ment that Reverend Michaelius was involved in educating children. This document is not that important in and of itself because it only speaks of the intention of creating a school. Yet it has importance if it is remembered that Reverend Michaelius must have known about its existence, and thus this knowledge must have reinforced his commitment to educating the Dutch children in the colony before a school was officially chartered. It should be noted also that his own school records reveal that he was a highly educated man with a facility for languages. Further, his zeal for educating natives as a missionary predated his arrival in New Netherland; he wrote about the need to educate two mulattos in Guinea, where he was stationed as a minister between 1625 and 1627.

Finally, Reverend Michaelius’ intense preoccupation with education during the 1620s reflected the theological position of a strict Calvinist or “Counter-Remonstrant.” For such a man as Reverend Michaelius the only access which humans had to God’s truth was through the written word as revealed and set down in sacred Scripture. Literacy for him and other “hard” Calvinist reformers was not a cultural option but a religious necessity.

The impressive contextual evidence complements the foregoing evidence quite well. To begin with, Bastiaen Jansz. Krol, the first Comforter of the Sick in New Netherland, arriving in 1624, was given orders by Willem Verhulst, the colony’s provisional director, about January 1625, concerning missionary work. Verhulst desired that “the Indians be instructed in the Christian religion out of God’s Holy Word.” Another document reveals that within a few years Krol was “well acquainted with the language.” Two historians of the Dutch colony argued that the word “language” refers to the language spoken by the local Indians. This latter document implies, in other words, that Krol had the linguistic abilities needed to carry out Verhulst’s order while he was a Comforter of the Sick. In addition, it is known that the Comforters in the early seventeenth century “were also frequently asked to assist in the catechismal instruction of the youth” of New Amsterdam. In particular, Jan Huygens, another Comforter of the Sick, who arrived in New Amsterdam in 1626, was also instructed to catechize all children in the colony. Incidentally, Reverend Michaelius thought highly of Huygens. It is clear, therefore, that the extremely religious Reverend Michaelius as the first ordained minister of New Nether-
land could not have done any less in the field of education than the Comforters of the Sick who preceded him.

The evidence for early schooling in New Netherland is also buttressed by the insights of Lawrence A. Cremin. He stated that “at the outset preaching and catechizing were the forms of education most widely practiced in each of the North American colonies planted during the first half of the seventeenth century.” He also pointed out that “schooling went on anywhere,” and that people “were taught by anyone,” including clergymen; he further argued that “whatever lines there were in the metropolis between petty schooling and grammar schooling were virtually absent in the colonies.” In particular, he indicated that Dutch ministers played an important role in instructing children in the colonies. Interestingly, Otto F. Kraushaar, another scholar on the history of education in the United States, made similar points for the early seventeenth century.

The commitment on the part of the Dutch clergy to education was an integral part of the ecclesiastical history of Holland and Europe as a whole. Calvin himself, of course, set down the role of pastor as educator in The Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1547. This role was reaffirmed in subsequent synods in Holland; it was especially “developed” in the synod of Dort which took place in the early seventeenth century. These recommendations on pastoral educational duties were followed scrupulously in Holland: schools sprang up throughout the country in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, even in remote rural areas. Needless to say, militant Calvinists like Reverend Michaelius and his successor Reverend Everardus Bogardus, who was also deeply religious and highly cultivated, must have taken this tradition quite seriously.

Thus, all the evidence strongly suggests that some form of instruction of the young by Reverend Michaelius took place in New Amsterdam as early as 1628. Such instruction should not be seen, of course, as the beginning of an organized school, supervised by a licensed teacher. Rather, what is contended is that the mostly inferential evidence suggests in a powerful way that Collegiate School has a longer history, albeit of an informal nature, than previously thought. In fact, only the most abstract and ahistorical criteria for the beginning of education would insist on the actual issuance of a charter in order to speak of schooling in this sense, especially in a primitive colonial setting.
Notes


3Kilpatrick, 44-49.

4Ibid., 48.


