950s Heiloo appears to have served as a research clinic, as Geerdinck, following the example of Bless, had initially suggested. It was used for both diocesan priests and brothers from religious orders. Judging from a case in the Diocese of Roermond, this practice continued into the second half of the 1960s. Feron's successor, Van Odijk, asked psychiatrist De Smet from the St Willibrordusstichting to observe a priest from this diocese and, if necessary, admit him for treatment. The priest was at risk of becoming embroiled in a scandal because of 'things' which were 'very punishable by law and could have very unpleasant consequences for him personally'. The case was actually about contacts with six altar boys and giving boys lifts in his car, much to the bewilderment of parents. The fact that this priest did not seem to comprehend the inappropriate and risk-laden nature of his behaviour was sufficient reason to send him on sick leave and to book a consultation for him with De Smet.¹⁰⁵

Heiloo was not the best place for psychiatric patients that needed long-term hospitalization. This was likewise true of the St Jacobus institution in Wassenaar, categorized by Bless in his report as an institution that specialized in neurological problems, where patients were

treated and not nursed. There were other facilities for long-term care. The Bless Report (1953) listed five which admitted 'neurotics' and chronically ill priest-patients. Bless not only declared them suitable or unsuitable but defined the groups of patients. Huize Overdonk, which was run by the Brothers of Our Lady of Lourdes in the municipality of Dongen, was described, for example, as a place for 'quiet, nervous patients'. St Joseph's in Apeldoorn, like St Servatius in Venray, was unsuitable for neurotic patients because the treatment was designed for the chronically sick. St Paschalis in Oostrum, which was connected to St Servatius, had a very limited capacity and was primarily for priests with an alcohol addiction. St Bavo in Noordwijkerhout, a Roman Catholic psychiatric institution, is also on the list, but is not discussed.

Traditionally, Huize Padua in Boekel (Brabant) was where priests and members of male religious orders were sent when, for some reason or another, they could no longer be assigned duties. It was suitable for more serious cases, according to Bless, but ill-equipped for the category of neurotics that would benefit from temporary hospitalization and treatment. As we shall see, Huize Padua did not have much of a reputation among clerics. The bishops and superiors knew that priests with diverse problems were clustered together there. It was a situation that was regarded as most undesirable, given the risk of stigmatization.

Huize Padua was run by brothers of the Hospitaller Brothers of St John of God for general hospital nursing who had been trained in psychiatric nursing.¹⁰⁶ Around forty priests and brothers were accommodated more or less separately from the other male inmates in a building called the Heerenhuis. The building retained this name after it was formally dropped in 1932 and was converted into a first-class, open unit where priests and ordained members of religious orders were placed at the expense of their respective communities.¹⁰⁷ Most of them were males suffering from dementia, whose failing mental faculties might have tarnished the image of the priesthood. They came from different dioceses, orders and congregations and were known as 'non-active boarder-priests'. For them, Huize Padua was the end of the line. Huize Padua was also where priests were sent who were deemed 'incurable', mostly alcoholics. But it also housed priests who had sexually abused minors and had been temporarily or permanently withdrawn from pastoral duties. The priests' wing in Huize Padua might best be likened to a 'house of disgrace',¹⁰⁸ which has reportedly never existed in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁹

Sources from the Archdiocese of Utrecht dated 1953 – the year of the Bless report – offer a glimpse of the situation in Huize Padua. There is a correspondence between Geerdinck and Coadjutor-Archbishop Alfrink about a priest who was relieved of his duties because he was a 'woman chaser'. The priest was sent for examination and treatment to the psychiatrist Hanrath, who was attached to the Antoniushoeve in Voorburg. He was then transferred to Huize Padua, which, according to Hanrath, was not the most appropriate place for him. Hanrath's opinion was endorsed by the priest's father confessor, who had painted Geerdinck

a somewhat sad picture of a few dozen priests who were staying in Huize Padua at that time. There was no selection procedure, only the 'troublesome ones' were shut away in the psychiatric unit. The others sat together: listless, drooling old men, dishevelled and neglected. Some of them didn't even know that they were priests.¹¹⁰

An unequivocal warning: the Monitum of 1956

The years 1953 and 1954 are associated with a final show of triumphalism in the history of Catholicism in the Netherlands.¹¹¹ The highlights were the celebrations in 1953 to mark the centenary of the restoration of the diocesan hierarchy – deliberately kept low-key out of respect for the victims of the flood disaster earlier that year – and the Mandement of 1954, whereby the episcopate returned to a kind of pre-war form of top-down communication about commandments and prohibitions – a move that was totally out of step with the level of development and education of its own grass roots. The problems addressed in the Mandement were blamed on a modernizing society. The main concerns were the steady decline in church attendance and disloyalty to Catholic organizations.¹¹² The solutions, which had been formulated by the bishops, were rooted in the age-old principle that unity must be preserved within the confessional group. These church leaders had not yet worked out isolation as a strategy and were still intent on preventing criticism of the Mother Church by alternative thinkers come what may.

The Dutch bishops were under heavy pressure. In October 1953 Rome had imposed a reorganization of the dioceses as a response to what it regarded as a weakening of the Church's hold on the Catholic community in the Netherlands. One concern that remained unnamed, but which still figured strongly and would receive closer attention from Rome, was the role of the governing bodies in keeping Dutch Catholics on the right path. It is difficult to see this concern and the way it was monitored as separate from the psychiatric treatment administered to priests and members of religious orders, whether or not for inappropriate behaviour. The correspondence between the Dutch episcopate and the internuncio and the church institutions shows that it centred mainly on the quality of the priests. In the eyes of Rome the fact that some were 'neurotics' and 'psychopaths' pointed to shortcomings in the selection and training processes.

At all events, since 1955 the Holy See had been formally apprised of the talks between the bishops and major superiors about the psychiatric patients in their own ranks. Sources from the archives of the Diocese of Breda indicate that the papal internuncio Paolo Giobbe had sent a letter to Coadjutor-Archbishop Alfrink in January 1954, asking for the 'formal list of decisions' from the Conference of Dutch Bishops. In contrast with similar conferences in other ecclesiastical provinces the Conference of Dutch Bishops had never been established canonically and hence did not actually have the status that Giobbe had assigned to it – no doubt upon the instigation of the Holy See.¹¹³ This somewhat obscure status explains not only why, according to the Dutch bishops, the collective decisions were not enforceable by law, but also why the internuncio was not present at these conferences.

It cannot be concluded with certainty from the sources in the diocesan archives whether the request for a formal list of decisions in early 1954 was connected with the pending reorganization of the ecclesiastical province in the Netherlands. Nor is it clear whether it was connected with the fact that Rome was preparing to appoint a successor to Archbishop De Jong. Alfrink had been appointed his coadjutor in 1951, but without right to succession. This was a sign of limited trust, not just in Alfrink but in the entire episcopate.¹¹⁴

In July 1954 it was announced that the Jesuit Sebastiaan Tromp would be coming to the Netherlands.¹¹⁵ The reasons were fairly vague – it was said that he would be visiting Nijmegen University and the major diocesan seminaries on behalf of the Holy See. Eventually, besides monitoring the soundness of the theological training for new intakes of priests, Tromp turned his attention to the relationship between spiritual care and mental health with particular emphasis on Terruwe and Duynstee.

The request for the list of decisions caused the Dutch bishops embarrassment. Eventually Alfrink asked the Coadjutor-Bishop of Roermond, Monsignor J.M.J.A. Hanssen (1906-1958) to draw it up. The exercise took more than a year and Hanssen could not distribute the list to the other bishops until February 1955. Decision 10 reads:

‘On behalf of the bishops, Monsignor Geerdinck, official of the Archdiocese of Utrecht, will take up contact with the Association of Provincial Superiors of Orders and Congregations (*Vereeniging van Provinciale Oversten van Orden en Congregaties*) so that they can look together for suitable and more spacious accommodation for priests who have been relieved of their duties because of mental and moral problems. Pastor Bless from Oerle is thanked for his report and may reclaim his costs.’ [underlined in the original]

In plain terms, Rome now knew officially about the discussions regarding priests in difficulties. And this knowledge arrived while Tromp was still visiting the Netherlands. The archive search did not reveal whether any other information was exchanged.¹¹⁶

However, three directives did reach the Dutch bishops via internuncio Giobbe in 1956. The first came in June in the form of a letter, *Magna Equidem* (27-12-1955), which was sent to bishops worldwide and which raised the question of careful selection of candidates for the priesthood. Then, in July 1956, the Holy See instructed the episcopate to issue an official warning to the presidents of the diocesan seminaries: seminarists were to be prohibited from being treated by psychiatrists who endorsed the ‘unorthodox’ repression theory.¹¹⁷ Treatment by female psychiatrists was also prohibited. That could only apply to Anna Terruwe, the one person to be warned beforehand by Vicar-General Oomens from the Diocese of Den Bosch.¹¹⁸ The bishops published the *Monitum* in November 1956.¹¹⁹ In October the Dutch bishops, like their counterparts elsewhere, received a circular which against stressed that adherence to the sixth commandment had to be closely monitored via the confessional.¹²⁰

The Monitum had direct implications for the role of psychiatrists in the mental assessment and treatment of priests, seminarists and members of religious orders with psycho-sexual problems. Pastor Bless and his colleague Hein Ruygers, priest at the Diocese of Breda and teacher of psychology amongst others at the major seminary in Hoeven, disagreed with the way the situation was presented in the Monitum.¹²¹ They were chairman and secretary respectively of the Pastoral Orientation Committee (*Pastorale Oriënteringscommissie*) in the Catholic Charitable Association. In October 1957 they sent a letter to all bishops¹²² in which they claimed that the reprehensible views and practices described in the Monitum were not endorsed by 'any Catholic psychiatrist in the Netherlands [...], not even by most bonafide non-Catholic psychiatrists'. The committee members had, however, heard rumours about practices like those described in the Monitum. Upon further investigation they could be traced to advice that had been misinterpreted by patients or by spiritual counsellors 'who lacked the necessary insight'.

Bless and Ruygers objected to the 'generalizing tenor' and insinuating tone of the Monitum.

'The people who work in the field of mental hygiene feel repudiated. They believe that insinuations are made that they frequently and seriously fall short in their professional ethics, even though it is well-known how seriously and conscientiously people in the medical world adhere to time-honoured principles. Their trust has been shaken. Psychiatrists feel constrained in their academic efforts and damaged in their practice. They feel that patients have greatly deteriorated, as they too have become aware of the content of the Monitum; the essential trust in the physician has been undermined. This will not assist the healing process. Many clerics who are not sufficiently acquainted with this material have again been made to feel insecure and no longer dare, when necessary, to refer penitents to a psychiatrist. The Catholic professionals who have a difficult job of work to do in this field cannot do without external support, particularly from the ecclesiastical leaders. They would have liked to have received a word of encouragement from Rome, expressing confidence in their efforts to bring about the human and therefore the Christian recovery of so many sick people.'¹²³

The Pastoral Orientation Committee

Bless and Ruygers were writing on behalf of the Pastoral Orientation Committee, which had not dared to protest openly against the Roman Catholic institutions in case it put more pressure on the discussions on the development of Catholic mental healthcare in the Netherlands.¹²⁴ Alfrink had also tried to stop any such protests when he received Ruygers for an audience on this very question in August 1957.¹²⁵ At his request Ruygers compiled a detailed reply to the charges in the Monitum. It could be read as a defence of Anna Terruwe but the archbishop eventually did nothing with it.¹²⁶ The discussions in the Pastoral Orientation Committee were mainly about the consequences of the Monitum. Bless and Ruygers expressed this concern in their letter.

