We turn in this lecture to the subject of the Dutch Reformation. And in so doing, we turn to another case of the Reformation coming to a difficult country facing difficult problems and coming to quite a distinctive outcome. And so it’s with some interest we turn to this subject of the Dutch Reformation. When we talk about the Netherlands, we mean by that in the sixteenth-century context the area of Europe that today would be known as the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and a little of northwestern France. So it’s an area of some size and was quite important in the early sixteenth century. It was important as an area of commerce and trade, an area of textile production, and therefore an area of a good deal of wealth. It was also involved in trade. The ports of Antwerp and Amsterdam were significant trading ports. And so the Netherlands was important to Europe because it was an important economic center of activity.

What we want to look at then is both the political and ecclesiastical or religious history of the Netherlands in this period. Because the history of the Netherlands in the sixteenth and on into the early seventeenth century is the history of an intimately intertwined political and religious situation where both the state and the church are being constructed in the midst of struggle and in the midst of difficulty, and so we want to take a look at how that happened and what were the results of it.

Let’s look first then at the situation in the state in the sixteenth century. The Netherlands as an area were composed of seventeen provinces, and these provinces had some common history. They had some sense of belonging to one another, but in reality they also had a very large measure of a sense of independence. In a sense I guess we could say it was a little like the American colonies before the Revolutionary War. They had some common background. They had some elements of things that bound them together, but they also had a very profound sense that they were members of the commonwealth of Massachusetts or that they
were Virginians. They had a sense of their own local history, their own local political independence. And even though in the early part of the sixteenth century Charles V was their sovereign (Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor) he did not rule them as the Holy Roman emperor, nor did he rule them as the king of Spain, but he ruled them because he was installed as the count of the province of Holland or the count of the province of Zeeland or the duke of the province of Gelderland so that in each of these provinces Charles V was installed as the local sovereign. And that reinforced the sense of these provinces that they were significantly independent, that they had a history of liberty of action, a measure of autonomy that they jealously guarded. The Netherlands were not even united linguistically. In the north it was a form of Dutch that was spoken, and in the south it was French that was spoken. And if you follow the history of Belgium at all today know that there continues to be the difficulties and tensions in the kingdom of Belgium over the language that is spoken. There are still Dutch and French speakers there, and they often have difficulty with one another.

What was the main focus of their union (their unitedness) was the fact that they sent representatives to a States General, a very small and select sort of parliament in which the common interests of the provinces were debated and in which for important matters a unanimous vote was required. And usually that States General served as an advisory panel to the monarch and in the years before the outbreak of war and difficulty worked well as an advisory manifestation of the unities of the peoples. Charles V was a popular sovereign in the Netherlands. He had spent time living there. He knew the people. The people knew him, and he had a measure of respect for their ancient liberties. And even though when Protestantism began to spread in the Netherlands and Charles took strong measures against the spread of Protestantism and introduced a fair measure of persecution, with most people he remained popular. Perhaps in part that was because the earliest manifestations of Protestantism on a widespread scale in the Netherlands was Anabaptism, and many people felt that Anabaptism should be suppressed because it was regarded as a dangerous and anarchistic movement.

In 1555 Charles V abdicated as the sovereign of the Netherlands, and his authority passed to his son, Philip II of Spain. This succession was a very important one in Dutch history because Philip was not well acquainted with the Netherlands. He had not spent much time there. He did not speak any of the local
languages. He spoke only Spanish. And it was a situation where Philip could quickly come to be perceived as a foreign oppressor, as some kind of foreign tyrant who did not understand the Dutch or understand their rights and liberties. And this is precisely what did happen very quickly after Philip came to the throne. Philip, like many monarchs in Europe in the sixteenth century, wanted to try to rationalize and centralize government. And as he looked at the Netherlands, he saw these seventeen provinces each with their little different ways of doing things, and he thought that there could be great improvement reached by finding ways of streamlining the government. And he had several suggestions. He wanted to see changes in the church. He wanted to see the bishoprics of the church made more numerous and more effective to gain control of the religion on a local level and to help stop the spread of Protestantism. He wanted to increase the level of persecution so that Protestantism could be stamped out. He wanted to make better advantage of the economic wealth of the Netherlands for the royal coffers by increasing taxation. And so he pursued a pattern of change that began to alienate a lot of people. The changes in the church alienated many common people; particularly the change in the number of bishops alienated some of the nobility who were used to their younger sons becoming bishops in the church.

