

CONFLICT, ACCOMMODATION, EVASION: SURVIVAL
STRATEGIES OF ENGLISH REFORMED COMMUNITIES
IN THE EARLY DUTCH REPUBLIC

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a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the degree of

Master of Arts in History

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of History

December 2009

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Acknowledgement

This Thesis is dedicated to Dr. Jesse A. Spohnholz, Thesis Chair, whose support and commitment to excellence, and many hours of hard work, made this thesis possible.

Many thanks also to Dr. Steven Kale and Dr. Susan Peabody for their support and participation in this project.

And in loving memory of my parents, Wren K. and Brenda J. Van Buskirk.

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Abstract

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December 2009

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This thesis is a study of four English Reformed (Puritan) communities in the Netherlands in the early seventeenth century. It examines the political, religious, and social tensions present at the local, national, and international level that were present during this period, and the strategies developed by the leadership of each of the four communities in response to these tensions. It addresses the old prevailing historiography of Reformation history, with its preponderance of one size fits all labeling, and shows that when examined at the local level, Reformation history is not only extremely diverse, but that the old labels no longer apply.

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Introduction

Francis Johnson laid down his quill pen next to the parchment he had been writing on in the dim light of his jail cell in Newgate prison. It was the year 1596, the third year of his imprisonment. Johnson had been imprisoned for seditious preaching; he was the pastor of a group of English Puritan dissenters known as separatists, a radical version of Calvinism whose advocates espoused complete separation from the state religion in England, the Church of England. The document he had just completed was titled *A True confession of Faith*. This document summarized the theology of the separatist movement as he interpreted it.

The conditions of the prisons in England during the sixteenth century were terrible by today's standards. Although it is not certain under what conditions Francis Johnson labored to produce his treatise, it is probable that he dealt with the same conditions that most prisoners (excluding prominent nobles) had to deal with. The only thing given to prisoners during the Elizabethan era was a cold and filthy cell. Food was not provided except for occasional charitable donations from private parties such as well-off businesses or individuals and occasional contributions from the city government, as for example when a supply of food was confiscated from a peddler who was selling underweight amounts of food for the full weight price or had failed to pay their taxes or duties to the city. Most prisoners had to buy their own food, as well as any other necessities or comforts they desired, such as clean clothing, extra bedding, candles for light, and pen and parchment to write with. Prisoners could buy food, mostly of dubious quality, from the corrupt jail wardens, and many prisoners were supported

directly by friends and family.¹ Francis Johnson probably had the support not only of friends and family, but also of members of his outlawed congregation, as well as supporters and sympathizers of the jailed pastor. That a man of God was subjected to such conditions was a symptom of the great tensions during the post-Reformation era in the relationships between governments and individuals, and between the monopolistic state churches whose authority came from those governments and those who believed in other creeds. Across Europe, penalties for believing and professing a faith other than the state-approved versions could be harsh; the very action of following a different faith could be considered not only heretical but seditious by the government in England and those in countries across the continent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

What is surprising about Francis Johnson's term in jail was that he wrote several treatises about the separatist position while there, and some of these were apparently smuggled out and published while he was still incarcerated. Perhaps the published works failed to attract the attention of religious or political authorities, or Johnson's identity as the author of the treatises was concealed until he was safely out of the country. In spite of the danger of publishing these works, Johnson was never caught while serving his sentence; Francis and his brother George, along with many other separatists, were released from prison in 1597 and immediately exiled. Francis Johnson left for the Dutch Republic, where he expected to be able to practice his religion in peace. The many political and religious tensions found in late sixteenth-century England were greater than Johnson's fledgling church could begin to cope with. Johnson hoped that his congregation would find it easier to balance the tensions between his group and local and

¹¹ Anthony Babington, *The English Bastille: A History of Newgate Gaol and Prison Conditions in Britain 1188-1902* (London: Macdonald and co., 1971), p. 21, 22.

national, political and religious authorities in the Dutch Republic, which was known throughout Europe at this time for its toleration of many different churches and theologies. Johnson never returned to England.

* * *

The Puritan movement that spawned the congregations contained within this study was an offshoot of the English Reformation, begun in 1534 by King Henry VIII (r.1509-1547). This reformation was not inspired by any particular religious leader, but rather was an act of state. The failure of Catherine of Aragon (r.1509-1533), Henry's wife of more than twenty years, to provide him with a male heir led him to seek radical solutions for this dilemma. Henry's request to Pope Clement VII (r.1523-1534) for permission to divorce Catherine, so that he could marry a younger woman who could provide him with a male heir was rejected in large part because he had already been granted a dispensation to marry Catherine of Aragon in the first place, because she was the widow of Henry's brother Arthur. In addition, Catherine had a powerful ally in her nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (r.1519-1556), who applied pressure upon the pope not to grant the dispensation. Henry's inability to sway Clement VII in the matter caused him to sever all ties with the Church of Rome and declare himself supreme head of the English church.²

The Church of England that took the place of the Catholic Church retained many of the latter's practices and rituals, and a similar ecclesiastical structure. Yet many Protestants were unhappy with the retention of so many "popish" trappings, and the movement to reform the Church of England began soon after Henry's death in 1547. The reform movement had some support during the short reign of Henry's Protestant son,

² Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 29.

Edward VI (r.1547-1553), but was forced underground with the ascension of his half-sister Mary I (r.1553-1558), daughter of the Catholic queen Catherine of Aragon, and herself a devout Catholic. With the backing of her husband King Philip II (r. 1554-1598) of Spain, Mary attempted to bring the country back into the bosom of the Catholic Church, but her reign was also brief; with the ascension of her half sister, Elizabeth, in 1558, England was once again ruled by a Protestant monarch. It is during Elizabeth's reign (r.1558-1603) that we first hear from the contemporary commentators of the period, of the reformers referred to as 'hot Puritans of the new clergy' in polemical tracts issued in 1565 and later by Catholic exiles.³ Initially a term of derision used by the reformer's enemies in the Church of England and the Catholic Church, this label gradually lost some of its harmful connotations. In 1631 Giles Widdowes wrote that "those whom we ordinarily call Puritans are men of strict life and precise opinions." He added that they "cannot be hated for anything but their singularity in zeal and piety."⁴

Ongoing tensions with Spain caused the English government to agree to an alliance with the Dutch Republic in 1585. The young Republic had sought alliance with France initially, to help the Republic in its ongoing war with Spain, but had been rebuffed. In May 1585 the government of the Dutch Republic, the States General, offered sovereignty over the Netherlands to Elizabeth, in turn for her military assistance. Elizabeth agreed to an alliance provided she could nominate the Republic's political and military head and be granted seats in the States General. The treaty of Nonsuch, signed in August of 1585, represents the beginning of English political involvement in the Netherlands. Elizabeth sent the Earl of Leicester with an army and appointed him

³ Patrick Collinson, *English Puritanism* (London: Chameleon Press, 1988) p.8.

⁴ Patrick Collinson, *English Puritanism*, P.10.

governor-general of the Republic. Although he returned to England just two years later, the English continued to garrison the Dutch Republic with troops until the English Civil War in the 1640s. A feature of these garrisons from the beginning of their stationing in the Dutch Republic was the inclusion of chaplains to provide religious services for the troops and their commanders, and Leicester's strong support for the Calvinists ensured that the appointments to these posts would also be Calvinist in their religion.⁵ As England's involvement with the Netherlands continued to evolve in the following decades, communities of English expatriates and exiles, many of them Puritans, increased the demand for Reformed, that is to say Reformed, or Puritan pastors. It was by this means that the Puritan presence in the English communities of the Netherlands became firmly established. It was also through this means that the churches of this study were established and maintained.

* * *

The Netherlands to which Johnson and his Puritan supporters had fled in 1597 had been a part of the Spanish empire until 1572, when the Dutch Revolt began. The primary causes of this war were both political and religious in nature. Among many disastrous maneuvers by the Spanish crown, the attempted imposition of a Tenth-Penny, or ten percent tax on all sales without the consent of the provinces, and the garrisoning of Spanish troops and construction of citadels in the major towns, were major factors leading to the revolt. Religious tensions also played a part. Although the Dutch Provinces had been under Hapsburg control since 1542, the Catholic rulers had for many years kept a somewhat heavy-handed approach to the natives' religious preferences, establishing an

⁵ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), Pgs 219-221.

inquisition and executing hundreds of people for heresy. But under Philip II, who ruled the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands after his father Charles V abdicated in 1556, the increasing tensions within Reformation Europe and Philip's desire to Catholicize all of his subjects resulted in the repression of Dutch Protestant clergy and their followers, especially in the northern provinces. The high-handedness of the Spanish in both temporal and spiritual matters was more than the independent-minded Dutch could bear, and the Eighty Years War (1568⁶- 1648) ensued.⁷

The religious element of the Revolt continued to shape the Dutch polity and world-view for at least the next century. Philip II and the Duke of Alva had tried to suppress heresy and sedition through the *Conseil des Troubles*, a court body aimed at punishing both rebellion and heresy, which had commissions in each province. Almost nine thousand persons from all levels of Dutch society were investigated and sentenced by the council for treason or heresy, and more than one thousand were executed. Although the later Dutch Republic would practice limited tolerance for the Catholic minority within its population (turning a blind eye to private gatherings), it would remain predominately Protestant for the remainder of its existence.⁸

Dutch Calvinist ministers were a major driving force and some of the most effective spokesmen for the Revolt. The hardliners within the ranks of the Dutch Calvinist clergy tried to establish the Dutch Reformed Church as the only official church in the Republic but were rebuffed by the nobility, the urban magistrates, and lesser officials of the government. They were however successful in completely suppressing the

⁶ Note: 1568 was the year that William of Orange, the first leader of the Revolt, launched a military campaign against the Spanish-led government in Brussels.

⁷ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 135-137.

⁸ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 157-158.

Catholic Church in the first years of the war in the northern provinces under rebel control; in many cities, the clergy had been driven out along with the Spanish garrisons. Although the much of the populace did not support the Catholic Church in the northern provinces, the people's response to the new Dutch Reformed Church was tepid at best. The Dutch Reformed Church emerged as a power broker in the new Republic, a public church with influence on civic and national affairs, but without the legitimacy of a designation as the state church of the nation or the support of a majority of its people.⁹ The influence it exerted over religious and civic affairs in the new Republic would, however, cause many problems for the churches in this study.

* * *

This study is an examination of the Puritan communities of Amsterdam and Leiden, in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. It compares four Puritan communities in these cities, in an effort to answer a number of questions which have not, until now, been addressed. Historians of Reformation English churches in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century have focused primarily on three types of scholarship: monographs of Reformed churches within an individual city, monographs of single congregations, and social or cultural surveys of the entire group of English Reformed churches. In addition, some work has been done on refugee populations in individual Dutch cities and biographies have been completed for a few figures in the English Reformed churches in the Netherlands. What has not been attempted is a comparison survey of both conformist and separatist Reformed English churches in different geographical locations within the Netherlands.

⁹ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, Pgs 361-362.

Why do a comparison of this kind? By comparing the histories and activities of conformist and separatist groups that existed at the same time but in different locations, new insights can be gained into the motivations, experiences, world views, and hopes and aspirations of these groups of people. Rather than defining churches only by the theological position espoused by their leaders, this study emphasizes the local nature of these congregations. It examines how local factors, such as political, social, and economic realities, as well as the personalities and theological positions of the leaders of these individual congregations, shaped the experiences of the members of each congregation. By comparing these congregations we can avoid treating them as a theologically singular, all-inclusive and stereotyped description that has often characterized previous histories. Instead, we can see differences that are not available to historians who focus on a single congregation or city, or who are only interested in a general survey of all English Puritans in the Dutch Republic.

* * *

The historiography of the period has yet to be definitively established, but works by early modern historians of the Netherlands have also informed my study. An examination of this kind addresses at least two categories of historiography. In addition to works that examine English Reformed congregations in the Netherlands, this thesis also contributes to a larger historiography associated with the study of Puritanism. Although inspired by and firmly guided by Calvinist theology, the English Puritans had their differences with other kinds of Calvinists, as this thesis will show. Puritan historiography firmly links this thesis to the study Reformation history in early modern Europe.

Keith Sprunger has produced an excellent book on the English and Scottish Reformed congregations in the Dutch Republic. In 1982, he published *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*¹⁰. Sprunger convincingly argues that the early Dutch Republic was a refuge in this period, for clergy and laity whose views were unpopular back home- in this case, English and Scottish Puritans. Leaders of the English governments were not happy that the dissenting congregations that had been formed in the Netherlands were led by non-conformist ministers (those who did not agree with the Church of England's retention of "popish" practices). They acquiesced to the practice for two reasons: first, it was difficult to convince Church of England pastors to take the positions. Ministers who were more acceptable in the governments' eyes, i.e. conformist or Anglican pastors, were not interested in giving up their positions at home and moving to a strange country. The non-conformists who arrived in the Netherlands were either coerced into moving there by the suspension of their employment within the Anglican church, or left England to find more tolerant conditions elsewhere. A second reason why the English authorities were willing to put up with the non-conformists was economic, and possibly also political in nature: the Dutch authorities paid most of the salaries of the ministers, and English Puritan non-conformists were exactly the kind of ministers that Dutch magistrates in the host cities most approved of.

Specific monographs have been written on the Puritans of both Amsterdam and Leiden. In her 1964 book, Alice Carter's *The English Reformed Church in Amsterdam in*

¹⁰ Keith Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1982).

*the Seventeenth Century*¹¹, Carter argues that John Paget, the first minister of the English Reformed church in Amsterdam was governed in his conduct by his relationship to the Dutch Reformed church. His church had been sponsored by the Amsterdam Classis, the local governing body of the Dutch Reformed Church, and was constituted with the idea that the English congregation would be a part of the Dutch Reformed Church, albeit an English-speaking one. From necessity, Paget relied upon the Classis to oversee his church, particularly after he began converting members of the rival English separatist church in Amsterdam. These new members of his congregation were used to having more participation in church decision-making and governance than Paget, as a strict presbyterian, was willing to grant. Carter's book demonstrates ably the difficulties encountered in adapting Calvinist theology to this early modern world. My thesis contributes to this historiography by showing that individual congregations dealt with these difficulties in fundamentally different ways.

Daniel Plooijs's 1922 book, *The Pilgrim Fathers from a Dutch Point of View*, on Dutch/English relations and the impact they would later have on American history is an early monograph of Puritans in Leiden. But Plooijs's work is invaluable for its recreation of the Leiden separatist church of John Robinson and his counterpart, the English Reformed pastor in Leiden, Hugh Goodyear. The argument he makes regarding the Leiden separatists, some of whom immigrated to America as the Pilgrim Fathers, was that their time in the Dutch Republic and their exposure to Dutch institutions had a greater influence on the establishment of religious freedom and civil liberty in America than England had. For the purpose of this study though, Plooijs's discovery of the

¹¹ Alice Carter, *The English Reformed Church in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century*, (Amsterdam: Scheltema and Holkena, 1964).

Goodyear papers and his compilation of wedding banns and letters connected to the Leiden separatists, as well as his description of their time in Leiden, are more important than his theories about Dutch influence on American history.

