IV
". . . I WILL WORSHIP" (Psalm 5:7)

ESPECIALLY ON THE DAY OF REST

Lord's Day

We all know the expression taken from Lord's Day 38 of the Heidelberg Catechism, in answer to the question "What does God require in the fourth commandment?": "first . . . that, *especially on the day of rest,* I diligently attend the church of God to hear God's Word, to use the sacraments, to call publicly upon the LORD, and to give Christian offerings for the poor."

There are four elements mentioned in this answer concerning public worship. I am of the opinion that there is a special *order* in it: Word — sacraments — prayer — collection. I think it is wrong to throw these elements around, as if the order is arbitrary. But we will let that matter rest for now. Let us pay attention to the expression "that, especially on the day of rest, I diligently attend the church of God." That means that I have to attend the church of God, in the first place, on Sunday. Especially the day of rest is the day of public worship. But, apparently, there are more worship services than only on that day.

The question is now: Are there many other days of worship? If so, how many? Is it desirable to observe a number of those days? What about the Christian festivals? It is remarkable about 30% of the "Hymns and Paraphrases" of the *Book of Praise* are connected with Christian Feast days. That is quite a lot! But it is also remarkable that Article 52 of the Church Order says: "The consistory shall ensure that; as a rule, once every Sunday the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism is proclaimed."

Other days?

There is, therefore, an obligation for public worship on Sunday, even twice. But what about the other days of public worship? In Article 53 of the Church Order we read about "Days of Commemoration," and there it says: "Each year the Churches shall, in the manner decided upon by the consistory, commemorate the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as His outpouring of the Holy Spirit." But we do not read there that these facts of salvation must be celebrated on special days *besides* the Lord's Day. No, there must be a commemoration of these facts, but "in the manner decided upon by the consistory." We see the same in Article 54 about "Days of Prayer": "In time of war, general calamities, and other great afflictions the presence of which is felt throughout the churches, a day of prayer may be proclaimed by the churches appointed for that purpose by general synod." (It is of interest to know that the Church of Burlington-West is one of these churches, appointed for this purpose, the other the Providence Church of Edmonton). Again, one cannot read in this article that a special day must be chosen for this purpose *besides* the Lord's Day.

In Article 65 we read that funerals are not ecclesiastical but family affairs, and should be conducted accordingly. That means, without a special public worship service on a workday. And what about marriages? According to Article 63, there may be a *choice:* "The solemnization of a marriage may take place either in a private

ceremony or in a public worship service." The conclusion is that neither confession (e.g., Heidelberg Catechism) nor Church Order point to many services on workdays, but that on the contrary, both of them stress the celebration of the Lord's Day as the day of rest, the day of public worship.

Scriptures about festivals

But I can imagine that one says: It may be true that confession and Church Order do not point to many services on workdays, but ultimately they are *based* on *Scripture.* So the question really is: what does Scripture say about this?

The Bible does not tell us very much concerning special days and special services. There *were* in the Old Dispensation special days and times. But that is not decisive for our days, because we confess in Article 25 of the Belgic Confession that Christ is the fulfillment of the law: "All shadows have been fulfilled, so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians."

In the New Testament, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, we read about *Passover* (Acts 12:4) not in the context of the celebration of that day as a special day for the Christian church, but only as a reference to the time mentioned ("intending after the passover to bring him out to the people").

We read also about the day of *Pentecost* (Acts 20:16, 1 Cor. 16:8), "Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost." I agree with *Calvin* in his commentary on this text: "There is no doubt that Paul had strong and important reasons for hurrying to Jerusalem, not because the sacredness of the day meant so much to him, but because strangers were in the habit of flocking to Jerusalem from all directions for the feastdays." So it concerned *Jewish* feast days!

And as for the second text: "But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries" — it is remarkable that Paul only mentions *Pentecost* in connection with a time-schedule, but that he writes in the same chapter about the *first day* of the week as a special day concerning worship. He points to one of the elements of public worship, namely, the *collection* (verse 2): "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up."

Indeed the first day of the week was a special day. We read in the last book of the Bible that this day even received a special name. John writes (Rev. 1:10): "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." *The Lord's Day,* that means without any doubt the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. What about other special days?

We only read in the New Testament a reproach of Paul to the Galatians (4:10): "You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years!" Paul lists there what is involved in living by the Mosaic law: *days* (sabbaths, fast days, feast days, new moons), *months* (particularly observd during the Babylonic exile, Isa. 66:23), *times or seasons* (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacle feast, Dedication days), and finally, *years* (the sabbatical year every seventh year and the year of Jubilee). Calvin asks in his commentary on this text: "What sort of observance did Paul reprove?" and he answers: "It was that which would bind the conscience by religion, as something that was necessary to the worship of God, and which, as he says in Romans 14:5ff., "would make a distinction between one day and another." So also should we understand the admonition of Paul to the Colossians: "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." So, for instance, festivals had

been prescribed in the Old Testament, but now, in the New Testament, after Christ's coming in the flesh one cannot be obliged to observe them.

I quote Calvin again: "Those who make a distinction of days, separate, as it were, one from another. Such a partition was suitable for the Jews, that they might celebrate religiously the days appointed, by separating them from others. Among Christians such a division has ceased. But someone will say, 'We still keep some observance of days.' " "I answer," Calvin says, "that we do not by any means observe days, as though there were any sacredness in holy days, or as though it were not lawful to work on them, but this is done for government and order, not for the days." Calvin respected the decisions of the government, and I shall come back to that point. It is quite understandable, therefore, that the early church celebrated only one Christian feast day, namely, the Lord's Day.

Abolishment of festivals

In the beginning of the Christian church there were no special public worship services besides the services on the Lord's Day. The congregation held her meetings, often early in the morning and in the evening. There was a festal celebration of the Lord's Supper as well. But there were no other festivals.

When later on the Reformers of the 16th century fell back on the early church, they would have liked to abolish the many festivals beyond the Lord's Day. In 1520 Luther sighs that the Lord's Day might be the only feast day. When Calvin arrived in Geneva in 1536 he stressed from the very beginning of the Reformation the Lord's Day as the only feast day. Farel and Vinet were not inclined to acknowledge any human institution, but to respect only the Lord's Day.

Even the matter of the celebration of festivals was one of the reasons for Calvin's and Farel's banishment. After their return the council of Geneva instituted four feast days: Christmas Day, Circumcision Day, Mary-Annunciation Day and Ascension Day. To work on these days was forbidden.

As for the Reformation in the Netherlands, the Synod of Dort 1574 decided that one had to be satisfied with only the Lord's Day. Synod approved of preaching on the Lord's Day before Christmas concerning Christ's birth, of giving attention in the sermon on Easter to Christ's resurrection and on Pentecost to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. But these days must not be considered as festivals above the Lord's Day.

This synodical decision was not appreciated by the civil government, who wanted to maintain some festivals, although not the same in all the provinces. So the next Synod of Dort 1578 decided that preaching should take place on those feast days which had been maintained by the government "in order that people should not loaf." This included both Christmas days, which had been established again (although reluctantly), the days of Easter and Pentecost, in some regions New Year's Day and Ascension Day, and sometimes some other festivals, not mentioned. But it is very clear that there was much ecclesiastical resistance against special Christian festivals besides the Lord's Day (Koopmans, 1941:22 ff,).

Oldest festival: Easter

In the beginning of the Christian Church one celebrated only the Lord's Day. One considered the Lord's Day as the *weekly* commemoration of Christ's resurrection. Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week. So that was *the* festival, which was celebrated in the meeting of the congregation. Very early data are available to confirm that. Although the Jewish Sabbath had not been abolished right away in

the beginning of the new dispensation of Pentecost, it was gradually abolished and substituted by the Lord's Day (cf. Francke, 1973:194; Koole, 1974:13). *Ignatius* writes for example, in the beginning of the 2nd century that the Sabbath must not be observed any more by the Christians. He also uses, in Rome, the term "Lord's Day" as a day of public worship. But besides the *weekly* celebration of Christ's resurrection, there was the beginning of the *yearly* commemoration (Rozdorf, 1972: 134ff.).

There are data which go back to the middle of the 2nd century and that are within one century after the apostles' death. In the time of *Tertullian,* the old-Christian author from the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century, the celebration of Easter already extended for more than one day. In the term *"Pascha"* he summarizes a period of fasting, and administering baptism (Dekkers, 1947:147ff.). Also an Easter sermon by *Melito* of Sardes, which was held very early in the day, has been preserved. He lived in the latter part of the 2nd century. We learn from it that at that time there was a kind of "comprehensive" celebration of Easter. The suffering, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ were not separated, but considered as a whole. So there was not a special "Good Friday," to commemorate Christ's death and a separate Easter day to remember Christ's resurrection, but it was considered in its entirety: the comprehensive, all-inclusive work of salvation of the Redeemer, summarized in "Pascha" (Vander-Waal, 1979:161).

It would take too much time to explain how it was possible that besides the weekly Lord's Day there was also a yearly celebration of Christ's resurrection. It must be sufficient to know that this was connected with the Jewish calendar year. The Passover date was the 14th of Nisan to the Jews, but the Council of Nicea 325 left that date over against the Jews as a fixed date for the celebration of Easter. It was decided then to celebrate Easter depending on when there was a new moon. Until now that decision is still executed, namely, to celebrate Easter on the first Lord's Day after the first full moon of Spring.

Jerusalem in the 4th century

Starting with the rule of Constantine the Great, important changes occurred in the Christian Church. Simplicity was then replaced by abundance. The antithetical attitude of the church changed into one of accommodation. The doctrine of salvation acquired, from pagan mystery religions, a mystical notion. Important ecclesiastical centres arose and also with respect to liturgical matters considerable changes came to pass. After the Council of Nicea 325, Constantine visited Jerusalem and the church buildings which he and his mother Helena had built. This contributed greatly to the development of the liturgy of the Jerusalem Church in the 4th century. The pilgrimage of Helena to the holy city was taken as an example by many others.

There was, for instance, a nun of Northern Spain, called *Egeria,* who visited Jerusalem in 381-384 A.D. She wrote a travel story about that journey and gave many details of the Jerusalem liturgy of bishop *Cyril.* Time and again she writes that in the services in Jerusalem hymns, antiphons and Scripture-readings were "according to the day and the place." Special attention is paid to Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, when the bishop enters Jerusalem like Christ did before, surrounded by the people, saying "Hosanna!" Special attention is also paid to the many, many services in the so-called "Great Week," the week before Easter, and in the Easter week itself. The bishop again took Christ's place, He performed as a holy person, who impersonated Christ. All the services were conditioned by *topographical* factors. The places at which the bishop performed were carefully chosen, according to the requirements of the situation and the time. A *dramatic repetition* was staged of the things which

happened when salvation was accompanied by Christ Himself (Wilkinson, 1971:131ff.).

But the frequent services were very tiring, so that by the end of the week the people that followed the bishop from the one holy place to the other and from the one service to the other, were extremely tired. Egeria writes concerning the early morning of Good Friday: "The bishop addresses the people, comforting them, because they have laboured the whole night long and they are to work this whole day, encouraging them not to weaken, but to have hope in God, who will for this labour bestow on them an even greater reward. So comforting them as he is able, he adresses them, 'Now go again, each one of you to your homes, sit there for a while, and be ready to be back here about eight o'clock, so that from that hour until about noon you may be able to see the holy wood of the cross, which we believe to be profitable to the salvation of each of us. And from noon on we must again assemble here, that is, before the cross, that we may devote ourselves to readings and prayers until the night.' "

Actually there was a whole Easter cycle with many special days and special services. Rome itself adopted from Jerusalem the Palm Sunday procession and the adoration of the cross. It was told that Helena found the wood of the cross in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, more than four centuries after Christ's death! Egeria is convinced, too, that it was the wood of Christ's cross. So on Good Friday she writes, "the bishop's chair is set up on Golgotha behind the cross, which now stands there; the bishop is seated on the chair, and before him is placed a table covered with a linen cloth. The deacons stand in a circle around the table and the silver casket decorated with gold is brought in, in which is the holy wood of the cross. It is opened and taken out, and both the wood of the cross and the title are placed on the table. While it is on the table, the bishop sits and grasps the ends of the holy wood with his hands, and the deacons, who are standing around him, keep watch. Here is why they guard it so. It is the custom that all of the people here come one by one, the faithful and the catechumens, bowing before the table, kissing the holy cross and moving on. I was told that this was because someone (I do not know who) bit off and stole some of the holy cross. Now it is guarded by the deacons so that it dare not be done by someone again. So all of the people pass through one by one, bowing, first with their foreheads and then with their eyes touching the cross and the title and so kissing the cross they pass through, but no one is permitted to put a hand on the cross. But when they have kissed the cross, they go on. . . ."

The whole Easter cycle is marked by a development according to this description of Egeria of the Jerusalem model.

After the 4th century the church calendar is gradually filled up with festivals, feastdays, and saints days. In the 8th century 106 dates are occupied in the calendar year as special days and festivals. In the 16th century, at the end of the Middle Ages, only four dates are still vacant. . . .

The whole Christian year becomes a sacramental preaching of special services with a sacrosanct meaning.

Christmas

So there is a development from Jerusalem to Rome, and there is a development from one day, the Lord's Day, as a festival, to many days, almost all the days of the year, with special services. There are three main cycles: before Easter (the fasting time), then the time between Easter and Pentecost, and at last the Christmas cycle.

As for *Christmas Day,* it is remarkable that the Eastern Church celebrated Christ's birth on the 6th of January, the so-called *Epiphany,* while the Western Church since about 336 said, "No, it must be December 25th." But both dates originated in

heathenism. In the East the Epiphany, the appearance of the godhead on earth, played a big role in religion. It was a matter of showing the power of the godhead. Epiphany became more and more the day of the appearance of Christ, a combination of His birth and His baptism.

In the Western world one celebrated the 25th of December as the day of Christ's birth. But this day originated also in heathenism as a festival. All kinds of calculations had been made in order to "find" that date. The 25th of March was the Roman start of Spring, also the date of the creation of the world. So it was argued that that *must* have been the date of annunciation of the angel Gabriel to Mary. The next conclusion was that the resurrection should have taken place on the same date, namely March 25th. That must have been exactly on the 30th birthday of Christ, because actually the new beginning, the start, was His conception on the annunciation day. The final conclusion was that Mary was of course pregnant for nine months, so she gave birth to Jesus on December 25th. . . . But this calculation is as fantastic as it is incredible!

How did one come to December 25th? The answer is not difficult, if we keep in mind that to the world of Rome in the 3rd and 4th century the 25th of December was called "the day of the invincible Sun." This Sun service originated in the East as well, but it was extended to the whole Roman empire. In the background we must also see the influence of the mystery religions, with which the Roman soldiers were involved, as for example in Persia. A kind of Sun religion came about. The Sun, in its mild warmth and big scorching power, high above the earth, but powerful on earth, became a symbol of the godhead, who sees everything, but is not ruled by anything. This Sun is called the conqueror of darkness. The victory of the Sun was especially celebrated on the day of the change of winter season as the day of turning. The Sun, which in the preceding weeks always seemed to diminish, then resumed glorifying its power.

But how is it that about the year 336 in Rome the date came up as a Christian festival? About this question a late Syrian text from the 13th century sheds some light. We read in it: "The reason, why the fathers changed the feast of 6th of January and shifted it to December the 25th, was this. The heathen were used to celebrating, on December the 25th, the feast of the birthday of the Sun and to light lamps on that day. They also let Christians participate in that feast of joy and spectacle. Because the teachers of the church perceived that the Christians were attracted by it, they made precautions and celebrated on that day — December 25th — henceforth the feast of the true birth, the birth of Jesus Christ, but on January 6th the feast of His appearance."

Here is said clearly that the necessity of *competition* with a heathen festival caused the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25th. But the truth is that nobody knows on what date Christ was born, and the Holy Spirit, who wrote the Scriptures, did not deem it of that importance, that it should be mentioned in the Bible. In any case, it could not have taken place on December 25th. When I was in Bethlehem 12 years ago I was told that at that time of the year it never happened that sheep were in the field. From at least the month of December until the end of February the sheep were always kept inside the stables.

After the year 325, when freedom had been given to the church, Christendom became the main religion. The world joined the church, but then the great danger appeared that the church would become worldly. Many people took their heathen pattern of life with them and all kinds of customs survived under the cloak of Christianity. In this way all kinds of adoration of many female godheads were delegated to "Mother Mary."

In the same light we have to consider the maintaining of December 25th as the

birthday of Christ. One was accustomed to celebrating that day as the festival of the invincible Sun. The Christian leaders now maintained this day as the birthday of the "Sun of justice," and applied that to Christ.

So Christmas on December 25th became a Christian festival. We can speak here of a *concession* to heathenism, at least of an accommodation to heathen data. We have to keep that in mind when people sometimes consider December 25th as "the day of days" and Christmas as the most holy feast! (Van Unnik, 1951:9; cf. also Zwart, 1947:57ff.).

Abolition?

We do not plead for *abolition* of all Christian festivals. It is not possible to turn back the clock. Especially when there is a *social* motive, in which the historical element also plays a role. But we plead for *soberness.* There is no reason for many festivals besides the Lord's Day. There is also the right soberness in the new version of the Church Order. Let us be sober in all kinds of weekday services. Then we have to do our daily work. Maybe it will be good to mention that the weekly services, for instance, in the refugee congregation of London, had the character of *prophecy.* It was more a matter of teaching and discussing a special passage of Scripture. But, we now have our Christian societies for Bible studies, and I like to emphasize the importance of them!

The conclusion, therefore, is, come and let us worship on the Lord's Day, the real and true Christian festival. Keep in mind that there are people, who easily neglect public worship on Sunday, but who do not want to miss one service on the "Christian festivals," and who would rather enlarge the number of them! There is an abundant celebration of these special days, with all kinds of connotations, in which soberness is totally missed. There is much reason, to consider the Lord's Supper as a festive celebration, in which the *whole* work of Christ's salvation is comprehensively surveyed: the purpose of His coming into the world, His suffering and crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension, His sitting on the right hand of the Father, His return on the clouds of heaven. There is no clear order to celebrate all kinds of special days: New Year's Eve, New Year's morning, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Easter, Pentecost, Christmas even on second days, and so on. So let us be sober in it. But there is a clear order of a regular and joyful celebration of the Lord's Supper by the words of Christ Himself: "Do this in remembrance of Me." And we shall do that, until He comes!

LITURGY AS COVENANT SERVICE

Covenant service

Those who say *worship* also say *covenant service.* Not that these two are completely similar to each other, but in the worship service the covenant of God with His people is always present. When the LORD establishes a covenant with His people, He wants to *live* with that people. He proclaims His word to that people. He elicits a response from His people. For that reason a house was built for Him in the wilderness and therefore the tabernacle was called the "tent of meeting." Because Israel may share in the merciful communion with the Lord, the poet sings in Psalm 84 that he longs for God's courts.

In addition to the place of meeting, God also established fixed *times* of meeting. On the seventh day there was a holy convocation. This gathering was convened by

the priests blowing upon silver trumpets and was considered a festive gathering, as often is emphasized in the Psalms.

The sacrifice of the atonement is central in Old Testament temple worship. On the day which the LORD had determined for this holy gathering, the offering was *doubled.* The assembled congregation was clearly shown that the communion with the LORD was based on the atoning blood. Without the pouring of the blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22). The worship service of the Old Testament shows: the two parties in the covenant *meet* each other. On the foundation of the blood of the atonement they exercise *communion.* On the day hallowed for that purpose, the day of meeting, God calls His people *together.*

In the Old Testament, God approached His people with the *glad tidings* of the atonement. He put His Name upon Israel and blessed the people. In the temple God's grace was shown to the people by means of the ministry of the priests. The people also heard about God by means of the *instruction* by the priests.

But also the *second party* in the covenant was active. They approached God with the *incense* of their prayers and came to Him with their *exultant hymns.*

Liturgy

In the New Testament, the word *leitourgia* makes its appearance. This is a Greek word, which actually means: a service for the *well-being* of the people. This service does not concern *private* or *individual* occasions, but refers to the *community.* It concerns the people as a whole, in their totality. We must see the people as a community, organized in the form of a "polis," a city-state.

Our word "liturgy" has been derived from this word; it is the word we also use for our worship services.

But in the first place, this word typifies the *official position and work of Christ, wherein and through which He has completed the Old Testamentic cult, in that He brought the real sacrifice and now completes His work as high priest in the real heavenly sanctuary.*

After Christ had founded the new covenant, the word (liturgy) becomes an indication of the worship service, such as this takes place in the assemblies of the congregation. The *altar* and the *sacrifice have disappeared.* The atonement has been accomplished. The shadows have been fulfilled. Now it is called a gathering, an assembly of the church, a gathering of the congregation.

The central idea of the New Testamentic worship service is that God and His people meet each other in the assembly of the exalted Christ-with-His-own people, on the day of Christ's exaltation, the first day of the week. Now, whenever two or three — the smallest possible plurality — are gathered in His Name, there He will be in their midst. In the worship service, the two parties of the covenant are together. God is the First. The initiative comes from Him. He calls the gathering together. But the two parties meet each other in the mutual exchange of love. Therefore the congregation is also active: she may pray and sing. But it is response-motivated, as instigated by God, who, as the First One, comes to meet His people.

Not prescribed

"All right," one will say, "but is there anywhere a certain liturgy *prescribed?*" Is it not true that the whole matter of liturgy is actually a matter of *tradition*? That tradition plays such a big role in liturgical matters is shown by the fact that each and every *change* often is considered by many as an *attack* on their spiritual life.