6There is a plethora of controversies surrounding Roelantsen's hazy whereabouts in the early 1630s; fortunately these matters are not germane to this study. The same can be said of the statement that children should be educated found in a 1632 New Netherland pre-marriage contract, whose date has been challenged by historians.


8Ibid., 58.

9Albert Eekhof, Jonas Michaelius: Founder of the Church in New Netherland (Leyden: Sythoff's, 1926), 70.

10Ibid., 49.

11Ecclesiastical Records, I:78.

12Eekhof, 25.

13Ibid., 47.


15The Comforters of the Sick were the first representatives of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Netherland; although they were not ordained ministers, they had many of the same functions. In fact, Dunshee said that since the Comforters had educational responsibilities, one could posit "the introduction of public education as early as 1626" (Dunshee, 15). In the light of the strong evidence for Reverend Michaelius' interest in starting some form of education in the colony, it is prudent to argue for the 1628 date.

16Eekhof, 5.


18De Jong, 343.

19Ibid., 348.

20Ibid., 350.

21Cremin, 176.

22Ibid., 192-93.

23Ibid., 164.

24Otto F. Kraushaar, Private Schools: From the Puritans to the Present (Bloomington, IN: The Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1976), 7-9.


26Spitz, 122-25.

27Dunshee, 3-5.


29Smith, 167-70.
A discussion of the education and training of Dutch Reformed ministers who served in the American colonies should begin with some indication of the number involved. Although no absolute figure can be given, a careful estimate would place it at about 115. Exactness is impossible because of occasional difficulties in determining whether a minister was Dutch Reformed or German or French Reformed. There are also a few instances in which it can be questioned whether a particular person had been properly ordained.

From 1628, when the first Dutch Reformed minister arrived, to 1664, when New Netherland fell to the English, thirteen ministers served at one time or another. In 1664, there were eleven churches. All of the pastors were European-born, and all but one received his entire education in Europe. The exception was Samuel Megapolensis, who in 1642 at age eight came to Rensselaerswijk with his father, the Reverend Johannes Megapolensis. The younger Megapolensis studied Latin and Greek under his father for a time, then spent a brief period at Harvard before going to the Netherlands to study at the universities of Leiden and Utrecht. Samuel is one of seven pastors in this period that we definitely know had a university education. Information about the others is sketchy, except in the case of Johannes Backerus, who had no university training and probably had little education beyond the normal elementary grades.

Several of these thirteen ministers had preaching experience before coming to New Netherland, and five had served in other Dutch colonies—two on the Guinea coast of Africa, two on the island of Curaçao, and one in Brazil. Another, Gideon Schaats, had eighteen years experience as a schoolmaster in the Netherlands before coming to America.

Other than the statistics, the situation did not change significantly during the half century after the fall of New Netherland. During the period 1664–1714, approximately twenty-five new ministers came to the colonies, and the number of churches increased to about thirty-five. As before, all the pastors were European-born. Although precise information on their education and training is difficult to find, we know that the majority had some university training, usually at Leiden, and a few attended more than one university. Most of those who had no university education did have some classical training, but there were a few who had only a rudimentary elementary education. Some of the new arrivals had preaching experience before coming to America, while for others, a parish in the colonies was their first charge.

The period from 1714 to 1776 saw several changes. By the close of the colonial period, the number of churches had reached nearly one hundred and the number of new ministers who served after 1714 totaled about seventy-five. Of these, about forty-five were born and raised in Europe and thirty grew up in the colonies. There were a few among the latter who had been born in Europe but had come to America as children. Of the forty-five who had grown up in Europe and received their education there, probably most had a university education, although there is definite information that only slightly more than one-half did so. Of these, the majority attended the University of Groningen. Among the thirty who were born or had grown up in the colonies, five went to Europe for some university training, while a few studied at the newly-created College of New Jersey (present-day Princeton) and one at Yale. About twenty of those who grew up in the colonies and did not attend a college or university studied theology under private tutors.

