

YVES KRUMENACKER

CAN WE GIVE THE GOSPEL TO THOSE WHO HAVE  
NOT HEARD OF IT? REFORMED THEOLOGICAL  
DISCOURSES ABOUT THE SALVATION OF PAGANS  
IN THE EARLY MODERN ERA

The Protestant Reformation happened almost at the same time as the great voyages around Africa and towards Asia, as well as the discovery of America. Thus, when a new Christian denomination arose, there emerged unprecedented opportunities for evangelizing new peoples. However, all historians agree that, in the 16th and 17th centuries, it was almost exclusively the Catholic Church that took up the challenge. Such weakness in Protestant missionary expansion has been accounted for in various ways. It has been suggested that the new Church had other priorities (reforming Christianity, strengthening an alternative doctrine to Roman theology, etc.); that 16-century Protestant nations were none too familiar with distant overseas lands; that the removal of religious orders led to a shortage of missionary personnel, etc<sup>1</sup>. Our

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Warneck, *Abriss einer Geschichte des protestantischen Missionen*, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1882; Gustav Plitt, Otto Hardeland, *Geschichte der lutherischen Mission*, vol. 2, Berlin: A. Deichert, 1894–1895; Gustav Kawerau, *Warum fehlte des deutschen evangelischen Kirche des 16 und 17 Jahrhunderts das volle Verständnis für die Missionsgedanken der heiligen Schrift?*, Breslau: Korn, 1896; *Les Précurseurs de l'idée missionnaire en France aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, Paris: Société des Missions Évangéliques, 1923; François Rousseau, "Les Protestants aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles et la théorie de l'idée de mission", in: *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 1926, vol. 12, pp. 443–459; Walter Holsten, "Reformation and Mission", in: *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 1953, vol. 44, pp. 1–32; Hans-Werner Gensichen, "Were the Reformers indifferent to Missions?", in: *History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission*, Genève: WSCF, 1960, pp. 119–127; William Hogg, "The Rise of Protestant Missionary Concern", in: Gerald H. Anderson, *Theology of Christian Mission, 1517–1914*, London: SCM Press, 1961,

contribution to this debate will examine theological texts dedicated to the evangelization of pagans in order to determine whether leaders of the New Churches did actually strive to boost that effort. We shall limit ourselves to the Calvinist literature tradition, not to embrace too vast a subject.

#### WHAT EVANGELIZERS?

In the Roman Catholic Church, missions used to be, overwhelmingly, performed by members of religious orders. Though there were a few somewhat adventurous secular priests, seeking fortune and limiting their ministries to their fellow-countrymen before expanding it to other populations, such as Las Casas in its infancy<sup>2</sup>, the first modern-era missionaries belonged mainly to long-standing religious orders, including the mendicant ones (Augustinians, Carmelites, Mercedarians, Franciscans and Dominicans), and later to new orders such as the Jesuits and the Recollects, the Vincentians (Lazarists), the Sulpicians, the Paris Foreign Missions priests, etc. However, Protestantism removed the old orders and did not create new ones. Who, then, could evangelize pagans?

Ecclesiology has a very important place in Calvin's theology. The matter of the organization of the Early Church and Church ministries at his time is dealt with extensively in Book IV (the 1559–1560 edition) of the *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne*. This point was little developed

pp. 95–111; Yves Krumenacker, “Le protestantisme et les découvertes au XVIe siècle”, in: *Découvertes et explorateurs*, Bordeaux: Histoire au Présent/L'Harmattan, 1994, pp. 239–251; Yves Krumenacker, “La conversion interdite? Lectures de l'évangélisation primitive par le protestantisme de l'époque moderne”, in: *Convertir/Se convertir: Regards croisés sur l'histoire des missions chrétiennes*, eds. Jan Borm, Bernard Cottret, Jean-François Zorn, Paris: Nolin, 2006, pp. 55–67; Andrew Buckler, *Jean Calvin et la mission de l'Eglise*, Lyon: Olivetan, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Manuel Giménez Fernández, “Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas: A Biographical Sketch”, in: *Bartolomé de las Casas in History: Toward an Understanding of the Man and his Work*, eds. Juan Friede, Benjamin Keen, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971, pp. 67–126; *The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de Las Casas*, eds. Henry Raup Wagner, Helen Rand Parish, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967, pp. 5–6.