Philip soon found himself evoking a lot of resistance and a lot of animosity for the changes he wanted to introduce. It began to be widely felt that Philip was insensitive to the traditional liberties and prerogatives of the Netherland people. One serious manifestation of this unrest occurred in 1566 with what came to be known as the great wave of iconoclasm that swept the country. Mobs throughout the country organized and began to break into churches and to throw down statues. In some places priests were beaten up. This was a kind of popular surge of rage and antagonism toward Philip and toward what was regarded as his increasingly tyrannical rule. Philip responded with a rather iron hand and in 1567 sent to the Netherlands the man known in Dutch history as the iron duke, the Duke of Alba, who was supposed to maintain peace with Spanish troops. The extensive presence of Spanish troops in the Netherlands only reinforced the notion that the Dutch were being oppressed by a foreign monarch and led to further unhappiness and further desire to resist and to change the situation.

This unrest finally manifested itself in 1572 with the beginning of a revolt against Spain. There had been some skirmishes
beforehand, and no one in 1572 knew that this was the decisive outbreak of revolt, but in fact the resistance that was initiated in 1572 in the Netherlands began what is known in history as the Eighty Years’ War, a war that dragged on and on, a war of resistance of the Dutch against Spain, and a war which ultimately led to the independence of the Netherlands from Spain. The great leader to emerge in this resistance was William of Orange. William, who was of German descent, had been raised in the principality of Nassau in Germany, had great holdings in the Netherlands, and was one of great noblemen therefore of the Netherlands. His title William Prince of Orange derived from a principality that he held in France. And so, like many of the nobility of Europe who had far-flung estates and principalities they were connected to, William Prince of Orange then was a German who took his title from a French kingdom, but he became sort of the George Washington of the Netherlands and was indeed one of the remarkable political leaders of the sixteenth century. He was a man of a great deal of compassion and tolerance in a rather intolerant age. He also seems to have had quite a genuine religious commitment, not always following the advice of his militant Calvinist advisors or the militant Calvinist clergy, but a man who seems genuinely to have been devoted to the church and to the Protestant faith.

As the revolt against Philip broke out, William wanted to make the claims of the revolt very clear. In the early days, William insisted that all the revolt was about was to restore the ancient privileges of the Netherlands. That is, the argument was presented that Philip was not keeping his promises to his subjects. He was not enforcing the laws but was changing the law illegitimately contrary to his coronation vows and that therefore Philip was behaving as a tyrant. And so William declared, leading many of the nobility and leading the people [to believe] that what was necessary was to end that tyranny and to restore the ancient liberties. William felt that such a revolt could succeed only if all of the nobility remained united behind that great theme of restoring ancient liberties. And that became William’s great hope, that all the nobility could remain united. William saw as the greatest threat to that union the religious divisions in the Netherlands. Some of the nobility were Protestants and some were Roman Catholic. And William feared that the revolt against Spain could easily become a sort of Protestant crusade against Spanish Catholicism. And he feared that if that happened, the unity of the nobility would be broken and that the war would almost certainly be lost. In fact most people thought that the war would certainly be lost anyway. Spain was regarded in the 1570s as the most powerful nation in
the world from a European perspective. Everyone believed that surely these Dutch rebels would soon and effectively be put down and crushed by Philip.

And so there was a sense that it was hopeless what these Dutch were undertaking. Even many of the leaders of the revolt hoped that maybe by troubling Philip they could bring him to the negotiating table, but few had any active hope of being able to defeat Philip and the great forces of Spain. William sensed that the only hope of accomplishing that at all was if the nobility would remain united in their opposition. The likelihood of keeping the nobility united was not very good. The nobility were internally divided by jealousies, and as the Protestant element of the leadership of the revolt became more and more prominent, it soon became obvious that the Roman Catholic nobility would be alienated. And in the course of the war, Philip came up with a number of inducements to lead Roman Catholic noblemen to desert the revolt and to return to him. And so William had before him great problems, the problem of convincing his staunch Protestant supporters that it was not wise to make this a war of religion. The staunch Protestants wanted to throw the Roman Catholics out and wanted a Protestant Netherlands. And they sometimes complained that William was not committed enough to the great Protestant cause.