The Pastoral Orientation Committee focused on the 'pastoral problems' and met for the first time in June 1954. Initially, the members were all priests, including Bless, but leading priest-governors such as Feron (vicar-general of the Diocese of Roermond) and Herman Fortmann (president of Dijnseburg school of philosophy in the Archdiocese of Utrecht) joined later. The priests were not only diocesan priests but religious priests as well, including the Franciscan Wilbert Stoop. In that same year Bless and Stoop were also directly involved in advising bishops and superiors on psychiatric support for priests and members of religious orders. In the autumn of 1954 psychiatrists Trimbos and De Smet, from the St Willibrordusstichting in Heiloo, were also invited to join along with psychologist Piet Calon, professor at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, and educationalist Lène Dresen-Coenders from the Hoogveld Institute. At the beginning of 1955 J.J. Dijkhuis, who had been working as a psychologist and psychotherapist in Heiloo since 1948, was also present. Though a layperson, he taught psychology at the major seminary of the Diocese of Haarlem.

The fast-changing composition of this committee in itself testifies to an intention to reconcile pastoral with psychiatric care, between the clerics on the one hand and the providers of mental healthcare on the other. The committee was made up of theologians and priests, but also priest-psychologists and lay psychiatrists and psychologists. Both the composition and the themes were sensitive to say the least. That explains why Chairman Bless asked the members in the summer of 1955 to treat the content of the discussions with the utmost discretion. This request was directly tied in with Tromp's investigation for the Holy See, which was also focusing on the psychology taught at the major seminaries. The secretary of the committee Ruygers had been personally questioned by Tromp on the matter and was not allowed to lecture in ethics or psychology at the major seminary in Breda starting from that same year.¹²⁷ Henceforth, discussions in the committee were minuted without names and the members received only very brief, businesslike reports of the meetings.¹²⁸ The orientation in the committee towards co-dependence between pastoral and psychiatric care and the recognition that psychiatric problems could affect moral judgement encountered opposition from the Jesuits, who were not welcome in the committee.¹²⁹

Paul Ellerbeck, the 'resident psychologist' of the Jesuits and fellow-priest and moral theologian Van Kol took the view that psychiatric patients were entirely responsible for their actions. It appears from the concrete reactions of the governing bodies to cases of abuse in the Society of Jesus that, from the early 1950s, a strong resistance was forming against psychiatric diagnoses for their own members. Even so, the archive search revealed that, after 1945, provincials had turned regularly to psychiatrists for expert advice and treatment. Sometimes the cases were clearly of a psychiatric nature. Advice from medical experts was also sought for measures to determine the sexual nature and possible 'curability' of deviant behaviour (especially when members were being sent away from the order).¹³⁰

That resistance was most evident in the readiness to label problems as 'neuroses' and was apparently reinforced in the contact with the generalate, of which Van Gestel, the regional

assistant for the 'German' provinces, was a member. In 1951 the then provincial Kolfshoten wrote to Van Gestel in Rome about a (further undisclosed) 'ill-fated incident involving an otherwise excellent brother' at Canisius College in Nijmegen who had concealed what qualified as a sin, but had authorized his father confessor to speak to the provincial about it. The brother had asked to be relieved of his vows. Kolfshoten asked Van Gestel 'whether there might be a neurotic predisposition' which would lessen the gravity of the sin and whether a psychiatrist could do anything to help. Van Gestel was diametrically opposed to the idea.¹³¹ Kolfshoten himself also responded more sharply when Ellerbeck recommended psychoanalysis for a gifted brother whom he diagnosed with 'organic neuroses'. The provincial made no attempt to conceal his irritation with Van Gestel in Rome: 'What that is exactly I couldn't say. That whole language of psychiatrists is mumbo-jumbo to me'. His aim was to let these people 'disappear' during their novitiate: 'I am most careful about having no neurasthenes in the society, and more and more of them seem to be coming.'¹³²

Ellerbeck and Van Kol were directly associated with the judgement meted out to Terruwe in the Monitum – a judgement which, according to Bless and Ruygers, had discredited an entire professional group. Ellerbeck had also chaired the fifth International Congress of Psychotherapy and Clinical Psychology in Rome in the spring of 1953, where, under the watchful eye of Pope Pius XII, the principles of Catholic mental healthcare were reconciled with the orthodox principles of the church.¹³³ Around that time, Ellerbeck also took the initiative to start a 'Catholic Dutch-Flemish Work Group for Psychotherapy' to represent doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists who observed the moral guidelines of the church in the development of mental healthcare and who wanted to continue to make the healthcare subordinate to the moral code. The Pastoral Orientation Committee declined to have any contact with this work group, which fizzled out in the mid-1950s.¹³⁴

The Heiloo Group and 'the difficulties of priests and seminarists'

In the Pastoral Orientation Committee individual themes were studied and prepared by study groups. Before long one of these groups had earned itself the nickname of the 'Heiloo Group'. With De Smet, Dijkhuis and Vaessen on this committee from 1958, the staff of the St Willibrordusstichting was strongly represented. The Heiloo Group studied 'the difficulties of priests'. This theme was directly related to the expertise that Heiloo had developed with priests suffering from psychiatric problems. Starting from 1959 'the mental hygiene implications of the seminary training' were studied. In 1961 De Smet and Dijkhuis held an introduction on the subject entitled 'the difficulties of priests and seminarists' for the entire Pastoral Orientation Committee.¹³⁵ The nature of these difficulties was diverse; in other words, they did not stop at priests and seminarists who had sexually abused minors, but extended to broader, more fundamental problems: the spiritual health of the governing body of the Roman Catholic church in the Netherlands.

The Heiloo Group investigated the social problems and the personalities of seminarists at the major seminaries in the Netherlands – both diocesan and religious. They were

inventoried by Dijkhuis and De Smet. Westhoff describes the research plans as basically 'innocent'.¹³⁶ But they were anything but. Any such investigation would inevitably entail a rationalization and analysis of what was still regarded by the ecclesiastical authorities as a matter for God alone. After all, a 'calling' to the priesthood came from God and could not be scientifically assessed. That task was reserved solely for God's representatives on earth, the bishops, and not doctors trained in psychiatry, who were laymen in the eyes of the Church and always would be. If this principle were abandoned, then laymen would come to play a central role in the internal organization of the Roman Catholic Church. And that would breach the basic hierarchical relationships between the priesthood and the laity, as established under canonical law.

Church documents since 1950 leave no doubts about the sacred nature of the priesthood, nor about the importance of celibacy as one of the pillars – which marks the hierarchical division between office bearers and the Roman Catholic faithful.¹³⁷ The eminence of the priesthood, Pius XII conceded, merited a better selection of candidates. Catholic doctors might be involved in this selection but the arguments about the role of psychiatrists in the selection and care of priests and members of religious orders in some Western European countries reflected great ambivalence.¹³⁸

In the summer of 1956 the Dutch bishops were again reminded of the *Magna Equidem* of the end of 1955.¹³⁹ The selection, training and education of seminarists was an ecclesiastical-clerical matter under the authority of the bishops. In 1960 a letter was sent to all bishops worldwide of the Congregation of the Seminaries and University Studies. It highlighted again that the problems around the recruitment and selection of candidate priests were not confined to the Netherlands – the question was also becoming ever more urgent since the group of priests 'in difficulties' was growing. The letter made it abundantly clear that 'neurotics' were unsuitable for the priesthood. Of course, vocations had to be tested, but in the context of the seminary and by the teachers who worked there – priests who were unequivocally continuing the 'formative work of the Saviour'. That test had to be directed at learning to recognize God's will. Advice could be sought from specialists, for example, to ascertain spiritual or physical immaturity. When external experts were called in, there must be no scope for theories or practices that conflicted with the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁴⁰ The *Institutio Religiosorum* directive of 1961, issued by the Roman Congregation for the Religious Orders and intended for the major superiors, also emphasized more efficient selection as a means of preventing departures. Anyone who wished to join the priesthood or a religious order should know the obligations of such a state. That was often not the case and the ignorance was particularly evident when it came to mandatory celibacy. Chastity was required and anyone who failed to remain chaste during the training could not be admitted to a religious order. Masturbation was also a barrier to admission to the novitiate. Sexual activities could only be excused in the case of 'temptation'.

Such demands, in effect, built a barrier that prevented the development of insights into 'physical maturity' from the perspective of mental healthcare. Psychiatrists in the Netherlands had contributed to a wider vision of sexuality as 'an integrating and integrated part of the overall development of the person' not just through the hands-on treatment of priests and members of religious orders – which escaped the research agenda of the Commission of Inquiry – but also through the Pastoral Orientation Committee and in direct contact with staff and students from major seminaries. For example, in January 1957, the previously mentioned Utrecht psychiatrist Kees Trimbos participated in the *Magna Equidem* discussions in Dijnseburg where some of the priests from the Archdiocese of Utrecht had been trained. During these discussions it was explicitly stipulated that the norm of proven chastity imposed by the Roman Catholic Church through total abstinence from sexual acts was definitely not endorsed by representatives from the field of mental healthcare. That abstinence, they warned, was not an indication of a *habitus castitatis* (state of chastity), which solved the problem of chastity for priests in the way the church wanted, but rather the disquieting opposite: a sign of infantility, 'important intra-psychological structures that have not matured'.¹⁴¹ Essentially, experts such as Trimbos were arguing for the separation of vocation, which was taking up so much of the church's attention, from 'sexual difficulties', which did not signify a lack of vocation but rather a need for expert advice.

The governors in the ecclesiastical province of the Netherlands were prepared to listen to such advice and take it seriously. Ever since the mid-1950s, when requested, psychiatrists had advised ecclesiastical and religious leaders on the suitability of candidates for the priesthood or monastic life. Similarly, when a priest or member of a religious order experienced difficulties the same leaders called in psychiatrists to advise them whether the individual in question should stay or would be better off returning to the "world". Psychiatrists fulfilled the role of experts, which was restricted to members of the clergy in the formal ecclesiastical context. It was precisely this – the involvement of lay Catholics in questions affecting church governance – that the Holy See tried to stamp out in the 1960s.¹⁴²

In the Netherlands this practice continued to run into strong resistance internationally to the involvement of psychologists and psychiatrists in the assessment and guidance of seminarists and priests. This state of affairs was underlined again in 1961 when the Holy See forbade seminary students from seeking assessments from 'psychoanalysts'.¹⁴³ The string of directives from Rome were probably to blame for the lack of cooperation that Dijkhuis encountered during his research and for the fact that, in 1963, the only welcome that he received was from the major seminary of the Diocese of Roermond and the Albertinum Dominican theological college in Nijmegen.¹⁴⁴ The findings, published in 1966, were based on research at four training courses. He had examined a total of one hundred and sixty seminarists and concluded that the main problems were disturbances in emotional development. He traced the causes to the parental environment, describing it as somewhat closed, protective and conservative. In the process he highlighted the need to adapt the

training so that problems relating to emotional development could be prevented in the future.

Support for priests and members of religious orders anchored in CAPER

In 1967 the central advisory agency for priests and members of religious orders or congregations (*Centraal Adviesbureau voor Priesters en Religieuzen*; CAPER) was set up in Utrecht. CAPER was the last stage in the negotiations in which the Dutch bishops, the praesidium of the foundation for Dutch religious priests (*Stichting Nederlandse Priesterreligieuzen*) and representatives of the Catholic National Centre for Mental Healthcare had been engaged since 1963. CAPER's first director was Nico Vendrik, priest in the Archdiocese of Utrecht who had broad experience as a student pastor and – not unimportant – had sat on the Pastoral Orientation Committee from 1954.

