Abstract

This thesis examines the life and writings of Elias Neau (1662-1722), a Huguenot sailor, merchant and catechist for the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG). I argue that Neau's devotional *cantiques,* written in French and influenced by European devotional movements, provide insight into the early catechetical practices in the mainland colonies and highlight the role of singing and affective religion, more than thirty years before the First Great Awakening brought revivalist practices to enslaved Africans.

I first trace Neau's travels throughout the Atlantic world, from his childhood in France, to the West Indies, to Puritan Boston, to his imprisonment in Louis XIV's galleys and prisons in Marseilles, to his life in New York as a catechist for the SPG. In studying Elias Neau as a "man of the Atlantic World," I am able to show the complex interrelationship of experiences and opinions that formed his life and work.

In exploring Neau's school for the enslaved in New York, I am able to examine what we know about the lives of his students, and I expose the troubles and conflicts that Neau faced in his controversial work.

In order to understand Neau's writings, I outline the varied affective movements so prevalent across the Atlantic World in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. I then specifically analyze the content of Neau's *cantiques* and the influence of European affective religion on Neau's own beliefs. I concentrate on describing five prominent themes in Neau's *cantiques*: creation as the "divine mirror" of its all-powerful Sovereign; the sinner's need for grace and divine sanctification; the desire for union with God; personal salvation through the Blood of Jesus Christ; and the place of human suffering in obtaining a heavenly reward. I then set each theme in its context, pointing to other works that reflect similar concepts.

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Advisor

'I Sing Night and Day': The Spiritual Songs of Elias Neau in the Atlantic World

By

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The life of Elias Neau (1662-1722) reflects the complexities and contradictions of the Atlantic World at the turn of the eighteenth century. Neau was a sailor and merchant who lived in France, Saint-Domingue,[1] Boston, and New York. He owned enslaved Africans at the same time that he fought for the rights of the enslaved to read and learn the Gospel. Neau was a layman who attended school only until age twelve, without any formal theological education—yet his conversation partners ranged from pastors throughout the Huguenot diaspora in Europe, to the Puritan Cotton Mather in Boston, to officials of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in London, and to Anglican and Huguenot clergy and government officials in the colonies. Neau was a Huguenot galley slave who survived captivity to become a teacher to enslaved Africans. He was a Huguenot elder who also became an Anglican vestryman.

Despite the richness of Neau's contacts throughout the Atlantic World, studies of his life and work have tended to focus on only one of two things: either his capture and imprisonment in France or his work as catechist in New York. In France, Neau is viewed as a hero of the Huguenot persecutions of the seventeenth century, having survived years in the galleys and in prisons in Marseilles for his Protestant faith. European scholars of Neau's work concentrate on the early eighteenth-century accounts and collections of Neau's letters from prison, published as testimony from a "confessor for the faith." In the United States, however, Neau is celebrated as the founder of the first mainland colony school for enslaved and indigenous persons, under the auspices of the SPG. Historians of

[1] The French colony of Saint-Domingue is now the Republic of Haïti.

Neau's catechetical work turn to his numerous letters to fellow catechists in New York and to SPG officials in London.

An aspect of Neau's writing remains in the shadows on both sides of the Atlantic, however: his devotional *cantiques.* None of these spiritual songs has been translated from French into English. It is my thesis that these writings, clearly influenced by European devotional movements, provide a window into the content of Neau's influential early catechetical practice in the mainland colonies. Neau himself reports in his SPG correspondence that his *cantiques* represent the truths and the lessons that he taught his catechumens in New York, and that his lessons regularly comprised singing as a means of instruction. Neau's lessons to children, servants, and enslaved Africans and Native Americans in New York would have thus introduced his students to themes of affective religion and personal devotion—a decade or more before the beginnings of the First Great Awakening. An understanding of Neau's spirituality, hidden in these French compositions, can help scholars to fill in their understanding of the influences among early SPG catechists in the colonies.

In Chapter One, I provide information on primary and secondary sources dealing with Neau and his writings. Since Neau's story is recounted in various forms in edited letters, and his songs are found in two different documents, it is especially important to examine the editions of these various sources.

In Chapter Two, I trace Neau's travels throughout the Atlantic world, from his childhood in a Protestant region of France, to his years as a sailor and ship's captain based in the West Indies, to his life in Puritan Boston, to his imprisonment in Louis XIV's galleys and prisons in Marseilles, to his triumphant release and tour of Protestant

Europe, to his life in New York as a catechist for the SPG. In studying Elias Neau as a "man of the Atlantic World," rather than simply as a Huguenot hero or as an SPG catechist, I am able to trace the complex interrelationship of experiences and opinions that formed his life and work.

In Chapter Three, I explore Neau's SPG-sponsored school for the enslaved in New York. I examine what we know about the lives of his students, and I expose the troubles and conflicts that Neau faced in his controversial work. I look at how Neau presents his curriculum in his letters to the SPG, and I point to differences between Neau's approach and that of the men who took over the school after Neau's death.

Chapter Four deals with the religious trends that surrounded Neau in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A tricky assumption in my thesis lies in the fluid nature of what is sometimes called early "European pietism." Entire books focus on the definition of pietism, and there is controversy surrounding its history. In the decades surrounding the turn of the eighteenth century, "pietism" can mean anything from the French "Camisards" in their prophetic millenarism; to earlier Roman Catholic Jansenists and Quietists; to Puritans like Cotton Mather; to hymn writers such as Joachim Neander; to German Lutherans such as Paul Gerhardt and August Hermann Franke. For some scholars, the word pietism should refer only to the German Protestant Philipp Spener and his followers. For others, pietism calls to mind later groups such as the Moravians and Methodists. Some pietist groups are labeled as "church/ ecclesial pietists," since they looked for reform within their established churches. Others, more radical in outlook, fueled by millennialism of some kind, sought change outside of official church affiliation, following their own inspired leaders. Scholars label them as "radical pietists."

In this paper, I am interested in all of these varied affective movements so prevalent across the Atlantic World in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. To avoid the fray of current pietism studies, however, I will borrow Ted Campbell's term "heart religion"[2] when writing about these groups and individuals, except where my secondary sources themselves specifically refer to "pietism." While it is impossible to identify Neau's exact theological influences, he clearly picked up affective devotional language during his travels. As a self-educated layman, he was perhaps more open than most to a variety of influences.

Chapter Five specifically analyzes the content of Neau's *cantiques* and the influence of European affective religion on Neau's own beliefs. I concentrate on describing five prominent themes in Neau's *cantiques*: creation as the "divine mirror" of its all-powerful Sovereign; the sinner's need for grace and divine sanctification; the desire for union with God; personal salvation through the Blood of Jesus Christ; and the place of human suffering in obtaining a heavenly reward. I then set each theme in its context, pointing to other works that reflect similar concepts.

Unfortunately, the voices of Neau's enslaved pupils remain silenced in the historical record. In my concluding chapter, however, I describe the likely involvement of a few of Neau's pupils in the infamous 1712 New York "Slave Rebellion," providing them at least a presence in the historical record.

[2] Ted Campbell, *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991.)

Chapter One: Literature Review

Primary Sources

Primary sources for Elias Neau's various writings are found in letter collections and in four published manuscripts. The published manuscripts, however, consist of letters and accounts enclosed within narratives created by other authors. While these authors claim to allow Neau's voice to speak freely, three out of the four are English translations of French letters, and all are arranged to reflect the theological and political beliefs of the editors.

A Present from a Farr Countrey to the People of New England

In 1698, Cotton Mather published the tract, *A Present from a Farr Countrey to the People of New England: A Great Voice from Heaven, to These Parts of the Earth: In an Excellent Letter Full of Divine Rarities, Lately Written from a Terrible Prison in France.* After a fearsome account of what was happening to Protestants in France, Mather included a letter from Neau to his wife, obtained from the elders of the French Church in Boston where she resided. Neau was still in prison when this work was published, and he was therefore not named in the publication, in order to avoid worsening his punishment at the hands of his captors. Neau's letter was translated from the original French into English by Nehemiah Walter, pastor of Roxbury.[3] In publishing this tract in Boston, Mather used the persecutions in France as a tool meant to stir up the people of New

[3]Cotton Mather and Elias Neau, *A Present from a Farr Countrey, to the People of New England: A Great Voice from Heaven, to These Parts of the Earth: In an Excellent Letter Full of Divine Rarities, Lately Written from a Terrible Prison in France.* (Boston, MA: Michael Perry, 1698), 10.

England, hoping to unite them with the fear of a similar attack from Roman Catholics near their own borders in New France. As Mather warned in his journal, "the French oppressor … wants nothing but New England for to render him the Master of All America."[4] Mather later explained that he wants the people of New England to understand "the great sacrifice, to whom all the glory of our great salvation will bee due."[5]

Besides hoping to protect New England Puritans from the French, Mather also hoped to influence New England Huguenots. He included a French section in this work, full of his own commentary. He exhorted the Huguenots to follow the imprisoned martyrs' example to improve their own obedience to the laws of God: observing the Sabbath, and living a sober and peaceful life. One can see Mather's appeal to English and French Protestants alike from his words in the preface:

> Let the Churches of New England then Receive this Letter, as written by one that was himself become a New England man: a Dweller in our Neighbourhood, a Sharer in our Charity. Let them admire the Glorious Operations of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, Enabling a poor man, of a mean Education and Occupation, thus to Glorify Him. Let them adore the Distinguishing Benignity of Heaven, in our preservation from having yet fallen under the Fury of Gallick Oppressors.[6]

Mather sent the published work out to all ministers to share at their weekly meeting.[7]

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[4] Cotton Mather, cited in Paul McGraw, "The Memory of the Huguenots in North America: Protestant History and Polemic," in *The Huguenots: History and Memory in Transnational Context,* ed. David Trim, 293 (Boston, MA: Brill, 2011).

[5] Cotton Mather, cited in McGraw, "The Memory," 293.

[6] Mather, "A Present," 9.

[7] Howard C. Rice, "Cotton Mather Speaks to France: American Propaganda in the Age of Louis XIV," *The New England Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1943): 218.

An Account of the Sufferings of the French Protestants

In 1699, an English account of Neau's imprisonment appeared in London as *An Account of the Sufferings of the French Protestants, Slaves on Board the French King's Galleys,* published by Richard Parker. While Neau himself is credited as the sole author of this work, it is unlikely that he could have written such an account in English at the time without help. His poor English was often commented upon by English-speaking associates in SPG manuscripts, and Neau himself admitted as late as 1720 that he was well-aware of his faults when speaking and writing in English.[8] Due to his pains with English, it is likely that Neau would have worked with an English-speaking ghost-writer in London during his months there, before his return home to New York.[9] There is no indication as to the identity of such a writing partner, however. As late as 1907, this work was reprinted in Edward Arber's London publication, *The Torments of the Protestant Slaves in the French King's Galleys and in the Dungeons of Marseilles 1686-1707.*[10]

[8] Neau's letters are found in bound volumes of manuscript letter books (Series A) and in boxes (Series C), now located in the Weston Library in Oxford, England. I have been able to access these documents through British Online Archives (BOA) and will provide the BOA references in my paper, with the letter book series and volume numbers corresponding to the shelf marks at Weston Library. The item and image numbers come from British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries. Neau to Humphreys, New York, 24 November 1720, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 14, item 118, image 129.

[9] Ruth Whelan, "La scène judiciaire dans les mémoires d'Elie Neau, galérien protestant sous le règne de Louis IV," in *L'idée de justice et le discours judiciaire dans les mémoires d'Ancien Régime: XVIII^{e}-XIX^{e} siècles* (Nantes, FR: Cécile Defaut, 2009), 84.

[10] Rice, "Cotton Mather," 215.

Histoire Abrégée des Soufrances du Sieur Elie Neau

The *Histoire Abrégée des Soufrances du Sieur Elie Neau sur les Galères* was also composed in 1699 after Neau's release from prison. This work is a collection of letters edited by Neau's pastor, Jean Morin. Morin was formerly the pastor of the Reformed church in Moëze, where Neau grew up. After Morin's own imprisonment, he, too, fled the persecutions in France, arriving in England in 1685 and then traveling to Holland, where he became pastor in the French Walloon church in Berg-Op-Zoom.[11] Morin's compilation contains parts of thirteen letters that Neau wrote while in prison, one meditation in the form of a prayer, four letters sent to the imprisoned Neau, fourteen of Neau's songs, or *cantiques,* and a running commentary by Morin.[12] Morin, like Cotton Mather, intended through this publication to hold Neau up as "a sign and a miracle of deliverance in these our days," during continuing persecution of Huguenots in France.[13]

Histoire Abrégée was not published for two years until its appearance in 1701 in Rotterdam by the publisher Abraham Acher. Its publication in Rotterdam makes sense, not only because Morin was pastor in Holland, but for polemical reasons, as well. The European Alliance of the Hague had recently declared war on Louis XIV's France.

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[11] Before the seventeenth century exodus of Protestants from France, an earlier wave of Huguenot refugees had arrived in Holland, creating a strong Huguenot presence there in the 1590's. By the mid-seventeenth century, this Walloon church had weakened in number, with few ministers. After 1680, however, with new persecutions in France, so many reformed pastors arrived in Holland that there were not enough positions for them all.

[12]Ruth Whelan, "Elie Neau's Patchwork Bible: Reading Scripture, Reframing Captivity in Early Modern France," in *The Cultural Reception of the Bible: Explorations in Theology, Literature and the Arts*, ed. Salvador Ryan and Liam M. Tracey (Dublin, IR: Four Courts, 2018), 112.

[13] Jean Morin, *Histoire Abrégée des soufrances du Sieur Elie Neau sur les galères et dans les cachots de Marseilles* (Rotterdam, NE: Abraham Acher, 1701), preface. "un signe et un miracle de delivrance en nos jours."

Protestants were hoping that a press campaign with depictions of suffering Huguenots would convince the Alliance to do something about their plight. The dedication of this volume pointedly lifted up for others the exemplary care of Protestant England for the Huguenots: Morin honored the Lord of Portland, "as a proof of profound gratitude of the confessor Elias Neau" to King William III of England for his release.[14]

It is important to note that Neau was not the only galley slave to have had the story of his captivity appear in print. Three galley-slave narratives appeared together in a four-year period: *Histoire des souffrances du bien-heureux martyr Mr. Louis de Marolles,* written by refugee pastor Isaac Jaquelot and published in 1699; Morin's *Histoire Abrégée* in 1701, and *Histoire des souffrances et de la mort du fidèle confesseur et martyr, M. Isaac le Febvre,* written by refugee pastor Etienne Girard and published in 1703.[15] These other two narratives, like Morin's, were composed of letters that the refugee pastors received from or had written to their imprisoned former parishioners. They too were published in Rotterdam by the same publishing house, Abraham Acher. Despite fitting into a particular *genre* of polemical history, however, Neau's story is the only one to involve a hero who survived his imprisonment. He is also the only simple sailor to be lifted up as a hero; both of the other exemplary Huguenots are educated gentlemen.[16]

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[14] Morin, *Histoire Abrégée,* dedication. "permettez-moi ... pour lui offrir mon travail, comme une preuve de la reconnoissance du Confesseur Elie Neau."

[15] David Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680-1700* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 190.

[16] Whelan, "Parle-moi, car j'ai peur: parole et confiance dans l'histoire des souffrances d'Elie Neau, galérien protestant," in *Risquer la confiance* (Neuchâtel, CH: Alphil, Presses Universitaires Suisses, 2014), 62.

As editor of Neau's story, Morin claims that he only arranged various pieces by Neau in order. The letters are not entirely in order by date, however.[17] In addition, some of Neau's letters were used whole, and some were extracts. While Morin clearly indicates who has written various parts of the work, the reader has no idea where paragraphs have been omitted or if words or whole sentences were added to the original correspondence. Modern studies of similar Huguenot narratives composed of edited letters have been shown to include important theological additions or omissions on the part of the editor, who adapted the original letters to make them more theologically orthodox or to fit them to the editor's point of view.[18] Neau's original words could have easily been modified in the same way. It is extremely helpful, then, that unlike most Huguenot prisoners who suffered martyrdom in the galleys, Elias Neau survived to write more after his release. We have other letters and *cantiques* by Neau which have survived in the SPG archives in London with which to compare these edited accounts.

A Short Account of the Life and Sufferings of Elias Neau

As late as 1748, twenty-six years after Neau's death, the *Histoire Abrégée* was translated and re-published in London as *A Short Account of the Life and Sufferings of Elias Neau upon the Gallies, and in the Dungeons of Marseilles; for the Constant Profession of the Protestant Religion,* edited by Jean Morin and translated from the French by John Christian Jacobi. This edition does not include Neau's fourteen cantiques but otherwise accurately follows the 1701 French edition, with the addition of an

[17] Whelan, "La scène," 83.

[18] Van der Linden, 192.

engraving of Neau in his dungeon. It was first included in the second volume of *The Book of Martyrs*, a compilation by J. Foxe "heartily recommended to the perusal of all those who have a zeal for God's glory, and the prosperity of the Protestant religion."[19] It was then published separately a year later, in 1749. The appeal of Neau's work twenty-seven years after his death points to his connection to growing pietist sentiment. Johann Christian Jacobi, the editor of this volume, was a German-born bookseller and translator firmly associated with Halle Pietism. Formerly an associate of Francke, he worked with Francke's colleague Anthony William Boehm in London. He sold books printed by the firm Joseph Downing for the SPCK, as well as works imported from Halle.[20]

Neau's SPG Letters

Neau's own voice can be heard clearly in the numerous letters that he sent to the secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel during his years as catechist in New York. As catechist, Neau was required to report back to the gentlemen in London on a regular basis, and his letters were often sent monthly, even sometimes more frequently. They recount his troubles, his successes, and his requests for materials. The letters received were carefully recorded in the SPG record books in London, recopied and sometimes translated into English by SPG scribes. Many of Neau's letters were addressed to John Chamberlayne, the SPG and SPCK secretary from 1701 until 1716. Others were

[19] Ruth Whelan, "Mysticism in Captivity: Elie Neau, French Protestant Galley Slave," in *Mysticism in the French Tradition: Eruptions from France*, ed. Louise Nelstrop and Bradley B. Onishi (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 225.

[20] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2008,* s.v. "Jacobi, Johann C." (by G. Jefcoate), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53805.

written to the Bishop of London, to Neau's various friends and fellow catechists, and to Chamberlayne's successor as Secretary, David Humphreys. Letters from London to other catechists, as well as responses from the Society to Neau, are also included.[21]

Neau's letters, while full of the expected deference to authority, portray Neau as a man of stubborn and strong character, often with tongue in cheek in his responses. They show his impatience with authority, his sharp wit, a merchant's eye in detailing financial matters, his certainty in possessing the truth, and a dogged, sometimes annoying, perseverance. Neau did not hesitate to grumble to his superiors against colleagues and opponents alike. Neau's early letters to SPG authorities in London, for example, were full of complaints about the rector of Trinity Church, William Vesey. In 1704, he wrote in a petulant tone that Vesey "doesn't like me," claiming never to have given the rector the slightest provocation for such negative sentiment.[22] That same year, he told his friend Josiah Woodward that he needed "extraordinary grace" to deal with the opposition and difficulties of his "thorny position."[23] Neau wrote candidly to his friend John Hodges in June of 1704 that he faced opposition because colleagues were jealous of his paid position as catechist, mocking him with the title, "The New Reformer," a reference to his presbyterian origins. Neau, however, insisted that he cared nothing for the salary,

[21] These SPG record books are now kept in Weston Library Oxford, and while I was unable to view them in person, I could access them through the online database, British Online Archives.

[22] Neau to John Hodges, New York, 22 June 1704. British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 1, image 3. "Mr. Vesey ne m'aime pas ... je ne luy ay jamais doné le sujêt d'etre mal content de moy."

[23] Neau to Josiah Woodward, New York, September 1704. British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 119. "C'est une office plein d'epines et bien rebutant, j'ay grand besoin d'une Grace Extraordinaire pour surmonter les rebuts et les difficultés."

likening money to "mud in the streets." What people really do not like about him, Neau maintained, is that he "fights corruption."[24]

Indeed, Neau was later chided by SPG leaders for corresponding privately about grievances with other ministers of the region, rather than appealing directly to the Society in London, as directed.[25] Neau, for his part, wrote to the SPG secretary that even though Anglican ministers preach loudly to their flocks about obedience, they themselves are the first to revolt when they do not agree with the decisions of authorities. Furthermore, the "Brigands" in both Church and State "cover themselves with protestations of enthusiasm [for the decisions of the leadership], but basically, only ambition and greed excite their passions."[26] Such judgments surely did not increase friendly relations with many of his powerful Anglican colleagues, yet Neau was undaunted by the risks involved in speaking out to authority figures.

Neau's Songs or Cantiques

Of particular interest in this paper are Neau's *cantiques* or original songs. Thirteen of them are included in the *Histoire Abrégée*, the account of Neau's life edited

[24] Neau to John Hodges, New York, 22 June 1704. British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 1, image 3. "Je ne suis pas aimé parce que je combas la Corruption; on m'appelle par raillerie le Nouveau Reformateur ... J'ay beau leur dire que l'argent et la boue des rues est la meme chose avec mon coeur."

[25] SPG [signature illegible] to Neau, London, 16 July 1716. British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 11, item 360, image 378.

[26] Neau to Secretary, New York, 21 February 1712. British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 7, item 148, image 145. "ceux qui prechent si fort l'obéssance aux puissances qui sont en Authorité sont ils les premiers a se revolter... les brigands dans l'Etat et dans l'Eglise se couvre du proteste de zele mais dans le fond c'est n'est que l'ambition et l'avirice qui excitent les passions."

by Jean Morin, which were written during Neau's years in prison.[27] We do not know whether he scribbled them in the dark of his cell with a pencil, as he did his letters, or whether he memorized them and wrote them down after his release. The other twelve remaining *cantiques* come from a manuscript included as part of Neau's archived letters to the SPG in London, sent in May of 1718. In the SPG manuscript, Neau mentions that he sent sixty *cantiques* to London, including an Apostles' Creed and a Nicene Creed with the Ten Commandments and Lord's Prayer. The document that remains today in the SPG records consists of thirty folios, copied by Neau into thirteen *cahiers* and bound into a quarto notebook.[28] It includes parts of sixteen of the original sixty songs that Neau sent to the SPG, including twelve of them found only in the SPG papers. Four of the songs from Jean Morin's French compilation of letters are also found in the unpublished SPG manuscript.[29] Since the SPG manuscript is not complete, it is possible that more or even all of the older published songs were originally included in the packet sent to the SPG in 1718.

In the SPG manuscript, Neau dedicates his *cantiques* to the Society, as "one of the fruits of my work in your service."[30] Neau explicitly states that these sacred songs are

[27] One must note that *Cantique VIII* in the *Histoire Abrégée* is attributed not to Neau but to "another confessor." Song-writing was a practice common among galley slaves and imprisoned Huguenots of the period. While using similar language to address God, *Cantique VIII* shows less beseeching humility than one sees in Neau's writing. The mystical elements are also missing from this plea for deliverance from his enemies.

[28] Ruth Whelan, "Soul Songs: A Snippet View of Elie Neau's 'Hymnes, ou Cantiques Sacrés' (1718)." *LIAS* 48, no. 1 (2021): 69.

[29] Cantique IX from the *Histoire Abrégée* becomes *Cantique XXXIV* in the unpublished SPG manuscripts. *Cantique XIII* becomes *Hymne LII*. *Cantique XIV* becomes *Hymne LIII*. *Cantique XV* becomes *Cantique LIV*. See the appendix for a side-by-side comparison.

[30] Elias Neau, *Hymnes ou cantiques sacrez,"* dedication. British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letters, series C, box 1, item 73, image 227. "J'ay composez pour la gloire du dieu vivant, comme etant un des fruits de mon travail en votre service."

"like an abridgment of the truths and the duties that I teach my catechumens."[31] Neau had hoped that the sound theology reflected in the songs would help him regain his post after his dismissal in March 1718. He had also hoped that the SPG would publish the songs: He had even asked merchants Joseph Paice and Son of London to purchase a hundred copies of the future publication and to ship them to him in New York, so that he could distribute them to his fellow French refugees.[32] The SPG, however, either from disinterest or oversight, failed to mention these songs in their minutes and never published them, in spite of Neau's request.[33] It is possible that they were lost upon their arrival in London and held in private hands. According to the catalogue entry, the remaining folios were purchased at some point for fifteen pounds and ended up in the SPG collection in Weston Library, Oxford.[34]

There are a number of differences between the version of Neau's songs published in Morin's work and the songs submitted to the SPG. In the SPG version, verse numbers are added to the stanzas, and several "pauses" are marked, probably to aid in communal singing. The titles of the songs often change as well. Songs in the published version are not always titled, and when they are, the titles are merely descriptive: "On Suffering in the Dungeon," or "On Sacred Love," or "Praises to God." In the SPG manuscript, however, the titles become guides to using the song for spiritual edification. *Cantique*

[31] Neau, "*Hymnes ou cantiques sacrez*" dedication. British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, series C, box 1, item 73, image 228. "parce que ces cantiques sacrez sont comme un abrégé des veritez et des devoirs que j'enseigne à mes catécumaines."

[32] Whelan, "Soul Songs," 69.

[33] Jon Butler, "Les 'Hymnes ou Cantiques Sacrez' d'Elie Neau: un nouveau manuscrit du 'Grand Mystique des Galères,'" *Bulletin de la sociéte de l'histoire du protestantisme français,* 124 (1978): 418.

[34] Whelan, "Soul Songs," 70.

XIII in the published version, for example, has no title. In the SPG manuscript, it acquires the title, "For Asking for Rescue." The untitled *Cantique XIV* becomes "For Asking for God's Love."[35]

It is clear that in seeking publication by the SPG, Neau hoped that his songs would be used by others in their devotions. Most interesting is that the SPG manuscripts show a doxology at the end of each song, likely a reflection of Neau's years as an Anglican, influenced by worshiping with the liturgy of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, where the rubrics require a doxology after each psalm. The addition of didactic titles and doxologies to the SPG version of the songs strengthens the hypothesis that Neau could have used his own songs in worship with students in his school.

Additionally, the songs found only in the SPG manuscript are more didactic than the earlier songs in the *Histoire Abrégée*, indicating that Neau might have composed them for his students. They include, for example, a sung, original version of the Nicene Creed, which is clearly a catechetical device, an aid in learning the creed. It is prefaced by a didactic opening stanza: "My God, my Lord, and my Father, my Creator in whom I hope, I come to profess before you the sincerity of my faith and the love that I have for your law, that I feel imprinted within me." It ends in a similar fashion: "Here is my very orthodox faith, that my heart believes without paradox, but I have need of your aid. Come quickly, Lord, and hurry to firm up my faith always within me, for You alone are my

[35] "Pour demander le Secours," and "Pour demander a Dieu son Amour."

salvation."[36] One can imagine a class reciting these words together, along with the Creed, as part of their lesson.

Neau's writing also shows signs of improvement in the versions of the songs in the SPG papers. Most of the editing is merely grammatical or poetic, although some editing results in a slight change of meaning. In *Cantique IX,* for example, Neau writes, "That's why, my God/ I offer you my life/ In this same place/ where you allowed/ that I be placed, I sanctify it [my life]."[37] The version of this same song in the SPG papers, *Cantique XXXIV*, becomes, without reference to the sanctification of his prison: "That's why, my God/ I offer you my life/ in this same place/ For you allowed/ that I be placed here/ I glorify you."[38] In *Cantique XIV,* "Come visit me in this sad abode" becomes, "Come make me visible in this sad abode." In *Cantique XIV* and its equivalent *Hymne LIII*, some changes are minor; however, the whole last stanza is omitted in the SPG version, replaced by a doxology. In the stanza omitted for the SPG, Neau praises the miracle of God's goodness—a miracle which, despite all obstacles, provides the poor man in his suffering with divine help and support.[39] It is possible that this stanza was considered so dangerously radical in the years following the 1712 New York Slave

[36]Elias Neau, "Hymne XXXIII," *Hymnes ou cantiques sacrez,"* British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG series C, box 1, item 73, images 235-238. In the appendix, see "Hymne XXXIII," pages 30-32, lines 1-6 and 69-74. All other references to this edition are cited in short form with Neau, hymn number, *Hymnes*, and page and line numbers from the appendix.

[37] Elias Neau, "Cantique IX," in "Cantiques sacrés composés dans les cachots par Elie Neau, confesseur de Jésus-Christ sur les galères," in Jean Morin, *Histoire Abrégée des soufrances du Sieur Elie Neau sur les galères et dans les cachots de Marseille* (Rotterdam, NE: Abraham Acher, 1701), 272. All other references to *cantiques* from this edition are cited in short form with Neau, cantique number, *Histoire Abrégée*, and page and line numbers from the appendix.

[38] Neau, "Cantique XXXIV," *Hymnes*, appendix page 18, lines 26-31.

[39] Neau, "Cantique XIV," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 26, and Neau, "Hymne LIII," *Hymnes*, appendix page 26, lines 49-65.

Rebellion that Neau removed it before sending this song to the SPG. In any case, it is plausible that Neau, as a writer, would have revisited his earlier work during his years of prosperity in New York, making the changes himself or asking a friend to edit his work.

Secondary Contemporary Materials

The earliest account of Neau and his school, outside of Neau's own letters, comes from Neau's colleague John Sharpe in his pamphlet, *Proposals for Erecting a School, Library and Chapel at New York.* Sharpe was "chaplain to her majesty's forts and forces" in the colony of New York and knew Neau personally. He was engaged in the process of raising funds to build a public library in the city and included an account of Neau and his school in his proposal. He even left a copy of this 1713 proposal with Neau, to be presented to New York Governor Hunter.[40] In the proposal, Sharpe praised Neau and his work and provided a detailed account of the 1712 slave revolt, emphasizing Neau's innocence. Sharpe commended Neau's piety and reported that he could "condescend familiarly to discourse with those poor slaves, who are put to the vilest drudgeries," taking pains to teach them in such a way that even they can give "a very rational account of the grounds of their faith" when questioned.[41]

Another early account of Elias Neau's work and character comes from SPG Secretary David Humphreys, with whom Neau corresponded regularly. In his history of the SPG, *An Account of the Endeavours used by the Society for the Propagation of the*

[40] Erin Schreiner, "The John Sharpe Collection at the New York Society Library," December 24, 2013. https://www.nysoclib.org/blog/john-sharp-collection-new-york-society-library. Accessed July 2022.

[41] John Sharpe, "Rev. John Sharpe's Proposals Etc. [for Erecting a School Library and Chapel at New York] March 1713," *Collections of the New York Historical Society/ Publication Fund Series* 25, 1881: 348.

Gospel in Foreign Parts, Humphreys provides a brief positive account of Neau's role as SPG catechist. Published in 1730, this account argues for Neau's innocence of wrongdoing in the 1712 slave revolt and uses Neau's successes to argue for the continued evangelization of enslaved Africans in the colonies. Humphreys describes Neau as a "Man of Piety, of Sober Deportment, and serious Life" whose humility allowed him to "bear with the many Inconveniences" of working with the enslaved.[42]

Later Studies of Neau

As time went on, nineteenth-century scholars continued to turn Neau into a hero of the faith. They lauded him for conforming from his Reformed origins to the Anglican Church, rising above "sectarian religion" to "save the meanest and weakest of men" by establishing the first school for the enslaved in the mainland American colonies.[43] In 1902, Charles Briggs rhapsodized: "There are few in modern history so resplendent with the beatitudes of our Savior and so marked with the graces and scars of the victors of the Apocalypse."[44]

As the first school for enslaved people in the North American colonies, Neau's school has drawn the attention of historians of African American history, especially in

[42]David Humphreys, "An Account of the Endeavours used by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts ... from its Foundation to the Year 1728," (London, UK: Joseph Downing, 1730), 6.

[43] Charles A. Briggs, "Elias Neau, the Confessor and Catechist of Negro and Indian Slaves." *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of America* 3 (1891):116.

[44] Briggs, "Confessor," 115.

colonial New York.[45] Huguenot scholars have also included Neau in their research. In the twentieth-century, Jon Butler and Frank Klingberg in America, as well as Emile Léonard in France, were deeply interested in Neau's work and writings as representing the Reformed tradition. For Butler, in his important work on Huguenot refugees in America, Neau was especially worthy of study as an example of a "conforming Huguenot." Catherine Randall devotes a chapter to Neau and her version of pietism in *From a Far Country: Camisards and Huguenots in the Atlantic World* (2011). She focuses on the Camisards, a distinct group of radical protestant insurgents in Southern France, and tries to tie Neau to their brand of "radical pietism."

Anglican scholars have investigated Neau's role as SPG catechist. Jon Dix and E. Clowes Chorley wrote about Neau in their historical accounts of Trinity Church. Travis Glasson includes Neau in his excellent 2011 study of the Anglican Church and slavery in the Atlantic World, *Mastering Christianity*. Even the 2010 Episcopal publication *Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints* remembers Neau (albeit with inaccurate biographical information) on September 7, the date of his death.[46]

[45] Scholars such as Sheldon Cohen, Thelma Wills Foote, Joyce Goodfriend, Paula Wheeler Carlo, and Patricia Bonomi have investigated Neau as part of their work on black Christianity and society in the colony.

[46] The Church Pension Fund, "Elie Naud," *Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints* (New York: Church Publishing, 2010), 565. This account is historically flawed in many respects. The short biography states that Neau fled France for England and then New York, completely omitting the time that he spent in the West Indies and in Boston. His years as a ship's captain are described incorrectly as a time of traveling in stowage across the Atlantic "to raise money for Huguenot causes." No mention is made of his time as a galley slave. The authors claim that Neau "became acquainted with Episcopalians" in New York, when the Episcopal Church did not yet exist, and state that he joined the French Church in New York after he became an Anglican, rather than before. They also conveniently fail to mention that the law that Neau was involved in passing in Parliament "to demand Christian instruction for the children of slaves" was in reality a law that helped embed chattel slavery in the colony. The 2016 edition corrects a few, but not all, of these inaccuracies.

With current interest in the role that the Protestant church played in the institution of slavery throughout the Atlantic world, scholars have begun to investigate the role of the SPG in the enslavement of Africans. Historian Katharine Gerbner includes a detailed look at Neau and his school in her chapter on the SPG in *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (2011). Gerbner is interested in Neau as an SPG catechist, especially his role in crafting the 1706 law that reinforced "Christian slavery" in New York. In her studies of Moravian missions in the British colonies, she also points to the link between eighteenth-century German pietism and the SPG and SPCK in England and the colonies. While Gerbner does not link Neau himself to pietism, Graham Hodges, in his 1999 study, *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey 1613-1863*, does point to such ties. He mentions Neau's emphasis on pietist themes such as "the suffering of Jesus, the importance of private family worship, the utility of despair, and millenarianism."[47]

The preeminent expert on Elias Neau is Ruth Whelan, who has written numerous articles and book chapters about Neau in French and English. She is an Irish scholar of early-modern French literature, with connections to French Protestant academic circles. Her publications include a study of Pierre Bayle, as well as work on a variety of Huguenot narratives. Her work inscribes Neau's autobiographical accounts in the genre of Huguenot *mémoires* and places his narratives in the tradition of the Huguenot galley-slaves. Whelan views Neau's vocabulary as the specific bible-encoded "language of Canaan" used by Huguenots, and she investigates the origins of the mysticism found in

[47] Graham R. Hodges, *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey, 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), 56-57.

his *cantiques.* Whelan's most recent article, "Soul Songs: A Snippet View of Élie Neau's 'Hymnes, ou Cantiques Sacrés' (1718)," provides a valuable edited edition of the remaining hymns that Neau sent to the SPG in 1718, along with information about Neau and his teaching that confirms my own research.

Chapter Two: Biography

Neau himself clearly traces his own life story in the letters assembled by Jean Morin in the *Histoire Abrégée*. His inclusion of names and dates in his account allows us to verify his story and to place Neau in his context throughout his many adventures. From Europe to the West Indies to Boston and New York, Neau's journey reflects life in the Atlantic world at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Moëze, France

Elie Neau was born into a Huguenot family in the town of Moëze in the Saintonge region in 1662. On the southwestern coast of France, the area was highly Protestant and a center for maritime trade. Not surprisingly, Neau followed the local custom and went to sea as a cabin boy in 1674, at age twelve. His formal schooling would therefore have been minimal. Instead, his early understanding of God and of the Christian life would have come from what he heard from the sermons of his pastor, Jean Morin; from family and members of the Huguenot community; and from the practices of psalm-singing and Bible-reading common in all Huguenot households. Neau would soon need the strength of the songs and psalms of his childhood. As a teenager, he already felt the need to leave France and his family to establish himself elsewhere, as a new wave of government crackdowns on Huguenots began in his region. Hundreds of restrictions placed upon Huguenots between 1680 and 1685 made life miserable for Protestants, with Huguenots banned from their professions, forced to house the King's soldiers, and prevented from holding public worship.

