

CHAPTER VI

The Roman Catholic Church's Effort to Instill Respectability

Introduction

At the time of emancipation the Roman Catholic Church was a primary institution exercising authority and control over the lives of Afro-Curaçaoans. As previously stated, after Niewindt's arrival in 1824 on the island the Church's missionary efforts broadened. By the mid-nineteenth century the Church had successfully established its position as a driving force in the lives of the enslaved and the freed black population. As can be seen in Table 6.1, in 1860, three years before emancipation, the number of people baptized as Roman Catholics on Curaçao, both enslaved and freed, was already over 16,000, constituting around 85 per cent of the total population.¹

Table 6.1 Total Number of Baptisms, First Communions and Marriages in 1860

Parish	Total Catholics	Baptism	First Communion	Marriage
Santa Ana	9,000	315	2,371	26
Santa Rosa	3,300	135	1,056	24
Santa Maria	2,600	68	690	17
Sint Jozef	2,700	78	640	9
Sint Wilibrordus	1,000	64	218	2
Sint Petrus	1,000	47	234	4
Total	16,900	707	5,209	82

Source: Kerkelijke Courant, 'Katholieke Nederlandsche stemmen over godsdienst, staat-, geschied- en letterkunde', no. 291, vol. 28, 26-7-1862

The Church thus gained a firm basis in island society, with the congregations worshipping at six churches spread across the island, led by fourteen priests and assistant priests.²

The Church functioned on two levels. One was the conversion of 'heathens' and people of other religious beliefs. The other was teaching Roman Catholic doctrine and rituals, which also entailed a change in the mindset of those converted. The Church endeavoured to adapt the values, norms and attitudes of blacks, believing these to be remnants of African cultures and of the slave system. This, they subsumed under the concept of civilization.

Over time, the Roman Catholic Church evaluated its effort to civilize not only upon its successes but also on the hardship, doubt and frustration encountered while fulfilling its mission. There is little written information regarding the response of the Afro-Curaçaoans to the missionary work. In which ways were they susceptible to this conversion? What role did Catholicism play in their identity-formation and self-perception?

In this Chapter I will discuss the ways in which the Roman Catholic Church influenced the behaviour patterns of Afro-Curaçaoans following emancipation. In the first section I will focus on how the Church used the concept of 'civilization' to implement its missionary work, and how this was based on preconceived ideas and images regarding Afro-Curaçaoans. I will then give an overview of the strategies employed by the Church to control the social life Afro-Curaçaoans. Finally, I will look at how Church and Afro-Curaçaoans interacted and I will analyse the various ways in which the latter responded to the different forms of control introduced by the Church.

Respectability from a Missionary Perspective

After 1863 the Roman Catholic Church continued its missionary activities among Afro-Curaçaoans. Emancipation actually facilitated this task. The Afro-Curaçaoans' new freedom gave them the opportunity to become more active in Church matters. In 1862 the priest B.Th.J. Frederiks expanded on this in a letter, writing that 'no doubt, there will be great opportunities ahead for our Holy religion, due to our emancipation of the enslaved. May God provide sufficient priests to teach them and to embrace a divine life, because most of them are ignorant, and as a result live an immoral life.'³ In his letter dated 20 June 1863, to be read aloud to the freedpeople, the then vicar apostolic Kistemaker set out this message and related that 'no longer could they use their position as enslaved as an excuse for non participation in Church activities'.⁴

In the time leading up to emancipation the colonial government began to recognize the work of the Roman Catholic missionaries: it appealed to the Church to help maintain public order among the soon to be freed population (Latour 1945:68). The members of the elite class became preoccupied with this change in the social order, believing that blacks were volatile and would be prone to violence once freed. The Church, however, was of a different opinion, as Kistemaker emphasized in the previously mentioned letter: 'Neither do we think it is necessary to urge you in your desire for freedom to behave "quietly and peacefully". After all, thank God that in this colony we do not know of any revolt or resistance against the legal authority.'⁵ This letter was read aloud in all churches on the island on the first Sunday after having been received as well as on Emancipation day.

In their evaluation of that day, priests made sure to emphasize the success of their mission by stating that freedom had been received without violence. The clergy were proud of the fact that on 1 July 1863 all Catholic churches on the island had been full of people and that during the celebrations, which continued over several days, there had been no 'killing, plundering, vengeance, or any other irregularity' (Latour 1945:68). In his retrospective Latour underscored this as proof of the effectiveness of the Roman Catholic Church's civilizing mission (Latour 1955:9).

With freedom, the Catholic priests believed their presence to be more essential than ever. They compared the behaviour of those freed in 1863 with those freed previously and concluded that the former group was more receptive to religious beliefs and conversion. They considered that: 'They were guided by religion, and in spite of their weakness every individual behaved like a free child of God' (Latour 1952:20). However, in the period following emancipation, the Church frequently feared that Afro-Curaçaoans would regress into what it termed an 'uncivilized' state. In 1875 the priest M.M. Jansen, on his arrival on the island with two other priests, expressed this anxiety:

For most of these unfortunates, virtue seems to be a vice and sin to be something good. So easily, they leave the path of virtue in order to commit wicked acts. We nevertheless hope that this situation will change and that these poor souls, entrusted to us, will reform themselves and become more virtuous.⁶

A decade later, faced with an overwhelming feeling of frustration, another priest would express similar ideas regarding a certain community over which the Church had little control. This community was situated near that of Sint Willibrordus, on a piece of land named 'Mondi afó (popularly also called 'tera di misa': the land of the Church), 'kurá di pastor' (the yard of the priest) or 'kurá di mishon' (mission yard)). It was one of the first plots of land that Niewindt received from the government in order to build a church and a school (Latour 1940:7):

If Christianity had not exerted its benevolent influence on the island, a whole population would have become like animals. Fortunately, the Church still has priests who just as the disciples and other preachers before them are willing to leave everything and spread the gospel among the heathens, to light the flame of faith in the hearts of those who dwell in darkness.⁷ [Translation R.M. Allen]

The essential aim of the Church's civilizing mission was to turn Afro-Curaçaoans into 'hende drechi' (decent/respectable people) or 'un bon katólíko' (a good Catholic person) – decent people according to the Roman Catholic model. Their interpretation was based on the way they saw working class people in their own societies, coupled with their perceptions of people from non-European cultures, whom they believed to be on the lowest evolutionary scale. The Church was critical of elements in the social behaviour of Afro-Curaçaoans which it believed required change. The missionaries' assessment of the characteristics of Afro-Curaçaoans also influenced the ways in which they proceeded with this civilizing process.

In the previously mentioned emancipation letter, Kistemaker addressed some of the flaws considered inherent in Afro-Curaçaoans. Examples cited were a tendency towards idleness and a lack of work discipline. Therefore Kistemaker described work discipline as a religious activity and he associated laziness with sinful behaviour, punishable by the State and above all by God.⁸ The missionaries would continue to reaffirm this observation in whatever form they could. The Church also paid special attention to marriage and family life. The western model of marriage was highly valued as an important instrument in the

civilizing process. Kistemaker's letter, read aloud on the day of emancipation, placed heavy emphasis on marriage and monogamy in association with moral behaviour.

In the years following emancipation negative stereotyping of Afro-Curaçaoans would increase, while the Church persisted and remained committed to its civilizing mission. The clergy defined civilization as 'the refinement of a population, the evolution from a state of wildness to religious, moral and scientific formation and education' (Euwens 1906:48). When the priest-historian Euwens refuted the views of a critic who was denying the civilizing role of the Catholic Church by stating that Afro-Curaçaoans remained uncivilized, he retorted that 'Where on earth will one find a people who after fifty years of missionary work are so docile, have so much love for work, are so loyal to the laws of the country and so orderly and disciplined, if not on the islands of Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire?' (1906:48).

Over time the Roman Catholic Church would denounce as immoral certain cultural rituals which persisted among Afro-Curaçaoans. De Pool (1935) gives an overview of what were believed to be such negative African customs. De Pool was a devoted Catholic who wrote several articles on cultural development during the 1930s. He believed that through the efforts of the Catholic clergy African customs, such as the previously mentioned eight-day ceremony called 'ocho dia' – held during eight consecutive nights following a burial, leading to a concluding ceremony on the last day – were dying out in the first half of the twentieth century.⁹ De Pool was clear in his negative view of the ocho dia and pointed out that: 'We should undoubtedly be grateful to the Catholic Church, which through its zeal, perseverance and preaching has made this half barbarism called ocho dia disappear' (1935:63). His statement has proved to be incorrect, as this custom, along with others, persists until the present day. It does, however, give us an idea of perceptions existing at the time regarding these customs.

De Pool continues to describe the ocho dia as 'a mixture of African superstition and Catholic ceremony, mixed with some witchcraft, and something more uncivilized than the highly criticized tambú' (1935:63). He was also appreciative of the Catholic Church for having eradicated the *seú*, which was celebrated during the maize harvest: 'Thanks to the Catholic Mission, that has always aimed at uplifting the morality of our population, such a noisy, scandalous ceremony called *seú*, which has always ended in bloody fighting, drunkenness and disorder, has disappeared' (1935:77).

In a sense de Pool was wrong, as the Church was not against all elements of the *seú*: the *wapamentu*, the marching in a particular style, was accepted. During the *wapamentu* those who had cut and gathered the maize, together with others living nearby, would dance in a procession from the fields to the storage depots called 'mangasina', while singing songs in Guene. After emancipation, when the plantation owners' control was slowly diminishing and more people were granted government lands to live on, the Church attempted to take over control of the celebration: following the procession, people would give part of their harvest to the priests. This was called the '*seú di pastor*'.