According to our Belgic Confession, Article 7, we confess that "we may not consider any writings of men, however *holy* these men may have been, of equal value with the divine Scriptures; nor ought we to consider *custom*, or the great *multitude*, or antiquity, or *succession* of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of *equal value* with the truth of God." Over against the Roman Catholics with their tradition, our *fathers* stated this very clearly and maintained it consistently. Tradition does not have the *same value*, nor stands on the same level as the Word of God, let alone that tradition would have the final word. Time and again we have to *test* church matters, also liturgical matters by the Word of God itself. It is also wise that Article 50 of the Church Order says, in the last sentence: "On minor points of Church Order and ecclesiastical practice Churches abroad shall not be rejected." In former days, especially *liturgical matters* were meant in this respect.

I think one is right in saying that *nowhere* in the Bible a complete liturgy is prescribed and that much is based on custom. However, we have to add two things. In the first place: although not *everything* is prescribed in the Bible concerning the liturgy of the church, there is given us a certain basic pattern, from which all liturgy is to be derived. In the second place: not all customs are wrong. There is also a *good tradition*, which is not to be abandoned without good reason.

Basic pattern

The *basic pattern* of "liturgy" for the church of the New Dispensation is given in the same chapter in which is mentioned the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, namely, Acts 2. After Luke mentions immense growth of the church at Pentecost, he adds in verse 42: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." As a matter of fact that are four elements, which can be called decisive for the dispensation of the New Testament church. The teaching of the apostles means: the doctrine, taught by the apostles. We could interpret this as: *the reading and preaching of the Word of God.* In the RSV it is not fully clear that "fellowship" is a new element. The Greek word speaks of the communion of saints in a concrete manner, namely, in what later on was called the "offering," or the "collection" in the worship service. In the beginning the believers brought their offerings in natural gifts. In that way the poor were provided for by the rich. The third element is the *breaking of bread,* which is the celebration of the *Lord's Supper.* In the church of Corinth it was preceded by the so-called "agapai," the meals of love. Finally Luke mentions in Acts 2 the *prayers.* It appears that the prayers formed an essential part of the worship service already in the beginning of the New Testament church.

When we oversee these *four elements,* we can say that there is a remarkable *order* in them: *doctrine — communion — sacrament — prayer.* It is the order of Word and answer in God's covenant. First comes the doctrine, the reading and explanation of God's Word, in which the LORD Himself speaks. Then follows the answer of the congregation in the communion of saints: the care for one another. Again the LORD comes with His *promises* in the sacrament, the breaking of bread, and the *answer* follows, in the prayers of God's people, prayers which are at the same time offerings of thanksgiving, and also sometimes in the singing of the congregation.

When we place these elements of the worship service after Pentecost beside the *explanation of the Fourth Commandment* of God's covenant law in the Heidelberg Catechism, we see a remarkable agreement. Lord's Day 38, referring to Acts 2:42, mentions that the ministry of the gospel must be maintained, and continues to say that, especially on the day of rest, I have to diligently attend the church of God, in order to do especially four things:

1. to hear God's Word;
2. to use the sacraments;
3. to call publicly upon the LORD;
4. to give Christian offerings to the poor.

The reading and the preaching of the Word of God is the most important part and, therefore, comes first. Then the sacraments follow, as an underlining and affirmation of the Word of God. Moreover the prayers, inclusive the intercessions are mentioned, and finally the response of the congregation receives its place in the Christian charity. There is a clear *parallel* here with what is mentioned in Acts 2, whereby the two parts and the two parties of God's covenant are shown very clearly.

Arbitrary elaboration?

When we now pay attention to the other elements which have received a place in the worship service, it will be clear that they are *grouped* around the four main elements mentioned in Acts 2, and in Lord's Day 38. Of course, a certain *tradition* has been formed here, but that does not mean that an arbitrary extension has taken place. We take our starting point in the second order of worship as recommended by the Synod of Cloverdale 1983 (Orders of Worship B, *Book of Praise,* p. 582 ff.), because these orders go back to Calvin who himself always pointed to the early church. We follow hereby the *16* elements for the *morning service.*

1. *Votum.* We have here a quotation of the last verse of Psalm 124, one of the songs of Ascents (Psalms 120-134). These Psalms were sung in processions when the Israelite pilgrims were ascending Mount Zion at the occasion of the three great temple festivals of the Jewish year. Then the people of Israel came to present themselves before the LORD, the God of the covenant, in order to worship Him, to call upon His Name, since their only help was in the Name of the LORD, the Almighty God, who created heaven and earth. Israel was dependent on the active presence of the LORD. The same can be said of God's people today, who are starting each and every public worship service in dependence on the God of the covenant, who created all things.
2. *Salutation.* When, in the beginning of his letters, the apostle Paul gives his apostolic *greetings* to the congregation he points to the rich promise of God's covenant in which the LORD meets His people with His grace and peace. The apostle John does the same in the last book of the Bible. In the very same way the *salutation* in God's Name to the congregation follows the votum. It is the mouth of the minister speaking words like 1 Corinthians 1:3, 1 Timothy 1;2 or Revelation 1:4 and 5a, but, actually, it is the very Word of God Himself; it is the LORD God Himself greeting His covenant people with His covenant promises.
3. Congregational Singing. Upon that Word of promise expressed in the salutation there follows then an answer-Psalm from the side of the people of God's covenant. It is clear that this singing has this character of being a response. It is not just an arbitrary song, but an answer to God's Word of promise. I would like to make the remark here that each Psalm in the Bible is to be taken in its entirety. Therefore, it is advisable, if possible, not to sing just one or two stanzas, but the whole Psalm, just as Israel did. Of course, many Psalms are too long, and would take too much time to sing them as a whole, but it is important to stress that the ideal is not only a single stanza but the entire Psalm.
4. *The Ten Words of the Covenant.* They can be taken from Exodus 20:2-17 or Deuteronomy 5:6-21. Already in the Old Testament the reading of the *law* of the LORD was an important element of the worship service, and the same can be said

of the synagogue. Also before the Reformation of the 16th Century, here and there the law of the LORD was read in the worship service, but Calvin brought the law back into the worship service as a regular part of it. Actually, the name *law* is not completely correct, for in Exodus 20 (and also Deuteronomy 5) there is a clear coherence between the promise and the obligation of God's covenant.

First there are the opening *words* of the law, in which the LORD God *announces* Himself. I refer to that one sentence, written in the beginning of Exodus 20 (we hear that *every* Sunday morning in public worship): "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." We have to *bear in mind* what this sentence *means.* It is *not* a mere *introduction,* which has little or nothing to do with the *contents* of God's law, but these opening words are the PROMISE of God, which accompanies *all* Ten Commandments. In this promise, the LORD God *announces* Himself as the God of His *covenant,* who is very *high* and *exalted,* but who, at the same time, bows Himself down in deep *mercy* to His people, and who wants to *show* Himself as the Father of His children.

Therefore, in these opening words we have, right from the beginning, the *twofold* idea, which must be remembered with all God's commandments, namely, that in this promise the LORD announces Himself as the *Almighty,* who is exalted *far above* all creatures, while, at the same time, He announces Himself as the *God of His covenant,* who *magnifies* Himself by His great *deeds* in history, the God of the *communion,* the fellowship in His covenant.

Then the Ten Words follow, expressing the covenant obligations. These Ten Words must always be read in the light of the opening words, God's promise. Therefore, I prefer to speak about the *constitution of God's covenant,* consisting of two parts: the promise and the obligation of the covenant of the LORD.

Already for this reason we should not replace this *constitution* of God's covenant by some admonishing parts of letters from the *New Testament.* There are some who prefer this and say: let us read a few parts of the New Testament letters instead of the law from Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5. However, the whole of God's covenant with its two parts is involved! I also do not like to read after the constitution of Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5 the *summary* as found in the New Testament, in the words of Christ found in Matthew 22. In the first place, Christ gave that summary in a very special context, in an argument with the *Pharisees.* In the second place, Moses had summarized God's Ten Words in the same way. However, my main reason is that in this summary the *first constituting element* of God's covenant, namely His promise, is not mentioned.

5. *Congregational Singing.* After this Word of God's covenant the answer of God's people follows again in the singing of a *Psalm.* This Psalm must have something to do with that constituting idea of God's covenant. It can be a Psalm in which we confess our sins, because we did not keep God's commandments as we ought to do. It can also be a *Psalm of praise,* because of God's faithfulness in His covenant. If possible, it is to be preferred that a Psalm is chosen in line with the first Psalm, or — when not the whole Psalm was sung — another part of that Psalm.
6. *Prayer.* (In this order of worship it is the prayer that contains, among others, a public confession of sins, as well as a prayer for forgiveness, for spiritual renewal, and for illumination by the Holy Spirit.) We have to be *aware of this nice order.* First of all, the law of the LORD is read to the people, together with the promise of God's covenant. The life of God's children does not respond to the obligation of God's covenant. But God's people may pray for forgiveness, renewal of heart

and *illumination* by the Holy Spirit, who promises to work with the Word of God. Hence this prayer is also an introduction to the reading and the preaching of God's Word.

7. Now follows the *reading of the Bible.* It has been said that one or more passages may be read, related to the sermon, and that this can be followed by *singing.* However, according to the custom of the early church the reading of the Bible and the preaching of God's Word belong together. Our Lord Jesus Himself followed this custom, by reading a passage of Isaiah, and preaching on that Word of God, right away (cf. Luke 4).
8. After one or more passages of the Holy Scriptures are read, there follows the *reading of the text,* and then comes the:
9. *Ministry of the Word.* This ministry of the Word of God is the proclamation of God's Word which is, at the same time, the explanation of the Holy Scriptures, the *administration of reconciliation,* appropriated and applied to God's people today, in their special circumstances. This teaching and preaching is the first element mentioned in Acts 2 and Lord's Day 38. It also received its position of honour in the whole of the (reformed) *liturgy of God's covenant.* It is and has to remain the main part of public worship service, and it may not be replaced by a short meditation or by a short timely word, the "topic of the day." No, it is to be the living proclamation of God's Word itself. With it the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of God's people. Therefore we may not reduce this preaching, but we have to give it its rightful place. After the preaching of the Word of God follows:
10. *The Responsive Song* of the congregation: the Word of God is responded to by the people of God's covenant. Also this song may not be an *arbitrary* Psalm or Hymn, but should be such a song which expresses the idea that the Word of God that was heard is to be affirmed by a life which is fitting to God's covenant.
11. It is at this point that the *administration of the Holy Baptism* can take place. In this way we have a more correct order: the first means of grace with which the LORD comes to His people in His Word, in the administration of this Word. It is followed by the second means, the sacrament.
12. Hereafter will take place *prayer,* that is, the thanksgiving for the Word of God, as well as the prayer for all the needs of Christendom, the intercessions, also in response to the Word of God and its preaching.
13. Now the congregation brings her *offerings,* according to what is said in Lord's day 38, "to give Christian offerings to the poor," and Acts 2:42. Therefore, the collection has a proper, Scriptural place in the public worship service. To offer something for the poor is an integral part of worshiping God.
14. After the sermon also the *administration of the Lord's Supper* can follow, again as the second means of God's grace in His covenant. It is not correct to speak about a service of the Lord's Supper. The *Form for the Lord's Supper* is not a sermon. It is only an explanation for the people of God's covenant. Also when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we should first listen to the preaching of the Word of God, the first means of God's grace in His covenant.
15. In the *closing song* God's people may again give their response to God's grace and praise the LORD with their singing.
16. Then follows the *benediction.* Just as the people of the Old Dispensation received the Aaronitic blessing according to Numbers 6, and as the apostle wrote his farewell to the church of the New Testament, e.g., as in 2 Corinthians 13, so the congregation receives, and takes home in faith, God's blessing.

In the afternoon service, the *Apostles' Creed* has not the same place as the *Constitu-*

tion of God's Covenant in the morning service. We refer again to the order B, as advised by the Synod of Cloverdale 1983. Also the confession of faith fits within the framework of the covenant communion: God speaks and God's people respond. First, in the morning service, there is the Law, or rather, the constitution of God's covenant. It is God speaking His Word. Then, in the afternoon service, in the confession of faith, we have the response of faith of God's people. It is, therefore, a good thing that the congregation herself is actively participating in this act of confessing, for instance by *singing* the Apostles' Creed.

Variety

In the beginning of this article we said that there is such a beautiful order in our public worship service, especially as presented sub number B (p. 582ff. of the *Book of Praise*), and that this order is derived from the order of *John Calvin.* We know that Calvin was in favour of going back to the early church and that he stressed that the church of the Reformation should honour the good customs of the early New Testament church in the times of the apostles and shortly thereafter. In this order, the Word and the response of God's people alternate constantly.

Besides order B, we have order of worship A variety in this sense that in A (p. 581ff. of the *Book of Praise*). This is the so-called "old order." In fact, this order is not so very old; it goes back to the Dutch synod of Middelburg, 1933. I do not want to say that this order A misses the Biblical, covenantal characteristic of expressing the meeting of God and His people in which God speaks His Word and God's people respond in faith, but I want to stress that the best Reformed tradition is given in order B.

"Out of custom or superstition"

Our conclusion is in the first place that we may not do anything in the whole matter of liturgy out of custom or superstition. We all know these words. They are derived from the beginning of the questions asked at the baptismal font. Over against the danger of an act "out of custom or superstition" it is stated that we have to use the sacrament of baptism for the purpose that to us and our children God's *covenant* is sealed.

"Out of custom" is wrong also with respect to the liturgy of God's covenant but *according to a custom* is not wrong! In the passage of the Scriptures in which Jesus' preaching in the synagogue in Nazareth is mentioned, we read that the Lord "went to the synagogue, as His custom was, on the Sabbath day" (Luke 4:16). That was a good custom! Let us, therefore, continue this good custom, as a Scriptural tradition: to "diligently attend the church of God," "especially on the day of rest." In this respect we can even speak of an "apostolic tradition." This has nothing to do with the Roman equalization of Scripture and tradition, nor with the Roman "apostolic succession," but it is a matter of continuing what, already in the apostolic era, was seen as *liturgy of God's covenant.*

This does not mean that in the liturgy of God's covenant nothing could be improved any more. On the contrary, discussions on the worship service and the customs and traditions in it, are always necessary. We do not need to aim for a *multitude* of liturgical forms, but we ought to have as goal that in our liturgy we remain *true* to God's covenant. Let our liturgy not become a dead service. Not the extent, but the intensity must be our goal. We can also say, let us aim for depth rather than for breadth in our liturgy. K. Schilder said once: "No liturgical forms, just because of tradition." And also: "The Word of life demands living words" (Schilder, 1952:76). Dead forms

can lead to the situation in which a congregation is preached to death or, at least, gets tired. But the LORD wants to have a living congregation, living people of His covenant, which is taught by the living proclamation of His Word!

A MISSING LINK IN REFORMED LITURGY

Cradle

Four and a half centuries ago John Calvin had to leave Geneva and go to Strasbourg.

What Calvin did in that European city with respect to liturgy is very important. No doubt T. Brienen was right when he recently said that Calvin already in the first edition of his *Institutes* had drafted a certain order for public worship, especially for the service of Word and sacrament (Brienen, 1987:82ff.). No doubt it is also true that Calvin remained faithful to this first draft throughout his whole life. Nevertheless I would like to maintain that the cradle of Reformed liturgy is neither Basle (where Calvin wrote his *Institutes*), nor Geneva (where the Reformer lived for a long time), but Strasbourg, where he was in exile for three years. There Calvin, to a large extent, crystallized a detailed order which had been used already for several years, with special attention to what precedes the reading and preaching of the Word of God. There Calvin was also in a position to start the Psalter in a rhymed version, which was finished later on in Geneva. This appeared to be of great importance for Reformed worship.

Preaching

As far as preaching is concerned, Calvin followed the custom which originated in the beginning of the 16th century. In 1503, Johann Ulrich Surgant of Basle wrote a handbook for preaching in which he pleaded that worship services be improved. This improvement had to start with the preaching. He directed himself especially to the young preachers, the "freshmen." He also described the preaching as it existed in his days in some parish churches at Basle and in some villages in Alsace. This preaching was done completely in the German language, in contrast with the Latin part of worship in the mass.

It is also important that the Ten Commandments had a place in this worship service. Not that Surgant ushered in reformation, for theologically he did not deviate from the Romish doctrine of the church. But Surgant's book certainly proved to be useful to the reformation when it first attempted to create a renewed worship service (cf. Dankbaar, 1978:201ff.). Leo Judae and Huldrich Zwingli, for instance, used Surgant's book in Zurich. The same can be said of Strasbourg and the changes made by Martin Bucer with respect to liturgy. But pre-eminent is the name of Theobald Schwartz, who in February 16, 1524 — even before Martin Luther! — read the mass in Strasbourg in the German language. Some consider this to be the date of the first Protestant worship. Not only did church Latin have to make place for the language of the people, but also the "communion" was to be distributed to the believers in both elements, bread *and* wine.

Martin Bucer

In the same year a book written by Martin Bucer was published in which he gave an account of the liturgical changes (he himself called them "renovations") which had

taken place in Strasbourg.

In the second chapter Bucer gave a description of public worship as it took place in Strasbourg:

> When the congregation comes together on Sunday, the minister exhorts the people to confess their sins and to pray for pardon; and on behalf of the whole congregation he makes confession to God, prays for pardon, and pronounces absolution to the believers. Thereupon, the whole congregation sings a few short psalms or hymns. Then the minister says a short prayer, reads to the congregation a passage from the writings of the apostles, and, as briefly as possible, expounds the same. Then the congregation sings again, this time the Ten Commandments, or something else. After that, the minister reads the gospel, and preaches the sermon proper. The sermon ended, the congregation sings the Articles of our Belief (i.e. the Apostles' Creed in metre]; and the minister says a prayer for the Magistrates and for all men, and specially for the congregation there present, beseeching an increase of faith, love, and grace to hold in reverence the memory of Christ's death. Then he admonishes those who wish to observe the Lord's Supper with him that they are to do so in memory of Christ, to die to their sins, and bear their cross willingly, and be strengthened in faith for what must come to pass when we contemplate with believing hearts what measureless grace and goodness Christ has shown to us, in that for us He offered up to His Father His life and blood upon the cross. After this exhortation, he reads the gospel concerning the Lord's Supper, as the three Evangelists and Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 have described it. Then the minister distributes the Bread and the Cup of the Lord among them, having partaken of it also himself. The congregation then sings again a hymn of praise; and afterwards the minister closes the Supper with a short prayer, blesses the people, and lets them go in the peace of the Lord. This is the manner and custom with which we now celebrate the Lord's Supper on Sundays only (cf. Maxwell, 1982:100ff.).

Opening of the service

Now I address especially the opening of the public worship service on Sunday morning, as Calvin experienced it in Strasbourg in 1538. We have the following description of it.

> *When the congregation is assembled, the Pastor (Pfarrer) enters, and goes to the Holy Table (altartisch) taking up such a position that he faces the people, and in order that every one may hear every word he stands upright, and begins the Common Worship, using approximately the following words; for he is able to lengthen or shorten them as opportunity or time affords:*
>
> *1. The Confiteor*
>
> Make confession to God the Lord, and let each one acknowledge with me his sins and iniquity:
>
> Almighty God, eternal Father, we acknowledge and confess unto Thee that we were conceived in unrighteousness, and in all our life are full of sin and transgression, in that we have not gladly believed Thy Word nor followed Thy holy commandments. For Thy goodness' sake and for Thy Name's sake, be gracious unto us, we beseech Thee, and forgive us our iniquity, which is very great.
>
> *2. An absolution or comforting word: 1 Timothy 1.*
>
> This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus is come into the world to save sinners.
>
> Let each make confession in his heart with St. Paul in truth and believe in

Christ. So in His Name do I pronounce forgiveness unto you of all your sins, and I declare you to be loosed of them in earth so that ye may be loosed of them also in heaven and in all eternity. *Amen.*

Sometimes he takes other Words which comfort us in the forgiveness of sins and in the ransom of Christ for our sins, such as St. John 3:16, or 3:35-6, or Acts 10:43, or 1 John 2:1-2.

3. Thereafter, the Church begins to sing a Psalm or hymn instead of the Introit; and sometimes the Kyrie eleison and the Gloria in excelsis follow.

4. When this has been done, the Minister (Diener) says a short prayer for grace and for a right spirit, in order that the Word of God and the Sermon which are to follow may be heard with fruitful effect. The content of this prayer is based upon those desires which a Christian ought to have, and is usually drawn from the Sermon which follows it. I will now take one of the sort to which I refer, which I have formerly allowed to be issued.

The Lord be with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty, ever gracious Father, forasmuch as all our salvation depends upon our having truly understood Thy holy Word: therefore grant us that our hearts be set free from wordly things, so that we may with all diligence and faith hear and apprehend Thy holy Word, that thereby we may rightly understand Thy gracious will, and in all sincerity live according to the same, to Thy praise and glory; through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

5. Then the Church sings a Psalm or some verse, and the Minister (Diener) goes to the front of the chancel, and reads from one of the gospels (Evangelisten), reading it in order, and selecting as much as he is minded to expound in a Sermon (cf. Maxwell, 1982:102ff.).

Calvin in the French congregation

In the French refugee congregation at Strasbourg Calvin followed this order which Bucer employed in the German congregation of Strasbourg. But it must be said that he did not slavishly imitate that which had been accepted as a custom in Strasbourg.

The order of the opening of the public worship service of Calvin's congregation at Strasbourg can be summarized in the following manner:

1. Scripture sentence with the words of Psalm 121:2.
2. Confession of sins.
3. Scriptural words of pardon to comfort the consciences, with the "absolution," the words of acquittal and forgiveness.
4. Singing by the congregation of the Constitution of God's covenant (the address of God and the first table of God's law in a rhyming version of Exodus 20, sung with *Kyrie eleison* after each commandment).
5. Short prayer.
6. Singing by the congregation of the second table of God's law in the same way as mentioned sub 4.
7. Prayer of the minister (now from the pulpit), ending with the Lord's Prayer, as a prayer for the opening of God's Word.