The next level of historiography to which this thesis contributes involves the history of the Puritan movement in England. While the history of the Puritans continues in the New World and is vital to the understanding of early American history, this thesis is primarily concerned with what the Puritans were doing in the Netherlands before the first voyages to America. The origins of the Puritan movement are skillfully traced by Ethan H. Shagan in his book *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*¹². Shagan agrees with revisionists that the English Reformation was political in its beginning—Henry VIII’s desire for a divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, so he could marry a younger woman and beget a male heir. His decision was primarily supported by a cooperative population which either viewed the split with the church with ambivalence or who were perhaps dissuaded from further dissent by the taint and punishment of treason. The Puritan movement grew slowly after Henry VIII’s death and gained momentum as a reaction to the 1559 Elizabethan Settlement, which established the Church of England as the official church of the land. The new church was too papist in its rituals and operation for the more radical element of the Protestants in England. Although Shagan’s study establishes the origins of the Puritan movement, he is primarily interested in the political causes of the English Reformation and does not address the diversity within the religious institutions which developed from it, a focus of this thesis.

¹² Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

In *English Puritanism*¹³, Patrick Collinson traces the rise of Puritanism during Elizabeth's reign as a further reformation (this time theological, rather than political) and argues that the Puritan movement was at least partially successful in the rural areas of England in the early seventeenth century. He argues that Puritanism was essentially conservative until the Arminian controversy in the early seventeenth century, inspiring religious and political leaders across the country to support the English Civil War of the 1640's. Collinson's work is focused exclusively on English Puritans at home during the period. It fails to address what Puritans were doing in other countries, and how they differed from, and were similar to, Puritans at home in England. This thesis helps to illuminate those differences and similarities by focusing on a local, rather than national, level.

Peter Toon examines the relationship of Puritanism to Calvinism and the reasons it grew in England in his work, *Puritans and Calvinism*.¹⁴ He argues that Puritanism was primarily a reaction to the Elizabethan Settlement, and while some parts of Puritan thought can be traced back to the Lollard movement, the primary impetus came in the reaction of convinced Protestants to what they saw as a large measure of continuity with the Roman Catholic past which was contained within the settlement. Toon argues for the inflexibility of the Puritan mind, that "Biblical doctrine is not capable of being reduced into any finally neat and fully tidy system since it contains seemingly irreconcilable elements- e.g. predestination and free will."¹⁵ To Toon, the inflexibility of the Puritans ultimately doomed their faith. This thesis addresses the differences in the degree of

¹³ Patrick Collinson, *English Puritanism*, (London: Chameleon Press, 1983).

¹⁴ Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism*, (Rushden, UK: Stanley L. Hunt, 1973).

¹⁵ Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism*, Pg 100.

flexibility of individual pastors and congregations, which shows that some congregations were more ‘successful’ (seemed to be more flexible) than others.

* * *

The primary sources for this study include five different types of documents. There are a few personal memoirs by members of these congregations still extant. These documents reveal the authors’ personalities and their motivations for producing them, but they also offer invaluable eyewitness accounts of events. In addition, there are official documents and letters between the congregations and the religious and political authorities of both England and the Netherlands, which help reveal the attitudes of each party. There are letters between important individuals and between congregations that show the concerns that occupied the minds of leaders and followers alike. Third, there are treatises that were written to support or attack matters of theology, which reveal where each congregation’s leaders saw themselves in relation to other Protestant faiths and organizations. Finally, there are also published sermons, which reveal how the pastors of these congregations viewed the world and how they wished their followers to view it. Together, these five types of sources allow me to place these English Puritan congregations in the seventeenth-century Netherlands within their immediate local, national, and international contexts, and understand the political, religious, and social tensions within them. While the members of the congregations within this study shared a similar theology, the way they experienced and dealt with these tensions varied greatly from one group to another. The result of these tensions was that individual religious experiences of the early modern world were fundamentally different. Despite historians’ eagerness to access the Puritans as a monolithic bloc, they were in fact anything but.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, a large English immigrant population existed in the recently-founded Dutch Republic. There were two major reasons for this buildup of English immigrants in the Netherlands. First, the military alliance between England and the Dutch Republic against Spain during the Eighty Years' War caused the garrisoning of English troops in the major cities, and an increase in trade and economic opportunities in the Netherlands. Second, the flight of English Puritan dissenters and their congregations to the Republic, whose state-sponsored church was the Dutch Reformed Church, which was in fact allied to the English Reformed pastors in matters of theology and ecclesiology. The members of these English Reformed churches abroad objected to the practices of the Church of England. As a result, back in their home country, they had been subjected to harassment or outright banishment. The Dutch Republic provided a haven which was geographically close to England, but which was officially more tolerant of differences of religion than England was.

In fact, on an international level, the English and Dutch states were already strong allies when the English Puritan refugees arrived in Amsterdam and Leiden. The English and the Dutch had been working together against what they saw as a Spanish threat since 1585, when Queen Elizabeth and the States General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands signed the Treaty of Nonsuch. In that agreement England sent a military force under the leadership of the Earl of Leicester to support the Dutch rebels against Philip II's government in Brussels. Though Leicester only stayed in the Netherlands until 1587, English troops remained garrisoned there after he returned to England, and this practice of stationing English troops at a number of locations around the Dutch Republic was maintained throughout the remainder of Elizabeth I's reign. This international

cooperation continued under the new king of England, James I (1603-1625). The States General and leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church in fact approved funding for the English Reformed chaplains who were assigned to the English garrisons. The fact that these chaplains were Reformed in their theology, and therefore largely in agreement with the theology of the Dutch Reformed Church, made it easier for Dutch divines to accept state support for these foreign clergymen. A precedent was established, as English Reformed clergy were welcomed to the Netherlands to attend to the spiritual needs of the English garrisons

In addition to the funding for the garrison chaplains, the Dutch government and religious authorities provided English Reformed pastors and church buildings for the large numbers of civilian English and Scottish immigrants, many of them merchants and artisans, who lived in the major cities, including Amsterdam and Leiden. The Dutch government provided some of these churches because they were an effective means of social control over the immigrant groups; however, at least one church was approved by the Dutch authorities as an alternative to the only available English speaking church in Amsterdam, the separatist church of Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth. The separatist church, while theologically closely allied to the Dutch Reformed church, was an embarrassment to the Amsterdam magistrates, and viewed by the English merchant elites as unsuitable due to its exile status.

The English merchants, soldiers, and Puritan refugees were not the only foreigners living in Dutch cities. The newly-founded Republic welcomed religious refugees from a variety of faiths from all over Europe. The tensions that resulted from the mingling of these groups, however, caused some social unrest, particularly over

theological differences, which the Dutch authorities, both secular and religious, and including both local magistrates as well as members of the States General itself, spent much of their time debating and contending with. In Amsterdam in particular both the Dutch Reformed church and the English Reformed church fought against perceived heretics, such as separatists, Anabaptists, and Arminians among others, and often involved the local magistrates in arbitration with these groups. At the national level, these controversies were debated in the halls of the state government at The Hague, and addressed in regional and national synods by the Dutch Reformed Church. In this study I argue that English immigrants devised several different solutions, varying from alliance and accommodation to outright defiance, depending upon their geographic locations and their relationships to local, national, and international authorities, to answer the challenges posed by the political, theological, economic, and social issues that they faced in their new lives in the early seventeenth-century Netherlands. What is most remarkable is that, quite independently of their theological positions, the pastors of the English Reformed refugee congregations in early seventeenth-century Holland not only differed greatly in their approach to these problems, but also experienced widely varying results. As a result, life in each of the English churches in the Dutch Republic was quite different. Further, these patterns did not follow clear confessional or denominational lines that historians often use to describe these communities. The English pastors' attempts at resolving religious, social, and political tensions help demonstrate that the English Reformed churches in the Netherlands simply do not fit within a description using the categorical or confessional models of historical analysis that dominate historical study of the Reformation era. Instead each of these English Reformed churches needs to be

examined individually in order to reveal their unique qualities. The English Reformed churches of Leiden and Amsterdam, or elsewhere in the Dutch Republic, were not simply sister churches in the same wider Puritan movement. Examinations of the English Reformed churches in the Netherlands, when conducted at the congregational level, enable scholars to achieve a more accurate historical picture of the period. In particular this study considers international and local individual characteristics of each of these churches, in addition to the specific personalities of their leaders, to highlight the considerable diversity that existed among them.

Seventeenth-century English immigrants living in the Netherlands and their Dutch hosts divided the English Reformed congregations according to their non-conformist or separatist status. Non-conformist Reformed churches were those that retained legal status in the Dutch Republic, and remained allied to the Church of England, even though their members were still Puritans who aimed at encouraging reform within the established church (conformists were Puritans who had stayed in England and conformed to Anglican practices). Members of non-conformist churches were willing to take oaths of loyalty to the Church of England, but rejected many of its rituals and its ecclesiastical organization. In the Dutch Republic, political and religious authorities officially recognized these churches, as did the English ambassador in the Netherlands. Because they adopted rites and church structures that did not conform to the Anglican Church, however, they were not permitted to exist back in England. Many of the non-conformist pastors had come to the Netherlands after being banned from holding positions within the Church of England. On the other hand, the separatist Reformed churches were those which had broken completely with the Church of England over theological issues and the

use of various rituals and organizational details, such as the retention of an episcopal system by the Anglicans. Although the separatists and non-conformists agreed on many of the theological issues that divided them from the Church of England, the separatists' stance was more stringent and uncompromising in matters of faith. Their unwillingness to compromise meant that they openly condemned the practices of the Church of England, which was tantamount to criticizing the sovereign, who was leader of both civic and religious affairs in England. The separatist churches were exile churches whose members were considered traitors in England. The separatists were allowed to worship in the Netherlands, but were not officially recognized or supported by the Dutch.

International political forces played a major role in shaping the nature of both the non-conformist and the separatist churches. It shows that the non-conformist churches enjoyed a significant advantage over the separatist churches in terms of material support by the Dutch state and Dutch Reformed authorities and approval by the English crown and the Church of England. The separatist churches were not just outlawed in England, they also continued to provoke the English government and the Church of England from their exile. Separatist leaders wrote and printed treatises critical of English policies and the Church of England, and had these treatises smuggled back into England, in an effort to generate popular support for political reforms within James' government and theological and liturgical reforms within the Church of England. In Amsterdam and Leiden, therefore, the relationship of the English Reformed churches to the English state church and James I's government profoundly shaped the nature those churches, depending upon the theological positions of each congregation's pastors.

At the local level too, the congregations faced remarkably different social and economic conditions that shaped their chief characteristics. In this case, differences in denomination or theological perspectives shaped these churches far less than the specific local context in which these churches were established. The Reformed congregations of Amsterdam, both the non-conformist and separatist, enjoyed greater economic advantages than their counterparts in Leiden. Amsterdam, the largest and wealthiest city in the Dutch Republic, enjoyed the most advanced and flourishing economy in Western Europe. In contrast, the nearby city of Leiden, although prosperous, had a closed market in which local guilds maintained a virtual monopoly on the leading industrial sectors. The Amsterdam separatists therefore were able to enjoy a relatively prosperous existence despite their lack of support from the city's magistrates, the Republic's regents, or officials back home in England. Some of their members were even members of Amsterdam's civic guilds, which granted them the right to employ non-guild members to work for them. This provided them with a legal framework to support fellow church members financially. This option was not available to the Leiden separatists, nor was the many other opportunities which were available in a free market versus a closed one. Rather the domination of the local cloth guild, which excluded foreign members, meant that most separatists in Leiden could only ever obtain poorly paid work as day laborers or as simple artisans.

In addition to international political forces and local social and economic conditions, each of the English Reformed congregations was profoundly shaped by the men who provided their leadership. How their pastors behaved greatly influenced how members of these congregations experienced the world, regardless of their viewpoints on

major theological debates of the day. My study shows that, for example, the implacable natures of the leaders of the Amsterdam non-conformist and separatist churches led to a theological war of words in the form of public sermons and the writing of treatises defending their respective positions. This public debate between members of the English Reformed communities of Amsterdam lasted for decades, and caused great turmoil on both sides. It also encouraged members of each congregation to shift their alliance from one to the other. In addition, the separatist church in Amsterdam faced even more profound dissension within its ranks. In particular its two main leaders, Henry Ainsworth and Francis Johnson, became embroiled in a dispute in the first decade of the seventeenth century that eventually led to an irreparable schism between the two men and ultimately the entire congregation.

The English Reformed churches in Leiden experienced a completely different situation. The pastors of the Leiden English non-conformist church, led by Hugh Goodyear, and the separatist church led by John Robinson, co-existed peacefully. The two leaders even formed an enduring friendship. Goodyear, unlike his counterpart in Amsterdam John Paget, was uninterested in highlighting his theological disagreement with the Leiden separatists. In fact, he made friends with many pastors and members of conformist (Puritans who had stayed in England and “conformed” to the practices of the Church of England), non-conformist, and separatist congregations during the course of his long tenure as pastor of the Leiden non-conformists, which lasted from 1617 to 1661. Goodyear focused on maintaining strict discipline within his own congregation, and although his church was officially recognized and supported by the Dutch State resisted

any attempts at mediation or intervention by the Leiden magistrates and Leiden Reformed Church authorities in his conduct and management of the congregation.

Unlike the Amsterdam separatist leaders Ainsworth and Johnson, who were steadfast in their opposition to the English Reformed church of John Paget and the Church of England, John Robinson, the leader and pastor of the Leiden separatists, showed a willingness to compromise with his theological enemies over the long period of his exile. An implacable foe of the Church of England when he fled into exile, and a man who shunned the company of those who did not subscribe to separatist theology, Robinson gradually reversed his stance on both of these positions. By the end of his life he was both friends with many non-conformists, including Goodyear, and even urged his followers to reconcile with the Church of England.

Members of each of these English Reformed congregations in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic experienced the world in a completely unique way, because each had different kinds of tensions to deal with, depending on its location, its relationship to local and national political and religious authorities, and the personality of its leader. By examining English Reformed churches on an individual, localized level, this thesis will show that applying a label such as 'Puritan' or 'English Reformed' to these unique congregations is misleading. They cannot be lumped together as some sort of homogenous whole; a distorted view of their world results from this narrow perspective. My thesis will show that the world of the seventeenth-century English Reformed churches in the Netherlands was a much more diverse world than many scholars have imagined. As historians are discovering in every field of historical scholarship, a closer examination of groups and individuals in any era reveals a much richer understanding of

the period as a whole as well as providing a more accurate rendering of that era and the people who lived in it.

* * *

Chapter one examines the tensions within the English immigrant community in early seventeenth-century Amsterdam, and what the English merchant elites, working with their Amsterdam counterparts within the Dutch Reformed Church and with the city magistrates, did to solve these tensions. The creation of a new English Reformed church, officially recognized by the Dutch ecclesiastical and civic authorities, provided an alternative to the existence of the outlawed separatist churches in Amsterdam by offering a “respectable”, high status church for the merchant elites to attend. The selection of John Paget as pastor worked to these wealthy merchants advantage, as he waged a decades--long war of words against what he saw as the separatist “heresy”, and eventually brought about the separatists demise. I argue that Paget’s church helped give the English elite merchants social parity with their Dutch peers, and political acceptance by the Dutch and English governments, as well as an improved relationship with both the Church of England and the Dutch Reformed Classis.

Chapter two examines the conflict between the leaders of the renegade separatist church, Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth, and the leader of the official, state approved English Reformed church in Amsterdam, John Paget. I argue that the disadvantageous legal status of the separatist churches and the consequent lack of support by the Dutch government and ecclesiastical authorities of the Dutch Reformed church contributed to their eventual downfall. However, the close relationship the separatists had theologically to the Dutch Reformed Church (both were essentially Calvinist in doctrine),

and the desire of the city magistrates to encourage the economic activities of all the members of the city's population, allowed the separatist churches to continue to exist in Amsterdam for several decades, despite the objections of the English merchant elites, the Church of England, and the English government. It took the strenuous efforts of John Paget, along with inner conflicts among the leaders of the Separatists, to end these churches.