The Church also believed that the impoverished condition in which many Afro-Curaçaoans lived following emancipation had negative effects on their behaviour and morality. The government was reluctant to help those who were too old, sick or feeble to work. In 1879 the governor wrote to the district master of Bandabou, explaining that it had

never been the State's intention to be responsible for the welfare of the elderly, let alone fifteen years after emancipation (Brenneker 1986:125).

Following emancipation, the Roman Catholic Church was one of the main institutions attempting to alleviate poverty within the Afro-Curaçaoan community. The Church aided the poor in many areas; priests often acted as intermediaries between the government and the poor or the disabled when seeking financial help. The district masters would appeal to the priests for the names of people in their parishes in need of financial relief. They would also make arrangements with the State for the care of the poor. There was always work for the Society established before emancipation to provide funds for the poor to pay for medical treatment and funeral expenses.

Roman Catholic priests often acted as arbiters in family problems, for example between parents and children or between husband and wife, in the case of the former having an extramarital relationship. They also helped to prevent eviction from the lands. According to Armando Lampe, the Roman Catholic Church was more efficient in helping the poor than the State and people would first go to there for help. Lampe (1991:19) argues that since the mid-nineteenth century, the social service of the Roman Catholic Church was well organized and efficient. Many members of the older generation recalled with gratitude the aid they received from the Church in their fight against poverty. A female informant confirmed this and related how the priest

would help you, when you had a sick child. He would send and look for medicine. When we had a year of bad harvest, he used to send to look for seed in Aruba. He would share with everyone. Everyone would receive a kana di maishi¹⁰ for them to plant and if it rained we would have food to throw away. We did not have any money. Oh yes, there was money, but for those in the Fort' (the popular name for the colonial government).¹¹

Likewise, another elderly person reminisced:

Mi ta kòrda tabatin un pader akí, e pader yama Kris. Mi ke ku el a muri. E pader tabata yuda hende. E tempu ei bo tabatin botika di Shon Inchi, den Herenstraat, pariba di Jules Penha. E tabata manda e hòmber ku tabata serka dje riba kabai, bai buska un anis ku yama 'anis sou'. Buska su bòter di labizjan bini kuné. E pastor tabata parti un bòter pareu pa kada hende.¹²

I remember a priest. His name was Kris. He must have died. The priest used to help people. In those days you had the drugstore of Shon Inchi, in the Herenstraat (Punda), east side of the store of Jules Penha. He used to send the man who worked for him on horseback for a drink named 'Anís sou'.¹³ He would come with a demi-john of the booze. Then he would give everyone a small bottle.

At the same time priests also worked towards instilling acceptance of poverty in the people. Religion was used as an important instrument for accepting destiny. Phrases such as 'keda konforme ku kiko bo tin' (be satisfied with what you have), 'no tin pena sin Gloria' (there is no suffering without glory), 'probresa ku onor no ta ofensivo' (poverty with honour is no disgrace) recurred in many discourses.¹⁴ A priest describing the poor

community of San Willibrordus in the western part of the island in a Church magazine concluded his article by noting that ‘the people of San Willibrordus are poor, very poor and live in miserable houses, but their religion gives them comfort. We only must have patience and keep on hoping, one of the virtues of dealing with poverty.’¹⁵

An informant reiterated this:

T.P.: *Barika yen ta ruman di mal morto.*

E.J.: *Kiko esei ke men?*

T.P.: *Ora bo barika ta yen, bo ta hasi kos ku bo no tin mester di hasi. Laga nos pone ku bo ta na kas sintá, bo ta pensa ku bo tin ku bai laman bai landa. Bo ta bai landa, anto hoga. Un otro ehèmpel di barika yen: bo tin sèn den bo saku. Bo ta sintá na kas, no, bo ta sali bai bebe. Bo ta fuma, bo ta haña bo den un aksidente. Bo ta sali asina ei bai buska bo morto. Bo no ke keda kas, pasó plaka ta mandabo sali.*¹⁶

T.P.: *A full belly is the brother or sister of bad death.*

E.J.: *What does that mean?*

T.P.: *When your belly is full, you do things which you should not do. For instance: you will sit at home, and it occurs to you that you have to go to the beach. You will go to swim, and drown. Another example of a full belly: you have money in your pocket. You will not stay at home; you will go out and drink. You are drunk and will get an accident. So you will just go out to look where death is. You don't want to stay at home, because the money encourages you to go out.*

In this process of conversion and civilizing some individual missionaries stood out due to their actions. Jean and John Comaroff state that anthropologists examine in minute detail the social and cultural conventions of Africans, whereas Europeans are seldom placed under the same scrutiny. The evangelists are not studied as individuals, with socially conditioned biographies that make a difference, but are taken for granted, faceless actors on the colonial stage. However, their actions and interactions were deeply influenced by their backgrounds, their cultures and ideologies (Comaroff 1991:54). On Curaçao this was also the case. Over time the Catholic Church encouraged priests to alternate in preaching to the congregations. In this way the people were exposed to different interpretations and approaches to the idea of civilization.

Certain priests left their mark on Church policies, which on their implementation were either accepted or resisted by the people. In addition, individual priests – through their deeds and sermons – provoked emotion in the congregations and were remembered in oral narratives. For example, Vincent Jansen, who was born on 1 June 1850 in the Dutch town of Schiedam and who arrived on the island on 16 December 1876, was remembered long after his death on 5 August 1890. Many elderly people spoke about him with much respect, even though they had not known him personally. As a secular priest¹⁷, he was not tied to any particular congregation, but fell directly under the vicar apostolic. Besides being a priest, he was an orator, photographer, writer (under the name ‘Ipi’) and the inventor of an electric master clock, which he patented in the United States in 1889 (Latour 1950:24).

But it was principally his effort in setting up the community of Willibrordus, by helping a number of people to become autonomous fishermen that made him popular among the people. In that way people could do other types of work, making them less dependent

on working the land and the salt-pans of the surrounding plantations. Jansen was therefore called 'tata di pober', father of the poor (Latour 1940:25). He also promoted a form of fishing which was applied by other fishermen in Westpunt and placed two men at the head of the business.¹⁸

The Union of Marriage

A sphere of life in which the Church played an important role was that of marriage and family life. Once free, couples were no longer denied the possibility of legal marriage. The issue then became: how to encourage people to embrace this new possibility?

Previously, marriage had only been of concern to the Catholic Church; now it was also the concern of the State. It would, however, take some time before both institutions would agree on the way marriage would be recognized legally and religiously. For a long time following emancipation the Church continued to consecrate the relationship between a man and a woman in the same fashion as it had during slavery. Using the so-called 'salta garoti' method it had been able to consecrate many relationships between enslaved men and women, even though the State did not recognize the legality of this union. It was officially called a 'matrimonia clandestina'. Following emancipation, the salta garoti continued to be performed by the Church, now in a more open way. However, now that slavery had ended and the law prohibiting enslaved from marriage was no longer valid, it was of importance to the State that the salta garoti was conducted after the official marriage ceremony, in the presence of the Council of Police.

The initial step taken by the colonial government was to gain information on this matter through a letter to the district masters, enquiring into the willingness of those cohabiting to enter into a legal marriage. The governor and the vicar apostolic came to an agreement, which entailed that the latter would direct his priests to encourage people to marry legally. The Roman Catholic Church welcomed this initiative by the State to further legal marriage among Afro-Curaçaoans. In turn, the district masters had to create facilities for conducting these marriages.¹⁹

Despite these arrangements, the priests remained in conflict with the State due to their limited authority regarding this issue. At one point the State even accused the Church of propagating resistance among the lower class against legal marriage. In relation to this accusation, in 1866 the government sent a confidential letter to all district masters to assess whether in their districts the Catholic priests were conducting marriages before they were legalized by civil law.²⁰ This came to light due to an accusation made by the Protestant Council of Churches that the custom of being married solely in Church was being adopted by people of the middle class. They were concerned that this practice would also proliferate among the elite.²¹

The replies the governor received from the district masters revealed that the way in which the marriage ceremony was conducted varied from district to district. For instance, the master of the third district reported that couples were married in Church after their relationship had been consolidated by law.²² In contrast, the priest responsible for marriage in the town district proved less diligent in stimulating couples to marry by civil law.

In general, children who were born within the union of *salta garoti* were registered as illegitimate by the State, whereas at their baptism in the Catholic Church they were registered as *filus legitimus* and their parents as a married couple by the Catholic priest.²³ This consequently led to confusion regarding the status of these children in society. This would manifest itself, for example, when they could not inherit any possessions from their father. A commissioner reported that in his district the priest had begun encouraging people from his parish to marry legally, after learning that a woman and her children had experienced problems in inheriting the possessions of her deceased husband whom she had married in Church but had failed to record the marriage legally. He further stated that priests were frustrated that children of couples who were only married in Church were registered as illegitimate children.

The Roman Catholic clergy made the government aware of the numerous difficulties a couple had to overcome in order to legalize their relationship. First of all, the relatively high cost of marriage made it unattainable for many. In order to get married legally, one had to pay a certain amount of money for stamps, legal dues, a permit from the governor of the colony and the fee for the civil servant who performed the marriage ritual.²⁴ Those who could prove that they could not afford this, were exempt from these charges. However, this search for a legal aid certificate was very difficult and time consuming. Moreover, the assessment of who was poor was done arbitrarily. Eight years after emancipation, the then vicar apostolic van Ewijk complained to the governor that on Banda Bou people were refused the possibility of marrying free of charge. A priest in that area had a list of names of 139 couples who wanted to get married legally, but were unable to procure the necessary funding (Brenneker 1986:269). A priest who was asked by the University of Leiden in the Netherlands to record the lives of the creoles on the island, wrote that some civil servants refused to conduct a marriage unless the couple paid them an extra amount of money (O.S.T. 1891:296-7).