After this prayer for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, there follows the reading of the Scriptures and the preaching of the Word of God.

It is remarkable that the confession of sins (and the subsequent absolution) takes place at the very beginning of the worship service. Calvin used the following words:

Almighty, eternal God and Father, we confess and acknowledge that we, alas, were

conceived and born in sin, and are therefore inclined to all evil and slow to all good; that we transgress Thy holy commandments without ceasing, and ever more corrupt ourselves. But we are sorry for the same, and beseech Thy grace and help. Wherefore have mercy upon us, most gracious and merciful God and Father, through Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant to us and increase in us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may recognize our sin and unrighteousness from the bottom of our hearts, attain true repentance and sorrow for them, die to them wholly, and please thee entirely by a new godly life. *Amen.*

The words of absolution which follow the Scriptural words of pardon are as follows: "Let each of you confess that he is really a sinner who has to humble himself before God. He must believe that the heavenly Father will be gracious to him in Jesus Christ. To all who have repentance and who seek Jesus Christ for their salvation, I pronounce forgiveness in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen."

Actually there are only a few differences between Martin Bucer's order of liturgy in the German congregation at Strasbourg and the one which Calvin employed in the French congregation of the same city.

The main difference is at the beginning of the service.

Bucer started right away with a confession of sins, while Calvin preceded it with the words of Psalm 124 (some say it was Psalm 121:2). Another difference concerns the Constitution of God's covenant, which Calvin had the congregation sing in place of a Psalm or a Hymn sometimes connected by Bucer with *Kyrie eleison,* and always used by Calvin after each commandment).

Common

Calvin was of the opinion that this order of the public worship service was very important. In his *Institutes* (III,4,11) he shows the reason for this very common confession of sins at the beginning of the service:

Seeing that in every sacred assembly we stand in the view of God and angels, in what way should our service begin but in acknowledging our own unworthiness? But this you will say is done in every prayer; for as often as we pray for pardon, we confess our sins. I admit it. But if you consider how great is our carelessness, or drowsiness, or sloth, you will grant me that it would be a salutary ordinance if the Christian people were exercised in humiliation by some formal method of confession. For though the ceremony which the Lord enjoined on the Israelites belonged to the tutelage of the Law, yet the thing itself belongs in some respect to us also. And, indeed, in all well-ordered churches, in observance of an useful custom, the minister, each Lord's day, frames a formula of confession in his own name and that of the people, in which he makes a common confession of iniquity, and supplicates pardon from the Lord. In short, by this key a door of prayer is opened privately for each, and publicly for all.

In this respect, Calvin points also to the example of Holy Scripture. Not only personally but also together, in common, confession of guilt and sin has to be made:

On this latter description we have an example in the solemn confession which the whole people made under the authority and guidance of Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. 1:6,7). For their long captivity, the destruction of the temple, and suppression of their religion, having been the common punishment of their defection, they could not make meet acknowledgment of the blessing of deliverance without previous confession of their guilt. And it matters not though in one assembly it may sometimes happen that a few are innocent, seeing that the members of a languid and sickly body cannot boast of soundness. Nay, it is scarcely possible that these

few have not contracted some taint, and so bear part of the blame.

Calvin considered himself in this respect to be in the line of the church fathers. For instance, Chrysostom had stated in a sermon on the gospel of Matthew in the year 390 A.D. that the first prayers in public worship must always request the forgiveness of sins and appeal to God's mercy.

Calvin's opinion was that also the common forgiveness of sins was very important (*Institutes*, IV, 1, 20ff.):

> Our first entrance into the Church and the kingdom of God is by forgiveness of sins, without which we have no covenant nor union with God. For thus he speaks by the Prophet, "In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle, out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies" (Hos. 2:18, 19). We see in what way the Lord reconciles us to himself by his mercy. So in another passage, where he foretells that the people whom he had scattered in anger will again be gathered together, I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me (Jer. 33:8). Wherefore, our initiation into the fellowship of the church is by the symbol of absolution, to teach us that we have no admission into the family of God, unless by his goodness our impurities are previously washed away.
>
> Nor by remission of sins does the Lord only once for all elect and admit us into the Church, but by the same means he preserves and defends us in it. For what would it avail us to receive a pardon of which we were afterwards to have no use? That the mercy of the Lord would be vain and delusive if only granted once, all the godly can bear witness; for there is none who is not conscious, during his whole life, of many infirmities which stand in need of divine mercy. And truly it is not without cause that the Lord promises this gift specially to his own household, nor in vain that he orders the same message of reconciliation to be daily delivered to them. Wherefore, as during our whole lives we carry about with us the remains of sin, we could not continue in the Church one single moment were we not sustained by the uninterrupted grace of God in forgiving our sins."

Back to the early church!

Did Calvin link up with liturgical customs of the late Middle Ages and with the situation in Strasbourg for the sake of convenience or because he himself was not very inventive?

Neither is the case! We already saw that Calvin consciously wanted to base himself on Holy Scripture. Besides, he also very much stressed the connection with the early church (*L'église ancienne).* Especially when liturgical matters were involved he pointed to the customs of the New Testament church and the first period after Pentecost. Frequently he quoted apostolic fathers and church fathers in order to emphasize his argument.

It must also be said that Calvin was absolutely not aiming for a multitude of forms in worship. But that which had shown itself to be significant in former ages, especially in the early church, had to be taken over.

As for the first part of the worship service, which we are now discussing, I want to investigate why Calvin stressed the importance of:

1. Confession of sins.
2. Forgiveness of sins.

3. God's words of His covenant.
4. The *Kyrie-eleison.*

Confession of sins

We have already discovered that Calvin stressed the importance of common guilt, an emphasis which he based on the Bible.

Evidently also personal guilt had to be confessed, but that is not a matter of a sacramental auricular confession before the priest. Calvin here quoted James 5:16, from which text we learn that we have to confess our sins before each other and that we have to pray for forgiveness of sins.

In the New Testament we more than once find indications that there is the necessity of the confession of sins and the petition for forgiveness. But it is also clear that the Christian church realized this from the very beginning.

In the first letter of Clement to the church at Corinth (dated before the end of the first century) we find this prayer: "O merciful and compassionate, forgive us our iniquities, and unrigheousness, and transgressions, and shortcomings.

Reckon not every sin of Thy servants and handmaids, but cleanse us with the cleansing of Thy truth, and guide our steps. . . ." We agree with the comments of A.B. Macdonald, who notes that the reference to men and women ("servants and handmaids") is one of the clearer indications that Clement's prayer had its origins in the public worship of the community (Macdonald, 1935:100).

I draw a second example from the *Didachè* ("Teaching of the twelve apostles"), probably also written at the end of the first century, or else not long after.

We read in that book two statements which are important. "In church, confess your transgressions, and do not go to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of Life" (IV, 14), and: "When you gather together each Lord's Day, break bread and give thanks. But first confess your transgressions so that your sacrifice may be pure" (XIV,1).

Later on, this confession of sins was limited to the priest personally in the *Confiteor:* "We beseech Thee, Lord, take away from us our sins, that we may be worthy to enter the holy of holies with a pure conscience."

That concerned the personal preparations of the priest before he celebrated the mass. The priest was not to start his work before he had personally confessed his unworthiness and sinfulness. But that had to be done just before the mass.

Bucer said in Strasbourg: No, before anything else there must be confession of sins; and Calvin agreed with that. Moreover, both of them were of the opinion that this was a matter concerning the whole congregation. Before the Word of God was administered, and before the minister went to the pulpit, sins were confessed on behalf of the whole congregation.

Forgiveness of sins

Confession of sins and forgiveness of sins are closely connected. Therefore the forgiveness of sins is an element in the liturgy which Calvin placed immediately after the confession of sins. He preceded the words of absolution with a word of comfort from Holy Scripture. He also came into contact with this in Strasbourg, for in Bucer's congregation the worship service started with confession of sins, after which was quoted the word of acquittal from 1 Timothy 1:15, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Another word of comfort from the New Testament could also be quoted, e.g., John

3:16, John 3:35 and 36, Acts 10:43, or 1 John 2:1 and 2.

Evidently the absolution had nothing to do with the sacramental absolution of Rome, let alone the mediation of the saints or any form of indulgence. It was a word of comfort that God is a good and forgiving God, who after confession of sins does not mark transgression.

God's words of His covenant

After the word of comfort from Holy Scripture and the forgiveness of sins, Calvin followed with the singing of the Decalogue by the congregation. This singing of God's law was done "in order to bring the congregation to the awareness that it was the duty of the congregation to walk in holiness before God, thankful for the forgiveness of sins" (Kruijf, 1901:76ff.).

This rhymed version of the Decalogue came from Calvin himself. The opening words of the Decalogue were, in Calvin's opinion, not just a kind of introduction, but the promise of the LORD God in the covenant with His people: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

H. Hasper correctly writes: "Ex. 20:2 is not an 'introduction' in the sense of the introductory stanzas of rhymed versions. Ex. 20:2 is the *main point: God's* deed of love, God's action. After that must follow *man's* deed of love, his reaction" (Hasper, 1955:592).

In the light of the forgiveness and acquittal of sins and also in the light of God's promise that He brings His people in Christ out of the house of bondage of sins, His people have to live according to the obligation of God's covenant. In connection with this what is also remarkable is Calvin's last stanza, which is not directly derived from Exodus 20:

Dieu, qui de toute saincteté,
contiens seul la vertu en toy,
à la Justice de ta Loy,
veuilles noz meurs conformer.

(O God, in whom alone is
the power of all holiness,
let our behaviour be according
to the justice of Thy law.)

Calvin here followed Luther's version of "Dies sind die heilgen zehn Gebot."

However, Luther added to his rhymed version a New Testament stanza, in which the help of the Mediator Jesus Christ was invoked.

Did the Reformers invent the practice of reciting the words of God's covenant? No, actually this custom is much older.

Think of the priests serving in the temple, who had to impress God's law upon the people of God's covenant.

Think about the reading of the whole Torah in the synagogue. There are indications that the law played a role in the liturgy of the early church. With respect to this I quote E.F. Kruijf: ". . . when the gnostics had appeared, who spoke more about trust in God than fear before God, some had the opinion that the Law should be placed more in the foreground; and even before traces are found of the reading of the Law in the worship services, it appears that some had sown it into the hearts of young and old" (Kruijf, 1901: 761). Kruijf refers then to the Apostolic Constitutions of the fourth century, which partially go back to the second century.

Also later on, at the end of the Middle Ages, the reading of the Law, or the singing of it, was used in some churches.

In Calvin's case the reading of the Law replaced more or less the *Great Gloria,* which was used for many centuries after the *Introitus* and which was derived from the song of the angels in Luke 2: "Glory to God . . . ." That Gloria had the tone of thanks to God, who had sent His Son into the world. Hence it is noteworthy that in Calvin's case the singing of the Decalogue was placed in the framework of thankfulness, *after* the forgiveness of sins.

Later on the Law was emphasized much more as the source of the knowledge of misery, but for Calvin its function in worship service was different. Something of this is retained in the last part of stanza 9 of Hymn 7 in the *Book of Praise:*

That we, delivered from all evil,
May live in thankfulness to Thee.

The *Kyrie-eleison*

As we have seen, Calvin had the *Kyrie-eleison* sung after each stanza of the Decalogue. He prayed a short prayer after the singing of the first table of the Law and twelve times the people sang "Lord, have mercy."

We see that Calvin is again in harmony with Luther, who also connected the *Kyrie* with the singing of the Law.

The *Kyrie-eleison* was well-known as the refrain of an old Christmas song, also dating from the century of the reformation. This hymn goes back to an old German song from the 11th century: "Nu sis uns willekomen, herro Christ, du unser aller herro bist."

In popular language the *Kyrie-eleison* was well-known in the times of Luther and Calvin. But its history is much older.

In the years 381-384 the nun Egeria came from northern Spain or southern France and stayed in Jerusalem. There she attended many worship services when Cyril was bishop of Jerusalem. In the account of her travels she speaks about these services. In the daily service at four P.M. the bishop rose and one of the deacons prayed. Then, "many little children standing around always responded: *Kyrie eleison,* which means: 'Have mercy'. " Egeria relates that this singing happened often in Jerusalem's liturgy.

From the East this *Kyrie-eleison* was brought to the West, and the Greek words were maintained for a long time.

Often the *Kyrie-eleis* took turns with *Christe-eleis.*

It is not impossible that stadtholder Plinius in his well-known letter to the emperor Trajan in the beginning of the second century alluded to this *Christe-eleis* and *Kyrie-eleis* when he wrote that the Christians in prayer called upon Christ as a God. Definitely this same *Kyrie-eleison* was found in Egypt coinciding with the morning prayer, while the faces of the people were turned to the East, to the rising sun.

We also have to bear in mind that the *Kyrie-eleison* is used more than once in the New Testament (cf. e.g., Matt. 15:22 and 25; 20:30 and 31), but also in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (cf. e.g., Psalm 6:3; 9:14; 31:10; 41:5 and 11; 56:2; 86:3, and Isa. 33:2). In the *Apostolic Constitutions* it is said that this *Kyrie* had to be the response in the prayer of the deacons. Already in early times *Kyrie* as well as *Gloria* were hymns which received their place at the beginning of the worship service. It is typical of Calvin that he did not abolish these hymns but placed them in his liturgy. The singing of God's Law as a rule of thankfulness took the place of the *Gloria,* while the refrain to it became the *Kyrie.* It should also be mentioned that this *Kyrie* did not have the character of a confession of sins (that had already been done), but the character of a petition for help, in order to live according to the obligations of God's covenant.

Continuation of the service

The first part of the Sunday morning service in Strasbourg was closed with the final *Kyrie-eleison* after the last stanza of Calvin's rhymed version of God's law. Until this point in the service, Calvin stood the whole time at the table in front of the pulpit. This first part of the service was placed in the framework of humility and thankfulness. Now, after the conclusion of this first part, the opening of God's Word followed. For that purpose the minister ascended the pulpit. Before the reading (or readings) from Holy Scripture took place, there was first the prayer for the opening of God's Word and also the prayer for the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Right after the reading, the preaching followed. The other elements of the service (also the service of the sacraments) had their place *after* the sermon.

To these other elements belonged the singing of Psalms, the intercessions, the collection and finally the benediction. In the eventuality that there was the administration of the Holy Baptism and/or the celebration of the Lord's Supper, these also were placed after the sermon.

Obviously, respecting the traditions of the church, without becoming formalistic, Calvin had a carefully considered order for the first part of the service.

Calvin declared he was not against forms, but emphasized that it was necessary to get the essence of forms. One must be conscious of what is going on in the worship service!

Back to Geneva

Calvin was called to return to Geneva and finally he complied with the urgent request. But he could never completely accomplish in Geneva what he had been aiming for and appeared to have been accomplishing in Strasbourg.

When Calvin came back in Geneva in the year 1541, he was confronted with Farel's liturgy, which was already in use when he had left the city three years earlier.

That was a liturgy without congregational singing and with an infrequent celebration of the Lord's Supper. There were similarities between this liturgy and that of Zwingli, but not so much that of Bucer and Calvin at Strasbourg. Calvin did his best to change this liturgy and he partially succeeded. A very important point to him was the singing by the congregation. Indeed, the whole Psalter was finished in 1562, two years before Calvin's death. But he did not succeed in bringing about more frequent celebrations of the Lord's Supper, which caused grief to Calvin. The Reformer was troubled by the fact that even a monthly celebration did not appear to be possible. Once he wrote about that fact: "I mentioned in the public announcements that our custom is abnormal in order that our offspring would feel freer to improve upon it." But that offspring did not change it very much!

In the year after Calvin's return to Geneva, an important book by Calvin about liturgy was published; in it he made mention in the title already that he would like to go back to the custom of the early church. He was aiming to continue what he had written already before in his *Institutes,* and what he had worked out in Strasbourg. But in certain points he had to give in, also concerning the first part of the worship service on Sunday morning. (Calvin did not give a specific order for the Sunday afternoon service.) Accordingly there were five ways in which it was different from the order of Strasbourg:

1. The omission of the words of comfort from Holy Scripture after the confession of sins.
2. The omission of the words of "absolution."

3. The change from the rhymed version of the law to the reading of it.
4. The omission of the singing of the *Kyrie-eleison* after the individual stanzas of the rhymed version of the law.
5. The change from standing behind the table in the first part of the service: from the very beginning the service was now conducted from the pulpit.

Some considered these things as "novelties." Not each and every point weighed equally heavily with Calvin. For instance, the omission of the words of comfort from Scripture after the confession of sins, and also the "absolution" he really wanted to introduce in Geneva, and, indeed, later on he advised its introduction elsewhere. At a later time Calvin answered a question concerning liturgy in the following manner: "To add to the public confession of sins a promise, which exhorts the sinners to the hope of forgiveness and reconciliation — there will be no one who does not acknowledge that this would be very useful. I wanted to introduce this use from the very beginning; but because some feared the novelty of it, I was willing to abolish this use. Therefore this matter is omitted. It would not be opportune to change things now.

For many are busy standing up (from kneeling prayer, K.D.) before others have reached the end of the confession of sins. But more so it is our wish to get people used to both of these things, because they are not bound to anything yet."

So the confession of sins was maintained, but not the words of comfort afterwards. Calvin introduced the confession of sins in Geneva with these words: "Brothers, let everyone of us place himself before the LORD with confession of his sins and debts and let him say with me these words in his heart."

Refugee congregations

Was this the end of the elements which had been omitted from the beginning of the Sunday morning worship? Let us turn for a moment to London, England, where Martin Micron had fled in 1549, seven years after the publication of Calvin's liturgical book in Geneva. In 1554, just a year after he had to leave London again, he wrote his *Christlicke Ordinancien,* from which we learn the order of worship of the refugee congregation in London. The first part of this service was only an exhortation to prayer which ended with the Lord's Prayer and the singing of a Psalm.

After the sermon followed the reading of the law, exhortation to confession of sins, a prayer in which this confession was expressed, and the proclamation of the "loosing and binding of sins."

Several things are noteworthy. In the first place almost the entire first part of the service was placed in a later phase of the service, namely, after the sermon. Moreover, the confession of sins was placed after the reading of the law, and the law was apparently considered as the source of knowledge of misery. The exhortation to confession of sins was worded in this way: "We see in this divine law as in a mirror how much and in how many ways we have incensed God with our transgressions; so let us now wholeheartedly desire that He will forgive them, saying, . . ." (there follows a prayer with confession of sins).

What is new is the "binding of sins," the so-called formula of retention, directed to those who do not repent from their sins: ". . . I proclaim to them from the Word of God that all their sins are bound in heaven and are not loosed until they will repent."

So the forgiveness of sins came back, but in a totally different place than in Calvin's Strasbourg liturgy. Here should also be mentioned the name of Vallérand Poullain, who served the French refugee congregation at Strasbourg after Calvin and who departed to England in 1547, where he in 1551 received the function of superintendent of the French-speaking refugee congregation at Galstonbury.

In that year his *Liturgia Sacra* was published. In this book we find the *Liturgia diei dominici* (the order of Sunday), which contains (as far as the first part of it is concerned):

1. Singing: first part of the song of the Ten Commandments.
2. Confessio peccatorum (confession of sins).
3. Absolutio (formula of forgiveness).
4. Singing: second part of the song of the Ten Commandments.
5. Short prayer.
6. Singing: last stanza of the song of the Ten Commandments.

Then followed the reading of Scripture and the preaching. When "Bloody Mary" started her reign, Poullain, Micron and many others had to flee to the continent. Poullain continued his work in Frankfurt and established church life in the same way as in England.

Other countries

At the same time John Knox was a minister of the English refugee congregation at Frankfurt. A year later he became a minister of the English refugee congregation at Geneva and met Calvin. The year thereafter he published in Geneva his liturgical book *the Forme of Prayers and Administration of the Sacraments, etc., used in the Englishe Congregation at Geneva; and approved by the famous and godly learned man, John Calvin.*

Knox started the service as follows:

1. Confession of sins.
2. Prayer for forgiveness.
3. Singing of a rhymed Psalm.

Then followed the prayer for illumination, the reading of Scripture and the preaching. Again Calvin's influence is to be seen: the service started with humiliation, followed by prayer for forgiveness and the singing of a psalm that has to do with forgiveness. Only after the sermon there followed intercessions, the Apostles' Creed, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

This liturgy was maintained in Scotland.

As far as the Hungarian Reformed churches were concerned, we would like to point to the fact that the custom was maintained that during the singing of Psalms of humiliation, confession of sins, and forgiveness of sins (with the Genevan melodies!), the minister was seated below the pulpit. After that first part of the service he ascended the pulpit, just as Calvin also did in his French congregation at Strasbourg.

It was not always the same elements and the same order that entered the Reformed liturgies of several countries, but it is clear that Calvin's liturgy had a great influence. It is also clear that not only in Strasbourg but also in several other places that which Calvin was not able to realize in Geneva was indeed achieved.

Datheen in Frankenthal and in the Netherlands

A clear link to Calvin was found in Frankenthal in the Dutch refugee congregation of the Palatinate.

In 1562 Petrus Dathenus became the minister of this congregation. He had been in London, but in 1553 he, too, had fled. In 1555 he had become a minister of the Flemish congregation at Frankfurt, where he had met Calvin.