CAPER's target group was priests and members of religious orders. Its aim was to provide 'profound and expert help for priests and members of religious orders who were facing – or would face – a crisis in the way they experience their office or religious state'. The reports in the press said that these crises could stem from their 'working and living environment' which could trigger 'serious tensions that could be exacerbated in different cases by the celibate life'. The truth was that the Church and the Faith were in the throes of a 'general crisis' in the modern world. Assistance was being offered to individuals who had already left the priesthood or holy orders, to those who were thinking of leaving, and to those who did not want to leave but had no idea how to proceed farther. The third group was described as a product of the church renewal, which had made countless priests and brothers feel disoriented in their lives, their work and their personal vision of their life's mission. 'The aim is to support priests and members of religious orders so that they can make the most mature decision possible and come to terms with its consequences.'¹⁴⁵

In the run-up to CAPER the bishops thought mainly in terms of 'problems of faith',¹⁴⁶ which covered a wide group with unspecified mental difficulties and which may have included perpetrators of sexual abuse of minors. The position that ecclesiastical and religious leaders adopted before CAPER shows how they interpreted and expressed their personal responsibility in these matters. It is virtually impossible to disentangle this position from the international pressure that the Roman Catholic Church was putting on persons in authority to retain control of everything that impinged on their own ecclesiastical territory and, under no circumstances, to pass it on to lay professionals.

The run-up began in 1964 with preliminary recommendations from the Catholic National Centre for Mental Healthcare, drawn up by a staunch think tank made up of priests and a few lay experts.¹⁴⁷ Bless and the Heiloo psychiatrist De Smet were part of this think tank. It was they who, together with the chairman, A.A.M Sanders, priest from the Diocese of Rotterdam, headed the talks with the bishops (usually Alfrink together with Monsignor G. de Vet from Breda) and the praesidium of the Association of Religious Priests in the

Netherlands, with the Dominican Frans van Waesberge as chairman.¹⁴⁸ Sanders was rector of the Piusconvict, a boarding house for student priests from all dioceses who were studying in Nijmegen. Until the early 1950s he had been rector of the St Jacobus Foundation in Wassenaar, a Roman Catholic institution for psychiatric patients.

These preliminary recommendations are particularly interesting from a governance perspective as they question whether ecclesiastical and religious leaders are the best counsellors for priests and members of religious orders who are experiencing problems. In their position it might be more prudent to transfer the responsibility for priests in difficulties (this was about priests, not members of religious orders) to an external institution. If governance, pastoral or even personal problems were affecting the lives of priests under the direct authority of the bishop, the diocese might not be the best place to seek help. What is more, priests are sometimes better served by lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists or doctors. According to the think tank, the agency that was proposed in the preliminary recommendations should be outside the ecclesiastical hierarchy and function independently of the bishops, who would then have their hands free towards 'Rome' and others.

The bishops refused to relinquish the care for their own priests. They specified three types of support: spiritual, psychological and social. The first type, 'spiritual support' they regarded as their own responsibility. Indeed, Archbishop Alfrink explicitly registered his objections to the think tank's plan at the Conference of Bishops on 24 August 1965, saying that it depended too heavily on the principles of mental healthcare and not enough on the 'actual responsibilities towards the priests'.¹⁴⁹ If it were left to the bishops, they would join forces with the major superiors and designate 'a number of priests' to give 'spiritual help to their fellow-priests' on their behalf, if desired. Aside from that, an 'agency for psychological and social support' should be set up for the same priests to fall back on. It would be run by a board of representatives from the episcopate, the Association of Dutch Religious Priests in the Netherlands and the Catholic National Centre for Mental Healthcare.

The determination of the bishops and the major superiors to retain responsibility for the new type of support was also connected with 'the secretum': what happened in the lives of priests and members of religious orders was confidential. Hence, requests for support must preferably be passed on to experienced priests. Mention was also made of the tension between the responsibility (of bishops and major superiors) and confidentiality (from the perspective of the priests). The bishops had to be kept informed in order to discharge their responsibilities and to avoid confrontation after the event.

The board of the Catholic National Centre for Mental Healthcare felt that some of this support lay, quite simply, outside the competence of the bishops. The guarantee that it was well organized 'from the mental hygiene perspective' stemmed from the fact that, eventually, the Centre was allowed to send three representatives and not two to the board of CAPER. One of them was Nico Vendrik, who soon realized that CAPER's ambition to become a central organization with nationwide allure would run aground on the

administrative autonomy of the individual bishops. He submitted a basic plan for a regional approach: a list for each province comprising in total 32 Catholic psychiatrists and psychologists and 41 pastoral counsellors, most of them from the clergy.¹⁵⁰ That way, he tried to find a way around the multidisciplinary nature of the task, the wide-ranging requirements, the need to tune into the field of mental healthcare and, finally, the freedom of ecclesiastical and religious leaders – and of the clients themselves starting from the mid-1970s – to choose specific kinds of support and providers. CAPER served as a helpdesk and a guide.

The first decade of CAPER's existence coincided with an increase in the number of departures from the priesthood and religious life. Because it assisted individuals who were taking this traumatic step CAPER soon earned itself the reputation of an agency for departure counselling. At the end of the 1970s CAPER found itself at the centre of a furore following allegations by Bishop Gijsen of Roermond that most of its work consisted of giving sexual counselling to clerics. From the 1980s there was a change in the kind of problems for which, in the main, members of religious orders, women as well as men (in fact women were in the majority), sought help from CAPER. These problems no longer related to the state of their lives or their mission, but were much more 'commonplace' pertaining to depression and feelings of loneliness, emptiness or worthlessness.¹⁵¹

From the mid-1970s CAPER had also helped 'members of religious orders who were experiencing difficulties with life' to find their way to mainstream mental healthcare facilities. Supreme importance was accorded to 'freedom of choice' and 'privacy'. Anyone who wished to visit a care worker or an agency for family or personal problems without the knowledge of his superior could arrange to do so via CAPER, which would then send the bill to the order or congregation without stating the name of the client.¹⁵² This more or less brought an end to the confidential relationship between ecclesiastical and religious leaders and treatment providers, which had been virtually taken for granted since the 1950s.¹⁵³

Shift in interests

The explicit efforts of the 1960s to bring the Roman Catholic Church worldwide into the modern world were not accompanied by an *aggiornamento* of the priesthood.¹⁵⁴ The *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* encyclical of Pope Paul VI in 1967 left no doubt whatsoever on that front. The clerical job profile could be modified but the demands placed on men of God – including celibacy – were unchanged. The separation of the priesthood from celibacy, which the ecclesiastical province of the Netherlands had explicitly argued for at the last session of the Pastoral Council in Noordwijkerhout in 1970, was absolutely out of the question. However, the embarrassment of the church authorities was compounded by the significant increase in the number of departures from the priesthood and religious orders and particularly by the publicity they received.¹⁵⁵

This embarrassment was to some extent assuaged by the exposition on a better selection of candidates, as demanded by Rome in numerous ecclesiastical documents in the 1950s. At the end of the 1960s this became intertwined with instruments for the assessment and selection of seminarists, which had been provided by a group of psychiatrists and psychologists who enjoyed the trust of ecclesiastical and religious leaders. Ironically, one of them was Anna Terruwe, whose psychotherapeutic practice was denounced in 1956 by the Holy See, but whose work, translated into English, was warmly embraced in ecclesiastical and religious circles in the US from the early 1960s. In an evaluation, which she was invited to hold with the Dutch-American psychiatrist Conrad Baars (1919-1981) for the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1970¹⁵⁶, they both estimated, on the basis of their experience of treating priests, seminarists and members of religious orders, that 20 to 25 percent of American priests had serious psychiatric problems. They reckoned that between 60 and 70 percent suffered from 'spiritual immaturity', which was defined more precisely as psychosexual immaturity. These problems came to light because the men did not remain celibate but were heterosexually or homosexually active.¹⁵⁷ Baars, who had translated Terruwe's work into English, was present at the establishment of the House of Affirmation in Whitinsville, Massachusetts, an international treatment centre for priests and members of religious orders where – it emerged later – perpetrators of sexual abuse with minors were also treated.¹⁵⁸ The centre was given a festive opening by Cardinal Alfrink in 1974, who used the occasion to lay a direct link between the centre and the 'modern psychological knowledge and experience of the Dutch psychiatrist Dr A. Terruwe from Nijmegen'.¹⁵⁹

In the 1970s the psychiatric assessment and treatment of priests, seminarists, novices and members of religious orders in the Netherlands moved from the intramural to the extra-mural circuit. Priests and members of religious orders could choose their treatment provider, even if the treatment was a condition of a suspended sentence or provisional dismissal involving the sexual abuse of minors.

An impression exists that the choices were influenced not only by the nature of the problems, but possibly also by the treatment providers' experience of this specific category of clients and the demands of a life as a priest or a member of religious order. It is, for example, known that Van Terruwe and Baars stood unequivocally on the side of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; that, for them, the Catholic Church without priests was unthinkable and that they had every confidence that it was possible to treat a diagnosis of 'spiritual immaturity'. They believed they could reverse the 'clerical drop-out' that stemmed from what they regarded as emotionally underdeveloped spirituality. They did not question celibacy as such, but rather the ability of individual men to lead their lives in accordance with this obligation.

These provisional findings cannot be generalized to other treatment providers who were recognized as or called themselves Catholic. What is clear is that members of religious orders and their superiors preferred CAPER while bishops preferred a select group of therapists,

most of whom had been trained in psychology or psychotherapy. It seems that psychiatrists were called in far less than in the 1950s and 1960s. The tension between the professional expertise of care providers and the interests of the church authorities in the care requirements of perpetrators of sexual abuse from within their own ranks runs like a constant thread through this study. Whether this tension was resolved after the 1960s is open to question.

In conclusion

The archive search revealed that ecclesiastical and religious leaders had been making use of psychiatric expertise since the 1930s when they were experiencing problems with priests or members of religious orders under their authority – problems which were defined as ‘psychological’ or ‘psychiatric’ according to standards of the time. These also included cases of sexual abuse of minors. Other perpetrators of such inappropriate behaviour, who were not priests or members of religious orders, but still came from Roman Catholic circles were admitted to psychiatric institutions. At this point, psychiatry impinged directly on the administration of correctional justice. Research has shown that these admissions were usually short.¹⁶⁰ This chimes with information from the archive search about the placement of clerical and religious perpetrators of child sex abuse in psychiatric institutions. The costs of such placements, usually in a designated or open first-class unit, were paid by the respective diocese or order.

During 1945-1970 ecclesiastical and religious leaders had the authority to send priests and members of the order to a psychiatrist. However, within the hierarchy that existed at that time, priests and members were not free to consult therapists without informing their superiors. This changed after the mid-1970s because superiors, under the influence of the mental healthcare guidelines, had to think about guaranteeing the privacy of priests and members who consulted doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists about psycho-social or psychiatric problems. This more or less ended the customary relationship of trust and relative openness in the communication between treatment providers and ecclesiastical and religious governors.

From the 1950s, the church authorities, by drawing on the expertise of Roman Catholic psychiatrists, broadened their range of response to in-patient observation and examination and institutional nursing and treatment. Since then, the medico-psychiatric assessment and treatment of perpetrators of sexual abuse was part of the approach and response of the governing bodies of the Roman Catholic Church to the sexual abuse of minors by their core members. Treatment programmes were implemented for cases of serious or chronic dysfunctionality, which were not limited to the sexual abuse of minors. Other problems or syndromes (work-related problems, neurotic behaviour, alcoholism) could also be tackled by calling in professional psychiatrists. The archive search for the Commission of Inquiry revealed that reports of psychiatric examination or treatment did not always imply the sexual abuse of minors.