The financial burden of a civil marriage has often been mentioned in the petitions to perform marriage at 'perculum in mora'. The term 'perculum in mora' describes a marriage ceremony that needed to be conducted urgently as one of the partners was very ill and likely to die. Often these couples had lived together for many years and had several children. Priests complained that even in these cases the government was slow to react. One district master in the outer district requested, in the common interest, to create proper facilities so that couples in his district could be married more rapidly in 'perculum in mora', regardless of the financial position of the couple.²⁵

Difficulties were reported when people had to submit the official papers necessary for marriage, such as a birth certificate. Names and surnames were often misspelled. Very often official documents were incorrect and had to be corrected through the agency of the court of Justice. Individuals petitioned for the correction of these faulty registrations. Such was the case of Antoine Martis, whose name was written in the civil register as Antonie Martis and who petitioned for it to be changed again to Antoine. This was also the case of Gerard Faustin Gerardo, who before emancipation carried the name 'van Sek' but at emancipation received the name Gerardo. He requested to be van Sek again.²⁶

People sought to record their correct name, especially if their heritage rights were threatened.²⁷ Former slaves such as Rostina Hydsinth Zurum and Eduard Jasmin, both

children of Rosa, petitioned to receive the name of Semmers, the name of their deceased father.²⁸ Children born out of wedlock petitioned to carry the name of their father, as they had always unofficially been called by that name. If no objections to the names were published, the petitioners would be granted their requests. The unwed children of Jewish fathers in particular often requested to carry the family name of their father. In most cases no objection was made to these requests. There are many cases in which children asked to carry the Jewish family name of Maduro and also received it. This is in contrast to the petitions of unwed children of the white Protestant group, who were denied from carrying the family names of their fathers.

The confusion regarding people's names was also caused by the fact that most midwives at that time could not read or write, which posed a problem when registering a child after birth. It depended, then, on how the government officials wrote down the name of the baby. In addition, civil servants themselves made mistakes in the spelling of names and surnames, causing changes in surnames in the course of time.²⁹ For example, Petronia would be spelled Petrona, Ursula would be written as Oersula, Cijntje would become Seintje etc. In that way family members sometimes carried different surnames. This even caused confusion between siblings, as due to this misspelling brothers or sisters would be registered with different surnames. For example, in a contract for a piece of land in the western part of the island, the petitioner named Lucien Alberto signed his name Lucien Albertus. The informant Yeta Albertus explained why her name was written in various ways.

Mester skibi mi nòmber ku 'us' na final. E fam akí ta konosí na Westpunt, el a bin brua akibanda. Mi a tende ku un tata tabatin 12 yu hòmbler, i nan a kambia nan fam. Ora un di e yu hòmbernan a nase, nan a skibi e fam ku 'oe', i ora un otro yu a nase nan a skibié ku 'o' na final. Hopi brúa.³⁰

You have to write my name at the end with 'us'. This family name is also known in Westpunt, but has been mixed up here. I learnt that a father had 12 sons, and that they changed the family name. At the birth of one of the sons, the family name was written with 'oe' at the end, while at the birth of another one it was written with an 'o' at the end. Very confusing.

Well into the twentieth century government officials continued registering the names of people incorrectly. For example in 1909, the Procurator General composed a list of two pages with mistakes in the registration of names made by a district commissioner in that year.³¹

The problems this could cause in later life were described by an informant in Banda Bou, born in 1903:

S.V.: Tempu mi tabata bai kasa, tabatin brua-shon den mi fam.

R.A.: Kiko ke men 'bruashon' den e kaso akí?

S.V.: Ora mi a nase nan a dunami un fam, ku nos no sa ta ken su fam e ta. Tempu mi ker a kasa, nan mester a bai buska un hende ku tabata presente ora mi mama a hañami, pa bai Kranshi i deklará ku mi mama su nòmber ta tal i tal.³²

S.V.: When I was going to get married there was some confusion about my surname.

R.A.: What do you mean by confusion?

S.V.: At birth they gave me a family name which we did not know whose name it was. When I wanted to get married they had to get someone who was present when my mother gave birth to me, to go to the Municipality and declare that my mother's name was so and so.

The Church also attempted to have its say in the choice of marriage partners. If the man was a free mason, the marriage could not be consecrated. Other factors also played a role. According to custom a young man had to be hard-working, 'un hòmbler trahadó'. He should have a piece of land to build his house on before he would get married. Just as in the rest of the Caribbean, any prospective son-in-law was always asked the question whether he had already finished his home.³³ This showed that he could be responsible for his future wife.

C.V.: *Mi papa tabata biba na Porto Mari. Nos a bai aya, nos a bini bèk.*

R.A.: *Señora su papa a keda biba aya?*

C.V.: *Sí, el a biba aya. E tabata kasá ku un mucha muhé djaya. Mi wela tabata un muhé trabahoso, e no tabata ke pa mi mama kasa ku e shon.*

R.A.: *Di kon e no a gusta?*

C.V.: *E tempunan ayá no ta manera awor akí. Mi ta kere ku e mama di e mucha hòmbler i mama di mi mama no tabata duna mashá. Wèl e no tabata ke.*

R.A.: *'No tabata duna' ke men ku nan no tabata bai bon ku otro?*

C.V.: *E tempu ayá bo mama ta bisa e no ke e hende, bo ta obedesé. E no ta gusta e mama, e yu ta tende. E mama ke men miéntras su wowo ta habrí, e yu ei no ta kasa ku e hòmbler ei. E mama a bisa shon, e buska su otro hende. No ta manera aworakí. Ku e no ke, e no ke. E yu ta bai tras di su mama.³⁴*

C.V.: *My father lived in Porto Mari. We went there and came back.*

R.A.: *Your father stayed and lived there?*

C.V.: *Yes, he lived there. He was married with a girl from there. My grandmother was a very obstinate woman. She did not want my mother to marry the shon.*

R.A.: *Why did she not want that?*

C.V.: *It was different in those days. I think that the mother of the man did not like the mother of my mother. So she did not want that.*

R.A.: *This means that they did not like each other, they didn't get along?*

C.V.: *In those days, when your mother tells you that she does not like someone, you would listen to her. The mother thinks that as long as she is alive the child would not marry that man. The mother told the shon to look for someone else. Nowadays things are different. If she did not want it, it would not happen. And the child would obey its mother.*

In general respondents stated that family members had to know every detail about the families of the prospective husband or wife. Any negative information regarding a member of the family might have obstructed the marriage.

Bo mester a bai ku madrina, padrino, yaya, ku tur kos ku bo tin ku bai kuné ora bo ta bai pidi man. Anto e mama di e hende (mucha muhé) ku bo ke bai komprometé kuné, mester konosébo bon. Bo mester ta trahadó, bo no mester ta ladron, bo mester ta hende limpi. Sigur no. Bo tin ku komprometé, ora nan aseptábo. Ke desir bo ta bishitá kas di e mucha muhé pa sinku, seis luna, òf alguitu mas, boso ya ta komprometé, anto despues bo ku e mama

You had to go with your godmother, godfather, your yaya (nanny) and some next of kin when you wanted to ask for a girl's hand. The mother of the one you wanted to court had to know you very well. You had to be a hard worker, not a thief, a clean person. Oh yes. When they accept you for their daughter, then about five to six months or a little bit longer afterwards you would be engaged to her and then you and the girl's mother would have a talk. Formerly, if you

ta papia. Si bo bai kas di mama bai pidi man, si bo no tin bo propio kas lantá, nan ta bisa ku bo tin ku lanta bo kas promé. Ora bo kasa den kiko bo ta pon'é bo señora?

Ántes tur kos tabata mashá na òrdu. Awor akí ta kon ku bai laga bai. Tempunan ayá, ku bo ta bai kas di bo mucha muhé promé biaha, bo mester bai ku bo padrinu, e padrinu ku a batisábo, bo yaya ku a kargabo, bo madrina di batisá, bo tata, bo mama, bo ruman... Bo tin ku avisá e hendenan siman padilanti ku bo ke bin hasi bishita, pa duna di konosé, ke desir ku bo ta akudí ku nan yu. Anto e ora ei nan ta bai mira kiko nan ta disidí. Nan mester mira ku bo ta famia di bon hende. Ku bo no ta rasa di ladron. Ku bo no ta matadó di hende, promé ku nan risibí bo den nan kas.³⁵

did not have your own house built yet, you could not go to the house of the mother of the girl you were in love with to ask for her hand. You had to have a house built first. If not, when you got married, where would you put the woman? In the past everything was well organized. Not any longer. If for the first time you were going to visit the home of the girl, you had to go with your godfather and godmother who had baptized you, your yaya who had carried you to church, your father, mother, brother... You had to tell the people some weeks in advance that you were coming. They will find out whether the members of your family are good people. Whether you don't have a thief in the family, or a killer, before they receive you in their home.

According to some informants these rules mostly applied to those with a darker skin. In a society where a lighter complexion was associated with better jobs, more status, beauty, and civilized behaviour, parents were more flexible when a man with a lighter skin colour sought their daughter's hand in marriage.

For the poor, the *salta garoti* had always been a convenient solution. An informant described this as an event whereby a couple would, in their working clothes, go to the home of the priest, who would 'marry' them in the presence of a witness. For the *salta garoti* marriages people would dress modestly and incur few expenses, but this was not the case for those combining both the legal and the Church marriages. As early as 1864 Kistemaker mentioned during a conversation with the Public Prosecutor of the King that one of the bottlenecks in the marriage process was the fact that many people liked to dress for the occasion but often lacked the funds to do so.³⁶ The lower class wanted to marry as gracefully as the wealthy people (van der Gon Netcher 1868:510).