The education a future minister received at the elementary level was similar no matter whether it was European or colonial. Students at that time attended an elementary school until about the age of ten or twelve. The courses centered around the three "R's," but there was a liberal amount of religious study as well. As a general rule, the schoolmaster instructed the pupils in the common prayers and Heidelberg Catechism twice a week, while textbooks included the Bible and readers contained such items as the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed as well as excerpts from the Psalms and Proverbs. The close tie-in between education and religion is also evident in the practice of opening the morning and afternoon sessions with prayer. Moreover, it was not unusual for local ministers and consistories to join with the secular authorities in examining and
approving schoolmasters. At Bergen, New Jersey, for example, the consistory of the local Dutch Reformed church continued to play such a role until 1790.

Ideally, elementary school training was followed by four to six years attendance at some kind of a classical school. The curriculum at such institutions included grammar, public speaking, penmanship, logic, and, of course, some work in religion. Much of the time was devoted, however, to the study of Latin; hence the references to them as classical schools. Late in his studies, a student also usually received some exposure to classical Greek. At the conclusion of this phase of his training, when the student was about sixteen or eighteen years of age, he was prepared to enter a university.

University training took from four to six years to complete. As might be expected, university work involved considerable study of Reformed Church doctrine and polity as well as church history. The curriculum also included exegesis, that is, the critical analysis and interpretation of key words and texts from Scripture, which involved also the study of Greek and Hebrew. Oratory and some practical experience in composing sermons and in preaching were likewise a part of the university training. Depending on the student's earlier preparation and his age when he enrolled in the university, he would be close to his mid-twenties when he completed his studies.

Persons with the most formal education had the best chance of becoming ministers, but ordination was not automatic. A candidate for the ministry had to be examined and approved by a committee of ministers and elders within a specified geographical area known as a classis. Generally there were two such examinations, the preparatory, and the peremptory. In the former, a candidate was examined on his knowledge of theology and church history, as well as his understanding of the ancient languages, especially Greek and Hebrew. He was also expected to preach an acceptable sermon on a text that had been assigned earlier. If he passed the examination satisfactorily, the candidate became a proponent or licentiate, which permitted him to engage in public preaching but did not allow him to administer the sacraments.

The peremptory examination took place after the candidate had received a call to serve a particular church. It was similar to the first examination, as can be seen in the minutes of the Classis of Amsterdam for the 4th of May 1761, describing the peremptory examination of John Martin van Harlingen, who afterwards served as pastor at Millstone, New Jersey from 1762 to 1795:

In the presence of the High Rev. Deputatur Synodi, R. Ph. G. van Essen, minister in this city [of Amsterdam], he [i.e., Van Harlingen] preached a sermon on the assigned text I Cor. 2:2, “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” He was further examined by the Examiner, William van der Zouw in Hebrew on Psalm 93, and in Greek, on I Cor. 2; and subsequently on the most important points of our Sacred Theology. In all of this he gave so much satisfaction in the Assembly, that with much satisfaction . . . and a unanimous vote he was adjudged fit for the ministry of the Gospel.

Upon satisfactory completion of this examination, a candidate was asked to sign various papers signifying his acceptance of the creeds and doctrines of the Reformed Church, after which he was ordained, permitting him to enjoy all the powers and prerogatives of a minister.

As has been noted, approximately one-third of the seventy-five new ministers who served in the colonies between 1714 and 1776 did not attend a university but received their theological training in the colonies, primarily through self-study and private tutoring, a practice for which there were several precedents. The mother church in the Netherlands had occasionally ordained such persons, especially after the Reformation when there was a shortage of pastors. The Church Order drawn up by the great Synod of Dort of 1618–1619 gave approval to the practice, providing certain safeguards were taken. These included the requirement that a ministerial candidate follow a prescribed course of study in lieu of attending a university and that the examination and ordination for the ministry take place before a committee approved by a classis. Even in the New Netherlands period, there was already at least one minister, Johannes Backerus, whose formal theological education had been limited to some private study under a local minister. It should also be noted that the training for two other “learned” professions in the colonies, namely, law and medicine, was often carried on in the offices of practicing lawyers and doctors. Why should the same standard not apply to ministers?