In Frankenthal, he first made a translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, and after that a version of the rhymed Psalms of Marot and Beza. In 1566 Datheen's *Book of Praise* was published. Datheen was in his last year a minister of the refugee congrega-

tion at Frankenthal. The opening of Datheen's worship service can be reconstructed as follows: Datheen started with prayer, and after the singing (or reading) of the law there was an exhortation to penitence and to faith in God's promises. Then followed words of admonition and comfort, retention, and declaration of grace. After the sermon followed confession of sins and intercessions. It is noteworthy that several elements of Calvin's beginning of the service are found here. But the element of *Gloria* (the law as a rule of thankfulness) diasappeared, and there was added a confession of sins after the sermon.

The first synod in the Netherlands, Dordrecht 1574, dropped the matter of confession of sins, words of comfort from Scripture, absolution, and retention-formula.

Gaspar van der Heyden was the chariman and he received the assignment to draft a shorter prayer for after the sermon. Van der Heyden also drafted a new liturgy in 1580, in which retention and declaration of grace were missing completely.

At the Synod of Dordrecht 1578 Peter Datheen presided, but his colleague Gaspar van der Heyden was in the chair again at the Synod of Middelburg 1581.

This synod made an important decision concerning retention and declaration of grace. The delegates from Gelderland had placed on the table the question whether or not it would be good after the sermon to proclaim to the converted forgiveness of sins and to the unbelievers the binding of sins.

But the synod was of the opinion that because the binding and loosing of sins was proclaimed sufficiently in the preaching of God's Word, it was not necessary to introduce a separate form. Indeed, the first part of the service would now be: Reading of Scripture, Singing of a Psalm, Votum and Prayer before the sermon.

Some have said that the Synod of 1574, and especially the Synod of 1581 (both of them chaired by Gaspar van der Heyden) spoiled the beautiful start of Calvin's liturgy (cf. Hendriks, 1970:223 ff.).

Not after the sermon

Apparently some were impressed by the argument of the Synod of Middelburg 1581 that the binding and loosing of sins is done sufficiently in the preaching of God's Word. This was supported by Lord's Day 31 of the Heidelberg Catechism, which confesses that the key of preaching God's Word opens and closes God's Kingdom. A special formula after the preaching of God's Word appeared superfluous: a kind of sermonette after the sermon.

No doubt there is an element of truth in this. But one must be aware of the question placed upon the table of the Synod of 1581. The delegates of Gelderland asked about a formula *after* the sermon. That would be a kind of appendix which never had a function before in the worship service. What Calvin did in Strasbourg was different. He maintained Confiteor, Absolution, Gloria, and *Kyrie,* but in the Scriptural sense, and as a beautiful whole: the humble beginning of the service with confession of sins, comfort from Scripture, acquittal from God, His words of the covenant in promise and obligation, and the petition to live according to God's will.

Thereafter there was a prayer for the opening of God's Word and then followed reading of the Scriptures and preaching. Much later there was again an attempt to insert the "absolution" in the first part of the worship service on Sunday morning.

Deputies, appointed by the Synod of Leeuwarden 1920 to study the Order of Liturgy, placed on the table of the Synod of 1923 a report in which they pleaded for the re-introduction of the declaration of forgiveness of sins. This would then commence with the words: "The minister speaks to all who sincerely regret their sins and take refuge in the only Saviour Jesus Christ, I declare the forgiveness of sins in the

Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen." But this proposal was not adopted by the Synod of Utrecht.

Ten years later when the Synod of Middelburg (!) again dealt with the whole matter of liturgy, the status quo was maintained as it had developed over the course of time in the churches.

After the liberation in 1944 in the Netherlands, the Synod of Kampen 1975 again dealt with the order of worship.

The synod took over a large part of Calvin's order of liturgy for the Sunday morning. Unfortunately his complete Strasbourg liturgy was not taken over.

The Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches at Cloverdale 1983 followed the sister churches in the Netherlands by recommending to the churches this second order of liturgy. But together with A. Kuyper, G. van Dooren, G. van Rongen and others I would like to plead for the re-introduction of the beautiful beginning of Calvin's liturgy at Strasbourg, which is now a missing link in Reformed liturgy. I agree with the recent remark of C. Trimp that there is room for a third order of liturgy. It could be done in the way of the congregation at Blue Bell, where especially the confession of sins and the absolution is maintained.

Repetition?

Is it true that a word of comfort from Scripture after confession of sins, together with a word of acquittal and forgiveness would be an unnecessary repetition because it is already done in the sermon? The answer is no. In the first place there are other elements in the liturgy which take place more than once. I point to the service of praise. The singing of the congregation is not limited to one selection, but it comes back (fortunately!) several times in the liturgy.

Also praying is not limited to one prayer only.

In the second place: in the *Form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper* we have the traditional invitation and the retention. This is also true in the *Abbreviated Form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.* There the invitation-formula is: "All who by the grace of God repent of their sins, desiring to fight against their unbelief and live according to God's commandments, will certainly be received by God at the table of His Son Jesus Christ. They may be fully assured that no sin or weakness which still remains in them against their will shall keep God from accepting them in grace and granting them this heavenly food and drink."

Then follows the retention-formula (in the Form called "the admonition"): "But to all who do not truly grieve over their sins and do not repent from them, we declare that they have no part in the kingdom of God. We admonish them to abstain from the holy supper; otherwise their judgment will be the heavier."

Calvin esteemed this retention-formula very highly and placed it at the beginning of the service.

The argument is used that invitation and retention are found here in the context of self-examination with a view to the celebration of or abstinence from the Lord's Supper. But I ask: is the whole matter of self-examination limited to that? Is this not something which we have to execute continually, even daily?

With respect to this I would like to point to the fact that it is not right that in some churches the Form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper is cut into two parts. One reads the first part on the so-called Sunday of preparation, namely, the part concerning self-examination, while the rest of the Form is read on the Sunday of the celebration itself. But apart from the question whether or not it is desirable to have a separate Sunday of preparation, liturgically it is not right to spread a Form over two Sundays.

When the words of comfort concerning forgiveness of sins and the retention come back in the Sunday morning service, the matter of that continual obligation of self-examination will prove to be a real blessing.

Conclusions

In summary, I come to the following conclusions:

1. It was an important and laudable principle of Calvin that liturgically he sought connection with:
   a. what he found in Holy Scripture;
   b. the custom of the early church;
   c. good customs which had developed in the course of history.
2. The first part of Calvin's order of liturgy (the part before the prayer for the opening of God's Word) forms an organic whole according to the triad: misery, deliverance, and thankfulness.
3. Calvin rightly emphasized very strongly the element of humility at the very beginning of the worship service.
4. This humility is expressed in the confession of sins, which is to be followed directly by a word of comfort from Scripture and the declaration of forgiveness of sins for believers.
5. The argument that absolution is given already in the preaching and that it is therefore superfluous to do it in another way is an insufficient argument:
   a. there would be an element of truth to this if absolution were placed *after* the sermon;
   b. there are more elements in liturgy which take place more than once, e.g., singing and prayers;
   c. similarly, aside from the preaching of God's Word, a kind of absolution (and retention) takes place in the Forms for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.
6. When reintroducing the word of comfort from Holy Scripture and the formula of absolution, one must be on guard not to be uniform: Holy Scripture offers abundant material for this.
7. It is seldom realized that the (singing of the) law by Calvin was designed to be an expression of thankfulness and a replacement of the "great Gloria."
8. It is to be emphasized that the beginning of the law contains God's promise, which forms a complete unit with the Ten Words; this is to be called the Constitution of God's Covenant.
9 .Because of this unity of promise and obligation of God's covenant, a repetition of the law in the "summary" is superfluous:
   a. actually this summary had already been given by Moses in Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18;
   b. when Christ gives this "summary" it is done in a different context;
   c. a repetition of the law in a summary weakens the character of the promise of God's covenant within the framework of the worship service.
10. Calvin had a special reason for having the *Kyrie-eleison* sung by the congregation, namely, the repeated petition for help from the Lord in order that the congregation would practice the service of love in thankfulness.
11. Calvin had a special reason for reserving the pulpit for the reading and preaching of the Word of God, while the beginning of the worship service and the administration of the sacraments took place in front of the pulpit.
12. With a view to the special character of the second worship service, namely, the emphasis on the confession of the congregation and the instruction in that

respect, Calvin's first part of the Sunday morning service was restricted to the morning service only and not interchanged with the afternoon service.

THE FUNCTION OF THE READER

Public reading

If things are normal, not one day passes by without the *reading of the Holy Scriptures.* We will do that in connection with the family and we will do that alone as well. It is a basic requirement of Christian life. The Holy Scriptures are the self-revelation of God, and Jesus Christ comes to us in the words of the Bible. He appears to us in the *garment* of the Holy Scripture, as Calvin expressed it (Inst. III,2,6). Not one Sunday passes by without the reading of the Bible in the church service. That starts in the morning service, when the Ten Commandments of the LORD are read. That is to be continued by the Scripture reading in the same morning service and also in the afternoon or evening service. From the very beginning of the Christian church, Scripture reading was a constituent part of public worship (Moule, 1961:94). It was a special honour as well, to be privileged to read the Holy Scriptures in the service of the church. Therefore, in the Apocalypse, the Revelation to John, it is written: "Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy." This public reader is to be deemed happy. This is the first beatification of the book of Revelation to John. So the reading of the Holy Scriptures in public worship is very important.

The apostle Paul exhorts his spiritual son Timothy: "Till I come, attend to the *public reading* of Scripture, to preaching, to teaching." This is not an advice but an *order* of the apostle. Before "preaching" and "teaching," the public reading of the Holy Scripture has been prescribed with apostolic authority.

Old Testament

There is a long tradition of Scripture reading in the services of the church. Already Moses in his valedictory sermon of the book of Deuteronomy commanded the priests and the elders of the people of Israel: "You shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your town, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess" (Deut. 31:11 ff.).

After the time of exile we hear that Ezra the priest brought the Law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel. "And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden pulpit which they had made for the purpose. . . . And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; and when he opened it all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God; and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. Later, the law of Moses and especially the Decalogue, was in use in the Palestinian synagogue. (Dugmore, 1964:21). Probably the reading of the law of Ezra was the model to the reading of the Torah in the synagogue, especially on feast days (Boon, 1973:128).

Little by little the reading of the law grew in regular services. At last, the Torah was divided into 54 parts, which had to be read in the course of a year in a so-called "lectio continua," a continuing reading. So there was reading of the law on all Sabbath days. For the convenience of the rural residents the Torah was later read on the market days as well. At last, there was no divine service in the synagogue without Scripture reading.

We know little about the origin of the prophetical lesson in the synagogue, the so-called "Haftarah." It may either have been an independent item, or it may have been chosen to complement the lesson of the Torah. At any rate, the lesson of the Torah was more important than the lesson of the prophets and the same can be said to the lecturer of both. If the lecturer was a very young man — and that could be in that time — then he could only read the *Haftarah,* not the *Torah.*

It is evident that such a lesson of the prophets formed part of the public worship on the Sabbath in the time of Jesus. Luke mentions that Jesus went to the Synagogue of Nazareth, as His custom was, on the Sabbath day. And He stood up to read; and there was given to Him the book of the Prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. . . ."

Personally I am of the opinion that the term: "He *found* the place . . ." means that Jesus was looking for a special and free pericope and not that this part had to be read at that time.

As a rule, the reader and the preacher were two different persons. However, in the case of Jesus in the Synagogue of Nazareth, the reader was the Man who preached as well.

Christian church

The history of Scripture reading in the Christian church is rather complicated. We only mention the main facts. In the beginning, the apostles visited the synagogues and listened to the reading of the law and the prophets, apparently in that time established parts, as we read in the book of the Acts of the apostles, concerning the Synagogue of Antioch. So there were links with the synagogue. What about the Scripture reading in the Christian church itself? The first announcement after the mentioned texts of the New Testament we find in the Apology of Justin Martyr in the second century. He writes: "On the day of the Sun all who live in towns or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. Then when the reader has finished, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of the good examples cited" (Apologia I, 67, cf. McDonald, 1935:3ff.). We read here that Justin knows only one Scripture reading, namely from the books of the apostles *or* the prophets. Later, the reading of the Scripture and the preaching were connected to each other. The sermon joined the reading. Justin wrote his Apology about 160 years after Christ.

In the books of Hippolytus of Rome (about half a century after Justin), we get the impression that there were already more Scripture readings in the service of the Christian church. In any event, there is an expansion in the readings, for in the *Constitutiones apostolorum,* a book dated from the fourth century, four readings are mentioned, namely, two of the Old Testament and two of the New Testament: "When both readings of the Old Testament are finished, another has to sing the Psalms of David and the congregation must repeat the last verses. After that the Acts and the letters of Paul must be read, and at last the deacon or the priest has to read the gospels (II, 57). In the same time, we hear about the services in Jerusalem. The nun Egeria, coming from Spain, describes in the account of her travels the Jerusalem liturgy of Bishop Cyril

of Jerusalem in the second part of the fourth century. In the daily services, there was an absence of Scripture reading, but in the first service on Sunday the bishop himself read the gospel. "Then the bishop, standing inside the screen ("intro cancellos"), takes the gospel and goes to the door, where he himself reads the account of the Lord's resurrection. At the beginning of the reading the whole assembly groans and laments at all that the Lord underwent for us, and the way they weep would move even the hardest heart to tears. When the gospel is finished, the bishop comes out, and is taken with singing to the Cross, and they all go with him. They have one psalm there and a prayer, then he blesses the people, and that is the dismissal ("fit missa"). As the bishop goes out, everyone comes to kiss his hand" (XXIV).

At daybreak the people assemble in the Great Church built by Constantine on Golgotha behind the Cross. There are lectures of the Old and New Testament. Presbyters are preaching and when they have finished there is a sermon from the bishop. The object of having this preaching every Sunday is to make sure that the people "will continually be learning about the Bible and the love of God." Because of all the preaching, Egeria writes, it is a long time before the dismissal, which takes place not before ten or even eleven o'clock.

With respect to the services in the Church of Jerusalem in the fourth century the frequent use of the phrase "apte et diei et loco" (according to the day and the place) is to be noted. This phrase was used in relation to the several parts of the service, Scripture readings included. We also receive some information about the Jerusalem liturgy of the fourth century by the *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem. In his *Catecheses* on baptism, dating from the beginning of his episcopate (about 348 A.D.), the liturgical character of his teaching is already revealed in his explanation of the Jerusalem formula of baptism, but in his mystagogic *Catecheses* (dated from the end of his episcopate, about 380) this is much more so. Again we see that the Jerusalem liturgy of that time was "topographical," according to the day and the place, the Scripture readings as well (Cross, 1966: passim). The gaps in the information, left by the travel story of Egeria and the *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem, are mostly filled by the information furnished by the *Armenian lectionary.* The list of Scripture readings in Jerusalem, gleaned from this source, renders a significant addition (Renoux, 1969:161ff.). In this time the Christian Calendar had been built up, and the Scripture readings had been divided according to the feast, and even the day and the place where in Jesus' time the facts of salvation have occurred.

Slowly but surely Western Europe came under the influence of the East. In the days of Augustine there was still a certain liberty in the choice of the readings, but for the feasts the readings were fully prescripted. The readings took a long time, Augustine says. They were interrupted by the singing of psalms and hymns. For instance in the night before Easter, the Scripture reading was very long: it began with the first part of Genesis, the story of the passage through the Red Sea from Exodus, the first Passover, the song of Miriam, the sister of Moses, the history of Jonas, the hymn of the three men in the fire, and so on. Augustine complains of the long duration of the Scripture readings. He says: "The readings of the Bible are so long that we cannot complete with an interpretation. And even if we should be able to interprete, you would lose the thread and your attention" (van der Meer 1947:319).

Not only in Northern Africa was there the interruption of the Scripture readings by the song of psalms and hymns: we see the same thing in Rome, namely, in the Roman Mass Rite in the fifth century. There psalmody came between the readings as well. The usual number of three readings before the gospel reading was first reduced to two in the Church of Constantinople in the fifth century, and Rome followed this

example in the late fifth or sixth century.

In other Eastern and Western rites the first of the usual readings was discarded later than the above dates, but not everywhere. There were several songs between the readings. The first chant was called "gradual," because it was sung on the steps (that is "gradus") of the ambo, the pulpit. The pulpit was the place where the sermon was delivered. But in the third and the fourth century the term "rostrum" is used to indicate the place from where the lections were read. The rostrum was situated where the readers could be easily heard. The name "rostrum" means a beak, a platform for public speaking, with reference to the speaker's platform in the Roman forum, which was decorated with the beaks of captured war galleys. Usually the sermon was preached from another place in the building, the pulpit, or the sanctuary steps. After the "gradual" came the "Alleluia" chant: a signal for the refrain, chanted by the people. And then, a chant of several verses of psalms was sung before the epistle.

In Milan, the "Ambrosian" rite closely resembled that of Rome. On many days of the year there were two lessons before the gospel. The first was usually taken from the prophets or other parts of the Old Testament, but on Sundays in Eastertide from the Acts of the apostles, and on some saints' feasts from the life of the concerning saint. That is remarkable, because the last reading was not a Scripture reading, and not the Word of God, but a story of men. Little by little saint worship was growing in this time. Each lesson was preceded by a special blessing given by the celebrant at the request of the reader. After the first lesson a little psalm was sung, called "psalmellus" (usually consisting of one or two verses from the psalms). The epistle was followed by Hallelujah with a verse, again usually taken from the psalms. On some solemn feasts a chant, called "Antiphon before the Gospel" was sung after the Hallelujah. After the gospel the celebrant chanted.

So there was a continual alternation of reading and singing, but in the time of Pope Gregory, in the beginning of the seventh century, the gospel and the epistle were not read, but sung. Thus the difference between Scripture reading and chants was not so sharp anymore. At the same time there appeared books, called *Comes,* guides for the reading and the preaching in the services. These books contained the titles of the pericopes, which had to be read according to the liturgical year. By degrees there came in the West many local and regional systems of pericopes. So there came a prescribed reading and preaching, especially in the time of Charlemagne in the beginning of the ninth century. This compulsory system of pericopes is still in effect in the Roman Catholic Church.

Reformation

Luther preserved the pericope system, but his ideal was the "lectio continua," the continued reading of the Scriptures. However, his argument for preserving the system of pericopes was for instance that in Wittenberg there were many students who would later be obliged to preach in congregations, where the pericopes were still in vogue. (Koopmans, 1941:41). In Lutheran churches it became and remained a custom to preach in the main service on Sunday the gospel of that Sunday and in the second service the prescribed epistle, or Luther's Catechism. Calvin rejected the system of pericopes. He wrote: in the early Christian church the ministers did not preach according to "sectiones" (divided parts), but according to "lectio continua" (continuing reading). There was a moment that certain parts joined certain times of the year. In that time, Calvin said, they made a pericopic system. But the whole system is established injudiciously. Calvin promoted the "lectio continua" and the "praedicatio continua" as well. There is a close connection between both and Cal-

vin always preached just after the Scripture reading.

As for Zwingli, he promoted the "lectio continua" too and preached whole Bible books, especially of the New Testament, from the beginning to the end, sometimes during several months (Old, 1975:195ff.). In the refugee congregation of London, "lectio continua" and "praedicatio continua" had been given by the ministers, for instance of the whole letter of Paul to the Romans, and in the beginning of the Reformed churches in The Netherlands, more than one national synod promoted continuous preaching of a whole book of the Bible. More and more the Reformed churches opposed not only the pericope system, but the "lectio continua" as well. They feared the compulsion of the pericope system and the danger of neglecting many parts of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament. But they also objected that sometimes in "lectio continua" there was no connection between reading and preaching. Preaching whole Bible books in a great number of sermons leads to one-sidedness. Then it seems that one is eating for month after month for dinner only bread, after that for years only vegetables and at last for a long time only meat. That would be tiring and unhealthy (Kuyper, 1911:295). Therefore, it is advisable, to read the Bible, Old Testament, namely the law of the LORD, psalms and prophets as well, and the New Testament, gospel and epistles. But the Scripture readings must cohere with the text of the sermon.

In liturgical and historical sense it is not advisable to have a gap between reading and preaching. When the choice of a text is free, the reading is free too, in the same sense. On the other hand, it is neither advisable to jump from one thing to another. Therefore, a *compromise* is to be made between "lectio continua" and the free choice of a text. There is, for instance, the possibility of continuity in preaching and reading for a shorter series than a whole book of the Bible, or to preach and read a special theme for a number of sermons. But it is always preferable to select the readings in connection with the preaching. Scripture reading is a constituent part of the service. It has a special meaning, just as the reading of the Ten Commandments of the LORD, as the Constitution of God's Covenant.

It has a special meaning in connection with the text of the sermon as well, to open the context, to show the relations, to build up the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as the central contents of the whole Word of God. Therefore, the reading of the Holy Scripture is the foundation and one of the pillars of Christian public worship (Wegman, 1976:98). The function of it is essential for the service, in which the two parties of God's covenant meet one another. The whole Bible is the infallible Word of God and the inscripturation of the covenant of the LORD. Therefore, the covenant document for today, the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testament is to be read in every service. God wants His relationship with us to be known to us.

Reader

So the reading of the Holy Scriptures is necessary and indispensable to public worship in the Christian church. But what about the *reader?* Who must read the Scriptures? Does the reader have a *special and separate task* in the service?

In the Reformed churches it was the custom until this century that the service started with the appearance of the reader. Many times the reader came in action even before the service started. For instance in Scotland the reader started with a form like this: "Let us dispose our hearts to the service of God by singing the following psalm. . . ." In The Netherlands too, the reader entered before the service and asked the congregation to sing the first psalm. And after that, the service started.