Weddings became increasingly expensive events. Members of the black population attempted to match the wedding customs of the white elite.³⁷ Effort was made to provide entertainment for the guests as well (Schipper 1933:7). This is similar to what Fernando Henriques has noted about weddings in Jamaica. "People must be entertained with music, food, rum and champagne. In the eyes of a black person, to be married without these paraphernalia would be no marriage at all."³⁸

Punitive and Encouraging Acts

To discourage premarital sex and to promote monogamous marriage, the Roman Catholic Church, under the leadership of vicar apostolic H.J.A. van Ewijk³⁹ – vicar apostolic between 1870-1886 – introduced punitive measures as well as rewards. The act of the 'Presentashon di mucha' (the presentation of the child) was among those encouraging

marriage. Once a legitimate child was six weeks old, the mother could come to Church, present it to the Virgin Mary and request the priest to bless the child, whereupon the priest would pray the ‘benedictiones mulieris et infantis’ (Latour 1948a:308). An interviewee recalled the following about such a blessing:

Six weeks after a child was born, there would be a presentation. After six weeks you had to go to church, thank God for having been able to give birth to a healthy child. After you had given birth to a child, you were not allowed to go anywhere before you had gone to church first. You had to go and tell the priest that you wanted to present your child to the Virgin Mary. Sometimes the ‘yaya’ (a lady who carried the child at baptism) would also come along. The priest would receive you with your child and your candle and present your child to the Virgin Mary. I have done it with all my nine children.⁴⁰

This presentation took into account the custom of mother and child staying indoors for the first six weeks after birth, to protect both from harm.⁴¹ In this case, the Church concurred with this custom. Indirectly, the popular class also used this ritual to invoke protection for the mother and the child through the Virgin Mary.

Van Ewijk also introduced the custom distinguishing between children born of married parents and those born out of wedlock. He introduced a two-tier system of baptism: one for children born in lawful wedlock, conducted on a Sunday, at which both a godmother and a godfather were present (Latour 1945:440). They were called ‘yunan di klari-dat’ (children of the light). Another system existed for children born out of wedlock, who were baptized on a weekday, at dusk, before sunrise. They were called ‘yunan di skuridat’ (children of the dark) or ‘yunan di piká’ (children born in sin) or ‘yunan di diabel’ (children of the devil), or sometimes even ‘yunan di puta’ (children of a whore).⁴² During this baptism ceremony the godfather was not allowed to be present, only a godmother. This measure marked the beginning of a life-long stigmatization by the Church of children born out of wedlock. Illegitimacy became then a shameful mark for the child.

The mother of a child born out of wedlock, who went to a priest to set a date for the baptism, was likely to be verbally castigated by the priest. An informant of mine, an unwedded mother, who had gone to request the priest to baptize her child, described the way he had behaved on that occasion:

Mi promé yunan tabata oochi. Mi no tabata kasá. Mi a bai puntra e pastor pa e batisá nan. Ora mi a puntr’é, el a kana bai, i kada biaha e tabata dal porta sera den mi kara. Masha sla mi a haña di pastor ku blat di porta.⁴³

My first children were twins. I was not married. I went to ask the priest to baptize them. When I was requesting this to the priest, he walked away and every time I asked he slammed the door in my face. I got many blows from him with the door.

However, there were people who resisted this rule from its conception. Van Ewijk wrote the following to the Prefect of the Propaganda Fide:⁴⁴

It is unbelievable to hear how many people belonging to the free masonry, also Catholics and Protestants, opposed to this measure. They voiced their protest in some of the newspapers on the island and some allowed their child born out of wedlock to be baptized by a Protestant vicar.⁴⁵ [Translation R.M. Allen]

A few years later van Ewijk would again lament in a letter, dated 24 February 1880, that the process introducing legal marriage was developing too slowly and that people continued to live in a so-called immoral state, despite the Church's best efforts. He attributed this to the fact that it was still difficult to persuade the coloured class to first marry legally and then marry in Church. Again the lack of facilities provided by the government, particularly in the outer districts, was seen as a major factor hindering the popularity of legal marriage. In town facilities were somewhat better.⁴⁶ Sometimes the Church authorities would openly complain about what they considered to be feeble efforts made by the government.

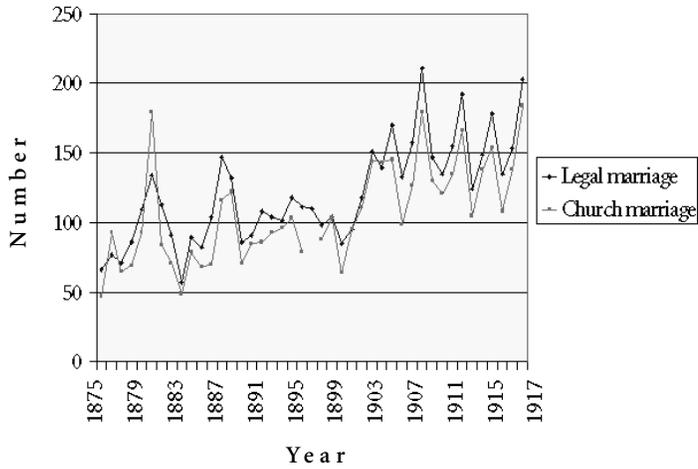
The Roman Catholic Church forwarded various strategies to establish monogamous marriage among Afro-Curaçaoans. They used different methods to attain their goal. Besides measures mentioned previously, the Church began burying people who had cohabited out of wedlock in the 'chiké', a Papiamentu word for pigsty. The 'chiké' was often situated at the back of the cemetery and was on unconsecrated ground. In this way the Church brought shame on the family of the deceased, who held the Catholic burial in high regard. In order to avoid this shame, they would sometimes turn to the Protestant Church to conduct the burial.

Another strategy employed by priests was to regularly visit families in their homes and to teach them about marriage and family life. According to an informant, 'they would come to your home and advise a man and a woman who lived together as a couple to get married (*drecha bida*). Some did, some did not.'⁴⁷ Sometimes people who had been living together and who were admitted into the hospital run by the Catholic Church were pressurized to marry (van der Mark 1999:223).

Any individual living on mission land who violated the code of behaviour faced expulsion. Priests would also request district masters to chase individuals from government land when they fell foul of their rules and norms. In this way an entire family could be outcast by the Church.

The impact of these missionary activities can be seen in the data in Graph 1, indicating the number of people who were married legally and those who were married in the Catholic Church. Records of the number married in Church only began in the year 1875.

Graph 6.1 Legal marriage vs Church marriage

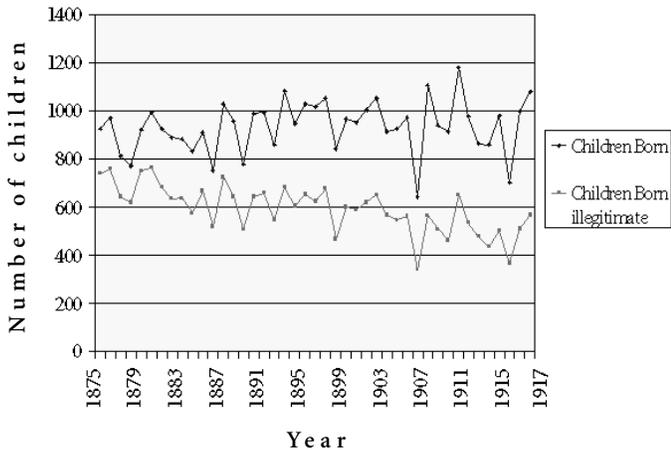


Source: Koloniale Verslagen 1875-1917

This graph shows that in the course of time the number of legal marriages increased. In a sense it goes against the complaints of the Roman Catholic Church that the lack of facilities encouraged people to marry only in Church.

Graph 6.2 gives an overview of children born between 1863-1917. The term 'registered as illegitimate' refers to children born out of legal wedlock.

Graph 6.2 Number of children born and number of children born illegitimate



Source: Koloniale Verslagen 1863-1917

Here it is also visible that the number of children registered as illegitimate decreases over the years. Their number would have been even lower if it had been taken into account that the State and the Church employed different registration criteria. At baptism, a child born out of legal wedlock was registered by the clergy as legitimate, while a government official would register it as illegitimate. This implies that the Church recognized a durable relationship and the presence of a father in the life of the child, which the State denied.⁴⁸ Eva Abraham van der Mark noted (1973) that the number of children born out of legal wedlock decreased after the arrival of Shell on the island. However, Graph 6.2 indicates that around 1910 the decrease had already set in.

Over the years, Church and elite complained about the fact that the number of children born out of wedlock remained high. It was generally believed that one could measure the level of civilization and development by assessing the percentage of children born in lawful wedlock.⁴⁹ In 1902 a priest commented that ‘the mission became so ashamed when they saw that in 1901, of the 1004 children born in that year, 617 were born out of wedlock. What a poor impression this will give people in the Netherlands about the state of morality in Curaçao.’⁵⁰ Some blamed this high figure on the failure of the Roman Catholic Church in its civilizing mission. Priests were accused of not having done enough. Even though a Protestant historian such as Hamelberg adhered to this view, he still recognized the efforts made by the Roman Catholic Church in a letter to the *Amigoe* in 1904. According to Hamelberg, if it were not for the Roman Catholic Church, people in the outer districts would be at a loss. He stated that ‘Thanks to their contribution, these people were not left to their fate, as they were by the government.’⁵¹

Gradually the beliefs regarding illegitimacy shaped by the Catholic Church were accepted by the people and illegitimacy began to carry a stigma. Names such as ‘yu teduki’, ‘yu di piká’, ‘yu di porko’ or ‘yu di diabel’ and ‘yu di puta’⁵² became part of the daily discourse. Children who were born out of wedlock could not later be ordained as priests or be trained to work as schoolteachers etc.