Chapter three examines how one Separatist leader, John Robinson, dealt with the problems faced by his congregation in England, Amsterdam, and Leiden. I argue that Robinson essentially dealt with conflicts and tensions by moving away from them, hoping to avoid trouble by starting over in a new location. Although Robinson achieved some peace in Leiden in relations with the already established English Reformed church there under the leadership of pastor Hugh Goodyear, he found that the troubles in Amsterdam between Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth followed him to Leiden, in the form of appeals to him to mediate their (the Amsterdam separatists) problems. The greatest problem faced by the Leiden Separatists was of an economic nature, as there were fewer opportunities in Leiden to make a good living. This was due to the closed, monopolistic system employed by the local Dutch entrepreneurs and merchants to control the cloth-making industry, which was the leading sector of Leiden's economy. I argue that, for these and other reasons which I explore, a group from Robinson's congregation made the decision to move to the colonies in America, and were remembered in American histories as the Pilgrim Fathers.

CHAPTER ONE:

A 'HOTTER SORT' OF PURITAN: FRANCIS JOHNSON AND THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF AMSTERDAM.

This chapter is an examination of the separatist church in Amsterdam, known by its members as the Ancient Church of Amsterdam, and covering the period of 1593 to 1623. In it I argue that the Amsterdam separatist church was at a disadvantage in its relationship to local, national, and international governments, both civil and religious, due to its exiled and outlaw status. Although this church was theologically very similar to the Dutch Reformed state religion, its unfavorable status with the English crown and the Church of England was a determining factor in the Amsterdam Dutch Reformed consistory's decision, at the urging of Amsterdam's English merchant elites, to allow the creation of a new, state-approved English Reformed church under the leadership of John Paget. Paget's determination to uphold the English Reformed religion, and to stamp out what he viewed as heresies among the English immigrants (which included the separatists) led to increased local theological tensions, between his church and the separatist church of Francis Johnson and his followers.

One significant result of this increased tension was the estrangement of the two leaders of the Amsterdam separatists, its pastor Francis Johnson, and its teacher, Henry Ainsworth. Because the separatist churches were fiercely independent entities which viewed ecclesiastical organizations as "popish" in nature, the Amsterdam separatists did not have a higher authority to appeal to in dealing with their internal problems. The schism that followed was a direct result of Johnson and Ainsworth's unwillingness to compromise over issues which included the amount of participation, if any, that regular congregation members should have in the running of the church.

The primary sources I examined for this chapter included letters between Henry Ainsworth and John Robinson which discussed the theological and ecclesiastical issues between the two leaders of the Amsterdam separatists, Ainsworth and Francis Johnson, along with John Robinson's suggested solutions, and treatises published by Johnson and Ainsworth defending their respective positions. I also examined a document which outlined the complaints of George Johnson, Francis' brother and another member who disagreed with Francis' conduct and policies.

* * *

Although the Amsterdam separatists had a slightly easier exit from England late in the reign of Elizabeth I than their separatist brethren of Leiden did under James I, their repression at the hands of Elizabeth's government was equally as brutal. Three leaders of the separatist congregation in London, Henry Barrow, John Greenwood, and John Penry, were executed in 1593. In that same year, Francis Johnson, the newly ordained pastor of the congregation, and his brother George were jailed for seditious preaching and served more than four years before being released and exiled in 1597. At least 50 other separatists served jail terms for various offences during this period. The major difference between the Amsterdam separatists' experience and that of the Leiden group fourteen years later was that the women and children of the London/Amsterdam separatist congregation were not targeted for harassment, and its adult male members, once released from jail and exiled, were not impeded in their efforts to leave the country.¹⁶

England late in Elizabeth's reign had become increasingly uncomfortable for the "hotter" sort of Protestant reformers that were then beginning to assert themselves. Elizabeth

¹⁶ B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 94-96.

was not interested in encouraging these evangelical reformers at the cost of antagonizing the portion of her subjects who were conservative or sympathetic to the Church of England or its predecessor, the Catholic Church, because the membership of the conservative faction contained not only some of the most powerful nobles in her realm, but also a large portion of the common people as well. In ensuring her rule against the wishes of the Catholic powers of Europe, she could not afford to alienate a significant portion of her own citizenry for the desires of a few Protestant zealots. Elizabeth, as always when faced with polarized views in either the political or religious arenas of her government, tried to steer a middle course. In this case, it meant repressing the few in favor of the many.¹⁷

In addition to the pastor Francis Johnson, at least 55 other members of the London separatist congregation were arrested at a gathering in Islington in 1593, and committed to several London prisons. A petition to Parliament, which protested their loyalty to Queen and country, and to redress the conditions of their imprisonment, was ignored. Within a few months, the original leaders of the congregation, Henry Barrow, John Greenwood, and John Penry were executed for sedition. A few months after the executions, a redrafted bill was introduced in Parliament, an ‘Act to retain the Queen’s Majesty’s Subjects in their due Obedience’, which had an immediate effect of encouraging the London prison authorities to release and exile most of their separatist prisoners (exceptions were those leaders, like Francis Johnson, who were deemed too important to be released). This first wave of exiles from the London separatist congregation settled in Amsterdam.¹⁸

The Amsterdam separatists enjoyed many economic opportunities in their new home that were not always available in other cities in the Netherlands during this period.

¹⁷ Wallace McCaffrey, *Elizabeth I*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1993), 333-336.

¹⁸ White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 95.

Amsterdam at the beginning of the seventeenth century one of the most prosperous cities in Europe, and expanding rapidly as the most important of the Dutch Republic's ports. Even companies that enjoyed monopoly status elsewhere did not possess the same status in Amsterdam. The Merchant Adventurers Company from England, which controlled most of the English wool trade with the Low Countries, had to compete in Amsterdam with "interlopers"; English exiles that traded independently of the company and brought much wealth to the city and themselves through their trade. While the separatists included some merchants among their members, the English Reformed church of John Paget was, at least in the early years, made up primarily of English merchant elites.¹⁹

Although the Amsterdam separatists were known as "undesirables" by Amsterdam's Dutch Reformed ministers because of their single-minded and contentious view of religion, many of the members of this group were prosperous merchants. The Ancient Church founded by the separatists was the only available English-speaking church available in Amsterdam in the late 1590s and early 1600s, and some of its members were the same English merchant elites who later petitioned the city government and Dutch Reformed authorities for a new church. However, Amsterdam's Dutch Reformed ministers' efforts to get rid of the separatists were countermanded by the magistrates of the city, whose main motivation for welcoming all kinds of religious groups and protecting them was for their economic contributions to the city.²⁰

The Amsterdam separatist congregation was composed of strong-minded, ideologically-oriented individuals, many of whom developed their own views of what the proper form of their religion should be, and as a consequence the congregation suffered great

¹⁹ Alice C. Carter, *English Reformed Churches in Amsterdam*, (Amsterdam: Scheltema and Holkema, 1964).

²⁰ Keith L. Sprunger. *Dutch Puritanism: a history of English and Scottish churches of the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1982), 44.

controversies and schisms from the very beginning of its existence. These controversies were a component of religious life for the separatists at every level within their church, not only among the leadership, but also within the membership of the congregation itself. One of the first and most ferocious of the controversies was an argument between Francis Johnson and his brother, George. George Johnson objected to Francis' marriage to Mrs. Thomasine Boys, a well-off widow, while Francis was still in prison. George objected to Francis' new wife because she was proud and vain, a "bouncing girle". What he especially objected to was the new Mrs. Johnson's sartorial sense, which leaned toward "immodest" clothes such as whalebone stays, great sleeves, and lace. The controversy continued in Amsterdam after the brothers' arrival in 1597, and for several months thereafter; a series of meetings were held by the leadership of the congregation to settle the matter, with Francis eventually vindicated. The result was that in 1598 or 1599 Francis and his followers, who constituted a majority within the congregation, excommunicated George from the Ancient Church. When the Johnson brothers' father arrived in Amsterdam to attempt a rapprochement between them, he too was eventually excommunicated, in 1602.

George addressed the issues in his 1603 work, *A Discourse of Some Troubles in the Banished English Church in Amsterdam*. At this time George appeared to have held little hope for a reconciliation, for "a brother is harder to win than a strong city".²¹ The arguments between the two brothers were, according to George, bitter and protracted, and he addressed his brother Francis defiantly in the *Discourse*: "Think not to dismay me, though to that end you have left no means unattempted. Yea what have you not devised and objected that might

²¹ George Johnson, *A Discourse of Some Troubles in the Banished English Church in Amsterdam*, (Amsterdam, 1603), 4.

have discomfited me if I had not conferred one scripture with another.”²² According to George, it was Francis’ pride and his enormous ego that had caused the rift between the two brothers: “You boast that you have the ordinances of Christ, that you are the church, and that the church hath excommunicated us.”²³ Despite various attempts by George and his supporters within the congregation, the two brothers never reconciled. George returned to England shortly afterward, and later died in a jail in Durham (1605).²⁴

Conflict and tensions within the Ancient Church continued. The next major problem arose in 1610, when Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth, the congregation’s teacher²⁵, split over differences of opinion on the question of leadership of the congregation, and where church power resided. The majority of the congregation stayed with Johnson, but some thirty members sided with Ainsworth.²⁶ The main issue between them was the form of government the church should have. Ainsworth supported a congregational model, in which regular members of the main body of the congregation had a limited participation in church decision-making and governance. Johnson argued for a presbyterian model, which only allowed for the minister and elders to participate in the governing of the church. Their struggle presaged the great controversies within the Calvinist world within a few years; for example, the Remonstrant controversy which shook the Netherlands over the next decade and culminated in the Synod of Dort. The Synod of Dort (1618-19) was convened primarily to address questions dealing with predestination, or the idea that humans were predestined

²² Johnson, *A Discourse of Some Troubles*, 11.

²³ Johnson, *A Discourse of Some Troubles*, 13.

²⁴ Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 63-64.

²⁵ In this church, a teacher was a person who studied scripture and provided scripture-based doctrine in support to the minister and elders. That is to say, the teacher answered the more difficult theological questions as they arose. The teacher was often, but not always, heir apparent to the minister. John Robinson had been teacher under Roger Clyfton in the Scrooby(Leiden) separatist church, before becoming its pastor.

²⁶ Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 64.

from birth to either damnation or heaven. Its secondary purpose was to deal with the Remonstrant controversy, which was an attempt by some Dutch Reformed ministers to reform the church based upon the teachings of Jacobus Arminius, who had studied with Theodore Beza. The result was the banning and persecution of Remonstrants by the Dutch Reformed Church, and the affirmation of their presbyterial form of church government at the local level and the regional and national organization of the Dutch Reformed church along classis and synodal lines. The great struggle between congregational and presbyterian English Protestants to determine their form of church government continued on a larger scale in England for another two centuries.

Locally in Amsterdam, Francis Johnson wanted to restrict church power to the elders and officers, while Henry Ainsworth believed that church power belonged to the whole body of the congregation. Johnson, however, would not or could not tolerate dissent. Johnson's followers "were disposed to exclude from all fellowship all such as would not concur in the opinion of their pastor."²⁷

Henry Ainsworth appealed to John Robinson and his Leiden separatist church for help in resolving the issue. He felt that the best solution to the problems between his followers and those of Francis Johnson would be to form one congregation with two forms of church government. Ainsworth sent a letter to John Robinson in Leiden: "Touching the things that have now lately been spoken of between the two churches" he wrote, "there is with us a new motion of our walking together thus ... to permit of a double practice among us, that those that are minded either way should keep a like course together, as we would do if we were asunder ..."²⁸

²⁷ From a memoir by Robert Ashton, editor, in *The Works of John Robinson*, vol. 3, 464

²⁸ John Robinson, *The Works of John Robinson*, vol. 3, (London: John Snow, 1851), 467

Ainsworth had proposed that what were now in fact two separatist congregations at Amsterdam should continue as a single congregation; with two forms of church governance. How exactly Ainsworth intended his proposal to work is not clear. He may have had in mind separate meeting times in the same building for the two factions, or perhaps maintaining two separate buildings. In any case, the proposal found little support from John Robinson, who replied: "...And for this last motion about a double practice, ... so we do not see, how it can stand ... but that it will not only nourish, but even necessarily beget endless contentions, when men diversely minded shall have business in the church." Robinson appealed to their better natures in a conciliatory compromise which was rejected by both sides; "If therefore it would please the Lord so far to enlarge your hearts on both sides, brethren, as that this middle way be held, namely, that the matter of offence might first be brought...unto the elders, as the church governors... and after, if things be not there ended, to the church of elders and brethren"²⁹ His petition fell upon deaf ears.

The congregation remained divided and a war of words, many of them published, soon followed. Ainsworth's position was published in 1613, in a treatise titled *An Animadversion to Mr. Richard Clifton's Advertisement*. Clifton was Johnson's new teacher³⁰ after the departure of Ainsworth, and had been the author of a treatise addressed merely to the "Christian Reader", describing and defending Francis Johnson's position on the matter. Ainsworth's treatise was a rebuttal of Johnson's position, and it addressed him directly. Johnson favored a presbyterian form of government, in which he and his supporters among the Elders retained direct and unassailable control over the congregation. Ainsworth supported a congregational form of church government, in which the

²⁹ Robinson, *The Works of John Robinson*, 467-468

³⁰ For an explanation of the office of teacher in this context, see footnote # 25.

congregation participated in the decision-making process along with the church officers. The congregational form of church governing had been traditionally the acceptable form within the separatist movement from its earliest beginnings, and had been incorporated within the body of the Brownist Confession; it had been authored, ironically, by Francis Johnson in 1594.

Johnson and Ainsworth, as was a normal practice for seventeenth-century Puritans, cited passages from scripture to bolster their arguments. Ainsworth began his argument by citing a passage from Matthew which neatly encapsulated his basic position: “And he (Jesus) hath forbidden his ministers to exercise prince like authority, or dominion over his heritage.” Ainsworth compared the members of the congregation to secular kings and magistrates, because just as secular leaders had a duty to “stamp out sin and fight the Devil as part of their power”, so did “godly” members of Christian churches have this same duty; Ainsworth viewed these godly members as “kings of a spiritual nature” in their own congregations.³¹ It is from this personal duty, Ainsworth argued, that the congregation was given the power to appoint and depose its officers, even when it “hath no Elders,”³² and the officers did not have the power to appoint or depose members without the full cooperation of the congregation.

One of Francis Johnson’s arguments for having a presbyterian church government was the idea of public and private judgment for sinners, and that “public judgment, in the cause of faith, is never given to the people.” Ainsworth countered with quotes from scripture which he said showed no distinction between public and private judgment and

³¹ Henry Ainsworth, *An Animadversion to Mr. Richard Clifton’s Advertisement*, (Amsterdam: Giles Thorp. 1613), 114,115.