But this custom was neither new nor a peculiar mark of Reformed churches. No, this custom already existed in the fourth century in Jerusalem. In the time of Bishop

Cyril in the second part of the fourth century, people came very early to the church. They "sit waiting there singing hymns and antiphons, and they have prayers between, since there are always presbyters and deacons there ready for the vigil, because so many people collect there, and it is not usual to open the holy places before cock-crow. Soon the first cock crows, and at that time the bishop enters and goes into the cave in the Resurrection church. The doors are all opened, and all the people come into the church, which is already ablaze with lamps. When they are inside, a psalm is said by one of the presbyters, with everyone responding." (Egeria, XXIV, 8,9). So not the bishop, but one of the presbyters started in that time the service. However, not only in the fourth century, but even in the very beginning of the Christian church this situation existed. It seems that presbyters and deacons read the Scriptures and led the song, and that the pastor delivered the sermon (Dix, 1954:39ff.).

In the second century we hear about a fixed office in the church under the name *lector.* Even laymen, although educated laymen, could fulfil this task.

In the third century this task became an official ecclesiastical degree. Already in the beginning of the third century the reader had achieved the status of an official in the congregations of Northern Africa.

Cyprian describes the reading desk as "the tribunal of the church." It was situated there in the centre of the church, like the reading desk in the synagogue.

From a letter of Cornelius, who was elected bishop of Rome in the year 251, to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, we learn that the Roman clergy in his day numbered forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, fifty-two readers and janitors (that means doorkeepers). The readers were held in great esteem. Commodian addresses them in his "Instructions" as follows: "Vos flores in plebe, vos estis Christi lucernae" ("You are the flowers under the people, the lights of Christ"). Eusebius mentions that during the persecution under the emperor Diocletian in the beginning of the fourth century the prisons everywhere were filled with bishops, presbyters, deacons, *readers* and exorcists, so that room was no longer left in them for those condemned for crimes. Before that time Tertullian writes about the readers in the church: "Hodie diaconus, qui cras lector" ("Who is deacon today will be reader tomorrow"). And also: "The leaders of the congregation are "probati seniores" (experienced elders) or "praesidentes," and their assistants are deacons and readers" (Dekkers, 1947:38,72ff.).

In the fourth century we find in several places young men, who were not old enough to be ordained to other offices, proceeding as readers. So the later Pope Damasus was already lector at the age of thirteen. To become a lector, there was at first an "adlectio" (an examination) and after that came the "ordinatio." So it is understandable that in several churches, like Rome, Lyons and Reims, there were "scholae lectorum" (schools for readers), who became in the seventh century "scholae cantorum (schools for singers). In that time the readings of the Bible were given in charge with the deacons and the subdeacons. Remarkable is the decision of the council of Toledo (398): a penitent can be a lector again, but then he may not read the gospel and the epistles!

Further development

Several times the church father Augustine spoke and wrote about the "lectores." They must read the Scripture from the "rostrum" and sometimes from the steps of the "absis" (the higher part of the church building). Augustine called the readers "young men, who did not yet change their voices" (Van der Meer, 1947:31). In another place Augustine called the lectores even "infantuli" (little boys). The point was that

the boys should have a clear, plain, unbroken voice. But they were in the time of Augustine always "pueri," boys, who were very young, and who even had little knowledge. Always after the greeting in the beginning of the service, done by the bishop himself, the congregation answered. But immediately the young lector then started to declaim the Scripture reading with a clear voice. No wonder that in later times decisions were made that the lector might not be too young. For instance, Justinian, a Byzantine emperor of the sixth century decided that no one could be lector before the age of eighteen. But the independent liturgical function of the lector was maintained through the ages. Still the pulpit was forbidden for him and reserved for the ordained priest.

Not only the lector, but also a deacon could read the Scripture. In any case, according to the decision of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, at least two readings were to be held in the service. The term "lector" is still in vogue and Rome still uses the word in the sense of an ecclesiastical task.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century knew the office of the reader as well. Calvin for instance maintained in the beginning two servants in the services. He called them according to the old names: deacons and subdeacons. Especially in the daily services there was a lectio continua. The task of the lector in the time of the Reformation was often: to read the Holy Scripture before the beginning of the service. So we can read in the articles of Wesel (1568) that it is useful, to prevent idle talk, that one of the elders or deacons should read a chapter of the Scriptures. But the readers must be mindful that it is not their office to explain the Scriptures. Therefore they have to stay away from any explanation. They may not strike their sickles in the harvest of another one, and in the second place they may not disturb the common understanding of the church by untimely explanations (Biesterveld & Kuyper, 1905:13ff.).

In the same way we read about readers in the Acts of Synod Dordrecht 1574. The reading must not be done from the pulpit and most of the time the readers should be teachers of the school. We also read about the readers in the *Acts* of particular and provincial synods in the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. The provincial synod of Haarlem 1606, in answering a question of the Church of Alkmaar, decided that the lector must be a member of the church.

In the same year the provincial synod of Nijmegen said: the readers may not interfere "in partes ministerii," the office of the ministers of the church (Reitsma/Van Veen, 1985: IV, 146). Apparently it was necessary to forbid that again and again. It is also to be noted that at the time of the synod of Dordt 1618/'19 a reader in Kampen did not only read the Holy Scripture, but he read a long letter defending the Remonstrant ideas and heresies as well. The provincial synod of Overijsel then decided that this reader should be suspended. (Reitsma/Van Veen, 1896:V, 340). At the same time there was the case of a reader at the provincial synod of Utrecht. He not only read the gospel, but gave explanations too and baptized as well. It was decided that he had to abstain from all ecclesiastical ministry because he had no licence for it. Moreover he was condemned to be unworthy to read the Holy Scriptures in the services (Reitsma/Van Veen, 1897:VI, 433).

In the meantime synod decided that the readers had to be examined. If it was clear that they could read well in public worship, they were allowed to do it. If not, they could not be a Scripture reader of the church. (Reitsma/Van Veen, 1897:VI, 323).

Amsterdam

It is most interesting to hear how the reader functioned in the capital city of Amsterdam in the beginning of the Reformation. Exactly half an hour before the ser-

vice started, the organ stopped and the reader stepped behind his desk. In the beginning he did not read the announcements of the consistory. The ministers did that on the pulpit. But the Reverend Plancius proposed to change this and his proposal was adopted. So the lector read the announcements before the service. He filled the remaining time with reading the Bible. He started with Genesis 1 and proceeded to Revelation 22.

So it was a real "lectio continua," of course divided over many Sundays. Later the ministers made a list, more or less adapted to the liturgical year. Scripture reading was interrupted by singing psalms. This custom was maintained in Amsterdam until the twentieth century (Evenhuis, 1967:57ff.).

Dordrecht

In 1578 the Scripture reading before the preaching had been introduced in Dordrecht. The consistory decided to ask elders for that task, but also decided to wait until the new elders had been installed in their office.

In the beginning the elders only read in the services of the Lord's Supper, but after seven years, the consistory decided to do that every Sunday. The elder who was a reader in the cathedral of Dordrecht received a free habitation in the Guest House. In the year 1619 the municipality appointed the readers. The consistory examined them and presented them to the burgomasters, who elected them. Their function also included the visiting of the sick and hearing the children recite their Catechism lessons. For the last task they received twenty-five guilders yearly (Schotel n.d.:313ff.). This office of the reader was a very serious matter.

In Zeeland a synod decided that the calling of readers and singers should be done by the consistory. The argument was: their service is fully ecclesiastical. Another decision of the same synod was: "When both offices of reading and singing in public worship have been done by one and the same person, such a call must be extended in the same way as the call of the ministers of the church."

Other countries

How was the situation in other countries? In many churches there were readers. In the "Holy Liturgy" of the Byzantine rite of the "orthodox churches" in the East the reading belongs to the "cheirothesia," one of the lower ordinations.

As for England, we read in the "Form of Prayers" of 1556, used by the Puritans: "Upon the days appointed for the preaching of the Word, when a convenient number of the congregation are come together, that they make fruit of their presence till the assembly be full, one appointed by the eldership shall read some chapters of the canonical books of Scripture singing psalms between at his discretion: and this reading to be in order as the books and chapters follow, that so from time to time the holy Scriptures may be read throughout. But upon special occasion, special chapters may be appointed." (Maxwell, 1931:177).

In Scotland, a similar practice soon appeared. Readers were appointed from 1560 onwards to "read the Commoune Prayeris and the Scripturis," and this practice of reading was to be carried on daily in the town churches.

There is a description of the year 1635 of an English Puritan visiting Edinburgh. He writes: "Upon the Lord's Day they do assemble betwixt eight and nine in the morning, and spend the time in singing psalms and reading chapters in the Old Testament until about ten. . . . The afternoon's exercise, which begins soon after one, is performed in the same manner . . . save the chapters then read out of the New Testament."

Remarkable is the fact that sometimes women read the Scriptures. In the *Manual* of the French Carmelites, 1680, there is a full description of the solemn reading of the gospel at the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday. A nun takes the gospel book from the altar and goes to the desk, preceded by lights and incense; she censes the book and reads the gospel exactly as the deacon does at High Mass.

But this replacement of deacons by women, as in this case in the Roman Catholic Church, is an exception. Almost always *men* fulfil the task of reading the Scripture, and this task had been maintained as a *constituent part* of public worship.

Often they were "lay readers." In Lutheran Germany the schoolmaster carried this burden more often than the pastor.

In Scotland in the majority of sixteenth-century parishes the Lord's Day services were also conducted by the readers, following the *Book of Common Order.* In those parishes the ordained minister (with some of the congregation) entered only just before the sermon. The minister also felt free to substitute prayers of his own in the stated liturgy. A similar institution developed in continental Reformed churches, the French with their "lectures," and the Dutch with "voorlezers" (Nichols, 1968:70).

As for the Presbyterians, they were uneasy about the rapid expansion of unlicensed preachers and laymen, which the Independents encouraged in congregational "prophesying." They also wished to set limits on "lecturing." "Lecturing" was a running exposition of Scripture and was especially popular through the system of Puritan "lectureships," of endowed preaching posts outside the regular benefices. The Directory permitted lecturing, but specified that if the Scripture was to be expounded, it should wait till the end of the chapter. What was merely permissive here soon became general practice. The minister added an expository "lecture" to his reading of Scripture in addition to the sermon. The Scotch assembly had to set the hour for morning worship half an hour earlier to accommodate the additional time added by the "lecturing." And the old "reader's service" disappeared altogether. The question was now, how to reunite the separate services of the reader and the preacher.

Special readers or not?

Are the readers (elders, deacons or laymen) able to read the Holy Scriptures in public worship? More than once the answer given is: No!

There are many stories about reading elders, who made mistakes, who could not read strange terms and strange names very well.

It is known that a reader in the morning service and in the afternoon service on account of two different ministers had to read the same chapter of the Epistles with many names for greetings. In the first service he stumbled over his words when he read all the names. In the second service he took it easier, saying in short: "Furthermore you may have the greetings of the same people as this morning!"

And well-known is the story of the reader who was the chanter as well. He had to sing an unknown song, but he could not read it very well. So he apologized for that, saying on a half melodious tune:

"My eyes are dim, I cannot see" —

The congregation, however, thought this sentence was the first of the song, and sang after him:

"I speak of my infirmity"
"I did not mean to sing a hymn"
"I only said: My eyes are dim!"

But good *preparation* is the way out here. And what about that minister who is sometimes unintelligible on the pulpit? That happens more than once!

Almost a century ago the advice had been given to each Scripture reader: "Do not read the Scripture like a notary but like an heir reads the last will!"

It is a challenge to those who read the Scriptures to do it well. The reader should never give the impression that he is reading just because the order of service calls for a reading from the Scripture at that time. He should convey to the congregation that what he is reading is of very great importance (Rayburn, 1980:208).

But to read well is a rare accomplishment. It is much more common to excel in singing or in public speaking.

It is very important that the reader prepares always the Scripture reading before the service. Already in the first century the synagogue reading was prepared very well. The reader knew at least the day before the service was held what part of the Scripture he had to read, and he was supposed to read in the service very well and "with melodious voice."

But the congregation must attend to the reading too. We agree with the wish of a contemporary liturgical scholar: "It is of great importance that members of the congregation should follow the reading of the Scriptures in their own Bibles or in Bibles provided for them in the pews." (Rayburn, 1980:209). We must not leave the Bible on the *pulpit* alone. That is the reason too why we would strongly defend to have a special reader of the Holy Scriptures in public worship, and to look for men who are able and capable to read the Bible in the services of the church. For the question is: is the Bible property of the minister of the church, so that only *he* is able to read it? The answer is: no, our LORD gave the Bible in the hands of all His people. The reading of the Bible, therefore, is not a privilege of a pastor, neither especially something of an office-bearer!

The institute of the "lector" as reader of the Holy Scripture has been defended strongly by A. Kuyper. He writes that the minister is already the Jack-of-all-trades and that is not good in the church. Moreover, from the beginning of the Christian church, the acts of the official services were divided among two or three persons. Kuyper pleads in favour of the reader apart from the preacher. He writes: public service means a meeting. It is not only a meeting between God and His people, but a meeting of the people together as well. And therefore it is not good to think that everything is to be done by one person and that everybody only comes to hear that one person (Kuyper, 1911:171ff., 262ff.).

Connection between reading and preaching

When should the Scriptures be read? We said already it would be good to have no gap between reading and preaching, except singing psalms or hymns between both. But should that close association of the Scripture reading with the preaching be an argument against the restoration of the institute of the lector, as has been said?

I do not believe that. It is a fine variation in the service, especially when things have been prepared very well. No doubt it would promote the beauty of the Reformed worship if the special task of the reader were to be restored. With A. Kuyper I say: think if over, consider it and discuss it! And we can use the pulpit and the reading desk as well, from which places even in large buildings, one can be quite understandable, with today's modern technology!

But let the minister announce all elements of the service previously. All elements. For the caretaker, for the organist, for the Scripture reader too, for the whole congregation, so that everybody can come to worship well-prepared!

And let us give content to the task of the public reader in the church. It was not good that the lector read the announcements of the consistory quite sometime before the service started. But why should it be impossible that the reader of the Scriptures reads the announcements at another time, when the whole congregation assembles? And would it be impossible that the reader announced the psalm which is to be sung after the reading of God's Law? And if there is no minister preaching in the service, is there any objection that in that case two brothers appear, namely as reader of the Scriptures and as reader of the sermon?

A sensitivity for these liturgical matters would be very desirable.

We have to see the exalted place of the Word of the covenant of the LORD in public worship, where He and His people meet one another.

We have to see the exalted place of the preaching of the Word of God by the ministers of the church in public worship.

We have also to see the exalted place of the Kingdom of priests, as all the members of the church are, especially when they meet together in the service. Let us all see our place and task, worshipping the LORD, praising our God in all the parts of the beautiful public worship! So we are now going to finish our address with the following:

Conclusions

1. The reading of the Holy Scripture was already known in the time of the Old Testament and in the synagogue; it was one of the constituent elements of the Christian public worship.

2. It is necessary that this principle of Scripture reading be maintained in public worship; for the Bible is the covenant document for today as well.

3. The Law of God in the Ten Commandments is to be read as the constitution of the covenant of the LORD; besides the reading of the Law of God, at least one other part of the Holy Scriptures is to be read in every service.

4. Scripture reading, preaching and teaching belong together; it would be better, not to interrupt these elements, except for instance by singing between the readings or between reading and preaching.

5. Reading of an arbitrary part of the Bible, without any relationship to the text of the sermon, is not good; it is preferable to select the readings carefully in connection with the preaching.

6. The Holy Scripture is not the property of the minister of the church, but the whole congregation possesses the Bible; it is therefore desirable that the reading of the Bible takes place by another reader.

7. It is not necessary that the Scripture reading be done by an office-bearer; the main thing is that the Bible will be read clearly in public worship.

8. It will be good that the function of Scripture reader is not limited to only one person; variety and interchange are here desirable.

9. Just as for all elements of public worship a good and timely preparation is indispensable, the best way is that the minister makes all the elements of the service known ahead of time.

10. It is desirable to give content to the task of the public reader; he can take care of the reading of the confession and the announcements of the consistory as well.

POETRY AND PROSE

The Organist

Up the stairs without a runner
Climbs he to the gallery.
Then begins, once he is seated,
Softly his soliloquy.
'Take a look at the first prelude,
Seven triplets in a row;
Here I'll use the sesquialtra,
There a flute should nicely go.'

So he tries to solve his problems.
'Tis already time to start . . .;
Softly he begins his prelude,
Left hand has the solo part;
In a pair of worn-out sneakers,
On the pedal, feet are on the go;
Now and then he plays a few notes
On the manual below.

To the brothers and the sisters
His endeavours are not known.
'Let him have his fun,' they're saying,
And they add, 'To each his own.'
If you judge by what you're hearing,
He's not very good, you know.
It's too loud, too soft he's playing,
Much too fast or much too slow.

With the psalm, in proper rhythm,
Utter chaos reigns below.
It's too fast that way already,
Yet much faster it must go.
And his offertory playing
Could have been much better, too.
Through that tootling one hears barely
That the neighbour says, 'Thank you.'

If per chance he plays a wrong note
('As the hart . . .' a child can play),
Heads are shaken in feigned pity:
'T was a proper mess today.
A hundred times it may be perfect;
If it's hundred-n-one, watch out.
That the plaints are then forthcoming
Oh so quickly, there's no doubt.

Down the stairs without a runner
Wearily he makes his way.
Even though he sometimes grumbles,
There's no doubt he loves to play.
If it's Bach he plays or, worse still,
Feike Asma or Jan Zwart,
Once he's seated at the organ
He plays it with all his heart.
(Jaap Mijderwijk, transl. from Dutch by S. VanderPloeg)

Those who meditate about the organist and his task are involuntarily tempted to quote from the copious poetry written about the office and duty of the organist. It is difficult not to do this for the nature of the man's profession is such that one is almost automatically inclined to speak and write about him in verse.

The title of this essay, however, is taken from a very prosaic book which was published in 1694 by Reynier van Doesburg, bookseller on the Fish Market at Rotterdam. I mean that beautiful book *The Office and Duties of Elders and Deacons,* written by Jacobus Koelman, minister of the gospel.

Let it be said beforehand that when we speak about the "office" of the organist we do not give it the pregnant meaning which Koelman gives this word. We are not dealing with a special office in Christ's church, even though others in certain liturgical circles think differently. We are speaking about the organist's office as being synonymous with his duty.

The organist and his faith

The first point to be considered, in our opinion, is the organist and his faith. Kuyper was fond of quoting the 50th Psalm, wich speaks of Zion as "the perfection of beauty." "So high stood the Temple for beauty in Israel," writes Kuyper, "that when Solomon had to build the temple and was unable to find an architect in all Israel who could give form to this beauty, he did not say: 'Then we must sacrifice this beauty, for it must be a Jew who is going to do the work.' No, he went to the heathens and found in Hiram a man who could build it to the aesthetic and artistic requirements. It was this heathen builder who created the temple. That Solomon, in so doing, did not kick over the traces, but stayed in line with God's ordinances becomes clear from the lay-out and furniture of the Tabernacle. Then it is the Spirit of God Himself who gives Bezaleel and Aholiab artistic integrity and an eye for beauty and who to the smallest detail had the parts and the tools of the tabernacle constructed according to the law of aesthetics" (Kuyper, 1911:75).

Kuyper's conclusion is that there can be no objection against engaging an architect from outside our circle, if no suitable church architect can be found among the brethren.

Now one could perhaps think that Kuyper is of the same opinion with regard to organists. One could reason: the task of the organist is an artistic one; if we cannot find one among the brethren who meets our standards, we hire one from outside our circle.

Under no circumstances does Kuyper wish to go in that direction. He selects organists from among the brethren for in the worship service not only beauty, but above all holiness plays an important role (Kuyper, 1911:158).

This holiness comes first. The worship service is a matter of the communion of saints. "It would be improper, to give this direction in the hands of an unbeliever who only works in the field of art and who could not lead the singers entrusted to him in

the area of faith. The choir-master would be a stumbling block to his chorister and could conceivabley keep them from the holy encounter" (Milo, 1946:216).

A few more quotations from Milo, for in our opinion he makes meritorious remarks on the subject. "Even when the organist is a confessing member of his church, he can only do his work properly if he has a rich life in faith. Isolation behind curtains for many years can lead to an 'ivory-tower culture.' When the organist literally as well as figuratively looks down on the congregation - *they* sang fairly well today; *they* do not know this tune; *they* like this minister - he has removed himself from the congregation and has become a wandering sheep. It is precisely the artistic type - also through lack of understanding on the part of the congregation - who runs the risk of losing himself in subjectivism. It is therefore dangerous to put an organist behind curtains. It harms his experiencing of the communion of saints. It is beneficial for an organist to sit from time to time among the brethren so that he can sing along. It is, however, not enough to see to it that the spiritual growth of the organist does not lag behind. The organist above all needs to have a rich life of faith and be an active churchmember. His playing 'according to the Word' is prophesying. Not only should he know the metrical psalter for the most part by heart and possess a great knowledge of Scripture, but also have a feeling for the content and spiritual value of churchsong and make this feeling correctly known to others. His playing is not sufficient if it merely avoids all giving of offence. It must edify positively and contribute to God's honour and the congregation's salvation. Now without promoting the organist to special office-bearer we should insist that he be spiritually healthy and capable of growth in that respect. Organists with a derelict life of faith, indifference towards the sacraments, or chronic irresolution, cannot be chief-musicians."

Prophesying from the organ bench

That organ playing is related to prophecy, Jan Zwart already told the Reformed people in 1934. He spoke of "prophesying during the worship service, before and after the sermon, in a language the people understand." At Zwart's death Schilder wrote, "What our forefathers in not even circuitous ways concluded from 1 Cor. 12 (namely that also from the organ bench the neighbour has to be edified), that Jan Zwart felt burning within him and how he was consumed by that fire!" (Schilder, 1937:341).

A year later, during the unveiling of Zwart's tombstone, Prof. Schilder said: "His life's work was to prophesy from the organ bench, and when we say that we give true expression to what motivated this man."