The Church continually stressed family life as a standard for morality. Legitimate children whose families participated in Church matters were considered a ‘bon famia’ (good family). In its attempts to spread the word among the population, a weekly series of life stories was published in Papiamentu newspapers; initially in *La Union*, published by the *Gezellenblad van de Sint Josef (Club San Hose)*, but when this periodical ceased to exist, the stories would continue in *La Cruz*.⁵³ They concerned everyday life, focused on the morals and values preached and ran alongside news items. Naturally, the success of this method depended heavily on the level of literacy within the population. To spread the message, those able were asked to read these stories aloud to the illiterate. Missionaries played an important role in the process of writing and publishing in Papiamentu.

In these didactic articles, often written in a simple narrative form, priests attempted to make their moral teachings more accessible to the people. In several stories focusing on family life and the significance of fatherhood, they stressed virtues such as thriftiness, sobriety and the systematic accumulation of wealth.⁵⁴ This is illustrated in the following story, comparing three types of men, with the last one being used as the standard for behavior. One was a husband who worked as a mason earning about seven and a half guilders per week. This was added to the money his wife earned with a small business; their income totaled ten

guilders a week. However, this man wasted his money on the lottery, drinking, smoking and partying and failed in his duties as a father. The second man was eighteen years old and earned five to six guilders per week. He behaved in a similar way. His mother, a widower, had to work in order to take care of him. In contrast, the third man, even though he liked to drink, would every Saturday give some of his wages to his wife as well as saving part of it. Due to his thriftiness, they were eventually able to buy a piece of land.⁵⁵

Other stories related morality to work ethics. Missionaries wrote and used stories and newspaper articles to criticize idleness and to promote a work ethic in order to ensure the well-being of families. The theme of work ethics was discussed in a series of articles during the year 1889, which began with the definition of a good Catholic worker. According to the author this was a person who worked by the sweat of his forehead.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the author compared free work to slavery and stated that the obligation to work does not imply that you are forced to work against your will. Work is a divine activity. A worker has to fulfill his task as this is the will of God.

Another aspect of the Church's mission was its effort to eradicate alcohol abuse among the popular class, highlighting the negative effects within the family. Alcohol consumption among the enslaved was high, as was pointed out in the emancipation letter of vicar apostolic Kistemaker.⁵⁷ A male informant sang to me the following song and expressed the theme as follows:

*Presently, it is not as before. Formerly they had a reason to sing it. They used to sing it, because we used to overdo it. When we arrived somewhere, instead of bringing our money home to our wives, we would waste it on alcohol. When we drank too much, our wives did not get any money.*⁵⁸

He then sang:

Rom ta dushi?

Rom ta dushi?

P'e maldito buraché

Rom ta dushi?

Is Rum sweet?

Is Rum sweet?

For the cursed drunkard

Is Rum sweet?

This was an orally transmitted version of the song, composed by Father Poeisz, to warn against the effects of alcohol.⁵⁹ The fact that it became an oral tradition and that it was sung by several of my informants, demonstrates that the use of songs as an educative device had some success. These songs were virtuous and didactic and aimed to change the negative behaviour of the popular class (van Panhuys 1934:315).

The reality of alcoholism should be taken seriously. Most of the time workers received rum as part of their wages. Alcoholism was one of the causes of aggression among Afro-Curaçaoans, often in the form of domestic violence (van Soest 1977:18). Priests used all types of didactic devices to discourage alcoholism. The following was published in the newspaper *La Cruz*.

*Rom ta dushi? L'e ta dushi.
 P'e maldito buraché
 Koe ta bandona famia
 Pa bai bebe com k'e kié
 Rom ta dushi? L'e ta dushi
 P'e perverso buraché
 Koe pa causa dje bebida
 Pa toer hende'a desprecié
 Rom ta dushi!
 Ta palabra
 Dje malbado buraché
 Koe ta camna panja sushi
 I toer hende ta harié
 Rom ta dushi! Rom ta dushi!
 Pobercito buraché
 El a drenta toer e shapnan
 Bebe e cos pa venené
 Rom ta dushi! Rom ta dushi!
 Mir'e pober buraché
 C'un zapatoe sin nanishi
 Sin tin placa pa dreché
 Bo ta kere rom ta dushi
 Desgraciado buraché?
 Drei bo mira bo mes curpa
 Na ki estado b'a poné
 Ai no kere rom ta dushi
 Pretencioso buraché
 Corda bon di bo famia
 Na ki estado b'a largé
 Aleha bo fo'i dje bicio
 Lastimoso buraché
 Rom ta causa di toer maloe
 Hui, hui for di djé.⁶⁰*

*Is Rum sweet? It must be sweet
 For the cursed drunkard
 Who abandons his family
 To drink how he wants
 Is Rum sweet? It must be sweet
 For the perverse drunkard
 That for the cause of the drink
 Already everyone despises him
 Rum is sweet!
 That is the word
 Of the wicked drunkard
 Who walks with dirty clothes?
 Moreover, everyone laughs at him
 Rum is sweet! Rum is sweet!
 Poor drunkard
 He went to all the bars
 To drink the drink that poisons him
 Rum is sweet! Rum is sweet!
 Look at the poor drunkard
 With shoes without caps
 Without money to fix them
 Do you believe that Rum is sweet
 Disgraceful drunkard?
 Turn around and look at your own body
 In which state you have put it
 Oh, don't think that Rum is sweet
 Pretentious drunkard
 Think about your family
 In what state you left it
 Kick the habit
 Pitiful drunkard
 Rum is the cause of all evil
 Fly, fly away from it.*

Creating Respectable Citizens

For the Roman Catholic Church, educating young Afro-Curaçaoans was an important element in instilling respectability. Education entailed teaching young people Christian values and norms. One year before emancipation, a priest wrote:

Young people need school education alongside religious education. We do not need priests who are only acquainted with our mission, and who do not recognize and supply the need of the Negroes. We lack instructors and find hundreds of children in the different parishes growing up with no school education at all.⁶¹

Following emancipation, the number of children attending mission schools increased (*Koloniaal Verslag* 1864). But the Roman Catholic Church depended on a subsidy from the government enabling it to broaden its education programme among the black lower class. Reluctantly it had to accommodate certain governmental interests if it wanted to continue its civilizing mission. This led to its independent position being compromised. Even though a general decree regarding emancipation stipulated that schools run by the Church needed to be encouraged and supported along with those run by the State, the grants given by the government to religious education were small and many schools were in a state of decay. Thus one of the greatest obstacles faced by the Roman Catholic mission on Curaçao was funding. For example, in the early 1880s the four public schools on the island received a total of 18.000 guilders per year, while the seven Catholic schools received an allowance of only 7.000 guilders. These four public schools, each with approximately five hundred students, had four teachers, each with three or four assistant teachers, whereas the Roman Catholic schools had fifteen hundred pupils in seven schools, with only eighteen nuns as teachers.⁶² Missionaries would constantly express hope tinged with frustration when dealing with this situation. Often they appealed to Dutch Catholics in the Catholic magazines distributed in the Netherlands, requesting money to either build a school, a church or a home for the priest on the island.

Education involved more than merely teaching children to read and write. It also entailed teaching them moral standards. This was clearly stated in an article in the *Amigoe*, in which the author expressed that:

*Education, as an instrument of developing knowledge, cannot exist '... without morally forming the heart and mind'. All discussions as to whether school should give moral 'teaching' are a waste of time and words. The school is a powerful element in the education and therefore in moral formation as well.*⁶³

In its attempt to create respectable citizens, the Church paid special attention to young women. Priests would frequently write about the various kinds of menace young women encountered in society, hampering them in leading a moral and decent life.

The town in particular was considered an area of low morality. Even though those living in town were generally believed to be more civilized than their rural counterparts, priests were often alarmed by the immoral life style prevalent in these urban communities. They therefore diligently worked to elevate the moral standards of this group (Latour 1953:47).

Town and country were communicating vessels as many impoverished people, especially young women, moved to town in the hope of finding work. Their plight made them vulnerable to exploitation and they were likely to become victim to this moral decay. Therefore the priests considered them in need of special attention (Latour 1952:23). The aforementioned priest who published under the initials O.S.T. denounced the practice of young women being sexually exploited by their employers.⁶⁴ The apostolic vicar G.M. A.M. Vuylsteke, in his pastoral letter of 5 February 1917 regarding morality, also addressed this issue. The case of the daughter of James Hooi, which was presented by the priest of Westpunt in a letter of 28 July 1917 to the district master, again illustrates this problem. The

daughter of Hooi was made pregnant by the son of her employer, who denied responsibility. Her father requested the aid of the guardians' supervisory board in obtaining custody of the child.⁶⁵

Girls between fourteen and sixteen years of age could become members of an organization named 'The Legion of Virgin Mary' or *Kongregashi*. Some were chosen by the nuns while others volunteered. The girls called *kongrenis* had to be unblemished. They had to display high moral conduct, which related to their actions and the way they dressed. They were tightly supervised and constrained, isolated from boys their own age and could not participate in any activities other than those organized by the Catholic Church. They were not allowed to participate in local popular cultural events and happenings, such as the *tambú* and *ocho dia*, representations of an immoral and pagan way of life. Their solitary life was an important characteristic of their respectability. The ethnologist Juliana, who interviewed several former *kongrenis*, was told the following by an informant:

A.M.: *Si bo ta kongrenis, nan mirabo un kaminda ku nan no ta gusta, nan ta bai, bai bisa pastor. Mi tanta a kontami ku e ku mi mama tabata kongrenis. Un hende a bai bisa pastor ku el a mira un mucha muhé meskos ku mi tanta na ocho dia. Nan a bai, bai bisa riba nan.*