³² Ainsworth, *An Animadversion*, 45.

that “by such Popish distinctions, the clergy was severed from the laity.”³³ Johnson also tried to bolster his position by redefining what constituted a church: “Now *we have been lately taught*...that the Church is not ...the whole body of the congregation, but of the Church of Elders...with the Church is the power, the Elders being the Church.”³⁴ Who taught him this version of church constitution? It is possible that he was taught this idea by someone who already had embraced the presbyterial form of church government, either John Paget or one of the Dutch Reformed ministers. It is also possible that this is the voice of Richard Clifton, referring to what he had “been taught” by Francis Johnson. An examination of the consistory records, which were unavailable for this study, might reveal some clues. If Johnson ever wrote a diary, it is no longer extant. What we do know from available records is that Francis Johnson fought constantly for absolute control over his congregation, as this struggle with Henry Ainsworth, and his earlier struggles with his brother and father demonstrate. Within the context of those struggles, Johnson’s partiality for the presbyterial style of church government makes perfect sense.

He continued his argument in that peculiar fashion; in arguing against the ability of congregations to depose their officers or elect new ones without the consent of Elders, he said: “*Now we were taught*, that a people without officers have not power to cast out obstinate sinners...they that cannot cast out, can not receive in: one power is for both.”³⁵ Ainsworth’s reply was that the government of the Church was to be by its officers, but that power resided “in the whole body of the Church.”³⁶

³³ Ainsworth, *An Animadversion*, 10.

³⁴ Francis Johnson, *An Advertisement concerning a Book lately published by Christopher Lawne and others, against the English Exiled Church at Amsterdam*, (Amsterdam: 1612), 22.

³⁵ Johnson, *An Advertisement*, 22-23.

³⁶ Ainsworth, *An Animadversion*, 10.

Religious controversy was also a major concern for the elders and laity of the Ancient Church of Amsterdam. In addition to forming factions under the two leaders Johnson and Ainsworth, many also defected to other churches, such as John Paget's English Reformed church and the Dutch Reformed church in Amsterdam. One group of separatists under the pastor John Smyth (c. 1568-1612) formed their own church which quickly evolved into an Anabaptist church. Smyth soon adopted many of the beliefs of the Dutch Mennonites, including universal salvation, rather than just salvation for the elect, as was espoused by the Calvinist theologians. His embrace of Mennonite ideas led to a further splintering of his own group: a new church was formed under the leadership of Thomas Helwys (c. 1575-1614). Helwys soon tired of all the tumult in Amsterdam and returned to England, where he began and organized the first English Baptist church. The separatists, as individuals, were willing to turn to anyone who seemed to have the right answers, and were notorious, at least to "mainstream" ministers like John Paget, for their willingness to embrace doctrines that were deemed heretical by both the Dutch and English Reformed churches.

The two leaders of the Amsterdam separatist congregation were polar opposites. Francis Johnson was an extremely strong-willed man who appeared to have taken any opposition to his policies and decisions very personally, as he demonstrated when he excommunicated both his brother and father. There are no extant records indicating that he ever felt any remorse for doing so, and he seemed to have been incapable of compromise once his mind was made up. His unbending stance during the conflict with Ainsworth over the leadership of the congregation in 1610 is a prime example-not even the intervention of John Robinson, writing from Leiden, could get him to accept any change in his opinion and

position on the matter. Even Ainsworth's suggestion of a single congregation with two forms of governance was rejected, and Francis Johnson soon removed himself and the majority of the Amsterdam separatists to Emden. Ainsworth was much more willing to compromise his position, and his willingness to battle for a congregational form of church government suggests that he believed it was the right thing to do according to his interpretation of the scriptures, and that he had greater faith in the laity of his church than Johnson did.

The early history of the separatist church in Amsterdam was one of seemingly endless conflict and controversy. At any given time most of the members of the church were affected by controversy and disputes in one form or another, and the constant upsets and schisms that followed allowed John Paget to lure many separatists to join his church. The deaths of Francis Johnson in 1617 and Henry Ainsworth in 1622 effectively ended significant separatist presence in Amsterdam. After 1622 the Ancient Church of separatists in Amsterdam struggled on in much reduced form until it was disbanded in 1701.

CHAPTER TWO:

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER: JOHN PAGET AND THE ENGLISH REFORMED CHURCH AT AMSTERDAM.

The social, economic, political, and theological tensions which English immigrants to the Netherlands experienced, and which were present at the local, national, and international levels during the early seventeenth century, were dealt with by individual English Reformed congregations and their pastors in ways which were unique to each congregation. Strategies that English immigrants developed to deal with these tensions ranged from defending their worldviews by engaging in religious debate, as was the case with Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth and the Amsterdam separatists, to escaping conflict by moving to another location, as we see in chapter three with John Robinson and the Leiden separatists. A third strategy, examined in this chapter, was that adopted by John Paget, who fully accommodated to local religious and political authorities and built alliances with wealthy and powerful countrymen. This chapter examines the creation of the Paget's English Reformed church in Amsterdam at the request of English merchant elites in 1607. It argues that the English merchants built and staffed a new English Reformed church as an alternative to the only English-speaking church then in existence, the 'Ancient' church of separatists led by Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth. They did this in order to ease the political and theological tensions that had existed among Puritans in the Republic since the arrival of the first separatist exiles to Amsterdam in the mid 1590s. The new church was closely allied with the Dutch Reformed consistory and was therefore deemed acceptable by the Church of England authorities. On the local level, its first pastor, John Paget, who viewed the separatists as

his theological adversaries, spent more than two decades combating the separatist heresy in Amsterdam. This chapter provides examination of the theological war between Paget and his chief adversary in the English Puritan community living in Amsterdam, Henry Ainsworth. The debate between these two men reflects the larger tensions which existed on a national and international level in the religious worlds of England and the Netherlands in the early years of the Dutch Republic. Paget was a representative of the powerful in the English immigrant society of Amsterdam in the first decades of the seventeenth century. The membership of his church, at least in the first years of his pastorate, was largely composed of wealthy English merchant elites, and he was loyal to the Church of England and the crown. The separatists, on the other hand, were outspoken dissidents who had broken away from the Church of England, and therefore from England as well. Although Paget and Ainsworth were both pastors of churches whose Puritan members followed very similar theologies, there were enough differences between their theological positions to create tensions. At the international level, England and the Netherlands were both Protestant countries, allied in the Dutch Republic's war with Catholic Spain. Still, there were enough differences between the Church of England and the Dutch Reformed Church, to create tensions there as well. Included in this chapter is a brief examination of James I's religious policies, in order to explain why the merchants were so concerned about the English churches in Amsterdam, and why the separatists and other religious dissenters immigrated to the Netherlands. This chapter's primary focus, however, is on local conditions to show Paget's strategies for dealing with these tensions.

I begin this chapter with an examination of the economic situation in Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century, followed by a brief overview of the English merchant elites' place in this world. I then discuss the creation of the English Reformed church and the appointment of John Paget as its minister. A look at the political situation in both the Dutch Republic and Amsterdam follows, to explain some of the reasons for the creation of this church and Paget's close alliance with the Amsterdam Dutch Reformed Consistory; I then turn to an examination of the argument between Paget and Ainsworth to show theological differences between these two Puritan church leaders that were based upon their individual interpretations of scripture, and discuss John Paget's personality and his effect upon his congregation and its experience of early seventeenth century Amsterdam. I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the greater opportunities the Amsterdam non-conformist Puritan church led by Paget enjoyed over the other churches discussed in this study, to show how economic, social, and political factors helped shape his strategy for dealing with local tensions.

Among the evidence I use to support my argument are official letters between James I of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury regarding theological issues, which show the direct influence James had upon religious matters which affected English citizens both at home and abroad. Though few sources are left from these early Puritan churches, I examine the religious treatises which John Paget and Henry Ainsworth wrote and published, attacking and defending their respective theological positions; these treatises provide a valuable insight into the debate between these two Puritan leaders. The treatises that Paget and Ainsworth authored show not only their theological positions, but

also help reveal to us their attitudes toward each other on a personal level as well as clues to their personalities.

* * *

At the beginning of the seventeenth century Amsterdam was the wealthiest city in Northern Europe. The city was the major commodities market, financial center, and shipper for the Baltic and North Seas. Much of the commodities market and financial business had arrived in Amsterdam after Spanish soldiers, under the leadership of the Duke of Parma, captured the southern Netherlands metropolis of Antwerp in 1585. Even before this, Amsterdam had controlled the exports of the fisheries, farms, and forests of the Baltic region. The merchants of Amsterdam had wrested control of this latter trade in the region from the Hanseatic League, a confederation of German cities engaged in the regional trade opportunities, by more efficient shipping methods and by underbidding the shipping cost to the local producers.³⁷

As Amsterdam's prosperity grew, so did the city's need for an expanded workforce to keep this prosperity going. The Amsterdam city magistrates adopted an unofficial open-door policy to welcome all workers who could contribute to the economy, regardless of their origin. Amsterdam was soon flooded by refugees from the war-torn southern Dutch provinces, from France, Poland and Germany, and from Spain, Portugal, and England.³⁸ Some of these refugees were fleeing wars; others came in order to escape religious persecution in their former homes. Some non-refugee immigrants, like the English merchants of Amsterdam, came for the economic opportunities offered in the

³⁷ Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1950), 11-14.

³⁸ Douglas Catterall, *Community Without Borders: Scots Migrants and the Changing Face of Power in the Dutch Republic, c 1600-1700* (Boston: Brill, 2002).

powerful trading city. One result was that Amsterdam was among the most religiously and culturally diverse cities in Western Europe. Although Catholics, Lutherans, Jews, Mennonites and Arminians all faced limitations on their worship, the actions taken by Amsterdam's magistrates were remarkably mild compared to authorities elsewhere in early seventeenth-century Europe. The refugees and immigrants from cities and towns across Europe brought their skills with them, and the magistrates of Amsterdam welcomed them into the city with open arms. The city government compromised with its native guilds to allow foreign craftsmen to practice their trades, found housing for newcomers, and offered financial and other inducements to foreign masters whom the magistrates believed could either start new industries or improve existing ones. The magistrates had a keen interest in the economic wellbeing of their city; the entire membership of the Amsterdam city council was made up of native Dutch merchants--and their own fortunes continued to rise as the city continued to grow.³⁹

Important contributors to the growing wealth of Amsterdam, and therefore of major economic interest to the magistrates, the English merchant elites maintained economic and political ties with their homeland while seeking fortune through trade in the Netherlands. The English merchants arriving in Amsterdam at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries found themselves in a city that lacked a legitimate English-speaking church. The Amsterdam separatist congregation of Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth, established in the 1590s and referred to as the Ancient Church of Amsterdam by its adherents, was not considered to be a legitimate church by the English merchants or by any of the government bodies in England or the Netherlands, including the Church of England and the Dutch Reformed church. The separatists, after

³⁹ Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century*, 15-17.

all, were outlawed exiles from England; although they were allowed by the magistrates of Amsterdam to practice their religion, the separatist version of English Reformed religion did not meet with the approval of many leading ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church. The Dutch Calvinist clergy had two major concerns. First, they were uncomfortable with the separatists' insistence that they operated independently of religious authorities in either Holland or England. Second, ministers were anxious about separatists' continual criticism of England's state church. This criticism largely took the form of religious pamphlets that presented religiously and politically subversive messages. The separatists wrote and published these religious pamphlets in Holland and then had them smuggled into England.

Beginning in the late sixteenth century, non-separating English migrants to Amsterdam were admitted to the Dutch Reformed Church. This arrangement was less than satisfactory to some of the English migrants in Amsterdam for three reasons. First, the Dutch Reformed Church had a greater degree of control over the marital relations of its members than did the Church of England in which many of the foreigners were raised. Second, many English men had taken Dutch wives, and this close supervision of their spousal relationships by the Dutch Reformed ministers also caused tensions between the English men and their Dutch in-laws. Third, most of the Dutch Reformed ministers did not speak English, and sermons at the Dutch churches were, of course, in Dutch, though few of the most newly-arrived English men and women had learned the local language. One consequence of this language barrier was that many English preferred to attend

services at the separatist church, which held the only English-language services in Amsterdam.⁴⁰

The Dutch Reformed ministers wanted to have some say over the new migrants' religious affiliations, and did not want them joining the separatists as the only available alternative to the Dutch system. Integrating the English immigrants into the Amsterdam community within the framework of a Calvinist community, and under the control of the Dutch Reformed classis, was therefore highly desirable to the Dutch Reformed ministers. On June 2, 1605, the Dutch Reformed consistory of Amsterdam voted to set up an English Reformed church incorporated within the Dutch system; within a few months they also voted to provide a salary to the new church's minister, equal to the one already provided to the French-speaking Walloon community in Amsterdam.⁴¹

Over the next year and a half, the English merchants advanced several candidates to serve as the minister to this new English-language church within the Dutch ecclesiastical system. The English merchants approached their first choice, a man named Hugh Broughton, but he declined the position. Broughton was a scholar of note who enjoyed a good reputation on both sides of the English Channel. He had published a two volume work in Amsterdam, in defense of Calvinist views on the descent of Christ into the underworld, in 1601. He was also involved in some controversy with Henry Ainsworth, who at the time of the selection process (1605-6) was the teacher, but not yet a minister, of the separatists. Broughton was considered by those who selected him to have anti-separatist views, and his nomination indicates the anti-separatist role that the Dutch Reformed ministers and the English merchants expected the new English church to

⁴⁰ Carter, *The English Reformed Church*, 19-20.

⁴¹ Carter, *The English Reformed Church*, 21.

fulfill. Broughton, however, was not available.⁴² The Dutch Consistory in Amsterdam rejected the merchants' next choice, Thomas White, due to his suspected separatist sympathies. It turned out their suspicions were well founded. White had led a separatist church in England before coming to Amsterdam in 1604. White had not only stayed at the separatist minister Francis Johnson's house in Amsterdam, but had attended separatist assemblies himself. White and Johnson soon developed differences of opinion regarding theological matters, and White and his followers left the Ancient Church to form their own congregation. White returned to England shortly thereafter and published an anti-separatist tract called *A Discoverie of Brownisme* in 1605.⁴³ Although he had written against the Separatists, and enjoyed the favor of the leading English merchants in Amsterdam, the Dutch Consistory rejected him, perhaps because he seemed willing to change sides so easily. White made his peace with Church of England officials and was granted a living in England at the end of 1606.⁴⁴ Although Hugh Broughton was considered eminently qualified by the Dutch Reformed ministers and the English merchants, and had the proper anti-separatist attitude they desired, he was either unwilling or unable to accept the position. Thomas White seemed to be willing, but his past as a separatist minister disqualified him in the eyes of the Dutch Reformed ministers. They probably doubted his willingness to pursue the ending of the separatist church in Amsterdam that he had so recently been affiliated with.

⁴² G. Loyd Jones, *Hugh Broughton, Divine and Hebraist*, (Oxford: Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004)

⁴³ Thomas White, *A Discoverie of Brownisme; or, a brief declaration of some of the errors and abominations daily practiced and increased among the English company of the separation remaining for the present at Amsterdam in Holland*, (London: 1605).

⁴⁴ Michael E. Moody, *Thomas White, Separatist Leader*, (Oxford: Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004).

From the perspective of the Dutch Reformed ministers of Amsterdam, the English merchants found a more acceptable candidate in the person of John Paget. Paget was apparently a hard-line, non-conformist Reformed minister who had held a post as rector in Nantwich, a small town in Cheshire, and had given up this position after the Hampton Court Conference (1604), which had decided to retain the episcopal church order in England. Paget's presbyterian sensibilities, while not estranging him completely from the Church of England, led him to do what many Reformed ministers before and after him did, seek a position abroad which would allow him to practice his religion according to the dictates of his conscience. One option available to these recalcitrant ministers was to serve as chaplains to English garrisons in the Netherlands. Paget arrived in the Netherlands in early 1605, and served as chaplain to the English regiment commanded by Sir Horace Vere, which was in service to the States General of the Netherlands. After about two years of service, he left to assume the post in Amsterdam, preaching his first sermon on February 5, 1607.⁴⁵

Amsterdam's English Reformed church under John Paget's leadership enjoyed cordial relations with England's secular and ecclesiastical governments. Generally neither the English government nor the Church of England approved of any English Reformed churches in the Netherlands because they wanted all English men and women to be members of the Church of England. In this case, however, Paget's Reformed congregation was much preferred by the English government and the leaders of the Church of England over the dissident and potentially dangerous separatist congregations. In this sense, King James I and the Archbishop of Canterbury viewed the English

⁴⁵ Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 92.