Despite these precedents, private tutoring in the colonies of persons who were interested in the ministry was rare for many years. In part, this was because of the strong tradition existing in Dutch Reformed circles for a learned ministry. The practice was also uncommon because of the requirement that a ministerial candidate had to be examined by a classical committee and until about 1740, this generally meant the Classis of Amsterdam for
the American colonies. On only a few occasions was permission granted for a committee of colonial ministers to examine and ordain a candidate. About 1740, some colonial ministers did finally create a classis of their own but it had at best a quasi-legality and the status of the candidates it examined and ordained remained for a time in doubt. As a consequence, if a pre-ministerial student ultimately had to go to the expense of going to the Netherlands for his examination and ordination, it seemed logical that he might as well get his theological education there as well.

In due time, however, private tutoring came to be more accepted in the colonies, especially as the assembly of colonial ministers increasingly took on the trappings of a legitimate classis. In all, perhaps about a dozen and a half colonial ministers served as tutors, several of whom were themselves the product of the tutorial system and had received ordination in the colonies. Ministers who undertook this task did so on their own initiative and in the spirit of Christian service and not for monetary gain, although some financial remuneration was usually involved. Some tutors probably never had more than a total of one or two students, but others had several. John Henry Goetschius, for example, a pastor in Queens County, Long Island and later at Hackensack and Schraalenberg, New Jersey, taught more than a dozen during his career.

In several instances, a student moved around, studying under several tutors. This is indicated in a letter of 1746 to the Classis of Amsterdam from the Reverend Gerardus Haeghoort, who served several churches in New Jersey from 1731 to 1776, requesting permission for himself and several other pastors to examine Benjamin Vanderlinde. According to the letter, Vanderlinde had studied two years under the Reverend Peter Henry Dorsius in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, two years under Goetschius on Long Island (concentrating primarily on Latin and Greek), and for the year prior to the examination he had been studying Hebrew under Haeghoort. That the practice of studying under several tutors was not uncommon is also shown in a letter written that same year to the Classis of Amsterdam by two ministers of New York City, asking permission to examine and ordain Johannes Leydt. Classis was told that the latter had studied for some years under John Freelinghuyzen of Raritan, New Jersey, then under Goetschius, and for the last year and a half under the New York ministers. The communication concludes with the following statement: "We can say with all freedom in regard to this young man, that he is so far advanced that he can understand a Latin author, can help himself with Hebrew and Greek, and is reasonably well-versed in theology".

The above letters indicate that candidates for the ministry studying under tutors were taught virtually the same subjects as would be found in a university curriculum. This was necessary as all candidates for the ministry, whether they were university graduates or the products of the tutorial system, had to undergo the same examinations for ordination. It also made no difference if the examination took place in the Netherlands or in the colonies. Thus, a resolution of a committee of ministers meeting in New York in September 1747 declared: "No student shall undergo the preparatory examination except in a regular systematic manner, not only upon theology, but also upon the original languages of the Bible, as is commonly done in the Rev. Classis of the Netherlands." The similarity of the examinations is also evident in the records concerning the peremptory examination in New York of candidate David Marinus on 21 September 1752:

The Examinatores, proceeding to the examination of the candidate . . . first required him to ascend the pulpit and preach from I Cor. xii, 3. He was then examined in Hebrew and Greek and in Divinity.

There were both advantages and disadvantages in the tutorial system as compared to formal university training. In the former, student-teacher relations were closer, and students were probably obliged to do more independent thinking. But the greatest advantage was in studying under someone who had first-hand acquaintance with the unique problems of colonial preaching, instead of in a university 3000 miles across the ocean, where they did not have the least idea about the conditions a young preacher had to face in America. In this respect, it should be noted that one of the strongest arguments made by colonial preachers for the right to have their own classis was that too many of the European-trained ministers sent to America were unprepared to face these unique conditions and soon returned to the fatherland.