E.J.: *Bai bisa pastor.*

A.M.: *Ku nan a mira nan na ocho dia. Pastor a saka nan tur dos for di kongregashi.*

E.J.: *Bo no por a bai ni ocho dia?*

A.M.: *Ni ocho dia kantá bo no por bai, ni baile di plaka. Ni bo no por a bai tambú. Nan weta bo, nan ta bai bisa pastor anto ta sakabo for di kongregashi. Asina tabata tempu ayá. Ku bo ta kongrenis, asina ei. Bo tin ku bai misa, bo por bai un fiesta den dia, ma anochi bo no por ta na fiesta. Niun. Ahan, mané, si tin balia di ka'i músika den dia, pa fiesta, bo por bai. Pero si ta kos di plaka, fiesta ku bo ta paga plaka, bo no por bai. Mashá estrikto bida di kongrenis tabata. Ma awor mi ke ku no tin kongrenis mes mas. Bo tin ku bai kongregashi ku bo medaya, ku bo sinta blou na bo garganta.⁶⁶*

A.M.: *If you are a kongrenis (member of a Roman Catholic congregation) and people see you somewhere they do not like, they will go and tell the priest. My aunt told me that she and my mother were kongrenis. Someone went and told the priest that she saw a girl just like my aunt at an ocho dia. She went and told the priest.*

E.J.: *Went and told the priest.*

A.M.: *That they saw my mother and her sister at an ocho dia. The priest chased both of them from the Kongregashi.*

E.J.: *You could not even participate in the ocho dia?*

A.M.: *Not even an ocho dia kantá, no dancing party for which one had to pay money, no tambú. If they saw you, and they went to tell the priest, he would chase you from the Kongregashi. It was like that in those days. You had to go to church; you could go to a feast during the day, but not at night. None whatsoever. If they had a party of the kaha di músika you could go. But nothing that had to do with money. They were very strict. Nowadays there are no kongrenis anymore. You had to go to Kongregashi with your medal and your blue ribbon around your neck.*

Juliana related to me that some of these *kongrenis* had aspired to become nuns, but were impeded from doing so because they had been born out of wedlock. He had interviewed several women who in their old age were still proud that they never married and had remained virgins.

The kongrenis were expected to remain virgins until married. Their wedding days became highly ceremonial events, celebrating the devout lives they had been living. These ceremonies were called *bini krea*, taken from the song ‘Veni Creator’, which was sung by the participating choir. The attitude of the other women towards these kongrenis ranged from admiration to contempt. Some considered the lives of the kongrenis to be dull and restrictive. Gossip was fuelled by the suspicion that some kongrenis had received the honour of Veni Creator despite becoming pregnant before marriage. Due to their close relations with the priests, people did not always trust them. They often accused them of gossiping and relaying information about people in the neighbourhood to the priests. The following tambu song is a satire about one of these girls and accuses her of illicit sex – even though she plays the refined lady. The act of sexual relationship is being described as the sucking of a lollipop.

Señorita fini

Muchanan di pastor

Nan ta chupa lòlipòp

Anto benta e palu afó

Pero mucha desidido

no tin kuenta di nada

Nan ta chupa e lòlipòp

Warda e palu te mañan

Koro:

Chupa lòlipòp

Tambe guli su papel

Chupa lòlipòp

Tambe guli su papel.⁶⁷

Refined ladies

Children of the priest⁶⁸

They suck on the lollipop

And throw the stick away

But the determined ones

Do not care about anything

They suck the lollipop

And save the stick till the next day

Chorus:

Suck on the lollipop

Swallow its rapping as well

Suck on the lollipop

Swallow its rapping as well

For women abiding by the rules laid down by the priests, there were advantages. The Roman Catholic Church created possibilities for local women to teach as non-qualified school-teachers in nurseries and primary schools and they were often given work by others on the recommendation of the priests. The Church stressed the necessity for those who taught at school to possess high moral standards; these standards also extended to their families.

Oral history shows that remaining a virgin until marriage was generally accepted as respectable behaviour within the community. Most interviewees stressed the fact that young women should marry as virgins because ‘Strea ku sali trempan, ta drenta trempan’ (Stars which rise soon, will also fade quickly). The community judged young women according to whether they had retained their virginity. The proverb ‘Mi n’ke kashu sin kashipete’ (I do not want a kashew fruit without its nut), meaning I do not want to marry a woman who is not a virgin, expresses this.

Women were educated to be domestic and pure. In a lawsuit in 1871, Virgilius, a conductor of a ferry boat, was sentenced to jail because he had pushed Juan, a farmer, into the water. Juan had reprimanded Pieternella, who came from a good family, for associating herself with Virgilius. Juan had stated this after having scolded her for walking alone on the streets at 8 o’clock in the evening.⁶⁹

The expectation of women is confirmed by the following narration:

Ora bo ta sali, bo mester bai ku yaya pa mirabo, pa tira bista. Tabata un tempu konservador. Dia mi ta'a mucha yòn, tin hopi kos ku mi no tabata mete aden. Bo no mag. Esun ku bo hende grandi ke so. Bo no por a mira tambú, bo no por a mira seú, bo no por a mira nada. Reservá. Ora bo hende grandi ta bai, si bo ke bo ta para djaleu mira un ko'i mira. Pero drent'e no.⁷⁰

When you went out, you had to go with a yaya to look after you. Those were times when people were socially very strict with their children. When I was a young girl, I did not engage in many things. You were not allowed. Only what your elders wanted. You were not allowed to go and watch a tambú, or a seú, nothing. Reserved. When adults go you may go with them and watch from a distance. But you could not participate.

Among the popular class there were several divinations through which one could see whether a woman was still a virgin. When a man wanted to know this, he would look at her and then look at a flower. If the flower was still flowering, she would be a virgin, if it wilted, she was not. Another sign was conveyed in the way she would stand up. Only if she would put her left foot first, she was a virgin (Brenneker 1961:123).

Typical is a court case brought before the judge in 1872, in which a seventeen year old Curaçaoan girl defended her name after having been accused of being a prostitute on the island of St. Thomas, and then on Curaçao.⁷¹ A woman denounced a man who sang the following song:

*Wilhelmina mi ruman,
No kulpa mi kunado
Kulpa shon Lucien
ku tin korant di bo mocedat*

*Wilhelmina, my sister
Don't blame my brother in law
Blame shon Lucien
Who can inform all about your virginity.⁷²*

The following tambú song expresses the importance of women preserving their virginity, while at the same time attempting to avoid gossip.

*Tur kos bo a konta mama
Pakiko bo n'bisa mama
Ku lampi a pèrdè su balon.
Tende kiko e shishi di
Cu su yu si ta niña
mar'e sabí ku galiña a pone
te ku ne a klòk.⁷³*

*You have told mother everything
Why didn't you tell mother
That the lamp has lost its lampshade.
Listen what the tramp is saying
That her daughter is still a virgin
if only she knew that the hen has laid an egg
and that it has even hatched*

The following tambú song is a manifestation of shame for the family of a girl who has lost her virginity. The father of the girl takes the man whom he accuses of deflowering his young daughter to the district master. The accused admits that he indeed had sexual relations with the girl, but claims that at the time she had already lost her virginity.

*Mener de Leeuw
m'a kome karni
wesu si mi n'sa di dje*

*Mister de Leeuw
I have eaten the meat
but I don't know anything about the bone*

The different treatment of the two sexes by the parents and particularly the protective stance towards the daughter is illustrated in the following song. Mothers protected the virginity of their daughters before marriage. Here the protection of the mother is rejected by the daughter.

*Mama n'ke pa mi bai akí
Mi mama n'ke pa mi bai ayá
Mama por serami den un kashi di glas
Mand'é den kombentu serka ser⁷⁴*

*Mother don't want me to go here
My mother don't want me to go there
Mama can lock me up in a glass cabinet
and send it to the sisters in the convent*

Creating a Work Ethic

The Church also paid attention to the morality of young men. A priest referred to them specifically in his remarks on the civilizing influence of Roman Catholic religion. He pointed out that the

Negroes of San Willibrordus have become different people. It is easy to understand the persistent effort required on the part of the priests so that these black boys develop in such a way that they become respectful members of society. We may compare this place to another, where people are living who are completely wild, where even cannibalism exists, where people live and die like animals.⁷⁵

Several organizations were established to educate boys. The Sint Jozef Fellowship, popularly called *Club San Hose*, was founded on 29 October 1882 in Pietermaai by the priest of the parish, with the principle aim of teaching boys a trade. The club gave its pupils the opportunity to support themselves and to eventually become responsible husbands and fathers. In order to achieve this, the organization taught the trades of masonry, carpentry, tailoring and shoemaking (Latour 1952:50). Members who lived according to the fellowship's values were favoured, as the organization rented pieces of land and built houses for its members. The cultural influence of the Church on the fellowship was seen when on 1 July 1883 its members brought a serenade to the governor, while parading in mediaeval costume from their club at Pietermaai to Scharloo, the governor's home (Latour 1952:22).

With the orphanage for young boys established at Santa Rosa in the east of the island, help was available for boys from the countryside. This orphanage was a centre for young boys without families who could learn a craft and be given an education. The boys were taught to be musicians, shoe-makers, tailors, cabinet-makers, carriage-makers or carpenters.⁷⁶ The Church received orders for carpentry from places such as Venezuela and Suriname.