Reformed churches in the Netherlands as the lesser of two evils. On the one hand the Reformed congregations were made up of refugees like Paget who could not accept some of the Church of England's practices, particularly in its organization and the use of certain rituals in its services. On the other hand, at least members of these congregations expressed loyalty to the Church of England, and they did not publish subversive pamphlets against Anglican practices.⁴⁶

James I's personal focus on the separatist churches and other schismatics in the Netherlands was one result of his desire for an absolutist style of government. James developed his absolutist theories, which included the idea that the Church should be directly and absolutely controlled by the monarch, before he even became king of England. James published his *Basilicon Duron* in 1598, five years before he assumed the throne. In it, he argued that all political power rested with the king, who derived it directly from God. James' *Basilicon Duron* was written as an advice book for his son, prince Henry. In the treatise, James made two key points. First, James informed Henry that he had a double obligation to God, first, for being made a man. Second, Henry was obliged to God because "he made you a little God, to sit on his Throne, to rule over other men."⁴⁷ Active resistance to monarchs was, in James' view, always wrong: "that rebellion be ever unlawfull on their part." The king also argued that he alone was to make all final decisions on foreign and domestic policy, and that he was supreme in all ecclesiastical matters "containe your Church in their calling... for the ruling them well, is no small point of your office...suffer no conventions nor meetings among Church-men,

⁴⁶ Carter, *The English Reformed Church in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century*, 21.

⁴⁷ '*Basilicon Duron*', published in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, Johann P. Sommerville, editor, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20.

but by your knowledge and permission.”⁴⁸ James argued, as did many of his contemporaries, that strong monarchical power was necessary to prevent civil war and to maintain order. One direct effect of James’ policies once he had become king of England was the exile of John Robinson’s separatists to the Netherlands in 1608.

An example of the concerns of King James I later in this period are found in a letter he addressed to George Abbot, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1622. James was worried about the dangers to the unity of the Church of England posed by reform-minded preachers in England, and the treatises critical of the church that Puritans in the Netherlands clandestinely smuggled back across the channel. He included instructions to the archbishop for handling those who “preach seditious and dangerous doctrine to the scandal of the Church and disquieting of the state and present government.”⁴⁹ This letter shows the influence James exercised over the Church of England as the Supreme Head of the Church and as the king, and why he was so focused on the activities of English churchmen both at home and abroad. The English government and the Church of England supported each other. Any threat to the Church of England constituted a threat to the crown in James’ eyes. As James expressed in his letter to the Archbishop, his primary motive for sending it was: “Our Princely care and desire, for the extirpation of schism...and for the settling of a Religious and Peaceable Government both of Church and State.”⁵⁰

In the same letter, James gave instructions for handling issues raised by one of the major theological controversies during the early seventeenth century, the ongoing debate

⁴⁸ Johann P. Sommerville, ed., *King James VI and I*, 45.

⁴⁹ *The King’s Majesty’s Letter to the Lord’s Grace of Canterbury touching Preaching and Prayers*, (n.p., Aug 4, 1622) 1.

⁵⁰ *The King’s Majesty’s Letter* 1.

between Arminians and Calvinists over the issue of predestination: this was a reference by James to the greater debate within the Calvinist world, not the lesser debate over the use of liturgy then also raging within England. With regard to this dispute, he urged: “leave these themes to be handled by the learned men...being fitter for the schools and universities, than for simple audiences.”⁵¹ James believed, as many elites did during this period, that commoners were not capable of understanding theology because of their relative lack of education.

James was also concerned about the political activities of the Puritan reformers, as related to the secular government’s ongoing support for the Church of England, and any attempted limitations to his own power: “No preacher shall presume to declare a limit by political doctrine... (of) the power, prerogative, (and) jurisdiction...of sovereign princes...or meddle with...matters of State.”⁵² James commanded Archbishop Abbot to disseminate his instructions throughout the kingdom. In a letter to the bishop of Norwich, Abbot reiterated the king’s instructions, and added that James was concerned about the political activities of the reformers, the: “papers and pamphlets of Anabaptists, Brownists, and Puritans.”⁵³

* * *

Paget’s congregation enjoyed better economic opportunities than any other group in this study. The church had been founded by the magistrates and Dutch Reformed ministers specifically for well-off English merchants living in Amsterdam. Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century was the hub of a global trade empire. The English

⁵¹ *The King’s Majesty’s Letter 2.*

⁵² *The King’s Majesty’s Letter 3.*

⁵³ George Abbot, *The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his letters to the Bishop of the Diocese of Norwich.* (n.p., Sept 4, 1622), 5.

merchants in Paget's congregation had grown wealthy from their participation in this trade, and as a consequence were able to wield some influence with Amsterdam's magistrates, as for example during the selection process for the new English Reformed pastor. Although some of their choices were rejected, it was from the merchants' pool of candidates that Paget was eventually selected. In addition to the wealthy status of many of the members of the new church, who could be expected to tithe large amounts of money to it, some of the officers of the new church enjoyed significant economic advantages as well, as paid employees of a state-approved English church in the Netherlands. In addition to John Paget's salary, the city magistrates provided a rent-free church building and allocated monies for its upkeep. The building that the magistrates provide for the new English church was called the Begijnhof. It had formerly belonged to the The magistrates also provided salaries for some church officials, such as comforters of the sick. In addition, the magistrates contributed some monetary support for Paget's princes...or meddle with...matters of State."⁵⁴ James commanded Archbishop Abbot to disseminate his instructions throughout the Kingdom. In a letter to the bishop of Norwich, Abbot reiterated the king's instructions, and added that James was concerned about the political activities of the reformers, the: "papers and pamphlets of Anabaptists, Brownists, and Puritans."⁵⁵

The church led by John Paget from 1607, had been self-consciously created as an alternative to the English separatist church in Amsterdam in large part as a result of the particular economic, political and theological conditions prevailing at the time of its creation. Not surprisingly, these same tensions shaped the church's later history as well.

⁵⁴ *The King's Majesty's Letter* 3.

⁵⁵ Abbot, *The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, 5.

In particular, Paget became embroiled in religious controversy with these separatists from its inception. The controversy arose from the differences between separatist and non-conformist theology. Whereas Paget espoused an alliance with the Church of England and the retention of some of its practices, the separatists viewed any relationship with the Church of England to be impossible because it had not yet been reformed in the separatists' eyes. Paget was a fierce anti-separatist minister who waged a theological war of words with members of the Amsterdam separatist congregation for more than two decades. In the process, Paget alienated some of his own followers, but also gained many ex-separatists as converts. Some of these conversions were undoubtedly the result of excommunications from the separatist church. Excommunicates from this rival English church in the Dutch metropolis were often eager to shed their pariah status and rejoin a Christian community that, in the scheme of European Christianity as a whole, was not so dissimilar from their earlier church. Other separatists converted without the stigma of excommunication, perhaps even due to Paget's powers of persuasion. In fact, Paget worked tirelessly to bring as many former separatists into his church as possible. He produced sermons and religious treatises attacking the separatist position and its defenders. Paget addressed many of his anti-separatist treatises to either Henry Ainsworth or Francis Johnson, the two main leaders of the separatist groups in Amsterdam. Paget wrote these treatises to undermine the separatist position in order to gain converts to his church and ultimately to end the separatist presence in Amsterdam.⁵⁶

Though Paget's role in this debate was critical, it was in fact Henry Ainsworth, representing the separatist point of view, who fired the first salvo in this "pamphlet war" in his treatise, *An Arrow against Idolatrie*, published in 1611. As with many of these

⁵⁶ Carter, *The English Reformed Church*, 53, 57.

pamphlets, Ainsworth's *Idolatrie* referenced both sides of the argument, the better to attack his opponent's position by using his words against him. Ainsworth used his argument to challenge John Paget's position as minister of the English Reformed church and to portray him as an idolater. Ainsworth argued that Paget had originally been ordained according to the rites of the Church of England, and had been reordained under the rites of the Belgic Confession upon arrival in the Netherlands. Paget maintained that being ordained anew wiped away any "taint" from the earlier ordination: Ainsworth disagreed.

Another item of dispute between the two was over the Begynhof church; it had formerly been a place of worship for Catholics, and a chapel was still maintained there for the Catholic Beguines. It was therefore "unclean", according to Ainsworth. Ainsworth's *Arrow* offered a summary of what constituted idols and idolatry and why a former Catholic church would be considered "unclean". Ainsworth wrote: "The Devil...draws men to the service of himself...by idolatry. Idolatry is performed...by mixing men's...inventions with the ordinances of God...or by using and applying the rites and services of the Lord unto the honor and service of some creature...All religious images made by man himself are idols" Ainsworth in particular saw the Catholic practice of veneration of the saints as idolatry. To a separatist like Ainsworth, Catholics were no less than devil-worshippers, whether aware of it or not, and the leadership of the Catholic Church were minions of Satan. Under such conditions, the use of a reconsecrated Catholic church was inconceivable to separatists like Ainsworth and his supporters in the Ancient Church in the early seventeenth century. It would be preferable to Ainsworth to raze the building to the ground because it was still, and would forever remain, tainted by

Satan. He also objected to Paget's use of the Lord's Prayer in what he called "read and dead" services. By this term, Ainsworth suggested that the use of the Lord's Prayer in religious services was a "Popish" practice, something invented by the Catholic Church and therefore not a legitimate expression of faith. Ainsworth's assertion was that the Lord's Prayer was given by Jesus as an example only of how to pray to God and was not meant to be a rote prayer. His view was that preachers were called by God, and were given the gifts they needed to compose and preach new sermons for each new situation. Ainsworth's main argument was that only services as practiced by the earliest Christians could be considered the proper way to worship God, and all newer versions of worship, including the more than 1000 year old Catholic church, were false churches that were designed to lead believers away from God and toward worshipping the Devil.⁵⁷

John Paget did not immediately reply to Ainsworth's assertions, perhaps because he was too busy converting separatists to his own church. Paget's retort came seven years later, in 1618. In the preface to *An Arrow against the Separation of the Brownists*, Paget gave a general description of the "Brownists"⁵⁸, as well as an explanation of his reasons for writing the treatise. He stated: "though the Brownists assume unto themselves the title of separation...yet is not this title sufficient to distinguish them". He then proceeded to describe the separatist sects then existing in Amsterdam and Leiden: "Some separate from the Church of England for corruptions," he wrote, "yet confess both it and Rome also to be a church." This was in reference to Francis Johnson's congregation (Johnson had stated that he thought there were good Christians in both organizations). In

⁵⁷ Henry Ainsworth, *An Arrow against Idolatrie Taken out of the Quiver of Hosts* (Amsterdam: Giles Thorp, 1611); 3, 4, 6.

⁵⁸ Note: John Paget himself recognized fundamental differences between the English Reformed separatist congregations, although he only described them in religious terms.

describing John Robinson's separatist followers in the city of Leiden he wrote: "Some renounce the Church of England and yet allow a private communion with the godly therein..."⁵⁹

Paget saved his greatest condemnation for Francis Ainsworth's group: "Some renounce all Religious communions with any member of that church whatsoever, as Mr. Ainsworth...being deepest and stiffest in their schism." Paget also expressed his belief that other "heresies" were rooted in the separatist churches, particularly the Anabaptists and Arians. Paget stated that the "three or four hundred of the Brownists" produced more Anabaptists and Arians in one year than "ten thousand members of the Reformed Dutch Church" had produced in "ten years or more." As proof of this claim, he referred to his experiences with the Brownists in the ten or so years he had lived in Amsterdam at the time of his publication, and his being "present in the Classical assemblies" of the Dutch Reformed Church, and so was familiar with the Dutch Reformed losses to heresy because he knew "the number that have fallen away".⁶⁰ What Paget was referring to here was that the separatist churches had also had their own separatists, former members of the separatist congregation who left to form their own churches, including Anabaptists and the first of the Baptist churches. Paget's document indicates a large disparity in the number of heretics found within the two groups (Dutch Reformed churches and English separatists in Amsterdam), with a much greater loss of members, by proportion, in the separatist church than in the Dutch Reformed churches. The difference in numbers may indicate that the followers of the separatist theology were so concerned about their salvation they were more inclined than their Dutch Reformed peers to embrace further

⁵⁹ John Paget, *An Arrow against the Separation of the Brownists* (Amsterdam: George Veseler, 1618), 2-5.

⁶⁰ Paget, *An Arrow Against the Separation of the Brownists*, 6.

deviations from Calvinist theology, if those differences also promised salvation.

However, it may simply indicate that separatists had a completely different mind-set from their Dutch Reformed peers. After all, the separatists already had a history of questioning authority before they had arrived in Amsterdam, and many had belonged to congregational churches, which encouraged some forms of debate between congregation and clergy.

The theological battle between Paget and Ainsworth demonstrated another way that these congregations were effected, not just by outside forces, such as international, national, and local political and religious authorities, but also by internal forces peculiar to each congregation. All of the congregations in this study were affected by the nature of the leadership they received from their ministers. The pastors directly influenced the theological directions the congregations pursued, the forms of church government that they practiced, and the congregations' relationships with each other and the English and Dutch governments and state-approved church systems; John Paget was certainly active in all these areas. He was a fiercely determined and tireless champion of the truth as he saw it, and intolerant of opinions that differed from his. He spent the first twenty years of his pastorship attempting to end the influence of the separatists in Amsterdam, and to win as many converts as he could from among their number. His actions in combating these 'heretics' probably contributed to the schism between the leaders of the separatists, Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth in 1610, and which was discussed in chapter one. By the end of his second decade as pastor of the English Reformed church in Amsterdam, attrition within the ranks of the separatists had completely diminished their presence in Amsterdam. Paget had converted many of the followers to his own church. The removal

of Francis Johnson with a sizable number of his followers to Emden in 1613 hastened the decline of the Amsterdam separatist community, while the deaths of the two leaders, Francis Johnson in 1618, and Henry Ainsworth in 1622, guaranteed the church would never recover. Paget spent the remaining ten or so years of his pastorship combating other heresies.