But there were disadvantages to the tutorial system. For the tutor, teaching was a sideline, and his numerous pastoral duties sometimes prevented him from devoting sufficient time to his students. Another disadvantage was in the number of books available for candidates to read, as most ministerial libraries in the colonies were small. Also lacking in the tutorial system was the stimulus that could be sparked by discussions carried on among a large
body of students. Nor did tutorial students have the advantage of studying under specialists. By comparison, the great John H. Livingston, while a student at Utrecht from 1766 to 1769, was able to study theology under Gisbertus Bonnet and Greek under Rijklof van Goens, both highly respected in their fields. Livingston also had specialists as instructors in Hebrew and biblical criticism. When he had the time, he further broadened his education by “sitting in” on lectures on chemistry and biology.

Among both university trained ministers and those who received their theological training from a tutor there was naturally some diversity. Differences resulted in part from the kind of pre-professional training the candidates had received and because of their varied innate abilities. But diversity also resulted from the personality differences and predilections of their teachers, and these could vary among university professors as much as they could among private tutors. Some teachers were more doctrinal, while others were more evangelical in their approach to theological questions. There were also those who placed more emphasis on one subject than another, and some encouraged more independent thinking.9

In addition to ordained ministers, there were also lay preachers serving the spiritual needs of the people. Indeed, two had already arrived in New Netherland before the colony’s first ordained minister arrived in 1628. Initially, they were usually referred to as ziekentroosters, meaning “comforters of the sick.” This position had become popular in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century in response to the need for persons to assist ministers, who were in short supply, in visiting the sick—hence the name ziekentrooster.10 With the passage of time, ziekentroosters were attached to hospitals, orphanages, poor houses, the army and navy, and the merchant fleets of the West and East India Companies. Meantime, their duties expanded to include leading the people in prayers every morning and evening before meals, reading a few chapters from Scripture and perhaps a sermon from an approved book of sermons on Sundays, directing the people in singing the Psalms (which resulted in their sometimes being called voorsangers, or “foresingers”), and instructing the youth in the Heidelberg Catechism. During the seventeenth century, they were frequently sent overseas because of the shortage of pastors and because colonial settlements often consisted of only a few families. In view of their varied responsibilities, the ziekentroosters serving overseas can legitimately be referred to as lay preachers.

The important role the lay preachers played as an adjunct to ordained ministers in the American colonies therefore requires that some note be taken of their training and education. A person interested in going overseas to serve as a lay preacher made his wishes known to his local consistory. After a preliminary investigation, he was examined by a committee of ministers. On this occasion, he was expected to show a good knowledge of the Bible, be able to read and write well, and have a good voice for leading the people in singing the Psalms. He might also be asked to give a demonstration of how he would go about comforting someone who was seriously ill.

The training of a lay preacher was, of course, much less rigorous than that required for someone contemplating the career of an ordained minister. A lay minister was expected to have at least an elementary education and to have studied certain basic works. One of the most useful was Den Siecken Troost; Twelk is een onderwysinge inden gheloove, ende wech der salicheyt; om ghewillichlick te sterven, which translates as “The Consolation of the Sick; Which is an Instruction in the Faith and the Way of Salvation to Prepare Believers to Die willingly.”

Very doctrinal in some places, it describes man’s total depravity and inability to save himself; only through belief in Christ can he be delivered from the cares of this world and be victorious over death. Commonly referred to by the shortened title of Ziekentroost, it was written by the Reverend Cornelis van Hille in 1571. It soon went through several editions and was frequently bound with such works as the New Testament, the Psalms, and the Heidelberg Catechism. all of which made it a valuable reference work for lay preachers. The fact that the Ziekentroost appeared in the first two English editions published in America (1793 and 1815) of the liturgy of the Dutch Reformed Church indicates that ordained ministers also found it helpful.