in the early editions of the book and not until 1543, not only from Scripture but not from the Fathers of the Church either<sup>3</sup>. The clearest classification of ministries can be found in Chapter III of Book IV. Calvin believed the early Church had five ministries: apostles, to preach the Gospel to all; prophets, who have special revelations; evangelists, whose “ministries are next in importance to the Apostles’, though they are inferior in dignity”; doctors, who are in charge of explaining Scripture; pastors, who are responsible for “discipline”, [...] to administer Sacraments, [...] for exhorting and remonstrating, [...] and for explaining Scripture”. The first three ministries are not to be perpetual but subject “to the time it was necessary to establish churches where there were none,” a time that, Calvin believed, was gone, though God could still, exceptionally, generate apostles or evangelists. Only pastors are left for the ordinary Church; these are close to apostles, except for one thing: “What Apostles do around the whole world, each Pastor is required to do in his own Church, which he is a representative of.” Every pastor is indeed linked to a particular Church<sup>4</sup>. As can be seen, no ministry was designed to evangelize pagans in Calvin’s times.

This organization is reflected in the various Reformed Churches. For example, the *Discipline des Églises réformées de France* from 1559 reserves the term “minister” for pastors, and it attributed to the offices of deacon and elder the same tasks as in Geneva<sup>5</sup>; ministers, elected by a consistory, are not allowed to preach elsewhere without prior consent of the minister or the consistory they visit – which means they can rarely do so in non-Christian lands<sup>6</sup>. Later versions of the *Discipline*,

<sup>3</sup> Alexandre Ganoczy, *Calvin théologien de l’Église et du ministère*, Paris: Cerf, 1964; about Calvin in general see: Yves Krumenacker, *Calvin au-delà des légendes*, Paris: Bayard, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne*, ed. Jean-Daniel Benoit, Paris: Vrin, 1957–1963, IV, III, § 4–9; for the most part, the writing of these paragraphs goes back to 1545.

<sup>5</sup> *L’Organisation et l’action des églises réformées de France (1557–1563): Synodes provinciaux et autres documents*, eds. Philip Benedict, Nicolas Fornerod, Genève: Droz, 2012, pp. lii–liii.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Roussel, “La *Discipline des Églises réformées de France* en 1559: un

until 1659, greatly increased the requirements regarding ministers, but they were again not expected to evangelize outside their own Churches; quite the contrary, actually: “Ministers will not be elected without assigning them a particular herd, and they shall be suited to the herds they have been assigned.”<sup>7</sup> Calvin, for his part, was much more discreet than Luther on the notion of universal priesthood and did not seem to consider that any faithful can evangelize: according to the Genevan reformer, God can be known only through pastors: “He [God] elects among men those he will make his ambassadors, whose task it is to enlighten the world about His will.”<sup>8</sup>

Of course, Calvin also stressed in many sermons (especially in sermons on Deuteronomy, preached from 1555 to 1556) the need to “draw all men on earth to God”, so as to grow and multiply the kingdom of Christ; note however, that he preached to Geneva citizens who would never have the opportunity to evangelize pagans: hence, his exhortations were only rhetorical. Nowhere does he tell them to leave their city to make the Word of God available to distant peoples. When he speaks of the whole earth, it is to explain that it is God himself who spreads his doctrine, without us knowing what instruments he might have used: “Suffice it that God spreads the doctrine of salvation throughout the world, that there are small herds assembled here and there [...] It [the doctrine of the gospel] must resound throughout the earth, and let our Lord plant Churches everywhere, and be worshiped among barbarous people”<sup>10</sup>.

royaume sans clergé?”, in: *De l'Humanisme aux Lumières, Bayle et le protestantisme*, eds. Michelle Magdelaine, Maria-Cristina Pitassi, Ruth Whelan, Antony McKenna, Paris: Universitas, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996, pp. 169–191.