The West Indies

In 1679, at age seventeen, Neau fled the growing troubles in France for what he called the "American islands," settling in the French colony of Saint-Domingue in the West Indies. For the next five or six years, he worked as a merchant seaman in the area, trading between French, Dutch, and British colonies.[48] Neau's parents and siblings, however, continued to live in Moëze. Neau's parents were still alive in 1692 when Neau wrote to them from prison in St. Malo. Neau's mother is thought to have died around 1695. Neau's two sisters Susan and Rachel eventually left France, moved to Boston, married, and had children. His brother James died in 1712, perhaps in New York.[49]

It is not surprising that, as a Huguenot sailor, Neau first left France for the West Indies. La Rochelle, the Protestant stronghold of Neau's region and an important French port, had been the main supply-base for the French colonies in the Indies since the 1660's.[50] Protestants from Holland, France, and England, involved in Atlantic trade networks, had established settlements and congregations in the West Indies early in the seventeenth century. As tobacco, indigo, and finally sugar cane plantations spread across the Islands, shipping these goods, together with the enslaved Africans who made this cultivation possible, became a lucrative endeavor. Protestant family networks grew, as

[48] Ruth Whelan, "The Extraordinary Voyage of Elie Neau (c.1662 – 1722), Naturalized Englishman and French Protestant Galley Slave," *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 29, no. 4 (2011): 501.

[49] Suzanne van H. Sauter, "Elias Neau: A Presentation to the Huguenot Society of North Carolina," (April 14, 2012), 1. https://nationalhuguenotsociety.org/states/nc/documents/Life_of_Elias_Neau_by_S_Sauter.pdf.

[50] Gérard Lafleur and Lucien Abénon, "The Protestants and the Colonization of the French West Indies," *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, ed. Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 268.

merchants in Europe and planters in the Islands intermarried. Protestant sea captains traveled back and forth across the Atlantic and between the islands to transport goods. By the 1670's, when Neau arrived in the Islands, Huguenot and Dutch Protestant networks controlled between twenty-five and thirty percent of French West Indian sugar production.[51]

Neau does not write about participating in the slave trade himself, but neither does he describe any of his activities as a free sailor, leaving the record unclear. According to maritime records, a number of French ships leaving from La Rochelle transported enslaved Africans to the West Indies. Neau's participation as a crew member is therefore quite possible.[52] Whether or not Neau served on ships that carried enslaved Africans, he would have been exposed at an early age to the growing culture, commerce, and theological justifications surrounding the slave trade.

During Neau's time as a sailor, devotional works by the Dutch Calvinist pastor Godfried Cornelisz Udemans were popular among Protestant sailors and merchants. One of Udeman's best-known works, *'t Geestelijk roer van't coopmans schip*, (*The Spiritual Rudder of the Merchant's Ship*) was a "famous companion for lonely seamen" throughout the seventeenth century.[53] Not only did Udemans outline steps for leading a Christian life of repentance and humility, based on personal piety and devotion, he was an early

[51] Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, "Minority Survival: The Huguenot Paradigm in France and the Diaspora," *Memory and Identity*, 13.

[52] https://www.slavevoyages.org. Geggus also mentions that much of seventeenth-century French traffic in enslaved Africans is missing from lists and databases, since a large part of it was clandestine, conducted by merchants who were challenging the royal companies. See David Geggus, "The French Slave Trade: An Overview," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (Jan. 2001): 120.

[53] Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 21.

proponent of the doctrine of the "fortunate fall," explaining that slavery exposed Africans to the true faith and saved them from "popish mischief."[54] For Udemans, slavery was justified, as long as the enslaved were educated in (Reformed) Christian principles. Neau would have been familiar with this belief, prevalent among merchants of the East and West India Companies at the time, driving him in his calling to Christianize New York's slaves.

Neau would have experienced a greater freedom of religion in the Islands than he had known in France. Historically, the West Indies had been a kind of refuge for the Huguenot merchants and adventurers who settled there. As one Catholic friar complained, "At all times … the governors here have suffered heretics."[55] Similarly, Roman Catholic priest Jean Baptiste du Tertre grumbled in his account of his voyage to the Indies that the ship's captain was a Huguenot, "*un hérétique très-obstiné*," who made the Catholics suffer during the voyage.[56] One early governor of Saint-Domingue, Jean le Vasseur, was a Huguenot who briefly guaranteed liberty of conscience to both Protestants and Catholics on the island. Even though King Louis XIV had begun a serious program in 1651 to send missionary priests like Du Tertre to the colony to "convert infidels," including both enslaved Africans and Huguenots, the missionary effort was largely ignored by the colonists."[57] Huguenots continued to settle and prosper on the island.

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[54] Hodges, *Root and Branch,* 21.

[55] Charles W. Baird, *History of the Huguenot Emigration to America,* vol. 1 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1885), 205.

[56] Jean Baptiste du Tertre, *Contenant l'histoire natvrelle.* Vol. 4 of *Histoire generale des Antilles habitées par les François: Divisée en deux tomes, et enrichie de cartes & de figures* (Paris, FR: Jolly, 1667), 44.

[57] George A. Breathitt, "The Religious Missions in colonial French Saint Domingue," (PhD diss., 1954), 25.

Moreover, with the islands so close to one another, French Protestants could go to worship in nearby Dutch or British colonies. The French-speaking Walloon Church in Holland regularly sent French-speaking pastors to the Indies to take care of their brethren there.[58]

The teenage Neau would have encountered an exciting variety of people and ideas in Saint-Domingue. From its beginnings, the French colonizers were a complex and chaotic mix of fortune-seekers and pirates.[59] Immigrants to the island were often poor, arriving as indentured servants and even as escaped galley slaves. It was an easy place to make one's fortune "by trickery or hard work."[60] In the 1630's, "*flibustiers*" or "fly-boaters" made the colony their base as they attacked Spanish shipping interests. In the interior of the island, "*boucaniers*" hunted the feral cattle and pigs left from earlier Spanish settlements and sold their hides and meat to European merchants.[61] These adventurers were still part of life in Saint- Domingue when Neau arrived in the 1670's, especially the well-armed *flibustiers,* who directed their attacks on enemy Spanish ships.[62] Over the years, as the colony changed hands between Spain, England, and France, the inhabitants managed to get by with their own rules and conventions. These

[58] Baird, *History,* 207.

[59] The French colony only occupied the western part of the island of Saint-Domingue and Tortuga, the eastern part still belonging to Spain.

[60] Pierre de Vaissière, *Saint-Domingue: la société et la vie créoles sous l'ancien regime* (Paris, FR: Perrin, 1909), 53.

[61] Gene E. Ogle, "Policing Saint Domingue: Race, Violence, and Honor in an Old Regime Colony," (PhD diss., 2003), 29.

[62] Vaissière, *Saint-Domingue,* 20.

adventurers, "a melee of buccaneer, filibuster, Huguenot, opportunist, and earnest"[63] inhabitants, had little interest in religion or in laws brought from Europe.

What became increasingly important to everyone, however, was the cultivation of tobacco, coffee, and indigo, and the plantation economy that grew along with it.[64] In 1664, just fifteen years before Neau's arrival, France took definitive control of their colony in Saint- Domingue, putting it in the hands of the West India Company in order to create a more settled and profitable plantation colony. In the 1670's, increased tobacco production brought more enslaved Africans into the colony. Responding to the pleas of the Catholic missionaries on the island, the Governor General of the French Islands declared that masters could not prevent their enslaved Africans from attending mass on Sundays. If masters did not allow them to attend catechism classes, they could be fined 120 pounds worth of tobacco. If, by the third offense, the masters still prevented the conversion of their enslaved workers, the Negroes would be sold (at a profit to the master) to a devout Catholic colonist.[65] Having observed these laws in Saint- Domingue, it is not surprising that Neau desired to create a Protestant version of them in the New York legislature when he himself was a catechist.

It was during his time in the West Indies that Neau experienced a true conversion experience that he describes in the language of heart-religion. He writes that God sent

[63] Breathitt, "Religious Missions,"20.

[64] Sugar cultivation came later, increasing rapidly from 1701-25. See Geggus, "French Slave Trade," 126.

[65] Breathitt, "Religious Missions,"29.

him an unidentified "sharp affliction"[66] and began to speak to his heart, making him aware of God's love.[67] Neau explained that, before his conversion, he "distracted [himself] impudently among the creatures" even though he always perceived "a ray of light glimmering in my heart." Neau believed that it was this inkling of God that the Lord used to lead his faith "to perfection."[68] Whelan postulates that Neau could have come under the influence of Dutch Reformed pastors in the islands who had been versed in the writings of thirteenth-century Flemish mystic John Ruusbroec.[69] While such influences are possible, Neau's account of his conversion could also be influenced by the many various strains of heart-religion found in the writings that he encountered in the galleys and as a sailor throughout the Atlantic world.

In 1683, regulations concerning Protestants in the Indies were multiplied and enforced. King Louis XIV, in support of the evangelism efforts of his Jesuit missionaries, expelled all Jews from the French islands and began to restrict the freedoms of Protestant colonists, preventing them from holding public office, owning land, or practicing their religion (although coming and going for trade was allowed!)[70] The *Code Noir* of 1685, set forth just a few months before the infamous Edict of Fontainebleau, clamped down fiercely on all Protestants in the French Empire, where Catholicism became the only

[66] Although a link cannot be established in his writing, it is possible that the "sharp affliction" to which he refers is more than convention. Was it a physical affliction? Or could his conscience have been pierced by the cruelty and brutality involved in the slave trade, seen first-hand in Saint-Domingue?

[67] Jean Morin, *A Short Account Of The Life And Sufferings Of Elias Neau: Upon The Gallies, And In The Dungeons Of Marseilles*, trans. John Christian Jacobi (London, UK: John Lewis, 1749), 42.

[68] Morin, *A Short Account*, 43.

[69] Whelan, "Mysticism," 236-37.

[70] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 503.

tolerated religion. Masters were required to catechize and baptize their enslaved Africans as Roman Catholics—although the enslaved kept their status as chattel after conversion.[71] With the restrictions of the *Code Noir* in place, Elias Neau, like many of his fellow Protestant sailors and merchants, quickly left the Islands to find a safer home-base in the mainland American colonies.

Boston

By the mid 1680's, there were as many as one hundred Huguenot families living in the English Puritan town of Boston; many, like Neau, had arrived after spending time in the West Indies.[72] Boston, as an international commercial port, appealed to Neau in his career aspirations as a ship captain, and he joined the Huguenot community there. Arriving in Boston around 1686, Neau soon married another Huguenot, Susanne Paré, in 1688. Susanne was originally from La Rochelle, near Neau's hometown. She had left France in 1681 with her widowed mother and two sisters. After spending time as a refugee in London, the family arrived destitute in Boston in 1682.[73] Two years after their marriage, in 1690, Neau became a naturalized English citizen, a requirement for anyone who wanted to command an English trading vessel according to the Navigation Acts. He

[71] Katharine R. Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 25.

[72] Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 73. Afraid that the Huguenots were secretly French Catholics sent by the Antichrist in Huguenot disguise, the General Court ordered newly arrived refugees from the West Indies to take the colony's oath of allegiance. (Butler, *The Huguenots*, 74.)

[73] Sauter, "A Presentation," 2.

continued to work at sea.[74] In that same year, Susanne and Elias had their first child, a daughter who lived only eight days.

Neau and his family would have attended the small French Church in Boston, where fellow former West Indian resident David de Bonrepos was the Huguenot pastor when they arrived in the city. We know that Neau developed relationships, however, with Puritan leaders, as well. Neau met John Eliot, known as the "Apostle to the Indians," shortly after his arrival in Boston and was strongly influenced by his catechetical work. Eliot, a non-Conformist with millennialist leanings, had established fourteen "Praying Indian Villages" in eastern central New England. These villages were flourishing during Neau's years in Boston, and according to Briggs, Neau visited one or more of them.[75] Eliot reached out to Native Americans by teaching them first to exemplify Puritan virtues and to speak English, then by sharing the tenets of his version of the Christian Gospel, and finally by leading them to a conversion experience and personal relationship with God.[76] Neau would remember Eliot's success and personal conversion model as he later began his own missionary efforts.

Puritan leader Cotton Mather also took a great interest in Neau, calling him a "Friend."[77] For Mather, Neau provided an excellent illustration of the kind of heroic

[74] Morin, *A Short Account*, 10.

[75] Briggs, "The Confessor*,"* 105.

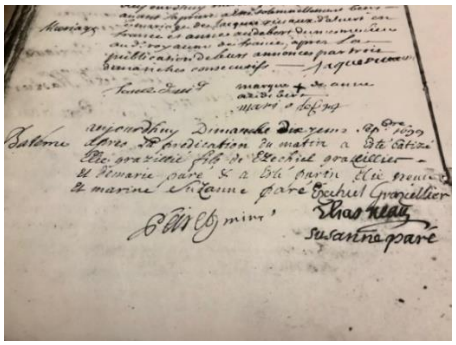
[76] D. Rae Gould, Holly Herbster, Heather Law Pezzarossi, Stephen A. Mrozowski, and Cheryl Toney Holley, "Threads of Continuity: Cultural and Temporal Intersections across Nipmuc Homelands," *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration: Discovering Histories That Have Futures,* 1st ed. (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2020), 34-35.

[77] Cotton Mather, Diary entry May 2, 1699, quoted in Rice, "Cotton Mather," 214.

resistance to Roman Catholicism that Mather advocated. Relations between Neau and Mather were close enough that when Mather learned that Neau had joined the Anglican Church in 1704, he was devastated. Mather wrote in his diary, '"The Apostasy of that famous French Confessor, Mr. Elias Neau at New York, is to me one of the most grievous and shocking Things that I have mett withal. I desire to do something towards his Recovery, or at least, a Testimony proper for this Occasion.'"[78]

New York

By 1690, Neau and his family had joined the Huguenot community in New York City and were worshiping at the "French Church." Founded by pastor Pierre Peiret in 1688, this community grew to welcome two hundred families in worship by 1695. In comparison, the Dutch Reformed church was comprised of four hundred and fifty families, and the Anglican church had only ninety during this same time period.[79] Susanne Neau's sisters had already settled in the city, and her brother-in-law Ezéchiel Grazillier was a lay leader in the French Church.



Signatures of Elias Neau and his wife Susanne Paré as godparents at the baptism of their nephew Elie Grazillié in September 1699. From the Archives of the French Church du Saint Esprit, New York. Photograph taken in 2019 at the French Church.

[78] Evan Haefeli and Owen Stanwood, "Jesuits, Huguenots, and the Apocalypse: The Origins of America's First French Book," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 116, no. 1 (2006): 98.

[79] Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City*, Columbia History of Urban Life (New York: Perseus, 1995), 24.

Unlike Boston, New York in the late 1680's was already a "melting pot" of colonists from all over Europe, and the various worshiping communities in the city reflected this variety. In 1687, Governor Thomas Dongan reported that the city was '"a spiritual cornucopia of Dutch Calvinists, Dutch Lutherans, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, orthodox Quakers, Singing Quakers, Ranting Quakers, Sabbatarians, Antisabbatarians, some Anabaptists, some Independents, some Jews.'"[80] French Huguenots, too, made up a distinct community within the East Ward of the city, where they often became successful merchants and seamen. The first major group of French Protestants had arrived in 1686 from the West Indies, followed by another group from England, a group from Boston, and some others from a failed Huguenot colony in Rhode Island. Seventy-one percent of New York Huguenots stemmed from Neau's own home region on the western coast of France.[81] By 1698, Huguenots comprised 9.5% of the white population of the city. New York Huguenots also owned more enslaved Africans than any other group, except for the Jewish community, a clear sign of their prosperity, their ties to commerce, and their participation in the growing institution of slavery.[82]

We do not know the extent to which Neau was involved in the slave trade during his sea-faring days in New York. We do know, however, that in 1692, at age thirty, he took command of the *Marquise*, a relatively small eighty-ton ship belonging to a friend

[80] Butler, *Huguenots in America*, 144.

[81] Joyce Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot: Society and Culture in Colonial New York City, 1664-1730* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 47-50.

[82] In 1703, 37% of Dutch households were slave owners, as were 44% of English households, 50% of French households, and 75% of Jewish households. See Butler, *Huguenots in America*, 150.

and fellow Huguenot, the wealthy merchant Gabriel Laboyteaux.[83] Like many Huguenot-owned trading companies, the Laboyteaux company was family-owned and operated. Gabriel supervised operations in New York, and brothers Pierre and Paul managed business in Amsterdam.[84] With close-knit operators in the New World and in Europe, the company could trade easily across the Atlantic World. On one such voyage, with Neau at the helm, we know that the *Marquise* left New York for Jamaica.[85] While neither the ship nor Laboyteaux are listed in the registers as being directly involved in bringing enslaved Africans to North America, the trajectory from Boston to Jamaica could have at least included provisions to supply the plantations in the Indies.[86]

It was common for New York merchants with Caribbean contacts from their years in the provisions trade to profit from slavery by dabbling in the transport of enslaved human beings. Some would bring enslaved people along from Africa to the Indies, then continue the trip by bringing other non-human cargo from the Indies to New York. For example, records indicate that a New York trader named Frederick Philipse brought several hundred enslaved people from Africa to Barbados; because they did not enter the port of New York, however, they were not registered there by customs. Another ship that did enter New York included six enslaved Africans squeezed in around a shipment of rum. These men were taken on board in Barbados, along with the rum, after other

[83] Shelden S. Cohen, "Elias Neau, Instructor to New York's Slaves," *New York Historical Society Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (1971): 9.

[84] Morin, *A Short Account*, 50.

[85] Morin, *Histoire Abrégée*, 3.

[86] In addition, a ship of only eighty-tons, like the *Marquise*, was built for shorter voyages along the American coast and to the West Indies. It was not made for Atlantic crossings and therefore would not have been involved in slaving voyages to the African continent.

Africans were dropped off on the island.[87] Given these sorts of clandestine arrangements, ships like Neau's could have been involved in the slave trade without any documentation in official records.

France Once Again

Neau's ship, the *Marquise,* never reached its destination in Jamaica. The War of the League of Augsburg, also known as King William's War (1689-1697), had brought French privateers into Caribbean waters. Since the Anglo-Dutch navies had cut off French commerce, the French had licensed privateers to protect French trade and disrupt enemy shipping.[88] Neau's ship fell prey off the coast of Bermuda to a French privateer from St. Malo, Julien Boussaut, who was returning home from Saint-Domingue.[89] Privateers usually traveled in convoys of three to five ships. Their goal was to escort the captured enemy ship back to the pirates' home port, where the spoils would be divided and a large percentage of the booty given to French royal coffers.[90] Since Boussaut was traveling alone, however, he demanded a ransom of 3500 pounds for the captured ship and cargo. The pirate decided to take Neau with him as a hostage on his own ship until he received the ransom money from Laboyteaux. Neau's vessel, captained by some of the pirates, was sent back to New York.[91]

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[87] Jeanne Chase, "New York State Slave Trade, 1698-1741: The Geographical Origins of a Displaced People," *Histoire et Mésure* 18 (1/2 2003): 21.

[88] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 506.

[89] Saint-Malo is a port city in Brittany known at the time as "la cité des corsaires," since privateers used it as a base for attacking English and Dutch ships. Whelan, "Soul Songs," 64.

[90] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 507.

[91] Morin, *Histoire Abrégée*, 10. The ship never made it back to New York, however, since the pirates got lost and arrived instead in the Spanish port of Tenerife, where the governor seized the ship.

In the meantime, Neau and Boussaut arrived in Saint Malo, where Neau was jailed, awaiting payment of the ransom. When authorities learned that Neau was a French protestant, the French court demanded that he abjure the *Religion Prétendue Réformée*. Neau refused. He tried instead to prove that he was now a naturalized citizen of England and no longer subject to French law. The Laboyteaux family in Amsterdam even lobbied for his release. The court, however, ignored his pleas. After four months in the prison of Saint Malo, Neau was condemned to serve as a galley slave for life, convicted of having left France for a foreign country without authorization. He was forced to join the chain of prisoners walking from Rennes to Marseilles on April 3, 1693.

This "Great Chain" was a "ritualized spectacle of power and punishment" that crossed France twice each year.[92] Convicts were placed in iron neck-collars and attached to a heavy chain that linked several hundred men together. Prisoners from jails across the country joined the Chain during the forced march, until they all arrived, sick and suffering, in Marseilles. The men in charge of the chains often scrimped on rations and on care for their prisoners, since they were paid a fixed per capita amount for each man who reached Marseilles alive, regardless of his condition.[93] After thirty-seven days on foot, and suffering from dysentery, Neau arrived in Marseilles on May 19, 1693.[94]

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[92] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 508.

[93]Paul Walden Bamford, "The Procurement of Oarsmen for French Galleys, 1660-1748," in *The American Historical Review* 65, no. 1 (1959): 43.

[94] Morin, *Histoire Abrégée*, 12.

The Galleys

Neau was first placed as prisoner on the galley *Vieille Madame*. After six months, Neau was then placed on *La Magnanime* for another six months.[95] It was during this time in the early 1690's that the French galley fleet had reached its zenith, with almost twelve thousand oarsmen.[96] The galleys were ships built for Mediterranean warfare and pageantry, especially between France and Spain. Since they plied the Mediterranean Sea, often sitting in port without moving, hot temperatures on the ships in summer were unbearable. Indeed, life on the king's galleys was grim. Most galley ships measured a mere one hundred-fifty feet long and forty feet across, while they held around three hundred enslaved men, all crammed below deck on benches of five or six prisoners.[97] These prisoners ranged from ordinary criminals, to vagabonds, to French army deserters, to captured Turks, to Huguenots. There were young boys and old men. They all worked, slept, ate, and excreted waste at their benches. The men were fettered at the ankles by a heavy chain and pulled the oars at the command of an overseer. Any complaint or defiance would have resulted in a whipping.[98] Galley slaves' heads were shaved, and they wore a uniform of a special cloak and red bonnet, a sign of their enslavement and shame that could be seen from afar. Of the 1450 Huguenots condemned to life on the galleys under Louis XIV, forty-four percent died in captivity, most within the first three years. Some committed suicide. Another twenty percent were released quickly, probably for

[95] Morin, *Histoire Abrégée*, 13.

[96] Bamford, "Procurement," 46.

[97] Cohen, "Elias Neau," 10.

[98] Cohen, "Elias Neau," 10.

abjuring their faith; and thirty-six percent served four years or longer, some for as many as thirty years.[99]

On the galleys, Neau became a spiritual leader among the other prisoners. The Catholic chaplain on the *Magnanime* nicknamed him "the pastor." Surprisingly, Huguenot piety on the galleys flourished. While Roman Catholic priests on board insisted upon the prisoners attending mass on the ships and punished the men for praying Protestant prayers and singing psalms, the prisoners secretly met for common prayer and passed devotional materials around to one another, even from ship to ship. They reported reading the Bible daily.[100] Neau, for example, wrote to his wife that he had copied out about twenty good sermons when he was on the galleys. He had left half of them at a home offshore so that if he were searched, not all would be found. He reported that he had an English bible, an exposition of Psalm 51 in English, and another "little English Book."[101] While other Huguenot galley slaves might have possessed fewer resources than did Neau, psalters, bibles, "books of piety" and pamphlets were common. Prisoners mention possessing *Traité de la Dévotion* and *Amour Divin* by the Huguenot author Pierre Jurieu, examples of the Huguenot heart-religion of the time.[102]

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[99] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 512.

[100] Emile Léonard, *Histoire générale du protestantisme,* vol. 3 (Paris, FR: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), 61.

[101] Cotton Mather and Elias Neau, *A Present from a Farr Countrey, to the People of New England: A Great Voice from Heaven, to These Parts of the Earth: In an Excellent Letter Full of Divine Rarities, Lately Written from a Terrible Prison in France* (Boston: Michael Perry, 1698), 15.

[102] Emile Léonard, "La pieté de l'église des galères sous Louis XIV," *Mélanges offerts à M. Paul-E. Martin* (Geneva: Comité des Mélanges à Paul-E. Martin, 1961), 101.

At the same time, Neau might have been exposed to Roman Catholic devotional materials on the galleys, as priests passed out pamphlets to the captives. Whelan suggests that Neau might have uncritically assimilated the popular Catholic theology of personal suffering as *imitatio Christi* from his time in the galleys.[103] Given Neau's determined and life-long rejection of Roman Catholicism, it is difficult to imagine that he would allow himself to take seriously anything presented to him by a priest. As we will see in Chapter Four, however, seventeenth-century Huguenot theologians had absorbed a similar theology of suffering that was spreading through Protestant circles, as well.

Neau in Prison

After being removed from the galleys for encouraging other prisoners to resist conversion by the Catholic chaplain, Neau spent time in two prisons in Marseilles, where he continued to be moved from place to place for breaking rules. Neau explained, for example, that he was once moved for speaking to another prisoner and encouraging him, and once moved for singing psalms.[104] Neau first spent time in the Citadelle de Marseilles, also known as the Fort St. Nicolas, from May 1694 until July 1696. He was then moved to the infamous Chateau d'If, where he spent fifty days in a cell with a view of the sea, followed by six months in a dark dungeon, from September 1696 until March 1697. Neau describes his cell in the Chateau d'If as completely dark, except for the weak light that came through the crevice of the door. He wore a galley slave cap on his head constantly. He had shirts and "drawers" but no shoes.[105] He was forced to live only "upon

[103] Whelan, "Mysticism," 237.

[104] Morin, *A Short Account*, 59.

[105] Morin, *A Short Account*, 46.

the king's ordinary" of five pence per day, deprived of the financial help from friends that other prisoners were accorded. He was refused a doctor when sick.[106]

Normally, when not being punished by prison authorities, Neau and the other prisoners would have received support from a large Protestant network during their imprisonment. They corresponded with family and friends in exile, as well as with their exiled pastors, who wrote back to exhort the prisoners to remain firm in their faith.[107] Two women in Holland, Miss Van Armeyden and Miss De Peray, served as a post-office and clearinghouse for this correspondence.[108] When the prisoners received letters of encouragement from their fellow Huguenots, they shared the good news, circulating the letters secretly among themselves.[109] As the news of their plight spread, the prisoners became famous all over the Atlantic world, and Protestant leaders as diverse as the Marquis Jacques de Rochegude in Switzerland and Puritan leader Cotton Mather in Boston pled their case, published their writings, and collected money to be sent to them for supplies.[110] Less famous supporters throughout Reformed Europe would sometimes "adopt" a galley slave, writing him letters and sending him money when possible.

After the Peace of Ryswick ended King William's War in 1697, tensions between France and England abated enough to ease negotiations for Neau's freedom. The Earl of Portland, Britain's ambassador to the court of Louis XIV, was finally able to secure

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[106] Morin, *A Short Account,* 60.

[107] Rice, "Cotton Mather," 216.

[108] Rice, "Cotton Mather," 217.

[109] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 516.

[110] Rice, "Cotton Mather," 217.

release for some of the convicted Huguenots in 1698. In July of that year, Neau learned that he was to be granted liberty, with six weeks to leave France for good.[111] Once released, Neau was lifted up as a hero of the Huguenot resistance throughout Europe. He first traveled from Marseilles to a congregation in Orange, France, then to a congregation in Lyons and later to Geneva, where he was well-received and nursed back to health at the home of New Testament professor Benedict Calandrin.[112] Neau continued to travel around Switzerland through protestant *cantons*, where he raised money for his fellow Huguenots who were still imprisoned.[113] In Zurich alone, he is said to have raised 19,600 *livres* in a single day.[114] In Bern, he was able to meet with the Swiss theologian of ethics, Jean-Frédéric Ostervald.[115] Neau then traveled to Holland and to England, visiting and thanking his benefactors there. After an audience with King William III, he was given three hundred florins and the promise that the king would do everything that he could to secure the freedom of those still enslaved in the galleys.[116]

It was likely during his stay in England that Neau met with Jean Morin, his former pastor from Moëze, to plan publication of his letters, resulting in the French *Histoire Abrégée*.[117] It is also during this time in London that he published his first account in

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[111] Morin, *A Short Account*, 72.

[112] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 513.

[113] Morin, *A Short Account*, 72.

[114] Briggs, "The Confessor," 108.

[115] Gaston Tournier, ed. *Histoire des souffrances du sieur Elie Naud sur les galères et dans les cachots de Marseille (1701),* (France: Musée du Désert, 1939) quoted in Yves Kéler, "Les chants d'Elie Neau." https://chants-protestants.com/chants/chants-et-cantiques-dauteurs/les-chants-de-elie-neau-16/011-les-chants-delie-neau/ Accessed January 4, 2023.

[116] Briggs, "The Confessor," 108.

[117] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 514.

English, *An Account of the Sufferings of the French Protestants.* In addition, during his time in Geneva with professor Calandrin, he collaborated on a publication for the galley slaves who were still in captivity. Published in 1699, these *Réglements fait sur les galères de France par les confesseurs qui souffrent pour la verité de l'Evangile* are a series of rules meant to establish religious discipline on board the galleys. Full of ethical injunctions and appeals to a holiness of life, this rule of life for the galleys was supposed to be enforced by the group on each individual prisoner.[118] If one of them broke the rules, he would be set apart from the others and would not receive any of the monetary aid which was sent to galley slaves from the churches.[119]

We do not know whether or not these rules were actually followed, but one of them is interesting to note, given Neau's passion to teach enslaved Africans in the colonies. This rule states that if someone on the galleys is unable to read, the most educated galley slave on his ship is obligated to teach him. Ignorance is not an excuse for avoiding the obligation to efficiently work out one's own salvation.[120] With such an ingrained sense of obligation, it is not surprising that Neau would take to heart the education of enslaved Africans in New York. Just as he believed the enslaved Huguenots to be responsible for the souls of their lesser educated fellows on the ships, he felt deeply his own responsibility to the education of the enslaved Africans in the colonies.

[119] Léonard, "Pieté," 99.

[120] Léonard, "Pieté," 100.

Return to New York

Following a stormy fifty-four-day Atlantic crossing, and after spending several weeks in Boston, the thirty-seven-year-old Neau finally arrived back home in New York in 1699. Understandably, after enslavement in the galleys, Neau did not return to sea again. Instead, he invested in commerce and trade in New York's bustling economy. Between 1703 and 1709, Neau prospered, moving from the fifth decile for tax purposes to the second.[121] According to the 1703 New York census, Elias Neau (spelled "Elyses Now") lived in the East Ward. With him were three women, two male children, two female children, and one "male negro".[122] Neau and his wife could have been living in a house with his wife Susanne's sisters and their families.[123] This census shows that, despite his dedication to the salvation of African souls, Neau was also the owner of at least one enslaved African. Moreover, one document also links his merchant activity to the slave trade during this time; Neau is listed as a partner of leading New York slave trader John Cruger in an account book from 1713, dealing in the sale of cloth.[124]

[121] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 520.

[122] Census, City of New York, 1703, Part II. https://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/teachers/andrews/docs/census.pdf.

[123] Whelan, "Extraordinary Voyage," 515.

[124] Hodges, *Root and Branch,* 54.

Trinity Church, New York in 1717. From the *Catalogue of the Commemorative Exhibition of Historical Treasures from the Collections of the Parish of Trinity Church and of the New York Historical Society, May 6-July 13, 1947*.

During Neau's time in Europe, the Anglican presence in New York had become more established, with the founding of Trinity Church in 1696. Trinity's early history shows the complexity of the relationship between reformed "dissenters" and Anglicans in the colonies during this time. William Vesey, a Harvard-educated priest of "moderate principles," was chosen as the first rector, serving faithfully until his death in 1746.[125] The Boston-born Vesey, however, was later accused of harboring secret dissenting ideas. Political opponents charged that Vesey had first been sent to Hempstead, New York by "that rigid Independent," Increase Mather, to minister to the Puritans. They claimed that it was only the "filthy lucre" of a high salary that led Vesey to Trinity as an Anglican.[126] While these 1714 rumors were likely a result of political squabbles with New York Governor Hunter, it is true that Hempstead was a mixed congregation made up of both Church of England and Reformed members.[127] It is difficult to know the mind of early colonial clerics like Vesey, since few sermons remain,

[125] Patricia U. Bonomi, "'Swarms of Negroes Comeing about My Door': Black Christianity in Early Dutch and English North America," *The Journal of American History* 103, no. 1 (2016): 52.

[126] E. Clowes Chorley, "Outline of the Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Trinity Parish in the City of New York," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 16, no. 1 (1947): 20.

[127] John Dix, ed. *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York, New York* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 100.

and his archived letters were written to Church of England and SPG authorities, to whom he was beholden. In a sparsely populated land of few congregations, with religious authorities far overseas, ideas mixed freely and ecclesiastical allegiances were fluid.

On his return to New York, Neau once again took up his friendship with Pierre Peiret, pastor of the French Church in the city. Peiret had fled Osse, France at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 with his wife and two children. After sojourns in Frankfurt, Rotterdam, and London, Peiret had arrived in New York in 1687, becoming pastor of the French Church in 1688.[128] In 1703, we know that Peiret was living and farming on Trinity Farm, property belonging to Trinity Church, showing a close working relationship between the Huguenot pastor and the Anglican Church. Along with his wife and two adult children, Peiret lived in a home with four enslaved Africans.[129]

Peiret was one of three French clergy in the colony who were paid a supplement by the Church of England to gain favor among their people for the Anglican cause. It is possible that Peiret accepted this arrangement because he, like Neau, admired the work of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.[130] The two men shared similar spiritual and ecumenical interests. Peiret used Neau's writings and letters from prison to inspire his own flock in

[128]John Latourette, "The Latourette Family of Osse, Bearn, Jean Latourette and Pastor Peiret." Unpublished manuscript in the Huguenot Historical Society Library in New Paltz, New York, 161. Catherine Randall is incorrect when she identifies Peiret as a Camisard from Languedoc. Latourette clearly shows evidence that he was instead from northern France, near Rennes, and was not associated with the Camisards. See Catharine Randall, *From a Far Country: Camisards and Huguenots in the Atlantic World.* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 76.

[129] Thelma Wills Foote, *Black and White Manhattan: The History of Racial Formation in Colonial New York City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 83.

[130] Butler, *Huguenots*, 169-170.

New York, inviting them to share vicariously in Neau's suffering. With Neau in mind, perhaps, Peiret is believed to have penned an anonymous 1996 work called *Le trésor des consolations divines et humaines ou traité dans le quel le chretien peut apprendre a vaincre et a surmonter les afflictions et les miseres de cette vie*. In this work, which we will examine more closely in Chapter Five, the author invites those seeking their own "rebirth" to meditate on their bodily suffering, misery, and human tragedy.[131]

On Neau's return to New York, he and Peiret attempted to gather together the clergy of the city to create their own New York version of the "Society in London," probably along the lines of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.[132] Due to lack of interest, this group met only once. The Dutch and Anglican pastors chose not to attend the meetings. Vesey, fearing being labeled a dissenter, argued that clergy should not attend "secret assemblies" or make any innovations without the bishop's permission, which he had not obtained.[133]

Unable to convince other clergy to join in, Neau and Peiret nevertheless founded a small devotional society together, with seven other members. Peiret served as president, and they met every Wednesday to share prayer and bible reading together. They would begin with a prayer asking God to help them understand God's Word, then the men would share their thoughts on eight to ten verses of scripture, especially the Gospel of

[131] Butler, *Huguenots*, 162-4.

[132] Neau to Hodges, New York, 22 June 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 1, image 1. "travailler de concert a ériger une Societé sur la Plan de celle a Londres."

[133] Neau to Hodges, New York, 22 June 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 1, image 1. "les Assemblées Secrettes." Vesey was clearly reluctant to be associated with dissenting activity, having once been accused of being a dissenter himself.

John and the Psalms. If the lay members would stray from the "true mystical or literal" meaning of the text, then Peiret was to lovingly set them straight. Peiret would end with an exhortation at the end to encourage "the reformation of morals," followed by common singing of a psalm and a prayer of intercession, especially for the elect.[134] As we will see in Chapter Three, Neau's lessons with the enslaved followed a similar pattern.

Neau and Peiret were close enough as friends and colleagues that Neau refused to leave the French Church until after the death of his friend and pastor in 1704. Much has been made of Elias Neau's "conformation" from the Huguenot Church to the Church of England. Episcopalians claim Neau as one of their own based on letters written to the secretary of the SPG, in which Neau described his love for the Book of Common Prayer, hinting that he had long been an Anglican at heart.[135] It is true that, in his letters to London, he stated that he joined the Church of England not merely to serve as catechist or for any "worldly reasons," but as a "principle of conscience." He told Secretary Chamberlayne just what the Society wanted to hear: that Neau found great consolation in celebrating the mysteries and in praying in the Anglican manner. He further explained that he had learned the Anglican liturgy by heart while in prison, using morning and evening prayer for his devotions there. He assured the Secretary that he had much affection for "the Common Prayer" and that he would do all that he could to promote the establishment of the Church of England everywhere in the colonies.[136]

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[134] Neau to Hodges, New York, 22 June 1704, British Online Archives: American in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 1, images 2-3. "Il nous donne ... une exhortation a la fin sur la Reformation des Moeurs."

[135] *Holy Women, Holy Men* 2010, 564.

[136]Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 6 November 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 21, image 45. "J'ay beaucoup d'Affection pour La Comune Priere et qu'il ne Dependra pas de Moy que l'Eglise ne soit pas Etablie par tout selon les Directions que je recoivray."

