INTRODUCTION TO THEME AND VOLUME

To stimulate comparative research and international contacts, a working agreement between British and Dutch historians has been in existence since 1977 as a sub-committee of the Comité Internationale d'Histoire Ecclésiastique Comparée. Initially bearing the name Anglo-Dutch Colloquium, later changed to British-Dutch Colloquium, meetings were held in Leiden (1977), Oxford (1980), Rolduc (1984), Exeter (1988), Groningen (1992), and Cambridge (1998). The seventh meeting took place in the Netherlands, at Utrecht, from September 18 through 21, 2002. It was organised by a committee in which virtually all Dutch institutes relevant for Church history were represented, while also members of the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Louvain participated.

Previously concentrating on themes as Church and authority, piety, change and revolution, eschatology, missions and missionaries, this time the British-Dutch colloquium focussed on the pastor, more or less, bonus. In advance, three sub-themes were distinguished. The first dealt with the requirements to be considered ‘bonus’ or ‘good’ enough to be admitted for pastoral work. This sub-theme evoked questions on education, explicit and implicit learning goals and admission criteria, and selection procedures. The second sub-theme dealt with the ideal conception of the pastor as being ‘optimus’ or ‘the best’, and also with the negative side of this conception. Here, questions were raised on the characteristics of an ideal pastor. The third sub-theme was on clerical practice, to wit, on questions such as how pastors, given the admission criteria and ideals, were living their daily life. Raising these questions intended to enhance the insight into changing criteria, ideals, and spectres relevant to different times, cultures, and confessions.

This volume presents the proceedings of the colloquium. To do justice to its context it starts and ends with the opening and closing speeches delivered by the Chairman of the Dutch committee, Prof. P.G.J.M. Raedts. Though time pressure prevented some participants to prepare their lectures for publication, the reader will find 27 contributions, all critically read, amended and, as far as possible, forged into a certain unity by the editors. Inevitably, the volume lacks the
coherence of a monograph based on long and persistent individual research. Moreover, the British-Dutch colloquia are open to experienced senior as well as to starting junior researchers. Nevertheless, the volume treats a major subject in European history. Regardless his varying title or name, the pastor can be considered as one of the most influential persons in the history of the Christian world. He, or nowadays even she, was and still is a key-figure in western society, especially as pacemaker in the ongoing processes of tradition, appropriation and development of ideas and forms of behaviour. Since Christianity is not a timeless, supra-historical entity and only could and can survive when its main thoughts, rites, values, and institutions are transmitted from generation to generation, each serious study on the pastor will be of an importance hardly to be overestimated.

In the present volume, the search for the pastor starts with an introductory contribution on the theme pointing at problems of translation and definition and treating the visual representations of the Good Shepherd and his substitutes. While the authors were not obliged to restrict themselves to only one sub-theme and in fact several of them focussed on more than one, the editors preferred a chronological rather than a thematic arrangement. Thus, after the introduction four sections appear: the era of Latin Christianity, the era of confessionalisation, the long eighteenth century, and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

For each main lecture only 45 minutes were available, for each minor contribution no more than twenty minutes. Moreover, the authors were bound by rather strict orders on the size of their texts. It may be clear that not everything could be said or treated as extensively and intensively as preferred. This volume will certainly not be the last on the subject. However, when it invites and incites to further research its purpose will be fulfilled. The colloquium itself was stimulating in many respects. Hopefully, this volume will continue the enriching exchange of facts, thoughts, and views.

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