<sup>7</sup> Isaac D'Huisseau, *La Discipline des Eglises réformées de France*, Genève et Saumur, ed. Isaac Desbordes, 1667, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne* (Book IV, Chapter III, § 1), Marne-la-Vallée: Farel, 1978, p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> Sermon on Deuteronomy, 33, 18–19, quoted by Andrew Buckler, *op. cit.*, p. 91. In this book, Buckler mentions numerous quotations from Calvin, mainly drawn from his Commentaries of Scripture and from his sermons, supporting the advancement of Christ's Kingdom.

<sup>10</sup> Sermon on Isaiah 26, 15, quoted by Andrew Buckler, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–98.

PRIMITIVE EVANGELIZATION  
AND THE DAMNATION OF PAGANS

A second obstacle to the evangelization of pagans is the belief that this work has already been done in apostolic times. That idea was already found in Luther's work, who had taken up the patristic and medieval tradition. It was taken up again, with some nuances, in the Calvinist tradition. Calvin himself was aware, however, that some people had never been evangelized. He knew, since he had followed Admiral Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon's expedition to Brazil quite closely, that the Topinambous Indians had no knowledge of God<sup>11</sup> and, in the *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne*, he wondered "how is it that cognizance of the pure heavenly truth has never been made known to so many people, and that others have hardly had any opportunity to get a taste of only some rudiments of it?"<sup>12</sup> The answer, he said, commenting on the first letter to Timothy, was that God never said that all men and women were to know the truth, but that it was the sole privilege of all states and all conditions; and when Matthew mentioned that the Good News was to be spread throughout the world, he only meant it would simply be found in "the most distant neighborhoods of the world"<sup>13</sup>. Augustin Marlorat (1506–1562), a pastor in Rouen, also explained that "all men" actually means "all states and conditions"<sup>14</sup>. Calvin himself did not seem to set great store by the actual realization of primitive evangelization because, while he would take a more relative view of it in some passages, he bore it out in others: in his commentaries on the Gospels, he explained that the

<sup>11</sup> Olivier Reverdin, *Quatorze calvinistes chez les Topinambous. Histoire d'une mission genevoise au Brésil (1556–1558)*, Genève: Droz, 1957.

<sup>12</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne* (Book III, Chapter 24, §15), *op. cit.*, p. 453.

<sup>13</sup> Jean Calvin, *Commentaires [...] sur toutes les epistres de l'apostre saint Paul*, Genève: Etienne Anastase, 1560 (about 1 Tim 2. 4); Jean Calvin, *Concordance qu'on appelle harmonie*, Genève: C. Badius, 1555 (about Mt 24. 14).

<sup>14</sup> Augustin Marlorat, *Le Nouveau Testament*, Genève: Jean Bonne-Foy, 1563 (about 1 Tim 2. 4).

doctrine had spread throughout the world after the apostles' departure from Galilee, which fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 49. 6<sup>15</sup>.

After Calvin, Théodore de Bèze expressed the same conviction that the apostles' preaching had reached the other side of the world or the New world in their times, because, as St. Paul wrote, at least a taste of the Gospel had penetrated there<sup>16</sup>. In the Netherlands, Hugo Grotius was also convinced that the Gospel had reached across the ocean in Pope Clement's time<sup>17</sup>. However, Adrian Saravia, professor at Leiden until 1588 (then in exile in England), found that the Gospel had not yet reached all peoples<sup>18</sup>. As we shall see, many Dutch theologians, rather than questioning the reality of primitive evangelization, insisted on the need to bring the Good News to pagans. In contrast, Lutheran theologians almost universally agreed that this work had already been accomplished in apostolic times: Lossius, Nicolai, Gesner, Gerhard, Johannes Müller, and many others, had no doubt about it either<sup>19</sup>.