In a commemoration address K.S. called Jan Zwart a confessor who did not wish to push prophecy aside. He ended with: "To those people for whom the language of art was foreign, and who had their own Christian faith content, he spoke in his own language; art's norms were obeyed and the church's 'credo' was honoured. He who is able to do that has done a great thing" (Schilder, 1947:349).

There is thus a clear connection between organ playing and prophecy. The organist who understands his task well will confess his faith in his organ playing and so contributes to the edification, that is, to the building up, of the congregation.

The organist and his art

First we saw that an organist has to be a believer, if he is to do his task in the worship service properly.

Although his spiritual disposition comes first, it can never replace the artistic know-how. Faith, indispensable as it may be, does not make a person a capable organist;

talents for and skills in organ playing must go with it. When the tabernacle was built, God Himself filled men with His Spirit so that they could think of designs (Ex. 31:3,4). There follows for added emphasis: "and I have given to able men ability" (31:6). Chronicles, in dealing with the singers, speaks about people "who were *trained* in singing to the Lord" (1 Chr. 25:7). The word "skilful" is even used in this context.

From this it becomes clear that we should not be satisfied with a minimum, but should strive for the maximum (the optimum). Our rule should be: our best is not really good enough, for Christ holds the demand of perfection before us.

For that reason the organist has to be an artist. "The church selects that brother," according to Milo, "who perceives the churchsong correctly and who has developed his skills in order to lead the singing in the best possible manner. No one is born with this ability. Only his talents did the artist receive from His Creator; for the development and use of his gifts he himself is responsible . . . Some of us are born with a fine sense of justice, a warm love for humanity, with leadership qualities, or with an acute religious consciousness. Can these people by virtue of their inborn abilities present themselves as lawyers, ministers of social welfare, officers, or preachers? Neither does an organist become a skilled professional by the bare fact of his musical talents alone. The most musically gifted person would not be accepted by an orchestra, unless he has received a sound training. Even less should such an untrained person be allowed to play during the worship service (Milo, 1946:218).

The organist and his training

This brings us to the next point: the training of the organist. Regretfully, only a few of our churches have a proper tracker organ. Often we have to be satisfied with a harmonium, sometimes with a piano, or (the less said about them the better) electronics.

Among us professional organists are even rarer than proper church organs. If we have such persons let us treasure them! In the course of time many organists became estranged from the church. Of course, they have themselves to blame, too. Where was their faith when they had to make the choice between a lessor organ within the Reformed church or a better organ without? Such a choice must be made in faith. It remains a sad thing that a man like Jan Zwart became organist of a Lutheran church in Amsterdam. How many of the professional organists, in accepting a position, gave up their church membership or even their faith? At the same time, however, I ask: did the churches always understand the needs or problems of the organist? (I am not talking about money in the first place). Has there often not been misunderstanding or lack of appreciation that made these persons feel isolated from the congregation?

Training then is needed and that training we must appreciate. The organist should not play all kinds of bravura to show off his virtuosity and the congregation should not react too quickly to an effort by the organist to remain "fresh": "All modern stuff, you can keep it!"

Our requirements should not be put on the low side. One does not become an organist in a few years, if previous training is lacking. Where studies have to be undertaken in spare time, one can count on at least five years. Even then it still depends greatly on the talents of the teacher whether or not one will pass a comparative examination.

Do stimulate this study! We live in a time in which the modern media offer us everything in the easiest possible manner. Seated in a comfortable chair all things are within easy reach. You don't have to do anything for it. Our youth has to be stimulated to activity and creativity, especially now that leisure time increases. Let it not hap-

pen again that a minister, when he was unable to find an organist in the congregation, was forced to ask an accordionist to take place on the organ bench. The next Sunday the good man had to play with hands and feet already.

Comparative examinations are necessary. The organ committee should not select the least poor from among all the poor candidates. They must have the courage to state that no choice could be made and to advise the candidates to study some more. At best only a temporary appointment can be made under such circumstances.

Apart from competent playing of independent organ music, the organist must, above all, be capable of accompanying the congregation. That means: that he must make the psalm tunes his own and know the church modes. "Accompanying," writes H. Hasper, "means to go along with someone. It neither means to run ahead or drag along, nor to follow or to lag behind, but to be where the other is, not to lose him, if necessary to help him along, to escort him and so create a sense of security and peace." Hasper adds that an organist neglects his duty if he, during the singing of the congregation, does something other than accompanying and supporting (Hasper, 1941:140ff.).

The organist and his honorarium

If the church has capable organists in its employ, they must be esteemed, too. That, in the first place, means honouring him. Also the organist is worthy of honour if he does his work well. Does this have to be expressed in money? Here I touch a hot issue. On purpose I left out one of the stanzas of Van Mijderwijk's poem and quote it now in this context.

Renumerations for his service
Are generally quite small
(Or as frequently the case is
Th' organist gets none at all).
For 'it broadens his horizon.'
'Tis a labour-o'love you know.'
But the worn seat of trousers
Is but all he's got to show.

Nota bene: this stanza dates from a few decades ago. Since then the standard of living has risen considerably. Salaries of church functionaries have risen. Those of the organist, too?

"It has to be a labour of love," is often the reaction. Sometimes one adds naughtily: "He misses the collection already, too!"

I am afraid that in most cases his honorarium is no more than a sort of indemnification for services rendered during the week and then almost exclusively for marriage ceremonies. Sometimes forced, I am told because no organist would show up otherwise. They simply couldn't always quit early to take half a day off.

One is quick to draw a comparison with the special office-bearer, not with the minister but with the elder and deacon. It is said: how much free time do not these men often give to the church and that also is a labour of love. In the first place I wish to point out that everything in the church is a labour of love, in the sense that it must come from and be done in love. It is not possible to pay for all the hours given. Nobody would want that either. But if an elder, in the course of his duties, regularly has taken time off, e.g. as a delegate to all sorts of meetings, it shouldn't happen that he should have to give up all his holidays for that. It must be possible to indemnify him or at least offer to do that.

Furthermore I wish to speak in favour of making it possible for elders and deacons to keep up with the literature pertaining to their office. If they are to prove the spirits, if they are to remain fresh on home visits, in short, if they are to discharge their offices faithfully, they must study. That costs money. This they should not have to pay out of their own pockets.

Let me extend this parallel. We should at least, I believe, enable the organists to keep up with the developments in his field. They should not have to ask for that; it should be offered to them. They want to put their talents at the disposal of the church community. With love. That comes first. But more is needed than time. They must study if they do not want to play the same old tune over and over. For that books are needed, books about music, books about the worship service, also books with music for before, during, and after the service.

It becomes more difficult when we are dealing with professional organists. I would not like to make a rule, but would like to plead for proper renumeration, which does not turn it into just another job, but which shows appreciation for the work done. Will that kill the love? I am not afraid of that. Milo writes in this connection: "Where the organists form the musical conscience of the church, there is no place for wage-slaves or misers, but for church-members who vigorously stimulate the church's sacred song. And that not only by virtue of inborn talents, but also by virtue of sound training and costly sacrifices . . . Truly, even if they were paid, the character of the labour of love would not be lost" (Milo, 1946:218). In a footnote he adds: "Even though the comparison with the Levitical singers and instrumentalists is faulty (for theirs was a spiritual office), it is not superfluous to show how the Levite was honoured according to God's law; the tithes were their rewards for services rendered (Num. 18:31); they were free from other service, for they were on duty day and night (1 Chron. 9:33); the people were not to forsake the Levite (Deut. 12:19), and when they did that Nehemiah remonstrated with the officials (Neh. 13:10,11), for the singers, who did work, had fled each to his field and the house of God was forsaken. Yet . . . no one can deny that they performed a labour of love: the Dutch metrical psalter even speaks of a "burning with zeal for the service of the Lord." (Ps. 134) (Milo, 1946:231).

THE ORIGIN OF OUR PSALM MELODIES

John Calvin

During a long time in the middle ages, the people of the Church did not sing in the public worship services. It was John Calvin who rediscovered the book of Psalms for the people of the Church and who transferred the singing in the Church from the clergy to the Church as a whole. The Reformer of Geneva taught the Church again to sing her Psalms.

In the year 1537, still during Calvin's first stay in Geneva, the Reformer proposed to the Council of the city the introduction of the singing of Psalms by the whole congregation, "in order to lift up our hearts unto God and to exalt His Name by songs of praise." But the Council of Geneva rejected Calvin's proposal. They did not consider the time to be ripe for such a radical change.

But in Strasbourg the victory began! In 1538 Calvin was banished from Geneva to this city, and already in the following year he had a small book of Psalms printed; it contained 19 Psalms in a rhymed version, together with the Song of Simeon, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed. The rhymed versions of 13 of these 19 Psalms were made by Clement Marot, servant and court poet of King Francis I of

France, a man who had great talents. The other six rhymed versions were made by Calvin himself. The melodies to which these 19 Psalms and 3 Hymns were sung originated mostly from Matthias Greiter at Strasbourg. These melodies disappeared later on from the *Book of Praise*; the well-known melody of Psalm 68 (the same as of Psalm 36) is the only melody from Greiter's hand, which is maintained in the *Book of Praise*. He was also the composer of the melody of the Apostles' Creed, the unrhymed version of the Twelve Articles. In the Dutch *Book of Praise* it is now Hymn 4.

In Strasbourg the basis of our singing of Psalms was actually laid.

From Strasbourg to Geneva

In 1542 Marot published another 30 Psalms. The rhymed versions of John Calvin were revised. When Calvin was back in Geneva, 49 Psalms could soon be published. Unfortunately, the cooperation between Calvin and Marot did not last very long. In the same year Clement Marot left Geneva, and he died in Turin in the year 1544. He did not feel at ease with Calvinism.

At that time only a third part of the book of Psalms was finished in a rhymed version. In Geneva many were strongly convinced that this work had to be continued, but the difficulty was: who was willing and able to finish this work? Calvin did not consider his own poetical talents to be very great. In later editions, Calvin's own rhymings are missing. The Reformer started this work and promoted and stimulated it, but he was too modest to promote his own work in this respect.

In 1548 he once visited Theodorus Beza. This young man (29) had been converted to the Reformation in that same year and had come to Geneva. Calvin did not find Beza at home, but on his desk he discovered a draft of a rhymed version of Psalm 16. It appeared that Beza had started on his own to rhyme Psalms. Historians mention the fact that Beza, after he for the first time attended the public worship service in Geneva, was so impressed with the singing of Psalms that very soon he started to rhyme Psalms himself.

Calvin took the paper with him and showed it to the other ministers, who immediately became enthusiastic. Therefore Beza received the request to finish the work of Marot. That did indeed happen: in 1551 "Thirty-four Psalms of David by Theodorus Beza" were published, and in the following year they were published together with the 49 Psalms mentioned earlier.

Behind the edition of 1551 there was not only the pressure of the congregation of Geneva to finish the Reformed Psalter. In Lausanne, where Beza had become a professor, lived Guillaume Franc, who was very much interested in the rhymed psalter and who had urged Beza more than once to give priority to the work of rhyming the Psalms. But after 1551 the work stopped more or less. In the following four years only six Psalms were done, while in the years which then followed only one Psalm was added.

When in 1559 in Geneva the academy was established and Beza had moved in because he received an appointment as professor there, 60 Psalms were still to be rhymed. He was urged from all sides to finish the work, and he did indeed complete it in a short time. He did not do it as a kind of hobby or by poetic impulse. He considered the work that Marot had started to be a *duty*. He felt himself compelled to do it and accepted responsibility for the task that was given to him. In 1561 he finished the whole project. The day after Christmas 1561 permission to print the complete Psalter was received from Paris. On the same day the Paris priests rang the bells of the Church of Saint Merardus in order to disturb the public worship of the Reformed people who were gathered together in the neighbourhood. That cause a struggle. The

parliament seized the occasion to hang three Reformed men. Even the guard officers who had protected the Reformed men against the attackers were sentenced to death.

It was a difficult time, filled with enmity against the Reformed people. But Beza nevertheless received the printer's privilege or permission to publish the complete Psalter. He was not dependent on the Paris parliament. With the support of the French court, the young king, his mother, and many others, he was able, in the spring of 1562, to introduce the complete Psalter also among the people of France.

The development and the growth of the Psalter took altogether a period of more than twenty years. The many editions of fragmentary Psalters point to the fact that the singing of Psalms started already very early in the Reformed public worship services. It was not delayed until the Psalter was completed.

Melodies

Already the first edition of Strasbourg, 1539, was supplied with melodies. We have already mentioned the name of Matthias Greiter, who composed several melodies, e.g., the melody of Psalm 119, which was used by Calvin for his rhymed version of Psalm 36, while Beza later on used this melody also for his rhymed version of Psalm 68.

Almost all other melodies orginated in France. The composer of most of them was Louis Bourgeois, a cantor at the Church of Saint Pierre in Geneva; he had been attracted by John Calvin himself to work on the Psalms. Louis Bourgeois composed melodies on the so-called church modes.

The melodies are of an extremely high quality. As for the church modes, already in that time they had a very long history. Thus it is absolutely not true that the Psalm melodies were based on street songs of that time or on airs and tunes which were popular then. For many decades this theory has been repeated, but it is totally wrong. In a next article we hope to work this out.

Louis Bourgeois

In my former article I mentioned the name of Louis Bourgeois, a musician who was attracted by Calvin himself in order to compose melodies for the rhymed Psalms. He came to Geneva in 1541 and already in 1542 he published some melodies, and they were followed by many more in the years which followed. Besides him also a certain Guillaume Franc worked in Lausanne until 1552. Bourgeois refashioned old melodies which belonged to the rhymed Psalms of Marot and arranged new ones for Beza. But in Lausanne the old Marot melodies were preserved and for the Beza Psalms the melodies of Franc were chosen. In the end the Psalter of Geneva was preferred to the melodies of Lausanne. It is not sure whether Louis Bourgeois was also the composer of the 34 Psalms which Beza has rhymed and which were published in 1551. In this respect also the name of Francois Gindron is mentioned, who also composed melodies to spiritual songs written by Beza. In that time Beza lived in Lausanne, where Gindron was a cantor.

It is remarkable that there were already at that time Reformed hymns. They had of course nothing to do with the so-called evangelical hymns which played a role in the 18th and 19th centuries. These Reformed hymns (also called Cantica) were directly derived from the Scriptures and were set to music on beautiful melodies in the church modes. It is certain that Louis Bourgeois composed many melodies which are of a very high quality.

But these things did not happen without any troubles. Besides financial difficulties

there was discord more than once. It is said that Bourgeois had left Geneva in 1557 because Calvin had forbidden him to introduce four-part singing in the public worship services. But there is no proof for this. Although Calvin was not in favour of four-part singing in public worship, it is certain that he helped Bourgeois in the publication of four-part compositions.

At any rate, Louis Bourgeois did not finish the melodies of the Psalter. At the time of his departure, 81 Psalms had received a melody. Somewhere he himself writes that one must not conclude that all the Psalm melodies were composed by himself.

After his departure a certain "*Maître Pierre*" delivered 40 melodies. Until now it is not clear who this cantor actually was. Neither is it cleared up until now whether this man was a composer or whether he just copied melodies from other sources.

Doubles

But apart from this work of Maître Pierre, each Psalm had not yet received its own melody. The rest of the Psalms were sung to the existing melodies of other Psalms. The reason was the desire to finish the whole Psalter in a hurry: the work had already extended over several decades and not enough time had been allowed for the composition of new melodies. That is the reason why up to now 15 Psalm melodies occur twice (5 + 64, 14 + 53, 18 + 144, 28 + 109, 31 + 71, 33 + 67, 36 + 68, 46 + 82, 51 + 69, 60 + 108, 65 + 72, 74 + 116, 77 + 86, 78 + 90, and 117 + 127).

But there are also four Psalm melodies which occur three times (17 + 63 + 70, 30 + 76 + 139, 66 + 98 + 118 and 100 + 131 + 142).

One melody even occurs four times (24 + 62 + 95 + 111).

The melody of Psalm 140 is also used for the Decalogue (Hymn 7 in the Canadian Reformed *Book of Praise*). Other Genevan melodies are those of Hymn 13 (the Song of Mary) and Hymn 18 (the Song of Simeon), while the Song of Zechariah (Hymn 14) orginates from Strasbourg (1525).

Several other Hymns in the *Book of Praise* have also a Genevan Psalm melody: Hymn 2 + 27 (= Psalm 89), Hymn 6 (= Psalm 134), Hymn 11 (= Psalm 42), Hymn 21 (= Psalm 22), Hymn 22 (= Psalm 54 + one line added), Hymn 44 (= Psalm 85), Hymn 49 (= Psalm 56), Hymn 53 (= Psalm 66, 98, 118), and Hymn 58 (= Psalm 124).

It is regrettable that several beautiful melodies of Beza's Hymns have been relegated to oblivion. (I mentioned that in Thesis XII, in my dissertation) (Deddens, 1975).

Already in 1968 (*Lucerna*, VII, 3) I wrote, "It is very desirable that Calvin's heritage in the Genevan Psalter be preserved; in case of a new rhymed version, let the rediscovered but not yet used existing melodies be introduced for the doubles of rhymed Psalms, and if possible let such melodies also be used in case of a revision of the book of Hymns." It has not been done, but I myself used the beaufitul melody of one of Beza's Hymns in my book of songs, *Kom, zing en speel* (Groningen, 1979).

No popular songs and street songs!

The Psalm melodies have a very long history. But it is strange that repeatedly a connection has been sought between Psalm melodies and street songs.

In his extensive work *Kerkelyke Historie van het Psalm-Gezang der Christenen* (Amsterdam, I, 1777; II, 1778), the minister of the church at Veere, Josua van Iperen, stated that the Psalms of Marot and Beza were originally sung to popular tunes and street songs, but that not until the year 1556 Louis Bourgeois was asked to compose other melodies. But in the light of the facts which I mentioned already, this statement

appears to be absolutely wrong.

But here for the first time terms like "popular tunes" and "street songs" were used. Just a century later, the Frenchman Orentin Douen likewise used these terms in another two-volume work, *Clément Marot et le Psautier Huguenot, étude historique, musicale et bibliographique, contenant les mélodies primitives des Psaumes, et des spécimens d'harmonie* (Paris, I, 1878; II, 1879). This work is even more extensive than the work of van Iperen; van Iperen's work counts 1015 pages, but Douen's work no fewer than 1461 pages!

Douen stated that many melodies of the Genevan Psalter had been borrowed from folk tunes and "top-hits" of that time. This statement was pronounced with great authority, but if one examines the "proof" which Douen tried to give, it must be said that he presents something which only resembles it. Nevertheless, Douen's statement has been repeated and accepted by many writers for a long time. I do not want to list all the names of even famous authors who repeated O. Douen's words, but it is remarkable that even a great liturgist such as G. van der Leeuw could write, "The Psalm melodies, just as we know them now, are popular tunes and dance-songs. The main part of it consists of contra-facts. But from the light tunes which were as such very often not that nice, were made beautiful melodies for the church" (Van der Leeuw, 1939:168ff.).

But at least for two reasons it would be impossible that John Calvin worked in that way. In the first place, Calvin always stressed that there must be a close connection between the words and the melodies in singing. Therefore he said time and again that our singing in church was not to be "light and frivolous," but "worthy and majestic." Calvin had a great aversion to all kinds of street ballads, which made the people only licentious, as he said.

In the second place, Calvin always went back to the church of former ages, especially to the early church. He never wanted to break with the church of the ages. On the contrary, he wanted to preserve the continuity of the church. Thus also for this reason it is very unlikely that he consented to the use of contemporary "top-hits" as Psalm melodies.

Simple, not artificial

But Calvin's aim was to give the singing in the church back to the *congregation.* How would that be possible? In Reformation times the singing in the church was limited to the priests, with their Gregorian chants. But these church songs were too difficult for the common people of the church. They were too artificial for untrained singers. Calvin considered that the common people would never be able to sing in the church all the notes of the Gregorian chants, which were often quite aristocratic and luxurious, although very different from the "top-hits" of the day.

But in Strasbourg Calvin heard rhymed hymns in the German language, and they fascinated him. Then he rediscovered, as it were, the book of Psalms, and he wanted to make it accessible to the common people of the church. He sought a style that was proper to the church, but not artificial. Therefore, Calvin often used in this respect the word "*moderate.*" In his writings about church music actually this word has a threefold meaning. This "moderation" stands in the first place over against the abundance of the Gregorian chants, but Calvin used this word also over against a very frequent use of music in the church. The singing of the congregation was to have a place in public worship, but not the first and the main place. But, thirdly, Calvin used this word also over against a kind of agitation and excitement in singing. Hence the expression "worthy and majestic."

Calvin promoted simple singing in the church, not in the sense of vulgar singing, but as a kind of singing which could be done by the whole congregation.

In the meantime, he also sought to continue the tradition of the church, as far as possible.

Did he succeed? Indeed, the Psalm melodies, which nowadays are esteemed very highly everywhere, meet these requirements, and the whole so-called contrafact-theory is proved to be a fantasy.

Emmanuel Haein

Almost half a century after the publication of O. Douen's work, another Frenchman delivered an important thesis, *Le Problème du Chant Choral dans les Eglises Réformées et le Trésor liturgique de la Cantilène huguenote.* This thesis was submitted in 1926 to the Faculté de Théologie Protestante of Montpellier. Haein discovered that there is a close connection between the Genevan Psalm melodies and what he called several "timbres" and "nomes" of Gregorian chants and medieval church hymns.

That was a very remarkable discovery. It dismantled the theory of O. Douen and led the investigation further back to the history of the church.