A programme of psychiatric treatment – intramural or extramural – resulted in the medicalization of cases of inappropriate behaviour by priests or members of religious orders towards minors. This development could contribute to the decriminalization of acts that were punishable under Dutch law – regardless of the state or status of the perpetrator.¹⁶¹ But decriminalization would only come into play if no charges were brought by the victims or their parents. However, from the 1950s, if charges were actually brought and if the police investigation was followed by a public prosecution, the public prosecutor and the court could demand a psychiatric assessment and treatment programme as part of the ruling on sex offences.¹⁶² Neither the state nor the status nor the religious background of the perpetrator played a role in this.¹⁶³ Such assessments and programmes could be demanded by the prosecution service and also imposed by the court in combination with detention, a provisional sentence or a provisional dismissal.¹⁶⁴ In such cases there is no question of the decriminalization of inappropriate behaviour with minors, but of psychiatric treatment as part of a (provisional) sentence which also aims at the rehabilitation of the perpetrator.

There were divided responsibilities in the advice that psychiatrists gave to ecclesiastical and religious leaders. As members of the medical profession the psychiatrists were bound by patient confidentiality and professional secrecy, whereas the church governors were bound by official secrecy and an administrative and organizational duty of care that stretched beyond the individuals concerned. The connection between professional secrecy on the one hand and official secrecy on the other in the exchanges between psychiatrists and ecclesiastical and religious governors may go some way to explaining why people refer to a 'closed culture' in the United States. This did not automatically apply to the Netherlands as well; after all, leading Catholic psychiatrists in the Netherlands did lobby publicly in the 1950s for better mental healthcare facilities. With this ambition in the forefront of their minds they had no qualms about taking the church, the authorities and the internal confessional culture to task in full view of society.

The written information on patients who were also priests or members of religious orders which the treatment providers passed on to the church leaders was always open, direct and very detailed. It is difficult say just how far this constituted a violation of professional secrecy in the context at that time. The frank and candid exchange between the church governors and the psychiatrists was accompanied by absolute discretion, which was practically relevant with a view to possible reassignment. It was through psychiatry that ideas relating to treatability, cures and rehabilitation were introduced – processes that benefited from discretion, given the state of scientific knowledge at that time.

It has also been firmly established that the actions of the church governors in 1945-1970 were directed largely at the perpetrators and their problems and paid little or no attention to the victims and psycho-somatic consequences of the abuse. This applies to the societal and judicial approach to sex offences in general and not specifically to the Roman Catholic context which was the focus of the study. However, it should also be said that, since the first

half of the 1950s, the expertise of Catholic psychiatrists has helped to make some ecclesiastical and religious governors more alert to signs of damage among victims.

This study gives no answer to the question whether the enlistment of psychiatric expertise was a permanent factor in the approach and response of ecclesiastical and religious authorities to the sexual abuse of minors by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. The findings do point to a growing ambivalence in the governing bodies at the highest (Roman) level with regard to this practice. This ambivalence led ecclesiastical and religious governors in the Netherlands to exercise more caution in the late 1960s about seeking advice from lay experts such as psychiatrists and psychologists. This caution was connected with the growing vulnerability of the Church and its offices to public criticism, which was fuelled by the fact that Rome was sailing against the tide of public opinion by upholding a sacramental vision of the priesthood with celibacy as the keystone. Against the background of inter-ecclesiastical polarization, protection of the institution and the office – unquestionably a governance motive of some magnitude in the 1950s and 1960s – acquired a truly existential meaning from the 1970s.¹⁶⁵

NOTES

1. This essay is based partly on data collected by the team that carried out the archive search for the Commission of Inquiry. I am deeply indebted to Jan Bank, Maarten van Boven, Ton Kappelhof, Paul Koedijk, Huib Leeuwenberg, Harrie-Jan Metselaars, Karlijn Olijslager, Hans de Valk, Gerrit Valk and Joos van Vugt. I would also like to thank Jan Bank, Ton Kappelhof, Hans de Valk, Gerrit Valk and Nel Draijer for their constructive comments on an earlier version. The foundations for this research were laid in conversations with Annelies van Heijst, who put me in touch with Goos Zwanikken and Joke Zwanikken-Leenders, who spared the time to meet me for detailed interviews on 29 October 2010.
2. Thomas Doyle, A.W. R. Sipe and Patrick J. Wall, *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes. The Catholic Church's 2,000-Year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse* (2006) refers briefly to a non-ecclesiastical shell of psychiatric experts. See also *Celibacy in Crisis. A Secret World Revisited*, 2003, by psychotherapist and former priest Richard Sipe, which is based on years of experience of counselling priests.
3. Doyle, Sipe and Wall, *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes*, cite 1962 as the year in which the 'institutional secrecy' surrounding the sexual activities of priests and members of religious orders with minors could no longer be maintained. This change was the result of legislative amendments in individual US states, whereby anyone with knowledge of child sex abuse was obliged to report it to the proper authorities. By 1968 the amendment had been adopted by almost all states. It was put into effect by the federal government in 1974.
4. The Servants of the Paraclete were founded with the specific aim of providing treatment for priests with mental health problems. In the 1950s and 1960s clerical perpetrators of child sex abuse were also admitted to and treated in their institutions (Via Coeli, Jemez Springs, New Mexico and Our Lady of the Snows, Nevis, Minnesota). Some correspondence on this matter between Fitzgerald and the bishops responsible for these men (1952-1966) can be found in the appendices, Doyle et al., *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes*, pp. 301-308. See also Philip Jenkins, *Paedophiles and Priests. Anatomy of a Contemporary Crisis*, 1995; 2000. Jenkins sets the record straight by explaining in the introduction to the edition of 2000 that the

monastery of the Servants of the Paraclete in Jemez Springs was not a 'treatment facility' but a place for housing abusers from the clergy who were receiving psychiatric treatment or psychotherapy elsewhere.

5. Joep Dohmen, *Vrome zondaars. Misbruik in de Rooms-Katholieke Kerk*, 2010, points to the involvement of psychiatrists in a few cases. Annelies van Heijst, Marjet Derks and Marit Monteiro, *Ex Caritate. Kloosterleven, apostolaat en nieuwe spirit van actieve vrouwelijke religieuzen in Nederland in de 19e en 20e eeuw*, 2010, pp. 1039-1042, draw attention to the role of the (unnamed) St Willibrordusstichting psychiatric hospital in Heiloo in the assistance given to a Flemish priest convicted of sexual abuse. Thanks to new material, further details of this case were added in Chapter 4 of the report by the Commission of Inquiry. Finally, in the spring of 2011, the Conference of Bishops in the Federal Republic of Germany commissioned a team of former magistrates to investigate the personnel files of priests from the 27 German dioceses. This investigation is being carried out by the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony headed by criminologist Christian Pfeiffer. The files have been selected by the respective diocesan archivists, who are also responsible for the anonymization of the documents. Hence, the Germany inquiry is subject to far more limitations than the official Dutch inquiry. A parallel investigation has been announced by the German bishops led by Professor Norbert Leygraf of the Institute for Forensic Psychiatry at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Under the same anonymization conditions a selection will be made of very recent cases from 2000-2010 in which psychiatric and psychological reports were compiled on priest-perpetrators. This investigation should enhance the knowledge of psychological disorders, sexual development and biographical connections among priest-perpetrators.
6. The Executive Boards of the Mental Health Service for the northern region of the province of Noord Holland and Oost Brabant allowed the Commission of Inquiry access to some historical patient records to assist with the inquiry into sexual abuse of minors by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands. They conceded to the request because of the academic nature of the research and under the condition that patient anonymity was guaranteed.
7. Joost Vijselaar, *Het gesticht: enkele reis of retour*, 2010, pp. 316-318, 12. See also Commissie voor de Geschiedenis van de Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg (Nederlands Centrum Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg, Note concerning regulations for the retention of historical patient files, 1989 (in Dutch)). Cf. Giel Hutschemaekers, *Neurosen in Nederland. Vijfentachtig jaar psychisch en maatschappelijk onbehagen*, 1990, who analysed more than 5,400 patient files, the majority from institutional archives (institutions and (university) clinics).
8. This corresponds with the findings of Agnès Desmazières, *L'inconscient au paradis. Comment les catholiques ont reçu la psychanalyse*, 2011, Chapter 8.
9. The following case – unless otherwise indicated – is based on the detailed personnel file of this priest and on his files in the Secret Archives of the Diocese of Roermond. It was also possible to consult the file in the St Willibrordusstichting in Heiloo.
10. The Commission of Inquiry points out that this term, when applied in connection with sex offences, should be understood in the sense assigned to it until at least the 1960s. Those who had committed indecent acts with minors of the same sex aged between sixteen and twenty-one (punishable under Section 248, Dutch Penal Code) were consistently defined as homosexual. A distinction was drawn between congenital homosexuality and so-called pseudo-homosexuality. The latter was described as opportunistic or necessitated sexuality whereby someone could be 'seduced' or 'infected' but it could be 'unlearned'. That is why the age limit was so high in criminal law: boys and young men who had been 'seduced' by homosexual contacts had to get a chance to develop as 'normal' heterosexual males (see Anna Tijsseling, *Schuldige seks. Homoseksuele zedendelicten rond om de Duitse bezettingstijd*, s.l. 2009). The line that separated homosexuality from paedo-homosexuality was not always clear-cut in the 1950s. This is evident, for example, in the work of the Roman Catholic psychiatrist F.M. Havermans in *Opstellen over forensische psychiatrie*, (1956, first

printed 1951). For an account of homosexuality in relation to paedosexual orientation and/or acts see Harry Oosterhuis, *Homoseksualiteit in Nederland. Een sociale geschiedenis 1900-1970* (1992), esp. Chapter 4; cf. Theo van der Meer, *Modernizing Categories. Separating Homosexuality and Paedophilia in the 1950 's in Holland*, Paper at Conference on Post-war Homosexual Politics: 1945-1970, 2-4 Aug 2007.