Equally interesting is the conclusion that most of these theologians derive from the existence of a primitive evangelization. Again, Calvin's ideas were broadly shared. To his mind, pagans had no extenuating circumstances: God "has imprinted some marks of his glory in all his works, and even in such a clear and significant way, that no allowance for ignorance can be allowed to the harshest and least sophisticated peoples in the world"<sup>20</sup>. The Geneva reformer added in his commentary

<sup>15</sup> *Commentaires de Jehan Calvin sur le Nouveau Testament*, Genève: Conrad Badius, 1561 (about Mc 16. 15 and Mt 28. 19).

<sup>16</sup> Théodore de Bèze, *Jesu Christi Domini Nostri Novum Testamentum...*, Genève: H. Estienne, 1565 (about Col 1. 23).

<sup>17</sup> *Annotata ad ss. Evangelia... Sive Criticorum sacrorum*, t. 4, Francfort: Balthasar Wust, 1696 (Grotius, about Mt 24. 14).

<sup>18</sup> Adrian Saravia, *De ministrorum evangelii diversis gradibus liber...*, London: G. Bishop & R. Newberie, 1590.

<sup>19</sup> Yves Krumenacker, "La conversion interdite?..."; a great number of texts are quoted by *Mission in Quellentexten: Von der Reformation bis zur Weltmissionskonferenz 1910*, ed. Werner Raupp, Erlangen: Verlag der Evang.-Luth. Mission, Bad Liebenzell: Verlag der Liebenzeller Mission, 1990.

<sup>20</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne* (Book I, Chapter 5, § 1), *op. cit.*, p. 17.

on Psalm 19 that “the glory of God is not written in cryptic and small letters, but richly engraved in nice big letters for everyone to read, and easily, too”<sup>21</sup>. For him, pagans have had some knowledge of the truth: “We see that among pagans there had always remained a residue of truth; we will see, from some of the statements pagans have formulated, that it is impossible for natural man to think up by themselves any of those they have brought there. Why then? It is God who has brought them there, for their conviction to be all the greater, so that on the last day it will all be taken into account?”<sup>22</sup>. We can better understand why the matter of primitive evangelization was of little importance in Calvin’s eyes: even though the Word of God had not been announced to them, they should have known the truth by contemplating creation; and if they remained ignorant, it was because God had doomed them. Predestination does actually extend to particular persons: it is each and every man that God saves or otherwise dooms to damnation<sup>23</sup>. It is easy to deduce that trying to convert pagans who had turned away from God could only be a transgression of God’s eternal purposes.

Obviously, his successors shared similar views. Marlorat thought knowledge of God through creation “does not come before removing any excuse from men; and is quite different from what is alluded to in John 17, 3; which leads to salvation”<sup>24</sup>. Bèze seemed of the same opinion, and hardly considered sending missionaries to the peoples deprived of Revelation because, under predestination, they were just excluded from salvation<sup>25</sup>. Much later, an echo of this teaching can be found in Charles Drelincourt’s works, though he was a supporter of sending missionaries

<sup>21</sup> *Commentaires de Jehan Calvin sur le livre des Pseaumes*, Paris: Ch. Meyrueis, 1859 (about Ps 19. 4).

<sup>22</sup> Sermon 176 about Dt 31, quoted by Louis Caperan, *Le Problème du Salut des Infidèles*, Paris: Beauchesne, 1912, p. 233.

<sup>23</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne* (Book III, Chapter 21, § 7), *op. cit.*, pp. 402–404.

<sup>24</sup> Augustin Marlorat, *Le Nouveau Testament* (about Rm 1. 20).

<sup>25</sup> Michel Delval, “La doctrine du Salut dans l’œuvre homilétique de Théodore de Bèze”, in: *Mémoire de la Ve section de l’École Pratique des Hautes Études*, 1982.



to pagans and was sure the whole world had not been evangelized at the time of the apostles<sup>26</sup>.

