Navigating Reformed Identity in the Rural Dutch Republic

Kyle Dieleman

Communities, Belief, and Piety

Through an examination of Dutch Reformed church records and theological texts, Kyle Dieleman explores the local dynamics of religious life in the early modern Dutch Republic. The book argues that within the religiously plural setting of the Dutch Republic church officials used a variety of means to establish a Reformed identity in their communities. As such, the book explores the topics of church orders, elders and deacons, intra-confessional and inter-confessional conflicts, and Sabbath observance as local means by which small, rural communities negotiated and experienced their religious lives. In exploring rural Dutch Reformed congregations, the book examines the complicated relationships between theology and practice and 'lay' and 'elite' religion and highlights challenges rural churches faced. As they faced these issues, Dieleman demonstrates that local congregations exercised agency within their lived religious experiences as they sought unique ways to navigate their own Reformed identity within their small, rural communities.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Kyle Dieleman serves as Associate Professor of Theology at Dordt University. Dr. Dieleman earned his Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the University of Iowa and served as Assistant and Associate Professor of History at Trinity Christian College from 2017-2023. His research in the Protestant Reformations, especially in the Low Countries, has resulted in multiple articles and chapter contributions as well as his first book, entitled The Battle for the Sabbath in the Dutch Reformation: Devotion or Desecration?, which was published in 2019.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction
“Establishing Order: National, Provincial, and Local Church Orders “Let all things be done with decency and order.””
“Establishing Authority: Electing Elders and Deacons” |
“Establishing Confessional Identity: An “Honest Citizen, Even Though a Catholic””
“Establishing Belief and Practice: Rural Approaches to Sabbath Observance”
“Conclusion: Establishing and Navigating Reformed Identity in the Rural Low Countries”
Bibliography