As we will see in the next chapter, however, Neau deeply desired to serve as a catechist to the enslaved under the auspices of the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. How much of his conversion was a tactical move and how much was based on his own personal piety can be disputed. Even after Peiret's death, Neau wavered about joining the Anglican Church. He remained at first an elder in the French Church and wrote in another letter to Secretary Chamberlayne that he was desperately needed in the Huguenot congregation. He complained about Vesey's insistence that he join Trinity before taking up the position as catechist. Vesey, he claimed, was trying to force him to abandon a religious "society" that held the respect of the Anglican Church. Neau argued that, as a naturalized Englishman, he had already taken oaths of allegiance in the House of Parliament, and that should suffice to prove his loyalty.[137] Such negotiations on Neau's part show less enthusiasm for conforming to Anglicanism than he had originally professed in order to be granted the position of SPG catechist. In any case, Neau succeeded in his goal of serving the SPG as catechist and even served on the vestry of Trinity Church from 1705 until 1714.[138]

On his death in 1722, Neau divided his large estate of one thousand pounds between relatives and friends. Neau's wife Susanne had predeceased him in 1720, and their children had died even earlier. A list of the recipients of his estate, outside of family, provides an interesting glimpse into Neau's wide-ranging loyalties and charitable

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[137] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 13 October 1704, British Online Archives: American in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 20, images 39-40.

[138] David R. King "Missionary Vestryman," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 34, no. 4 (1965): 362.

interests.[139] He gave twenty pounds to Trinity Church for the "School for Negroes" that he had established, yet he gave an equal twenty pounds to the French Church to support French Huguenot refugees. He gave smaller amounts of five and ten pounds to various other local pastors, both conforming Huguenots and Anglicans, even to the city's Lutheran pastor. He left the considerable sum of fifty pounds in trust with Louis Rou, pastor of the French Church since 1710, for the publication of his 152 *cantiques*.[140] Between Neau's submission of sixty *cantiques* to the SPG in 1718 and his death in 1722, he continued to write his devotional songs, as he had outlined in a letter to the SPG. His plan was to arrive at a total of 150 *cantiques*, with one per psalm, and his will states that he wrote one hundred fifty-two songs.[141] Unfortunately, Rou neglected to follow through with the publication, as requested in the will, and the complete collection of *cantiques* has not been found.[142]

[139] Neau's will can be found in *Abstracts of Wills on File in the Surrogate's Office, City of New York,* 17 vols, New York, 1893-1913, vol. 2, 254-55. See Whelan, "Soul Songs," 72, note 23.

[140] Briggs, "Confessor," 115.

[141] Whelan, "Soul Songs," 72.

[142] Rou, pastor of the Huguenot Church for forty years until his own death in 1750, was a poet himself. (See https://stesprit.org/history/1700-to-1799/ , accessed July 1, 2022.) It is possible that Rou quietly deemed Neau's simple poetry unworthy of publication or had other personal motives for deciding not to pursue Neau's wishes after his death.)

Chapter Three: The First School for the Enslaved in the Mainland Colonies

Slavery in New York

A "slave collar" worn by enslaved workers in the Huguenot settlement of colonial New Paltz. Photograph from historic New Paltz, 2019.

Slavery first appeared in New York under Dutch rule and persisted until 1827. Between 1710 and 1760, enslaved Africans and Native Americans made up fifteen percent of the population of the colony of New York and twenty percent of the New York City population.[143] According to an early account, there were fifteen hundred enslaved Africans and Native Americans in the city of New York in 1704.[144] The enslaved came from West Africa, Madagascar, the West Indies, or from other mainland colonies. Some were Native Americans or even "Spanish Indians," native peoples first enslaved in New Spain, who had already converted to Roman Catholicism.[145]

[143] Butler, *Huguenots*, 144.

[144] Humphreys, "An Account," 6.

[145] While it was against New York law to enslave local natives and "Spanish Indians," it happened anyway. (See Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 35.)

In 1703, a quarter of all blacks lived in the East Ward of the city, the area near the docks, where wealthy merchants, including Elias Neau, made their homes.[146] In that same year, forty-one percent of households had at least one enslaved worker, but most New Yorkers could only afford to own a few.[147] The enslaved lived in close proximity to their white owners: in attics, back rooms, basements and outbuildings. In the colony's Huguenot community in New Paltz, for example, enslaved workers slept on blankets on the floor of the owner's basement, and the door was locked at night to prevent escape. During the day, enslaved and free laborers worked together, with white indentured workers and indigenous and African slaves all working side by side with their masters. The enslaved wore a metal "slave collar" around their necks, however, with the white family's name imprinted on it for identification.[148]

In the city, many enslaved men hoisted heavy loads at the docks, while women worked in the household as maids, cooks, nurses, and seamstresses. Some women worked as vendors at the market, and some men were trained as skilled artisans, working alongside their masters. Due to their varied work around town, enslaved men were quite mobile, traveling to work sites, steering boats, and being "let-out to hire" from one family to another.[149] There were some free blacks in the early part of the eighteenth-century in New York, living on the outskirts of the city on their own plots of land. A few free blacks

[146] Foote, *Black and White*, 79.

[147] John Latourette, 2008, *Pastor Pierre Peiret and Jean Latourette in America*, unpublished document (Huguenot Historical Society Library in New Paltz, New York), 114.

[148] From a guided tour of New Paltz, 2019.

[149] Foote, *Black and White*, 72-73.

even owned their own enslaved workers.[150] Blacks and lower-class whites often spent time together and looked out for one another. In defiance of laws to prevent the enslaved from circulating after dark, for example, they often gathered in groups after curfew. Lower-class whites opened illegal taverns in their homes for the enslaved, where they all socialized together.[151]

Until 1700, most enslaved Africans were brought to the port of New York in small shipments, and most came from the West Indies. The British merchants of the Royal Africa Company had a monopoly on the slave trade between Africa and the mainland colonies, so independent local merchants were constrained to find their supply of Africans among those already in the West Indies.[152] Even later, between 1701 and 1714, of the 487 enslaved Africans brought into the port of New York, 278 of them came on ships from the West Indies.[153] Some even came to the city on pirate ships, having been stolen at sea as cargo, along with spices and other exotic goods. New York merchants purchased these pirated human beings at low black-market prices and sold them for a profit in the colony.[154]

There was little history of encouraging the baptism of enslaved workers in New York. For Dutch Protestants, the earliest European settlers in the region, the Christian

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[150] Goodfriend, *Melting Pot,* 117.

[151] Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 37.

[152] Goodfriend, *Melting Pot*, 112.

[153] Foote, *Black and White*, 64.

[154] Foote, *Black and White,* 63.

conversion of the enslaved was left up to individual white masters. This practice was a legacy of the Reformed Synod of Dort in 1618, at which the power for deciding whether or not heathen servants could be baptized was given to the head of each household. The doctrine from this council affected the beliefs about slavery of both Dutch and French Reformed Protestants.[155]

At the same time, the Dutch Reformed Church did not encourage slave baptism, due to the prevailing sentiment that a baptized slave could demand emancipation as a Christian.[156] Reformed clergy were also hindered by their own theology of baptism. Since they opposed the Roman Catholic practice of baptizing non-Christians without first teaching them Christian doctrine, Reformed pastors insisted on providing catechesis and asking for a written profession of faith from each convert. As SPG Secretary Humphreys later complained, Roman Catholics [should] lay "greater Stress ... upon bringing [the enslaved] to a knowledge of the Christian Faith, than upon barely giving them the *Name* of Christians."[157] Such need for prolonged instruction and language skills complicated the conversion process for Protestants. Between 1639 and 1655, Dutch Calvinists in New York baptized only fifty-seven Africans. Between 1656-1664, they did not baptize any.[158] Moreover, records of the entire Dutch colonial period show only one Native American convert to Christianity in all of New Netherland.[159]

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[155] Hodges, *Root and Branch,* 19.

[156] Paula Wheeler Carlo, *Huguenot Refugees in Colonial New York: Becoming American in the Hudson Valley* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 157.

[157] Humphreys, *An Account,* 17.

[158] Foote, *Black and White,* 48.

[159] Foote, *Black and White,* 44.

After England took possession of the colony in 1664, views among Anglican slave-owners were similar. Even though the "Duke's Laws" of 1665 proclaimed that no Negro or Native American slave could be set free for "turning Christian,"[160] owners of the enslaved were not convinced. Among Anglicans, enslaved Africans were "much discouraged" from embracing the Christian religion.[161] They were denied church marriage and church burial, and no notice was given in the parish when they were sick so that they could be visited. Indeed, between 1707 and 1764, 869 enslaved people were baptized at Trinity Church in New York, but only nineteen of these were accepted as full members.[162] Similarly, members of the French Huguenot churches in the colony showed little interest in evangelism to the enslaved. In 1703, for example, there were no baptisms of enslaved people in either the register of the French Church in the city or in the New Paltz French church in the countryside.[163] Even the early Quakers of New York failed to proselytize among the enslaved or to welcome them in their meetings.[164]

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[160] John C. van Horne, "Impediments to the Christianization and Education of Blacks in Colonial America: The Case of the Associates of Dr. Bray," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 50, no. 3 (1981): 249. The Duke's Laws were a compilation of laws based on elements of English and Dutch law as well as the codes of the New England colonies. They applied to the city and colony of New York.

[161] Humphreys, *An Account,* 7.

[162] Harris, 35.

[163] Anne-Claire Faucquez, "Les réfugiés huguenots au coeur de la mosaïque ethno-religieuse de la colonie de New York: Une assimilation partielle ou complète? (1670-1730)," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 155 (2009): 805.

[164] Harris, 35.

The Age of Benevolence

In her study of the SPG, Katherine Gerbner shows that SPG sermons in London first reflected an increased interest in the evangelization of enslaved Africans after two Huguenots, Elias Neau and Francis Le Jau of South Carolina, each began urging the Society to reach out to the enslaved at the turn of the eighteenth century. Both Neau and Le Jau had spent time in the Caribbean before their arrival on the mainland, and both had deep roots in the Huguenot story of persecution and suffering. Gerbner speculates that their openness to teaching the enslaved was formed by the influence of cross-cultural exchange, by French influence, and by pan-European Protestantism.[165]

It is true that Neau's own suffering as a prisoner and galley-slave, as well as his international experience with slavery in the West Indies, likely pushed him to reach out to enslaved Africans in New York. He could not have engaged his missionary venture, however, without the influence of what Gerbner calls "pan-European Protestantism." Neau was clearly inspired by the larger movement in the British Isles and across the Atlantic world known today as the "Age of Benevolence," with its pious societies and drive for moral reform. Beginning in the 1690's, various associations promoting social reform and personal Christian renewal spread among nonconformists and Anglicans alike. These groups promoted enlightened piety as the answer to social ills. At least forty-two of these societies were founded in London alone by 1710.[166]

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[165] Gerbner, *Christian Slavery,* 126.

[166] Rusty Roberson, "Enlightened Piety during the Age of Benevolence: The Christian Knowledge Movement in the British Atlantic World," *Church History* 85, no. 2 (June 2016): 247-48.

Neau was well-known for his own personal piety during his time in New York and had high expectations of himself, his family, and others in their religious duties. One of Neau's contemporaries explained that Neau's household was "full of hospitality and good works" and that his family had a small chapel in their home, where they read prayers and sang psalms three times every day.[167] Another witness testified that Neau was known by "People of all Persuasions" as "a Man of Piety, of sober Deportment, and serious Life."[168] Neau himself attested that he strived to practice the virtues of justice, temperance, and equity. He promised that he would never "call evil good, or good evil."[169] He regretted the slow "progress of piety" in the world: No one wanted to "sanctify themselves," he complained, sighing, "The world never changes; it keeps going the same way." Only a few people "walk the paths of justice," thanks to the grace of God,[170] Neau admitted.

Neau's correspondence with supporters of Huguenot prisoners and his subsequent travels through Europe after his release from prison brought him in contact with men of like-minded piety. As noted in Chapter Two, Neau met in Switzerland with Jean-Frédéric Osterwald, author of devotional works such as the *Traité des sources de la corruption qui règne aujourd'huy parmi les chrétiens (1700)* and the *Traité contre*

[167] Sharpe, *Proposals,* 350.

[168] Humphreys, *An Account,* 6.

[169] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 22 November 1715, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 11, item 286.

[170] Neau to Hodges, New York, 22 June 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 1, image 1. "des Progrés de la Pieté," "se sanctifier," "Le monde ne change point. Il va toujours le meme train. Si j'en excepte un Petit Nombre de gens que Dieu seul connoist et qu'il conduit par sa Grace dans les sentiers de la Justice."

l'impureté (1707). Neau also spent time in London with Josiah Woodward, member and chronicler of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, and continued to correspond frequently with him during Neau's years in New York.[171] Soon after his return from French imprisonment, Neau joined together with men like these as a member of the brand-new Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK).

The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge

The SPCK was founded in 1699 by Maryland Commissary Thomas Bray. The new society arose out of the religious and philanthropic fervor of the 1690's and committed itself to engage those who fell outside of participation in usual Church of England parishes: sailors, soldiers, merchants, prisoners, and those in the colonies.[172] While the Society promoted a wide variety of new endeavors, they set out to accomplish their goal in the colonies by sending missionaries and schoolmasters and by establishing libraries there.[173] The publication of devotional literature for seamen by SPCK members Josiah Woodward and navy chaplaincy work by member William Hodges brought the society to Neau's attention.[174] For Elias Neau, himself the author of books intended to increase the piety of fellow Christians, the aims of the SPCK felt worthy indeed. Neau

[171] Neau to Woodward, New York, September 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 119.

[172] Brent S. Sirota, "The Antinomies of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1699-1720," *The Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680-1730* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 112.

[173] William W. Kemp, *The Support of Schools in Colonial New York by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1913), 9.

[174] The SPG correspondence includes friendly letters between Neau and both Hodges and Woodward.

began an early correspondence with the group, offering to promote '"their excellent designs.'"[175] By August of 1700, while still a member of the Huguenot French Church, Neau had become the SPCK's lay correspondent in New York.[176] As a part of the SPCK, he joined a wide range of high and low-church Anglicans, as well as dissenters. They all shared the common goal of stopping "the current of debauchery and profaneness" and promoting "the salvation of men's souls" through publications, libraries, and charity schools.[177]

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

As SPCK members set about raising money for books, libraries, and schools in the colonies, they realized that a royal charter would provide them with the authority to more easily receive, manage, and disburse funds. Bray approached King William III with a petition to charter a new society: the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG). With founding members mainly from the SPCK, the newly-formed SPG began its work in 1701, focusing on spreading Anglican Christianity and supporting an orthodox clergy presence in the British colonies. For the first time, a single fund for protestant missionary work existed in the American colonies that could compete with the resources and zeal of French Catholic missionaries, long active in the same regions.[178] By 1705, the Society had members from every diocese in England, Wales, and Dublin, as well as members

[175] Cohen, "Elias Neau," 12.

[176] Butler, *Huguenots in America*, 167.

[177] Sirota, "The Antinomies," 121.

[178] Francis E. Wakely, "Mission Activity among the Iroquois, 1642-1719," *Rochester History* 38, no. 4 (1976): 16.

from Reformed churches in Europe.[179] Between 1701 and 1741, the SPG provided funds to build one hundred churches in the mainland and island colonies, sent out ten thousand Bible/ Book of Common Prayer combinations, funded seventy overseas missionaries, and distributed one hundred thousand small tracts and sermons to their missionaries.[180] While most missionaries were educated clergymen, Elias Neau joined their ranks early-on. Recognized because of his celebrity as a heroic figure in the prisons of France, Neau began conversations with the SPG leadership as early as 1703.

In their missionary work in the American colonies, the SPG believed that their first order of business must be to target Quakers and non-churched Protestants, first instructing and reforming their own people. They soon became interested in reaching out to native peoples, however, in an attempt to compete with the large French Catholic missionary presence in New France. The Society for the Conversion of the Indians, begun under Cromwell, had been confined only to work in New England.[181] As the French threat grew, and as English colonists pushed further into New York and neighboring regions, the SPG saw the need to bring the native peoples into England's Protestant orbit. Anglican missionaries were sent to the Five Nations to keep up with increasing French Jesuit conversions. In 1703, Thoroughgood Moore, an SPG catechist, began work with Native Americans. Soon, Neau was also asked to join him in this work.

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[179] Daniel O'Connor, ed., *Three Centuries of Mission: The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1701-2000* (London, UK: Contiuum, 2000), 9.

[180] Frank J. Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism in Colonial New York* (Philadelphia, PA: Church Historical Society, 1949), 29.

[181] Faith Vibert, "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Its Work for the Negroes in North America Before 1783," *The Journal of Negro History* 18, no. 2 (1933): 172.

These early SPG missionaries, however, soon found teaching the indigenous population to be challenging. Besides language difficulties and a general disinterest on the part of Native Americans, the remoteness of native settlements added an extra barrier for the Anglican catechists. Even the indefatigable Neau soon complained that '"running up in the woods'" after Native Americans was a waste of time and that their evangelization was '"a lost cause.'"[182] He agreed to catechize those who came to his home in the city, providing them with an "Indian catechism," but he saw no reason to go into the wilderness to reach them.[183]

The Beginnings of the School

For Neau, the community most in need of the Church's evangelism efforts was the enslaved community right on their doorstep. Fresh from his own suffering and captivity overseas, Neau was disturbed by the general lack of interest in the souls of New York's Africans in chains. Since reading printed prayers, scripture, and devotional materials had sustained him during his captivity, Neau was pained that the workers around him could not do the same.[184] Neau wrote in exasperation to the SPG in 1708 that, when the enslaved ask their masters' permission to be baptized, the masters threaten to sell them off to plantations in Virginia. When they ask to attend school, the masters threaten to send them to work on farms out in the country, where they have less freedom of movement. "O Good God, what kind of religion these people [the masters] must

[182] Cohen, "Elias Neau," 26.

[183] Neau to Secretary, New York, 10 July 1703, Journal of the SPG, found in Klingberg, *Anglican*, 56.

[184] Sauter, "A Presentation," 5.

have," Neau exclaimed about his fellow Christians. "I can only say that they must have very little [religion]…They have slaves who are perfect to instruct, and whose hearts are touched by the truths that they know. May God in his grace watch over them [the enslaved] for their good and for his glory."[185]

Never one to wait patiently on the approval of others or to ask permission of those in authority, Neau jumped in to remedy the situation. On his own, he began going from house to house, asking to meet with the enslaved workers who belonged to his friends and associates. He knocked on the doors of the mayor, the sheriff, the alderman, and the tax collector, all of whom owned at least one enslaved African.[186] Having procured enough interest to gather his prospective students in one place, Neau convinced the owners to send their enslaved workers to his home every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon. It was not only the Africans who appeared, however. Enslaved Native Americans, apprentices speaking English, Dutch, and French, and "all manner" of children gathered in Neau's home. [187]

While the SPG wanted enslaved Africans to attend parish-run catechism classes at Trinity, under the watchful eye of clergy, Neau understood that the enslaved were neither able nor willing to follow that model. Neau tried to explain to the SPG that the enslaved

[185] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 24 August 1708, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 4, item 68, image 230. "O bon dieu quelle sorte de religion ces gens la peuvent ils avoir, je ne saurois m'empecher de dire quils en ont trés peu ... ces gens la ont lés Esclaves les plus propre pour instuire, et qui ont le Coeur touché des verités quils connoissent. Dieu par sa grace veille sur eux en bien pour sa gloire."

[186] Neau to Woodward, New York, September 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 120.

[187]Neau to Woodward, New York, September 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 120.

were not masters of their own time: they were often "old" and "bashfull" and "overall pronounce the English very poorly" and did not want to embarrass themselves in front of whites. While the enslaved had Sundays off, they did not want to spend their only free day of the week in church, especially as it was their only day to tend the vegetables in their own gardens. Moreover, as the ever-practical Neau pointed out, the church building had no room to add any more families on Sundays, and the rector had no time "to catechize them poor Slaves." Besides, Neau knew that the churches would object to being filled with enslaved workers, wanting to "keep them clean for the congregations."[188]

For these reasons, Neau chose to teach his students at his home in the evening "at candlelight," supplying the candles at his own cost.[189] He also set up a forty by twenty-two-foot room on the second floor of his home, filling the space with benches for his students.[190] Evening was the only time that masters would allow their workers time away from their labors. Unfortunately, evening was also the only time that enslaved Africans could relax or visit their wives and children, who often lived apart with other white families. [191] For them to appear at the classes at all showed their desire to learn from Neau.

[188] Sharpe, "Proposals," 354.

[189] Neau to Humphreys, New York, 22 January 1719/20, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 14, item 100-101, images 110-111.

[190] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 22 July 1707, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 3, item 80, image 188.

[191] Humphreys, *An Account,* 7.

Neau was invited in March of 1703 to serve as an SPG catechist and was promised the usual salary of fifty pounds per year.[192] He did not receive his official appointment, however, until two years later, in 1705. Not everyone in New York approved of Neau's selection as a catechist. Neau's SPCK friends, chaplain William Hodges and Josiah Woodward, were his main early supporters in the SPG establishment. Woodward was the one who recommended him for the position, having met Neau in London after Neau's imprisonment.[193] Neau had also won the approval and respect of Lord Cornbury, Governor of New York, who officially appointed him as catechist.

William Vesey, the rector of Trinity Church, was not pleased with the SPG's choice. He thought that the Bishop of London, rather than the Governor, should be the one to make such a church appointment. The rector had been hoping that the SPG would choose George Muirson, a catechist in deacon's orders, who could both teach the enslaved and help him with other parish matters.[194] Vesey therefore complained that Neau, as a Huguenot, was not "in sympathy with the Church" and was "tinctured with purist conceits."[195] He argued that if Neau were chosen as catechist, other non-conformist preachers would think that they could meddle in Anglican affairs without Church approval.[196] Vesey also held it against Neau that he was a "Merchant in good Business"

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[192] Butler, *Huguenots in America*, 168.

[193] Neau to Woodward, New York, September 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 119.

[194] Vesey to Chamberlayne, New York, 26 October 1704, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 26, image 67.

[195] Dix, *A History*, 157.

[196] Vesey to Chamberlayne, New York, 26 October 1704, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 26, image 67.

and spoke English poorly. If the SPG were determined to appoint Neau as catechist, Vesey suggested that they appoint him to the whole Province, sending him far from Trinity Church, and allowing Mr. Muirson to serve in New York as Vesey's assistant.[197]

In response, Neau agreed to leave the French Huguenot Church, but on his own timeline. He compared himself to the "Holy Apostles who buried the Synagogue with honor" and asked the SPG to allow him to leave the French Church in such a way that it would not scandalize "the weak, who needed him" there. He further railed against Vesey, whom he accused of only being interested in controlling the fifty-pound catechist salary. In a huff, Neau threatened several times to withdraw as SPG catechist and to continue his work alone and without pay, teaching all those who came to him.[198] Neau insisted, "God is my witness that I am not ambitious for ecclesiastical honors, for which I am unworthy... You shall find in me [only] Sincerity, Zeal, and Faithfulness."[199] In spite of his protests, Neau gave in to SPG demands and finally agreed to leave the Huguenot Church and join the Church of England. His troubles with Vesey were far from over, however.

The men continued to complain to the SPG authorities about one another over the years. In 1712, a slave rebellion involving a few of Neau's pupils put both Neau and the

[197] Vesey to the Bishop of London, New York, 26 October 1704, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 40, image 98.

[198] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 13 October 1704,British Online Archives, American in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 20, image 40. "Saints Apôtres qui Ensevelirent la Synagogue avec honneur," "En sortir dune Facon qui ne scandalizat pas les faibles, sur tout parce que je leur suis necessaires."

[199] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, October 1704, British Online Archives, American in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 20, image 41. "Dieu est mon têmoin que je ne suis pas Ambitioux des Honneurs Ecclesiastiques, à cause que j'en suis si Indigne .... vous trouverez en moy toute Sincerité, Zele et Fidelité."

school in jeopardy (see Conclusion). Neau was cleared of wrong-doing, and as a response, Governor Hunter issued a proclamation that was to be read four times per year in every church in the city following the service. This proclamation named Neau as a "person well qualified with Piety and Knowledge, to Catechize and Instruct Children, Servants, Negro and Indian Slaves in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ." It required all "Parents, Masters and Mistresses of Families" to encourage their enslaved workers to attend the school.[200] Vesey, however, refused to read the proclamation aloud at Trinity. In addition, he refused to baptize at least one of Neau's students, a "mulatress named Jane," even though her master had written the required letter of request.[201] Indeed, records of Trinity's Vestry show no seat assignments in the church for any of Neau's pupils because, according to Neau, "Vesey would not suffer any of them to have a place in his Church."[202]

Neau, in turn, tried to stir up trouble for Vesey in 1715, reporting to SPG Secretary Chamberlayne about Vesey "sluring his Enemies" after arriving from London "loaden with Laurells" and a new benefice as Commissary. Neau complained that Vesey took Neau's letters to the SPG and was showing them around the city "to whom he thinks fitt" in order to set the Dutch and French Reformed ministers against him.[203] Likewise, Vesey complained about Neau to the SPG and succeeded in starting an investigation of

[200] Governor Hunter's Proclamation of 1712, New York, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letters, series C, box 1, item 48, image 13.

[201] Neau to Taylor, New York, 6 December 1715, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 11, item 278, image 293.

[202] Neau, quoted in Kemp, *The Support*, 249.

[203] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, November 1715, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 11, item 269, image 284.

Neau's business practices. As a result of this investigation, of which we do not have details, the SPG decided that, as a catechist, Neau should no longer be involved in trade. Much to Neau's shock and dismay, he was discharged from his position. After sending copies of his curriculum to the SPG, along with letters of recommendation from the governor and other clergy, Neau was vindicated and reinstated just one year later.[204] He appears to have continued his trading business unimpeded.

School Curriculum

In general, the curriculum of Neau's school followed the educational pattern and practices of the day. A 1679 Dutch Reformed catechism class for white children in New York, for example, consisted of singing verses of the psalms, reciting a prayer, answering questions from the catechism, and closing with prayer and psalms once again.[205] In Saint-Domingue, Roman Catholic instruction of the enslaved in the seventeenth-century also involved praying aloud, reciting the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and a series of prayers, with a confession.[206] Neau, too, began his school with a similar simple pattern of prayer, singing of psalms, and recitation with much repetition.[207]

The SPG, however, prioritized English reading skills, preferring the study of the written word over simple memorization and recitation. Christianity was viewed as a cultural practice requiring education, along with the circulation and personal study of

[204] Klingberg, *Anglican*, 136.

[205] Goodfriend, *Melting Pot*, 100.

[206] du Tertre, *Contenant l'Histoire,* 472.

[207] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 22 July 1707, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books series A, vol. 3, item 80, image 188.

catechisms and written materials.[208] The SPG supplied their schools in the colonies with copies of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, school books, and catechisms on demand. In addition, each catechist received up to ten pounds to purchase his own books and five pounds to purchase tracts for his students from an approved list.[209] Catechists used Dyche's *Spelling Book* to teach English. Also popular was a beginner catechism with an English alphabet printed on the back cover.[210]

Neau, too, emphasized reading in his curriculum. His letters to the SPG constantly requested books that could be distributed to his enslaved pupils. At the end of his life, Neau was still requesting hundreds of copies of the church catechism that included the English alphabet. He explained that the students who learned how to read were then able to teach others: "The children of the masters of the blacks who come to the school teach the Creed and the Lord's Prayer to their negroes, reading to them a few times [each day] from the church catechism that also serves as an alphabet book, in order to teach them to read."[211] Neau added that this practice also benefitted the white children in their studies, as well as encouraged the blacks.[212] Indeed, Neau expected the masters to help at home

[208] Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, 8.

[209] Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 37.

[210] Foote, *Black and White*, 130. Whelan mentions that Neau also used one of the many editions of *The ABC with the Catechism: That is to say, an Instruction to be Learned of Every Person before he be Brought to be Confirmed by the Bishop,* London, 1556, 1st edition. See Whelan, "Soul Songs," 73, note 26.

[211] Neau to Secretary, New York, 12 April 1714, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 9, item 138, image 134. "... les anfans des maitrés, des noirs qui viennent a lécole, enseignent le Credo et le pater a leurs negros en lisant quelques fois dans les catchismes de l'eglise, qui servent aussy dalphabeth, pour aprendre a lire."

[212] Neau to Secretary, New York, 2 April 1722, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 16, item 168, image 196.

with the education of their slaves. He often complained to the SPG that a number of enslaved students could not make progress in their studies because there was no one at their masters' homes who would tutor them.[213]

For Neau, there was a downside to the distribution of reading material, however, as it affected attendance at the school. Once students had learned to read, they could keep the books that they had received and could use them to study and to teach one another at home, without attending the white man's classes.[214] In order to keep his students learning and engaged, Neau began to experiment with the required curriculum in order to meet their needs more fully. Early on, he expanded on the idea of instruction in English, ordering Akan and Mandingo transcriptions of the Lord's Prayer and requesting Dutch, Spanish, and French written materials.[215] Perhaps because the requested African language versions did not arrive, he himself translated the Lord's Prayer into "Indiam, Cormantin, and Cymondingo" and sent these versions to London for others to use.[216] Having traveled the world as a sailor, it is likely that Neau had picked up a rudimentary knowledge of several languages. Since Neau's school was close to the multilingual docks of New York, an ability to communicate with students was a distinct advantage for the self-taught catechist. Sailors—whites, blacks, and native peoples from the West Indies and across the

[213] Neau to Secretary, New York, 27 February 1708/9, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 4, item 121, image 387.

[214] Foote, *Black and White*, 130.

[215] Foote, *Black and White*, 130.

[216] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 5 July 1710, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 5, item 134, image 366. According to Glasson, Neau's attempt to translate prayers into native African languages was not repeated for many decades. (Glasson, 95)

Atlantic world—joined domestic workers at Neau's school when their ships were in New York harbor. They took books and tracts so that they could continue to learn at sea.[217] Scholars speculate that Neau could have conducted his classes in a mixture of Atlantic tongues.[218]

Soon, Neau also began to expand the school's curriculum. He wanted to do more than to teach his students to read and recite the Creed. Neau wanted to bring the enslaved to "moral sanctification," to appeal to their hearts and wills, as well as to their heads.[219] To the expected lessons of rote memorization, Neau added extra prayers and the singing of psalms. Neau proudly informed Secretary Chamberlayne in 1715 that New York Governor Hunter and New Jersey Governor Morris visited the school. They were especially impressed by "these poor Negroes, who pray to the true God and who sing praises in English."[220] For Neau, whose Huguenot psalm-singing had sustained him in his own captivity, the singing of the psalms was just as important as spoken prayer. In addition, Neau argued that if students learned the version of the psalms that were sung in church, they would later be able to join in the services.[221]

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[217] Hodges, *Root and Branch,* 59.

[218] Hodges, *Root and Branch,* 57.

[219] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 6 June 1709, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 5, item 6, image 20. "la Sanctification des Moeurs."

[220] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, November 1715, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 11, item 138, image 134. "ces pauvres negroes, qui prient le vray dieu et qui chantent cés loûanges en anglais."

[221] Neau to Secretary, New York, 27 February 1708/09, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol 3, item 121, image 387.

Neau explained to the SPG in 1707 that psalm-singing encouraged both his students and himself. It reminded them that God put them in the world only to glorify God; therefore, praying and singing the "divine praise" of the psalms allowed them to "do part of what God commands of us." He was also pleased to note that his students tried to "out-sing" one another, each striving to perform better than their classmates.[222] In that same letter, Neau requested an English psalter with music notes for his school, since such books were not available in the colony.[223] This psalter was probably Tate and Brady's edition, *A New Version of the Psalms of David, Fitted to the Tunes Used in Churches,* published in 1703.[224] Neau's "singing Africans" performed well enough that curious townspeople would gather outside of the classroom to enjoy their performance of the psalms.[225] Apparently, the idea of enslaved workers singing the psalms was a novel one for the people of New York and an encouraging addition to Neau's new curriculum for student, catechist, and the public alike.

Because authorities in London were suspicious of any innovation, Neau explained his lesson plan to them in great detail. In the two-hour sessions, Neau always began his lessons with the prayers read in Anglican worship. Fully expecting his pupils to attend worship with whites someday, he wanted his students to learn these prayers so that they

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[222] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 24 July 1707, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 3, item 128, image 295. "Je leur represente que Dieu ne les a mis au monde que pour le glorifier, et qu'en priant et en chantant ces divines Louanges on fait une partie de ce qu'il nous commande."

[223] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 24 July 1707, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 3, item 128, image 296. "Je remarque avec Plaisir qu'ils ont de l'Emulation de qui chantera mieux."

[224] Whelan, "Soul Songs," 75, note 30.

[225] Foote, *Black and White,* 129.

would be able to join in worship easily. The class would then be seated while he moved from one student to another to question them individually or in small groups of three, depending on the number of students. Students would stand and respond with memorized answers to Neau's questions. Afterwards, Neau would share his own reflections on Christian doctrine, allowing himself the liberty to add illustrations or explanations that would help his pupils to understand various parts of the creed, "according to the capacity of each." After Neau's reflection, the class would stand and face in the "direction of the rising sun" to repeat the Apostles' Creed. They would then repeat word for word the church catechism in English "the way that it is in the liturgy."[226]

As for the rest of the catechism, Neau would summarize it for them so that they would have a general idea of the Christian religion. He would not ask them to recite the whole catechism at once, since that would take too long. Students then would kneel to recite the Lord's Prayer and rise again to sing two or three verses of a psalm. Neau specifically pointed out to the SPG that his students would always end the psalm with the "Gloria Patri" in correct Anglican style. Finally, the lesson would end with evening prayer and a benediction. In the prayer, Neau promised the SPG that he would always include prayers for the benefactors of his students, helping the enslaved pupils to remember the obligation that they bore toward members of the "illustrious Society."[227]

[226] Neau to Secretary, New York, 9 June 1709, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 4, item 155, image 504. "je me donne la liberté d'ajoúter ce que je croy necessaire pour leur faire bien comprendre ce que je leurs dis, suivant la capacité de ceux a qui je m'adresse. ... apres cela je leurs fay repetter mot a mot tout le catechisme de l'Eglise tel quil est dans la liturgie."

[227] Neau to Secretary, New York, 9 June 1709, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 4, item 155, image 505.

The one concern voiced by Neau's friend Moore, and later by the SPG authorities, was Neau's desire to have his unbaptized students pray aloud together in class. The authorities were concerned about non-Christians calling on an "Infinite Being" whom they did not know. Even having them recite the Lord's Prayer was considered improper. For Neau's critics, an understanding of Christian doctrine had to precede any testament of faith. Neau believed, however, that as long as the students understood God as their Creator and Protector, God's Grace would intervene in their prayers, even though they might not know God entirely.[228] Neau agreed that the hearts of his pupils were "furiously corrupt," but he also believed in the strength of a God who could use the power of God's grace in their favor.[229] The SPG was insistent on their position, however, and Neau eventually had to back down on the issue.

Other letters and witnesses explore the content of Neau's curriculum in more detail. At the school's beginning, Neau and his friend and fellow catechist Thoroughgood Moore spent time reviewing possible catechisms to use with his pupils. Due to the novelty of their missionary endeavor, they had trouble finding one that was made for adults who were not "born into Christianity." The catechism from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer was complex and directed at confirmands, full of scripture references that his pupils would not understand. Calvin's *Geneva Catechism* was equally filled with complex language. Neau and Moore had to combine various resources to create their own questions and answers.

[228] Neau to Woodward, New York, September 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 121.

[229] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 24 July 1707, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 3, item 128, image 295.

A partial list of the catechetical questions that Neau adapted for use is found in one of his letters. The questions, all simply phrased, with brief answers, begin with the existence of God—God's being, omnipresence, omnipotence, and judgment of human sin. Indeed, God is presented as an all-powerful ruler residing in heaven who searches the hearts and minds of human beings in order to judge them. God first made Godself known through God's Works (first through the Work of Creation and secondly through the Work of Redemption). Later, God revealed Godself by God's Word, and we now know God through the power of the Holy Spirit.[230] There is nothing surprising in the theology of this brief snippet of Neau's catechism. Indeed, Neau prided himself on his theological orthodoxy. At the end of his life, Neau wrote to the SPG that the Christian religion had many enemies in New York: "Arians, Socinians, Quakers, [and] Deists." He grumbled that so many "men of Honor Incline to disbelieve [the] necessary and comfortable truth" of a Trinitarian faith. He bragged that he owned a "Sett of good Books" that he can "Shew to them high-minded men" who refused to honor the divinity of Christ.[231]

The form of Neau's catechism questions, however, consisting of just a few words each, are an interesting pedagogical accommodation to his students' situation. Besides working with Moore, it is possible that Neau consulted the Swiss pastor Jean-Frédéric Ostervald. Ostervald's work, *The Grounds and Principles of the Christian Religion* for young people, had recently been published in French in 1702 and in English in 1704 and

[230] Neau to Woodward, New York, September 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 121. Unfortunately, the end of this letter is missing from the record, and so the whole catechism is not available.

[231] Neau to Secretary, New York, 2 April 1722, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 16, item 168, image 196.

was specifically dedicated to the SPCK. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Neau knew Ostervald and had spent time with him in Switzerland. Moreover, there is a clear similarity in their approaches. According to both David Humphreys and John Sharpe, Neau had "digested into form" the history of salvation for his catechumens. Both men exclaimed that even those students who could not read could repeat what Neau told them of the history of creation, the flood, the giving of the Law, and the birth, miracles, and crucifixion of Jesus.[232] Neau himself wrote that he taught "the principal stories of Holy Scripture" in order to give his students an "historical idea" of the creation and redemption of the world: "I place before their eyes the promises and the threats that God has given them the grace to learn from."[233]

Ostervald, too, made salvation history the cornerstone of his catechism. He began his work with a considerable "abridgement of sacred history" and explained in the preface that "it is absolutely necessary that Christians have a knowledge … of the Sacred History, of the Order of Time, and of the most remarkable Events which have happen'd since the Creation of the World."[234] Neau's emphasis on teaching salvation history could have entered his curriculum from the Reformed tradition, through Ostervald.