11. F. Havermans, *Beknopte psychiatrie voor sociaal werkenden*, 1940, pp. 104-126.
12. E.A.D.E. Carp, *Sexuele misdadigheid*, 1949, p. 115.
13. J. Wilschut, *Tussen psychiatrie en filosofie. De dynamische psychiatrie van Eugène A.D.E. Carp (1895-1963)*, p. 29.
14. E.g. 'De Psycho-Analyse als vorm van Psychotherapie', *rk Artsenblad* nr 13,1 pp. 1-18, (1934).
15. Wilschut, *Tussen psychiatrie en filosofie*, pp. 22-23 and 86-93.
16. (2nd revised edition in 1941, 3rd revised edition in 1948).
17. Carp, *De psychopathieën*, 1934, pp. 16-23 and 32.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 32.
21. Carp, *De psychopathieën*, p. 483.
22. Kees Schuyt, *Het spoor terug. J.B. Charles W.H. Nagel 1910-1983*, 2010, pp. 359-362. Nagel tried to establish a connection between damage to the rule of law caused by an offence and the victim(s).
23. Diocese of Haarlem, Secret Archives, file B., *Psychiatric report (in Dutch) by Dr Barnhoorn (1945)*.
24. Vol. XLIX, pp 283-293.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 287.
26. Catholic Documentation Centre, 'Collectie LARC 7038, letter from P. Wijte (curate in *Uitgeest*), to Van Deursen, president of the major seminary in Warmond, 17 March 1956 and his answer, 5 February 1956 (in Dutch).
27. Catholic Documentation Centre, 'Stokman Archive', inv. no. 403 (in Dutch).
28. Carp, *De psychopathieën*, pp. 497-498.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 497.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 499. Carp refers with the requisite caution to the Swiss inquiry (by Strasser, 1927) which indicated that 67 percent of sex offenders who had been placed on probation did not lapse into recidivism compared with 13 percent who did.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 505.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 506-507: Carp explicitly declined to go into the 'eugenic aspects' of this invasive procedure. What mattered to him was the advisability of castration from a psychiatric perspective.
33. Oosterhuis, *Homoseksualiteit in Nederland*, p. 79.
34. Historian Theo van der Meer conducted research on castration as a form of 'treatment' for sex offenders between the 1930s and the late 1960s. I am much indebted to him for information and advice for this part of the study. Van der Meer ascertained that more than four hundred men were castrated during this period. He claims that after TBR was introduced in the 'psychopath legislation' of 1928 the pressure on places in 'psychopath asylums' was so high that castration was explicitly proposed as an alternative 'treatment'. In theory, sex offenders who had been sentenced to TBR and were diagnosed as 'incurable' had to spend the rest of their lives in such an institution. That cost space and money. Under political pressure the Ministry of Justice introduced a dispensation for castration whereby the emphasis rested on the therapeutic aspects of the procedure and any connection with punishment or sentencing was avoided. The argument was that this procedure could solve the psychiatric cause of sexual offences.
35. Van der Meer concludes from an analysis of patient files that Carp's guidelines (voluntariness and awareness of the consequences of the surgery) were not always followed. Almost 80% of

the men who underwent castration met the current definition of paedophile. In 40% of cases these were men who were found guilty of molesting young girls, 37% involved inappropriate behaviour with young males (Section 247 of the Dutch Penal Code: inappropriate behaviour with males under the age of sixteen). Theo van der Meer, "'Vrijwillige" en "therapeutische" castratie van TBR-verpleegden, 1938-1968. Een veroordeling tot tbr en de verdere lotgevallen van de verpleegde', In: E.C. Coppens e.a. (eds.), *Fabrica Iuris. Opstellen over de 'werkplaats van het recht' aangeboden aan Sjoerd Faber*, 2009, pp. 303-329, and 'Eugenic and Sexual Folklores and the Castration of Sex Offenders in the Netherlands (1938-1968)', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Science*, no 39, pp. 195-204, (2008).

36. Carp, *De psychopathieën*, pp. 508 (quote)- 509.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 510-511.
38. He was not the only priest in this diocese to undergo this procedure. It was also carried out on a priest who was found guilty of indecent behaviour with young boys at a school in Pey-Echt in the early 1950s. The case was investigated by the court and forensic psychiatrist, G. Janssens (medical director of Voorburg, Vught), advised castration in the interests of both the priest and society. Cf. Oosterhuis, *Homoseksualiteit in Nederland*, pp. 8082: six of the seventy castrations discussed by Catholic psychiatrist A.J.A.M. Wijffels in his thesis concerned priests or members of religious orders. Wijffels worked in the St Willibrordusstichting psychiatric hospital in Heiloo and defended his thesis under the tutelage of Carp. Oosterhuis writes that treatment for sexual misdemeanours did not stand in the way of (reassignment to) duties as a priest. One man became a priest after castration while another who was already a priest and had sexually molested boys was allowed to return to priestly duties after castration.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.
40. Van der Meer, 'Vrijwillige' en 'therapeutische' castratie.
41. Archives of the Diocese of Roermond, inv. nr. 543.1 (Geestelijke volksgezondheid), note by Feron, dated 18 September 1953, entitled 'Verblijf van zielszieke priesters' (hospitalization of mentally ill priests). For the stigmatization of neurotics, see Hutschemaekers, *Neurosen*.
42. In Éditions Beyaert te Brugge under the title *Traité de psychiatrie psycho-pathologie-morale thérapeutique-direction* (translated by P. Ghysaert). Reissued in 1938, 1951 and 1958.
43. Entitled *Psiquiatria pastoral*, published by Editorial Razon y Fe (Ediciones Fax), Madrid.
44. *Inter alia* in *Divus Thomas* (1942) and *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*, 1937, 1951.
45. Cf. Desmazières, *L'inconscient au paradis*, pp. 134-135.
46. Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, pp. 112-113.
47. Archive of the Conference of Bishops, 'Minutes of the Conference of Bishops in Breda, agenda item 6', (in Dutch) 4 and 5 September 1951.
48. 'Over Roeping en psychose', *Nederlandse Katholieke Stemmen* 37, pp. 164-174, 199-206 (1937). His archive, which is kept in the Catholic Documentation Centre in Nijmegen contains a similar plea (undated, possibly 1950s): 'Psychiatrische keuring van de geestelijke stand' (inv. nr. 148).
49. Archives of the Diocese of Roermond, inv. nr. 543.1 (Geestelijke volksgezondheid), 'Letter from Monsignor Lemmens to the archbishops and fellow-bishops' (in Dutch), 13 January 1954.
50. Archives of the Diocese of Roermond, 'Letter from Geerdinck to Alfrink about the Bless Report' (in Dutch), 9 February 1954.
51. See also Jan Jacobs, *Werken in een dwarsverband. Een portret van de gezamenlijke Nederlandse priesterreligieuzen 1840-2004* (2010), pp. 352-353. Unlike the Commission of Inquiry, Jacobs had no access to the reports of the Conferences of Dutch Bishops for his research on the Association of Religious Priests in the Netherlands.
52. There is no clear-cut distinction between geriatric and psychiatric disorders in the Bless Report. Bless did, however, say that his investigation did not include priests whom he

classified as 'senile' and priests who had been admitted to charitable institutions such as St Joseph in Heel (run by the brothers of St Joseph).

53. Archives of the Diocese of Roermond, 'Letter from Geerdinck to Alfrink about the Bless Report' (in Dutch), 9 February 1954. Cf. Archive of the Conference of Bishops, Minutes of the Conference of Bishops in Utrecht, 13 and 14 December 1948 (agenda item 21) (in Dutch): the bishops were already discussing psychiatric treatment for clerics in the preparations for the establishment of the Central Catholic Association for Public Mental Health.
54. Archives of the Diocese of Roermond, letter from Geerdinck to Alfrink about the Bless Report (in Dutch), 9 February 1954.
55. Archive of the Conference of Religious in the Netherlands, SNPR Collection, Circulars File 1952-1957.
56. Said by the chairman, the Jesuit Kolfshoten.
57. See Chapter 4 of the final report by the Commission of Inquiry.
58. Archive of the Conference of Religious in the Netherlands, SNPR Collection, Circulars File 1952-1957.
59. Desmazières, *L'inconscient au paradis*, pp. 221-222, describes this as a psycho-medical method of treatment for priests at a crisis in their lives which could trigger a scandal.
60. Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, inv. no. 1405.
61. Catharina Th. Bakker and Leonie de Goei, *Een bron van zorg en goede werken. Geschiedenis van de geestelijke gezondheidszorg in Noord-Holland*, 2002.
62. 'Het Zilveren Jubileum van de geneesheer-directeur: Dr. De Smet geridderd'. *Klaroen*. Maandblad van de Sint-Willibrordusstichting, July 1957, pp. 102-105, see p. 103. The Paulus Pavilion was closed in 1960 and the patients were moved to the newly opened Pompekliniek in Nijmegen.
63. Report of the (interconfessional) conference of R.C. spiritual counsellors employed in custodial institutions, 10 and 11 September at Drakenburgh (s.l. 1951), lecture by De Smet, pp. 4-17, see pp. 4 and 6.
64. Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, inv. no. 1405; see also the Archive of the Conference of Bishops, Minutes of the Conference of Bishops (in Dutch), 16/17 March 1955, agenda item 15.
65. Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, inv. no. 1405: a comparable response from J. Groot, vicar-general of the Diocese of Den Bosch, dated 10 March 1955, in which he re-asserts 'the freedom of the ecclesiastical authorities'.
66. Cf. Van der Meer, "'Vrijwillige" en "therapeutische" castratie': in 80 percent of the cases that he researched castration was performed on men that would nowadays be classified as paedophiles.
67. Archive of the Conference of Religious in the Netherlands, Collection SNPR, Circulars 1952-1957, circulars of February and 14 April 1955.
68. For the history of this institution see Marie-José Billekens et al., *100 jaar psychiatrie in Venray. Geschiedenis van de psychiatrische instellingen Sint-Anna en Sint-Servatius*, 2005.
69. This debate hinges on the relationship between the historically determined social subordination of Catholics on the one hand and crime on the other. See for a synopsis: H.P.M. Litjens, *De criminaliteit in Limburg. Een historisch overzicht*, 1973.
70. Published by J.J. Romen & Zonen, Roermond. A collection of the lectures that he had delivered to the local departments of the St Adelbert Association in Helmond and Venray, and for the Katholieke Kring in Eindhoven at the end of the 1940s.
71. The statutes of this organization were approved by the Dutch bishops in 1949. It also received a grant from them in the early 1950s.
72. The fairly laborious process in Roman Catholic circles is described by Westhoff in *Geestelijke bevrijders*. For a history of mental health concepts and institutional development in the Netherlands see Leonie de Goei, *De psychohygiënist. Psychiatrie, cultuurkritiek en de beweging voor geestelijke volksgezondheid in Nederland 1924-1970*, 2001.

73. For a critical discussion of the statistics: cf. in A. Th.L.M. Mertens, 'Criminaliteit in Limburg' and 'Criminaliteit, moraliteit en geestelijke gezondheid', in *rk Artsenblad* 31 pp. 214-217 and 300-305 (1952).
74. Cf. Litjens, *De criminaliteit*, with the work of criminologist Willem Nagel, who had been studying the relationship between religion and crime since the 1930s. This theme was introduced to Dutch criminology by Willem Bongers, founder of what was then known as 'criminal sociology'. Nagel wrote his thesis about crime in Oss within this tradition (defended in Groningen in 1949). In 1961 he published again on the subject, *Criminality and Religion*, in *Social Compass* viii,i pp. 3-34 (1961). See also Schuyt, *Het spoor terug*, esp. pp. 208-214, 216.
75. Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, pp. 162-163.
76. Cf. the review by lawyer E. Brongersma in *Te Elfder Ure* 1 pp. 30-32 (1954).
77. Havermans, *Over de criminaliteit onder katholieken*, p. 4.
78. *Ibid.*, 7-8.
79. *Statistics Netherlands, Criminele statistiek. Gevangenisstatistiek. Statistiek van de toepassing der kindwetten 1948 en 1949, 1951*, p. 16.
80. 'Mr. Kneepkens geeft voorkeur aan "stille getuigen"', *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 26 March 1949.
81. J. Godefroy and C. Thoen, 'Criminaliteit en Moraliteit onder Katholieken', *Social Compass* 1,2, pp. 1-12 (1953), followed by a response from Havermans: 'Nog Eens: Criminaliteit Onder Katholieken', *Social Compass* 2, 1, pp. 14-15 (1954).
82. 'Groeïende onrust', *Credo. Diocesaan Weekblad voor het bisdom Roermond* 5, 30 (24 July 1953).
83. Havermans, *Opstellen over forensische psychiatrie*.
84. Report of the (interconfessional) conference of R.C. spiritual counsellors employed at custodial institutions, Drakenburgh, 10 and 11 September (s.l. 1951). Havermans delivered a lecture entitled 'Over de onevenwichtige mens en zijn reacties op de detentie' (The unbalanced individual and his reaction to detention). He drew a distinction between a prison sentence and a court supervision order with conditions attached (TBR) based partly on a psychological assessment.
85. According to the patient files of this Jesuit, held by the Mental Health Service for the province of Oost-Brabant.
86. For this Havermans relied on Carp, *Sexueele misdadigheid*.
87. Dr F.M. Havermans, *Vijfduizend verdachten*, 1963.
88. Frans van Houtert, 'Kind aangerand', *Beatrijs* 23,5 (30 January 1965) and C. Bruyère, 'Onze kinderen. Zijn onze kinderen veilig?', *Beatrijs* 23,19 (8 May 1965). With thanks to Dr Marloes Hülksen.
89. For more information on this hierarchy see the ecclesiastical code: CIC, canon 491.
90. Desmazières, *L'inconscient au paradis*, Chapter 5.
91. *De verdringingstheorie beoordeeld van thomistisch standpunt* (1935).
92. See also the biographical entry (in Dutch) by J.P. de Valk: <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BNw/lemmata/bwn2/duynstee>
93. For a detailed exposition of this question: R.H.J. ter Meulen, *Ziel en zaligheid. De receptie van de psychologie en de psychoanalyse onder de katholieken in Nederland, 1900-1965*, 1988, Chapter 3. See also Lodewijk Winkeler, 'Verdringing van de moraal. De discussie rond het proefschrift van mevr. dr. A.A. Terruwe'. In: *Jaarboek van het Katholiek Documentatie Centrum* 10, pp. 118-134 (1980); R. Abma, 'De katholieken en het psy-complex'. In: *Grafiet* 1 pp. 156-197 (1981-1982); Jan Brabers, *De faculteit der rechtsgeleerdheid van de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen 1923-1982*, Gerard Noodt Instituut, 1994, pp. 277-284 (largely from the perspective of Duynstee); Hanneke Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, 1996, pp. 293-305 and Marit Monteiro, 'De "affaire Terruwe" - oftewel: actuele geschiedenis in de jaren 1960'. In: Theo Engelen, Onno Boonstra, Angélique Janssens (eds.), *Levenslopen in transformatie. Liber amicorum bij het afscheid van prof. dr. P.M.M. Klep*, 2011, pp. 148-159.

94. Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, Archive of the Conference of Bishops, Minutes (in Dutch), Conference of Bishops 28/29 September 1949, agenda item 21: the episcopate had asked the official from the archdiocese, Monsignor Felix van de Loo, to speak with Duynstee about 'Moraal en Psychotherapie' (morality and psychotherapy). Van der Loo was ill and unable to participate in the committee.
95. Archives, Diocese of Roermond, Secret Archives, Duynstee files, Cardinal Marchetti Selvaggiani, Secretary of the Holy See to the Archbishop of Utrecht, Cardinal De Jong, dated 12 December 1949.
96. The visitation of Sebastiaan Tromp on behalf of the Holy See in 1954-1955 illustrates, on the other hand, that this is not how things worked. The Dutch bishops were to all intents and purposes satisfied with the results of the inquiry by the committee headed by Feron, whereas Tromp took it further.
97. Archives, Diocese of Roermond, Secret Archives, Duynstee files, Cardinal Marchetti Selvaggiani, Secretary of the Holy See to the Archbishop of Utrecht, Cardinal De Jong, dated 12 December 1949. This places the question in a different light, i.e. a developing power struggle between 'Rome' and 'Utrecht' where it seems that the instructions of the Holy See were apparently no longer obeyed without question.
98. Archives, Diocese of Roermond, Secret Archives, Duynstee files, introductory lecture delivered by Duynstee in Roermond, 14 February 1950.
99. Archives, Diocese of Roermond, Secret Archives, Duynstee files, report submitted by Feron to the bishops on behalf of the Commission of Inquiry (salutation: 'My Lords'), dated 12 May 1950.
100. Westhoff, Geestelijke bevrijders.
101. 'Het priestelijk celibaat: enige psychisch-hygiënische beschouwingen', Nederlandse katholieke stemmen. Maandschrift voor theologie en zielzorg LI pp. 320-337 (1955).
102. 'Homosexualiteit en zielzorg', Nederlandse Katholieke Stemmen, xlix p. 283-293, see 287 (1953).
103. Information from the search of the archives of the Congregation of the Holy Sacrament (September 2011), stored in the archives of the Commission of Inquiry.
104. Punishable under Section 248, Dutch Penal Code.
105. According to the file on the priest, stored at the Mental Health Service for the northern region of the province of Noord Holland.
106. Information from the report of the archive search to the Diocese of Roermond (July 2011), stored in the archives of the Commission of Inquiry.
107. Ineke Merks-Brunschot, Broeders penitenten: 300 jaar 'Burgers in Pij' en de ontwikkeling van eigentijds vrijwilligerswerk in organisatie-sociologisch perspectief, 1996.
108. Archive of the Conference of Bishops. Minutes (in Dutch) of the Conference of Bishops in Utrecht on 9 and 10 July 1945, agenda item 13: mention is made of the Heerenhuis, as in the case from 1953, which follows below. From 1933 until it was demolished in 1978 the building that used to be known as the Heerenhuis was used for a different category of patient. Priests were placed in the designated or first-class open unit (privately paid nursing) in the Maria Pavilion (or Maria 1); this was in use until the late 1960s.
109. Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen, Klerus und abweichendes Verhalten. Zur Sozialgeschichte katholischer Priester im 19. Jahrhundert: Die Erzdiözese Freiburg, 1995, pp. 118-119, 127-128.
110. Interview held by the Commission of Inquiry with Dr A.P.H. Meijers. The Hague, 23 September 2010.
111. Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, personal files of the priest.
112. Hans Bornewasser, '1953: "Honderd Jaar Kromstaf": kentering binnen de katholieke subcultuur'. In: Jurjen Vis and Wim Janse, Staf en storm. Het herstel van de bisschoppelijke hiërarchie in Nederland in 1853: actie en reactie, pp. 313-333 (2002); Luykx, P., 'Erger dan de

Reformatie? Katholieken in de jaren vijftig'. In: idem and Slot (eds.), *Een stille revolutie*, pp. 67-88, see pp. 75-77.

113. See essay by Professor D.J.K. Bosscher, 'De Nederlandse Rooms-Katholieken in een overgangstijd. Onrustig temidden van de woelige baren'.
114. Breda City Archives, inv. no. 2.107.4, internuncio Giobbe to Coadjutor-Archbishop Alfrink, 4 January 1954: Giobbe cites canon 250 art. 4, which refers to the legal authority of this Roman Catholic body in everything connected with councils, synods and conferences of bishops.
115. Ton H.M. van Schaik, Alfrink. Een biografie, 1997, pp. 187, 240-241.
116. Archives, archdiocese, inv. nr. 711, internuncio Giobbe to Coadjutor-Archbishop Alfrink, 19 July 1954 and Alfrink's reply of 24 July 1954 in which he states that Tromp, who was part of the Holy See, had been sent by the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities.
117. The archives of the internuncio, which were inaccessible to the Commission of Inquiry, could provide more information on the subject.
118. Archive of the Conference of Bishops. Minutes (in Dutch) of the Conference of Bishops, 3 and 4 September 1956, agenda item 2. This conference also dealt with the request by Terruwe to be heard personally on this question. This warning was repeated by internuncio Giobbe in the following year for those responsible for the seminaries of the male orders and the priest congregations. Marit Monteiro, *Gods predikers. Dominicanen in Nederland (1795-2000)*, 2008, p. 476.
119. Anna Terruwe, *Opening van zaken*, s.l. 1964, pp. 30-31.
120. 'Quaedam admonitiones theoriam et praxim curationis spectantes psychoneurosi laborantium', *Analecta voor het Aartsbisdom* 29, 11, pp. 166-167, (1956).
121. Utrecht Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, inv. nr. 551, Internuncio Giobbe to Archbishop Alfrink, 15 October 1956 (without the circular), with Alfrink's reply (20 October 1956) that the guidelines had been passed on to the professors at the major and minor diocesan seminaries and that the professors at the major seminaries had been instructed to pay explicit attention to moral theology in the teaching.
122. See also the entry (in Dutch) for Hein Ruygers by Frans Oudejans in the *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland*, <http://www.historici.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn4/ruijger>.
123. Archives, Diocese of Roermond, Secret Archives, Duynstee files, letter of 20 October 1957, to all bishops (apparently distributed via the archdiocese, because there is also a note from Alfrink, again addressed to all bishops, dated 4 November 1957).
124. *Ibid.*
125. Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, p. 327: discussions had taken place in a small committee comprising Ruygers, Bless, Van Boxtel, Han Fortmann, Herman Fortmann, Willem Grossouw and moral theologian C. van Ouwkerk.
126. Archives, Diocese of Roermond, Secret Archives, Duynstee files; audience of 13 August 1957.
127. Ruygers still published the text in 1965 in *Tijdschrift voor Theologie*, after Terruwe had set out her vision of the inquiry on herself and the *Monitum* in *Opening van zaken* (1964) and after the content of this document – which was not intended for publication – had leaked via the press. Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, p. 328 (note 2): as a student in Nijmegen Ruygers himself had been treated by Terruwe; her mentor, Duynstee, had been his spiritual counsellor and father confessor for many years.
128. Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, p. 320.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 322, indicates that this 'mist of secrecy and tension' typifies the historical writings about the committee, the framework having been set by Henk Suèr in *Niet te geloven. De geschiedenis van een pastorale commissie (1968)* commissioned by the Catholic Charitable Association.
130. Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, p. 319.

131. See Chapter 4 of the report by the Commission of Inquiry.
132. Arch. SJ The Hague, PA 1655, Provincial to Van Gestel 18.2.1951 and reply of 20.2.
133. Ibid., Kolfshoten to Van Gestel, 22.11.1953.
134. Desmazières, *L'inconscient au paradis*, pp. 169-180. See also Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, pp. 299-305. The address by Pius XII at this conference concluded with what constituted a direct allusion to the Terruwe Affair and which came from Ellerbecks: that no-one should be encouraged to commit a 'material sin' in a psychotherapeutic setting. Besides Eugène Carp, Terruwe's supervisor and professor of psychology at Leiden University, the participants included the Flemish Jesuit psychologists Raymond Hostie and A. Snoeck. In February 1949 during the so-called 'masturbators' conference' and under the auspices of the R.C. Physicians' Association, Snoeck had set out the hard moral line in the assessment and treatment of 'adolescent onanism' (Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, pp. 120-125).
135. Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, p. 304 and 320.
136. Ibid., pp. 334-335.
137. Ibid., pp. 455-456.
138. In the apostolic exhortation to the clergy worldwide, chronologically: *Menti Nostrae*, 1950, the Instruction of the Congregation of Seminaries, 1951, and the *Sacra Virginitas* encyclical, 1954.
139. As Desmazières shows in Chapter 8 of *L'inconscient au paradis*.
140. Executed by the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, whereby the more or less identical instruction *Quam Ingens*, 1930, was recalled.
141. Utrecht Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, inv. nr. 707, 'Brief an die Bischöfe zum dreihundertsten Todestag des Hl. Vinzenz von Paul über einige wichtige Probleme der kirchlichen Erziehung' (executed by the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities) (no date [1960]).
142. Utrecht Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, inv. nr. 707, summary for Archbishop Alfrink of 16 June 1958 (in Dutch).
143. Cf. Desmazières, *L'inconscient au paradis*, pp. 217-220.
144. Westhoff, *Geestelijke bevrijders*, 456 (note 4). The ban was accompanied by a reminder of canon 139 art. 2 of the Code of Canon Law, which prohibited priests from practising medicine without the Pope's permission. Priests and members of religious orders were also prohibited from training or working as psychologists or psychoanalysts.
145. J.J. Dijkhuis, 'Een onderzoek bij seminaristen', *Dux* 33, 9, pp. 477-488 (1966). See also Monteiro, *Gods predikers*, p. 720.
146. 'Deskundige hulp aan priests in Nood. Spanningen in werk- en leefmilieu', *De Tijd*, 9 March 1967.
147. It was only after CAPER had been established that mandatory celibacy for priests could be placed on the agenda of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands.
148. Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, inv. nr. 1405, Memorandum of 15 May 1964 (in Dutch), compiled for a meeting with Alfrink about setting up an agency.
149. Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, inv. nr. 1405, memo from Monsignor G. de Vet of 8 February 1966 (in Dutch) : there were discussions at 'many meetings of the Conferences of Bishops' in September 1964, August 1965, November 1965 and January 1966. At the conference the auxiliary bishop of Den Bosch, Jan Bluysen, was in charge of mapping out the problems of the support services for priests. For Van Waesberge see: Monteiro, *Gods predikers*, pp. 402-405.
150. Archive of the Conference of Bishops, 'Minutes of the Conference of Bishops', (in Dutch), 24 August 1965, agenda item 20.
151. Archive of the Conference of Bishops, 'Letter from N.J.M. Vendrik to Cardinal Alfrink', (in Dutch) (6 April 1967).