The question looks like an open and closed case, then: the belief, a widely shared one, that primitive evangelization has indeed taken place, the assurance that outside the knowledge of Jesus Christ there can be no salvation, and the strength of the doctrine of predestination acted as a powerful restriction to the missionary enterprise of spreading the Word of God. Moreover, it is even more so in the Lutheran world. Georg Möbius went, against all evidence, to the extent of writing, in 1685, that the apostles could only have managed to go to America on foot, in order to accomplish the divine will of offering salvation to all<sup>27</sup>! Lucas Lossius better represented the majority opinion regarding the damnation of all pagans and thinking it could only be a consequence of their sins<sup>28</sup>. Their common teaching was to be found in *Loci Theologici* by Johann Gerhard who taught that preaching the Gospel throughout the earth belonged to the apostles and that this duty had not been passed on to the Church; therefore the Gentiles could only be damned<sup>29</sup>. This was the basis of the Lutheran teaching for decades. One final example could be a submission written in 1651 by the Faculty of Theology at Wittenberg claiming that God had legitimately removed salvation from the peoples who were still in darkness, on account of their carelessness and ingratitude<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Drelincourt, *Les Visites charitables, ou les consolations chrétiennes, pour toutes sortes de personnes affligées*, Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1731, 52nd visit, pp. 410–468 (1st edition 1667).

<sup>27</sup> Georg Möbius, *Tractatus Philologico-Theologicus de Oraculorum origine, propagatione, & duratione*, Lipsæ: Justin Brand, 1685.

<sup>28</sup> *Annotationum scholasticarum Lucae Lossii Luneburgensis in Novum Testamentum Iesu Christi Nazareni, promissi à Deo per Moysen & prophetas ... Tomus quintus, in quo continetur ad Romanos Epistola Diui Pauli Apostoli ...*, Francfort: Chr. Egen, 1562.

<sup>29</sup> Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, 1610–1625 (numerous editions), volume 6, locus 23, Chapter V, § 210–225.

<sup>30</sup> A dissertation presented to Count Erhardt Truchsess zu Wetzhausen in 1651 by the Wittenberg Theological Faculty, in: *Mission in Quellentexten*, pp. 70–71.



## OPENINGS FOR MISSION

Yet there were openings for mission, especially in the Calvinist world, and indeed, though Protestant missions were very rare in the 16th century, they became slightly more numerous in the next one. Calvin, the first among others, did not close the door on any attempt at evangelization in his time. But can we indeed say, as do the advocates of the view that Calvin had a missionary vision, that all his actions, the reform of Geneva, the will to bring the powerful to the true faith, sending books and pastors to France and elsewhere, were done out of missionary intent<sup>31</sup>? This would be consistent with the ancient usage of the word, meaning that God manifests Himself, makes Himself present in this world, as a mission, even though Calvin never used the word “mission” to describe his reformation work. Hold on, are we not going too far when we equate preaching within the Christian world and proclaiming the Gospel to those who do not know Christ? Calvin thought the main objective was to reform the Church, to bring it back to true piety, to surrender all its glory to God, but only among peoples who knew him already, even though their faith was deeply clouded. Never ever did he contemplate starting a new Church, unlike, for example, the Anabaptists. On the other hand, he was convinced that it is always God who leads men. “Missionary activism”, like the one that could be found within the Catholic Church, was therefore out of the question. Commenting on the episode when Paul came to Troas to preach the Gospel, but failed to meet Titus and went on his way to Macedonia instead, where he felt called by God, Calvin declared that “an opportunity had then presented itself to advance the Gospel. For, just as we can enter when the door is open, the Lord’s servants also make advancements when the means prove to be available to them. The door is closed when there is no hope of ever making the most of it”<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Philip Hugues, “John Calvin, Director of Missions”, in: *The Heritage of John Calvin*, ed. John H. Bratt, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1973, pp. 40–54; Andrew Buckler, *Jean Calvin et la mission de l’Église*, Lyon: Olivétan, 2008.

<sup>32</sup> *Commentaires sur toutes les épistres de l’apostre saint Paul*, Genève: Estienne Anastase, 1560 (about 2 Cor 2, 12).