[232] Sharpe, "Proposals," 349 and Humphrey, *An Account*, 8.

[233] Neau to Secretary, New York, 9 June 1709, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 4, item 155, image 505. "pour leur donner une Idea historique de la Creation et de la redemption du Monde en un mot je ne leurs empeche rien dici qui est propre pour les amener au Sallut jenpose a leurs yeux les promesses et les menaces."

[234] Jean Frédéric Ostervald, *The grounds and principles of the Christian religion, explain'd in a catechetical discourse, for the instruction of young people,* trans. H. Wanley and G. Stanhope (London, UK: W. Sayes, for William Hawes, 1704.) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*.

In time, though, other short published catechisms began to appear that Neau could incorporate into his teaching. By 1710, he mentioned using "the Church Catechism with the comment of Mr. John Lewis on it."[235] Another even shorter catechism appeared in 1709, written by Neau's friend Josiah Woodward. With answers as brief as Neau's, directed toward children and people "of the meanest capacities," this book bears the closest resemblance to Neau's 1704 curriculum notes—which had been addressed by Neau to Josiah Woodward. It is clearly possible that the two men collaborated on Woodward's 1709 publication, *A Short Catechism.*[236] Neau even told Woodward in 1704 that the churchman's charity during Neau's visit with him in London after his captivity "birthed a good way [for them] to work together to the glory of our common Lord," showing the depth of their teamwork over the years.[237]

Attendance and Success

While Neau provided attendance numbers regularly to the SPG in his letters, it is still challenging to get an accurate picture of regular attendance at the school. Although he occasionally provided a detailed list of students, his accounting was far from clear. In the lists that Neau provided, there is no way to tell how many of the pupils were new and how many had been attending for months or even years. We do know that students came

[235] Neau to Secretary, New York, 5 July 1710, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 5, item 134, image 367. This is one of the many editions of John Lewis, *The Church Catechism Explain'd by Way of Question and Answer, and Confirméd by Scripture Proofs,* London, 1700, 1st edition. See Whelan, "Soul Songs," 73, note 26.

[236] Josiah Woodward, *A short catechism, explaining the substance of the Christian religion suited to the understanding of children, and the meanest capacities* (London, UK: Downing, 1709.) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*.

[237] Neau to Woodward, New York, September 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 119. "puisque votre charité ma fait naitre un bon Moyen pour Travailler a la Gloire de notre Commun Seigneur."

and went depending on the whims of their masters, on their own schedules, and on their own motives. The high death rate for the enslaved was also a real factor. As Neau explained matter-of-factly, "the number of my students has not diminished, for while some die, there are yet others who desire to be taught and came to take the vacant spots."[238] Attendance therefore varied from day to day. Neau wrote in 1710, for example, that twenty young people were attending classes regularly for three months; there were so many new girls that Neau divided the class and held a session twice each week just for girls. At that point, the girls stopped attending.[239]

Similarly, many men and women came, as Neau readily admitted, just to pick up books and pamphlets to read: "They only come for the Books," he acknowledged to the SPG.[240] During a period of growth, Neau welcomed English, Dutch, and French white apprentices to his school, as well as enslaved blacks and Native Americans of all ages, and gave away many hundreds of catechisms and pamphlets. In just one shipment, he received eight hundred catechisms from the SPG in London.[241] By giving out tracts and other SPG publications, Neau was able to attract new students of all races to his school:

[238] Neau to Taylor, New York, 12 April 1714, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 9, item 138, image 134. "le nombre de més catecumenes nest pas diminué, car comme il en meurt, il y en aussy dautres a qui le desire detre instruits les fait venir occuper les places vacantes."

[239] One must wonder if they missed visiting with their male classmates!

[240] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, July 1710, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 5, item 134, image 367.

[241] Neau to Taylor, New York, n.d., British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books series A, vol. 9, item 147, image 143.

they first took the materials, brought them home and showed them to family and friends, and then others came to attend the classes, probably hoping to learn to read.[242]

Attendance also depended upon local politics and the varying trust level of slaveowners. When Neau left the French Church for Trinity in 1704, he lost a number of Huguenot pupils when their owners boycotted him and his school in protest for what they considered a perplexing betrayal by Neau.[243] The number of Anglican slaveowners sending their enslaved Africans increased, however, and in 1705 there were forty-two Negroes and four Native Americans attending the school, sent by thirty-six different slaveowners, including Vesey of Trinity and the English Governor, Lord Cornbury.

In 1706, however, the concern grew among whites that enslaved workers could ask for their freedom if baptized, and numbers began to decline again.[244] Neau had first hoped that New York Governor Lord Cornbury would require that all slaveowners educate and evangelize their negroes, but his hopes were in vain.[245] As he complained, the people of New York were not yet aware that "the Christian religion allows you to keep enslaved people who profess that same religion."[246]

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[242] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, July 1710, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 5, item 134, image 365.

[243] Butler, *Huguenots in America*, 168.

[244]Cohen, "Elias Neau," 17.

[245]Humphreys, *An Account,* 6.

[246] Neau to Woodward, New York, September 1704, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 2, item 48, image 120. On "n'est pas encore bien desabusé que la Religion Chrêtienne puisse permettre qu'on tienne pour Esclave des Gens qui la Professent."

Believing that white slaveowners would allow their enslaved men and women to attend classes if the masters no longer feared that Christian baptism could lead to freedom for their slaves, Neau helped pass a 1706 New York law stating that fact. He and other local ministers lobbied both the New York Assembly and the SPG to declare in the colony and in an act of Parliament that the "baptizing of any Negro, Indian or Mulatto Slave shall not be the cause or Reason for setting them or any of them at liberty."[247] Neau was delighted that the new law, "An Act to Encourage the Baptizing of Negro, Indian, and Mulatto Slaves" brought more students into his school. When the new Act of Assembly passed in 1707, affirming that Christian baptism could never result in temporal freedom for the enslaved, numbers soared to over two hundred students.[248] In reality, though, the law had disastrous consequences for the enslaved. Additional clauses, which Neau did not directly author, declared that all children born into slavery should follow the state and condition of the mother and that no slave would be allowed to witness against any freeman in a civil or criminal matter.[249] With this law, which Neau wholeheartedly promoted, the hope of Christianity bringing temporal freedom was dashed for good, and the path was set that would entrench the institution of slavery in church and state.

The school's growth did not last. Neau lost many students after the slave uprising of 1712, when his school was briefly closed, and again following his troubles with Vesey in 1718, when he was temporarily suspended by the SPG. In 1719, after his

[247] Faucquez, "Les Réfugiés," 805.

[248] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 26 September 1707, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 3, item 181, image 506.

[249] Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, 117.

reinstatement, Neau sent several attendance lists to the SPG in London: one reported nine men and thirteen women between the ages of twenty-four and fifty attending his school, including two free negroes. All of them were baptized, and three were communicants of Trinity Church.[250] Another list showed twenty male students and eleven females between the ages of twenty-two and fifty years of age, with one free negro and six children. Eighteen of these were baptized, and two were communicants of Trinity.[251]

Numbers, then, were never overwhelming and gave rise to the general scholarly opinion that Anglican missionary work in the American colonies was a failure, since it reached such a small fraction of the enslaved population.[252] Indeed, even when a large number of students drifted in and out of Neau's classes, actual baptisms were few and far between, due to the difficulty for the enslaved in receiving baptism. In order to be baptized, enslaved students first had to obtain a note from their owners for Vesey. They would then go to be examined by Vesey, with free white witnesses in attendance, "as required by the rubric."[253] One can only imagine the real practical and psychological hurdles that such a process involved for Neau's students as they faced reluctant masters and stood before white authority figures to "give an Account of their Faith."[254]

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[250] "A List of Negroes Taught by Mr. Neau," 23 December 1719, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 14, item 129, image 141.

[251] "A List of Negroes Taught by Mr. Neau," 23 December 1719, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 14, item 130, image 142.

[252] Van Horne, "Impediments," 244.

[253] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 5 July 1710, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 5, item 134, image 365.

[254] Neau to Secretary, New York, n.d., British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 16, item 176, image 204.

Not surprisingly, Foote calculates that between 1704 and 1773, only about thirteen enslaved converts were baptized on average per year in New York City.[255] Even Vesey chose to be vague when he reported in 1722 on the life of his parish. He listed 1600 families of English, Dutch, and Jewish origin in the bounds of his parish, along with 1362 "Indian and Negro slaves." Yet he did not give numbers on conversions of the enslaved: "Many of them frequent our church and have been baptized," he reported, "and some of them admitted to the Lord's Table."[256] He left exact numbers up to the imaginations of the London authorities.

Neau always blamed the lack of baptisms on white slaveowners, never admitting to the possibility that the enslaved Africans and Native Americans could have their own reasons for not flocking to his classes or abandoning their native religion. Noting once that a new "shipment" of 120 Africans had just arrived from Madagascar, Neau exclaimed that "ye spiritual harvest wou'd be great if the Glory of God was earnestly seek'd by our white people."[257] While Neau blamed white slaveowners for his lack of students, the SPG blamed a shortage of catechists and the failure of the teachers to recommend their work "zealously" enough to the white masters.[258] While the circle of responsibility went round and round in the correspondence among white authorities, one

[255] Foote, *Black and White*, 125.

[256] Chorley, *Quarter,* 19.

[257] Neau to Secretary, New York, 22 June 1721, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 15, item 68, image 95.

[258] Humphreys, *An Account,* 4.

must wonder what the Africans themselves thought of SPG attempts to deliver the "poor Creatures from the Pagan Darkness and Superstition in which they were bred."[259]

Unfortunately, no record exists of the feelings or thoughts of Neau's enslaved students. Modern scholars have looked at African religious beliefs and hypothesized that the Calvinism-tinged theology of the day would not have been at all compatible with African beliefs. The enslaved Africans would have learned in their own culture that misfortune is a result of various supernatural forces, rather than divinely-declared guilt or shame. The idea that anyone would need God's Word to be saved would have made little sense to a people who believed that almost all returned to the ancestors in the spirit world after death.[260] Moreover, archeological findings and studies of the 1712 slave revolt show that Obeah was still being practiced, proof that the African religion system had endured.[261]

On the other hand, others believe that Neau's curriculum, with its emphasis on the Creator God and the concrete imagery of Neau's prayers, might have had an appeal that was missing from the teachings of other SPG catechists.[262] In any case, Neau's sympathy to their suffering, his declaration that God cared for their souls, and the possibility of participating in baptism and the other "exclusive" religious rites of their owners, would

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[259] Humphreys, *An Account,* quoting Bishop Gibson, 21.
[260] Foote, *Black and White,* 144.

[261] Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2008), 47.

[262] Hodges, *Root and Branch,* 56.

have been encouraging to the enslaved, who might have likened that participation to a tribal adoption ceremony.[263]

For Neau, the salvation of African souls mattered more than their temporal freedom. Neau's own understanding of race differed from that of many of his white contemporaries, however. He himself did not believe that God had placed any kind of curse on the Negro race, or that blacks are any more sinful than anyone else. He publicly rejected the idea that Africans bear the mark of Cain: When people would tell Neau that the color and condition of enslaved Africans points to God's condemnation upon them, Neau reported that he would always cry out against the audacity of those who dare to "mess in the impenetrable decrees of God." With his characteristic sharp tongue, Neau pointed out that the wickedness of blacks is no worse than that of whites, for everyone is scandalized by the horrors committed by Christians. "At least these miserable ones [the blacks] have more of an excuse" for their sin, he adds.[264]

Interestingly, despite the struggles of Neau's school, the white SPG leaders in England soon came to join Neau in his enthusiasm for the conversion of enslaved Africans in the colonies. In 1711, seven years after the founding of the school, Bishop Fleetwood's annual sermon to the SPG in London, shared in thousands of copies across the colonies, reflected a change of heart in the Society. Given the ever-increasing number of enslaved Africans in the colonies and the pleading letters of Neau, Le Jau, and other

[263] Frank J. Klingberg, "The S.P.G. Program for Negroes in Colonial New York," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 9, no. 4 (1939): 308.

[264] Neau to Secretary, New York, n.d., British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol.6, item 87, image 285. " ... mais au moin ces miserables sont en quelque sorte plus excusable."

early catechists, the SPG shifted its focus from evangelizing whites to pouring resources into the catechesis of enslaved people. Even though slavery was an economic necessity, Fleetwood soon declared, Africans were "equally the Workmanship of God … endued with the same Faculties and intellectual Powers" as their white owners. Purchased with the blood of Christ, the enslaved were meant to be instructed in faith and baptized, as well as treated with kindness and mercy.[265] In 1730, SPG Secretary Humphreys wrote that the Society "looked upon the Instruction and Conversion of the Negroes as a principal Branch of their Care."[266] Similarly, in 1723, Bishop Gibson, then Bishop of London, sent a long missive to ten thousand slaveowners in the British colonies. He affirmed that negroes were "part of our Nation" and contributed to the wealth and trade of the Kingdom. They should therefore receive the same care for their souls that whites do.[267] As Gerbner argues, the SPG was on its way to supporting "Christian Slavery" in the British colonies.

The School after Elias Neau's Death

Neau was able to inspire a trust among his enslaved students that other catechists were not able to replicate. Neau clearly reached out to his students with compassion. Sharpe explained that Neau always appeared for his classes at the promised time, instructing his students even when only a few of them were present. In addition, he crept "into Garrets, Cellars, and other nauseous places, to exhort and pray" with them when

[265] William Fleetwood, " A Plea for Humanitarianism for the Negro in the Institution of Slavery, February 16, 1710-11," sermon printed in Klingberg, *Anglican,* 203-04.

[266] Humphreys, *An Account,* 1.

[267] Humphreys, *An Account,* 18.

they were ill.[268] Surely Neau's own suffering in French prisons must have helped him to relate to other captives at a human level. In addition, as a self-taught man and non-native English speaker, Neau was perhaps more able than highly educated clergy to speak in ways that his students could understand. Here, too, Sharpe agreed: Neau could "accommodate his discourse to their capacities whilst he inculcates the great truths of the Gospel."[269]As the New York Governor testified in 1718, Neau had "acquainted himself with the tempers of those infidels whereby he is capable of applying himself to them after the most Convincing Manner."[270]

The ability to relate to one another went both ways, however. Aware of Neau's own story, the enslaved workers likely felt a kinship with him. According to Sharpe, the enslaved students knew Neau as a renowned "confessor." Whether Neau was so famous that everyone in town knew his story of captivity, or whether Neau shared the testimony of his misfortunes with his students, they felt that he was someone who could relate to their own pain. In addition, they deduced that there must be some comfort in a religion and in a God that had supported Neau through so many trials. Sharpe also pointed out that his enslaved students were able to see Neau "hated and ridiculed" by other whites on their account. While their owners might have told them that they had no souls, Neau was telling them that God desired their salvation.[271] In a letter to the Bishop of London, Neau

[268] Sharpe, "Proposals," 350.

[269] Mabee Carleton, *Black Education in New York State* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1979), 5.

[270] Goodfriend, *Melting Pot*, 128.

[271] Sharpe, "Proposals," 349.

backed up Sharpe's assertions. He claimed that the masters turned on him every time one of his students failed to do his duty at home, and that he would be exposed to the people's fury every time he dared to say something good about negroes.[272]

The SPG catechists who directly followed Neau shared neither his active compassion for their enslaved pupils nor Neau's ability to speak in simple terms to gain the students' trust. In 1720, two years before Neau's death, the schoolmaster from Trinity, William Huddleston, began mixed-race Sunday classes at Vesey's behest. While Huddleston's classes were sponsored by Vesey, rather than by the SPG, Neau nevertheless encouraged his enslaved students to attend the extra classes, but without success. "My school is numerous," Neau wrote, "yet there is but few who will go [to] the catechism of Mr. Huddleston in the Sunday at Church."[273] After Neau's death two years later, Huddleston briefly took over all of the classes, holding them both in the church steeple and in his home on Sundays. Huddleston employed a strict set of rules that Neau had not, punishing students who missed classes or who arrived late. While the whites approved of these measures, they were obviously not well-received by his pupils, and attendance plummeted.[274]

Right after Neau's death, Vesey jumped into action in order to obtain the ordained associate he had always wanted. In the very same letter to the SPG secretary in which he

[272] Neau to Bishop Robinson, New York, 28 February 1718/19, *Fulham Papers in the Lambeth Palace Library: American Colonial Section*. Microfiche collection at Bishop Payne Library, Virginia Theological Seminary.

[273] Klingberg, *Anglican*, 138.

[274] Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 83.

announced Elias Neau's death, Vesey wasted no time in asking for the SPG to send a new catechist "in priest's orders," someone who could help him with parish matters part-time and teach in the school part-time.[275] The SPG complied and in 1724 sent James Wetmore, a newly-ordained, Yale-educated priest from Connecticut. Wetmore, who knew nothing of teaching enslaved students, lasted in the position only two years before asking to transfer to Rye, New York. In spite of increasing the number of classes and using what he claimed were similar teaching methods to Neau's, numbers declined sharply at the school. One scholar claims that there were only two or three black pupils remaining at the school by December 1726.[276]

Wetmore's successor, Thomas Colgan, also had little success with the enslaved students. While he claimed to have fifty catechumens shortly after his arrival, most of them were white.[277] Kemp speculates that since Wetmore and Colgan were no longer asking the SPG for primers, they were probably not teaching reading to their students, nor encouraging them in their reading skills.[278] As young and inexperienced clergymen, both Wetmore and Colgan could have been overwhelmed with their tasks and lacking in the passion that Neau had for reaching the enslaved. As one young priest wrote to the SPG, he had enough to do preaching, visiting his parishioners, and worrying over the "infidels"

[275] Vesey to Secretary, New York, 4 October 1722, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 16, item 182, image 210.

[276] Klingberg, *Anglican*, 141.

[277] Klingberg, *Anglican*, 142.

[278] Kemp, *The Support*, 251.

of his own race, without adding enslaved pupils who might never "be brought to have any true sense of the Christian religion."[279]

Colgan left for an easier job in 1731 and was followed by a series of priests who experienced longer tenures and greater success. By 1740, enslaved Africans were more often American-born, with a good grasp of English, and more ready to understand the white man's teachings.[280] In addition, the Great Awakening brought a renewed openness to the teachings of the Anglican catechists—an openness to the "heart religion" that Neau had begun to offer his students thirty years before. In Trinity's school, devotional works were once again handed out; reading was encouraged, and psalm-singing was once again taught, with singing classes offered to blacks three times each week in 1741 by the Trinity Church organist.[281]

[279] Klingberg, *Anglican*, 131.

[280] Foote, *Black and White*, 145.

[281] Vibert, "The Society," 196.

Chapter Four: Key Ideas in Heart-Religion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

In order to situate the layman Elias Neau into the religious world of his day, it is important to trace the themes of heart-religion that would have circulated around Neau on his travels throughout the Atlantic world. Like the trade networks that wound their way from country to country, across oceans, cultures, and languages, the networks of thought crossed the same boundaries, mixing ideas and leading to greater exchange and cooperation between religious groups.

Germany

While Neau did not travel to Germany, German heart religion played a role in England and North America through Halle Pietism. In Germany, where the trauma of the Thirty-Years-War had led to suffering and disillusionment, theologians like Philipp Jakob

Spener (1635-1705) found solace in personal spiritual renewal. In his *Pia Desideria* (1675), Spener called for more Bible-reading, an increase in righteous Christian living, a lay spiritual priesthood, and a reform of theological education. Spener emphasized individual regeneration and "New Birth." In New Birth, God enters our hearts to re-create us in faith. Christ's righteousness is thus imputed to us, and we are forgiven and adopted as God's children. Those who are reborn live godly and heavenly-minded lives.

Influenced by Spener, August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) built up a pietist intellectual center at the University of Halle in 1698 for the character-formation of Christian people. Halle became a center of missionary and cultural-diplomatic activities throughout the Atlantic World. The work there was funded by trade networks, printing houses, and a pharmaceutical business.[282] Printing presses at Halle and abroad filled Europe and America with bibles, hymnals, and other devotional literature, including Neau's own works. Theologically, Francke emphasized "*Busskampf*," or repentance through penitential struggle. For Francke, the path to New Birth begins with a struggle with despair before the powerful judgment of God upon one's sins. With a "'terrified, defeated heart'" one asks God for renewal. With perseverance in struggle, God's presence will break through, and the Holy Spirit will enter one's heart.[283] Like Neau, Francke used bridal mysticism to describe union with Christ and offered meditations on Christ's Passion.[284]

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[282] Markus Matthias, "August Hermann Francke," in *The Pietist Theologians,* ed. Carter Lindberg (London, UK: Blackwell, 2005), 101.

[283] Matthias, "Francke," 107-08.

[284] Ingrid Goggan Lelos, "The Spirit in the Flesh: The Translation of German Pietist Imagery into Anglo-American Cultures," (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2009), 24.

England and North America

German pietism soon took hold in England, where the royal chaplain at Buckingham Palace, Wilhelm Boehm (1673-1722), was an associate of Francke's. Boehm was associated not only with Halle pietism, translating German devotional works into English, but with Puritans in England. Boehm was also a leading figure in the SPCK. According to Gerbner, the SPG considered German pietists not as dissenters but as foreign Protestants engaged in a common cause of moral reformation. The SPG even sent their North American catechists copies of Francke's *Pietas Hallensis,* translated into English by Boehm, in 1707, 1710 and 1716.[285] The preface to this edition was written by none other than Neau's friend Josiah Woodward, acclaiming the suppression of "Impiety and Vice" and praising the "Propagation of the Christian Faith among Infidels."[286]

New England Puritans, too, were attracted to Halle pietism. They shared a common criticism of established church life, considering it superficial and corrupt. They both sought a continuing reformation, brought about by spiritual and ethical revival. In their lives and writings, Puritan leader Cotton Mather and Francke shared a focus on the methodical development of individual holiness and the use of small groups and prayer meetings to promote spiritual growth. They both stressed regeneration, sanctification, practical living, and a kind of Protestant mysticism.[287] Mather saw Halle pietism as a sign

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[285] Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, 142.

[286] Ernest Benz, "Ecumenical Relations between Boston Puritanism and German Pietism: Cotton Mather and August Hermann Francke," *The Harvard Theological Review* 54:3 (July 1961): 164.

[287] Richard F. Lovelace, "Cotton Mather," in *The Pietist Theologians,* ed. Carter Lindberg (London, UK: Blackwell, 2005), 117.

of the necessary revival that would lead to the expansion of God's Kingdom in a New Millennium.[288] We know that Mather corresponded with Francke in Halle around 1715 and sent Boehm his own catechism, *Lapise Monte Excisus,* to disperse in England, France, and at Halle, hoping that this work would "serve the good Cause of Piety and Liberty."[289]

It is possible that Mather and Neau exchanged ideas during Neau's time in Boston. We know that Mather could read and write French. He owned works by French Huguenot Pierre Jurieu, as well as other personal narratives and pietist pamphlets in French that had been published in Holland.[290] Mather even translated the practice of small-group devotional meetings to his own work in converting enslaved Africans, as Neau would do in his New York school. In 1693, Mather published a tract titled "Rules for the Society of Negroes" that was supposed to help the enslaved to set up their own religious society along the lines of John Eliot's "Praying Indian" villages.

Mather's rules included meeting in small groups in the evening after the Sabbath to take turns offering prayers, singing psalms, and listening to a sermon, with the permission, of course, of their masters, "those who have Power over us." Focusing on moral rules, the enslaved were to avoid "wicked company" and only to allow people to come to their meetings who were approved by the local minister. They were to learn the

[288] Lovelace, "Cotton Mather," 124.

[289] Rice, "Cotton Mather," 226.

[290] Rice, "Cotton Mather," 208.

catechism and avoid drinking, swearing, lying, stealing, and fornication.[291] Like Neau, Mather taught a Christianity of personal devotion and moral reform.

France

In Roman Catholic France, one can find "heart religion" blossoming in early seventeenth-century Jansenism and Quietism. The Jansenists at Port Royal emphasized the human need for grace and for rigorous affective devotion in preparation for the Eucharist. Quietists stressed the mystical contemplation of God and the need to rest in God's presence, above all else. The laywoman Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Mothe Guyon (or "Madame Guyon,"1648-1717) entered a life of religious devotion under the spiritual direction of François Lacombe. She wrote of the "annihilation" of the soul in passive contemplation. In *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer*, she called for "prayer of the heart" that would allow the afflicted to taste God's presence.[292] The German pietist Tersteegen translated her book of poems, *Les états différents de l'amour sacré et profane*, into German,[293] and Quakers even recognized her as a kindred spirit.[294]

Once again, in Madame Guyon's publications, the connections between countries and traditions highlight the shared networks of pious devotional materials in the Atlantic World. Even French Huguenots shared in this complex web of networks. For example, Huguenot Pastor Pierre Poiret (1646-1719) studied in Basel and Heidelberg and spent

[291] Wendy Warren, *New England Bound* (New York: Liveright, 2016), 187.

[292] Patricia A. Ward, "Madame Guyon," in *The Pietist Theologians*, ed. Carter Lindberg (London, UK: Blackwell, 2005), 162.

[293] Ward, "Madame Guyon," 172.

[294] Campbell, *Religion*, 41.

time with the German pietists Spener and Schütz. After taking refuge in Holland in 1676, he met the mystic Antoinette Bourignon and settled in Holland. He served as Walloon pastor for a short time but soon left the church to write his own theology and to edit the works of Bournignon and Madame Guyon.[295]

Madame Guyon and the earlier Roman Catholic movements reflect an interest in mysticism and human suffering that also appears in French Protestantism. For example, Huguenot pastor Pierre Jurieu (1637-1713) was professor of theology and Hebrew at the Protestant Academy at Sédan and later pastor of the Walloon church in Rotterdam. Jurieu was the author of devotional materials that made their way across the Atlantic world. Neau met with him in Holland during Neau's European tour, and Jurieu's *Traité de la dévotion* (1681) circulated among prisoners in the galleys.[296] Morin specifically notes that Neau and his fellow prisoners read and shared the works of "the illustrious Jurieu."[297]

Jurieu's works were also important to the Camisards, a French group often tied to radical pietism. In isolated parts of southern France, especially Languedoc and the Vivarais, the religious persecutions led to a growing hope of God's direct intervention in the world. After 1685, with their pastors in exile, ordinary people, reading the Bible at home, began to speak in tongues, fall into trances, and prophesy. Even women and children would reportedly speak out in their sleep about the fall of the antichrist and the divine punishment to come. The writings of Jurieu encouraged them in a radical

[295] Ward, "Madame Guyon," 171.

[296] Whelan, "Mysticism," 237.

[297] Morin, *A Short Account*, 51.

millenarianism, as Jurieu himself began to hint at the need to use force against the king's soldiers, sending money from the Walloon parishes in Holland to support the Camisards.[298]

Transforming the psalms into war chants, these rural, working-class prophets, wearing "shirt-sleeves" or *camisas* in Provençal, rose up in revolt in 1702. Their rebellion was crushed by Louis XIV's forces in 1705, and many Camisards fled France. Some went to Halle, where they joined pietists there, and others went to England, where they formed a group called the French Prophets in 1706.[299] These "Spirit-fueled" uprisings continued in France, however, until 1713, when they were finally quelled. Randall claims that Neau was influenced by the Camisards that he met in prison and on the galleys,[300] but beyond a common emphasis on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the mystical language used by Neau in some of his songs, there is little evidence that he shared their radical piety.[301] It is more likely that Neau, like the Camisards, was influenced by the language of Jurieu's devotional writings.

In New York, Neau came into close contact with another millennialist group arising out of seventeenth-century France—the Labadists. Jean de Labadie (1610-1674)

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[298] Randall, "From a Far Country," 33.

[299] Also known as the "London Prophets," this group of millenarian radicals joined with English and German millenarians to form the Philadelphian Movement, claiming to predict the future and to raise the dead. The French Prophets were generally rejected by other Huguenots residing in London. Butler, *Huguenots in America*, 39.

[300] Randall, *From a Far Country*, 107.

[301] Randall fails to define the Camisard movement accurately. She sets them apart from and in opposition to "Huguenots," while the Camisards were instead a subset of "Huguenots." At the same time, she claims that general Huguenot customs, such as giving children biblical names, were only for Camisards.

was an eclectic collector of religious experience. Raised as a Roman Catholic, he joined the Jesuit order as a teen. He then spent ten years with the Oratorians and Jansenists. After reading Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, he converted to Protestantism. In Geneva, he met Spener, who introduced him to the idea of conventicles, or small-group house-meetings. Preaching in France, Switzerland, and the United Provinces, Labadie settled in the United Provinces, where he formed his own conventicles and preached about personal union with Christ. He split with the Reformed Church in 1669 to form his own religious community. While his beliefs were similar to those of the Quakers, he had trouble getting along with the Quaker leadership and never joined with them.[302]

Labadie and his followers wrote poetry and spiritual songs which were similar in structure and content to Neau's songs. The themes of the Labadist songs include the need to surrender to God's love; the role of mystical abandonment to God in Christian devotion; Jesus as the Bridegroom of the Christian soul; and wholistic transformation of life. A first volume of the songs appeared in 1678 as *Cantiques Sacrez et Spirituels.* In 1680, a second *Recueil de Cantiques Spirituels* appeared, followed by *Heylige Gesangen* in 1683. Songs were sung in both French and Dutch, accompanying both daily chores and religious house-meetings. Some were sung, like Neau's songs, to the tunes of the Genevan psalter, and others were sung to new tunes. Most of these songs fell out of use after the Labadist community disappeared, between 1690 and 1720. [303]

[302] Campbell, *Religion,* 75-78.

[303] Joris Burmann, "Presentation on the Labadists and their Hymns," Zoom lecture at the Eglise Française du Saint Esprit, New York, April 25, 2021. Unfortunately, these songs are available only in Dutch and are found in the Netherlands, so I was only able to access a small sample.

After Labadie's death, some of his followers traveled to Surinam to establish a colony. This venture was extremely unsuccessful, and the survivors came to New York in 1688 to establish a colony there.[304] Dutch Reformed leaders complained about the presence of Labadists and other "zealous Pietist preachers" who organized conventicles in the 1680's in New York City. They grumbled that the Labadists attended the Dutch Reformed services in the mornings but then stirred up trouble for the churches in the afternoons, attending their own closed-door meetings and seeking reform.[305] In 1715, Neau, too, mentions the followers of "Abbadie" in negative terms to the SPG;[306] however, records show that Neau worshiped with them at the French Church in New York. Among the founders of the French Church were Monsieur de la Montagne, Peter Bayald, and Monsieur Cresson, who were all New York Labadists.[307]

Despite varying definitions, most scholars would agree that an "experiential Christianity," with an emphasis on what Campbell calls "heart religion"[308] was circulating across the Atlantic World during Elias Neau's lifetime. These various groups shared an interest in personal religious experience, especially repentance as struggle; a devotional life that included striving for Christ-like holiness; the importance of prayer, devotional reading of Scripture, and meeting in small groups; a focus on the Cross as the

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[304] A. Salomon, "Jean de Labadie," *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 78, no. 2 (1929): 41.

[305] Joyce Goodfriend, "The Crystallization of an Anti-Dutch Narrative," in *Who Should Rule at Home? Confronting the Elite in British New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), 22.

[306] Neau to Sharpe, New York, 14 December 1715, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 11, item 281, image 296.

[307] Burmann, "Presentation on the Labadists."

[308] Campbell, *Religion*, 14.

symbol for a life of self-sacrifice; the necessity of mission; and often a hope for better times in the age to come.[309] These groups sought out other reform-minded religious groups for conversation, visits, letter-writing, and sharing publications across linguistic, confessional, and geographical boundaries.[310] In Neau's travels throughout the Atlantic world, meeting with a multiplicity of religious figures, he was clearly introduced to overlapping religious renewal movements. As a self-taught layman, he absorbed what made sense to him, without the need to fit his beliefs into a specific paradigm.

It is important to note that Neau did not call himself a "pietist." His letters refer often to the importance of "*piété*," or devotion, but Neau saw himself as an upstanding, orthodox Anglican, uninterested in sectarian groups—at least that is what he reported to the SPG. In several of his letters, Neau spoke of the need for an Anglican bishop in the colonies, someone who could keep clergy in check and promote instruction of the enslaved. He also hoped that a bishop would help deal with the "Sabbatarian, Pietist, Labadist, and Quaker Sects," among others.[311] Clearly, "pietism," attached to radical nonconformists, was already seen in a negative light in Neau's Reformed and Anglican circles. Neau's sympathies were instead with those who sought the reform of society and the sanctification of souls within the established churches. Neau shared his goals with his friend Sharpe in 1715:

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[309] Roger E. Olson, "Pietism: Myths and Realities," in *The Pietist Impulse in Christianity*, ed. Christian T.C. Winn, Christopher Gehrz, G. William Carlson, and Eric Holst (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 7.

[310] Elizabeth Bouldin, "In Search of 'Fellow Pilgrims': Radical Protestants and Transconfessional Exchanges in Europe and the British Atlantic, c. 1670-1730," *Church History* 83, no. 3 (2014): 592.

[311] Neau to Secretary, New York, n.d., British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol.6, item 87, image 287.

> The state of Religion is also much ye same. Piety and Charity gives place to Trade and buisness [sic]. The affections of ye heart are generally strongest to sensible things. And Spiritual make not such Impression on them. Let us pray to God to open the flood gates of his Grace and Pour downe upon us Streams of his Love, that obedience may become as … frequent, as now it is difficult and rare.[312]

Psalms and Spiritual Songs at the turn of the Eighteenth Century

After the horrors of the Thirty Year's War, people sought union with God through prayer, contemplation, and other forms of active piety. As a result, there was a "deluge of prayer books, devotional tracts and hymnals" that combined theological orthodoxy with a rebirth of mysticism.[313] An understanding of the role that singing played in the Reformed tradition, combined with the rise in the composition of spiritual songs in seventeenth-century Protestant Europe, is necessary to understand Neau's work.

Calvin and the Psalms

In order to understand the role that the Psalms played in Neau's writing, one must first look further back into the history of French Protestantism. John Calvin believed that a community singing God's praises together, with one spirit, faith, word, and mouth, was the best way to honor the Creator and to encourage one another in the Christian life. Calvin believed that music has a special power to enter into human hearts. He also

[312] Neau to Sharpe, 14 December 1715, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 11, item 281, image 296.

[313] Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974), 189.

claimed that secular music and seductive tunes could have the power to distract the faithful. In an expanded version of the preface to the psalter published in 1543, Calvin wrote "'when melody is with the words, they will pierce the heart much more strongly and enter inside. Just as wine is cast into a vessel through a funnel, so also venom and corruption are dropped down into the depths of the heart through melody.'"[314] So strongly did Calvin and his followers believe that singing unauthorized music could harm the morals and discipline of the entire community, that the Consistory in sixteenth-century Geneva punished all offenders for breaking this rule. Just as harmful music had the power to destroy, however, Calvin believed that communal singing of the psalms, set to simple tunes, would instead center the singers in God's Word, "as if [God] himself sings in us, to exult his glory."[315] Singing the psalms would imprint the sacred words on the hearts and memories of the faithful.

In early sixteenth century Geneva, Calvin began commissioning tunes and a French paraphrase of the Hebrew psalter, so that his followers could sing and absorb the words in their native tongue. The *Genevan Psalter,* published in 1562, contained French paraphrases of all one hundred fifty psalms by poets Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze. The accompanying one hundred twenty-five tunes that Calvin commissioned were written to reinforce the meaning of the words, with each syllable assigned to one note so that each word would be clearly intelligible. The rhythm of these psalm tunes was also

[314] Melinda Latour, "Disciplining Song in Sixteenth-Century Geneva." *The Journal of Musicology* 32 (2015): 8.

[315] Barbara B. Diefendorf, "The Huguenot Psalter and the Faith of French Protestants in the 16th Century," in *Culture and Identity in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800): Essays in Honor of Natalie Zemon Davis,* ed. Barbara B. Diefendorf and Carla Hesse (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 44.

distinctive; tunes were crafted with a moderate, yet majestic simplicity, designed to make them easy for a congregation to sing together.[316] Additional devotional materials were included in the *Psalter*, such as the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, other biblical canticles, and the Articles of Faith. This psalter sold more than 30,000 copies.[317]

Not only did the Huguenots sing psalms in worship, they incorporated them into their daily lives. The psalter included a caption over each psalm to show readers how to use it in a given situation. In a world of constant war and persecution, the psalms of lament, especially, became the lens through which French Protestants could deal with violence and sorrow, imagining themselves in the place of the persecuted psalmist, protected by a loving and powerful God. Other psalms led them into battle or encouraged them to remain steadfast under persecution. Indeed, defiant sixteenth-century protestants would gather in large groups in public to sing loud psalms, a "deliberate flaunting ... of their confessional identity, intended to be openly provocative."[318] Over time, as persecutions increased, the psalms became instrumental to Huguenot fellowship and identity in a hostile world, accompanying Huguenots into their prison cells and onto the galleys.