Growing to maturity involved learning to assume responsibilities believed to be part of manhood. By 'building a dam against laziness and unemployment which result in poverty

and immorality, in dehumanizing the family and neglect of the education, the Church intended to instill in these boys what was expected of them as future husbands and fathers. It also helped people who were unable to perform their religious obligations (Latour 1952:51). The Church aided young men in progressing towards the possibility of starting a family and in preventing the belief that 'nice young girls would remain unmarried, as they were unable to find decent young men to secure a happy married life' (Latour 1952:51).

Often individual priests invested much time and effort in teaching trades to young men. The construction of churches was utilized as an excellent opportunity to teach boys from the parish a trade. This occurred, for example, in the building of the churches in Sint Willibrordus and Westpunt (Latour 1952:13).

The Church remained responsible for the pupils' conduct until they came of age. After this period the priests were often dismayed at the conduct of the boys and frustrated by their lack of influence over them (Latour 1952:22). Despite their desire to keep the young men within the community, they were powerless to stop them from, for example, emigrating. Young men would often emigrate as a survival strategy, but it was also an important rite of masculinity.

The Roman Catholic Church would continuously campaign against the emigration of young males from the island, citing this as one of the factors hampering their spiritual development. The missionaries were sufficiently close to this group to be aware of the disappointment the migrants often experienced. People found adaptation to their new surroundings difficult and upon their return would be impoverished. The clergy often used these examples of misfortune to deter others from leaving (*La Cruz*, 29 August and 14 November 1917). Emigration also placed a large group of young people beyond the reach of the clergy. This distressed the priests, for whom social control was essential in their civilizing mission. In that way, even the positive results of migration, when people returned with money, were negatively portrayed as fuelling the idea of the black working class being preoccupied with the material world, such as clothing, music and play.

One of the songs about migration collected by Juliana and Brenneker relates to men who in the mid-nineteenth century emigrated to Tucacas in Venezuela to work in the copper mines. The song states that these men, although having returned with a lot of money and expensive clothes, were uncouth. For that reason, they were called Luango's or Guene's.⁷⁷ As previously stated, both terms initially referred to the places of origin of the enslaved but over the years had begun to denote negative or primitive behaviour.

*Tukaka a pari Gueni,
trupa di Luangu
Tukaka a pari Gueni,
esta Luanganan!
Bo mama ta Luangu,
famia di Luangu
Rasa di Luangu
Tukaka a pari Gueni.⁷⁸*

*Tucacas has given birth to people from Guinea,
a troupe of Luango's
Tucacas has given birth to people from Guinea,
meaning Luango's!
Your mother is a Luango,
family of Luango
Luango race
Tucacas has given birth to people from Guinea*

This song seems to condemn emigrants who returned devoid of morals and links this to the acquired behaviour of those returning to the traits of ethnic African groups. The disdain

shown in this song suggests the idea that migrating elsewhere in the region leads to re-Africanization or, in this particular case, to a *reluangonization* of the black population of Curaçao. It underlines once more why the clergy, among other groups, was against people leaving the island, as they would be exposed or re-exposed to cultural influences negative to the civilizing mission.

Response to the Civilizing Mission

The teachings of the Roman Catholic priests were referred to with the term ‘Lei di pastor’, ‘the rules imposed by the priests’. The fact that these teachings were compared with the law indicates the power evoked by their words. Afro-Curaçaoans addressed priests using the term ‘shon’, as they had done with the slave-owners.

Their response to the ‘Lei di pastor’ is complex and does not adhere to one interpretation. Afro-Curaçaoans originated from many diverse African countries. During slavery, many more social divisions became established among the enslaved and the freed community. These divisions would endure following emancipation, according to criteria such as origin, skin colour, area of domicile etc.

The rapid growth in congregations following emancipation did not necessarily equate to a full acceptance of faith. The recently freed were motivated to join the Church for various reasons, which did not always coincide with those preferred by the missionaries. Some accepted Catholicism, but challenged the Church whenever they disagreed with its rules. As mentioned earlier, some Catholics reacted to the discrimination made at baptism against children born out of wedlock by baptizing their child in the Protestant Church. The Catholic Church denounced this opportunistic acceptance of the competing Christian denomination. It was also noted that some blacks were only Catholic in name, as in the proverb ‘Chimina a yega porta di San Juan i lubidá misa katólíko’ (Chimina arrived at the gate of the plantation of San Juan and forgot the Catholic Church).⁷⁹

The Church was associated by some with poverty and was called the Church of the poor.⁸⁰ Protestants and also some members of the lower class would criticize the fact that priests used images of poor black people to appeal to readers abroad in order to collect money for their activities. Some Catholics went against this negative labeling of the black people on the island. Some considered that their involvement with the Church affected their social standing (Latour 1952:15).

Other Afro-Curaçaoans were devout Catholics and lived according to the rules laid down by the missionaries. For some of these people the Church offered a status above that of their peers and they would receive benefits accordingly. For example, some Afro-Curaçaoans who had learnt to read and write and lived a respectable life, attained leading positions in a funeral organization called the ‘sitter’.⁸¹ Or they could be granted a piece of land from the Church in order to build a house and so become independent from land owners. A good parishioner could even count on the help of the Church in legal matters.

It seems that women were more receptive to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church than men. A priest commented on this when he wrote in 1877:

Already at this moment there is a core group of god-fearing people, whom we can set as an example. Also more and more, there are people who are ashamed to commit crime, especially women.⁸²

This different response to the Catholic Church is illustrated in Table 6.2. This Table gives an insight into the participation rate of men and women at the obligatory Easter Confession and Communion. According to Muriel Nazzari (1996:111) through the sacrament of confession the Church sought to control the morality of the population. The faithful were advised to confess frequently, but ecclesiastical law obliged them to confess at least once a year during Lent. Curaçaoan parish priests were ordered to prepare annual lists of members of all households in their parish, and to record whether males over fourteen and females over twelve years of age had confessed before Easter.

As one informant stated:

Tempu ayá tabatin un lugá spesial pa dera un hende ku muri sin ku el a konfesá risibí den tempu di Kuaresma.

Pastor ta skibi tur hende su nòmber ku a kumpli ku Kuaresma. Si bo nòmber no ta den buki, ta fièrnu bo ta bai.

I nan ta derabo den chiké. Esei ta pida kurá parti pabou di santana.⁸³

In those days there was a special place for people who did not go to confession and to communion during Lent.

The priest would write down all the names of those who did comply with Lent. If your name is not in the book, you will go to hell.

You would be buried in the chiké, that is in a separate place at the western part of the cemetery.

The following Table indeed shows that more women participated in the Easter Communion and that more men remained outside the fold of Christianity.

Table 6.2 Number of Males and Females Participating in the Easter Communion

Year	Male	Female
1870	-	-
1875	3872	7624
1880	3801	7678
1885	-	-
1890	-	-
1895	-	-
1900	7652	13333
1905	8269	14347
1910	9443	15883
1915	10630	18243

Source: Provinciaat Vicariaat der Paters (1945:3-4)

One of the benefits of keeping to these rules was that one would be provided with a decent Catholic burial. The 'marka buraku' (to mark one's grave), as it was called, meant that one assured having a consecrated burial ground ready for burial and that one would not be buried in a place called the 'chiké'. Abiding by the rules of Lent was referred to in the same way. An informant asserted that

Tempunan ayá pastor sa presis ken ta kumpli ku kuaresma, pasó e ta skibi bo nòmber den buki. Tur djadumingu bo mester a bai misa. Den kuaresma nos mester a lanta tres or di mardugá pa bai misa. Tabatin hopi hende i si bo yega lat, bo no ta haña un lugá di sinta. Tempu ayá si bo kumpli ku kuaresma, pastor sa, pasobra e ta skibi bo nòmber den buki.⁸⁴

In those days the priest knew for sure whether you had kept the rules of Lent (kumpli ku kuaresma), for he wrote down your name in his book. Every Sunday you had to go to church. In the period of Lent, we had to wake up at three in the morning to go to church. There were a lot of people and if you were late you would not get a place to sit. In those days if you complied with Lent, the priest would know, because he would write your name in a book.

Conclusion

The Roman Catholic Church was the prime institution exercising authority and control over the lives of Afro-Curaçaoans. In its civilizing mission the Church aimed to create a Catholic mindset which required that in addition to people adhering solely to the Catholic creed and liturgy and banning all other religious beliefs and practices, they should avoid behaviour considered negative and rather focus on becoming *hende drechi* (decent people). For every *bon katólíko*, the Church maintained a firm line in what it considered correct and moral behaviour.

The different strategies it used in its civilizing mission covered many areas of social life. It ranged from social assistance for the economically marginalized groups and the education of young people to a more direct exercise of control through rules and sanctions, including the exclusion of people from certain privileges, such as a proper baptism or burial. It also included physical abuse of those who manifested obstinate disobedience.

The Church succeeded in pervading the private lives of people in a way the State never did, and in doing so influencing what Scott has called the hidden transcripts. The response by Afro-Curaçaoans to the influence of the Church has been paradoxical. On the one hand they were attracted by the value system of the Church. Abiding by it opened up doors, but at the same time it imposed values which were not always shared and clearly not always obeyed. Some therefore tended to resist the control of the Church in various ways. On the other hand, being a good Catholic meant a change of identity, which implied not only an adherence to Catholic religious beliefs and practices, but a person tended to be moulded in character and behaviour by the Church as well. For those who reached this condition, it had social advantages, as they could be employed in institutions directed by the Catholic Church, such as schools and hospitals, and in that way rise in social position as well. Likewise, children from couples who lived in monogamous relationships would also benefit.

In the following Chapters it will become clear to what extent Afro-Curaçaoans adopted the teachings of this influential body and how they accommodated or bent the concept of 'bida drechi' to suit their private lives.