Paget's temperament seems to have shaped the character of his Puritan church as much as the temperaments of Johnson and Ainsworth shaped the characters of their respective congregations. His actions suggest that he was a patient man in the pursuit of his goals, if not so patient with independent thinkers. His involvement with Amsterdam's Dutch Reformed consistory as a member in good standing suggests a desire to maintain and strengthen the ties between the English and Dutch Reformed churches; he never deviated from this course during his tenure in Amsterdam. Paget also liked to have great control over his congregation; this led him to fight many battles with his followers over issues such as the form his church government should take and how church discipline was applied and maintained. The greatest challenges to his control and authority came from the ex-separatists he had managed to convert. The separatist churches, although guided firmly by their leaders, were based on the congregational model of church government, in which the regular members participated in many of the decisions made for the congregation as a whole. The ex-separatists brought their experience of this form of church government with them to Paget's church and often agitated for change.⁶¹

Because of its status as an officially-recognized church, the English Reformed congregation of John Paget benefitted from a more highly developed support network than its separatist counterpart in the English community in Amsterdam. In addition to the

⁶¹ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 89. Carter, *The English Reformed Church*, 53.

various salaries and benefits provided by the Dutch government to the congregation, its membership in the Amsterdam classis meant that disputes within Paget's church could, and often were, appealed to the higher authority of the classis. The classis could be appealed to by both sides in any dispute between the ministry of the English Reformed church and recalcitrant members of its congregation who disputed the consistory's decisions or refused punishment. By contrast, referral to the chapters on the Amsterdam and Leiden separatists show that, because of their autonomous nature and therefore the lack of any higher authority to appeal their issues to, the internal squabbles of the separatist congregations could, and sometimes did, lead to permanent schisms.⁶²

The Reformed English church in Amsterdam also enjoyed greater opportunities economically than its sister church in Leiden led by Hugh Goodyear in the same period, due in large part to its geographical location. Leiden enjoyed a fine reputation as one of the leading cultural centers of Europe because of its university, but was relatively poor in economic opportunities for the newly arrived English immigrants; although it maintained a strong cloth industry, this was monopolized by Dutch artisans, and the best positions within this industry, and subsequent better pay, went to the Dutch first. The separatists also faced competition from Dutch Calvinist refugees from the southern provinces, many of whom already had experience in the cloth trades as well as the advantage of being Dutch themselves. Amsterdam, as a vibrant port and trading center, enjoyed a market system that was far more advanced than that found in most other Dutch cities.

Amsterdam was the one major city in the Netherlands where English trade was not controlled by the Merchant Adventurers Guild. Independent English merchants could make their fortunes there unimpeded by outside agencies. Most of the members of

⁶² Carter, *The English Reformed Church*, 45, 46.

Paget's church in Amsterdam came from the ranks of these wealthy English merchants (some with their own connections to important members of the civic government and the Dutch Reformed Church⁶³), which further enhanced Paget's relationship with the magistrates and the Amsterdam Classis. Paget's personal and ultimately successful, crusade against the separatists caused years of turmoil in his church. While the same can also be said for Amsterdam's separatist congregations, Paget's ultimate victory over his theological adversaries probably strengthened his church's prestige in the eyes of the Amsterdam establishment.⁶⁴

* * *

The Amsterdam English merchant elites found an ideal solution for a dilemma: the increased political and religious tensions within the English immigrant community of Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century, due to the lack of a legitimate English-speaking church. The English merchants eased the religious and political tensions between this community and local and national governments by creating a new church that was more closely aligned with the Church of England, and acceptable to both the English government and the Dutch authorities, particularly the Amsterdam magistrates and the Calvinist ministers of the Dutch Reformed church. They found a near-perfect candidate in their choice of John Paget as the church's first pastor. He went after the Amsterdam separatists with enthusiasm and determination, in the process severely weakening the separatists' existence in Amsterdam, and converted and recruited many to his own church.

⁶³ Carter, *The English Reformed Church*, 21, 22.

⁶⁴ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 51.

CHAPTER THREE:

WALKING TO ZION: JOHN ROBINSON AND THE SEPARATIST CHURCH AT LEIDEN.

This chapter examines the two English Reformed congregations at Leiden in the early seventeenth century. The main section, concerning the separatist congregation led by John Robinson, argues that this particular congregation's leader found his own way of dealing with the prevalent religious, political, and social tensions of early seventeenth century the Netherlands. Whenever it was possible, and tensions with local religious and political authorities were becoming a problem and potential danger to the congregation, Robinson moved his followers to a new location to start over. The short history of the Leiden separatists was one of movement, often caused by a need to flee encroaching authority, from the Church of England and civil authorities in England, to the movement to Leiden from Amsterdam to escape the religious tensions Robinson found there among the Amsterdam separatists, to the eventual removal of the majority of the congregation to North America, when conditions in Leiden began to deteriorate. Rather than adopt a position of accommodation, as with John Paget's non-conformist church in Amsterdam, or one of conflict and strenuous argument, as with the Amsterdam separatists under Ainsworth and Johnson, Robinson chose to deal with rising tensions wherever he found them by removing himself and his followers from the location of those tensions, with very limited success.

The shorter section of the chapter briefly examines the English Reformed, non-conformist church of Hugh Goodyear in Leiden. It argues that unlike Paget's non-

conformist church in Amsterdam, Goodyear did not seek out accommodation with the local civil and religious authorities, and in fact for many years Goodyear's church was not on good terms with the local Dutch Reformed consistory and the Leiden civil magistrates. Goodyear's contentious relationship with the Dutch was not reflected in his dealings with English contemporaries; in fact, Goodyear counted among his friends not only non-conformist Puritans like John Paget, but also conformist Puritans back in England, and separatists on both sides of the Atlantic.

For the Leiden separatist section of this chapter, I have assembled a wide selection of primary sources, ranging from the memoir of William Bradford, a leading member of the congregation and later governor of the Massachusetts colony, to correspondence between John Robinson and the Amsterdam separatists, to official letters between the Leiden city magistrates and the ambassador of England at the Hague, Sir Dudley Carleton. A record of the wedding banns posted by members of the Leiden separatist congregation helped reveal their economic circumstances, and confirms that part of Bradford's account dealing with the reasons the Leiden separatists chose to remove themselves to America.

* * *

The Leiden congregation's theological composition as non-conformists and separatists from the official Church of England was a source of continual political pressure and persecution from the beginning of its existence. The roots of separatist religion in England can be traced back to the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553); however, the English origins of the Leiden congregation appear to date only from 1605. The majority of the Leiden congregation's early members came from the region around Scrooby, a small

farming village in the county of Nottinghamshire. The first incarnation of this congregation was organized under the ministers Richard Clifton and John Robinson, and the elder William Brewster. Believing, like other separatists, that the Church of England was tainted by too many rituals that lacked biblical precedent, these men and women withdrew from compulsory attendance, or conformity. Many English men and women viewed the separatists' refusal to conform to the Anglican Church as a sign of dangerous religious dissent, and the English political and church authorities also saw them as troublemakers and potential traitors.⁶⁵

Persecution of the members of the Scrooby congregation began in earnest soon after James I (r.1603-1625) took the throne. James I was equally as zealous as his predecessor, Elizabeth I, in stamping out a religion that he perceived as both a danger to the Commonwealth and a challenge to his authority as head of the Church of England. His Scottish upbringing had inclined him toward a Calvinist belief in predestination- he actively affirmed this by supporting the Synod of Dort (1618-1619), a national convocation of Dutch Reformed ministers in the Netherlands, which met to decide issues of theology and ecclesiology, and in particular to combat the 'heresies' of the Arminian faction. James sent representatives to the Synod to voice his support for the anti-Arminian majority. In the years that followed, James also worked to silence its English critics. He was also committed to the idea of the divine right of kings, and determined to enforce his authority as head of both church and state in England. He viewed the hostility of the radicals toward royal authority and an episcopal form of church government as a threat to the basis of government in both church and state. Soon after coming to the throne, in 1604 James

⁶⁵ William Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation. 1606-1646*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and co., 1856), 14

isolated the radical element by issuing Canon 36, which required ministers with benefices to sign a statement acknowledging the royal supremacy and accepting that the Common Prayer Book, the Thirty Nine Articles, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church of England, were entirely agreeable to the word of God. The result of this canon was that about seventy-five ministers who would not sign on were deprived of their benefices. Among those who left England for the Netherlands due to this action were leaders of the Leiden and Amsterdam separatist congregations.⁶⁶

William Bradford, a leading member of the Scrooby congregation, was among the Puritan exiles who fled to the Dutch Republic following James' stricter stance of 1604. Later in his life, when he was serving as the governor of the Plymouth colony, Bradford wrote down the early history of the Scrooby/Leiden congregation. This account, titled *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, is the only eyewitness account of events experienced by the Leiden separatists available; it undoubtedly contains exaggerations and an emotional element due to the personal nature of the narrative, the amount of time that passed between the events and the recording of them, and Bradford's probable interest in casting the separatists in as favorable a light as possible for posterity, but it is a valuable historical record nonetheless. Many of the events recorded in it are or have been verified by other historical documents. In this account, Bradford recalled the story of some of the abuses that he felt the congregation had suffered in England under the rule of James I, that led to the first in their series of migrations: "they could no longer continue in any peaceable manner but were hunted and persecuted on every side...for some were taken and clapped up in prisons, others had their house beset and watched night and day and hardly escaped (from)

⁶⁶ S.J. Houston, *James I*, (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1995), 59-60.

their hands and the most were (forced) to fly and leave their houses and possession.”⁶⁷

Under John Robinson’s leadership, the Scrooby separatists decided that the circumstances were too bleak to continue living in England. As Bradford later recalled, “by a joint consent they resolved to go into the Low countries, where they heard was freedom of religion for all men; as also how sundry from London and other points of the land had been exiled and persecuted for the same cause and were gone thither and lived at Amsterdam and in other places of the land.”⁶⁸ The Dutch Republic seemed to these separatists like an ideal refuge, with its promise of religious freedom and with other separatist groups already living there. It also promised some relief from the political and religious pressures the separatists were experiencing in England.

As he prepared for his departure across the English Channel, Bradford and the congregation’s other leaders clearly did not anticipate that the troubles of the Scrooby separatists were just beginning. After making the decision to leave England for the Netherlands, an initial attempt to hire a boat at the Lincolnshire town of Boston failed due to what Bradford characterized as alleged treachery on the part of the captain. Bradford related this misadventure in his memoir: “when he had them and their goods aboard, he betrayed them having before hand (plotted) with the searchers and other officers... who took them and than put them into open boats and there rifled and ransacked them, searching them to their shirts for money, yea even the women further than became modesty; and then carried them back into the town”. What Bradford is implying here is that the local authority figures abused their offices in their treatment of the separatists, searching for money and treating the women in a manner “further than became modesty”. The wording conveys a

⁶⁷ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 14.

⁶⁸ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 14-15.

sense of outrage on Bradford's part, and perhaps is intended to foster similar feelings from the reader. Bradford next related what happened to the separatists in the English law courts and penal system: "after a month imprisonment the greatest part were dismissed and sent to the place from whence they came; but some of the principals were still kept in prison and bound over to the assizes."⁶⁹ Clearly Bradford was incensed at the separatists' handling by the ship's captain and the English authorities. The Scrooby separatists were in an awkward position; the English government wanted them gone, yet they could not legally leave without official permission, which the government refused to give to them.

After this incident the separatists made further attempts to escape to the Netherlands, and some small groups made it out of England over the next few months. The main group of separatists succeeded, after some early problems, in their final attempt to leave in 1608. As the group was waiting to board a Dutch ship, the women and children as well as some of the men were separated from those already on board by an overeager sea captain. Anxious to make the outgoing tide, the captain had insisted on sailing immediately, before all of the passengers had arrived. The main body of men made it to Amsterdam, but those who were left behind were captured by the English authorities. Bradford recalled what happened next: "The rest of the men that were in the greatest danger made shift to escape away before the troop could surprise them, those only staying that best might; to be assistant to the women but pitiful it was to see the heavy case of these poor women; in distress what weeping and crying on every side...others melted in tears seeing their poor little ones hanging about them crying for fear and quaking with cold."⁷⁰ The impression conveyed here is one of intense misery inflicted on innocent people, and

⁶⁹ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 16-17.

⁷⁰ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 18.

that the separatists were subjected to deliberate persecution, at the hands of ungodly people. Already under intense pressure in their home villages and from the English authorities because of their dissenting beliefs, the separatists were subjected to further harassment as they tried to leave for what they hoped would be a better life in the Dutch Republic.

Writing forty years later from his home in Massachusetts Bay, Bradford portrayed the English authorities as heartless and cruel toward women and children. In expressing his outrage toward the English authorities, he was supporting a general idea held by the Leiden separatists that they were a persecuted people, pursued by evil men wherever they went.⁷¹ This idea fit nicely into the Puritan tradition, which held that the Puritan faithful were God's chosen people, and that they were inheritors of this title and responsibility from the Jews, and therefore also had to undergo trials and tests of their faith. Bradford's memoir also reveals that most of the congregation's property was disposed of by the time of this attempt to escape England, and the proceeds of the sale of the property were in the possession of the men who had already escaped: "being thus apprehended they were hurried from one place to another and from one justice to another until in the end they (the justices) knew not what to do with them for to imprison so many women and innocent children, for no other cause (many of them) but that they must go with their husbands, seemed to be unreasonable ... and to send them home again was as difficult; for they alleged (as the truth was) they had no homes to go to."⁷²

Bradford's narrative at this point turns to later events, but makes clear that the suffering of the families continued: "But that I be not tedious in these things I will omit the

⁷¹ The idea that the separatists of Scrooby/Leiden were persecuted people was expressed on several occasions in letters and other documents by John Robinson himself, as for example in his debates with William Ames, a Puritan theologian.

⁷² Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 19.

rest; although I might relate many other notable passages and troubles which they endured, and underwent in these their wanderings and travels both at land and sea.”⁷³ It is important to note the language which Bradford uses here about his group, the “notable passages and troubles which they endured” and “their wanderings”, which help to further reinforce their connection to the Puritan tradition and the separatists’ view of themselves as inheritors of the Israelites. Bradford claims that there was some good that came out of the trouble the congregation endured in England, because word got out about the congregation’s difficulties: “yet I may not omit the fruit that came hereby; for by those so public troubles in so many eminent places their cause became famous, and occasioned many to look into the same, and their Godly carriage and Christian behavior; was such as left a deep impression in the minds of many; ... notwithstanding all these storms of opposition they all got over at length ... and met together again according to their desires with no small rejoicing.”⁷⁴ Bradford’s claim here was that the publicity generated by these troubles led many members of the general public to sympathize with the separatists, and may have even led some of them to convert to the separatist religion.

The Scrooby congregation members thought they had reached their safe haven when they made it to Amsterdam in 1608. Unfortunately, because John Robinson’s supporters got involved in debate that already existed among English Puritans living in Amsterdam, their illusions of a peaceful life in their new home were soon shattered. Disputes and troubles already existed between the leaders of the Amsterdam congregation (known as the Ancient Church of Amsterdam), not only in matters of doctrine but also concerning the behavior of the pastor Francis Johnson’s wife. John Robinson observed

⁷³ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 19.

⁷⁴ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 19-20.

these squabbles within the Ancient Church first hand, and saw how the problems were effectively splitting the Ancient Church in two. Robinson's fear of religious division within his own congregation caused him to look for a new home for his church elsewhere in the Netherlands, where his church could exist peacefully and remain whole and without major controversies afflicting it. Robinson and the elders settled upon Leiden as a good location for their church, and applied formally, even though it was not required, for admission to the magistrates of the city of Leiden on February 12, 1609. Bradford: "and when they had lived at Amsterdam about a year; Mr. Robinson their pastor, and some others of best discerning seeing how Mr. John Smith and his company were already fallen into contention (with the Ancient Church) ... thought it best to remove before they were anyway engaged [with] the same; though they well knew it would be much to the prejudice of their outward estate; Bradford and the others were apparently already aware that their opportunities for employment would be more limited in Leiden, but, " for these(fears of religious division and conflict) and some other reasons they removed to Leiden a fair and beautiful city",⁷⁵ Robinson's separatists were continuing their "wanderings" due to further "troubles", this time away from Amsterdam, and coincidentally adding to their(the separatists) view of themselves as the new chosen people.