Spiritual Songs in France

[316] Blume, *Protestant,* 530.

[317] Edith Weber, "Le patrimoine hymnologique protestant," *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 161 (2015): 613.

[318] Kathleen Ashley, "Psalm-Singing at Home: The Case of Etienne Mathieu, a Burgundian Protestant," in *Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World*, ed. Marco Faini and Alessia Meneghin (Leiden,NL: Brill, 2018), 72.

In addition to learning the psalms, the young Neau would have learned to sing the kind of "spiritual songs" that he would later write. While only psalms were sung in worship, Huguenots began writing and singing *chansons spirituelles* in their private lives as early as the sixteenth century. These devotional songs, sometimes accompanied by the lute, were written to provide believers with an edifying alternative to the love songs of the secular world.[319] From 1533-1678, anonymous anthologies of spiritual songs were published and re-published, spreading the message of the Reformation.[320]

Some songs were devotional. Matthieu Malingre's 1533 collection of original tunes advertises its intentions in the long title: *Plusieurs belles et bonnes chansons, que les chrestiens peuvent chanter en grande affection de coeur: pour et affin de soulager leurs esperitz et de leur donner repos en Dieu.*[321] These songs sought a transformation of the heart. Some editions even included notations about the spirit in which the songs were to be sung: "with great heart-felt affection," with a "contrite heart" in order to be "nearer to the spirit of Jesus Christ as contained in Holy Scripture."[322] Others, however, were satirical or polemic, meant to poke fun at Roman Catholics. In 1542 Geneva, one such collection was boldly called *Chansons demontrant les erreurs et abuz du temps present,*

[319] Weber, "Le Patrimoine," 616.

[320] Anne Ullberg, "Au chemin de salvation: la chanson spirituelle reformée, 1533–1678," (PhD diss., Uppsala Universiteit, 2008), 15.

[321] Véronique Ferrer, "La chanson spirituelle au temps de la Réforme (1533-1591), *Studia Litteraria Universitatis lagellonicae Cracoviensis* 7, no. 1 (2012): 43. (*Several Beautiful and Good Songs that Christians Can Sing with Great Affection of Heart: to Soothe their Spirits and to Give Them Rest in God.*)

[322] Ferrer, "La Chanson," 46. "en grande affection de coeur," "coeur contrit" pour être "au plus pres de l'esperit de Jesus-Christ, contenu es sainctes Escritures."

lesquelles le fidele pourra chanter au lieu des chansons vaines et pleines de mensonges.[323]

One of the last of these sixteenth-century books of *chansons* is a collection of four songs written by an unknown Huguenot prisoner in 1597. Appearing almost one hundred years before Neau's poems, this collection has striking similarities. Called *Chansons spirituelles, anciennes et nouvelles, composies a l'honneur de Dieu, pour chanter de ceur et bouche, et comme sainct Paul escrit,* these songs are described as a story of the persecutions that the author has experienced, with deeply moving personal details and theological convictions.[324] A third of the tunes chosen for this work are psalm tunes from Marot and Bèze, and the rest are secular tunes in French, Flemish, German, and Latin. Interestingly, the author of these songs also considers himself a teacher, sharing the devotion of the true faith with others.[325] Long before Neau and his fellow galley slaves wrote songs of their time as prisoners, other Huguenots were expressing themselves in a similar fashion.

While such "chansons" proliferated in the sixteenth century, Ullberg points out that the broader term *chanson spirituelle* changed to the term, "*cantique spirituelle"* in the seventeenth century, as Huguenots came under the influence of German pietism.[326] Like the songs that Neau would write, these songs were also written in the first person

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[323] Ferrer, "La Chanson," 44, note 2. (*Songs Showing the Errors and Abuses of the Present Day that the Faithful Can Sing, Instead of Songs that are Vain and Full of Lies.)*

[324] Dorothy S. Packer, "Les chansons spirituelles de 1597: Une anthologie protestante inconnue." *Revue de Musicologie* 65, no. 1 (1979): 6. (*Old and New Spiritual Songs, Composed for the Honor of God, to Sing with Heart and Mouth, as St. Paul Wrote*.)

[325] Packer, "Les chansons," 9. Literally a "zèlateur."

[326] Ullberg, "Au Chemin," 21.

singular, as a personal prayer offered to God, and were filled with paraphrases of scripture, especially the psalms.[327]

Language of Canaan

In his own letters, Calvin used allusions to the psalms, as well as direct quotations, and his followers did the same. In sermons, memoirs, personal letters, and even daily conversation, Huguenots brought bits of the psalms that they knew by heart into their own speech. Their own self-expression became filled with metaphors and rhythms of the psalms, as well as allusions to other biblical passages. This special manner of speech and writing became known as the "language of Canaan." This kind of coded language is "peppered with the cadences and phraseology of the Bible and allusions to biblical verses, concepts, and characters."[328] Since these biblical allusions were inserted without referencing a certain verse or book of the bible, those who did not share the same "symbolic world" were unaware of the reference. Neau's devotional writings, as well as those of other Huguenots of the time such as Pierre Peiret and Pierre Jurieu, are clear examples. In Neau's *Histoire Abrégée*, Whelan counts four hundred biblical allusions, stories, and quotations, coming more often from the psalms than from any other single book.[329]

The Huguenot "language of Canaan" has not been fully studied, and the exact manner and extent to which Huguenots writers used language full of Hebrew turns of

[327] Ullberg, "Au Chemin," 307.

[328] Ruth Whelan, "From the Other Side of Silence: Huguenot Life-writing, a Dialogic Art of Narrating the Self." *Narrating the Self in Early Modern Europe: European Connections* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 148.

[329] Whelan, "Patchwork Bible," 112.

phrase, as found in their French bible translation, is not known.[330] A look at just one page of Jurieu's *Traité de la Dévotion,* Neau's *Cantiques Sacrez,* and the anonymous *Trésor des Consolations Divines et Humaines* (thought to be written by Neau's friend Pierre Peiret) brings the extent of this language to light, however. Picking one page at random from Jurieu's work, one finds a veiled reference to Psalm 42, Matthew 8:8, Song of Solomon 5:2, Genesis 28:16, and Song of Solomon 1:2 all interwoven with Jurieu's own words.[331] In the *Trésor,* a random page refers to Isaiah 45:9, Romans 9:19, I Kings 2, Job 1:21 and Matthew 10:29.[332] In Neau's brief *Cantique V,* a close reading finds words or images that reference Psalm 42:1, Song of Solomon 1:2, Psalm 44:3, and Malachi 4:2. As Whelan explains, the bible in these writings becomes a "place of meeting" between God and the author: the writer hears God's voice in the scripture and addresses himself to God in that same biblical language.[333]

A large number of Huguenot *chansons* and *cantiques* were also written to fit an official psalm tune. Morin arranges Neau's songs according to the order of the psalms of the *Genevan Psalter*, and a superscription assigns each song to a specific psalm tune. The rhyme scheme and meter of Neau's songs fit the rhyme scheme and meter of the psalm in the *Genevan Psalter* to which Neau assigns each song. While Neau uses the melodies of

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[330] Olivier Millet, "La redécouverte contemporaine des poètes protestants français des XVI[e] et XVII[e] siècles," *Foi et Vie* 116, no.1 (2016), 19.

[331] Pierre Jurieu, *Traité de la dévotion* (La Haye: Abraham Troyel, 1697), 3.

[332] [Pierre Peiret], *Le trésor des consolations divines et humaines ou traite dans le quel le chretien peut apprendre a vaincre et a surmonter les afflictions et les miseres de cette vie*. (New York: William Bradford, 1696), 2.

[333] Ruth Whelan, "L'heuristique des galères: La Bible du forçat Elie Neau," *Revue Bossuet* 9 (2018): 66.

the *Psalter* to craft the metrical form of his verse, he is not always guided by the content of the words of the original psalm. In *Hymne XXXIV*, Neau creates a song about suffering based on the tune of Psalm 81 in the Marot and Bèze version of the Psalter, in which the directions are to "sing gaily."[334] That said, the tone and words of the *cantique* and the psalm do occasionally coincide. *Cantique XIV*, for example, set to the pleading Psalm 130, does call on God to "respond to [Neau's] distress."[335] In general, the psalm tunes serve simply as a familiar and edifying vehicle for the author's own prayer. Neau was not consciously trying to recall the emotions surrounding the words of a specific psalm.[336]

Spiritual Songs in Germany and the United Provinces

In Germany and the United Provinces, the writing of spiritual songs began early in the seventeenth century as part of Johann Arndt's *Frommigkietsbewegung* ("piety movement") that followed the horrors of the Thirty Years War.[337] Well-known Baroque hymnists Paul Gerhardt and Johann Scheffler, among others, called on singers to meditate on Christ's Cross and to share in his sufferings. Borrowing the spiritual imagery of medieval Catholic mystics, they dwelt on imagery of Christ's blood, on his wounds, and on bridal mysticism, depicting the union of Christ and the believer in physical terms. In these baroque hymns, God was often depicted in sensual terms, as the object of sight,

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[334] Whelan, "Soul Songs," 75. "chantez gaiement"

[335] Neau, *Histoire Abrégée*, "Cantique XIV," appendix page 26, line 43.

[336] It is important to note that it was longstanding practice, dating from the thirteenth century, to apply the tunes of secular love songs to devotional verse. Like Neau, authors of the verse would simply craft their poetry to fit the tune. As long as the new words had the correct number of syllables and fit the same rhyme-scheme, then neither author nor singer worried that they were singing Christian devotional words to the tune of a secular love song.[336] Ferrer, "La Chanson," 44.

[337] Lelos, "The Spirit," 37.

sound, taste, smell, and touch.[338] In addition, Gerhardt's work in his *Geistliche Andachten* (1666-67) stressed moral behavior and the creation of a loving community between God and humanity. In Arndt's words, the words of these hymns "'wake up our heart, lift up our mind to God, inflame the devotion, strengthen belief and hope, and are useful to those who want to persevere in prayer.'"[339]

Similarly, an early seventeenth-century piety movement arose in Holland. Jadocus van Lodensteyn (1620-77) organized the faithful into conventicles, as Spener did in Germany.[340] Theodor Untereyck, trained in Holland, organized conventicles in Bremen, where he influenced the young Reformed musician Joachim Neander (1650-80). Neander's hymns also expressed the soul's desire for union with God and the repose of the soul found in Jesus, our Savior.

Pietist Hymns

The hymns of Neander, Gerhardt and Scheffler were later taken up by Reformed and Lutheran pietists throughout Europe. Spener supported the spread of hymnbooks and the writing of new hymns. And at Halle, Francke's co-worker Johann Freylinghausen published his *Geistreiches Gesangbuch* in 1704 and in 1714. This hymnal contained sixteen hundred old and new hymns, eighty-four of which are from Paul Gerhardt. This book of hymns spread to America, India, and around the world.[341] While Neau might

[338] Lelos, "The Spirit," 36

[339] Lelos, "The Spirit," 39.

[340] Labadie was also influenced by van Lodensteyn in Utrecht. Salomon, "Jean de Labadie," 25.

[341] Christian Bunners, "Paul Gerhardt," in *The Pietist Theologians,* ed. Carter Lindberg (London, UK: Blackwell, 2005), 78.

have seen the *Gesangbuch* in New York, he was already writing his own spiritual songs by 1704. He also makes no reference to having read or sung hymns by Neander or Gerhardt. Neau's songs, however, like the hymns of the German and Dutch pietists and the spiritual songs of the Labadists, are steeped in biblical language, in a theology of suffering, in a piety of bridal mysticism, and in a reliance on metaphors of the senses.

Among Reformed believers in the seventeenth-century United Provinces, as in France, the psalms alone were to be sung in church. At home, however, there was an entire genre of song meant to encourage piety in daily life. Borrowing phrases from the bible itself, the words to these songs were composed without musical accompaniment. As in France, these Dutch poets chose familiar melodies to put together with their lyrics, whether or not they were an exact fit. It was the text that was important, rather than the tune.[342] The authors hoped that these songs would both provide a counterweight to the popularity of "worldly songs" and would help to spread the author's religious ideas. Even preachers would distribute their own songs after worship for parishioners to sing at home.[343] Published editions contained only the text and were meant for singing or reading, either to oneself or aloud. The books were small so that they could be carried around easily in a pocket and pulled out when needed for devotions.[344] Elias Neau had perhaps hoped for a similarly handy volume to be created from his songs when he left money in his will for their publication.

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[342] Natascha Veldhorst, "Pharmacy for the Body and Soul: Dutch Songbooks in the Seventeenth Century," *Early Music History* 27 (2008): 231-32.

[343] Veldhorst, "Pharmacy," 235.

[344] Veldhorst, "Pharmacy," 239.

Chapter Five: Neau's *Cantiques*

In 1718, after having been relieved of his position as catechist due to an investigation into his business as a merchant, Elias Neau responded by sending the SPG a large packet of original songs, his *Cantiques Sacrez.* In the dedication, Neau assured the Society that the songs were composed to the "glory of the Living God" and that they were "the fruits of my work in your service." More importantly, he reported that they were "like an abridgement of the truths and duties that I teach my catechumens."[345] There is no indication that Neau actually taught enslaved Africans to sing the songs themselves—although he might have, given his heritage and his students' joy in singing the psalms in his classes.

If Neau's lyrics are truly a summary of the content of Neau's teaching, however, then they are invaluable in understanding what was taught in the first school for enslaved peoples in North America. Unlike Neau's published autobiographical works, the songs in the SPG manuscript were less likely to have been heavily edited by publishers. They can

[345] Neau to the SPG, New York, Dedication to the "Cantiques Sacrez," 2 May 1718, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letters, series C , item 73, image 228. "J'ay composez pour la gloire du dieu vivant, comme etant un des fruits de mon travail en votre Service." "... ces Cantiques Sacrez sont comme un abrégé des veritez et des devoirs que J'ensigne à mes catécumaines."

give us an authentic glimpse into the devotional mindset that Neau would have offered to his students.

Neau explains in the preface to the SPG document that he desired to publish these songs of praise to the Creator simply in response to God's command that human beings praise God, with the added incentive that he would be rewarded in the next life for his efforts. In Neau' mind, God is the one who deserves all thanks and praise for human works and deeds, even though God usually "is the worst served of all" by humanity in terms of receiving thanks. Neau criticized those who "are stuffed to overflowing with God's blessings" yet who neither open their mouths nor their hearts in thanksgiving.[346] Perhaps with tongue in cheek, Neau explained that when "great men" have done something for their inferiors, they "believe themselves to be extremely offended" if their underlings do not thank them. If we humans hold such expectations, he continued, then God must certainly expect the same.[347] It is easy to imagine that Neau enjoyed making such a point to the "great men" of the SPG in London with whom he was constantly constrained to correspond with deference and in thanksgiving for their support.

Neau's songs are deeply felt, but they are not great works of poetic art. Compared with the songs produced by literary figures such as Gerhardt, Neander, or Marguerite de Navarre, Neau's songs are repetitive in vocabulary and imagery and are sometimes

[346] Neau to SPG, New York, 2 May 1718, "Preface" to the "Hymnes ou cantiques sacrées," British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letters, series C, box 1, item 73, image 230. "Quou que dieu soit le plus genereux et le plus liberal de tous les Rois ... cependent il faut avoüer à notre confusion qu'il est le plus mal servy de tous." There are "ceux qui regorgent des biens de dieu, et qui ne luy ouvrent ny leurs bouches ny leur coeurs pour l'en remercier."

[347] Neau to SPG, "Preface," item 73, image 229. "quand [les grands et les riches du monde] ont rendu quelque signalé service à leurs inferieurs, ils se croyent extremément offensez sy on ne leur marque du ressentiment d'une maniere ou d'une autre, qu'on applique cela au Créateur ..."

clunky to the ear. Neau never claimed that his work was of literary excellence, however. He admitted that he was never instructed in eloquent language: he only learned his craft by singing and reading the psalms of the church.[348] He humbly compared his written words to the babble of a child learning to talk. He imagined that God would applaud his simple efforts as parents applaud the incoherent words of their young children.[349] He also believed that it is God who puts in our mouths the words that God wants for us to utter. Neau did not expect the approval of all those who read his work, either. While he expected benevolent tolerance from God, he knew all too well that human beings are "so delicate about poetry, that they cannot stand anything that shocks the ears." He regretted that good works "without art" please fewer people than do evil works that are ornate. He asked that, rather than criticize his poetry, people join him in praising God.[350]

Looking specifically at Neau's song texts that remain available to us, both in Morin's collection and in the SPG manuscript, there are five major themes that run through his own songs: creation as the mirror of a divine Sovereign; a desire for union with God; a sinner's need for grace and divine sanctification; salvation through the blood

[348] Neau to SPG, "Preface," item 73, image 232. God gave him "l'industrie de le glorifier dans le langage mesuré qu'il n'avait jamais appris qu'en lisant et en chantant des psaumes dont nos églises se servent."

[349] Neau to SPG, "Preface," item 73, image 231. All that he writes is "comme ce que dit un petit enfant qui commence à articuller quelque mots qu'on luy à apris, cependent le pére et lamere y trouvent du plaisir." Neau is perhaps aware that Calvin speaks of God using "baby talk" with God's human creatures. As Calvin writes in *The Institutes*, "For who is so devoid of intellect as not to understand that God, in so speaking, lisps with us as nurses are wont to do with little children? Such modes of expression, therefore, do not so much express what kind of a being God is, as accommodate the knowledge of him to our feebleness. In doing so, he must, of course, stoop far below his proper height." https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.iii.xiv.html.

[350] Neau to SPG, "Preface," item 73, image 231. "aujourdhuy on est si delicat sur la poesie, qu'on ne peut soûfrir rien qui choque l'oreille, les meilleurs choses qui n'ont pas l'agrement de l'art, ne plaisent pas tant que de tres mechantes qui en sont ornees."

of Christ; and the place of suffering in attaining a heavenly reward. In examining these five themes, one can see glimpses of the various currents of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century affective piety and spirituality that Neau absorbed and reflected back in his songs. The word "heart" appears no less than fifty-four different times in Neau's songs.

Creation as the "divine mirror" of its all-powerful Sovereign

Throughout his songs, Neau calls upon God using a variety of divine names, although he always addresses God in the familiar second-person singular: Neau sings directly to his God. By far, the most frequently used divine names are designations of kingly power. Besides the common address, "Lord," God is named most often as powerful King and Majesty, terms used twenty-seven times in the *cantiques*.[351] Moreover, God is often lifted to the superlative, as the "God of Gods," "King of Kings," "Holy of Holies" and "Lord of Lords." God is "supreme" and "sovereign," a "protector" who is also a formidable judge. Sometimes a string of powerful names for God all follow in one stanza: "Glorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Supreme Majesty, I love your magnificence… What God is like you, awesome Monarch."[352] Neau contemplates the image of God sitting upon God's "inaccessible throne," describing God as clothed with strength and virtue and crowned with honor.[353] God is sufficient to Godself, immutable, always shining with supreme glory. God's essence is incomprehensible, and God's holy

[351] For example, "Grand Roi triomphant," "Grand Roy de l'univers," "Monarche éternel," "Monarche redoutable," and "Monarche adorable."

[352] Neau, "Cantique XI," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 22, lines 1-2, 5.

[353] Neau, "Cantique III," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 8, lines 61-67.

majesty is inaccessible.[354] Neau does call upon the Trinity, mainly in formulaic doxologies added to the unpublished songs, written while Neau was a catechist. Only in *Cantique XI* does he include praise to the Trinity within the body of the song: "Father, Son, Holy Spirit, August Trinity, you alone are the true God from all eternity, ever-permanent in your unchanging being … existing by yourself in unspeakable glory."[355] Neau's God is clearly the majestic God of John Calvin, a God who is the all-powerful yet loving ruler of Creation.

Neau does devote one entire song to the Trinity. *Cantique XV*, "On the mystery of the praise-worthy Trinity," which becomes *Cantique LIV* in the SPG version, with the title: "Praises on the Mystery of the Trinity." Both are orthodox visions of the triune God, the "three perfectly united" in unity, of infinite goodness. The Father is the "August Author of light," begetting eternally his Son, God of true God, Coeternal with the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son "in the union of the divine friendship."[356] Similarly, in *Cantique L*, Neau imagines the Trinity as a source of joy for God, as the Persons engage with one another as friends. Here, Neau describes God as eternally glad, filled with a lasting happiness, and never alone or bored, doing nothing. Indeed, before creating the world, God was busy in conversation with the Son and the Spirit.[357]

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[354] Neau, "Cantique XI," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 22, lines 9-12.

[355] Neau, "Cantique XI," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 22, lines 7-12.

[356] Neau, "Cantique XV," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 27, lines 27-28.

[357] Neau, "Cantique L," *Hymnes*, appendix page 43, lines 15-24.

In the majority of his songs, though, Neau speaks directly to the Creator God, addressing the Son and the Holy Spirit indirectly, through the Father. More rarely, he does call Jesus, "my doctor," or "my dear Spouse."[358] When speaking to the Son, Neau often addresses him, too, in kingly terms: "the King who rules me," "the King of all the kings," "the Lord of potentates," and the "Lord Jesus, august King of Kings." *Cantique LV* contains a description of the Son as prophet, priest and king, the author and the goal of the Law. Yet, even here, the Son is a king who is in personal relationship with Neau: Christ is the "King who rules me … the prophet who instructs me, the priest who prays for me."[359]

Neau often praises God as Creator, describing with fervor God's role as Creator of all things. Neau calls upon "the only Author of my being," the "Great Creator of Men and Angels," the "August Author of all Light," and the "Great Author of Nature." For Neau, it is in the creation that we can see God, for everything in the universe belongs to God and was created by God's power. Neau expresses awe and wonder in observing creation, and he emphasizes the divine power that created heavens, earth, and seas, as well as the divine presence that fills and sustains them. In *Cantique LI*, Neau describes how God, the First Cause, made heaven and earth, pulled light out of shadowy darkness, created thousands of angels to sing divine praises, filled space with luminous orbs, and placed the sun on a magnificent chariot.[360] For Neau, the immensity God's being fills the

[358] Neau, "Cantique LV," *Hymnes*, appendix page 48, lines 21 and 26.

[359] Neau, "Cantique LV," *Hymnes*, appendix page 48, lines 9-12.

[360] Neau, "Cantique LI," *Hymnes*, appendix pages 45-46, lines 34-66.

heavens, the earth, and the abyss, protecting and animating everything that is. The "virtue of your invisible power holds the world suspended with one finger," Neau exults.[361]

While God's Being is incomprehensible and invisible to mortal eyes, Neau directs us to look for God in God's works—especially in human beings, whose spirits are images and portraits of the Sovereign God.[362] We are the most beautiful of all God's works: "the soul and the human body, the sovereign of this mortal world, you gifted it with reason," he writes.[363] Creation is a portrait of God's perfection, the mirror of God's justice and grace.[364] Neau explains, "This is how you showed yourself in this incomparable mirror, and you show in all that happens here that You alone are the indescribable Being."[365]

Neau meditates on his own lowliness and the contrast with the "deep wisdom" of God. It is that wisdom, however, that can be seen in all living beings.[366] We are the "exquisite work of [God's] hand."[367] Echoing Psalm 139, Neau describes a creator who knew him while he was still in "nothingness." He was always present to God's Spirit, and before the creation of the world, God knew who he would be today. God knew his paths

[361] Neau, "Cantique II," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 5, lines 21-22.

[362] Neau, "Cantique L," *Hymnes,* appendix page 44, lines 38-41.

[363] Neau, "Hymne LVII," *Hymnes,* appendix page 54, lines 80-85.

[364] Neau, "Cantique II," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 5, lines 25-28.

[365] Neau, "Hymne LVII," *Hymnes,* appendix page 54, lines 99-104.

[366] Neau, "Hymne XLVIII," appendix page 38, lines 1-2.

[367] Neau, "Cantique XLIX," appendix page 41, lines 17-18.

and his steps, giving him reason in order to show God's power in him.[368] "Heaven, earth, and wave express to humankind the deep wisdom of a Sovereign Being," he writes.[369]

Indeed, God created everything in order to show God's power and profound wisdom, and God's Providence takes care of the needs of every creature.[370] Because of the power of our creator, the "true author of all life and the only protector of all that has breath," we can rest secure in God's care, come what may.[371] God can see what will happen in the future, because the future is always present to God, as is the past. God possesses in God's memory "the whole abyss of the future."[372] There is nothing surprising in Neau's understanding of an all-powerful Creator God who holds all things in the hand of his loving Providence. Neau clearly shows the influence of the Calvinism of his day which he would have easily absorbed from youth onward. His belief in the wonder of the created order and God's image in creation and in unfallen humanity follow closely the teachings of his Huguenot, Puritan, and Anglican contemporaries.

A Sinner's Need for Grace and Divine Sanctification

Echoing the pattern of the Hebrew psalter, with its psalms of praise and lament, Neau praises God's excellent work in creation in some songs, while he slips easily into lamenting human depravity in many others. Neau describes the human condition in

[368] Neau, "Hymne XXXV," *Hymnes,* appendix page 33, lines 17-24.

[369] Neau, "Cantique LI," *Hymnes,* appendix page 47, lines 76-79.

[370] Neau, "Cantique III," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 7, lines 25-30.

[371] Neau, "Cantique XI," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 22, lines 25-30.

[372] Neau, "Hymne XXXV," *Hymnes,* appendix page 34, lines 34-41.

personal terms, referring to himself and his own need for salvation, rather than making sweeping statements about humankind. Neau has a clear view of his lowliness and depravity, reflecting here, too, his Calvinist roots. He sees himself as dust and ashes, a crawling worm that cannot defend itself from the destruction that pursues it. He tells God that he is "criminal, inclined to evil and the slave of vice." He has been ruined by original sin from the time that he was in his mother's womb. He has inherited his sin from Adam in all of its fullness: moral evil, guilt, ruination, death, hell, and the horror of the nature that Adam transmitted to his posterity. Evil, for Neau, is a poison that comes from the "venom of the devil" and clings inexorably to his humanity.[373]

Light, on the other hand, is for Neau a constant symbol of God's grace. Neau asks that God shoot a ray of light from God's face into Neau's heart so that God may penetrate his interior with the power of God's grace.[374] The light from God's face will enlighten him from inside. He invites the "Sun of Justice" to brighten him through God's goodness.[375] God is the "source of light," who can enlighten his prayer.[376] Neau explains: "for want of the light of the natural sun, the sun of grace darts its beams into our hearts, which, by their virtue, imprint a joy which cannot be exprest, nor perceived, but by those that have an experience of it."[377]

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[373] Neau, "Hymne XLVIII," *Hymnes*, appendix page 38, lines 12-19.

[374] Neau, "Cantique X," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 21, lines 17-20.

[375] Neau, "Cantique V," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 11, lines 41-42.

[376] Neau, "Cantique VI," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 12, lines 2-3.

[377] Neau, *Histoire Abrégée,* 46.

Elias Neau in his dungeon. From Jean Morin's *A Short Account of the Life and Sufferings of Elias Neau ... Translated by John Christian Jacobi,* 1749.

For one who spent several years in dark prisons, without natural light, it is not surprising that the metaphor of God's bright light shining upon him would be especially meaningful. An anonymous woodcut portraying Neau in his prison in Marseille was included in the 1749 edition of *A Short Account of the Life and Sufferings of Elias Neau.* This image portrays the importance of "light imagery" for Neau and for his pietist publisher. In this drawing, Neau is seated in his dark prison, with the light of the outside world coming in around the locked door in front of him. Yet on his right, there is also a mysterious light that could either be falling on him from above or emanating out from his soul. With his foot raised to indicate mystical assent, Neau is clearly rising to God in prayer from out of the depths of his suffering.[378] From the "Inward Light" of the Quakers to Jurieu's burning "rays of the Sun of Justice,"[379] the Christian symbolism of light found a special place in the vocabulary of Neau and his contemporaries alike.

[378] Neil Kamil, *Fortress of the Soul: Violence, Metaphysics, and Material Life in the Huguenots' New World, 1517-1751* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 404. Also see Whelan, *Mysticism,* 226.

[379] Jurieu, 29. "La devotion ... est une émanation des rayons du Soleil de justice."

Indeed, Neau describes his salvation in terms of God's light and love, without which he would surely perish.[380] This love and grace come to him through the sacrifice of Jesus, punished in his place. Christ, filled with compassion, offered himself as a sacrifice and "by his death expiated my evil, making satisfaction for his redemption." That sacrifice accomplished, God, in the immensity of God's love, gives Neau proof of this love in delivering Neau from hell. God's love brings him back to life, pulling him from the tomb of his vices and filling him with chaste delights, a foretaste of the happiness to come. From that moment on, Neau belongs to God and no longer to himself.[381] No amount of suffering or misfortune can separate him from that divine love.

For Neau, sanctification plays a role in continuing to grow in God's grace. In the prayer that accompanies Neau's songs in the SPG papers, Neau writes that the praises of sinners do not please God unless God has "sanctified their hearts by God's Spirit." Knowing that he is a sinner, Neau asks in the name of Jesus Christ that God forgive his offenses and give him "a good measure of [God's] grace" to sanctify him and reestablish his heart in God's image so that God may hear his praises.[382] Elsewhere he declares, "My visible and invisible enemies are the instruments of my sanctification."[383] Both Neau's personal self-examination about his salvation and his emphasis on the ability to sing

[380] Neau, "Hymne XLVIII," *Hymnes*, appendix page 39, lines 33-36.

[381] Neau, "Hymne XLVIII," *Hymnes*, appendix page 39, lines 41-52.

[382] Neau, "Prière de l'auteur," *Hymnes ou cantiques sacrez*, British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letters, series C, box 1, item 73, image 233. " ... a moins que tu n'aye sanctifié leurs Coeurs par ton Esprit, o mon dieu, Je sens que je suis pecheur... accorde moi ... une bonne mesure de ta grace qui me sanctifie et qui retablissent en mon Coeur ton image, afin que je juste Tribut de mes louanges et de mes actions de grace, monte jusqu'a toy."

[383] Morin, *A Short Account*, 62.

God's praises through sanctification echo the Puritan mindset that would have surrounded Neau. Puritans are known for their Augustinian piety--a religious life centered on a recurring, often anguished, self-examination into the state of their souls. They constantly examined their hearts, accounting for their sins and asking for the grace to overcome temptations. With the heart quickened through remorse or moved by tears, the individual would be brought to feelings of devout praise.[384] Writing about the state of one's soul through spiritual autobiography often accompanied the self-examination. In his letters and in his songs, Neau, too, is laying bare his own soul before God and before the reader, examining critically his own faults and temptations.

Neau's own spiritual autobiography is vague about the details of his own conversion experience, however. He reports that he fell ill while in the "American islands" and first heard God speaking to his heart, giving him God's love.[385] But he did not truly experience grace until his imprisonment, when the distraction "among the creatures" was removed.[386] In prison, "the rays of [God's] face have penetrated my soul, and have melted my crimes, as the ice is melted by the sun." He became "sensible of the scent of [God's] perfumes to that degree, that the inferior part of my soul jumped for joy in the presence of my God."[387]

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[384] Glenda Goodman, "The Tears I Shed at the Songs of Thy Church:' Seventeenth-Century Musical Piety in the English Atlantic World," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65, no. 3 (fall 2012): 701-2.

[385] Morin, *A Short Account,* 42.

[386] Morin, *A Short Account,* 43.

[387] Morin, *A Short Account,* 43.

Surprisingly, Neau does not use the common pietist terms "regeneration" or "new birth" in his songs, but he does use them in his letters. In the letter to Neau's wife published by Cotton Mather, Neau asks his wife to tend to their children's Christian education so that "they may be Born again by grace." Neau explains that "all the world talk of regeneration" but only a few know it by experience. "When a person is Regenerate, he aims only at the Glory of Christ … the love of our heart is conformed to the Law of God in spite of all the remainders of our Corruption."[388] It is possible that Mather would have translated another French word as "regeneration" in order to fit his own theology. To Pastor Morin, however, Neau also writes in French that God sent him difficult trials in which God began in him the work of his "régeneration."[389] Unless Morin and Mather are inserting their own words into Neau's narrative, regeneration must have been a concept with which Neau was familiar and at ease.

The Desire for Union with God

While Neau stays close to his Calvinist roots and the language of the psalms in describing God the Creator, he branches off into the realm of "heart religion" when he talks about his longing for union with God.[390] Neau begs, "make my heart triumph with joy by the presence of thy Holy Spirit, to comfort me in thy love."[391] Indeed, Neau's prayers themselves come from "the love issuing from his heart."[392] A faithful heart is

[388] Mather, *A Present*, 20-21.

[389] Morin, *Histoire Abrégée*, 31.

[390] Whelan describes the distinction as the language of symbolic theology and the language of illumination. See Whelan, "Mysticism," 230.

[391] Morin, *A Short Account*, 16.

[392] Neau, "Cantique VI," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 12, lines 6-8.

"burning with a Holy love; all penetrated by zeal."[393] God's immense love sees and receives all his holy desires,[394] and Neau asks to live in God's heart, his soul united to God, forever.[395] Similarly, this mystical desire to be absorbed into God can be found in Jurieu and in the Labadist songs. The Labadist poet Anna Maria van Schurman exults, "Abyss of goodness, inexhaustible Source, from which all kinds of good things flow to us; Our God, our All, our only resource, we no longer lack anything, because we are yours."[396] Similarly, Jurieu uses the image of the ocean, calling God "an ocean where all the sadness of the flesh melts." When the Christian dies to the world, his heart "plunges itself completely in God, and God seeps into it."[397]

Instead of using mystical imagery from the natural world, like water or the deep, Neau draws on love language from the Song of Solomon. He speaks of God as a "ravisher" of hearts and souls. God "ravishes the hearts" of those who adore God, of those who contemplate God's face. For them, God fills their desires with divine pleasures from the river of God's grace.[398] Borrowing language from Paul in 2 Corinthians, Neau describes how God ravishes his soul up to the third Heaven, like a living flame shooting forth from God's Altar. Neau is not alone in making references such as these. Jurieu

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[393] Neau, "Cantique LI," *Hymnes,* appendix page 45, lines 6-7.

[394] Neau, "Cantique IX," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 19, lines 57-59.

[395] Neau, "Cantique X," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 21, lines 23-24.

[396] A. M. van Schurman, "Afgront van Goedigheyt/ Abime de Bonté," *Heylige Gesangen,* found in Service Bulletin for the Fourth Sunday of Easter (Eglise Française du Saint Esprit, New York, April 25, 2021.) "Abyme de bonté, inépuisable Source,/ D'où découlent vers nous toutes sortes de biens/ Notre Dieu, notre Tout, notre unique ressource,/ Nous ne voulons plus rien, puis que nous sommes tiens."

[397] Jurieu, 14-16. "C'est un Ocean oú se noyent tous les chagrins de la chair." "le Coeur ... se plonge ... tout en Dieu, et Dieu s'insinuë tout en luy."

[398] Neau, "Cantique III," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 8, lines 43-48.

writes that devotion gives rise to "a kind of extasy, by which the soul is said to be ravished outside of itself," like Peter seeing the heavens open or like Paul being taken to the Third Heaven.[399] New York Labadists prayed, similarly, that God is "the center of the heart" and the only place of rest for our hearts. They ask for God to "pull them to you and we will run, shivering with desire to see your face."[400]

In *Cantique V*, Neau gives full voice to his yearning for personal union with God. It is interesting that this song is set to the tune of Psalm 42, where the soul of the psalmist also longs for God, like the "deer at the water brooks." Neau calls on the Holy Spirit "whom he loves" to enter his soul and fill his whole heart with a "heavenly liquor." He prays to the Spirit, on his knees, sobbing with desire, as if calling a "chaste Bridegroom." Moving deeper into the imagery of the Song of Songs, Neau then asks God to come and kiss him with God's mouth. Again, he asks that God calm his desires with a "chaste kiss," so that his "ravished soul" will love God more than life itself. [401]

In *Cantique VI*, Neau also calls upon God, the object of his desires, and asks to be filled with God's divine essence and "chaste pleasures," a clearly sexual reference.[402] Again, he refers to a holy marriage with God, asking God to make his heart sing a holy

[399] Jurieu, 18. "une espéce d'extase, par laquelle l'ame est comme ravie hors d'elle-même."

[400] Labadist Prayer, Special Service Bulletin for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, highlighting the history of Labadist poetry (Eglise Française du Saint Esprit, New York, April 25, 2021), 13. "Tu es le centre du coeur, quel moyen donc de nous reposer ailleurs que dans le tien? ... Tire-nous à toi et nous courrons, tressaillant du désir de voir ta face."

[401] Neau, "Cantique V," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 10, lines 1-6; 17-24.