Further inquiries

Emmanuel Haein in his thesis dated 1926 showed that there was a connection between the melodies of the Genevan Psalter and the Gregorian chants and medieval church hymns. Of course they were not the same, and the Gregorian chants were also deprived of their exuberance that had been developed in course of time. But special motives, called by Haein "timbres" and "nomes" come back in the Psalm melodies, just as they were used in medieval singing.

In this respect the development agrees with Calvin's principle that he did not want to break with the church of the ages.

But there is more. In 1929 a study was published by *Abraham Zebi Idelsohn,* titled *Jewish Music in its Historical Development.*

Idelsohn studied the Jewish way of singing in the synagogue, especially the way of singing Psalms. He discovered that there was throughout the ages a remarkable consistence in the way of singing, in spite of the isolation and separation of synagogues outside the Palestine land. He discovered also that there is a remarkable connection between the singing of Psalms in the synagogues and in the Christian churches.

Furthermore, *Peter Gradenwitz* delivered another study, called *The Music of Israel: Its Rise and Growth through 5000 Years.* He furnished sufficient material to continue the investigations of Haein going back to the synagogical songs, but also to the temple chants.

The remarkable conclusion is then that, as far as the origin of the Genevan Psalm melodies is concerned, these tunes can be traced back even to the period of revelation.

In his very extensive work of almost 2000 pages, the late *H. Hasper* worked that out in his two volumes *Calvijns beginsel voor de zang in de eredienst,* I, ('s Gravenhage, 1955) and II ('s Gravenhage/Groningen, 1976).

Hasper brought many arguments together and on the basis of the explorations by Haein, Idelsohn and Gradenwitz and by combining the data brought to light by them, he came to totally different conclusions from those of Douen. There must have been a very long tradition in the way of singing Psalms, especially via the church modes.

Pierre Pidoux

Between the publication of the two volumes of Hasper, another important study was published, namely that of Pierre Pidoux, *Le Psautier Huguenot,* I *Les Melodies,* II *Documents et Bibliographie* (Basel, 1962).

Pidoux looked for the sources of the Psalm melodies of the Genevan Psalter and published many documents which are important in discovering the origin of the Psalm melodies. Time and again his conclusions go in the same direction as those of other contemporary investigations. He proved that in many cases the Psalm melodies were derived from hymns of the *Antiphonarium* and the *Gradual,* two books consisting of Gregorian chants. Remarkable is his discovery that not only the melodies of Geneva, but also those of Strasbourg go back to those sources.

S.J. Lenselink

A couple of years before Pidoux' study, S.J. Lenselink wrote a dissertation, called *De Nederlandse Psalmberijmingen van de Souterliedekens tot Datheen, met hun voorgangers in Duitsland en Frankrijk* (Assen, 1959), and some years after Pidoux's study but in connection with this, he wrote his book *Les Psaumes de Clément Marot* (Assen/Kassel, 1969).

He writes that although there is not always a sharp distinction to be made between worldly and church music in that time, it is certain that there is a very close connection between many Psalm melodies of the Genevan Psalter and the Gregorian chants. But characteristic of the Genevan melodies, more or less over against the popular songs, is their absolute syllabical structure.

So also Lenselink pointed out that the origin of the Psalm melodies is to be found in the medieval hymns and especially in the Gregorian way of singing.

Church modes

That brings us to the matter of the so-called *church modes,* which are characteristic of the Gregorian chants and which are also used for the Genevan tunes. What are these church modes? In the "Notes on the Genevan tunes" (cf. the *Book of Praise* of the Canadian Reformed Churches, p.VII ff.) it is mentioned that in the Genevan Psalter nine different modes are represented: Dorian, Hypodorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, Hypomixolydian, Aeolian, Hypoaeolian, Ionian and Hypoionian.

These names come from Greece. The Greeks first used tone series of four tones (tetrachords) and called them *modes.* Each area, people or city (Phrygia, Lydia, Ionia) used its own specific order of tones or steps. These developed into tone systems of seven steps or intervals to fill a so-called *octave.* An octave is the distance between a male voice and a female voice singing the same note. The natural difference in tone is called the eight-step or rather the octave interval. This distance is usually filled with seven whole and half steps to fill the space of twelve semitones. The arrangement of whole and half steps can differ in many ways. Each particular order of small and big steps is called a mode, or a key. Most of the hymns of the *Book of Praise* are composed in the so-called *major* or *minor* key. But in the Gregorian chants the Greek names are used (although their names become somewhat confused in translation). But there is much more variety in these so-called church modes than in the major and minor system. The Dorian church mode is used most frequently in the Genevan Psalter: 45 Psalm melodies are based on this mode. To explain this mode briefly: the scale of the Dorian mode has no sharps or flats in the range d to d (while the major key has two sharps from d to d, namely f sharp and c sharp). The scale of the Phrygian mode has

no sharps or flats in the range e to e. The scale of the Mixolydian mode has no sharps or flats in the range g to g. The scale of the Aeolian mode is more or less comparable with the minor key: it has no sharps or flats in the range a to a (although in the minor key actually the g sharp is used). The scale of the Ionian mode is comparable with the major key, because it has no sharps or flats in the range c to c.

When modulating or transposing, the space of the semitones has to be the same. To give an example: when the major key runs from c to c (the c being the so-called *finalis*), it does not have either sharps or flats. But when the same key has been modulated to d, it has two sharps, namely f sharp and c sharp.

So when the Dorian mode runs from d to d, it does not have any sharp or flat. But when it is transposed to e, it has two sharps, namely f sharp and c sharp.

As far as the term *hypo-* is concerned, this has to do with the same mode, so that e.g., the *finalis* of Dorian scale (without sharps or flats) is also d. But the meaning of *Hypo* is: below, or beneath. That means: this scale runs not from d to d (although the finalis is indeed d), but it runs from a to a.

It would go beyond the purpose of my articles if I worked out all the details in this respect. I just give these examples in order to show the great variety and the many possibilities in the church modes.

For more details I should like to refer the readers to the interesting study of Dennis Teitsma, *Tunes of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter,* 327 Pandora Avenue East, Winnipeg, MB, R2C 0A3, 1980 (80 stencilled pages).

The so-called Gregorian phrase is composed of a flexible undulating line, a kind of sonorous thread which is sensitive to the smallest music waves. The Gregorian phrase is not static, not stiff, not sharply delineated. But the hymn, of course, has a different structure. In the hymn the architecture dominates, because of the stanzas which are composed in a strophical construction.

Background of Gregorian chants

So we see that the background of the church modes of the Psalm melodies in our *Book of Praise* is found in the Gregorian chants, and just as Em. Haein already proved more than sixty years ago, Bourgeois and "Maître Pierre" used all kinds of motives, firm melodic formulas and many other elements from the treasure of church music before Reformation times.

But it is interesting to know also what the background is of the Gregorian chants. From more than one side it has been proved that they go back via Greece to the synagogue and even to the temple.

In an also extensive study, the famous Dutch musicologist Hélène Nolthenius who was a professor at the University of Utrecht from 1958 to 1976, pointed to the rich history of the Gregorian chants. Her book was called *De oorsprong van het Gregoriaans* and was published by Querido in 1981. She discovered in Italy that relief pictures on *sarcophagus* (stone tombs) had a close connection with melodical motives of Gregorian antiphones (responsorial chants).

She also found out that the final form of Gregorian chants was actually Frankish. About the year 900, Metz in France was the centre of it.

But the origin of the Gregorian chants are to be sought in the beginning of our era, about two thousand years ago, in the Jewish synagogues.

There were Jews from Yemen and also from other Asiatic countries who immigrated about sixty years ago to Israel. Their synagogical songs appeared to have exactly the same kind of Psalmody, the same music curves in their rises and falls as the Gregorian chants.

Temple and synagogue

As I already said before, there is also a connection between the way of singing in the synagogues and the way of singing before that, namely, in the temple.

The question is: do we know anything of that way of singing, especially in the temple?

In this respect there is another very important study, namely of *Suzanna Haik Vantoura,* concerning *"La Musique de la Bible révélée"* (Paris, 1976).

Of course, it was not easy to find out in which way the people of Israel have sung their Psalms. But in our next and final article we will see that Suzanna Haik Vantoura developed a very interesting theory, which in a certain sense offers us the missing link in the long chain of church singing throughout the ages.

Biblical signs

Sylviane Falcinelli tells us that Vantoura especailly scrutizined the relevant Biblical signs. "After trying out many hypotheses, deductions, and experiments, she discovered the key to that ancient notation, she revealed the significance of the musical signs and finally revived and transcribed in modern notation the music which was revealed to her following methodical deciphering and irrefutable verification, whereas the cantillation of the synagogue, varying (for the same text) from one country to another, could not claim any logical justification." Vantoura worked on it for a long time. The result of these years of labour is an historical work which has convinced musicologists as well as Hebrew scholars, and the revelation of musical treasures which have already seduced the greatest composers. "Listening to this music," Falcinelli says, "everyone will be made conscious once again that the history of the people of Israel is the cradle of our Western history . . . and of its musical language. Those musicians of long ago, travelling through various lands, absorbed their modes. These songs issuing from the foundation of the ages seem to be very contemporary. Astonishingly modern, too, is the answer found by Biblical musicians regarding the relationship between text and music. We notice first the expressive correlation between the texts and their melodic line, and then the economy of means used in this expression. This way of underlining the intentions of the text reconfirms the affiliation of Western music, for in some chants we recognize the poetic nuances (madrigalisms) of the composers of the 16th century. But between Biblical musicians and madrigalists there are numerous levels, notably Gregorian chant, of which we are in the process of discovering the middle eastern sources" (Cover of the record Harmonia Mundi 989).

Synagogue and temple

So there is not only a close connection between the church modes of the Genevan Psalter and the Gregorian chant, but there is also the background of this chant, found in the synagogue singing. And in turn, this synagogue singing is not to be separated from the singing in the temple. Listening to a record like HMU 989, especially in respect of Psalm singing, makes this connection clear. There are also indications that the singing in the temple of David's times was based on the so-called Egyptian pentatonic scale, on which Moses is said to have composed and sung his old 90th Psalm.

Is it not remarkable that with regard to Psalm singing one can point to a long line extending throughout the history of the church?

Psalms and Hymns

No wonder that not only musicians who are church members promoted the singing of the Psalms and praised the Genevan Psalter in respect of the melodies, but that also outsiders admired the great value of these melodies.

It is very important to know that there is a continuing line in Psalm singing in the church from days of old until today.

Therefore let us be careful not to abandon this heritage!

Sometimes there is a tendency to prefer the tunes of all kinds of hymns to the Psalm melodies. Then it is said: the tunes of the hymns are easier, they are played by ear, and especially the young people like that.

At the same time it is also said: the Psalm melodies are sometimes difficult to learn, you do not so soon get used to them, etc.

But I think that also has something to do with the relation between word and tone. In former days, when the Psalms were sung in a unitone way (although against the original tonality!) and when the rhymed version was not correct, there could indeed be a problem. But all that is improved now. It is therefore to be applauded that the Genevan melodies are more promoted than before. For instance in South Africa, there is the beautiful rhymed version of the poet Totius. Unfortunately, some Psalms are rhymed in a way in which the existing church modes cannot be sung. So the Psalter is more or less mixed up with church modes and other melodies. But now there is the attempt to make it possible that all Psalms are to be sung on church modes.

Let us sing Psalms!

To prevent misunderstandings: I do not want to say a bad word concerning hymns, especially not concerning the 65 Hymns of the *Book of Praise* of the Canadian Reformed Churches. I only stress that the singing of Hymns should not be promoted at the cost of singing Psalms.

A couple of years ago I was in South Korea, and the people of the church were used to singing all kinds of Hymns. When I delivered some guest lectures at the Theological Seminary at Pusan, I pointed also to the Psalm melodies. Then several students asked me, "Why do we not sing Psalms on these beautiful melodies?" And right away some students tried to make a start of it.

Sometimes it is asked just the other way around in the mission fields, especially by missionaries, "Why do we have to sing the Psalms to the Genevan tunes? Let the people sing in the church in the way they like and which they are used to, for instance using the tunes of popular songs." And one of the arguments is then: actually also the Psalms were sung in Reformation times to popular tunes!

But since it is clear that this appeared to be wrong, let us not argue any more in this way.

I think the people in the mission fields must have their own rhymed version, in their own language. But let us be careful not to abandon the beautiful melodies of our Psalms too soon!

I want to stress also: let us sing *Psalms* and not only one or two stanzas of a Psalm. Of course, some Psalms are too long to sing as a whole. One always points to, e.g., Psalm 119 with the many stanzas. But in that case there were also already from of old indications to sing a part of the Psalm, and many times that is forgotten. But if a Psalm is not that long, let the people sing the whole Psalm. Then they will also understand the better the contents of what they are singing.

I want to point also to the possibility of *antiphonal* singing, in which two parts of the people sing on turn. That was also done from of old! A clear example of that way of singing is Psalm 136: the burden or the chorus was sung by a part of the people, while the rest was sung by another part.

Do not say too soon: then you make a part of the congregation passive and silent. To *hear* is also a matter of being active and in your mind you are then still singing with the other part, just as you are praying with the minister, when he prays on behalf of the whole congregation.

Conclusion

We may conclude at the end of these articles that the Psalm melodies of the Genevan Psalter were of undoubtedly high quality for congregational singing. The link of the Genevan melodies with the ancient church and via the synagogue with the Old Testament church has been established as proven fact, over against the so-called "contrafact theory" as if the Psalm melodies were only derived from street songs and "top-hits" of that time.

Thankful use of the Psalm melodies of the Genevan Psalter will mean a really ecumenical labour of love: we will be singing in communion with the saints of bygone ages.

In this respect it is now up to us to show our gratitude to the Lord of the church of all ages.

I will end with Calvin's words about congregational singing in his *Institutes* (vol. III, 20): "Certainly if singing is tempered to a gravity befitting the presence of God and angels, it both gives dignity and grace to sacred actions, and has a very powerful tendency to stir up the mind to true zeal and ardent prayer. We must, however, carefully beware, lest our ears be more intent on the music than our minds on the spiritual meaning of the words." And in the same context (32) he says: "If this moderation is used, there cannot be a doubt that this practice is most sacred and salutary."

MAY CHILDREN PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

A timely topic

Since the beginning of the seventies many publications have appeared concerning the question whether children may partake of the Lord's Supper or not. In the Netherlands, the general synod of the "synodical churches" decided to allow children at the Lord's Supper, "since God's Word neither commands nor forbids it." Also the Church at Rijsbergen (buiten verband [outside the federation]) decided to allow children at the Lord's Supper. In the circles of these churches the question has been under discussion for many years. K.C. Smouter and M.R. van den Berg wrote about this topic in *Opbouw,* and G. Visee wrote no fewer than eight articles concerning this matter in 1965 (reprinted in the book *Onderwezen in het Koninkrijk der hemelen,* Kampen, 1979). Translated into English, they were published in *Christian Renewal.* Especially the last fact is noteworthy in connection with the 1986 synod of the Christian Reformed Church. This synod dealt with a majority and a minority report (even two kinds of minority recommendations) of the "Committee to study the issue of covenant children partaking of the Lord's Supper." In *Outlook* of June 1986, J. Tuininga also wrote an article about "Children at the Lord's Supper." So we see that the topic is under discussion also in the Western hemisphere.

In the U.S.A. several "denominations" decided to allow the children of the church to partake of the Lord's Supper, and on the mission fields also it was the experience of Reformed missionaries that in the circles of more than one "denomination" the so-called "paedocommunion" had been accepted. Therefore, it was among the topics discussed at the Fifth Conference of Reformed Mission Workers in Latin America in April, 1985. It is also worth noting that the practice of "paedocommunion" is promoted in the liberal World Council of Churches.

So everywhere the topic is under discussion and quite often it has been concluded: we may not deny children the Lord's Supper. The Rev. G. Visee even wrote: "Today there is a wholesale suspension from the Lord's Supper, as far as the children of the covenant are concerned!" That is actually a bitter reproach and if this were true, we would have to be converted in this respect as soon as possible. But the question is: Is it indeed true? Do we deny the children of the church something they have a right to, so that we actually wrong the children of God's covenant?

God's covenant

Not infrequently the discussions about this topic start with God's covenant of grace. They point, for example, to what is said in Lord's Day 27 of the Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 74: "Infants as well as adults belong to God's covenant and congregation," and also to what follows: "Through Christ's blood the redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith, are promised to them no less than to adults." I am of the opinion that this starting point as such is a good one. Over against all kinds of Anabaptist ideas, the Reformers stressed that the children of the believers belong also to the covenant of the LORD and to Christ's Church.

But I think it is wrong to step over right away from Q.74 to Q.75 of the Heidelberg Catechism, namely, from Holy Baptism, to the Lord's Supper, and to quote then the commandment and the promises concerning the Lord's Supper in this respect. We have to bear in mind that God's covenant is unilateral in its origin but bilateral in its existence, as our Reformed fathers used to say. This is also reflected in the way they viewed the two sacraments, according to the Scriptures.

The one pointed more to the unilateral origin of the covenant, namely, baptism, whereas the other pointed more to the bilateral existence of the covenant, namely, the Lord's Supper. In the former the child is passive, in the latter the believer is active. That is also the difference in formulation between Q.69 and Q.75 of the Heidelberg Catechism. In Q.69 it is asked: "How does holy baptism signify and seal to you that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross *benefits* you?" (i.e., the children are the object of this benefit), but Q.75 asks: "How does the Lord's supper signify and seal to you that you *share* in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all His gifts?" (i.e., it is the deed of the believers). I quoted now the revised edition of the *Book of Praise* (1984), but I am of the opinion that the difference is to be seen more clearly in the first complete edition of the *Book of Praise* (1972). In that edition the formulation of Q.69 is: "How is it signified and sealed unto you in holy baptism that you *have part* in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross?", while Q.75 in this edition asks: "How is it signified and sealed unto you in the holy supper that you *partake* of the one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all His benefits?" The difference is clear: in the case of Holy Baptism we *have part* in the one sacrifice of Christ, and in the case of the Holy Supper we *partake* of the one sacrifice, namely, as believers. Of course, one can say: Q.69 does not yet speak about the children (that will be done especially in Q.74) but presents only a general view on baptism. But we have to bear in mind that in by far the most cases baptism of infants takes place in the church; that is the common and normal way.

Are benefits denied?

If we bear in mind the difference between Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we cannot maintain that some benefits of the covenant of grace are denied to the children of the believers when they are not yet allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. H. Bavinck showed that very clearly:

> "To deny the Lord's Supper to the children does not let them miss any benefit of the covenant of grace. That would indeed be the case if Holy Baptism was denied to the children. For that is only to be done by those who are of the opinion that the children stand outside of the covenant of grace. But as far as the Lord's Supper is concerned it is different. He who administers to the children baptism, but not the Lord's Supper, admits that they belong to God's covenant and that they may share all the benefits of it. He only denies to them a particular *manner* in which the same benefits are signed and sealed, because this does not fit their age. The Lord's Supper does not give any benefit which was not granted before already in God's Word and in Baptism" (Bavinck, 1930:561).

And in *Our Reasonable Faith* Bavinck writes:

> "Although Baptism and the Holy Supper have the same covenant of grace as their content, and although both give assurance of the benefit of the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Supper differs from Baptism in this regard that it is a sign and seal not of incorporation into but of the maturation and strengthening in the fellowship of Christ and all His members" (Bavinck, 1956:542).

Hasty transition

So the transition may not be made too hastily from Baptism to the Lord's Supper. And that is what for instance G. Visee did. I quote:

> "We teach our children *after* they have received the sign and seal of the covenant: 'How does Baptism remind you and assure you that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross is for you personally? . . . .' In my catechism class I taught Lord's Day 28 as follows:
>
> *Answer:* To eat the broken bread and to drink the cup.
> *Question:* To whom did Christ give that command?
> *Answer:* To the believers.
> *Question:* Will you read out loud exactly what the catechism says?
> *Answer:* 'Me and all believers.'
> *Question:* What is meant by 'me'?
> *Answer:* I.
> *Question:* So. Christ commanded you and all other believes to eat the broken bread and to drink the cup. Why don't you do it then?
> *Answer:* I'm not allowed yet" (Visee, 1986, IV, 16, p.11).

So far the quotation from Rev. Visee's article. His conclusion is clear: the church denies to the children something which they have a right to. But there is a mistake here. Although both sacraments deal with the covenant of grace, there is a clear difference. And it is wrong to make a very hasty transition from the one sacrament to the other one. But there is more. There is also a hasty transition from the Old Testament sacrament of Passover to the New Testament sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Passover and the Lord's Supper

One of the arguments that children must be allowed to participate in the Lord's

Supper is derived from the Old Testament sacrament of Passover. One argues then simply in this way: just as baptism came in the place of circumcision, the Lord's supper is a New Testament adaptation of Israel's Passover. The Rev. G. Visee wrote in this respect:

> "There is only this difference: Christ is not merely Israel's Passover Lamb, but the Lamb of God that bears the sins of the world, and, secondly, since His blood was shed, we now have the bloodless feast of the Lord instead of the bloody sacrament of the Passover. And the children partook of that Passover. They were not passive observers, but ate of the meal. The Passover was celebrated by the household, parents and children together. It was not simply a family affair, however, for if the household was too small to eat the whole lamb other Israelites were invited to share. That is also borne out by the fact that Christ celebrated the Passover with His disciples. He and His disciples did not constitute a family; that, however, did not detract from the validity of the meal. There simply were no children in this group, nor were there any women. Nevertheless, they did and do participate in this meal."

His conclusion is clear: we may not deny the Lord's Supper to the children of God's covenant, because they participated also already in the Old Testament sacrament of Passover (Visee, 1986, IV, 14, p.11).

Relation, but not mere transition

What are we to say about this? Of course, there is a certain relation between Passover and the Lord's Supper.