Another useful work for lay preachers was the Huys-hoek, a Dutch translation of a collection of sermons written in 1577 by the Swiss reformer, Heinrich Bullinger, on a variety of subjects, including the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, and the sacraments. The Reverend Johannes Uytebogaer, a distinguished preacher in the Netherlands of ca. 1600 stated it was read in more Dutch homes in the sixteenth century than any other book except the Bible.11

In the colonies, the office of lay preacher frequently included that of the schoolmaster. This is clearly evident
in the instructions given to Gerrit van Wagenen on his appointment in 1733 to a position in the Garden Street Dutch Reformed Church in New York City. The instructions stated that he was to serve as “Clerk and Foresinger and also to be the Visitor of the Sick for the whole congregation, and to keep school in the Low Dutch language, and finally to keep the books of the Elders, Deacons and Church Masters.” Such varied duties were still commonplace at the close of the colonial period. Thus when Anthony Welp was appointed schoolmaster in 1773 by the Dutch Reformed citizens of Flatbush, Long Island, he was expected to devote one afternoon each week to catechizing the children and on Sundays to “attend to the church services, such as reading and singing,” and assist at burials.

It is difficult to evaluate the quality of work performed by colonial ministers and lay preachers simply on the basis of the training they received. The historian can find significant achievements among those who were university trained as well as among those who received little formal education. Jonas Michaelius, a graduate of Leiden University and the first Dutch Reformed minister to serve in the colonies, would have to be included among the former group. His biographer wrote of him:
We may conclude that Michaelis was a man of culture and learning. He not only speaks and writes his mother tongue well but he administers the Lord's Supper to Walloons in the French language. He also uses Greek words, and he is able to write long letters in praiseworthy Latin.

Henry Selyns, who attended the Universities of Leiden and Utrecht and served churches in Brooklyn from 1660 to 1664 and New York from 1682 to 1710, was even more of a linguist and classical scholar. Similar compliments can be paid to some of the ministers serving in the later colonial period. Thus, Cornelis van Santvoord, who studied at Leiden and served at Staten Island from 1718 to 1742 and at Schenectady from 1742 to 1752, preached in both Dutch and French and translated several Dutch works into English. And Eilardus Westerlo, a graduate of the University of Groningen and minister at Albany from 1760 to 1790, was a classical scholar who could write ably in Greek and Latin as well as Hebrew. Dr. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College and a well-known classicist, once reported that Westerlo "wrote Latin of a greater purity than any man he had ever known."\(^1\)

But the competence of a minister depended on more than his ability "to turn a neat Latin phrase." There were several pastors who lacked that ability, having been largely self-taught, but were as successful as the most educated minister in the matter of winning souls, which, in the final analysis, it may be argued, was the primary function of the ministry. Guiliam Bertholf was one such person. Born in the Netherlands of humble background, Bertholf, who was trained as a cooper, came to America in 1683 with his wife and three children. He soon located in New Jersey where he showed considerable talent as a lay preacher. His hearers encouraged him to return to the Netherlands to seek ordination, which he did, wisely by-passing the staid Classis of Amsterdam, which likely would have denied him ordination, and going instead to the more evangelical-minded Classis of Walcheren. From the time of his return to America in 1694 until his death in 1724, he served as an itinerant preacher, founding a number of churches in New Jersey as well as a few in New York. As one writer said of him:

Through forest and stream, over rugged hills and broad plains, up quiet valleys, wherever a group of Dutchmen had cleared for themselves homes in the wilderness, he went comforting the sick and troubled, baptizing children, bringing into the hard and lonely lives of the settlers the cheer of his kindly presence and longed-for news of distant relatives and friends.

In brief, Bertholf's place in the annals of the colonial Dutch Church is fully as significant as that of his most sophisticated colleagues.