When, in 1556, an expedition in Brazil, led by Admiral de Villegagnon, requested pastors, Geneva sent two, but probably more as European explorers. Nevertheless, one of the members of the expedition, Jean de Léry, began to try and convert the Topinambous Indians who, he thought, had been evangelized by St. Matthew himself. Twenty years later, he had become a pastor and interpreted his failed attempt as a sign that God had not included the Topinambous among his elect<sup>33</sup>. An opportunity had presented itself to preach the Gospel, he had been bound to seize it, but he need not have persisted when conversion did not happen, because it was evidence that such was not God's will. Yet, it was the main and one of the few attempts at evangelization by France or Geneva during the 16th and 17th centuries.

However, some records have been found of Huguenots lamenting the scarcity of Protestants on the mission field. The great size of Catholic literature on missions has undoubtedly played a great role. Reports and letters the Jesuits would send to report on their missions to their congregations were often published, as early on as the famous one written by Francis Xavier in 1545; as of 1583, extracts from annual letters were communicated to pupils in Jesuit grammar schools (and we know today

<sup>33</sup> About that famous expedition, see: Franck Lestringant, "Calvinistes et cannibales. Les Écrits protestants sur le Brésil Français (1555–1560)", in: *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, 1980, vol. 126, pp. 9–26, 167–192; Franck Lestringant, "Tristes Tropicistes: du Brésil à la France, une controverse coloniale à l'aube des guerres de Religion", in: *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1985, vol. CCII, no. 3, pp. 267–294; Franck Lestringant, *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1990; Franck Lestringant, *Une sainte horreur ou le voyage en Eucharistie, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: PUF, 1996; Franck Lestringant, "Le huguenot et le sauvage: nouvelles hypothèses, nouveaux documents", in: *La France-Amérique (16th – 17th centuries)*, ed. Franck Lestringant, Paris: Honoré Champion, pp. 131–142 (and, in the same collection, the article by B. Conconi); Franck Lestringant, *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage: essai sur l'Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999; Franck Lestringant, *D'encre de Brésil: de Léry écrivain*, Orléans: Paradigme, 1999; Yves Krumenacker, "Le protestantisme et les découvertes au XVIe siècle"; Yves Krumenacker, "La conversion interdite? ..."; Thierry Wanegffelen, "Rio ou la vraie Réforme", in: *Aux temps modernes: naissance du Brésil*, Paris: PUPS, 1998, pp. 161–175; Mauricio A. Abreu, "La France Antarctique, colonie protestante ou catholique?", in: *Les Huguenots et l'Atlantique* eds. Mickaël Augeron, Didier Poton, Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, Paris: PUPS, 2009, pp. 125–134.

that, despite censorship by consistories and synods, many Protestants would send their children there) and to the general public. In the 17th century, the *Relations*, whose most famous ones were the *Relations de la Nouvelle France* (41 volumes, 1632–1673), were a great success. Moreover, missionaries published stories of evangelization, which enjoyed great readership, such as *L'Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle Espagne* by Bernardino de Sahagun; *L'Histoire naturelle et morale des Indes* by José de Acosta, *L'Histoire de l'expédition chrétienne au Royaume de la Chine* by Nicolas Trigault, or *L'Histoire des Indes orientales et occidentales* by Giovanni Pietro Maffei<sup>34</sup>. To which must be added a whole series of Protestant “black literature”; these writings were meant to give Catholic missions a bad name – but at the same time, they made them more widely known as well – such as the translation by Urbain Chauveton of the *Historia del Mondo Nuovo* by Girolamo Benzoni, *De Rebus Gestis* by Jeronimo Osorio and translated by Simon Goulart<sup>35</sup>, or then again Las Casas’ translation of *Brevissima Relación de la destruccion de las Indias*<sup>36</sup>. Though quite a few Protestants were sensitive to the exposure of the cruelties practiced by missionaries and the hypocrisy of Catholic states – arguably more responsive to economic wealth than to the salvation of pagans – or denounced the refusal to accept God’s judgment irremediably condemning those who had not known Christ, others took a keen interest in these remote regions and lamented that Protestants took no part in this evangelistic effort.

We have some examples in France, like the one of Beaulieu Heves who, in 1646, wanted to bring the Gospel to the peoples who had never heard of it<sup>37</sup>; or of a lawyer at the Paris Parliament, Henry Mouche, *Sieur*

<sup>34</sup> Jean Comby, *Deux mille ans d'évangélisation*, Paris: Desclée, 1992.