[402] Neau, "Cantique VI," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 12, lines 21-24.

epithalame, or marriage poem, after sniffing God's "delicious perfumes."[403] Once his heart has been "penetrated" with passion, his heart will kiss God with all its might. Ravished with pleasure, his heart will then desire to sing God's grandeur constantly.[404]

In *Cantique LV*, it is Jesus Christ who is "my dear Bridegroom." Christ's love is sweet, and in Christ's "divine kisses, [Neau] feel[s] thousands of delights." Christ is the "object of my desires, for he alone gives all my pleasures."[405] Similarly, in a prayer written at the beginning of his captivity, Neau asks God, "So that my sacrifice may be perfect, kiss me, O my sweet Saviour, with the kiss of thy adorable mouth, kiss me with a kiss of love."[406] Outside of the songs, in a long prayer sent to his pastor, Jean Morin, Neau also writes of his dependence on God's love using bridal imagery. "It is that infinitely infinite love, which I adore at present, as the sole cause that I am still alive… And since thou hast given me a heart that acknowledges this, give me also a soul, that loves thee with a love a thousand times stronger than death. Endow me with a soul, that may be thy spouse."[407]

Such bridal mysticism is, of course, not unique to Neau. The tradition flourished in France in the work of twelfth-century Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux. It made its way into the hearts of other medieval mystics and flowed into the sixteenth-century devotions

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[403] Neau, "Cantique VI," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 12, lines 35-36. In antiquity, an *epithalame* was a lyrical poem composed in praise of a couple at their marriage. In the Bible, Psalm 44 and the Song of Songs have been referred to as *epithalame.*

[404] Neau, "Cantique VI," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 13, lines 41-45.

[405] Neau, "Cantique LV," *Hymnes,* appendix page 48, lines 21-24.

[406] Morin, *A Short Account,* 16.

[407] Morin, *A Short Account*, 14.

of reformer Martin Luther in Germany, as well as into the poetry of Marguerite de Navarre in France.[408] Marguerite, a Catholic poet with Protestant sympathies, speaks often of exchanging "kisses" with Christ. In one of her poems, she describes a mutual kiss between her soul and Christ on the Cross. She does not dare approach Christ, but then she feels him come toward her. She "allowed him to touch her" and kiss her, and then "on both knees, lowering her face to his feet, she kissed him."[409]

In the seventeenth century, Labadist poet Anna Maria van Schurman sings, "In you we meet the desire of our soul … We are filled because we possess you; your Bride faints with pleasure and love."[410] Even seventeenth-century Huguenots use the imagery. Jurieu prays that his soul will become "drunk with [God's] delights and let me taste all the sweetness of your love. I am filled with pleasure, open, fountain of eternal desire, let your streams flow into my soul." Quoting from the Bride in the Song of Songs, Jurieu asks, 'May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is sweeter than wine.'"[411] The Huguenot galley slave Lefèvre prays to God, "'Give me, too, a soul that loves you, but a love one thousand times stronger than death. Give me a soul to be your bride ….

[408] Jean Lecointe, "Embrasser la Croix: La Méditation de la Passion du Christ Chez Martin Luther et Marguerite de Navarre," *Seizième Siècle* 15 (2019): 120.

[409] Marguerite de Navarre, "Petit oeuvre dévot," quoted in Jean Lecointe. "Elle permist que la peusse toucher/ Helas que tant est heureux qui l'embrasse/ ... A deux genoulx baisant au pied la face/ Je l'embrassay..."

[410]A. M. van Schurman. "Afgront van Goedigheyt/ Abime de Bonté." "En toi nous rencontrons le désir de notre âme; / Nous nous trouvons remplis, care nous te possédons;/ De plaisir et dámour ton Epouse se pâme."

[411] Jurieu, 25 -52. "mon ame s'enivre de tes délices et me fait goûter toute la douceur de ton amour. Je suis altéré de plaisir, ouvre-toi, fontaine de volutpez éternelles, laisse couler tes ruisseaux dans mon ame. *Baise moi des baisers de ta bouche, car tes amours sont plus agreables que le vin."*

Your divine love wants to swallow up my love so that I may be one with you.'"[412] Through the imagery of the Song of Songs, Huguenots find the language and the authorization to indulge in a sensual connection to union with God.

In describing union with his Beloved, Neau asks to be transformed into God, to be formed in God's image as he contemplates God's face. He asks that his soul become God's palace where he can praise God in song. He asks to be absorbed in God's love, for all that he is to be "plunged into [God's] immensity" so that he can find calm in God's fullness. He needs the "sweet wind of [God's] breezes" to calm his desires, so that his mind can embrace God in God's silence.[413] Playing with the imagery of Psalm 141:2, he imagines the cries of his heart rising to God like incense smoke and being absorbed by God's vast love.[414] In return, Neau's heart is filled with a holy liquor that will make his heart drunk with divine love, showing his heart God's glorious face and allowing it to smell the scent of God's joy and salvation.[415] Switching to imagery of taste, Neau writes that God's love is more delicious than honey or wine; it is stronger than the most frightening death.[416]

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[412] Isaac Lefèvre, "La Prière à Jésus-Christ," cited in Léonard, *Histoire générale*, 63-64. "donne-moi aussi une âme qui t'aime, mais d'un amour milles fois plus fort que la mort. Donne-moi une âme qui soit ton épouse ... Ton amour divin veut engloutir le mien, afin que je sois fait un ave toi."

[413] Neau, "Cantique V," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 10, lines 21-22.

[414] Psalm 141:2 "May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice."

[415] Neau, "Cantique VI," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 12, lines 11-16.

[416] Neau, "Cantique IX," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 19, lines 44-49.

Neau's mystical experience fills his senses. He describes how he smells the perfume of God's clothing when he touches God. "Thy garments are perfumed with myrrhe, ales and frankincense; I find their odor admirable."[417] In *Cantique XI,* he again writes of God's "divine perfume" with its "charming odor." Here, as elsewhere, the metaphors of lover and king sometimes combine awkwardly. For example, Neau combines the metaphor of a sweet-smelling God with a God who is Lord God Almighty, Eternal Monarch, Ravishing Monarch, Holy of Holies, and Sun of Justice.[418]

Whelan explains that using the language of the senses to describe religious experience of God was common in the writings of other Huguenot galley slaves. It was a way for these men to feel their abused bodies in another way than through the suffering of hunger, noxious odors, and physical pain and illness. Instead of a path to degradation, their bodies became a path to God. The power of imagination gave them the strength to hold on to life in the midst of their suffering.[419] Neau, in his stinking prison, could transform his grim reality into the perfumed divine courts through the power of prayer and devotion. For him, the intimate language of the senses could still combine naturally with kingly divine grandeur.

Salvation Through the Blood of Christ

For Neau, as for Calvin and for members of the Reformed Synod of Dort, Christ's atoning sacrifice reflects the language of the "satisfaction theory" of atonement. God's

[417] Morin, *A Short Account,* 16.

[418] Neau, "Cantique XI," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix pages 22-23, lines 31-36.

[419] Ruth Whelan, "Hétéropies des galériens protestants," *Itinérances spirituelles: Mises en récit du voyage intérieur, XV^e^ – XVIII^e^ siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2014), 193.

justice demands that our sin be punished, and, since we are unable in our fallen state to provide that satisfaction, God gave God's Son to suffer in our place, providing the needed satisfaction.[420]As Calvin states in the *Institutes,* "Christ, in his death, was offered to the Father as a propitiatory victim; that, expiation being made by his sacrifice, we might cease to tremble at the divine wrath." [421] Neau, too, writes, "My heart flies to You, my God, when I read in your word that your son bought me by his immense goodness. O what an indescribable love, to save a miserable one… I say, great God, that you love me, to have given your son so that I might be admitted to paradise."[422] He goes on to praise the sublime grace that God shows in offering himself as a victim, saving Neau by Christ's own inhuman torment.[423]

While Reformed theologians disputed the role of predestination in atonement, concerned whether Christ's saving act applied universally or only to the elect, Neau turns the question inward. Neau usually describes Christ's saving action in light of his own personal salvation, rather than toward a doctrine of salvation for the world, or even for his reader. In prison, Neau writes that "God opened to me the wounds of my redeemer to wash away the impurities of my soul."[424] Neau asks the Lamb of God to pull him toward "the side that was opened for me."[425] Again, when he "contemplates the tree of the

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[420] Donald Sinnema, "Calvin and the Canons of Dordt (1619)," *Church History and Religious Culture* 91, no. 1/2 (2011): 92.

[421] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book II, Chapter 16,* 439. https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.toc.html.

[422] Neau, "Cantique XXXVI," *Hymnes*, appendix page 36, lines 50-57.

[423] Neau, "Cantique XXXVI," appendix page 36, lines 67-70.

[424] Morin, *A Short Account,* 58.

[425] Neau, "Cantique X," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 21, line 22.

cross," Neau recounts how Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice, spreading his blood on the altar of the cross, for Neau's own salvation. Neau's own "deadly deeds" brought torments upon Jesus, the sharpest pains that Neau himself deserves.[426] In Neau's devotional writing, it is rarely "humankind" who is the recipient of Christ's atoning sacrifice. In inward, devotional fashion, echoed in later pietism, the question centers on his own conversion story. It is Neau himself for whom Christ died.

Furthermore, emphasizing the blood of Christ, Neau explains that Christ's blood itself is the source of his healing grace. He sings to Jesus, "your wounds distill the liquor that consoles me in my great suffering… When you offered yourself on the altar of the Cross, you were nailed on this disastrous wood to expiate all my enormous crimes. Open, Lord, open today your veins to pour your precious blood upon me. Make me taste this delicious fruit that your love was able to pull from your pain."[427] Borrowing imagery from Psalm 42, Neau imagines Christ's blood flowing in great streams and creating a longing thirst within Neau, like the thirst of the deer at the water brooks.[428] Neau emphasizes the sensory aspect of Christ's healing blood, asking to share a drop of his Savior's blood so that his soul can taste its pleasant flavor.[429] For Neau, Christ holds first place everywhere because he earned it by his blood. He is the only mediator between humanity and our creator.[430]

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[426] Neau, "Cantique I," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 3, lines 1-6.

[427] Neau, "Cantique X," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 21, lines 3-12.

[428] Neau, "Cantique X," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 21, lines 13-14.

[429] Neau, "Cantique XIV," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 25, lines 17-20.

[430] Neau, "Cantique LV," *Hymnes*, appendix page 49, lines 38-41.

Meditation on the saving blood and wounds of Christ was well-known in Roman Catholic piety. In Medieval tradition, theologians such as St. Bonaventure drew attention to Jesus' "broken heart." In the seventeenth-century, writers such as Jean Eudes and Margaret Mary Alacoque emphasized the wounds of the sacred heart of Jesus and of his mother Mary. Devotion to the heart of Jesus created an affective encounter between the believer and God.[431] The emotional empathy with the suffering, bleeding Christ allowed the distinction between Jesus and the believer to break down and to allow transformation.[432]

Scholars have been surprised to find such extensive "blood language" in the writings of a Huguenot like Neau.[433] Even Ruth Whelan, who understands the role that suffering played in the minds of the French galley slaves, speculates whether Neau could have picked it up from Roman Catholic priests on board the galleys or in the Indies.[434] Such piety was not unusual for the "heart-religion" of the times, however, even among Protestants. Arndt believed that without adopting the inward practice of Christ's suffering, a Christian could not find grace. German Lutheran Paul Gerhardt is well-known for hymns such as, "O Jesu Christ, mein schönstes Licht," in which he cries, "Ah! Let the virtue of Thy blood/ My flinty heart be bending,/ Entrance finding; ... Oh! Were

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[431] Campbell, *Religion*, 37.

[432] Lelos, "The Spirit," 47.

[433] Léonard, "Piété," 108.

[434] Whelan, "Mysticism," 236-37.

my heart op'd to receive/ The blood-drops that were falling/ From Thee, wrung by my sin that eve/ In agony appalling."[435]

In France, too, the sixteenth-century Catholic poet Marguerite of Navarre wrote "chansons spirituelles" that echoed the Lutheran piety of Gerhardt and others. Influenced by the German tradition, she addresses a familiar "you" in her poetry and writes, "Take in this heart your life and your pasture/ From which Love has discovered the depths/ Make of his blood your life and food/ And hide yourself in this open heart/ Where the sinner can escape the wrath of the great Judge..."[436]

Lecointe finds that Navarre is influenced in her "blood theology" through Lutheran sources. One might also find a bit of a Lutheran take on *Christus Victor* language in Neau's beliefs on atonement. As Neau explains, "When you cried before giving up your soul, "My God! My God! Why have you abandoned me? It was thus that your holy soul was sharply penetrated by pain, but it is also in this last effort, that you broke the needle of death. In your death your cruel enemies saw themselves shamefully beaten. Thus, Lord, you won the victory. It gained for you triumph and glory."[437] Given Neau's use of the bible, however, and his immersion in the Protestant "language of

[435] Paul Gerhardt, *Paul Gerhardt's Spiritual Songs,* trans. John Kelly (London, UK: W. Clowes, 1867), 125-126.

[436] Marguerite de Navarre, "La Navire," quoted in Lecointe, 117. "Prens en ce cueur ta vie et ta pasture/ Duquel Amour le foundz a descouvert/ Fay de son sang ta vie et norriture/ Et cache toy dedans ce ceur ouvert/ Ou le pescheur de l'ire du grand Juge/ n'est poinct trouvé."

[437] Neau, "Cantique I," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 3, lines 19-30.

Canaan," it is more likely that this imagery comes directly from St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, rather than through Luther.

The Place of Suffering in Obtaining a Heavenly Reward

For Neau, as for his fellow Huguenots, human afflictions are sent by God to teach, correct, and mold us for the glories of the next world. In all of his writings, Neau makes no effort to minimize the suffering inflicted upon him in his imprisonment. In his letters and in his songs, he describes in great detail the terrible conditions of the prisons in which he was kept. He writes that he was in a dark ditch, deprived of human help, eaten with lice, starving, and covered in garbage.[438] Nevertheless, Neau has confidence that God will protect those who trust in God's goodness, no matter the evils that beset them. In spite of his suffering, Neau trusts that God will strengthen his heart and give him victory, with God the "master of [his] heart."[439] He exclaims that "all the miseries I suffer … very great in number, are gloriously swallowed up in the inexpressible charms of the power of grace."[440]

Neau shares with his fellow galley slaves the conviction that suffering is more than divine punishment for sin, however. Believing that they themselves were suffering with Christ, these Protestant martyrs for the faith turn their pain into an honor and a privilege. Galley slave Pierre Serres writes, "'These chains represent those that [Christ] wore for you … When you will be conformed to Christ in all that he suffered in his body,

[438] Neau, "Cantique VII," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 14, lines 20-23.

[439] Neau, "Cantique IX," *Histoire Abrégée,* appendix page 18, lines 30-35.

[440] Morin, *A Short Account,* 54.

you will be all the more glorious for it.'"[441] Jean Mallet implores his wife, "'Let us imitate this divine Savior, who was persecuted and defamed, who suffered all kinds of insults without opening his mouth.'"[442] For these persecuted Huguenots, bodily suffering becomes a mark of their election by God.[443] Having been chosen by God to suffer, they must even be willing to die for God's glory. Their freedom as slaves comes from the freedom that their suffering earns them.[444]

With God's help, Neau believes that suffering can be managed. Neau expresses certainty that, despite everything that his enemies do in his captivity to force him to convert, God will strengthen him to prevail. It is, after all, God "who fights within me, by God's holy grace."[445] He believes that God sees from heaven all of his struggles and the assaults of this world. In a song perhaps written in his old age, Neau asks God's grace to lend him a shield that will cover his body, feet, and head. "When I was young and healthy and robust," he explains, "you kept me by your mighty power, but now … I have strength and vigor no longer. Why would you want to abandon me in my old age after having

[441] Pierre Serres, quoted in Léonard, *Histoire générale,* 62. "Ces chaînes représentent celles qu'il a portées pour toi ....quand tu serais conforme à ton Sauveur dans tout ce qu'il a souffert en son corps, tu n'en serais que plus glorieux."

[442] Jean Mallet, cited in Léonard, "La piété," 105. "Imitons ce divin Sauveur, qui a été persécuté et calomnié, qui a souffert toutes sortes d'injures sans ouvrir la bouche."

[443] Léonard, "Pieté," 102 and Ruth Whelan, "Résistance et spiritualité dans les témoinages des galériens pour la foi," *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire du protestantism français* 156, no. 2 (April 2010): 240.

[444] Léonard, *Histoire générale*, 61.

[445] Neau, "Cantique IX," *Histoire Abrégée*, appendix page 18, lines 24-25.

saved me in my youth?"[446] Similarly, the galley slave Lefèvre prays, '"Cut, burn, hit [me] O my God, but heal me … Sustain me by your Spirit.'"[447]

Another Huguenot work with ties to Neau, published in New York in 1696, clearly points to a similar understanding. "*Le trésor des consolations divines et humaines: ou traité dans lequel le Chrétien peut apprendre à vaincre et à surmonter les afflictions et les misères de cette vie"* is an anonymous work that claims to be the reprint of an unnamed and unknown sixteenth-century French devotional text.[448] One of the first French language publications in the Americas—and the first one not part of Cotton Mather's propaganda campaigns—the book is dedicated to Antoine Pintard.[449] Pintard, a Huguenot, was a New York merchant and elder of the French Church at the same time that Neau served as elder there. Pintard had lost all of his worldly goods in a house fire in New Jersey before coming to New York.[450] According to the book's preface, Pintard had suffered a serious illness, as well, and had promised to pay for the printing of the book if he recovered, which he did. While some have hinted that Elias Neau could have written the book, it looks more like the writing of his pastor, Pierre Peiret, perhaps in consultation with Neau. In any case, like Neau, the author of *Le Trésor* believes that our afflictions come from God. Everything from sickness to rebellious children to famine and

[446] Neau, "Cantique LVI," *Hymnes*, appendix page 50, lines 19-24.

[447] Isaac Lefèvre, cited in Léonard, "Pieté," 104. "Coupe, brûle, frappe, ô mon Dieu, mais guéris-moi .... soutiens-moi par ton Esprit."

[448] No one has identified the older work to which *Le Trésor* refers.

[449] Haefeli and Stanwood, "Jesuits," 91.

[450] Baird, *History,* 295.

war, to prison and slavery all come from God and must be accepted voluntarily, as we "suffer with joy" what God's will is bringing about in us.[451]

Neau believes that suffering is often the result of sin. In a letter to Morin, Neau explains that his imprisonment is a direct result of his sinfulness. He wishes no ill to his captors, for in trying to punish him, "they have done me a great deal of good; so that I now perceive, that true liberty consists in being set free from sin." Suffering, moreover, gives the spirit victory over the flesh. Those who have enjoyed the pleasures of this world will not necessarily enjoy "the eternal pleasures." Instead, "afflictions, crosses, and reproach are the way to life everlasting."[452] Neau points out that, before his imprisonment, the "world and the flesh" got the better of him, and the spirit only rarely gained victory over the flesh. But after his suffering in prison, the spirit can triumph. "God has enhanced my afflictions, but they touch only the body; the spirit is afflicted, but that is for having offended God."[453]

The author of *Le Trésor* agrees with Neau that our sufferings are less than we deserve; if we happily receive blessings from God's hand, we must also humbly accept the pain with perfect resignation and thanksgiving.[454] Moreover, to recognize one's sin and to hate it are necessary for salvation, and suffering helps us to do this work.[455] Even

[451] [Peiret], *Le Trésor*, 1-3.

[452] Morin, *A Short Account*, 55.

[453] Morin, *A Short Account*, 19.

[454] [Peiret], *Le Trésor*, 7.

[455] [Peiret], *Le Trésor*, 23.

the Puritan Cotton Mather chimes in with a similar sentiment: "'Our Saviour sends killing things upon us … He loves us, when He kills us.'"[456]

For Neau, the greatest consolation of all is that everything will be made right in the next world. After a six-week bout of measles, during which he almost died, Neau writes with confidence to SPG secretary Chamberlayne: "God made the earth for Heaven; misery for joy; God wants to bring about grace from our weakness so that we can live lives of the saints and die the death of the just."[457] Similarly, in a letter to Morin, Neau clarifies that at death, "we shall be swallowed up in the immense abyss of his love, when we shall see [God] face to face...What joy will then be to leave a dungeon to enter into an eternal palace, where the servants shall all appear as kings!"[458] In one of his songs, he further exults that, "After the short troubles of this life, we shall be swallowed up in the river of glory, and be filled with the torrents of infinitely chaste pleasures, which God has prepared for us from all eternity."[459]

Here, too, his fellow Huguenots and Anglicans agree. Galley slave David Serres writes, "'What are all these evils in comparison to the eternal and infinite goods that await us? … Leaving this short and miserable life, we will enter into the possession of an

[456] Lovelace, "Cotton Mather," 121.

[457] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 30 March 1714, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 9, item 140, image 136. "Il a fait la terre pour le Ciel, la misere, pour la felicité, dieu veuille acomplir la grace dans nos Infirmites, afin qui nous puissions vivre de la vie des Saints, pour moûrir de la mort des justes."

[458] Morin, *A Short Account*, 49.

[459] Morin, *A Short Account*, 66.

infinitely happier life.'"[460] Jurieu is confident that, while not all of life is burdensome, and Christian joy can be found, "the spirit of the Christian religion is to inspire a disdain for the present life and the desire of the next life."[461] To find true happiness, we must be able to rise above the senses and the circumstances of this world. The author of *Le Trésor* explains that, in living our lives, we are like a traveler who is having so much fun that he forgets his family and wants to stay where he is, rather than to return home. Adversity is necessary to help us to lessen or stop our love of life and make us "sigh after deliverance."[462] Even for Trinity's rector Vesey, "This world is the School of Tryal and Probation for the next."[463]

This common understanding of human suffering can perhaps help us to comprehend the eighteenth-century view, shared by Neau, that the earthly suffering of enslaved Africans was deemed less important than their hope of heaven. It shocks us when Bishop William Fleetwood cries out in his 1711 SPG sermon that Christ would rather someone be "Sold, condemn'd to Bonds, to Stripes, Imprisonment, and Death, rather than live the Slaves of Sin and Unbelievers."[464] It is similarly upsetting to our

[460] Léonard, "Pieté," 107. "Que sont ... tous ces maux en comparaison des biens éternels et infines que nous attendons? ... en sortant de cette courte et misérable vie, nous entrons dans la possession d'une vie infiniment heureuse."

[461] Jurieu, *Traité*, 181. "L'esprit de la Religion Chrêtienne veut inspirer le mépris de la vie présente, et le desir de l'autre vie."

[462] [Peiret], *Le Trésor*, 45. "L'adversité .... nous laisse languir dans l'indigence ou dans la douleur, jusques a ce que nous ayons perdu le gout de cette vie et de ses objets perissables, et que nous soupirions apres la deliverance."

[463] William Vesey, "A Sermon Preached in Trinity-Church in New-York, in America, May 12, 1709. At the Funeral of the Right Honourable John Lord Lovelace" (New York: William Bradford, 1709,) 10.

[464] Fleetwood, "A Plea," 208.

sensibilities that Neau agrees to the 1706 law that would entrench slavery in the fabric of New York society in order for him to gather more students at his lessons. It is helpful for us to realize that these men truly believe that the life that matters most for any of us—black or white—is our eternal one.

As *Le Trésor* states, "those who walk in the footsteps of God's Son, who carry their cross without impatience.... will be crowned with honor ... [but] those who rebel against God in feeling their ills ... perish ... always for eternity."[465] It is helpful to realize that Neau sees his own personal suffering as a way to God, and does not simply consign suffering to be the lot of enslaved Africans. One must also wonder if Neau's enslaved pupils might have found strength in Neau's understanding of human and divine suffering. If earthly suffering can be a sign of the triumph to come in heaven, then enslaved Africans, as well as French galley slaves, might feel confident in their cause, and lifted up by God over their oppressors.

We do know that Neau taught his beliefs about suffering to his enslaved students. He writes to the SPG about his disappointment that the teaching that he shares with his enslaved students makes little impression on their hearts. He grumbles about the corruption that "floods our land like a torrent" and leads everywhere to the practice of vice. And yet he admits that there are "a few" of his students who seem to be "touched by the truths" that he teaches, especially when he talks about "the immortality of the soul and the pains [of this life] and the rewards of the next life."[466] In another letter, he writes

[465] [Peiret,] *Le Trésor,* 95-96. "ceux qui en marchant dans les traces du fils de Dieu, auront porté leurs croix sans impatience ... seront couronnes d'honneur ... ceux qui se rebellent contre Dieu dans lesentiment de leurs maux ... perissent ... toujours pour l'eternité."

[466] Neau to Secretary, New York, February (no year), British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 4, item 121, image 388. "il est vray que

to his friend la Mothe that "Great Corruption has almost overflowed all the Country so that both Negroes and white men like Ease and despise the promises of the good things to come for the Enjoyment of a present but Imaginary happiness."[467] While Neau complained that few people listened to his teaching, he was clearly sharing with blacks and whites alike the "treasures of divine consolation" that he found, in spite of suffering in this world.

In tracing the similarities between Neau's writings and the heart-religion of his time, it is important to note the move that Neau made during his lifetime from persecuted galley slave to well-known catechist for the enslaved. He was able to blend the two parts of his life in a way that others were not. The other Huguenot galley slaves quoted in this chapter, for example, shared Neau's feelings about suffering, bridal mysticism, and the wounded heart of Christ. Yet they all perished in the galleys and prisons of France. For them, there was no "life after suffering" on this earth, and their testimony remains that of the martyr. In contrast, Elias Neau survived the galleys. He had to go on to make meaning out of a different kind of life. He alone had the chance to use his own experience for the benefit of others, beyond the prison testimony that he left behind.

Similarly, Neau shared much theology in common with author Pierre Jurieu. Yet when the persecution of Huguenots worsened in France, Jurieu fell into despair. He lost hope in a peaceful outcome to the persecutions and turned to greater and greater

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la Corruption qui Reigne, et qui innonde comme un Torrent nos Contrees, cést a les afirmier dans la malheureuse practique du Vice, il y en a pourtant quelques uns qui paroissent etre Touchés des Verités, sur tout quand je leurs parle de l'immortalité de l'ame, et des pennes et des recompenses de l'autre vie."

[467] Neau to La Mothe, New York, n.d., British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 8, item 177, image 175.

millenarist fervor, helping to fund the Camisard violence in France. Neau, however, despite all of the turbulence in his own life, never seemed to despair that right living and God's Providence would always win the day. He continually shunned violence and rejected all who ventured outside of the established church and state. Neau continued to believe that he could make a difference among the enslaved in New York. He was able to transform his experience into a curriculum for others. Out of all the themes noted in this chapter, Neau himself summed up his teaching in all simplicity, as follows: "Our principal goal must be to make ourselves imitators of our glorious Savior, to love God with an obedient love, and to love our neighbors as ourselves."[468]

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Our understanding of religious teaching is incomplete until we know how that teaching has been heard by the students to whom it is directed, how it has affected their minds, hearts, and lives. Unfortunately, Elias Neau's enslaved students were not given a voice in the historical record. Neau's white contemporaries assure us that his students appreciated the care that he gave them. They tell us that his students flocked to his classes. We know that his students loved to sing in class, that they picked up books, readers, and tracts in large numbers, and that attendance at the school dropped for a time

[468] Neau to Secretary, New York, n.d., British Online Archives, America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 6, item 87, image 284. "nôtre principale affaire doit etre de nous rendre imitateurs de nôtre glorieux Sauveur, daimer dieu dun amour d'obeissance et nos prochains comme nous memes."

after Neau's death. But we do not know how the students interpreted the songs and bible stories, or what they made of the devotional and Calvinist-tinged Anglicanism that he shared with them so passionately. All that remains of Neau's pupils are Neau's attendance lists, sometimes containing their age, gender, a special classification such as "mulatto" or "free," and sometimes a first name.

Did Neau's teaching make his enslaved students "cunning and insolent,"[469] as white slave-owners feared? Did they find consolation and hope in the Gospel of an all-powerful God who knew the depths of human suffering? Did they attend classes in order to learn how to read or because they were drawn to the message of Christianity? Was it simply a chance for them to gather with other enslaved Africans, to glimpse a friend, to plan other meetings, to walk with one another to and from the school? While we can never be certain of the students' motivations, we have a few clues in what we know about the New York Slave Rebellion of 1712.

A group of enslaved men met during New Year's festivities (March 25, 1712) taking advantage of the holiday to plan revenge on their masters and to fight for their freedom. Following a carefully crafted plan, around twenty-four enslaved men snuck away from their homes and gathered in the East Ward of the city, in an orchard, around two o'clock in the morning on Sunday, April 6, 1712. Two of them set fire to an outbuilding, while others hid in the dark streets along the path to the orchard. As the white community ran to put out the blaze, the rebels surprised those who ran toward the fire, attacking them with guns and knives. They ended up killing nine whites and

[469] Sharpe, 353.

wounding seven more. Some of the wounded escaped and notified the authorities. When the cannon at the fort was fired in warning, white New Yorkers answered the call to arms.[470] When Governor Hunter sent the militia to round up the blacks hiding in the woods, many killed themselves and their wives before they could be arrested. The uprising was put down by the evening of the next day.

In the end, seventy enslaved men were jailed and tried over a two-month period. Twenty-one of them were convicted. Governor Hunter pardoned three, however. Records state that he found insufficient evidence to execute a man named Mars, and he pardoned two Spanish-speaking men, Juan and José, because they were subjects of Spain and had been unjustly enslaved.[471] Of the eighteen who were found guilty and executed, punishment was brutal: thirteen were hanged, one was starved to death in chains, three were burned at the stake, and one was broken on the wheel.[472] Their bodies were all left unburied and exposed outdoors where others could see them.

The rebellion was the first violence in British North America undertaken by more than a handful of enslaved Africans,[473] and it clearly created much fear in the white population. It is interesting to note that the secular Boston *Weekly News-Letter* reported that the slaves had tried to "murder all the Christians," equating the terms "white" and "Christian," and ignoring the SPG's efforts at bringing enslaved blacks to Christianity.

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[470] Terrence W. Epperson, "The Contested Commons: Archaeologies of Race, Repression, and Resistance in New York City," *Historical Archaeologies of Capitalism,* ed. Mark Leone and Parker J. Potter (New York: Springer, 1999), 86.

[471] Governor Hunter's pardons were controversial among white New Yorkers. Some even sought his removal as governor. See Hodges, *Root and Branch.* 65.

[472] Van Horne, "Impediments," 255.

[473] Van Horne, "Impediments," 138.

On the other hand, Neau's friend Sharpe of the SPG reported that the rebels wanted to "murder all the whites."[474] By 1712, then, the SPG had begun to set up an opposition between the enslaved and the enslavers in racial terms, rather than in religious ones.

In reality, most of the leaders of the rebellion were Akan-speakers from the Gold Coast, now Ghana. Humphreys called them members of the "Carmantee and Pappa Nations."[475] The rebels were relatively new to the city, probably arriving together on ships between 1710-1712.[476] One leader was a free black man, also an Akan-speaker, named "Peter the Doctor." He was an "Obeah doctor," practicing the religion that flourished in Jamaica and Barbados among the enslaved Africans there. Peter may have arrived in New York from the Indies, as did many enslaved Africans.[477] Before the revolt, we know that Peter officiated over an Obeah rite of invincibility, dusting the rebels' bodies with a white powder that was supposed to protect them from injury. They then cut themselves, mingling their blood and drinking it in order to symbolize their solidarity as a group.[478] Clearly, many Africans, whether or not they attended Neau's school, still held to their native religious practices, finding strength and comfort in those rites.

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[474] Epperson, "Contested Commons," 88.

[475] Humphreys, *An Account,* 8. Carmantee meant that they were exported through the port of Kormantin on the Gold Coast, although they could have come originally from different inland tribes. In addition, the names of some of the captured rebels were of Akan origin. See Epperson, "Contested Commons," 87.

[476] Foote, *Black and White,* 133.

[477] Rucker, *River,* 38.

[478] Foote, *Black and White,* 132.

We know that after the rebellion, Neau and his school were blamed "as the main Occasion of this barbarous Plot."[479] His catechism was attacked as having made his pupils "cunning and insolent."[480] Neau himself had to go into hiding, fearing violent reprisals at the hands of white New Yorkers. It is unclear, however, to what extent the school or Neau truly played a role in the rebellion. According to Butler, Huguenots owned some of those who participated in the rebellion, and two of the eight white men who were killed were Huguenots, men whom Neau would have known.[481] We also know that two students from Neau's school were charged and went to trial. One of the men was already baptized, a fact that made contemporaries blame the school's teaching even more.

SPG members struggled to justify why a baptized Christian would participate in a violent uprising and were relieved when the man was declared innocent "by the common Voice" after his execution.[482] Robin, the other guilty student from Neau's school, had not been baptized. His story fit the SPG narrative much better: Robin belonged to an "eminent merchant" who had refused his requests for baptism multiple times, even though he had "made some proficience" at Neau's school. Robin subsequently killed both his master and the master's two sons in the rebellion.[483] Although he was "hung in chains" for his crime, his story was lifted up by the SPG as a warning to those masters who frustrated the Christian progress of their slaves. Secretary Humphreys even

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[479] Humphreys, *An Account,* 9.

[480] Sharpe, "Proposals," 353.

[481]Butler, *Huguenots in America,* 175.

[482] Humphreys, *An Account,* 9.

[483] Sharpe, "Proposals," 353.

broadened the charge later, claiming that the masters of most of the guilty slaves were the masters who most opposed allowing slaves to become Christian.[484]

While the masters believed that the existence of two convicted rebels from Neau's school proved that the school was a danger to the community, Neau and the SPG denied that logic. Sharpe blamed the rebellion instead on the forces of evil, pointing out that "the devil finds his kingdom of darkness invaded [by the success of Neau's school] and rages because his time is short."[485] Neau, too, wrote quickly to the SPG Secretary in London to assure him that he had nothing to do with the rebellion and deplored it. He referred to:

> the Horrid plott of Some Negroes in this City, against their Masters, which did rise Scruples in the Minds of our Inhabitants against my School by imputing the Rebellion of their Slaves to the Instructing of them, as if the Christian Religion should not Comand Obedience to all Inferiors.[486]

Nevertheless, the Common Council found the idea of enslaved Africans roaming the streets at night no longer acceptable. They passed a decree that blacks could no longer go out after sunset without lanterns or candles. Since their masters refused to give them these items, they were effectively put under curfew and were no longer able to attend the school after a long day's work. Any enslaved worker who disobeyed this order would suffer a public whipping. Neau protested to Secretary Chamberlayne that this decree was "a Snare for my School, for it is well known that they do not come to me to be catechized

[484] Humphreys, *An Account,* 10.

[485] Humphreys, *An Account,* 10.

[486] Neau to Secretary, New York, 15 October 1712, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 7, item 225, image 226.

till after Sun Sett and often times without their Masters knowledge who to be sure will not furnish them with Lanthorns or Candles to come to me."[487]

Indeed, even though Governor Hunter stood up for the school, it never completely recovered the success that it had before the rebellion. Hunter brought city leaders with him to visit the classes, and he recommended that clergy include praises for the school in their sermons. We know that Vesey of Trinity Church, however, refused to read Hunter's praises from the pulpit, and he withdrew his own enslaved Africans from Neau's classes.[488] Furthermore, the New York legislature continued to crack down on the enslaved with the passage of the Negro Act, despite opposition from Governor Hunter. According to the Act, whites were no longer allowed to trade with enslaved people; masters could punish their slaves privately unless it was a capital offense; freed blacks could no longer own homes or land in the colony; and in order to set an enslaved worker free, a master must pay a two-hundred-pound surety, as well as an additional twenty pounds each year in maintenance.[489]

There is no evidence to prove that Neau was a "secret moving force" behind the rebellion, as some scholars claim.[490] It is likely, though, that his efforts in making the enslaved literate members of the church resulted in their increased self-confidence, as well as in a growing desire to be truly free. The prayers, the teaching, the encouragement

[487] Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, 8 September 1713, British Online Archives: America in Records from British Missionaries, SPG letter books, series A, vol. 8, item 175, image 175.

[488] Glasson, *Mastering Christianity,* 83.

[489] Hodges, *Root and Branch,* 65.

[490] Kamil, *Fortress,* 408.

to sneak out at night to attend the school, and the ability to read and write that Neau afforded them could have created a "subversive force" that Neau did not realize he was encouraging.[491] Neau's teaching and example could have become to them a "means of challenging the denial of slave humanity" that combined with their African spiritual values to provide a basis for resistance.[492]

The group singing of psalms, especially, an important part of Neau's instruction, could have played a role in encouraging rebellion. After all, Huguenot history and Neau's own personal story are full of the power of psalm-singing as an act of revolt, as a way to forge a common resistance in an oppressed people. When Neau sang loudly on the galleys and in his prisons, he was resisting authority. When groups of Huguenots paraded through the streets in the sixteenth century, singing forbidden words as loudly as they could, they were a downtrodden people proudly breaking what they considered unjust laws. As Whelan points out, the psalms themselves are sung prayers that situate singers collectively and individually before God as they sing. The singers become the righteous victims placed before both a righteous God and an opposing enemy, over whom God will surely grant them victory. The singers, then, "feel empowered to persevere in the face of oppression and resist the abjection that is willed on them by their perceived enemies."[493] Neau's own hymns and the psalm tunes to which they are sung could have led to "an unexpected turn in certain socio-political contexts."[494] Without consciously encouraging

[491] Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, 123.

[492] Epperson, "Contested Commons," 91.

[493] Whelan, "Soul Songs," 74.

[494] Whelan, "Soul Songs," 74.

his pupils to rebel, the act of singing together daily could have spurred the enslaved singers on to seek God's justice, at the expense of their own oppressors.