They petitioned Leiden's city council as "100 persons born in England", and added a provision that they would settle there by May 1, 1609. In the margin of the document they submitted to the vroedschap was noted the resolution of the Leiden magistrates:

"The Court, in making a disposition of this present Request, declare that they refuse no honest persons ingress to come and have their residence in this city, provided that

⁷⁵ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 20,21.

such persons behave themselves honestly, and submit to all the laws and ordinances here: and, therefore the coming of the memorialists will be agreeable and welcome to them.”⁷⁶

The reply from the Leiden magistrates was welcome news to Robinson and his separatist congregation: the move to Leiden promised relief, at least at the local level, from the religious tensions which were plaguing the Amsterdam separatist church.

Robinson’s congregation did not ask for church subsidies and received none. The implication here is that the separatists did not want to advertise their status, and the Leiden magistrates did not want to either. Apparently the congregation did not admit to being exiles from England; there is no mention of this in their request. Sir Ralph Winwood, the English Ambassador. The Hague, however, apparently found out about the separatists’ application, and protested against the welcoming of the congregation to Leiden. Winwood requested their extradition as banished separatists but the city magistrates refused. The appended version of this refusal of the English Ambassador’s request shows the eloquence and diplomatic skill of the secretary on behalf of Leiden’s magistrates: “We beg to state in answer that his Excellency, Sir Winwood, His Britannic Majesty’s Ambassador, was misinformed that we had any understanding with some of the Brownists.”

The term “Brownist” was derived from the founder of the first separatist congregation, Robert Browne. Browne was the leader of a group of reform-minded Christians living in England during the reign of Elizabeth I, who could not reconcile themselves to an accommodation or communion with the Church of England. Browne cited the Church of England’s “dumb” (non-preaching) ministry and lack of proper church discipline as reasons for not acknowledging the legitimacy of the Church. After setting up a congregation at Bury St. Edmunds, the group was forced into exile in the Netherlands in

⁷⁶ Daniel PLooy, *Leyden Documents relating to the Pilgrim Fathers*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, Ltd., 1920), I.

1581. The English and Dutch authorities dubbed subsequent Reformed separatist English churches as Brownists, and that is why Robinson's group are referred to as such in the preceding documents, by the English ambassador and the Leiden city magistrates: "it is, however, true that in February last a request was presented by John Robinson... along with some members of the Christian Reformed Religion, born in England, requesting that, as they intended to reside in the city of Leiden, free and full consent might be granted them to do so."⁷⁷ With this statement, the Leiden magistrates were asserting their right to extend the city's protection to the new arrivals, and which precluded any claims upon them by outside authorities such as the English ambassador.

The next section of the Leiden magistrates' reply to the English Ambassador contains a carefully worded legal defense: "as maybe seen from the Request and the accompanying Resolution... without anything else having been further done by us, and without our having known... that the petitioners had been banished from England, or belonged to the sect of the Brownists."⁷⁸ In other words, the Leiden magistrates had never knowingly admitted separatists into their city, and so could not be blamed for it, but neither did they relinquish the 'protection' they had extended to the separatists.

The final section cleverly sidestepped the refusal of extradition, as the welcome of Robinson's group was legal and binding from the magistrates' view: "Hence we request your Excellency to communicate this ... to the Lord Advocate ... that we may be excused by their Excellencies and consequently by His Majesty."⁷⁹

There has been an ongoing debate, particularly among historians of early America, about the reason Robinson's group formally applied for permission to reside in

⁷⁷ Plooi, *Leyden Documents relating to the Pilgrim Fathers*, II.

⁷⁸ Plooi, *Leyden Documents relating to the Pilgrim Fathers*, II.

⁷⁹ Plooi, *Leyden Documents relating to the Pilgrim Fathers*, II.

Leiden in the first place. Jeremy Bangs, in his *Pilgrim Life in Leiden*, has suggested that the reason Robinson's congregation asked formally for admission to the city of Leiden at a time when none was needed by any immigrant to any city in the Netherlands was so that the congregation's orphans would be cared for in the event of the congregation's demise.⁸⁰ His view is that John Robinson's separatists were planning to be in Leiden for a long time. However, the prior history of this group from Scrooby, and its status as a party of banished and outlawed "Brownists" back in England, along with the attempt by Ambassador Winwood to extradite them soon after their arrival, suggests another motive. John Robinson's separatist congregation applied formally for permission to reside in Leiden for the protection the congregation would gain from Leiden's magistrates as officially recognized "guests" of the city.

The congregation moved to Leiden in 1609; it would continue as an independent congregation until 1635. Although many members emigrated to North America, the first group on the Mayflower in 1620, and other members on later voyages and other ships, a remnant continued to live and worship in Leiden. Eventually the dwindling congregation was absorbed by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1635. The Leiden separatist congregation never had a formal church, but instead met at John Robinson's home. This was a necessity brought on by the refusal of the Leiden city magistrates to grant Robinson's group permission to use an officially sanctioned church. The magistrates would protect the group from extradition, but did not extend their largesse to official material support of the congregation.

⁸⁰ Jeremy Bangs, *Pilgrim Life in Leiden: texts and images from the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 17.

In 1611, with the help of several friends, Robinson purchased a house and some land in an area known as the Groene Port, near the Pieters Kerk. They added several cottages and a hall for worship to the property. Although only a few members of the congregation could live there, it served as their religious and community headquarters for most of the period between their arrival in 1609 and the final dissolution of the congregation in 1635.⁸¹ Although they lacked the legitimate status that their sister church in Leiden, the English Reformed church of Hugh Goodyear, enjoyed, and therefore received no financial support from the Leiden magistrates, the Leiden congregation was no worse off in this regard than their sister congregation in Amsterdam. It was in the employment of individual members of the congregation that the Leiden separatists faced their greatest challenge, due to the limited opportunities available to them.

The majority of the members of the Leiden congregation were severely limited in their pursuit of economic opportunities, primarily due to their backgrounds as farmers and husbandmen. The major employer of unskilled labor in Leiden was the cloth-making industry, and a large percentage of the members turned to trades in this industry to earn their livings. An examination of the wedding bans⁸² posted by members of the congregation reveals that the majority of the separatists of Leiden who posted their banns held ordinary occupations, and while some were carpenters and shoemakers, the majority of this segment of the group worked in the cloth making industry. The banns cover the period from November 7, 1609 to August 9, 1630. Of the seventy eight men listed in these records as betrothed, forty-eight, or 62%, were working in the cloth making industry or

⁸¹ Sprunger. *Dutch Puritanism*, 134.

⁸² The wedding banns of the Leiden congregation, referred to as "The Leyden Documents pertaining to the Founding Fathers", were assembled and published in 1922 by Daniel Plooij in Leiden. The spelling of the city of "Leyden" is his, presumably based upon his translation.

related fields, such as tailor or glove maker. Another fourteen of this group held ordinary occupations such as brewer or mason, and nine men, including a few widowers, did not list an occupation at all. In his memoir, Bradford explained that the move to Leiden was not advantageous for the congregation economically, “But wanting that traffic by sea which Amsterdam enjoyed it was not so beneficial for their outward means of living and estates; but being now here pitched they fell to such trades and employments as they best could valuing peace and their spiritual comfort above any other riches whatsoever.”⁸³

Occupations listed in the wedding bans for the congregation include fustian weavers, bombazine workers, say workers, and other types of work within the cloth-making industry. Non-cloth making occupations accounted for eighteen percent of the total, of which three men, or four percent of the total, made their livings as merchants, and another three worked as printers. Others earned their living as masons, and tobacco pipe makers. One member, William Brewster, ran a clandestine printing press and also offered English lessons to the Leiden University students. Brewster’s printing press published much of the separatist and non-conformist literature that was distributed in England during this period, and the English authorities consequently tried on numerous occasions to shut it down and arrest the printers. It is not clear from the sources whether the English authorities sent in their own men to effect these attempts or whether the Dutch government at the local or national level was involved, but the wedding banns offer clues to this as well: Brewster was forced to flee to Amsterdam on at least one occasion which is noted in the Leyden Documents- he published his wedding banns in both cities.

The Leiden congregation, in spite of a slight economic disadvantage when compared with the Amsterdam separatists, grew from 100 members in 1609 to about 300 in

⁸³ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 21.

1620.⁸⁴ John Robinson was their only university graduate; he soon enrolled as a student of theology at Leiden University, where he engaged in vigorous theological debates with the faculty and fellow students from many different Protestant backgrounds.

Robinson's Leiden church was a separatist congregation in "communion" (communication or consultation) with the Ancient Church of Amsterdam. Robinson wrote to Amsterdam in 1624 about the kinship of the two churches, stating that his was the church "which is nearest united unto you." That sense of kinship between the two churches had been made manifest in 1610, when the Ancient Church had split into two congregations during a theological dispute between Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth. Robinson and the Leiden church attempted to mediate the dispute with three proposals. None of the proposals satisfied both parties, and the Johnson faction wanted the Ainsworthians removed from the city. After a year of discussion with no compromise reached, Mr. Ainsworth and his followers removed themselves from the church on December 15th and 16th, 1610, and formed a separate society. The two congregations would be known by their enemies as Franciscan Brownists and Ainsworthian Brownists, after their respective leaders. The Leiden church had attempted, as a sister church, to broker a resolution of the problem between the two factions, but failed. The lack of confessional identity or an ecclesiastical organization among the separatist congregations was a major contributing factor.

* * *

Robinson's experiences as a separatist in England and Amsterdam convinced him away from fellowship with other Protestants, even those belonging to the English non-conformist congregations, whose members professed a theology very similar to that

⁸⁴ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 39.

advocated by his own congregation. In the work *Justification of Separation* (1610), Robinson acknowledged that there were some true Christians in the Church of England, but denied that any kind of religious fellowship could be had with non-separatists, no matter how pious. He stated; “And it is our great grief, though their own fault, that we cannot have communion with the persons in whom so eminent graces of God are.” Robinson probably viewed non-separatists as part of the problems associated with the Church of England, because their continued association with the Church of England helped support and continue it, no matter how slight this support was. The religious tensions Robinson had to deal with were therefore partly attributable to all non-separating English Protestant Christians, not just the Church of England.

This position sparked debate from many of his visitors, including non-separatist theologians like Robert Parker, Henry Jacob, and William Ames. They visited Leiden around 1610/11, and they managed to moderate his thinking to a less extreme position. Following their visit, Robinson began to allow for fellowship with “godly” Puritans, which apparently meant those who met with Robinson’s personal definition. Ames and Robinson exchanged letters after their visit, outlining their positions on the issue. In a letter to Robinson in 1611, Ames wrote : “Grace, Mercy, and Peace. Sir...I would desire you again to consider of, as you do me: viz. Whether there be not a visible communion even out of a visible church.”⁸⁵ Ames gave three reasons to support his argument to Robinson. First, he claimed that he could have communion with someone that he observed was godly, because an outward communion with another Christian followed from the recognition of the inner person. Second, he claimed that it was appropriate to communicate with competing

⁸⁵ Robinson, *The Works of John Robinson*, vol. 3, 85-86.

churches as their members were godly. Third, claimed Ames, it was the duty of those already in a godly church to reach out to those who didn't enjoy the same condition.

John Robinson sent Ames his reply: "Mercy and peace be with you. Amen. Sir...I thought good to return you a brief answer...I deny that external communion doth necessarily flow from the discerning of inward communion with Christ, which is your first reason. Robinson argued that a formal relationship needed to exist between two Christians before there could be communion between them, whether or not the other person was godly or not. He did, however, agree with Ames that those striving for membership in a church who had none deserved the attention of those who did: "such persons are joined in will and purpose, at the least, the which is accepted as the deed...they are in the door coming into the house, and not without."⁸⁶ Although Johnson's reply to Ames at this time reveals his adamant position and his determination to resist communion or communication with non-separatist Protestants, a seed had been planted which would in time lead him to moderate his views.

In later debates with Ames, Robinson published *Of Religious Communion* (1614) and *Manumission to a Manuduction* (1615) both of which allowed for private fellowship for Christians of all denominations but refused public fellowship of preaching and worship. He modified these declarations still further in his posthumous publication *Treatise of the Lawfulness of Hearing of the Ministers in the Church of England* (1634), which allowed certain kinds of public fellowship, for example hearing sermons given by godly non-Separatist Puritan preachers.⁸⁷ This gradual easing of Robinson's bitterness against non-

⁸⁶ Robinson, *The Works of John Robinson*, vol. 3, 86-88.

⁸⁷ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 136-137.

separatists can best be seen in his address to the Pilgrims at the departure of the Mayflower in 1620, when he urged them to seek renewed contact with the Church of England.

The Leiden congregation enjoyed an excellent civic reputation among their Dutch neighbors, according to William Bradford in his *History of the Plymouth Plantation*: “and [at] first although it was low with many of them yet their word would be taken among the Dutch when they wanted money, because they had found by experience how careful they were to keep their word; and saw them so painful and diligent in their callings that they strove to get their custom, and to employ them above others in their work for their honesty and diligence.” The Separatists at Leiden were also compared favorably to the Walloon immigrants by the city’s magistrates, again according to Bradford: “these English (said they) have lived amongst us now these twelve years; and yet we never had any suit or accusation come against them...”⁸⁸

John Robinson was a man who exhibited an interesting mix of stubborn single-mindedness and a willingness to compromise in almost equal measures, although it sometimes took the intervention of friends to get him to moderate his views.

Many members of the congregation at Leiden made the decision to begin immigrating to the New England colonies in 1620. William Bradford listed at least five different reasons for this decision in his *History of Plymouth Colony*: First, life in Holland was so hard that few in England would come to join them, because the life there was characterized by “that great labor and hard fare, with other inconveniences, which [the Pilgrims] underwent and were contented with.” The second reason that Bradford gave for the move was that “old age began to steal upon them.” Third, Bradford also stated that the separatists were forced by working conditions to oppress even their own children with

⁸⁸ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 23.

excessive work, in order to keep their Dutch employers happy. Even worse, according to Bradford, was that some of the children revolted against their treatment, drawn by the bad examples of the Dutch children into loose behavior and leaving home to travel or make their own way in the world. Fifth, Bradford claimed that the separatists wanted to try to convert the Indians, because they had had so little success converting the Dutch. The English feared eventual assimilation of their congregation by their Dutch hosts.⁸⁹

There is good reason to think that the congregation's demographic and economic conditions did indeed influence their decision to leave Leiden. Old age was a particular concern to the adult members, as Bradford so eloquently explained it in his *History*: "they saw the grim and grisly face of poverty coming upon them like an armed man; with whom they must buckle and encounter, and from whom they could not fly."⁹⁰ A major part of the Leiden congregation made their living in the cloth industry, and the total capitalism of the city's governing patriciate and the leading Walloons, who were not at this time subject to ethical restraints, meant that housing and the materials and equipment for production were provided on loan or rent by entrepreneurs who had sole rights to the finished products. A fast production worker in this setting could make just enough in a day's labor, to cover the necessities of a day's living. As a worker slowed down from age, their employment could be abruptly terminated. Old age meant unemployment and poverty.⁹¹ While it sounds a bit strange leaving for the New World based upon an aging population, one must remember that the occupations these people pursued before coming to Leiden were farming and husbandry, and could expect to take these occupations back up upon their arrival. Although farming is labor intensive and an occupation ideally suited for the young, it also

⁸⁹ Bangs, *Pilgrim life in Leiden*, 41.

⁹⁰ Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, 24.