William also recognized that if there was to be any hope of success, the Netherlands needed allies. And so the Netherlands began to cast about for allies. They looked to Germany, where of course much of William’s family was still to be found, and appealed to the German Protestant princes to help. But most of the German Protestant princes were Lutheran, and they declared a willingness to help only if the Protestants in the Netherlands would express their commitment to Lutheranism. But most of the Protestants in the Netherlands were not Lutherans. They were Calvinists and so were unwilling to make that promise, and so most of the German princes were unwilling to provide any help.

William with his French connection then looked to France and hoped that perhaps there in France there might be some help and hope for alliance. After all, Spain was a great traditional enemy of France, and Protestantism was strong at court. And so William wrote to Gaspard de Coligny, the great French leader we’ve talked a little bit about before. And in fact de Coligny had permission from the king of France to lead an army to oppose Spain and to try to help the Dutch in their resistance. That army was due to march north right after the wedding of Henry of Navarre in August of
1572. But as you remember, in August of 1572 Coligny and the cream of the French Protestant leadership was massacred and with it the possibility of an army from France coming to the aid of the Dutch.

William then turned to England and hoped that the British Queen Elizabeth, being a Protestant, being an antagonist of Spain would see the value of helping the Dutch. And Elizabeth did make a number of promises to the Dutch. She did encourage the Dutch. But it seemed that Elizabeth approached the subject this way: Elizabeth reasoned, “The longer the Dutch fight the Spanish, the less time and energy the Spanish have to worry about England.” And therefore Elizabeth felt, If I can encourage the Dutch to keep fighting, that’s good for England. But, Elizabeth thought, I know that these Dutch are eventually going to lose. They can’t possibly win out against the forces of Spain. And so I don’t want to get too involved. I don’t want to get Spain any more angry at me than they already are. So Elizabeth sent a lot of words of encouragement, and she sent a little bit of money and fewer troops hoping thereby to keep the Dutch going. She didn’t want the Dutch resistance to collapse, but she didn’t want to get too drawn in either. This made life extremely difficult for William, and yet he battled on; and the fortunes of war waxed and waned.

There were remarkable stories that emerged out of this intermittent warfare. It was a warfare that focused very much on cities. Much of the Dutch wealth and Dutch population was focused in cities and walled cities. And so many of the battles were fought in terms of besieging cities. At an crucial point in the war in 1574, the Spanish were besieging the city of Leiden in the middle of the province of Holland. And this was a most important siege because had the Spanish succeeded in taking Leiden, they might have been able to cut the province of Holland in two and divide the resistance and be able to break up the resistance in that way. And so William of Orange sent pleas to Leiden to hold out, and the suffering of the population in Leiden was tremendous. There was a great food shortage, and people were starving. And the difficulty was extreme. William labored to find a way to come to the aid of those at Leiden. He tried to find a way to raise an army to lift the siege. But it just didn’t seem possible.

And finally William and his advisors decided that the one thing they could do was to break the dykes. Much of the Netherlands was below sea level, had been reclaimed from the sea and was protected by great dykes that kept out the sea. And so they
smashed the dykes and still had to wait a couple of days for the wind to change. But finally the wind changed and began to blow the sea in across the lowlands. And the Spanish army woke up to find itself ankle-deep and then knee-deep in water as the sea began to raise around the city of Leiden. And then they looked up to see the Dutch navy in their very flat-bottomed boats beginning to sail in and to confront the Spanish army. And the Spanish army was well-equipped and familiar with confronting other armies, but they were not used to fighting a navy. And so the siege was lifted, and the Spanish withdrew. It’s one of the great heroic tales of the Dutch resistance about how the Dutch navy lifted the siege of the Spanish army around Leiden.

This lifting of the siege, however, did not by any means end the war. And as William found the struggle ongoing and the problems of unity growing, he decided in 1579 to try to organize a clear, defensive pact among the provinces. In 1579 then he drew up a document entitled The Union of Utrecht. Initially this Union of Utrecht was signed by the seven northern provinces. It had not been William’s intention at all to have this Union of Utrecht undermine the unity of the whole country’s resistance to Spain, but that was the result of it. The southern provinces decided not to sign and join the Union of Utrecht, not to enter in clearly to that defensive compact, and so the Netherlands began to find itself divided. And the division is the division that is still to be seen between the Netherlands and Belgium today. That is, as time went on, it became increasingly clear that Spain was likely to be able to hold the southern part of the Netherlands but was unable to capture the northern part of the Netherlands. And the States General of the northern provinces in effect threw off the sovereignty of Philip and began to function as if they possessed the sovereignty in their own hands.