Notes

- 1 *Kerkelijke Courant*, no. 291, vol. 28, 26-7-1862.
- 2 Idem.
- 3 *Kerkelijke Courant*, no. 291, vol. 28, 26-7-1862.
- 4 *Kerkelijke Courant*, no. 368, vol. 30, 16-1-1864.
- 5 Idem.
- 6 *Rozenkrans* 1879:55.
- 7 Kerstgeschenk 1883:166.
- 8 *Kerkelijke Courant*, no. 368, vol. 30, 16-1-1864; Letter Kistemaker in *Indisch Missietijdschrift* 1963, vol. 46, p. 9-13. See also *Amigoe*, 1-7-1963 (integral publication of the letter).
- 9 The anthropologist L.F. Triebels (1980) has discussed whether this custom is in fact African. However, for many years it was generally seen as a surviving African ritual and was also considered as such by the Catholic clergy at the time.
- 10 One *kana di maishi* is circa one litre of maize.
- 11 Interview Geertruda Alberto (Ma Tuda) (born 1883), Allen, 13-3-1984 (NatAr).
- 12 Interview Celestina Elizabeth (born 1897), Allen, 5-10-1981 (NatAr). She lived in the eastern part of the island.
- 13 A drink made from the seed of the plant called 'anis', derived from the Latin word *anisum*.
- 14 *La Cruz*, 11-2-1903. The title of the article is 'Pobreza no ta berguenza' (Poverty is not a shame).
- 15 Kerstgeschenk 1883:186.
- 16 Interview Thomas Plantina (date of birth not registered), Brenneker/Juliana, 10-2-1976 (T 52, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 17 He was called 'Pader di paña pretu' (the priest who wears a black rope) due to the fact that the members of his congregation wore a black rope (Latour 1940:3).
- 18 Vincent Jansen had a carpentry and blacksmith workshop. He built two large sailing ships and different types of boats for the fishermen of his parish. He also gave the men and women lines so that they could knit fishing nets. In that way he encouraged the people from his parish to take up fishing for a living. See Langenfeld 2001b:2.
- 19 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Ingekomen stukken 3e district, 1860-1905, 8-3-1864/73.
- 20 NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6741, 25-6-1866/405.
- 21 NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6741, 25-6-1866/405.
- 22 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Geheime stukken, 1861-1880, inv. no. 3659, 17-7-1866/1, 19-7-1866/no number, 19-7-1866/55, 20-7-1866/18 and 17-10-1866/2 (letter vicar apostolic I.B. Schermer).
- 23 An analysis of the books of baptism of several churches reveals that at the time babies were baptized within six days following birth. This is also confirmed by oral history.
- 24 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken 5e district, 1863-1904, inv. no. 127, 23-9-1863/54.
- 25 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken 5e district, 1863-1904, inv. no. 127, 23-9-1863/54. See NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6749, 20-3-1880/102 (besides the home of the district master another building was indicated where marriages could be conducted free of charge) and 27-3-1880/109 (the hour for marriage was left to the decision of the district master).
- 26 NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6741, 6-2-1866/85.

- 27 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Geheime stukken, 1861-1880, inv. no. 3659, 16-7-1866.
- 28 NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6740, 11-4-1865/194.
- 29 See NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6751, 16-8- 1883/437. The governor urges the civil servants and assistant civil servants of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages to register the names of children and their parents correctly. See also *La Union*, 23-1-1895: the priest devotes a whole article to the problem of misspelled names.
- 30 Interview Aniceta (Yeta) Albertus (born 17-5-1902 in Willibrordus), Allen, 2-9-1984 (NatAr).
- 31 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Ingekomen stukken 2e en 3e district, 1906-1924, inv. no. 102, 2-4-1909/141.
- 32 Interview Seferina Valks (born 1903), Allen/Ernest Gaari, 8-9-1983 (NatAr).
- 33 NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6784, 24-11-1886/718.
- 34 Interview Carlota Victoria (born 28-4-1914), Allen, 7-5-2001, Private Collection.
- 35 Interview Thomas Plantina (date of birth not registered), Brenneker/Juliana, 10-2-1976 (T 52, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 36 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Ingekomen stukken 3e district, 1860-1905, 3-3-1864/73.
- 37 See letter vicar apostolic H.J.A. van Ewijk, 6-7-1877, regarding the role of marriage in people's lives. According to him some people were reluctant to get married because they lacked the proper attire. NatAr, Lijst van ontvangen stukken, Pastorie Sint Anna, inv. no. 9 (Pastorale brieven), NatAr.
- 38 Henriques quoted in Joubert 1983:185.
- 39 Van Ewijk's previously mentioned letter of 6-7-1877 was sent to the priests of the parishes to be included in the following Sunday's sermon; it contained instructions for discussion topics for the entire year. NatAr, Lijst van ontvangen stukken, Pastorie Sint Anna, inv. no. 9 (Pastorale brieven) NatAr.
- 40 Interview V. Catharina Theodora (born September 1914), Brenneker/Juliana, 16-6-1983 (T 89, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 41 There were many beliefs regarding pregnancy and births. It was believed that during pregnancy a supernatural bond existed between mother and fetus. For example, the fetus of an emotionally unstable woman would feel and register a shock physically as a blemish or a deformity. The fetus may also be marked by its mother's cravings for a particular kind of food. It was commonly believed that a child may be affected in a similar way if the mother-to-be ate food considered taboo.
- 42 Brenneker 1970:1159-60.
- 43 Interview (no christian name registered). Simmons (born 1888), Allen, 15-1-1980 (NatAr).
- 44 The Sacred Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, is the department of the pontifical administration charged with the spread of Catholicism and with the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs in non-Catholic countries.
- 45 Latour 1952:21.
- 46 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Gouverneur, civiel binnenlandse correspondentie, inv. no. 3652, (1-2) 24-2-1880.
- 47 Interview Severina Valks (born 1902 in Kenepa), Allen, 8-9-1983 (NatAr).
- 48 Van Ewijk, in his letter of 12-7-1877, instructed the parish priests to keep statistical records of their parishes, including the books of baptism, marriage and deaths. These specific records gave quantifiable information. NatAr.
- 49 Hamelberg 1895. See also Irus 1910:55.
- 50 *La Cruz*, 24-9-1902.
- 51 *Amigoe*, 10-9-1904.
- 52 Brenneker 1970:1159-60.
- 53 The Roman Catholic mission, in this case the Fathers of the Dominican Order, published various weekly newspapers from 1870. In 1883 the *Amigoe di Curaçao* was founded, initially in Papiamentu and in Dutch, but after 1900, with the appearance of *La Cruz* in Papiamentu, it continued solely in Dutch. Broek 1990:61.

- 54 *La Union*, 21-8-1889.
- 55 *Idem*.
- 56 *La Union*, 3-4-1890.
- 57 *Kerkelijke Courant*, no. 368, vol. 30, 16-1-1864.
- 58 Interview Clemens Bonifacio (born 1908), Allen, 16-5-1989 (NatAr). Interview Anecita (Chita) Martina (born 21-4-1911), Brenneker/Juliana, 29-7-1982 (T 82, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 59 The priest Poiesz was known for his literary abilities. He was admired by the folk class for his knowledge of Papiamentu and his talent to create songs in that language. He published a book of songs in Papiamentu.
- 60 *La Cruz*, 19-9-1919.
- 61 *Kerkelijke Courant*, no. 291, vol. 28, 26-7-1862.
- 62 NatAr, Archief bisdom, letter 16-7-1904/712. See also NatAr. Publicatie Blad 1884/16.
- 63 *Amigoe*, 30-5-1885. The author analysed the essay by dr. A. Bruinings in de *Tijdspiegel* of February 1885 regarding the debate in the Netherlands on the introduction of non-religious schools.
- 64 O.S.T. 1891:296-7.
- 65 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Districtbeheer, ingekomen stukken 4e en 5e distict, inv. no. 92, 28-7-1917.
- 66 Interview Anecita (Chita) Martina (born 21-4-1911), Brenneker/Juliana, 29-7-1982 (T 82, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 67 Interview Anecita (Chita) Martina (born 21-4-1911), Brenneker/Juliana, 29-7-1982 (T 82, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 68 Due to their close relationship with the priest these women were referred to as children of the priest. This term could also refer to men.
- 69 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken, Correctionele Teregtzittingen 1871, Procesverbaal no. 32.
- 70 Interview Ana Schoop (born 1913), Allen, 1995 (NatAr).
- 71 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken, Correctionele Teregtzittingen 1872, Procesverbaal no. 19.
- 72 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken, Correctionele Teregtzittingen 1892, Procesverbaal no. 14.
- 73 Brenneker 1970:1823.
- 74 Interview Maria Pieters (born 1880), Brenneker/Juliana, 1960 (Zikinzá-collection, T 247, NatAr).
- 75 Kerstgeschenk 1883:186.
- 76 Latour 1952:71. Irus 1910:67.
- 77 Migration inspired people to make songs illustrating the intensity of the event. These purveyed important information about the way people experienced migration. Thus these songs are important information transmitters and most people of the older generations recall them more readily than any other information.
- 78 Interview Florita Reinila (date of birth not registered), Brenneker/Juliana, 1958 (Zikinzá-collection, T 79, NatAr).
- 79 This proverb is generally used to indicate that someone is ungrateful.
- 80 *La Cruz*, 4-12-1901.
- 81 These were burial funds (*sitter*), established in the nineteenth century by the Roman Catholic Church. Members would pay a weekly contribution, which would be registered in a special exercise book (*buki di sitter*).
- 82 Latour (1952:24).
- 83 Interview Felipi Sambo (born 1906), Brenneker/Juliana, 1960 (T 30, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 84 Interview Seferina Valks (born 1903), Allen, 8-9-1983 (NatAr).