<sup>35</sup> Marcel Bataillon, “L’Amiral et les ‘nouveaux horizons’ français”, proceedings of the conference, *L’Amiral de Coligny et son temps (1972)*, *Bulletin de la Société d’Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, 1974, vol. 120, no. 5, pp. 42–50, 81–82.

<sup>36</sup> André Saint-Lu, “Les premières traductions françaises de la ‘Brevissima Relación de la destruccion de las Indias’ de Las Casas”, in: *Revue de Littérature comparée*, 1978, vol. 206–207–208, pp. 438–449.

<sup>37</sup> “Lettre inédite de Beaulieu-Heves à Ph. Vincent ministre de La Rochelle. 1646.”, in: *Bulletin de la Société d’Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, 1852, vol. 1, pp. 416–418.

*de la Colombière*, who sent huge amounts of money in the 1660s and 1670s to British companies with a view to spreading the faith<sup>38</sup>. Similarly, the faithful person staged in Drelincourt's *Visites charitables* complains that there are no Protestants preaching the Gospel to pagans<sup>39</sup>. In the Lutheran world, Philipp Nicolai deemed that the Jesuits were Christians doing Christian work by announcing the fall, damnation and salvation through Christ, and that Roman Catholic Churches, be they Ethiopian or Muscovite, were instruments of salvation because they kept planting the Gospel worldwide; Johannes Müller wrote that, when the papists converted pagans to the apostles' faith, it concerned the Church of God, even though the Roman Church was not the true Church<sup>40</sup>.

Another route was explored by Adrian Saravia. Born in 1531 in Artois, he was first a Franciscan monk before converting to the Reformation in 1557. After a short stay in Geneva (1558), he went to England where many Dutch Protestants were fleeing Spanish repression. He married during his singular return to the continent and was then appointed curate of Threadneedle Street French Reformed Church, London. He returned to Antwerp in 1562, as a minister of the Walloon Church, and worked to spread the Reformation in the Netherlands. But he had to flee in 1563 and took refuge in Guernsey. He then reached Southampton in 1569, where he was headmaster of a school. The development of the Dutch Revolt allowed him to return to Ghent in 1580 and he became professor of theology (1584) and Dean (1585) of the University of Leiden. But he kept links with Britain and sought British intervention against Spain. Hence, he was suspected of conspiracy and was able to leave Leiden before being stripped of his post and sentenced to death. He fled to England where he became Dean of Tatenhill. This is where he wrote his *De ministrorum evangelii diversis gradibus liber* in 1590, which was refuted by Bèze and Gerhard among others. He questioned the traditional Calvinist ecclesiology, arguing

<sup>38</sup> *Livre des Actes des Eglises Wallonnes aux Pays-Bas, 1601–1697*, eds. Guillaume H. M. Posthumus Meyjes, Hans Bots, La Haye: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 2005, pp. 804–805, 818–821, 832–835, 839–840, 844–848.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Drelincourt, *Les Visites charitables*.

<sup>40</sup> Texts quoted in: Werner Raupp, *op. cit.*

that the evangelizing mission was not peculiar to the apostles, but was transmitted to their successors, the bishops; since the Church was holding the key to power, it had to send missionaries to unbelieving people. He maintained his position in his response to Bèze, the *Defensio tractationis of diversis ministrorum Evangelii gradibus* in 1594. He subsequently had a successful career in England, until his death as Dean of Westminster in 1613<sup>41</sup>. In his works, he defended Episcopalian ecclesiology, which can obviously be related to its links with England and its integration in the latter part of his life in the Anglican Church. But his word was apparently hardly taken up by Calvinist theologians, perhaps precisely because of its Episcopalian leaning.