152. Interview in *Trouw*, 10 September 1983, with Herman Coenen and Sister Christa Schrama, who were responsible for CAPER at that time. Cf. Van Heijst, Derks and Monteiro, *Ex Caritate*, pp. 818-819.
153. Archives, Archdiocese of Utrecht, 'Notitie Psycho-sociale begeleiding van religieuzen' (5 February 1974), prepared by a five-person committee from the Association of Female Religious Orders in the Netherlands (*Samenwerking Nederlandse Vrouwelijke Religieuzen*), amongst whom was Johan Muijtjens, provincial superior of the Brothers of Maastricht.
154. Further research would need to confirm this. Sister Christa Schrama, who worked for CAPER from 1983 till 1990 and then for her own consultancy agency (*Stichting Pastoraal Adviesbureau*) said that, when asked, she did not notify superiors of paedophile or paedosexual priests or members of religious orders within the confines of a confidential care relationship. She recalls only a few clients with this specific profile in her career. In some cases she spoke with these clients in the presence of their superiors. Interview by the Commission of Inquiry (represented by Paul Koedijk and Professor Marit Monteiro) with Sister Christa Schrama, 18 August 2011.
155. Marit Monteiro, 'Mannen Gods: historische perspectieven op clericale identiteit en clericale cultuur'. In: Marit Monteiro and Gian Ackermans (eds.), *Mannen Gods. Clericale identiteit in verandering*, 2007, pp. 9-32, see pp. 22-29.
156. Marit Monteiro, 'Verkondigers van heil. Narratieven van uitgetreden priests over zelf, geloof en kerk als spiegel van religieuze transformaties in de jaren 1960', In: Mirjam de Baar, Yme Kuiper en Hans Renders (eds.), *Biografie en Religie. De religieuze factor in de biografie*, 2011.
157. Set up by Paul VI in 1965 as a permanent consultation and advisory body for the Pope.
158. Conrad W. Baars, *How to Treat and Prevent the Crisis in the Priesthood*.
159. See <http://www.bishop-accountability.org/treatment/HoA/>
160. 'Dr. Terruwe's idee een pioniersvisie. Kardinaal in Whitinsville', *De Gelderlander*, 4 June 1974; 'Kardinaal opent huis van bevestiging in de vs', *Nederlands Dagblad*, 4 June 1974.
161. Vijselaar, *Het gesticht*, pp. 316-318.
162. Criminological discourses from the 1970s and the 1980s show that, at that time, many cases of sexual violence were not settled via the criminal justice system. This may be explained by factors such as earlier convictions for other offences or assaults or the background and level of education combined with conscious efforts to decriminalize sexual acts and expressions that were becoming more socially acceptable, such as pornography, but also sexual contacts with minors. See Nel Draijer, *Seksueel geweld en heteroseksualiteit: ontwikkelingen in onderzoek vanaf 1968*, 1984. See essay by R.S.B. Kool, 'Schuivende panelen. Een achtergrondstudie naar wereldlijke en kerkelijke ontwikkelingen rondom sexual abuse binnen de Rooms-Katholieke Kerkprovincie (1945-2010)'.
163. Contacts between leading psychiatrists from psychiatric institutions and the public prosecution services and the courts had been institutionalized since the start of the twentieth century. The former were required to submit annual reports on patients under court supervision (compulsory hospitalization – which applied in the majority of cases). Billekens, *100 jaar psychiatrie in Venray*, pp. 92-93.
164. See Chapter 4 of the final report of the Commission of Inquiry.
165. See Chapter 4 of the final report of the Commission of Inquiry.
166. See Chapter 4 of the final report of the Commission of Inquiry.

4 The 'Woodstock defence' and the sexual abuse of minors in the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands

DR H.P.M. KREEMERS

Introduction

The study published on 18 May 2011 by the John Jay College Research Team contains the conclusion that 'no single "cause" of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests is identified as a result of our research'.¹ The study reveals that, from the beginning of the 1960s until the end of the 1970s, the sexual abuse of minors by members of the Roman Catholic clergy 'steadily increased'. It concludes that neither celibacy nor homosexuality could be considered among the causes of the abuse. It was the 'social and cultural changes in the 1960s and 1970s' that were reflected in the number of cases of 'deviant behavior in the general society and also among priests of the Catholic Church in the United States'.

The research report commissioned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and carried out by the John Jay College Research Team argues that the abuse cannot therefore be explained with reference to celibacy and other cultural and organizational characteristics of the Roman Catholic Church. It points to the sexual revolution, sparked by mass music festivals, that resulted in looser morals in US society and therefore within the Roman Catholic Church.² Two days after the publication of the research report, Thomas Doyle responded by accusing its compilers of taking refuge behind the 'Woodstock defense'.³

In the Netherlands too, commentators have pointed to the general development in thinking about sexuality and the resulting changes in values as an explanation for the large number of cases of sexual abuse of minors within the Roman Catholic Church. On 14 February 2011, Church spokesman and priest Antoine Bodar appeared on the prime time chat show *De Wereld Draait Door*. At his request, an excerpt from a TV show first screened in 1978 and entitled *Het Groot Uur U* was shown, in which Dr E. Brongersma, a Labour member of the Upper House of the Dutch Parliament, spoke in favour of paedophile relationships and contact. Antoine Bodar argued that this excerpt illustrated that the 'prevailing morality was different at the time'. Ten days later, Bodar repeated his position: 'Much of the abuse committed by priests he explains in terms of the "unprocessed sexuality" of boys who entered the seminary in the 1950s. Later, in the 1970s, the looser morals surrounding sexuality led priests into temptation.'⁴ In line with Bodar, Cardinal Simonis affiliated himself with this 'Woodstock myth' in an interview with Dutch daily newspaper *De Telegraaf*: 'In this whole affair of sexual abuse, one of the greatest difficulties is that, until twenty years ago, completely different standards applied, not only in the Church but also in society at large: in the schools and in the care sector where such things also took place.'⁵

Dr E. Brongersma and the Dutch Society for Sexual Reform (NVSH)

Who was Dr E. Brongersma? Edward Brongersma was born in Haarlem on 31 August 1911. He died on 22 April 1998 in Overveen. In 1924 his elder brother joined the Roman Catholic Church and became a Benedictine monk. In 1930 Brongersma also converted to the Roman Catholic faith. He

established himself as a lawyer in Amsterdam in 1946 and became a Labour member of the Upper House of the Dutch Parliament. He continued to fulfil that office until 1950. In that year he was sentenced to 11 months in prison for sexual abuse of minors (in accordance with Article 248b of the Dutch Penal Code). Along with his conviction, his name was removed from the Netherlands Bar Association (NOVA). He was reinstated in 1959 and returned to his legal practice. Between 1960 and 1967, he became chief scientific officer of the Criminology Institute at Utrecht University. From 1963 until 1977, he once again served as a member of the Upper House.

He published widely on the acceptance of paedophilia, including a two-volume publication entitled *Jongensliefde* [Love among Boys]. One cause which he actively supported within the Dutch Society for Sexual Reform (NVSH) was doing away with age limits in sexual offences legislation.

In 1967, the NVSH changed the name of its members' magazine from *Verstandig ouderschap* [Wise parenthood] to *Sekstant* [Sextant]. This name change marked the transition from an organization that devoted its efforts to information and support relating to birth control to an organization that supported the emancipation of groups whose sexual preference lay outside of the heterosexual mainstream. A large number of the NVSH's 'traditional' members remained loyal to the Society.

But this development also created scope for 'a self-appointed vanguard',⁶ among whom were paedophiles. In the March 1970 issue of *Sekstant*, two photographs of naked children were printed. This inspired a member of the NVSH to complain about his troubles in the July/August issue of the magazine: 'Two children who evidently enjoy caressing and playing with each other.' The reader, whose name and address were withheld by the editor, wrote that he knew well 'from his own experience, as a paedophile working with youngsters in the care sector, that children – and adults too – can take pleasure in seeing and also expressing such feelings. However, I also know how strongly such expressions are repressed. Could it be that the repression of sexuality in children is more likely to have a damaging effect on their later psychological health than its expression?'⁷ The reader wondered if it had indeed been proved 'that paedophile contacts are always harmful?'

The reader's letter was the prelude to an article penned by Dr E. Brongersma in the October issue of *Sekstant* about the 'legal consequences of exceptional sexual behaviour'.⁸ Brongersma first summed up all manner of unusual sexual behaviour that was not governed by criminal law: defloration mania, gerontophilia, group sex, urolagnia, coprophagia and anilingus. Having described these forms of non-punishable sexual behaviour, Dr Brongersma turned his attention to exhibitionism and paedophilia, the latter of which is punishable by years in prison.

In the same October issue, Peter van Eeten complained of the lack of serious attention devoted to paedophilia: 'The NVSH too has so far been beating about the bush, with the exception of the unambiguous message contained in the closing speech of the conference *De staat als zedenmeester* [The state as guardian of decency], which asserts that 'a critical inquiry into the age limits in the legislation governing sexual offences would be advisable'.⁹

Van Eeten writes that 'no expression of childhood sexuality whatsoever should be repressed: this includes playing with one's own genitals, the desire to play sexual games with brothers, sisters or friends – and also the tendency to do this with parents or other adults.' According to Van Eeten 'it is true that certain sexual acts can be harmful to both children and adults. If I were to assault and rape an innocent child in a park or a wood, that would clearly be a violent crime. But if a child and an adult

have a relationship of trust, affection, friendship or love with one another and express that relationship sexually in one way or another, one fails to see how this can in any way damage the child, as long as the child – and more particularly the parents – perceive that sexual component as positively as any other shared experience.’

This article was followed by a plea to ‘pass judgement on the following paedosexual relationship’.¹⁰ The case concerned ‘a full loving relationship between this boy and me, to which we surrendered ourselves without any inhibitions in relation to each other’. Through ‘a combination of events, the police contacted the parents and with great difficulty they got him to talk. These same police officers told me that the boy had certainly not experienced this affair as something negative and if the boy did not already have homosexual tendencies, it would certainly not have a harmful effect on him. It is now up to the readers to pass judgement on this sexual relationship for themselves’.

His own sense of conviction was based on ‘the argument that no one has the right to restrict a child sexually’.