It is also interesting to take a closer look at the involvement of the two "Spanish Indians" in the rebellion. Both of these men, Juan (John) and José (Hosea or Hosey) had been baptized by Roman Catholic missionaries in Hispaniola. Like Elias Neau himself, they were sailors who had been sold into slavery as prize goods from a captured Spanish ship in 1706. They ended up in New York as enslaved workers for two different families. They were educated men and were sophisticated enough to petition the courts in New York for their freedom, claiming to be free subjects of Spain. Unable to document their claim, however, their appeal was refused. They responded by joining as leaders in the 1712 rebellion, where they set fire to the outbuilding on the property of José's master, starting the chain of attack.[495]

While Neau likely would not have condoned their violent response, he would have known their story and its similarities to his own tale of unwarranted suffering in France. After all, he too was imprisoned unjustly after having been captured at sea. It is possible that Neau sympathized with their plight, so similar to his own. If Neau identified with them, he might have had a hand in arranging with his friend Governor Hunter to provide them with the royal pardon that they were given, despite their clear guilt in the uprising. If José and Juan knew Neau's story, as well, they might have found in him a model of feisty resistance to false imprisonment. Neau's resistance in the French prisons could have even inspired their own. No one knows, but a story of such involvement with

[495] Foote, *White and Black*, 136.

the rebels is not a story that Neau or the SPG would have told. Neau's own personal story could have involved him in the rebellion, despite himself.

The old theory of African American evangelization during the First Great Awakening of the 1740's claims that it was only through "religious revivalism" that the enslaved were truly converted to Christianity. This theory does not help promote Neau's special legacy. In broad strokes, it dismisses all efforts of the "rationalist, doctrine-bound Anglicans" and insists that the enslaved needed the "evangelical stirrings of the soul" associated with extemporaneous preaching and personal conversion narratives before they could grasp hold of the Gospel.[496] In examining Elias Neau's beliefs and expression in light of religious exchanges throughout the Atlantic World, however, it is clear that this well-worn "Evangelical Synthesis" theory does not present a full picture of African-American catechesis and conversion in North America.[497]

As Katharine Gerbner has shown in her work on conversion of the enslaved in the British colonies, it is an exaggeration to say that only evangelicalism could offer enslaved Africans an egalitarian and accessible faith. This theory ignores the powerful draw that literacy had on the enslaved, a gift that they viewed as a sign of mastery and power.[498] As we have seen, Neau's pupils were eager to learn to read, to sing psalms, and to pray

[496] Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 83.

[497] Outlined by evangelicals like Robert Baird in the nineteenth century and beyond, these scholars claimed that North American religion flourished under Calvinist leaders until 1660, but that from 1660-1720, the rise of Congregationalist and Anglican ecclesiastical structures resulted in a decline in vital Christianity. It was not until 1720-1750 that revivals began to bring the new life which came to fulfillment in the Second Great Awakening of 1750-1775. See Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), xvii-iii.

[498] Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, 11.

together. They came to his lessons for the books, and they worked hard to share the reading skills that they learned with others.

Moreover, the increase in conversions after 1740 could have had just as much to do with the entrenchment of slavery into colonial laws as it did with a change in religious expression. As Bonomi points out, the laws surrounding slavery increased throughout the colonies over time and were well in place by the mid-eighteenth century. As masters felt less apprehension about sending their enslaved Africans to classes, the enslaved were able to participate more freely.[499] The ups and downs of attendance at Neau's school following the passage of the 1706 law and the fears following the 1712 rebellion support her hypothesis.

Sensbach insists that historians need to look further than North American evangelical revivals, examining instead the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa to find the varied origins of the African American spiritual revolution. One must "probe the links between the overlapping Pietist and evangelical movements and the diffusion of people and ideas back and forth across the Atlantic."[500] Our examination of Neau's life and writing in this paper points to the complexity of meetings and movements throughout the Atlantic world. The extensive, multinational trade routes that brought enslaved workers to the American colonies also carried multiple strains of "heart religion" back and forth across the Atlantic. As early as the late seventeenth-century these variations of affective devotion joined with the Calvinism of Dutch, French, and English merchants, sailors,

[499] Bonomi, "'Swarms,'" 56.

[500] Jon F. Sensbach, "'Don't Teach My Negroes to be Pietists:' Pietism and the Roots of the Black Protestant Church," in *Pietism in Germany and North America, 1680-1820,* ed. Jonathan Strom, Hartmut Lehmann, and James Van Horn Melton (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 197.

investors, and clergymen. They also brought forth missionary fervor in a new "Age of Benevolence" across the Atlantic World. And they seeped into the religious imagination of a self-educated sailor like Elias Neau—and into the materials that he presented to the minds and hearts of his pupils.

Without records describing the thoughts and reactions of Neau's enslaved pupils, the question of Neau's "success" as a catechist is a complex one. Neau fought to be accepted during his lifetime. He had to battle constantly the white masters who disapproved of teaching the enslaved; he struggled with the Anglican clergy, many of whom were suspicious of his Reformed origins and his French background; he especially did not see eye to eye with Trinity's rector, William Vesey, who was never happy with having an opinionated layman like Neau as catechist. Neau's immediate successors at the Trinity School ignored the devotional content and personal touches of Neau's work. After Neau's death, attendance at the school dropped. Neau's songs were never published, as he had so ardently hoped. Neither the SPG nor the French Church's pastor Louis Rou followed his instructions to make them known. His curriculum was not appreciated or repeated until educators during the Great Awakening produced their own versions of the singing and heart-religion that underlay Neau's teaching. Like the voices of his pupils, it is almost as if Neau's voice, too, was silenced by the powerful institutions that controlled the status quo.

In pointing to broad and sweeping historical movements, historians can lose track of the small, atypical figures and particularities that diverge from the "normal." In the Church, too, the singular advances and innovations made by the laity, the marginalized, and the unorthodox are often overlooked and lost to history. Neau's songs and letters

show that he was an unusual choice for an SPG catechist—a layman with a fire in his bones to share the heart-religion that he had assimilated throughout his turbulent life. He carried within himself a mix of traditions: he was neither a theological radical nor a university-educated Anglican--or even Huguenot--clergyman. He moved within the structures of the SPG and yet held firm to his own version of Christian piety, born of a life of travel throughout the Atlantic World.

Having survived real suffering as a prisoner and galley slave, Neau found deep comfort both in the imagery of divine Love and in the call to reform what he had experienced as a painful and corrupt world. Against all odds, he was determined to share the faith that had saved him with those who were enslaved around him in the colonies. Neau's work and modest success is proof that there was room in the SPG for a determined "outsider" to make his mark, years before the Great Awakening.

It was into Neau's complex mix of faith traditions and motives that New York's enslaved population wandered when they stepped into the first school for the enslaved in the mainland British colonies. They read the bibles that they were given and sang the songs of lament and praise, adapting and interpreting in turn. In ways that Neau intended and in ways that he did not, Neau's pupils were given more than baptism. They gained the gifts of literacy and music. They were strengthened and lifted up together in word and song, as they entered into the long, painful years of "Christian slavery." Because of one insignificant, imperfect man's suffering, his response to God's call, and his willingness to be open to change, hundreds of enslaved people were able to get a tiny glimpse of freedom.

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Appendix : The Extant Songs of Elias Neau

In order to place Neau's original songs from their two sources in one easy-to-read location, I have created this appendix. *Cantiques I* through *XV,* found on the left-hand side of pages 3-28 of the appendix, all appear exactly as they do at the end of Jean Morin's 1701 edition of the *Histoire Abrégée des Soufrances du Sieur Elie Neau sur les galères et dans les cachots de Marseilles*. All references to this edition in the appendix are found with "Morin" and page numbers in parentheses. The numbering of the *cantiques* in this appendix follow the numbering of Morin's work, even though he or his editor incorrectly numbered them. The song written by another prisoner, included as *Cantique VIII* in Morin's book, is also included here, for comparison with Neau's songs.

The remaining songs and fragments of songs from the *Hymnes ou cantiques sacrez* that Neau sent to the SPG in 1718 can be found in SPG Letter Book C, now housed in the Weston Library in Oxford, England. I have accessed them through British Online Archives. These songs follow on pages 29-56 of this appendix. References to the 1718 manuscript are indicated in this appendix with "Hymnes" and the image numbers from British Online Archives in parentheses. The four songs that are found both in the *Histoire Abrégée* and in the SPG document are placed side by side, with the changes in the SPG edition in red on the right-hand side of the page.

After this appendix was created, Ruth Whelan also published a compilation of the songs from the 1718 SPG manuscript in her article, "Soul Songs: A Snippet View of Elie Neau's 'Hymnes, ou Cantiques Sacrés.'" In reading her article, I noticed that a few lines of the incomplete *hymnes* were missing from the British Online Archive source that I used. Since Whelan viewed the folios themselves in Oxford, I have added her rendition of

those lines to the appendix, marked with a footnote. I was pleased to notice that otherwise my transcription accords with hers.

All spelling and accent marks are transcribed here just as they appear in the original documents. I have not attempted to modernize or correct them. My only addition is to add line numbers in order to provide an easy reference in my paper. Since the SPG manuscript is handwritten using eighteenth-century penmanship, the letters are sometimes hard to decipher. I have remained as faithful as I can to what was written.

Since Neau always includes the psalm tune and number from the *Genevan Psalter* to which each of his poems is to be sung, it is simple for the reader to find the correct melodies and to put Neau's words to music. The 1565 edition of the psalter created by Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze, *Les Pseaumes mis en rime françoise,* contains the tunes to which Neau referred and can be accessed online.[501]

In attempting to sing Neau's songs, however, it is important for English-speaking readers to note that, when counting syllables in Neau's songs, Neau follows French rules of versification, which are complex. For example, words ending in a syllable with a letter "e," "es," or "ent," silent in regular spoken French, will often be pronounced and counted as a syllable in French poetry and song. Syllables ending in a silent "e" within a verse that are followed by another word beginning with a consonant, are also pronounced in classical French poetry. If French versification rules are followed, one can see that Neau's lyrics do indeed fit the psalm tunes for which he has written them.

[501] Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze, *Les Pseaumes mis en rime françoise, Avec le chant de l'Eglise de Lausane* (Geneva, CH: Antoine Vincent, 1565) https://www.e-rara.ch/gep_g/doi/10.3931/e-rara-5820.

Cantique I (Morin, 249-251)

Sur le chant du Pseaume 1*: Qui au Conseil des malins n'a été*

Seigneur Jesus, auguste Roi des Rois!
Je te contemple en l'arbre de la croix.
Quand tu t'offrois pour nous en sacrifice,
Pour satisfaire à toute ta justice,
Tu repandis ton sang sur cet autel,
Pour m'obtenir le salut éternel.

J'avois commis un funeste attentat:
Mais, ô Seigneur! quand tu vis mon état,
Tu pris pitié de ma misere extreme;
Et tu punis mes pechez sur toi-même,
En t'infligeant dans cette extremité
Tous les tournmens que j'avois merité,

Christ tu souffris l'opprobre et le mépris
Et des humains et des malins esprits:
Car la grandeur de mes crimes énormes
Se presentoient sous de hideuses formes:
Et c'est pourquoi contemplant mes malheurs,
Tu ressentis les plus vives douleurs.

Quan tu crias avant que trepasser,
Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!
Pourquoi m'a tu laissé?
Ce fut alors que ton ame sacrée
Fut vivement de douleurs penetrée:
Mais c'est aussi dans ce dernier effort,
Que tu rompis l'aiguillon de la mort.

Oüi dans ta mort tes cruels ennemis.
Se virent tous honteusement soumis.
Ainsi, Seigneur, tu gagnas la victoire,
Elle t'acquit le triomphe et la gloire;
Ce qui fera qu'a jamais tous les Saints
Te beniront avec les Seraphims.

Et à mon tour mon coeur veut te loüer,
Sur cette Croix où tu te fis cloüer,
En adorant ton amour éternelle,

Qui sût sauver mon ame criminelle.
Je changerai tous les jours desormais
Que tu seras mon espoir à jamais

Cantique II: Des loüanges de Dieu (Morin, 251-254)
Sur le chant du Pseaume II: *Pourquoi font bruit et s'assemblent les gens?*

Mon Dieu mon Roi que j'aime uniquement,
J'ai bien avant ton nom dans ma memoire,
Pour t'adorer perpetuellement;
Et pour loüer la pompe de ta gloire.
Je chante, ô Dieu, ta loüange infinie,
En contemplant ta charmante beauté:
Et je fai voeu pendant toute ma vie
D'en celebrer l'immutabilité.

N'es-tu pas seul August Jeho v
Le Dieu vivant, et le premier principe,
Le Tout-puissant, l'Alpha et l'Omega,
Dont la grandeur jamais ne se dissipe?
Ta Deïté, Seigneur, est permanente,
Il n'est que toi de Monarque éternel.
Ta Majesté sublime et triomphante
Regne par tout en la Terre et au Ciel.

L'immensité de ton étre pompeux
Remplit les Cieux, la Terre et les abîmes:
Et ta presence en tout tems, en tous lieux
Protege tout, ainsi que tu l'animes.
Car la vertu de ta force invincible
Tient suspendu le monde avec un doigt.
Tu l'as créé sans qu'il te fut penible,
Disant ainsi: que la Lumiere soit.

C'est un portrait de tes perfections,
Et le Tableau que ta sagesse trace,
C'est le miroir où tes productions
Font resplendir ta justice et ta grace:
Car tu connois dedans ta prescience
Tous les Elûs et tous les reprouvez:
Tu les voyois avant leur existence,
Leurs noms étoient dans ton livre graves.

L'Arrêt en fut dressé dans ton Conseil,
Dans le secret de tes justes idées;
Car ta Lumiere éblouït le Soleil,
Et l'équité preside en tes pensées.

O Trinité! ton Unité d’Essence
Est toute pure en tous tes Jugemens.
Tu veux qu’on t’aime en toute obéïssance;
Et que tout tremble à tes commandemens.
Ta verité, ta grand’fidelité,

Sont les témoins de ta misericorde,
Et tu fais voir ta liberalité
Dans les pardons que ta clemence accorde.
O Providence, ô bonté tres-unique!
Qui m’as pourvû d’un remede infini,
O Saint amour, charité magnifique
Que ton Saint Nom en soit toûjours beni

Cantique III: Des loüanges de Dieu (Morin, 254-257)

Sur le chant du Pseaume 3: *Seigneur que de gens*

Glorieux Roi des Rois,
Je chante à haute voix,
Ta grandeur plus qu'immense,
Auguste Trinité!
J'adore l'unité
De ta divine essence.
Supreme Déïté,
Ta pure verité,
Est tres-indivisible.
Pere d'éternité,
Que ta Divinité,
Est incomprehensible!

C'est ta puissante main,
Monarche Souverain,
Qui fût creér l'abîme,
Pour montrer ton pouvoir,
Par ton divin savoir,
Et ta gloire sublime.
Tu t'es manifesté,
O Sainte Majesté,
En creant ce beau Monde,
C'est le divin miroir,
Dans lequel tu fais voir,
Ta sagesse profonde.

C'est toi mon Createur,
Qui fus l'unique Auteur,
De toute la Nature;
Ta Providence a soin,
De pourvoir au besoin
De chaque creature.
Dieu tres-juste, et tres-Saint,
L'on t'aime et l'on te craint,
Aux armées celestes,
Qui goûtant ta bonté,
Contemplent ta beauté
Que tu leur manifestes.

La contemplation,
De ta perfection,
Est le chaste delice,
Du bien heureux séjour,
Où regne ton amour,
La paix, et la justice.
Tu ravis tous les coeurs
De tes Adorateurs
Qui contemplent ta face,
En comblant leurs desirs
De tes divins plaisirs,
Au fleuve de ta grace.

Ton juste jugement
Se trouve également,
Aimable et redoutable,
Et dans ta profondeur,
Digne de ta grandeur,
Il est impenetrable.
Mais dans l'immensité
De ta gratuïté,
Tu fais voir ta clemence:
Et tes compassions,
Parmi les Nations
D'une riche abondance.

Je te contemple, ô Dieu!
Sur ton trône inaccessible,
Je te vois revêtu
De force et de vertu,
Qui te rend invincible.
On te voit là, Seigneur,
Tout couronné d'honneur
D'un divin diadême.
Ton regne est éternel,
Et ton triomphe est tel
Que ta pompe supreme.

Cantique IV: La Priere de nôtre Seigneur Jesus-Christ (Morin, 257-259)
Sur le chant du Pseaume 6: *Ne veüille pas, ö Sire*

Notre Pere Celeste,
Puisqu'on voit manifeste,
Ta gloire dans les Cieux,
Que ton nom tres-auguste
Soit comme il est si juste,
Celebré dans tous lieux.

Ton regne s'accomplisse
Afin que ta justice,
Apparoisse à nos yeux.
Et comme tu souhaites
Ta volonté soit faite
En terre comme aux Cieux.

Donne nous Dieu supreme,
Par ton amour extreme,
Nôtre pain d'aujourd'hui.
Pardonnes nos offenses,
Comme nos consciences
Vont pardoner autrui.

Que ce qui peut seduire,
Ne nous puisse pas nuire
Dans les tentations:
Mais delivre nos vies,
De toutes les envies
Qu'ont sur nous les Demons.

Car à toi Pere immense
Appartient la puissance
A perpetuïté.
Et le regne et la gloire
L'honneur et la victoire,
En toute éternité.

Cantique V: Oraison au Saint Esprit (Morin, 259-261)
Sur le chant du Pseaume 42: *Ainsi qu'on vit le cerf bruire etc.*

Vien Saint Esprit dans mon ame,
Je t'invoque à deux genoux
C'est après toi qu'elle brame
Comme après son chaste Epoux.
Vien, pour remplir tout mon coeur,
De ta celeste liqueur:
Et pendant que je t'invoque
Daigne exaucer mon colloque.

Vien Saint Esprit que j'adore,
M'absorber dans ton amour,
Afin que je chante encore
Ta charité nuit et jour.
Plonge en ton immensité,
Toute ma capacité;
Et que dans ta plenitude
J'y trouve ma quietude.

Vien me baiser de ta bouche
Toi que j'aime uniquement
Car je sens quand je te touche
L'odeur de ton vêtement.
Vien calmer tous mes desirs
Au doux vent de tes zephirs:
Et que mon intelligence
T'embrasse dans son silence.

Vien seul Auteur de mon être,
Pour me transformer en toi:
Vien-t'en te faire connoître,
Et te faire aimer de moi.
Que je goûte en t'embrassant,
Ton amour si ravissant,
Qui me forme à ton image
En contemplant ton visage.

Vien Saint Esprit, vien de grace,
Etre mon consolateur:
Et que l'éclat de ta face
M'éclaire l'interieur.

Vien-t'en Seigneur m'appaiser,
Avec un chaste baiser,
Alors mon ame ravíe,
T'aimera plus que sa vie.

Vien, ô Soleil de Justice,
M'éclairer par ta bonté;
Agrée le sacrifice
De mon humble volonté;
Et te fais voeu desormais,
De celebrer à jamais,
Tes loüanges magnifiques
En prieres et en cantiques.

Vien principe de lumiere,
M'assurer par ta bonté;
Aide à fournir ma carriere,
Et remplir ma volonté:
Afin, Seigneur, qu'à jamais,
Mon ame soit ton Palais
Où je celebre en cantiques,
Tes loüanges magnifiques.

Cantique VI: De l'amour sacré (Morin, 261-264)

Sur le chant du Psaume 51: *Misericorde au pauvre vicieux etc.*

Tres-glorieux et supreme Seigneur!
Je te supplie, ô source de lumiere.
De m'éclairer en faisant ma priere
Dont le but est ta gloire et ton honneur.
Ecoûte ô Dieu, j'invoque ta bonté
Prête l'oreille à l'oraison ardente,
Qui sort du fond d'un humble volonté,
Et que l'amour de mon coeur te presente.

Enten la voix, et le cri de ce coeur,
Comme un encens qui monte en ta presence:
Absorbe-le dans ton amour immense,
Et le remplis d'une sante liqueur.
Vien l'enyvrer de ton amour divin,
En lui montrant ta glorieuse face;
En lui faisant sentir jusqu'à la fin
De ton odeur la joye et l'efficace.

Exauce moi, mon Dieu tres gracieux;
Et me fai voir l'éclat de ton visage
Pour imprimer dans mon coeur ton image
Par la vertu de tes celestes feux.
Toi seul, ô Dieu, l'objet de mes desirs,
Vien les combler de ta divine Essence:
Et me remplir de tes chastes plaisirs,
Par la splendeur de ta magnificence.

Seigneur Jesus fai moi cette faveur,
Entre en ce coeur que tu vois qu'il se pâme;
Pour l'appaiser dit tout haut à mon ame,
Je suis ton Dieu, ton Roi juste, et Sauveur.
Fai moi toucher par une vive foi
Au fond du coeur, et que l'ame ravie,
S'écrie ô Dieu, qui m'est si cher que toy;
Qui fais la vie, et l'ame de ma vie?

Un seul regard de l'éclat de tes yeux,
Met dans mon coeur le silence et le calme
Fai lui chanter un Saint Epithalame
En flairant tes parfums delicieux.

Fai moi goûter en ta communion,
La chaste paix dans le profond silence:

Et tous mes sens dans l'admiration,
Celebreront ta divine excellence.

Alors mon coeur tout pénetré d'ardeur,
T'embrassera de toute sa puissance;
Et tout ravi d'avoir ta jouissance,
Voudra chanter en tout tems ta grandeur.
Il chantera continuellement,
Que toi tout seul mon Dieu fais ma richesse.
Mon cher tresor que j'aime uniquement:
Pour te loüer, et t'adorer sans cesse.

Cantique VII: Des souffrances du Cachot (Morin, 265-267)
Sur le chant du Pseaume 67: *Dieu nous soit doux et favorable*
Tableau des souffrances d'Elie Neau

Seigneur qui vois comme on m'afflige,
A cause de ta verité,
Contemple tout ce qu'on m'inflige,
Pour éteindre ma charité:
  Car c'est pour ton culte,
  Qu'on me persecute,
  Avec que fureur:
  Et on ne me gesne,
  Rien que pour la haine,
  Que j'ai pour l'erreur.
Le nouveau genre de supplice,
Que les Demons ont inventé,
Inspire aux hommes l'artifice,
D'encherir sur la cruauté.
  Ton bras fortifie,
  Celui qui se fie,
  Dans ta grand'bonté:
  Et qui rend esclavage
  A ta Déïté.
Je suis dans une fosse obscure
Privé de tout secours humain,
Rongé de poux, couvert d'ordure,
Où l'on me fait perir de faim.
  On veut que je mange,
  Pourvû que je change
  De Religion.
  Mais je leur proteste,
  Que mon coeur déteste
  Leur Communion.
Alors pour vaincre mon courage,
On multiplie tous mes maux.
Seigneur on met tout en usage,
Pour perpetuer mes travaux.
  Je suis en tenebres,
  Dans des lieux funebres,
  Tout remplis de vers,
  Et la solitude,
  Ne m'est pas moins rude
  Que le sont mes fers.

Mais je me ris de leur attente,
Au milieu de tous mes tourmens.
Et ma foi sera tres-constante,
Car Dieu soûtient ses fondemens.
  Ouï mon Dieu, mon Pere,
  Tu fais que j'espere,
  Dans ton seul support.
  Donne à ma constance,
  La sainte asseurance,
  De vaincre la mort.
Rempli moi de force invincible,
Pour defender ta Sainte Loi:
Et que mon coeur soit inflexible
Dans tous les combats de ma foi.
  Fai que l'efficace,
  De ta Sainte Grace,
  Me rende vainqueur;
  Afin qu'à la suite
  Tu sois sans limite,
  Maître de mon coeur.

Cantique VIII (Morin, 268-271)
(Ce Cantique n'est pas d'Elie Neau, mais d'un autre Confesseur.)
Sur le chant du Pseaume 79: *Les gens entrez sont en ton heritage, etc.*

This song is not by Elias Neau but by another unknown Huguenot prisoner. Morin included it with Neau's songs.

O Roi des Rois, Souveraine Puissance,
En qui je mets toute mon esperence,
Protege moi par ta force invincible,
En achevant ce qu'on croit impossible.
  Entretiens dans mon coeur,
  La celeste liqueur,
  Qui prend de toi la source:
  Et sans jamais broncher,
  On me verra marcher
  Jusqu'au bout de ma course.
Pour m'empêcher de finir ma carriere,
On veut m'ôter ce que j'ai de lumiere:
Et l'on mettra bien-tôt tout en usage
Pour faire effort d'ébranler mon courage.
  Déja privé du jour,
  Dans cet affreux sejour,
  Rempli d'objets funebres,
  On offre à tout moment,
  A mon entendement,
  Les plus noires tenebres.
Puisque je vois l'erreur et le mensonge,
Ne permets pas que mon ame s'y plonge,
Que ton esprit qui daigne me conduire
Chasse du mien ce qui le peut seduire.
  Que le bien à venir,
  M'ôte le souvenir,
  De ceux que j'abandonne;
  Et parmi mes liens,
  Les maux que je previens,
  M'asseurent la Couronne.
Satan qui voit qu'un genereux martyre,
Sera toujours fatal à son Empire,
A mis ses soins à me forger des crimes,
A fin qu'on crut mes peines legitimes.
  Seigneur rend ses desseins
  Inutiles et vains:

Et fai par tout entendre
Que l'on poursuit en moi
Ta pure et sainte Loi
Que l'on me voit defender.

Je t'ai suivi, je veux toujours te suivre
Privé de toi, Seigneur, je ne puis vivre.
Je suis à toi, car je te sacrifie
Ma liberté mon repos et ma vie.
Je fai que ton amour
Peut me rendre le jour,
Et que ta Providence,
Malgré tous les humains,
Peut m'ôter de leurs mains,
Contre toute apparance.

Mais si la main des personnes plus fortes,
Ne me vient pas ouvrir toutes les portes
Et pour bien-tôt mettre fin à mes peines;
Briser mes fers, mes liens, et mes chaînes,
Du moins accorde moi
L'esperance et la foi
Et cette Patience
Qui triomphe de tout:
Et qui peut jusqu'au bout
Soûtenir ma confiance.

	Cantique IX: Touchant les souffrances (Morin, 271-275) Sur le chant du Ps. LXXXI: *Chantez gayement, etc.*	Cantique XXXIV: Cantique de consolation sur les souffrances (“Hymnes, 238-242) Sur le chant du ps. 81 *Chantéz gayement*
1	Je t’aime Seigneur	1. Je t’aime, Seigneur,
2		
3	Parmi ma misere,	Parmi ma misere,
4	Puisque j’ai l’honneur	Puisque j’ay l’honneur
5	De t’y confesser	De t’y confesser,
6		Et d’y professer
7	Ma foi tres-sincere.	Ma moy tres seincere.
8	On veut me forcer	2. L’on veut me forcer
9	Dans ma conscience	Dans ma conscience,
10	A te renoncer:	A te renoncer,
11	Et méme on pretend,	Et même on pretend,
12	Avec que le tems	Avecque le tems,
13	Vaincre ma confiance.	Vaincre ma constance.
14	Pour venir a bout	3. Pour venir about
15	De cette entreprise,	De cette Entreprise,
16	On employe tout,	Lon employe tout
17	Jusqu’à la fureur	Jusqu’a la fureur,
18	Que permet l’erreur	Que préscrit l’erreur
19	Pour qu’on me seduise.	Pour qu’on me seduise.
20	Mais je suis certain	4. Mais je suis certain,
21	Que quoi que l’on fasse,	Que quoy que lon fasse,
22	L’on travaille en vain:	Lón travaille envain,
23	Car, Seigneur, c’est toi,	Car, Seigneur, c’est toy
24	Qui combats en moi,	Qui combas en moy
25	Par ta sainte grace.	Par ta Sainte grace.
26	C’est pourquoi, mon Dieu,	5. C’est pour quoy, mon Dieu,
27	Je t’offre ma vie,	Jet’offre ma vie,
28	Dans le même lieu,	Dans ce meme lieu
29	Où tu as permis	Car tu l’as permis
30	Que j’aye été mis	Que j’y fusse mis
31	Je la sanctifie.	Je t’y glorifie.
32	O Roi de mon coeur	6. Ô Roy de mon coeur,
33	Regne dans mon ame:	Regne dans mon Ame,
34	Et sois le vanqueur	Et rend moy Vainquoeur
35	Dans tous mes combats:	Dans tous mes combats,
36	Car on ne veut pas	Car on ne voit pas
37	Que je te reclame.	Que je te reclame.
		Pause I
38	Du plus haut des Cieux	7. Du plus haut des cieux

39	Jette sur mes chaînes	Jette sur mes chesnes
40	Un oeil gracieux:	Un oeil gracieux,
41	Et fai voir en moi	Qu'il allume en moy
42	L'amour et la foi,	L'Amour et la foy
43	Dans toutes mes peines.	En toutes mes peines.
44	Ton amour divin	8. Ton amour Divin
45	Est plus delectable	Est plus delectable
46	Que miel et que vin:	Que miel et que vin,
47	Et beaucoup plus fort	Et beaucoup plus fort,
48	Que n'est pas la mort	Que n'est pas la mort
49	La plus redoutable.	La plus redoutable.
50	Grand Roi triomphant,	9. Grand Roy triomphant,
51	Fai luire ta face	Fais luire ta face
52	Dessus ton enfant,	Dessus ton Enfant;
53	Penetre mon coeur	Penetre mon coeur
54	D'une vive ardeur	D'une vive ardeur
55	Par son efficace.	Par son efficace.
56	Car quoi qu'il en soît,	10. Car quoy qu'il en soit
57	Ton amour immense	Ton Amour immence,
58	Regarde et reçoit	Regarde et reçoit
59	Tous mes saints desirs,	Tous mes saints desirs,
60	Et tous mes soûpirs	Et tous mes soupirs
61	Dans ma patience.	Dans ma patience.
62	C'est cela qui fait	11. C'est cela qui fait
63	Que je prens courage,	Que je prens courage,
64	Quoi que l'on me hait.	Quoique lon me hait,
65	Je ne cesse pas,	Je ne cesse pas
66	D'adorer ton bras	D'adorer ton bras
67	Dans mon esclavage.	Dans mon Esclavage.
68	Et je sens tres-bien	12. Et je sens tres bien
69	La force invincible,	La force invincible,
70	Dont tu me soûtiens	Dont tu me soutiens,
71	Dans l'immensité	C'est l'immencité
72	De ta charité	De ta charité
73	Incomprehensible.	In comprehensible.
74		Pause II
75	J'en louë humblement	13. J'en loue humblement
76	Ta Divine Essence:	Ta Divine Essence,
77	Et profondement	Et profondement
78	J'adore à genoux	J'adore a genoux
79	Ton grand nom jaloux,	Ton grand mon jaloux,

80	Eternel Immense.	L'Eternel immence.
81	C'est le nom trés-saint	14. C'est le mon tres saint,
82	Que mon ame adore;	Que mon ame adore,
83	Et que mon coeur craint.	Et que mon coeur craint,
84	Je ne crois qu'en lui.	Je ne crois qu'en luy
85	Il est mon appuis	Il est mon appui,
86	Je l'aime et l'honore.	Je l'aime et l'honnore.
87	C'est toi seul qui es	15. Toy seul Seigneur, es
88	Toujours adorable.	Toujours adorable,
89	Tu l'es à jamais,	Tu l'es a jamais
90	Dieu de verité:	Dieu de verité,
91	Et ta Déité,	Et ta Deité
92	Est impenetrable.	Est impénétrable.
93	Tous tes ennemis	16. Tous tes Ennemis
94	Craignent ta presence	Craignent ta presence,
95	Et te sont soûmis:	Et te sont soumis,
96	Malgré leur pouvoir	*[The pages are missing for the rest]*
97	Tu leur fais bien voir	
98	Leur insuffisance.	
99	Afin donc, Seigneur,	
100	Que je persevere,	
101	A te rendre honneur	
102	Fortifie en moi,	
103	L'amour de ta Loi	
104	Pendant ma carriere	

Cantique X: De l'amour sacré (Morin, 276-277)

Sur le chant du Pseaume LVII: *Dieu pour fonder son tres-sûr habitacle, etc.*

Seigneur Jesus mon unique esperance,
Ta charité vient me ravir le coeur:
Et tes playes distillent la liqueur
Qui me console en ma grande souffrance.

Tu t'immolas comme on fait les victims.
Quand tu t'offris sur l'autel de la Croix
Tu fus cloüé sur ce funeste bois,
Pour expier tous mes énormes crimes.

Ouvre, Seigneur, ouvre aujourd'hui tes veines,
Pour m'arroser de ton sang precieux:
Fai moi goûter ce fruit delicieux:
Que ton amour sût tirer de tes peines.

Comme le Cerf alteré court et brâme,
Lorsqu'il entend le murmure des eaux:
Ainsi ton sang qui coule à gros ruisseaux,
Met dans mon coeur une soif qu me pâme.

Darde en mon coeur un rayon de ta face,
Pour lui donner une constante ardeur.
Penetre, ô Dieu, tout mon interieur
Par le pouvoir des charmes de ta grace.

Agneau de Dieu tire moi dés cette heure
Vers ton côté qui fut ouvert pour moi.
Fai que mon ame étant unie à toi,
Vive en ton coeur, qu'à toujous j'y demeure.

Cantique XI: Cantique de loüange (Morin, 278-280)
Sur le chant du Ps. LXXXIX: *Du Seigneur les bontez sans fin je chanterai.*

Glorieux Roi des Rois, et Seigneur des Seigneurs,
Supreme Majesté, j'adore tes grandeurs.
O Dieu dont la beauté, dont la magnificence
Charme et ravit les coeurs, qui voyent ton Essence!
Quel Dieu pareil à toi, Monarque redoutable:
Et qui peut égaler ta grandeur adorable.

Pere, Fils, Saint Esprit, Auguste Trinité,
Toi seul es le vrai Dieu de toute éternité,
Permanent à jamais dans ton étre ineffable,
Ta Divinité seule est toute impenetrable,
Toi seul es l'Eternel, immortel invisible,
Subsistant par toi-méme en ta gloire indicible.

Tu l'es, tu le feras, comme tu l'as été,
Immuable, infini dans ta sublimité
Toujours resplendissant en ta grandeur supreme;
Et tout infiniment suffisant à toi-même,
Tu puises dans ton sein la source de ta vie,
Et ta beatitude en est toute infinie.

Grand Dieu si magnifique en ta perfection,
L'on ne peut te loüer qu'en admiration.
Car comme ton Essence est incomprehensible,
Aussi l'est ta grandeur; elle est inaccessible,
Ta sainte Majesté, ton essence divine
Est et sera sans fin, elle est sans origine.

C'est toi, Seigneur, qu'on voit le veritable Autheur
De tout ce qui respire et son seul Protecteur.
Ton pouvoir Souverain a sû créer l'abîme
Pour te manifester dans ta pompe sublime,
Donnant l'étre au neant par ton pouvoir auguste,
Nous te croyons, Seigneur, et tout bon et tout juste.

O Dieu de verité, Seigneur Dieu Tout-puissant,
O Monarque Eternel, Monarque ravissant,
O Dieu plein de lumiere, ô lumiere éclatante,
Que tes divins parfums ont une odeur charmante.
O Dieu le Saint des Saints, ô Soleil de Justice,

36 Toi seul es et seras mon bien et mon delice.

	Cantique XIII (Morin, 281-282	Hymne LII: Pour demander le Secours ("Hymnes," 262-263)
	Sur le chant du Pseaume 129*:*	De la grace de Dieu sur le chant du Ps^{e}. 129^{e}
	Dés ma jeunesse ils m'ont fait mille assauts, etc.	*Des ma jeunesse ils m'ont fait mile massauts*
1	Ecoûte moi du fond de ma Prison,	1. Ecoute, o Dieu, du fond de ma prison,
2	Dieu qui connois le coeur qui te reclame!	La voix du coeur, qui t'invoque et reclame;
3	Prête l'oreille à mon humble oraison:	Prête l'oreille amon humble oraison,
4	Et vien calmer le trouble de mon ame.	Et viens calmer le trouble de mon ame.
5	C'est toi mon Dieu qui penetre le coeur,	2. C'est toi Seigneur qui penetre le coeur
6	Qui fais tres-bien après quoi je soûpir.	Tu vois tres-bien après quoy je soupire;
7	Entre en mon ame, et t'en rens le vainqueur,	Entre en mon ame, et t'en rends levaincoeur,
8	Etablis y ton trône, et ton Empire.	Establis y ton trône, et ton Empire.
9	Tu vois Seigneur mon extreme besoin,	3. Tu vois, Seigneur, mon Extrême besoin,
10	Comment je suis privé de la lumiere	Commen je suis privé de la lumiere;
11	Eclaire moi, toi qui prens si grand soin,	Eclaire moy, toy, qui prends si grand soin,
12	De soûtenir le juste en sa cariere.	De soutenir le juste en sa carriere.
		Pause
13	Exauce, et vien mon Dieu, me visiter	4. Helas, Seigneur, tu vois que je gemis,
14	Pour adoucir la peine que je souffre;	En t'invoquant, ainsy qu'une colombe,
15	Fai que ton bras me fasse resister,	Protege moy contre mes Ennemis,
16	Au fil de l'eau pour éviter le gouffre.	Et que ta main fasse que je ne tombe..
17	Helas, Seigneur, tu vois que je gemis!	5. Exauce, o Dieu, Viens t'en me visiter,
18	En t'invoquant ainsi qu'une Colombe!	Pour adoucir la peine que je souffre,
19	Protege moi contre mes ennemis,	Fais que ton bras me fasse résister
20	Et que ta main fasse que je ne tombe.	A ce torrent pour éviter le goûfre.
21	Fai triumpher ta force et ton amour,	6. Fais tiompher ta force, et ton Amour,
22	Par la douceur des charmes de ta grace,	Par la douceur des charmes deta grace,
23	En me rendant la lumiere du jour,	En me rendans la lumiere du jour,
24	Par la clarté des rayons de ta face.	Par la clarté des rayons de ta face.
25		Gloria Patrie
26		Qu'a toy, Vray Dieu, Pere, fils, Saint Esprit,
27		Soit a jamais la loûange rendue
28		Au Nom Sacré du Seigneur Jesus Christ
29		Dans tous les tems c'est a toy qu'elle est due.