It meant that gradually the seven northern provinces that called themselves “the united provinces”; gradually those provinces began to function as a republic. It had never been the intention of the Netherlands to found a republic. It had just sort of happened. And indeed for a while, the northern provinces tried to find a sovereign. They asked William of Orange of he’d be their sovereign, and he said no. He didn’t want to go down in history as a man who had led the resistance against Philip only for his own selfish interests, and so he refused. And they asked Queen Elizabeth of England if she would be their sovereign. And she refused because she was sure the Dutch would lose, and she didn’t want to be left a sovereign of a bunch of losers. And they
finally, for a time, experimented with a younger French prince. That didn't work out very well, and so in due course and sort of surprising to themselves, they found themselves a republic. And the republic of the united provinces would last down till late in the eighteenth century when finally in the Napoleonic era it was overrun by the forces of Napoleon.

And so we have rather interestingly in the course of the sixteenth century the gradual emergence of a republic in the midst of a revolt against Spain. That republic determined to be rather decentralized and determined to honor the ancient liberties of the provinces. And so they continued to operate with this small States General functioning something like a parliament but representing the interests of each local province. And they continued to operate with the rule that whatever important measures were undertaken, they had to be approved unanimously. William of Orange continued to be the great leader of the armed forces and the great advisor to the government until his cruel assassination in 1584.

Philip of Spain knew that William was the heart and soul of the resistance. And so he had offered a great reward to anyone who would assassinate William. And a young Spaniard had taken up that challenge and had traveled to the Netherlands and had traveled to the city of Delft where William was in residence. And finding himself in the city without any money, he went to William. William at that time lived in what was known as a palace, although it was a fairly humble building by the standards of Europe's palaces. William walked freely through the streets even though there had been an assassination attempt on him earlier. This young Spaniard went up to William and asked if William could give him some money because he was poor and hungry. William, out of the kindness of his heart, gave him some money. And that young man took that money and went out and bought pistols and returned later and shot William down in his own front hall in the palace in Delft. If you ever go to Delft, you can go and visit that palace and still see the bullet holes in the walls where they passed through William's body. The loss of William was a great calamity, and it seemed to seal the division of the Netherlands into a northern and southern realm.

Shortly after William's assassination, the city of Antwerp was lost by the northern troops, and that helped seal the division of the country into two.
After the death of William, a man who gradually emerged as the prime executive if you will of the Netherlands was a man by the name of Jan van Oldenbarnevelt. He was a man of considerable administrative and diplomatic ability. He occupied the formal position of advocate of Holland, which meant that he was the legal advisor to the Holland delegation to the States General. But he by the force of his personality and talents was the man who kept things going and kept things organized and kept the government moving and the resistance of the war intact. In due course, another important leader began to emerge in the Netherlands. And this was the son of William of Orange, a young man by the name of Maurice. Maurice became an effective general, an effective commander of the Dutch forces. And because he was William's son and because he was an effective general, he became a very popular leader and figure in the Dutch scene. He occupied the office of stadhouder. Now stadhouder was a traditional office with a long history in the Netherlands. And what the stadhouder had traditionally been was the official representative of the monarch, a kind of viceroy. And so the position at one time long ago had been a very important and powerful position. But in William’s day, it had become rather ceremonial. William had been stadhouder of several provinces, and Maurice succeeded him as stadhouder. Maurice, therefore, had a kind of public visibility and had an office that had a lot of dignity attached to it. But what exactly is the function of the representative of a monarch in a republic? That was never really very cleared up.

And so we have two men emerging as the real leaders and major influences in the Netherlands, but neither of them holds a clear constitutional office with claims to such power. And what we’re seeing in the instances of these two men then is the kind of gradual evolution of institutions in the Netherlands. And that evolution is not always very smooth or very clear. What is clear is that there was great potential for conflict if Oldenbarnevelt and Maurice began to develop different ideas. And by about the year 1600, they were beginning to develop different ideas. Oldenbarnevelt increasingly was pushing to find some way to end the war. Oldenbarnevelt represented particularly the interests of the merchants of Holland, and the merchants felt that this war had been going on too long, that the war was undermining trade in an unnecessary way.