Two responses to these articles appeared in the January issue: one positive and one negative. One reader stated that as a child he ‘had experienced just such a relationship’ and that it had only been a source of happiness to him and his adult partner. The other reader was ‘deeply shocked that someone with this tendency could think so lightly about sexual contact between adults and children’.¹¹

In March 1971, a reader’s letter referred to the last version of the Kinsey Report: ‘On the other hand, around 80% of the children were confused or shocked by the contact with adults. A small percentage of them were truly upset: but in most cases the shock reported was close to the level that children show when seeing insects, spiders or other objects that they were conditioned to give a hostile response to.’¹² The reader was a teacher and had ‘personal experience of friendly contact with a female pupil that developed into a full relationship’. In his case that did not lead to criminal prosecution but there was a ‘self-important air of salaciousness about the investigation and interrogation combined with a large dose of hypocrisy, which people would regard as inconceivable if they hadn’t encountered it’.

A second letter writer, Mrs M.A. Bogaers-van der Pas from Tilburg hoped that ‘all right-minded parents’ would join her ‘in protesting strongly against the articles in favour of paedophilia in the October issue’. When she read ‘the contested article’ it was ‘with tears and fists clenched helplessly; how is it possible that such a thing could be written and published’.

In the July/August issue, Dr E. Brongersma wrote ‘a reflection on underage sex’.¹³ The underlying principle for his article was that thinking about sexuality had changed. No longer was sexuality ‘a filthy business, necessary for reproduction’, but there was evidence of ‘a new sexual freedom [...] which makes much of the value of sexuality for a healthy and happy human life’.

Yet, according to Brongersma, many of the old prejudices with regard to sex remained intact. Brongersma argued that the fear of ‘underage sex’ had to do with ‘developments in society, whereby the process of learning had been extended. This made the age at which a young man was in a position to start a family much higher than the age at which he was physically capable of fathering a

child. But a general availability of contraceptives does away with society's objections to underage sex and the moral insights will gradually readjust to the new state of affairs.'

Number of convictions for sexual offences

In the 1960s, the number of convictions for child sexual abuse and 'sexual intercourse with children' fell by 60% and 50% respectively.

Table 1 The number of convictions for child sexual abuse or 'sexual intercourse' with children

YEAR	CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE	SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH CHILDREN
1961	1033	146
1964	800	141
1967	674	123
1968	707	163
1969	540	116
1970	423	93
1971	399	94

Source: Crime Statistics 1965 and 1968 and Monthly Police and Justice Statistics volume 16, issue 6, June 1972.

The 'Uncle Harry' scandal

In the early 1970s, a fierce battle raged within the NVSH between the 'anything goes' mentality among a group of members and the mainstream members who did not accept that position. The opposition between the two groups came to a head in what became known as the 'Uncle Harry' scandal. The scandal began in the NVSH members' magazine, which contained a letters section that answered readers' questions. In the 1960s, this section was written by a doctor (under the title WWW, which stood for *Wij Willen Weten* [We Want to Know]), but in the 1970s, teacher Dik Brummel took charge. The scandal illustrates how people in the Netherlands thought about sexual relations in general and sexuality with children in particular.¹⁴

In February 1973 a young widow with two children, a daughter of 10 and a son of 16, wrote about her new boyfriend with whom she had cohabited for three years. The children called him Uncle Harry.¹⁵ Harry had got into the habit of putting her daughter Irene to bed and staying with her for around 45 minutes. At a certain point, Irene told her mother: 'Mummy, my finger fits all the way into the hole but Uncle Harry's doesn't yet, because it still hurts when he tries to put his finger in. [...] And then he always says "if your little hole is big enough for my finger to fit, I can let you feel this nice prick in there and then you'll get the wet stuff that's running over your hand in your lovely little belly".' Irene's mother wondered in her letter what had possessed Uncle Harry: 'That he keeps on working her with his fingers until she is wide enough for him to penetrate her? We have sexual contact with each other four times a week, and twice a week his 21-year-old steady girlfriend comes

over and he goes upstairs to fool around with her. He's a sales rep and I know that he has several girlfriends he visits regularly because letters arrive for him and I accept all this because I love this man so much that I showed my own mother the door and I've dedicated my entire life to making him happy.'

In his reply, Brummel accused the woman of being 'tormented by fear and jealousy. In a hundred years time, there's no doubt that no one will know what you are getting all upset about.' Brummel argued that 'it is in a child's best interests that there are no taboos surrounding sex education. You write that your daughter already knows more now than you did on your wedding day. You should therefore be happy that your daughter can talk to you about sexuality in her own way. The more spontaneous and relaxed you can be in your responses to her sexual experiences, the better it will be for you and for her. Your boyfriend is guilty of an offence under the laws that are still in force in the Netherlands. However, you should never be tempted to bring in the police or threaten to do so.'

At the time when Brummel broached the subject of sexual behaviour towards children in this way, there were several paedophilia working groups active within the NVSH. In 1978, the number of these working groups within the NVSH reached 13: one national group and other local and regional groups in Amsterdam, The Hague, Eindhoven, Groningen, Leiden, Maastricht, Nijmegen, Rotterdam, Roosendaal/Tilburg, Utrecht, Venlo and Deventer.¹⁶ But in 1973 the organization did not have an outspoken view on the issue: '[This] proves, that within the NVSH as well, the phenomenon of paedophilia was hardly being discussed. For the various paedophilia working groups established up and down the country there is therefore still a great deal of work to be done, not least within our own organization.'¹⁷

The letter from Irene's mother and the response by Brummel prompted a great many reactions. One reader said they had read the letter 'with growing amazement' and was sorry that the child protection agency did not have Irene's address: 'But you asked for a solution. Well I have one for you: castrate Uncle Harry and get yourself to a psychiatrist as soon as possible.'¹⁸ Another reader recommended 'getting that man [Uncle Harry] out of your house'.¹⁹ A third reader wrote they had been overcome by a 'feeling of complete disgust' and wished Brummel would spend a couple of years in a psychiatric institute.²⁰ The flow of readers' letters in response to this case did not dry up until the end of 1973. In January 1974, a second letter by Irene's mother was published in which she said she had found a way to cope with the problems concerning Uncle Harry. He would stay away from Irene and if he did go too far, she had agreed with Harry that she would go to his boss.

Dik Brummel gradually disappeared from *Sekstant's* editorial columns. This was followed in May 1976 by his resignation from the NVSH: 'Despite clear criticism of your position and approach, I have the impression that you carried out your work for the NVSH through the years with personal commitment and conviction.'²¹

The NVSH's paedophilia working groups remain active to this day. They are smaller in number and go by a different name. The current working group *Kinderen en ouderen* [Children and the elderly] holds regular meetings but emphatically provides no scope for 'illegal activities'.²²

Back to the turbulent 1970s. On 19 March 1977, a national paedophilia working group organized a conference in Amsterdam. In his closing speech, the NSVH chairman sarcastically referred to the Society as 'the club for unbridled sex and unbridled conflicts' and observed that 'you will not have

converted many of us, in the sense that we are now prepared to follow your way of thinking in theory and practice'.²³ In 1983, an NVSH report was published on age limits in criminal legislation. This report referred to 'existing scientific research' that apparently revealed that sexual contact with children caused them no harm: 'however it did show that it can result in contacts which children value as positive (even once they have reached adulthood)'.²⁴

Conclusion

How much value should be attached to the showing of an excerpt from the television programme *Het Groot Uur U* dating from 1978? Can it be concluded on the basis of this example that the norms for sexual contact with minors became more relaxed at the end of the 1960s and in the course of the 1970s? Can this be used as a way of explaining why priests and members of religious orders of congregations engaged in inappropriate behaviour with minors?

At the very least it should be acknowledged that the arguments of a small group of paedophiles were allowed to enter the public debate at the time. It is hard to imagine a programme such as the relevant episode of *Het Groot Uur U* being broadcast nowadays.²⁵ But it would be misguided to conclude that the arguments of Brongersma and others garnered a great deal of support in those days. A similar situation even applied within the NVSH, 'the club for unbridled sex': although it took a tolerant approach in the information it provided about paedophilia and offered support for paedophiles who had got into difficulties, an appeal for doing away with the legal protection of children with regard to sexual acts remained the view of a small minority. And however much attention this small minority viewpoint attracted in the 1970s, there is no evidence whatsoever of a 'Woodstock myth' in the Netherlands in this regard. The Netherlands had its own Woodstock in the shape of the Kralingen festival but its influence cannot be held accountable for the sexual abuse of minors in the Roman Catholic Church.²⁶

NOTES

1. The John Jay College Research Team, *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010*, May 2011, p. 2.
2. Named after the Woodstock festival that was held in Bethel NY from 15 to 17 August 1969.
3. Thomas Doyle, 'The John Jay Document 2011. Reality Revised.' May 20, 2011: <http://www.richardsipe.com/reports/Doyle-%20The%20John%20Jay%20Document%2020ii.htm>
4. Frank van Zijl and Henk Müller, 'De RK Kerk heeft geen moraal gezag meer', *Volkscrant*, 24 February 2011.
5. 'Verbazingwekkend en adembenemend', *Telegraaf*, 30 April 2011.
6. H.Q. Röling, 'Zedelijkheid en struisvogelpolitiek. De confessionelen en de voorbehoedmiddelen'. In: P. Luykx, H. Righart, ed., *Van de pastorie naar het torentje. Een eeuw confessionele politiek*, 1991, p. 152.
7. 'Postbus 64 Den Haag', *Sekstant*, p. 5 (July/August 1970).
8. Dr E. Brongersma, 'Juridische gevolgen van uitzonderlijk seksueel gedrag.', *Sekstant*, p. 12 et seq. (October 1970).
9. Peter van Eeten, 'Pedofilie', *Sekstant*, p. 14 (October 1970).
10. 'Is ontucht met minderjarigen een misdaad?', *Sekstant* p. 16 (December 1970).
11. 'Pedofilie 1' and 'Pedofilie 2', *Sekstant* pp. 6-7 (January 1971).

12. 'Seksueel contact tussen meerder- en minderjarigen', Sekstant, p. 5 (March 1971).
13. Dr E. Brongersma, 'Waarom zou het je kind niet wezen? Een beschouwing over jeugdseks', Sekstant, pp. 24-29 (July/August 1971).
14. See also OVT 26 December 2008, <http://weblogs.vpro.nl/radioarchief/2008/12/26/over-het-einde-van-de-nieuwe-sekstant>
15. 'Ome Harry', Sekstant, pp. 39-41 (February 1973).
16. 'De wet kent grenzen. De liefde niet.' A publication on paedophilia by the national working group of the NVSH (1978).
17. 'Seks met kinderen. Ingezonden brief van W.T. te G', Sekstant (April 1973).
18. 'Ome Harry III'. Reader's letter by Ms 'T.S. te U', Sekstant (July 1973).
19. 'Ome Harry IV'. Reader's letter by 'S. v.d. M te L', Sekstant (July 1973).
20. 'Ome Harry V'. Reader's letter by 'B. de Z', Sekstant (July 1973).
21. 'Brief van de voorzitter van de NVSH aan Dik Brummel', Nieuwe Sekstant (September 2008).
22. See the NVSH website: www.nvsh.org.
23. Papers from the conference 'Pedofilie & Samenleving', pp. 105-106 (19 March 1977).
24. NVSH, Leeftijdsgrenzen in de zedelijkheidswetgeving. Bescherming of bedreiging?, 1978.
25. Koos Postema In: Andere Tijden, Ruimte voor de pedofiel (19 March 2011).
<http://beta.uitzendinggemist.nl/afleveringen/1080553-ruimte-voor-de-pedofiel>
26. Kralingen was the site of the Dutch equivalent of Woodstock which took place on 26 to 28 June 1970 and featured performances by Pink Floyd, Jefferson Airplane, Santana, The Byrds and Dutch rock band Ekseption.