⁹¹ Bangs, *Pilgrim life in Leiden*, 41.

represented the one social system that those without wealth had for caring for their elderly-enough food for all, and even the elderly can be useful to the farmer, performing such domestic tasks as caring for the younger children, and helping the farmer or his wife in subordinate, complementary roles.

In June, 1619 a law was passed by the States-General forbidding dissident religious services, and declaring that all contracts carried out under these churches' authority (such as marriages) were invalid; it also prohibited the collection of alms by non-Dutch Reformed congregations for the support of ministers, orphans, or the elderly. This law was targeted against the Remonstrant ministers to weaken them economically, and was not enforced against the English Reformed congregations; but from this point on, the English Reformed separatist churches' religious services and charitable activities for their ministers, the elderly, and the orphans, were officially outlawed. Lack of state sponsored support and the eventual enforcement of this law helped speed the assimilation of the Leiden congregation, once the majority had immigrated to the New World.⁹²

One last reason given by Bradford for emigrating from Leiden was the fear of war: "The 12 years of truce were now out, and there was nothing but beating of drums and preparing for war, the events whereof are always uncertain, the Spaniard might prove as cruel as the savages of America, and the famine and pestilence as sore here as there, and their liberty less to look out for remedy." The prospect of England renewing its military aid to the Dutch in the expected war on Spain also threatened the continued existence of the Leiden separatists, as King James had promised help to the Dutch on the condition that he would be given direct control over the English congregations in Holland. If this came to

⁹² Bangs, *Pilgrim life in Leiden*, 44.

pass, the separatists would have been forcefully assimilated into either the Dutch or English state religion.⁹³

There were indeed many real reasons that compelled the Leiden pilgrims to make the dangerous move to the New World, and there is likely some truth to all the reasons given by Bradford, this particular group of expatriate English Reformed separatists saw no better solution for the political and religious tensions which they faced in seventeenth-century England and the Netherlands than removing themselves from the sources of those tensions.

* * *

For about twenty years before a formal English Reformed church was organized in Leiden, there had been at least some informal English preaching available to the English immigrants in the city. A military chaplain had served there in 1587, and it is likely that some other preachers had at least visited the city and given an occasional sermon. The English Reformed Church of Leiden was first organized in 1607, after the city magistrates approved a petition by the English settlers for their own church. The initial English services provided when the church became a reality were given by local English-speaking ministers, including Jonas Volmarius of Oegstgeest, the Leiden professor Francis Gomarus, and the minister of the French Church, Daniel Castellanus. After two years of services provided by non-English ministers, the English community petitioned the magistrates again, this time requesting financial support for their own minister. The city magistrates approved the request and, in March of 1610, approved the calling of Robert Drury, a Scottish minister with a fiery reputation. Drury led the new church for just six years, and then died. His successor had a much longer tenure: Hugh

⁹³ Bangs, *Pilgrim life in Leiden*, 44.

Goodyear began his pastorate in 1617, and served for more than forty years, until he passed away in 1661. His leadership of the English Reformed Church at Leiden was marked by cloudy and sometimes acrimonious relations with the city magistrates and the local Dutch Reformed consistory, and surprisingly amiable relations with English Reformed ministers of both non-conformist and separatist theologies. Goodyear counted among his friends John Paget of the Amsterdam Reformed Church, and Henry Ainsworth and John Robinson of the Amsterdam and Leiden Separatist churches.⁹⁴

Unlike his more famous contemporaries, however, Hugh Goodyear was lost to history until 1921, when Dutch professor Daniel Plooij discovered his personal records, *The Goodyear Papers*, at the archive in Leiden. Although I was able to access many primary sources in my work on the other three chapters of this work, these primary sources from Hugh Goodyear's life are only available by viewing them at the Leiden archive. I am therefore depending on Plooij's and Keith Sprunger's scholarly interpretations. There are no earlier works available, and no biographies of Goodyear have been assembled, except for a summary in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, which is based on Sprunger's work.⁹⁵

Goodyear's policies where his church was concerned often led him into clashes with the local Dutch Reformed consistory and the city magistrates. He was a firm disciplinarian who would not bow to outside interference from the consistory, and only gave in to the magistrates in church matters when he had to. His treatment of his parishioners was harsh by Dutch Reformed standards, and their(the parishioners) appeals to the Dutch Reformed consistory for membership in the Dutch church were vigorously

⁹⁴ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 124-126.

⁹⁵ Daniel Plooij, *The Pilgrim Fathers from a Dutch Point of View*, (New York, AMS press, 1969). Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*.

opposed by Goodyear. He believed that those he viewed as guilty of transgressions against church law should not be released to other, more lenient churches but should remain within his church and should abide by his decisions and the punishments assigned them.⁹⁶

Goodyear's actions against his parishioners isolated his church from the Dutch community. Although recognized by the city magistrates as an official church and supported financially by them, Goodyear continually refused interference or mediation by the local Dutch Reformed consistory. Of all the churches examined in this thesis, Goodyear's church was the only English Reformed church which was both supported by the state and refused to be supervised by the Dutch Reformed authorities. In Amsterdam, by contrast, Paget's Reformed church was both officially recognized by the Amsterdam city magistrates and a fully accepted and participating member of the Amsterdam consistory and classis. According to Plooij, in 1633 Goodyear wrote that his congregation "enjoyeth the use of the ordinances, but wanteth that power of godliness which is in those rare Christians in Manchester and there about."⁹⁷ The Dutch consistory in Leiden disagreed.

Two prominent examples of Goodyear's approach to church discipline are in the consistory records of his English Reformed church. In the first case, an English merchant and member of Goodyear's church in Leiden, Richard Parsons, applied to the Dutch consistory for membership. Apparently Parsons was fed up with Goodyear's actions against members of his congregation, but he gave as his primary argument that part of his family knew very little or no English. When he was asked for a demission or an

⁹⁶ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 124-128.

⁹⁷ Plooij, *Pilgrim Fathers*, 107.

attestation from the English church that he was a member in good standing, he was unable to produce one. The Dutch were willing to accept him as a member if he could produce such a document, but without it they felt they could not overrule a fellow Reformed church constituted under its own consistory. Several months went by with no resolution, until Parsons finally appealed to the city magistrates. Only at this point did Goodyear finally relent and release Parsons and his family from further obligation to the English church.⁹⁸ Similar cases in preceding and succeeding years were a primary cause of tension between Goodyear and the Leiden consistory.

In 1638, another member of Goodyear's congregation, Henry Stafford, aroused Goodyear's ire for Sabbath-breaking. Stafford was a barber-surgeon whose transgression was that he had cut the hair of some individuals on Sabbath morning, before the sermon, and according to Stafford, for the benefit of the poor. Goodyear's response was to suspend Stafford from taking part in the Lord's Supper, one of the most important ceremonies within the English Reformed tradition, a recreation of the original Last Supper that, according to the New Testament, was celebrated by Jesus before his Crucifixion. Stafford's response was to ask the Dutch consistory for admission to their church, but as with the Parsons case, Goodyear refused to let him go. Goodyear rebuked the Dutch consistory for interfering in what he viewed as internal affairs of his church, and told the Dutch that the disgruntled English "should be sent to their own consistory and that the Dutch were please not to meddle with his members." Once again, the city magistrates intervened and ordered Goodyear to release Stafford and others from his church. Goodyear continued for much of the rest of his pastorate to fight the Dutch Reformed consistory of Leiden for control of the disciplining of his members, and

⁹⁸ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 128, 129

remained aloof from both the Dutch consistory and the synod for many years. He eventually tired of the isolation of his church and applied for membership in the Dutch consistory of Leiden in 1655. He and his church were admitted under specific terms which limited his power to excommunicate members or other harsh disciplining of his members without the knowledge of the Dutch Reformed consistory and classis.⁹⁹ The tensions between the English and Dutch Reformed churches at Leiden eased as a result.

Goodyear's contentious relationship with the Dutch Reformed church in Leiden apparently did not also extend to his personal relationships with English Reformed ministers from both sides of the Atlantic, and from both sides of the English Channel. According to Sprunger, within the Goodyear papers is a large correspondence with such New World luminaries as John Cotton (1630), Ralph Smith of Plymouth Plantation, William Aspinwall of Boston, and Hugh Peter of Salem (1639). There are also many letters between Goodyear and other Puritan exile ministers in the Netherlands; along with John Paget of Amsterdam he wrote to Robert Paget of Dordrecht and Thomas Cawton of Rotterdam. These congenial relations which Goodyear maintained with other English Reformed ministers also included very good relations with John Robinson and the Leiden separatists. After John Robinson's death in 1625, Goodyear continued to apprise Robinson's widow of the latest news from Plymouth colony whenever he received a new letter, and also helped some of the separatist that had moved to America in their business dealings.¹⁰⁰

On a personal level, Hugh Goodyear was able to maintain good relationships with many Puritans from every version of the faith, whether congregationalist, presbyterian,

⁹⁹ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 130, 131.

¹⁰⁰ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*. 133, 134.

non-conformist or separatist, a highly unusual stance for a Reformed minister during this period. In his professional world, however, Goodyear's inability to tolerate any interference in his running of his church and his supervision of his members exacerbated and increased the tensions locally that already existed between the Dutch Reformed and English Reformed churches throughout the Netherlands during the early seventeenth century.

CONCLUSION:

John Robinson gathered his congregation around him at the docks in Delftshaven, a small port near the city of Leiden in the Netherlands. It was a fair day in late July, 1620. At anchor in the port was the Speedwell, a trim ship bought by the Leiden separatists for the journey many of them were about to take to the new world. The sixty or so men, women, and children made a fair sized crowd; it was further swelled by well-wishers and friends, some from as far away as Amsterdam. The usual sounds of a busy port, the cries of seagulls and sailors, the creaking of timbers, and the snap of cloth in the wind, were joined by the sighs and tears of the soon to be parted. Robinson raised his voice, so all could hear him, and he hoped, be comforted. He reminded them of their covenant with God and with each other, and bid them draw determination and strength from it. He called upon God to bless their journey, and to grant them safe passage to America. He encouraged them to use all means to shake off the Brownist label that had been applied to them in both Holland and America, and seek a closer relationship with the Church of England, striving for union rather than division. The words he spoke revealed a changed man. Robinson was no longer the bitter, isolation-leaning separatist he had been when he had arrived in Leiden 12 years before, who had refused at that time to engage in any communion with anyone not belonging to a separatist congregation. Robinson had relaxed his stance over the intervening years until he was, by this summer of 1620, urging a sort of reunion with the Church of England. Robinson was homesick; the years of exile had mediated and mellowed his position, and his fondest wish was to return home and

live out his remaining years, in peace, on English soil. The separatist minister was not very keen on separation any more.¹⁰¹

* * *

My main goal in writing this thesis has been to use research on the local level for a particular group of Protestant communities, in this case English Reformed communities in early seventeenth century the Netherlands, to show the diversity, and consequently a richer, more compelling and more accurate view of this period in Reformation history, that is gained by such an approach. One of the major limitations in past historiography has been the categorizing and generalizing of groups and individuals under broad, all-inclusive labels, such as Calvinist or Puritan. While these labels are convenient and can convey a very limited, very non-specific understanding of Reformation history, labels used in this way are more problematic than helpful. John Robinson's separatist congregation is a prime example of the failure of these labels to accurately portray what was happening on the local level. Although Robinson's early years were marked by strife and a definite turning away from the Church of England and from members of many non-separatist churches, the position was modified over the years until one would be hard pressed to accurately call Robinson anything more than a non-conformist. His separatist brethren in Amsterdam in the same period, however, were implacable foes of non-separatist English churches, and so could be called separatist without straining credibility.

Examining what is happening to communities and individuals completely changes our understanding of Reformation history- it is no longer a history of major theological movements and religious wars, all propelled by mostly faceless individuals and groups.

¹⁰¹ This account is based upon the recollections of Edward Winslow in his "Hypocrisie Unmasked", printed in 1646. The version I read is in Old South Leaflets, vol. 6 (Boston: The Directors of the Old South Work, Old South Meeting House, 1903)

Instead, it becomes a history of events within each congregation, each community, and about conflicts and solutions to those conflicts on the local level. The human element that has been largely missing from earlier Reformation history can now be included. And while it is still extremely important to know the major theological movements, and the larger events at the regional, national, and international level during the period known as the Reformation, local studies like my thesis can help us understand how those larger movements and events affected small groups and individuals, and show how greatly these groups and individuals differed from each other.

Local studies also question the use of categories long associated with the Reformation, and show how limiting they are for defining what was actually going on in the period. I have demonstrated within this thesis that four different English Reformed churches in the Netherlands really were different from each other, regardless of what category we put them into. Even when the English Reformed category is broken down into non-conformists and separatists, the churches still differed greatly from each other; one separatist church was not like another, nor can it be said that one non-conformist church was like another. I have no doubt that similar studies in other geographic areas and dealing with other forms of Catholic or Protestant religion during the Reformation will reveal similar problems with these labels.

My other goal, and hope, in writing this thesis was to make a contribution, however small, to the historiography of these English Reformed communities in the early Dutch Republic. I wrote in the introduction of the minor contribution this thesis has made to Puritan historiography and to location specific historiography (English Reformed churches in the Dutch Republic). This study also fits within broader Calvinist and

Reformation studies. One of the most recent studies of Calvinism, Philip Benedict's *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed* (2002), is a social history and survey of the Calvinist movement as it unfolded across the European landscape in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Benedict represents the vanguard of new historians of the European Reformation; although this particular work is broad in scope and is really a history about the Calvinist movement rather than Calvinist people, Benedict is aware of and subscribes to the new historiography of Reformation studies. There are two elements to this trend. First, Reformation historians have begun incorporating the actions and aspirations of ordinary people into a story that has until recently featured only the role played by the elites of the period. Second, there has been a shift away from these histories being written by members of the churches they described, and who were often more interested in glorifying their particular faith than in transmitting the unvarnished truth, to a more secular approach which aims to strip away the distortions inherent in confessional stereotypes and the labels attached to them. Benedict has used this second approach in particular, to question long held assumptions about Calvinism's contribution to modern society. He argues that the idea long held by some early modern European historians, that Calvinism deserves most of the credit for the rise of both democracy and capitalism, needs to be revised to include elements of both Lutheran and Catholic contributions. An important component of this study is an idea found within the discipline of sociology. A prominent sociologist, Michael Mann, proposed that what we think of as societies are really power networks that have arisen over time to serve basic human needs. The four basic types of networks are ideological, political, military, and economic. Three of these four kinds of networks are examined within my own study; the ideological, the political,

and the economic. The fourth network, the military, is not a direct concern in the story of these congregations, but it still plays an indirect role: it is because of the Dutch Republic's war with Spain and her alliance with England that English troops are garrisoned on Dutch soil and a need for English reformed chaplains is created. Military pressures are also at least a small part of the reason John Robinson's separatists decided to move to America, as the 12 years truce between the Dutch Republic and Spain was about to expire. Using this four part model in conducting historical research is an ideal way to encompass most of the activity of a group or groups of people in a given period; it certainly worked for this thesis. Examining how these networks of power affected each of the congregations within my thesis helped me to show how they differed in very clearly delineated ways; it is undoubtedly one of the more important contributions sociology has made to the writing of history in recent years.

The four English Reformed congregations which were the subject of this study negotiated their local environments in very different ways from each other. Their identities as English Reformed parishioners did not preclude their having individual voices, reactions, strategies, opinions and aspirations. They are just one example, found within one small branch of a very large, continents-spanning Calvinist movement, of the tremendous diversity that can be found locally within the Reformation world.

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