And so Oldenbarnevelt became the leader of those who wanted to find some way out of this war.
Maurice on the other hand was convinced that the war ought to go on. He wanted to find a way to recapture the southern provinces. He didn’t think they should be given over to Spain. And he recognized that his own influence was largely related to the army, and if the war should end something of his own influence would also end. And so for a variety of reasons, he was eager to pursue the war policy of the Netherlands. In that regard, he had the support of a lot of the Calvinists, both the clergy and the people in the Netherlands, because they were unwilling to abandon the southern parts of the Netherlands to Roman Catholicism and felt that the struggle ought to go on until the southern part of the Netherlands was liberated and Protestantism could flourish there as well as in the north. And so we’ve looked in kind of overview form at the development of the Dutch state from its original rule by Charles in the early sixteenth century down to the time at which the northern state had functionally become independent and had become a republic in the course of the war years.

Now we want to switch over and look at the development of religion in the Netherlands in this same period. We’ve already made some reference to the religious realities and changes in the Netherlands, but we want to look at that in a more systematic way now. The first evidences of the Reformation in the Netherlands came very early. By 1523 two Lutheran martyrs were put to death in the Netherlands. And so at that very early stage of the Reformation we could see the message coming from Germany into the Netherlands and causing some to identify with the movement of Luther and the beginnings of the Protestant church. It is often said that the years 1520 to 1525 are the years of the Lutheran domination in the Reformation in the Netherlands, but that’s true only on one level. Lutheranism was never a widespread or popular movement in the Netherlands. It remained a rather small movement, but it does show that in those years 1520 to 1525 Protestantism was beginning first to manifest itself in the Netherlands.

The years 1525 to 1530 are often called the years of the Sacramentarians. This does not mean that the Lutherans disappeared, but it means that the most visible form of Protestantism was a movement known as Sacramentarianism. The Sacramentarians were also not a popular movement. It was a relatively small and limited movement, limited largely to an intellectual elite that focused their attention on the issue of the Lord’s Supper in particular. And they represented a position very much like that of Zwingli stressing the symbolic character of the...
Lord’s Supper. The first really popular expression of Protestantism in the Netherlands was the movement of Anabaptism. And that movement dominated the religious scene among Protestants in the Netherlands from 1530 till about 1540. These were the years of Melchior Hoffman and the experiment at Münster. And there was a lot of popular interest especially among common people in the Netherlands. These were the years when Menno Simons became prominent. And so the Anabaptist movement had a significant following in the Netherlands in that decade and bore the brunt of the imperial policy of persecution against Protestants.

In the early 1540s, we begin to see evidence of the growth of Calvinism in the Netherlands. And that growth seems to have begun in the southern French-speaking parts of the Netherlands, which is logical when we think about it. There was influence both from French-speaking Geneva and from French-speaking France in that region of the Netherlands. And so in the southern part of the Netherlands, Calvinism begins to grow first and indeed for a long time remains most dominant particularly in the provinces of Flanders and Brabant in the southern part of the Netherlands. It is certainly an irony that the part of the Netherlands that becomes Calvinist the earliest and has a rather widespread Calvinist following there is the part that’s ultimately lost to the Netherlands and is retained by Spain and by the Roman Catholic Church. The result is that many of the more southerly members of the Netherlands had to flee to the north where they could practice their religion in peace.

There’s been a great deal of debate about the character of this early Calvinism. Some have argued that this early Calvinism was a rather strict Genevan Calvinism. Others have argued that this Reformed movement was more tolerant, was more open-minded, was not as strict and as disciplined, and was not guided by the Genevan spirit as much. The reason for these divisions is that there seems to be some evidence on both sides of the question. And probably what this means is that in those days of persecution, in those days when the church was just first beginning to build and to grow there were different points of view. And there were some who were very much influenced by Calvin and by the Genevan model of the church and others who were more open-minded, perhaps more influenced by the Renaissance humanist spirit of Erasmus, who were not so eager to follow the strict teachings of Calvin. It does seem however that the majority, even in those early years of the church, were more strictly Calvinist in their outlook. Certainly the Belgic Confession prepared by Guido de
Brès in 1561 is a clearly Calvinist statement of faith and a strong statement of the Calvinist view of the church. Guido de Brès was martyred for his faith. Also the early interest and use of the Heidelberg Catechism in parts of the Netherlands, the catechism written in 1563, is another indication of commitment to rather clear and solid Calvinist points of view.

The first national synod of the Calvinistic churches in the Netherlands was held in 1571. It was held in the city of Emden actually outside of the Netherlands to be safe. And in that synod in 1571, although there was opposition, the synod did rule that all office bearers in the church should subscribe to the Belgic Confession. And so we see that while there is opposition, while there is resistance, the character of the church in its majority seems to have been rather determinedly Calvinistic. This position was reiterated at the third national synod at Middelburg in 1581. Whenever you get something reiterated, that probably means there is resistance as well as agreement. But it shows again that the majority of the church was committed to the kind of strict Calvinism expressed in the Belgic Confession.