The story of Bernardus Freeman is similar. Born in Westphalia and trained as a tailor, he developed an urge to become a preacher, but was denied ordination by the Classis of Amsterdam. Indeed, that body informed him he had no ability for his craft as a tailor and even "less for that demanded of a pastor." Undaunted, Freeman went to the Classis of Lingen in Germany, a short distance from the Dutch border, where he secured ordination and soon left for America. He served with distinction at Schenectady from 1700 to 1705 and on Long Island from 1705 to 1741. He is best remembered today for his missionary labors among the Indians while serving at Schenectady and for his translation of several religious works into the Mohawk tongue. He also had a collection of sermons published in the Netherlands.

On the other hand, there were ministers among both groups—those who had considerable formal education and those who were largely self-taught who would have to be considered average and even some who would have to be classified as poor. There were also those who were guilty of drunkenness, slander, having forged credentials, and not being able to get along with their congregations. Fortunately, their numbers were small.
Most Dutch preachers were content with their situations, and the people that they served were in turn satisfied with them. It was not uncommon for them to spend most of their ministerial lives at the same parish. For example, Gideon Schaats remained at Albany for forty-two years (1652–1694); Petrus Vas served Kingston for forty-six years (1710–1756); and Gualtherus Du Bois stayed at New York for fifty-two years (1699–1751). It is also striking to note the degree to which ministers served long past what is now considered the standard retirement age. Thus, Vincentius Antonides and Bernardus Freeman on Long Island were still officiating at ages seventy-three and seventy-eight. Gualtherus Du Bois was planning a visit to pastorless Bergen, New Jersey, to preach and administer the sacraments at the time of his death in 1751 at age eighty. Benjamin Du Bois of Freehold and Middletown, New Jersey, remained active until age eighty-eight. But the record was no doubt set by Petrus Vas who performed occasional duties at Kingston until within a short time before his death at ninety-six.

The Dutch Reformed Church, today called the Reformed Church in America (the name adopted in 1867), owes a debt of gratitude to the ministers of the colonial period who, under trying circumstances, gave unselfishly of their time and effort in looking after the spiritual needs of the people. This applies equally to learned and scholarly ministers like Henry Selyns and to those who were largely self-taught like Guiliam Bertholf. It also applies to humble lay preachers like Sebastian Jansen Krol and Jan Huyck, the first ziekenroosters to serve in the colonies.

In 1900, a plaque was erected in honor of Krol and Huyck and placed in the sanctuary of the Middle Collegiate (Dutch) Church in New York. The inscription tells us that it was erected in their memory as "officers of the established church of the Netherlands" for coming "hither to perform their sacred office of ministering to the people and consoling the sick." It concludes with several texts from scripture, including the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" and "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." These words would be equally appropriate for the many dozens of preachers who followed Krol and Huyck.
Notes

1 Backerus appeared before the Classis of Amsterdam on six occasions over a two-year period before he was finally ordained into the ministry.


5 Ecclesiastical Records, IV: 2937.

6 Ibid., 2976.

7 Ibid., V: 3289.

8 But there were exceptions. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College, wrote in his diary for September 27, 1786, about his having “viewed” the “learned Library of I judge 1000 to 1200 Volumes” of the Reverend Johannes Ritzema, then pastor at Kinderhook, New York. Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), III: 240.

9 Theological differences existing among professors in the Netherlands and among ministers on both sides of the Atlantic are discussed in James Tanis, Dutch Calvinistic Pietism in the Middle Colonies: A Study in the Life and Theology of Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967).


12 As quoted in Dunshee, History of the School of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, 43.


16 Tercentenary Committee on Research, Tercentenary Studies 1928: Reformed Church in America, A Record of Beginnings (n.p.: Published by the Church, 1928), 193.
Gerrit Van Wagenen, ziekenrooster in New York 1733.
From Henry Dunshoe, History of the School of the Collegiate
Reformed Dutch Church in the City of New York from 1633 to 1883
De Schoolmeester.
Maakt medecyn, Niet tot fenyen.

Door Letterkonst, soo hoog verheeven,
Is ons veel nut en heyl gegeeven,
Dat ons de Weg ten heemel roond.
Maar, om het Schuim van't Goud te scheide
Is't misbruick deesser kunst te myde
Op dat de Wysheid ons bekroond.