	Cantique XIV (Morin, 283-285) Sur le chant du Pseaume 130: *Du fond de ma pensée, etc.*	Hymne LIII: pour demander a Dieu son Amour Sur le chant du ps^{e}. 130^{e} ("Hymnes," 263-266) *Du fond de ma pensee, etc.*
1	Adorable sagesse,	1. Adorable Sagesse,
2	Ecoûte l'oraison,	Ecoute l'oraison,
3	Que mon ame t'adresse	Que mon ame t'addresse
4	Dans ma sombre prison.	Dans ma sombre prison,
5	Que ta bonté m'accorde	Que ta bonté m'accorde
6	D'éprouver la douceur,	D'eprouver la douceur
7	De ta misericorde,	Deta misericorde,
8	Dans le fond de mon coeur.	Dans le fond de mon coeur.
9	Vien me rendre visite,	2. Viens me rendre visible,
10	Dans ce triste sejour,	Dans ce triste sejour;
11	Afin que je medite,	Afin que je m'edite,
12	Ta grace et ton amour:	Sur ton divin Amour;
13	Que j'occupe sans cesse	Que j'occupe sans cesse
14	Toute ma volonté,	Toute ma volonté
15	A sentir l'allegresse	A sentir l'allégresse
16	De ta grande bonté.	De ta grande bonté.
17	Fai moi part d'une goute	3.Fais moy part d'une goute
18	Du sang de mon Sauveur:	Du sang de mon sauveur,
19	Et que mon ame en goute	Et que mon ame en goûte
20	L'agreable saveur.	Lagreable saveur.
21	Fai moi jouïr des charmes,	Fais moy trouver les charmes,,
22	Que tu nous as promis,	Que tu nous as promis,
23	Au milieu des allarmes,	Au milieu des allarmes
24	Dans l'exil où je suis.	Dans l'éxil ou je suis.
		Pause
25	Pénetre par ta grace,	4. Pénétre par ta grace,
26	Tout mon entendement,	Tout mon Entendement,
27	Des rayons de ta face,	Des rayons de ta face,
28	Et tout mon jugement.	Et tout mon jugement:
29	Qui ravisse mon ame	Qui ravissent mon ame
30	Jusqu'au troisiéme Ciel,	Jusqu'au troisiême ciel,
31	Comme une vive flame,	Comme une vive flame
32	Qui part de ton Autel.	Qui part de ton Autel.
33	Imprime en ma memoire,	5. Imprime en ma mémoire
34	Ta charmante beauté,	Ta charmante beauté,
35	Pour contempler la gloire	Pour contempler la gloire
36	De ta Divinité.	De ta Divinité:
37	Fai par ta grace immense,	Fais, par ta grace immence,
38	Que mon ame, et me sens	Que mon ame, et me sens
39	Ayent la jouissance,	Ayent la joüissance

40	De tes biens ravissans.	D’un amour ravissant.
41	A toi seul je m’adresse,	6. A toy seul je m’addresse
42	En toute humilité.	En toute humilité,
43	Répon à ma détresse,	Répond a ma détresse
44	En ta fidelité.	Par ta fidélité,
45	O Seigneur, je te prie,	Seigneur, je te suplie,
46	Hâte toi de venir:	Haste toy de venir:
47	Et fai que je n’oublie,	Afin que je n’oublie
48	Jamais de te benir.	Jamais de te bénir.
49	Celebrez les miracles,	[This whole stanza is omitted.]
50	De la bonté de Dieu;	
51	Malgré tous les obstacles,	
52	De ce funeste lieu:	
53	Car il est l’asseurance,	
54	Le secours et l’appui,	
55	Du pauvre en sa souffrance,	
56	Qui ne s’attend qu’à lui.	
57		Le Gloria Patri
58		Gloire te soit rendue
59		Pere, fils, Saint esprit,
60		C’est a toy qu’elle est due
61		Au Nom de Jesus Christ;
62		Que tout ce qui respire
63		En tout tems, en tout lieu,
64		Ne cesse point de dire
65		Que nul que toy n’est Dieu.

	Cantique XV: Sur le mystere de l'adorable Trinité (Morin, 285-287) Sur le chant du Pseaume 133: *O combien est plaisant et souhaitable, etc.*	*Cantique LIV* de loüanges sur le mistere de la Trinité ("Hymnes," 266-268) Sur le chant du ps^e^. 133^e^: *ô combien est plaisant et souhaitable*
1	O Dieu tres-Grand! Beauté tres-immuable!	1. Ô Dieu tres grand, beauté trés immuable,
2	Que ton Saint Nom me paroit ineffable!	Que ton Saint nom me parôit ineffable,
3	Puisqu'il comprend en l'unité,	Puis qu'il comprend, en l'unité,
4	Tout ce qu'on voit de ta Divinité.	Tout ce qu'on croit de ta Divinité;
5	Vous étes trois parfaitement unis,	Vous estes trois parfaitement unis,
6	Dont tous les biens sont infinis.	Dont tous les biens sont infinis.
7	Car l'ordre admet la personne du Pere	2. Car l'order admet la personne du Pere,
8	L'Auguste Auteur de toute la lumiere:	L'auguste auteur de toute la lumiere;
9	Il engendre éternellement,	Il engendre Eternellement
10	Son Fils, étant essentiellement	Son fils unique essentiellement,
11	Dieu du vrai Dieu, son Verbe naturel	Dieu du Vray Dieu, son Verbe Naturel,
12	Que je lui crois Coëternel.	Que je luy croy coétérnel.
13	Grand Dieu, ce Fils de ta propre substance,	3. Grand Dieu, ce fils est ta propre Substance,
14	Est Dieu de Dieu, dans une méme essence.	Dieu comme toy, dans une même Essence,
15	Ce Fils est un Dieu permanent	Il est Eternel, Permanent;
16	Qui subsistant en ton étre émanant.	Car il subsiste en ton étre Emanent:
17	Puisque tu dis en quelque part de lui,	Puis que tu dis en quelque part de luy,
18	Mon Fils je t'engendre aujourd'hui.	Mon fils, je t'engendre aujourd'huy.
19		Pause
20	C'est ton amour Saint qui luy communique,	4. C'est par l'Amour que tu luy communique,
21	Toute l'essence infiniment unique	Toute l'essence infiniment unique;
22	Car possedant l'éclat, et les splendeurs	Car il possede, en tes Splendeurs,
23	Tous tes tresors, ta pompe et tes grandeurs:	Tous tes tresors, ta gloire, et tes grandeurs;
24	Enfin il est comme toi tout-Puissant	Seigneur, il est, comme toi, tout puissant
25	Dans ton triomphe ravissant.	Dans ton triomphe ravissant.
26		
27	Le Saint Esprit puise son origine,	5. Le Saint Esprit puize son origine,
28	Dans l'union de l'amitié Divine.	Dans lu'nion de l'amitié Divine;
29	Par l'amour ta Divinité,	Par l'amour ta Divinité
30	Est trois en Un, et un en Trinité,	Est trois en un, comme un en Trinité
31	Car il est Dieu, procedant de vous deux	Car il est Dieu, procédant de vous deux,
32	Du Pere, et du Fils glorieux.	Du pere, et du fils glorieux.
33	Vous étes trois Personnes subsistantes,	6. Vouts estes trois personnes subsistantes
34	Dans une méme essence permanente,	Dans une même essence permanente,
35	Sans fin, ni sans commencement	Sans fin, ni sans commancement,
36	Vous vous aimez tous trois infiniment:	Vous vous aimez tous trois infiniement,
37	Et vous puisez dans vôtre propre coéur,	Et vous puisez dans votre propre coeur;

38	Tout vôtre souverain bonheur.	Tout vôtre souverain bonheur.
39		Gloria Patri
40		Grand Createur des hommes et des anges,
41		Tout l'univers célébre tes louanges,
42		Jeunes et Vieux, petits et grands,
43		C'est de toi Seul, Mon Dieu, que tout depend;
44		Qu'honneur et gloire a perpétuité
45		Soit a ta Sainte Trinité.

Neau's Unpublished Cantiques, found only in the SPG manuscript of 1718

Hymne XXXII, Fragment ("Hymnes," 234-235)

Celebrent ta grace infinie
Dans tes sacrez parvis;
    Le triomphe suit la victoire
Monarque glorieux
Tu te fais voir jusqu'en ta gloire
Misericordieux.

11. Alors les esprits angeliques
Charmez de ta bonté
Montrant leur joye par des cantiques,
Vantent ta charité
    Ils font retentir l'empirée
Durant l'Eternité,
De ton amour si admirée
Par la suavité.

12. Que la gloire te soit rendue
Pere, fils, Saint Esprit
C'est a toy mon Dieu qu'elle est due
Au nom de Jesus Christ.
    Qu'à jamais tout sexe, et tout age
T'adorent seul vray Dieu,
Et que chacun te rende homage
En toute tems en tout lieu.

Hymne XXXIII: ou Symbole de nicée ("Hymnes," 235-238)
Sur le chant du ps^e^. 80^e^ ou sur le 105^e^ ps.: *O Pasteur d'israel écoute*

1. Mon Dieu, mon Seigneur, et mon pere,
Mon Créateur, en qui j'espere,
Je viens professer devant Toy
La sincerité de ma foy,
Et l'amour qu j'ay pour ta loy,
Que je sens imprimée en moy.

2. Tu tiras du neant le monde,
Par ta puissance tres féconde,
Les cieux et la terre et les mers,
Avec tous les étres divers,
Qui font partout en l'univers,
Depuis les cieux jusqu'aux Enfers.

3. Je croy qu'aussi tu communique
Ton Essence a ton fils unique,
Et que de toute Eternité,
Il est par ta fécondité,
Dieu de vray Dieu, dans l'unité
De ton immence Déité.

4. Il est lumiére de lumiére,
Et comme Toy cause premiere
L'Etre eternellement parfait,
Ton image et ton vray portrait,
Seul engendré, mais non pas fait;
Qui ta justice a satisfait.

Pause I

5. Le vray Seigneur, Le Seul Messie,
Prit chair de la Vierge marie,
Par la vertu du Saint Esprit,
Un veritable homme il se fit
Sous Pilate la mort soufrit,
Puis après on l'ensevelit.

6. Mais pour accomplir l'écriture,
Il sortit de la fosse obscure,
Et par sa resurection,

Il montra sa gloire en Sion,
La triomphante assencion
Fait voir son exaltation.

7. Tu l'as fait asseoir a ta droite,
Pour régner comme il le souhaite,
Il viendra, mais au dernier jour
Avec une celeste cour,
Juger les humains tour a tour
Qui n'ont point eu pour lui d'amour.

8. Ton Saint Esprit, qui tout précéde,
De ton fils, et de Toy procéde,
De la vie il est le Seigneur:
Je luy rends la gloire et l'honneur,
C'est mon divin consolateur
Que j'adore de tout mon coeur.

9. Il a parlé par les prophétes,
Guidant ces sacrez intérpretes
Qui nous ont laissé par écrit,
Que Toy Pere, fils, Saint Esprit,
Es un seul même Dieu benit,
Je le croi comme il est prescrit.

Pause II

10. Je croi l'Eglise catolique,
Et la doctrine apostolique.
Je confesse un baptême aussy,
Pour laver mon coeur endurcy
Que mes pechez avoient noircy,
Tu les remets par ta mercy.

11. Et je croi de la chair humaine
La resurection certaine,
Quoiqu'a la mort tout est sujet,
La vie eternelle est l'objet,
Que je contemple a mon sujet,
Comme la fin de ton projet.

12. C'est la ma foi tres orthodoxe
Que mon coeur croit sans paradoxe,

Mais j’ay besoin de ton secours,
Vien promtement, Seigneur, et cours
Pour l’affermir, en moi toujours,
Car a Toy seul j’ay mon recours.

Hymne XXXV ("Hymnes, 243-244)

[Cantique de la préscience et de la connaissance de Dieu
Sur le chant du Psaume 84: *O Dieu des armées combien*

1.Ô Dieu, qui du plus haut des cieux
Tiens ouverts sur mon coeur tes yeux,
Pour regarder ce que je pense,][502]
Seigneur tu say ce que je suis,
    Ce que je fais ce que je puis,
Car tu sonde ma conscience.
Tu vois mes inclinations,
Aussy clair que mes actions.

2. Tous mes desirs sont devant Toy,
Tu les connois bien mieux que moi,
Je suis toujours en ta presence
Que si je fais quelque souhait
    Tu l'as vû devant qu'il fut fait,
Par les yeux te ta prescience;
Car, ô Dieu tres intelligent,
Tu prevois tout l'incontingent.

3. Lors que j'étois dans le néant,
Tu m'as vû, ce qui me surprend,
Quoique je n'usse pas d'essence,
J'étois present a ton Esprit,
    Premier que ton pouvoir me fit;
Avant que le monde eut naissance,
Tu distinguois parfaitement
Ce que je suis presentement.

Pause

4. Car quoique je ne fusse pas,
Tu comptois mes tours et mes pas.
Puis aprés tu fis ma substance,
Comme tu l'avois arrété.
    En ton immence Eternité,
Pour montrer en moy ta puissance,
Tu m'as doué de la raison,

[502] As included in Ruth Whelan's edition of this song in "Soul Songs: A Snippet View of Elie Neau's 'Hymnes, our Cantiques Sacrés' (1718).

Qui t’adore en mon oraison.

5. Ton oeil voit, ô Dieu souverain
Ce qui peut arriver demain,
Oui, quelque soit la contingence,
Le futur t’est toujours present,
    Et le passé n’est point absent
De ta divine intelligence.
Tu possede en ton souvenir
Tout l’abime de l’avenir.

6. J’adore avec humilité
L’incompréhensibilité,
De ta sainte et divine Essence
Ô Pere, fils, est Saint Esprit,
    Qu’au nom du Seigneur Jesus Christ,
Soit chanté ta magnificence,
Par l’amour d’adoration,
En toute langue et nation.

Cantique XXXVI: Actions de graces pour les biens faits qu'on a reçu de Dieu
("Hymnes," 245-248)
Sur le chant du Ps^e^. 26^e^ : *Mon dieu préte moi l'oreille*
[Incomplete]

1. Seul auteur de la lumiere,
Je t'adresse ma priére,
Elevant mon coeur vers Toy
Avec une vive foy.
Je repasse en ma mémoire
Le bien que m'a fait ta gloire
En loüant l'immensité
De ta generosité.

2. Grand Roy de tous les Monarques,
Qui m'as donné tant de marques
De ton divin souvenir;
Je veux cent fois t'en benir:
Quoique je m'en sente indigne,
N'étant qu'un pecheur insigne;
Mais dans tes compassions,
Reçois mes oblations.

3. Ta bonté si liberale
Ne trouve rien qui l'égalle;
Je suis comblé des biens faits
Qu'a tous momens tu me fais:
Car, o Dieu, Ton amour tendre
Sur moy fait ses biens descendre,
Quand je veille, et quand je dors,
Sur mon ame, et sur mon corps.

4. Ô seul auteur de mon Etre,
Qui m'as fait pour te connoitre,
J'en celebre ton honneur
Avec une vive ardeur;
Car sans fin, sans intervalle,
Ta charité se signalle:
Par mille profusions
Je sens tes infusions.

Pause I
5. Seigneur, lors que je medite

Combien d'encens tu merites,
Je dois loüer ton amour
Mille et mille fois par jour,
    Et d'ailleurs il faut encore
Que mon coeur t'aime, et t'adore,
Faisant retentir les airs
De ta gloire en mes concerts.

6. Je te rends grace Eternelle,
De la faveur paternelle,
Que tu me fais ressentir,
Afin de me garentir.
    Prosterné devant ta face,
Mon coeur jamais ne se lasse,
De t'offrir tres humblement
Mon juste ressentiment.

7. A Toy, mon Dieu, mon coeur vole,
Quand je lis en ta parole
Que ton fils ma racheté
Par son immence bonté.
    Ô quel amour ineffable,
De sauver un miserable.
C'est un prodige étonnant,
Lequel confound mon néant.

8. Tout ravy hors de moy même,
Je dis, grand Dieu, que tu m'aime,
De m'avoir donné ton fils,
Pour m'admettre en paradis.
    Cet excés d'amour m'engage
A te loüer advantage,
Et de n'oublier jamais
Tous les biens que tu me fais.

Pause II

9. Qu'elle charité sublime,
Que Dieu s'offre pour victime,
Pour sauver le genre humain
Par un suplice inhumain.
    Ô quel etonnant Miracle!
De voir du grand Dieu l'oracle

Exposé sur une croix
Souffrir les derniers abois.

10. Que mon coeur jamais n'oublie
Ton amour que je publie;
Mais que plutost chaque jour,
Te rende amour pour amour,
    Et que mon ame contemple
Un si grand, si rare Exemple,
Tres puissant pour m'enflamer
Et m'exciter a t'aimer.

11. Dieu de paix, Dieu de concorde ….

[The next page is missing.]

Hymne XLVIII, Fragment ("Hymnes," 249-252)

…. Et mediter sur ma propre bassesse;
Pour exalter ta profonde sagesse,
Que tu fais voir sur tout étre éxistant.

2. Je croi qu'avant que ton pourvoir m'ut fait,
Je n'étois point ailleurs qu'en ton idée,
Et tu n'as joint mon corps a ma pensée,
Que pour montrer ta gloire en ce portrait.

3. Tu renfermas dans mon corps un Esprit,
Tres distingué de toute la matière,
C'est ton image, ô Source de lumiere,
Ton serviteur Moyse nous l'apprit.

4. Seigneur, je sens que je suis criminel,
Enclin au mal, et l'Esclave du vice,
Ne fus-je pas souillé des ma matrice
Par le peché, qu'on nomme originel.

5. Dans le peché Dieu n'eut jamais de part,
Car ton concours soit moral, soit physique
Ne rend jamais l'intention oblique,
C'est le Demon, son venin, et son art.

6. Ah! C'est d'Adam que j'ay tout herité,
Le mal moral, la coulpe, et la souillure
La mort, l'Enfer, l'horreur de la nature,
Qu'il a transmis a sa posterité.

Pause

7. Je sens tres bien, et je n'ignore pas
Que je ne suis qu'un peu de poudre et cendre;
Un vers rampant, qui ne se peut defender,
Des accidents qui talonnent mes pas.

8. Je ne scaurois subsister un moment,
Sans ton concours avec ta providence,
Je sens, je vois partout ma dépendance,
Et je te dois l'étre, et le sentiment.

9. Sans Toy, Seigneur, je ne puis que périr,
Par ta bonté ta grace m'est offerte,
Ingenieux, que je suis a ma perte,
Si ton amour ne me vient secourir.

10. Mais ton cher fils, mû de compassion,
A bien voulu s'offrir en sacrifice,
Et par sa mort expier ma malice
Satisfaisant pour ma redemption.

11. J'en veux loüer, Grand Roy de l'univers,
L'immencité de ton amour extrême,
Tu m'as donné des preuves que tu m'aime,
Me delivrant des peines des Enfers.

12 Ta charité, Seigneur, m'a prévenu,
Ayant daigné m'éclairer par ta grace,
Tout penétré de sa douce éfficace,
Je suis ravy, que mon coeur t'ais connu.

13. C'est ton amour qui m'as ressuscité,
Et fait sortir du tombeau de mes vices,
Il me remplit de ses chastes delices,
C'est l'avant goût de ma fëlicité.

Pause II

14. Tire mon coeur, et qu'il coure après Toy,
Dans les sentiers d'amour d'obeissance,
Je veux courir de toute ma puissance,
Jusqu'a la fin, en observant ta loy.

15. Seigneur Mon Dieu, puisque tu m'est si bon
Que d'oublier le mal que j'ay sû faire,
Et me donner la grace salutaire,
J'en veux loüer tous les jours ton saint nom.

16. Que ton Esprit daigne éclairer le mien,
Et rétablir en mon coeur ton image,
Vien promptement, vien finir ton ouvrage,
Ô Seigneur Dieu, seul auteur de tout bien.

17. J’appartiens, je ne suis plus a moy
Sois moy toujours, mon Roy, mon Dieu, mon Pere,
Mon Rédempteur, que j’honnore et revere,
Legrand auteur, et l’objet de ma foy.

18. Qu’a Toy, vray Dieu, Pere, fils, Saint Esprit,
Soit en tous tems la loüange rendue,
En terre au ciel, c’est a Toy quelle est due
Au nom sacré du Seigneur Jesus Christ.

Cantique XLIX*:* Les louanges de Dieu ("Hymnes," 252-254)

Sur le chant du ps^e^ 117^e^

Toutes gens loüez le Seigneur, etc.

1. Pénétré d'une vive ardeur,
J'adore, ô mon Dieu ta grandeur,
En celebrant l'Eternité
De ton august Trinité,
Avec tout le ressentiment
D'un coeur qui t'aime infiniment.

2. Je prends un plaisir ravissant,
A t'honnorer, Dieu tout puissant,
Je reconnois qu'a Toy, Seigneur,
Appartient la gloire, et l'honneur;
Ô Dieu des Dieu, ô Roy des Rois
Je te loüeray cent et cent fois.

3. Tout ce que l'univers contient,
Est a Toy seul, il t'appartient;
Tu l'as créé par ton pouvoir,
Et c'est en luy qu'on te peut voir;
Mais sur tout dans le genre humain,
C'est ouvrage exquis de ta main.

4. Ainsy tu t'est manifesté,
Sainte, et divine Majesté,
Je veux, Seigneur, ce que tu veux,
T'adresser en tout tems mes veux,
Et protester que nul que Toy
Ne fera l'objet de ma foy.

5. Mon coeur célébre le renom
De ton tres Saint, et Sacré nom;
Car te louer c'est mon désir
J'y trouve un chaste, et doux plaisir;
Ma langue en Exaltation
Te loue en ma devotion.

6. Qu'a Toy Pere, fils, Saint Esprit,
Soit gloire au nom de Jesus Christ,
Tout ainsy qu'au commancement,
A present, Eternellement;

Que toute langue et nation
Te rende l’adoration.

Cantique L*:* Cantique de la gloire de la nature Divine ("Hymnes," 254-256)
Sur le chant du ps^{e} 118^{e}
Rendez a dieu louange et gloire

1. Seigneur, je veux chanter ta gloire,
Pénétré d'une vive ardeur,
Et contempler en ma mémoire
L'immencité de ta grandeur;
Car nul que Toy n'est ineffable,
Tu me l'as fait sentir souvent,
Ton nom si saint, si redoutable
Est l'Eternel, le Dieu vivant.

2. Avant que tu fisse le monde,
Tu fus heureux comme tu l'es;
Ton étre est la source féconde
Du bien permanent a jamais;
Ta Majesté si glorieuse,
Etoit comme Elle est, et sera,
Toujours infiniment heureuse,
D'un bonheur qui subsitera.

3. Jamais Tu ne fus solitaire,
Dans ton immence Eternité,
Non plus qu'oisif, et sans rien faire,
Avant que le monde ait eté;
Car tu t'entretenois toi même
Avec le fils de ton amour,
Et ton Esprit, Etre Suprême,
T'occupoit sans créér le jour.

Pause

4. Tu contemplois ta vive image,
Le fils de ta dilection,
Ton amour fut le sacré gage,
De votre parfaite union;
Car ton divin Esprit procéde
De ton cher fils, comme de Toy;
Nul n'est dernier, nul ne precede
Dans cet article de ma foy.

5. Ton Etre est incomprehensible,

Tout infiny, tout spirituel,
Et par consequent invisible
Aux yeux de tout homme mortel.
    On te peut voir dans tes ouvrages;
Mais sur tout dans le genre humain,
Dont les Esprits sont les images,
Et les portraits du Souverain.

6. Seigneur mon coeur se félicite
D'avoir un Dieu qui soit si grand;
Nul autre que Toy ne mérite
Le juste honneur que je te rend.
    Je veux chanter durant ma vie
Qu'a Toy Pere, fils, Saint Esprit
Appartient la gloire infinie,
Au nom du Seigneur Jesus Christ.

Cantique LI*:* Les Louanges de la toute puissance de Dieu ("Hymnes," 257-261)
Sur le chant du Ps^e^. 128^e^ ou 130^e^
Bien heureux est quiquonque etc.

1. J'adore en ma memoire
Le nom du Dieu des Dieux;
J'en médite la gloire,
Pour le célébrer mieux.
Avec un coeur fidelle
Brulant d'un Saint amour;
Tout pénétré de zéle,
Je chante nuit et jour.

2. La gloire plus qu'immence,
Que mon coeur vante tant,
C'est la divine Essence
De l'Etre permanent;
Sa Majesté Suprême,
Son auguste grandeur,
Contient par elle même
La source du bonheur.

3. L'inéffable mistere,
Que Jesus nous apprit,
De croire en Dieu le Pere,
Le fils, le Saint Esprit,
Trois personnes divines,
Qui ne font qu'un seul Dieu,
Sans fin, sans origine,
Qu'on adore en tout lieu.

Pause I.

4. Avant qu'il fit le monde,
Il étoit tout en tout,
Sa gloire est si féconde
Qu'il fait, et qu'il voit tout.
Il sut par sa puissance
Donner l'Etre au néant;
Et fit de Rien l'Essence,
De tout etre existant.
5. Cette cause prémiére
Fit la terre et les cieux;

Il tira la lumiére
Du caos ténébreux:
    Ces merveilles célébres
Sont les faits du Dieu fort,
Qui crée les ténébres,
Et la vie et la mort.

6. Il fit les milliers d'anges,
Pour chanter tour a tour,
Ces divines loüanges,
Dans l'immortel sejour.
    Ces Esprits si sublimes,
Durant l'Eternité,
Contemplent les abymes
De sa divinité.

Pause II

7. Il remplit l'etenduë
De globes lumineux,
Qui ravissent la vuë
Par leur éclat pompeux;
    Le bel order, et l'usage
De tant d'astres luisants,
Montrent qu'ils sont l'ouvrage
D'un Dieu tout bienfaisant.

8. C'est ce Dieu tres unique,
Qui plaça le soleil,
Sur un char magnifique,
Sous un dais sans pareil.
    Ô l'incomprehensible
Dans ses perfections;
Il s'est rendu visible
Par ses productions.

9. Ce Monarque adorable
Gouverne l'univers;
Ce Juge redoutable
Se fait craindre aux Enfers.
    Il forme le tonnére,
Et la foudre dans l'air,
Il fait trembler la terre,

Et fait secher la mer.

Pause III.

10. Le ciel, la terre, et l'onde
Disent au genre humain,
La sagesse profonde
D'un Etre Souverain;
Car toute la nature
C'est son divin portrait,
Et chaque creature,
Dit, c'est Dieu qui m'a fait.

11. Mais ces Divins oracles
Rendent l'humble Sçavant,
Montrant par ses miracles
Qu'il est le Dieu vivant;
Pour moy quand je médite
Que de luy tout depend,
Mon coeur se félicite
D'avoir un Dieu si grand.

12. Je chante en ce cantique
La gloire du tres haut,
Et quoique ma musique
Ne soit point sans deffaut,
Il est doux a mon ame,
De loüer son Sauveur,
Et de sentir la flame,
Qu'il allume en mon coeur.

13. Que gloire soit renduë
A ce grand créateur,
C'est a luy qu'elle est due,
Et de bouche, et de coeur;
Qu'a jamais d'age, en age,
A pérpétuité,
Chacun lui rende homage,
Jus qu'en l'Eternité.

Cantique LV*:* Cantique de la personne de Christ ("Hymnes," 268-271)
Sur le chant du ps^e^. 134^e^ ou 100^e^

1. Notre Jesus est le vray Christ,
Que les prophétes ont prédit;
C'est le prophéte, et prétre, et Roy,
L'auteur et la fin de la Loy.

2. Jesus Christ est la verité,
Qui donne l'immortalité,
Le vray chemin du Paradis;
Car nul n'y va que par le fils.

3. Christ est le Roy qui me régit,
Et le prophéte, qui m'instruit;
Le prétre qui prie pour moy,
Et qui forme en mon coeur la foy.

4. Christ est le Roy de tous les Rois,
Tout l'univers subit ses loix;
C'est le Seigneur des Potentats,
Il préside sur leurs Etats.

5. Jesus Christ est le pain vivant,
Qui donne la vie au mourant;
Il porte en ses divins rayons,
Le soufle que nous respirons.

6. Jesus Christ est mon cher Epoux,
Ô combien son amour m'est doux,
Dans ses divins Embrassements
Je sens mille ravissemens.

Pause

7. Jesus Christ est mon médecin,
Par son amour il me rend sein;
Je veux employer ma santé,
A chanter par tout sa bonté.

8. Notre Jesus m'est un tresor,
Que j'aime cent fois plus que l'or;
Il est l'objet de mes desirs,

Car luy seul fait tous mes plaisirs.

9. Notre Jesus est le Seigneur,
Et de la gloire, et de l'honneur;
Tous ses sujets sont de grands Rois
En depit du monde et ses croix.

10. Christ tient par tout le premier rang;
Il l'a mérité par son sang;
Il est le seul médiateur,
Entre l'homme et son créateur.

11. Jesus Christ est fils naturel
Du Dieu vivant, Pere Eternel;
Ce Divin Sauveur existoit
Avant que le monde fut fait.

12. Qu'a Dieu Pere, fils, Saint Esprit
Soit rendu, comme il est prescrit,
L'Amour, et l'adoration,
En toute langue, et nation.

Cantique LVI: Hymne pour demander le Secours De Dieu contre nos énnemis
("Hymnes," 271-273)
Sur le chant du ps^e^ 137^e^
Etant assis aux rives acquatiques

1. Ô Dieu, mon coeur, a tes pieds je présente,
Pour implorer, ta charité puissante;
Je crie à toi, tous les jours et les nuits:
Viens à bréger *[abréger]*, ma peine, et mes ennuis;
Accorde moi, du moin ton assistance,
J'en ay besoin, pour la perseverance.

2. Je suis contraint, même en toutes manieres,
De demander, tes divines lumieres;
Car je sens bien, que mon Infirmité,
Sans ton secours, n'est rien que vanité;
Le Tentateur, qui me tend mile pieges,
Voit mon néant, et par tout il m'assiege.

3. Tu sçay, Seigneur, que je lui serts de bute,
Que ta bonte, de moi ne se rebute;
Du haut des cieux, tu vois tous mes combats,
Et les asseauts, qu'on me livre içi bas
Couvre mon corps, et mes pieds, et ma tête,
D'un boûclier, que ta grace me prête.

4. Lors que j'etois jeune, et sein, et robuste,
Tu me gardois, par ton pouvoir auguste;
Mais a present, je suis tout en langeur
Et je n'ay plus ni force, ny vigeur;
Quoi voudrois tu délaisser ma viellesse,
Apres avoir secouru ma jeunesse.

Pause

5. Mon composé doit bien tot se dissoudre;
Car ton arest *[arrêt]* veut que je tourne en poudre;
Puisque je suis l'ouvrage de ta main,
Je dois subir le sort du genre humain,
Et t'adorer, en loûant ta justice.
Disant, Seigneur ton vouloir s'acomplisse.

6. En atendant que ce moment là vienne,

Que ton amour, en la foi, me soutienne;
Et que malgré mes plus fiers Ennemis,
Mon coeur te soit entierement soumis,
Ne respirant en tout tems que ta gloire,
L'ayant toujours presente en ma memoire.

7. Puis donc, Seigneur, que c'est toi que j'adore,
Exauce moi, je le repéte encore;
Je n'ay recours à nul autre qu'a toy:
Remplis, Seigneur, l'attante de ma foy;
Fais moi sentir ta vertu salutaire;
Mais ta bonté me promet de le faire.

<u>Doxologie</u>
A toi, Seigneur, soit rendu les louanges
En terre, au ciel, des hommes, et des anges;
Que ton Saint nom pere, fils, Saint Esprit,
Soit adore, comme tu l'as prescript.
Pour moi, mon dieu, tant que mon coeur respire,
Je veux par tout celebrer ton Empire.

Cantique LVII: Hymne ou louanges a Dieu pour la création du monde
("Hymnes," 274-280)
Sur le chant du ps^e^ 138^e^
Il faut que de tous mes Esprits

1. Je veux celebrer le renom
   Ce ton saint nom
   Durant ma vie;
   Et maintenir avec ardeur,
   Que ta grandeur
   Est infinie.
   Ouy de ma bouche, et de ma voix,
   Seul Roy des Rois,
   Je te confesse;
   A te louer tout de mon mieux,
   Ô Dieu des Dieux,
   Mon coeur s'empresse.

2. Me voicy prosterné devant
   Le Dieu vivant,
   Que mon coeur aime;
   C'est l'Etre infiniment parfait,
   Qui seul a fait
   Tout par luy même.
   Tu fus de toute Etérnité
   La Deité
   Tres glorieuse,
   Possedant en ton propre sein
   Sans nule fin
   La vie heureuse.

3. Tu pouvois tirer du néant
   Dans un instant
   Tout ce beau monde;
   Mais ta sagesse ÿ mit six jours,
   Qui sans secours
   Fut tres féconde.
   Tu fus l'auguste createur
   De la splendeur
   Et des tenebres:
   Comme nous l'a manifesté
   Ta Majesté
   Par tout célébre.

4. Tout le monde étoit en repos
Dans le caos,
Sans éxistance;
Mais Toy, tu l'en as fait sortir,
Faisant sentir
Ta force immence;
Car tu tiras du pur néant
L'Etre éxistant,
Sans hyperbole;
Tu commendas, Tout apparut,
Ainsy qu'il plut
A ta parole.

Pause I.

5. Seigneur, Tu fis tout l'univers,
Cieux, terre, et mers
Par ta puissance.
Et Tu soutiens tous ces grands corps,
Dedans dehors
Par ta présénce.
Tu mis la Terre sur la mer,
La couvrant d'air,
Que lon respire;
Car l'eau luy sert de fondément
Sans changement
Dans ton Empire.

6. Tu fis par un art sans pareil
Le grand soleil,
Qui nous eclaire;
Et tous les globes lumineux
Remplis de feux
Et de Lumiere.
La Terre est pleine d'animaux,
Et l'air d'oiseaux
Lesquels te loüent;
Les baux regorgent en poissons,
De cent façons,
Qui la se joüent.

7. De tes ouvrages le plus beau,

C’est le Tableau
Que tu sû faire;
Faisant de tout, entrer l’Extrait
Dans un portrait,
Qui te peut plaire.
Ce fut l’ame, et le corps humain,
Le Souverain
De ce bas monde;
Tu l’as doué de la raison,
Dont l’action
Est tres profonde.

Pause II

8. Car ce chef d’oeuvre de ta main,
Est pour certain,
Ta vive image;
Ta bonté voulut l’exprimer,
Et l’imprimer
Dans son visage.
Tu luy soumis tout ce qui vit,
Comme il le vit,
Des sa naissance;
Te reservant l’autorité
De ton *[illegible]*
Par bien séance.

9. Voila comment tu t’es fait voir
Dans ce miroir
Incomparable;
Et que tu montres en ses faits,
Que Toy seul es
L’Etre ineffable.
Ô qu’il m’est doux de t’adorer,
Et l’admirer
Etre invisible;
Car je crois, Seigneur, que tu peux
Ce que tu veux
Tout t’est possible.

10. Que ton grand nom si pur et saint,
Soit toujours craint
Parmy les hommes;
Puis qu’en tous tems comme un tous Cieux,

O Dieu des Dieux
A Toy nous sommes.
Sois reconnu pour Créateur,
Et protecteur
De tous les Etres;
Il est clair que sans le secours
De ton concours
Rien n'eût eu l'Etre.

11. O que, l'honneur te soit randu,
Comme il t'est du
Dans tous les ages;
Des jeunes gens, comme des vieux
Reçois des cieux
Tous leurs hommages;
Que les filles et les garçons,
Par leurs chancons
Te glorifient;
Et que ton nom soit le sujet,
Comme l'objet,
Qu'ils psalmodient.

12. Qu'a Toy Pere, fils, Saint Esprit,
En Jesus Christ
Soit toute gloire;
Et qu'a jamais Dieu bien faisant,
Tu sois present
A ma memoire;
Qu'en toute langue et nation,
Comme en Sion,
Chacun t'adore;
Et fais qu'a pérpétuité
En verité
Mon coeur t'honnore.

Cantique LVIII: Hymne de confiance au merite du sacrifice de la croix de Jesus Christ
("Hymnes," 280)
Sur le chant du ps^{e} 143^{e}
Seigneur dieu oy l'oraison mienne

1. Ô grand auteur de la nature,
   Daigne écouter ta creature,
   Au nom de ton fils Jesus Christ.... (pages missing)