The differences probably reflect the fact that in the midst of war and in the midst of persecution, in the midst of trying to build a new nation, it’s not very easy for the church to discipline itself. But in the 1580s and 1590s, the church in the Netherlands, the Protestant church, did take upon itself the task of becoming more disciplined and more regularized. Several ministers were deposed, accused of Pelagianism. And sometimes the state overruled the church and kept those ministers in their offices. Sometimes the state supported the rulings of the church councils. And what we see in this is a tension within the Dutch society as to how the church and state ought to relate to each other. And we can see two attitudes emerging, one of which we can call Erastian and the other we can call Calvinistic. The Erastian attitude toward the relationship of church and state is the attitude that was expressed by Zwingli in Zurich and came to be identified with a writer in Heidelberg by the name of Thomas Erastus. The Erastian position was that all of society is under God and under His Word, that all of society is obligated to be faithful to God and faithful to His Word, and that God has given particularly to the state the obligation to ensure that all of society would be faithful. And therefore the Erastian point of view says that the most important social institution is the state and that power ultimately resides in the hands of the state. The state, therefore, supervises the church. The church is under the state, and the church must take
leadership from the state even in matters of discipline. That is, that ultimately, the church can only recommend discipline, and the state must enforce it.

Now this was a point of view as I said that Zwingli shared in Zurich and that was adopted in numbers of parts of Europe. But it was a point of view that was rejected by Calvin and by the church in Geneva, which insisted that while it was true that all of society was under the Word, that God had in effect appointed two institutions that each had their own realm of responsibility directly under God. The state was one of those institutions, and the state did have the responsibility of maintaining order and peace and tranquility and that to the extent that the state was promoting order and justice, the church was under the state. But the church had been given by God a direct responsibility for Christian discipline. And the church, Calvin argued, was not subject to the state in the matter of spiritual discipline. And therefore the church ought to have independence to exercise discipline apart from the state.

That dispute, that disagreement within Calvinistic circles carried over also to the Netherlands. And in the Netherland there were those, particularly those closely associated with government, who adopted the Erastian point of view and said that it ought to be the state that makes ultimate decisions on matters even of spiritual discipline. But there were also, and most of the clergy and a lot of the people believed this, there were strong proponents of the Calvinist view of discipline and the relationship of church and state and said no, the church has to be free. The church has to be independent to exercise its own discipline even over ministers, and so this issue came up over and over again. Who really can control the discipline of the church? And although the majority of the church said the church ought to be free, the actual functioning meant that most of the time the church was under the control of the state.

The church in the Netherlands had been organized from early on into a series of assemblies. On the local level, the assembly was known as the consistory. The consistory governed the local congregation. The consistory was composed of the minister, the elders, and the deacons. Then there was a regional assembly to which ministers and elders were delegated from the consistories, and this regional assembly was known as the classis, somewhat like the presbytery in Presbyterian church government. Then a broader regional assembly took in the classes of a whole province or in the case of the province of Holland, there were two synods.
known as particular synods. Otherwise they were known as provincial synods so that the classes sent representatives to the particular or provincial synods. And then the church had believed that the churches occasionally ought to meet together in a national synod, that delegates from the provincial synods ought to be selected to come together to deal with national questions that affected all of the churches and that ought to be decided in national synods.

One of the issues though that began to divide the Erastians from the Calvinists on church government was the question who had a right to call a national synod. Who had a right to authorize a national synod? The Calvinists said, We had national synods even before the independence of the Netherlands began. We had national synods before the revolt against Spain broke out. And so we believe we ought to continue to be able to call, as a church, national synods. But others, the Erastians, said national synods can only be called by the government. And then they referred to article 13 of the Union of Utrecht, which was functioning as the constitution of the united provinces, and they said, Look what article 13 of the Union of Utrecht says. It says that important matters can be decided only by a unanimous vote of the provinces and that particularly matters of religion are under the control of the provinces. And so they argued a national synod can be held only when you have a unanimous vote in the States General of the country. And so these tensions between the Erastians and the Calvinists and the notion of church and state would continue to cause problems in the Dutch Reformation. We’ll go on looking at the Dutch Reformation next time.