Another opening for missions took place in Holland, thanks to the development of the colonial empire. Indeed, as of 1595, ships had won their fight against the Portuguese monopoly over trade with the Malayan archipelago. In 1602, various commercial companies were merged into the Dutch *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), founded in 1602, which had the monopoly of trade with the East, but also the opportunity to take possession of territories such as Java, the Moluccas or Ceylon, which put Dutch merchants in contact with non-Christian populations. The VOC statutes provided for the promotion and defence of the Dutch Reformed Church and, therefore, pastors accompanied expeditions and stayed in the colonies. A great number of them were much more concerned about settlers than natives, or baptized the latter only after very superficial evangelization. The experience, however, stirred true missionary zeal among some. Thus, Antoine Waleus founded, in Leiden in 1622, a *Seminarium Indicum* for VOC pastors, which, however, remained open for only eleven years. He was assisted in his efforts by Justus Heurnius, the author in 1618 of *De Legatione evangelica ad Indos capessenda Admonitio*, and he himself settled in the

<sup>41</sup> Willem Nijenhuis, *Adrianus Saravia (c. 1532–1613)*, Leyde: Brill, 1980. The main works on the controversy have been written by Saravia, *De ministrorum evangelii diversis gradibus liber...*, London: G. Bishop & R. Newberie, 1590; and *Defensio tractationis de diversis ministrorum Evangelii gradibus*, London: reg. Typog., 1594; and by Théodore de Bèze, *Ad Tractationem de ministrorum evangelii gradibus, ab Hadriano Saravia Belga editam*, Genève: J. Le Preux, 1592.

Dutch East Indies from 1624 to 1639. The great Utrecht theologian, Gisbertus Voetius, defended the idea of missions to unbelievers, but under the authority of the synod and not of states or companies. His pupil, Johannes Hoornbeek, also a professor at Utrecht, then Leiden, wrote an important treatise, *De conversione Indorum ac gentilium* (posthumous, 1669), where he stressed the responsibility of the Dutch government for advancing the kingdom of Christ<sup>42</sup>. In total, over two centuries, the Dutch Reformed Church sent eight hundred pastors and thousands of deacons and teachers to Indonesia, and it is thought that the number of Indonesians baptized between 1708 and 1771 reached 43,748<sup>43</sup>.

How are we to explain this evolution? An essential element is undoubtedly that one came into contact with reality. Writings that were most hostile to the evangelization of pagans often emanated from theologians who had not left Europe nor, oftentimes, even their countries. It dealt with theoretical reflections based on abstract dogmas, which could only spark disputes during the meeting, or through actual readings, with real pagans. One of the first to illustrate this was Jean de Lery: while in contact with the Topinambous, he preached the Gospel to them; it was not until much later, after studying theology, that he had explained why they had been excluded from salvation. Similarly, it was probably the encounter with the Malayan archipelago populations that brought theologians as strictly tied to Calvinism as Waleus – who played an important role at the Synod of Dort – or Voetius, one of the main representatives of the purest Reformed orthodoxy, to defend the idea of mission-work. Theologically, they could rely on the principle that every person, according to Calvin, must proclaim their faith around them; pastors surrounded by pagans enjoyed total legitimacy to announce the Gospel to them. On the other hand, the fact that these territories

<sup>42</sup> Biographies of these characters can be found on the site of the Boston University School of Theology, History of Missiology, in: <http://www.bu.edu/missiology/about/>

<sup>43</sup> *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 6, 16, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987, pp. 135–136.

were annexed by the Dutch authorities gave latter the obligation to evangelize their new subjects: it was no longer, strictly speaking, a matter of sending missionaries overseas, but of communicating the Gospel to the inhabitants of a territory of Reformed persuasion. Nevertheless, the Dutch decided to leave their province to serve in very remote areas where Christianity was almost unheard of. This was when they came very close to the Catholic missionary paradigm.

It should also be noted that similar efforts were undertaken, in America, by Puritans like Whitaker Mayhew or John Eliot, because of their eschatological ideas: they considered themselves chosen by God to spread His reign by converting the Indians before the advent of end times. Similarly, the protagonists of the Great Awakening in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were often millenarians, like Presbyterian Jonathan Edwards. It was the same with Pietists, who had millenarian ideas too and who wanted to spread the Gospel all over the world. This is probably another reason behind the way the Reformed missionary thought evolved.