But at the same time we have to be aware of the fact that the Passover did not proceed simply to the Lord's Supper. When the Rev. G. Visee says that the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrified," "draws an unmistakably direct connection between the Passover and the Lord's Supper," he says too much. This text deals with the fact that the Passover Lamb was a *prefiguration* of Christ's sacrifice. Furthermore, we have to bear in mind in this respect at least two things.

In the first place: there was a considerable time lapse between the breaking of the bread and the giving of the (third) cup, namely, the whole period of the eating of the Passover. In the second place: Jesus Christ did not join all the moments of the Passover, only two moments of it, but especially not the moment of the eating of the Passover.

Therefore, the Lord's Supper is not to be considered a mere Christian form of the Passover. The Passover did not proceed simply in the Lord's Supper. We may say it in this way: the Lord's Supper is the fulfillment of the Passover. The line of the Passover is not extended in the Lord's Supper, but it is picked up in it.

History of redemption

This has also to do with the history of redemption. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of another, a new covenant. He who appeals to the Passover, in which children participated, may not simply conclude: here we have the clear proof that children may participate in the Lord's Supper. Then he has to bear in mind that there is a new element in the Lord's Supper over against the Passover. That new element, in which the Lord's Supper does not result automatically from the Passover, is related to the different way of salvation. That does not deal with the *nature* of salvation, but with the manner of salvation. The self-evidence with which the people of Israel celebrated the

Lord's Supper, old and young people together, was connected with the degree of God's revelation. The celebration of the Passover was an obligation to the people of Israel under penalty of excommunication. The new element of the covenant of Christ's blood finds its kernel in the work of God the Holy Spirit, which is a personal matter and which is not simply founded on the tie of blood.

The Old and the New Covenant stand beside each other and one cannot simply draw a parallel between both in every respect. There are some diffrences.

Responsibility

One of those differences has to do with the emphasis on responsibility in the New Covenant. In the Old Dispensation there was of course responsibility, but that is different from the responsibility of the New Dispensation. We read about that difference in Hebrews 10: "A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?" (vs. 28 and 29). That has also to do with the responsibility in connection with the Lord's Supper.

In the same chapter of the letter to the Hebrews we read a quotation from the prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the new covenant: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds" (vs. 16). Also this text shows that increased grace brings along increased personal responsibility in the New Dispensation.

It is, therefore, totally wrong when for instance James B. Jordan states: " 'Unconverted' slaves ate the Passover in the Old Covenant — inward circumcision is not the ecclesiastical criterion for participation in the Lord's Supper" (Jordan, 1982, th. 15).

Here again a mere parallel is drawn between the Passover and the Lord's Supper. This takes into account neither the increased responsibility in the New Covenant nor the progress in the history of redemption.

Besides, there are the important words of 1 Corinthians 11:26-29 in connection with the responsibility of the celebration of the Lord's Supper (hope to come back to that passage).

The "inward circumcision" is justly stressed in the church as a condition for celebrating the Lord's Supper. I am reminded of the conclusion of article 35 of the Belgic Confession:

> "Finally, we receive this holy sacrament in the congregation of the people of God with humility and reverence as we together commemorate the death of Christ our Saviour with thanksgiving and we confess our faith and Christian religion. Therefore no one should come to this table without careful self-examination, lest by eating this bread and drinking from this cup, he eat and drink judgment upon himself. In short, we are moved by the use of this holy sacrament to a fervent love of God and our neighbours. Therefore we reject as desecrations all additions and damnable inventions which men have mixed with the sacraments. We declare that we should be content with the ordinance taught by Christ and His apostles and should speak about it as they have spoken."

Especially the *confession of faith*, mentioned in this article, is very important. And he who confesses his faith declares in this confession that he is a true believer, a living member of the church of Jesus Christ. He has accepted his responsibility in God's new covenant.

Without commitment?

In the meantime, the responsibility of the new covenant does not mean that we are without obligation in respect of the Lord's Supper. There is an obligation to accept the promises of God's covenant. So there is also an obligation to partake of the sacrament of the Holy Supper. The church may not leave that to the good pleasure of the people themselves. So if it would be so that the children are allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, they also had to do it.

It is therefore also wrong when James B. Jordan defends the following idea: "If a child or infant will not eat the food given him, he is not to be 'force-fed.' If a child won't eat, then he won't eat. There is nothing superstitious about it" (Jordan, 1982: th. 24). Of course, we reject the Roman Catholic idea of *ex opere operato,* as if the sacrament works automatically, exclusively by the act itself. But, precisely over against this idea, we point to the responsibility involved, and we say to the people: you are not free to partake of the Lord's Supper, but it is a matter of obligation in God's covenant.

It is only one of the two: the children are not allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, unless they have made profession of faith, or the children are indeed allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, but then that is not without consequences. Then they are *obliged* to partake of it. If they *may* go this means at the same time that they *must* go.

Proclamation

Especially 1 Cor. 11:26-29 is important in connection with the question whether children are allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. This passage is placed in the framework of the whole pericope of the verses 17-34, in which the Apostle Paul points to the misuses in the Church at Corinth with respect to the Lord's Supper. Over against these misuses Paul shows the great importance of the Lord's Supper. What is actually the celebration of the Lord's Supper?

In verse 26 Paul says that it is a *proclamation*: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." The apostle does not use in this sentence an imperative, in the sense of "you *have* to proclaim the Lord's death," but he gives a description of the celebration of the Lord's Supper: "You *are* proclaiming the Lord's death." But that means also that one must be aware of what he is actually doing when he celebrates the Lord's Supper.

Then, *faith* is supposed in the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ! I quote here the majority report of the Christian Reformed Church (Agenda for Synod 1986, p. 355)' ". . . that sacramental eating and drinking will be a proclamation of the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor. 11:26) . . . without such proclamation no true celebration of the sacrament can take place at all. That is what made the Corinthian celebration so horrifying. In Corinth what should have been a holy meal had turned into a common (literally, a profane) meal. The solution of that horror in Corinth lay in restoring the essence of the meal, a proclamation of the Lord of the covenant and his glory. The covenant is fulfilled in Christ not only by His death and resurrection but also by his 'proclaiming light to His own people and to the Gentiles' (Acts 26:23). The Lord's Supper continues that covenant celebration and declaration of Christ's light and so makes any meaningful partaking in itself a public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ."

That proclamation of the Lord's death has to do with the public profession of faith, which is not yet made by the children of God's covenant!

Examination

There is another important word in 1 Cor. 11:26-29, namely, what is said in verse 28: "Let a man *examine* himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup." That self-examination means actually that the people ("a man" — but that means here: everyone who wants to partake of the Lord's Supper) have to *test* themselves. A similar expression is already used by the Apostle Paul in the same chapter, namely, in verse 19: "in order that those who are *genuine* among you may be recognized." But also this term has to do with *faith.* I quote Calvin's commentary on this text. Calvin rejects the Roman Catholic idea that this self-examination has to do with auricular confession. He explains the word as follows:

> But now it is asked, what sort of *examination* that ought to be to which Paul exhorts us. It is an *examination* of such a kind as may accord with the legitimate use of the sacred Supper.
>
> You see here a method that is most easily apprehended. If you would wish to use aright the benefit afforded by Christ, bring faith and repentance. As to these two things, therefore, the trial must be made, if you would come duly prepared. Under repentance I include love, for the man who has learned to renounce himself, that he may give himself up wholly to Christ and His service, will also, without doubt, carefully maintain that unity which Christ has enjoined. At the same time, it is not a perfect faith or repentance that is required, as some, by urging beyond due bounds, a perfection that can nowhere be found, would shut out for ever from the Supper every individual of mankind. If, however, thou aspirest after the righteousness of God with the earnest desire of thy mind, and, humbled under a view of thy misery, dost wholly lean upon Christ's grace, and rest upon it, know that thou art a worthy guest to approach that table — *worthy* I mean in this respect, that the Lord does not exclude thee, though in another point of view there is something in thee that is not as it ought to be. For faith, when it is but begun, makes those *worthy* who were *unworthy.*

Already in the Didachè ("The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"), dated from the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, it is said that the people have to partake of the Lord's Supper after having examined whether they are reconciled with God and with their brothers, so that the celebration of the Lord's Supper may be pure and not be defiled (ch. 14).

Our fathers understood the meaning of this self-examination very well when they stated in the *Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper:*

> In order that we may now celebrate this holy supper of the Lord to our comfort, we must first rightly examine ourselves.
>
> True self-examination consists of the following three parts:
>
> First, let everyone consider his sins and accursedness, so that he, detesting himself, may humble himself before God. For the wrath of God against sin is so great that He could not leave it unpunished, but has punished it in His beloved Son Jesus Christ by the bitter and shameful death on the cross.
>
> Second, let everyone search his heart whether he also believes the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is freely given him as his own, as if he himself had fulfilled all righteousness.
>
> Third, let everyone examine his conscience whether it is his sincere desire to show true thankfulness to God with his entire life and, laying aside all enmity, hatred and envy, to live with his neighbour in true love and unity.

That is a good description and elaboration of what was already said in the days right after the apostles. It is to be summarized in one sentence: true self-examination means to know and to profess your sin and misery, your deliverance in Christ, and your thankfulness.

Is it not remarkable that these three words are exactly the three parts of the Heidelberg Catechism? So, to be able to examine ourselves we must know the Heidelberg Catechism, we have to be instructed in the doctrine of the church, just as had been promised by the parents of the children of the covenant at the baptismal font.

If we compare the explanation of our self-examination with the contents of the Heidelberg Catechism, we can understand the better the answer to Q. 81: "Who are to come to the table of the Lord?" (in the old Latin version of the Heidelberg Catechism the formulation is: "Who are *allowed* to go to the Lord's table?"): "Those who are truly displeased with themselves because of their sins and yet trust that these are forgiven them and that their remaining weakness is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life." What else is this than: those who know and profess their sin and misery, their deliverance and their thankfulness?

That means very clearly: instruction in true faith has to precede the access to the Lord's Supper!

Discernment

So the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning *proclamation* and *examination* in connection with the Lord's Supper and both words have to do with *faith.* But that is also the case with the third word used by the apostle in this respect, in the same passage; he writes in verse 29: "For any one who eats and drinks without *discerning* the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself."

There are commentaries which say that "the body" is just the body of the church. For instance, James B. Jordan writes (Jordan, 1982, th. 17): "Discerning the body for the child may be translated as 'obey your parents.' " But that is wrong. The apostle uses here a strong word that actually means "to make a decisive distinction." The word is often used in connection with "to be able to discern good and evil," and that is to be applied to mature people.

I quote again the majority report for the Christian Reformed Synod 1986:

> This means, first of all, that those who come to the table will need to discern that *this meal is not just a Sunday morning snack* but is, in fact, a participation *in the body and blood of Christ* given for the life of his people (1 Cor. 11:25-26). Anything other than a recognition of the giver of the heavenly food and drink will bring destruction rather than life through the eating (1 Cor. 11:30), the same destruction that fell on the Israelites who failed to discern God's gift in the heaven-sent quail (Num. 11:33; Ps. 78:30).
>
> As indicated earlier, this discernment of the body will include recognizing that *being part of the body of Christ means being part of the body of believers.* Participants in the supper will receive true nourishment when they recognize the unity they share with others in the covenant community as a result of partaking of the one loaf (1 Cor. 10:17), the one Lord Jesus Christ. Partaking meaningfully will require a true discernment by each participant that in holy communion Christ himself is feeding his people — and that of those fed people, I am one (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, Q. & A. 54).

So also the third word used by the Apostle Paul has to do with *faith,* and also with *instruction* in faith.

Now some reason that a child can believe in a childlike manner and that this must be enough to admit it to the Lord's Supper. That is not the way of thinking of the Apostle Paul, for he used strong expressions which are only to be applied to what is promised by the parents of the children of God's covenant: "to instruct their child in the doctrine of the church, as soon as he or she is able to understand, and to have him or her instructed to the utmost of their power!"

History

Finally I would like to show something from history, especially from Calvin and I will end with some conclusions. Defending the admittance of children, one often reasons: during many ages children were allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, but then, suddenly, it stopped. What are we to say about that?

Indeed, infants and small children participated in the Lord's Supper, especially in the Eastern church, but also in the Western church, and especially with the growth of a superstitious view of the sacrament, people feared to spill so much as a single drop of the transsubstantiated blood of Christ.

But we have to bear in mind two things.

In the first place: not all the texts to which one appeals show indeed that very young children partook of the Lord's Supper. For instance in the *Constitutiones Apostolicae* (a writing from the end of the fourth century) it is said after the dismissal of the non-baptized: "Mothers, take your little children with you." But it is absolutely not sure that these little children (sometimes even babies) did indeed receive the elements of the Lord's Supper. I am of the opinion that here is only said that the mothers were not to leave the children alone in the back of the church when they came forward to receive for themselves the bread and wine.

There is also an indication that in the early church children were instructed by their parents and were led to the minister in order to show their faith. Both lines are mentioned by Calvin.

In his *Institutes* he writes first that some people say (I give here the whole quotation of Inst. IV, 16, 30).

> . . . that there is not greater reason for admitting infants to baptism than to the Lord's Supper, to which, however, they are never admitted: as if Scripture did not in every way draw a wide distinction between them. In the early Church, indeed, the Lord's Supper was frequently given to infants, as appears from Cyprian and Augustine (August, ad Bonif. Lib. i.); but the practice justly became obsolete. For if we attend to the peculiar nature of baptism, it is a kind of entrance, and as it were initiation into the Church, by which we are ranked among the people of God, a sign of our spiritual regeneration, by which we are again born to be children of God; whereas, on the contrary, the supper is intended for those of riper years, who, having passed the tender period of infancy, are fit to bear solid food. This distinction is very clearly pointed out in Scripture. For there, as far as regards baptism, the Lord makes no selection of age, whereas he does not admit all to partake of the Supper, but confines it to those who are fit to discern the body and blood of the Lord, to examine their own conscience, to show forth the Lord's death, and understand its power. Can we wish anything clearer than what the apostle says, when he thus exhorts, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup?" (1 Cor. xi. 28.) Examination, therefore, must precede, and this it were vain to expect from infants. Again, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." If they cannot partake worthily without being able duly to discern the sanctity of the

Lord's body, why should we stretch out poison to our young children instead of vivifying food? Then what is our Lord's injunction? "Do this in remembrance of me." And what is the inference which the apostle draws from this? "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." How, pray, can we require infants to commemorate any event of which they have no understanding; how require them "to show forth the Lord's death," of the nature and benefit of which they have no idea? Nothing of the kind is prescribed by baptism. Wherefore, there is the greatest difference between the two signs.

So far the quotation of Calvin's *Institutes.* Calvin never denied that there is a strong connection between Baptism and the Lord's Supper, but he stressed also very much that there is a strong connection between Baptism and Profession of Faith.

Delayed response

In this respect Calvin often uses the expression "delayed response."

At the time of our baptism the LORD God, by means of His servant, sealed His promise to us. At the time we were not yet able to see or hear this, for we were not yet conscious of things. But nevertheless, God *did* speak to us at that time. Before we could utter one word the LORD had already spoken to us. And He kept on speaking to us, He kept impressing that baptism on our hearts. At one time the LORD said: "You are Mine, My child!" He told us so in baptism. And He kept calling us like that, as we grew up and matured. That is the reason why there is such a close connection between baptism and confession. At our baptism we were unable to answer for ourselves. Our parents had to do that for us. Otherwise we would have to respond to God's address then already.

Saying that confession is really a delayed response to baptism is not claiming too much. Calvin taught this already in one of his early writings, not long after the first edition of his *Institutes.* The Reformer was only twenty-seven years old at that time. He writes: "Covenant children must be instructed so that they may give a testimony of their faith in the end, which they were unable to do when they were baptized."

In his *Institutes* he relates that in the early church it was also customary for the children of Christians, after they were grown up, to be brought before the minister "in order that they might fulfill the duty required of adults; presenting themselves for baptism." For, according to Calvin, when they were baptized as small children, they could not yet make their profession.

The Reformer put it like this: a small child cannot speak yet and has not yet come to his/her senses. Therefore, for covenant children, making profession of faith is the discharge of an obligation, required of them at their baptism, but temporarily delayed.

Calvin wrote: Only one valid reason can be given to the Lord as to why covenant children would not yet be able to make confession of faith. And that one reason is that the children of the covenant lack sufficient knowledge as yet to partake in the Lord's Supper. You must be able to examine yourself, says Paul to the Corinthians, before being able to celebrate the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:28). This requires knowledge, also self-knowledge which toddlers and very young children do not have yet.

According to Calvin, there is no other possible reason that can stand up before the LORD. Certainly not this one: "I am not quite ready, I am not sure that I really believe in Christ." God has sealed His promise in baptism. Then what right does anyone have to doubt? Who may disregard these promises? Then Calvin addresses the young people and says: "You should have made profession of your faith at the hour of your baptism. Then already the LORD gave you this obligation. Only because of your weakness has this confession been postponed!"

Baptism may not be postponed, for the LORD has a claim on the child that is born into His covenant. Baptism should be administered as soon as feasible to the children of believers. "The consistory should ensure that the covenant of God is sealed by baptism to the children of believers as soon as feasible" (Article 17 of the Church Order of the Canadian Reformed Churches). We should not keep the LORD waiting! But this is also the way it is with confession. That too should take place as soon as possible for the children of the covenant. Calvin then refers to a custom in the old church, and says: this took place at the end of childhood, or at the beginning of adolescence. He writes somewhere that to him it seems best if "a child at the age of ten years would present himself to the congregation to make profession of faith." In the Dutch refugee Church of London, the cradle of the church of the Reformation in the Netherlands, the age was set at fourteen — still very young by our standard. We should keep in mind that instruction in the doctrine of the church was started at an earlier age than now. But one thing is certain: from the hour of baptism the demand for confessions calls to be fulfilled. Therefore any unnecessary delay is wrong.

Not a part of us

Once we have discovered the close connection between baptism and confession, we are more and more brought to worship God's good pleasure. It is not just "normal" that we are born covenant children. It is not just a matter of course that the LORD gave us parents who presented us for baptism. Behind this is God's gracious election, His good pleasure. It is written about the Saviour Himself that His Father in heaven spoke at His baptism: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," (Matthew 3:17). The LORD addressed us likewise in baptism. He has called us by name and joined us to His Name. In doing so God has shown His good pleasure in our lives. His good pleasure goes out to us; His goodwill. The LORD *honours* Himself in this way. And what an honour this is for us!

This too is what we are about to discover when we make profession of faith. Then we look back to our baptism and worship God's good pleasure in our life. So this confession is not a part of us, a kind of diploma we present ourselves with. No, it is a certificate of God's grace in our lives. This is included in that address "Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ."

When Peter made his good confession before the Lord: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" he was not complimented for having done something good. No, rather, Christ said: "Peter, this did not come from yourself." He was blessed, but not because of his own merit. The reaction of the Saviour was: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven," (Matthew 16:17). Others hadn't talked Peter into this. It was not his own idea either. The Father revealed this to him. It is God's good pleasure in his life. The LORD made him able to make this confession. It is indeed Peter who expresses himself, and he also speaks from the heart. But he expresses what God Himself has put into that heart: the worship of God's good pleasure.

Some conclusions

There is much more to say about this topic, but I do not wish to make this series of articles too long.

I have two main conclusions.

In the first place: children may not partake of the Lord's Supper, but according to the promise of their parents at the baptismal font, they have to be instructed in the

doctrine of the church and they have to make profession of faith, in order to be able to proclaim Christ's death, to examine themselves and to discern the body.

In the second place: this profession of faith is actually a delayed response to their baptism and it must be given as soon as possible; that means: when a child has grown up and when he or she is able to make important decisions in life. That time will vary for the one matures sooner than the other. If a child of the covenant is instructed for several years, and he or she wants to make profession of faith at the age of — let us say — sixteen or seventeen, there is nothing against it. But it is wrong to postpone profession of faith one year after another. Under the influence of pietism, young people were taught that they had to tell their "story of conversion," and that this was not possible when they were young. Thus many young people waited then until they were twenty-five or even thirty years old, and also many of them never dared to make profession of faith, because they could not say that they were really born again.

Let us stress to our children that it is a great privilege to be born as a child of God's covenant, to be baptized, and also to be instructed in the doctrine of the church, in order to be and to remain a living member of Christ's Church! So that they seek to pass through the door of the public profession of their faith in order to proclaim Christ's death and resurrection at His table as part of His congregation.

CURRENT STREAMS IN MODERN LITURGY

The First Centuries

In the first centuries, the church remained faithful to the sobriety of the worship services which dated from the time of the apostles.

Several documents which date from the post-apostolic period of the church, provide us with some material about the course of the liturgy.

Justin Martyr, in his *Apology* (ca. 153 A.D.) tells us something about the weekly gatherings of the congregations: "And on the day called Sunday there is a gathering in one place of all who dwell in the cities or in the country places, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writing of the prophets are read as long as time allows. Then when the reader was finished, he who presides gives oral admonition and exhortation to imitate these excellent examples.

Then we all rise together, and offer prayers; and as stated before, when we have ended our praying, bread, wine and water are brought. And he who presides similarly offers up prayers and thanksgiving, as far as lies in his power, and the people express their approval by saying: "amen." And each receives a share and partakes of the gifts for which thanks has been given, and through the deacons some is sent to those not present.

"According to Justin the gatherings consist of two parts": the Word-part and the sacrament-part. After the preaching, those who have not been baptized leave the church.

The sacramental part begins with a kiss (of peace) after which the bread and chalice are brought in. *Hippolytus of Rome* (170? - 235 A.D.), in his *Apostolic Tradition* written around the beginning of the third century, wanted to follow the tradition of the apostles in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. After greeting each other with a kiss of peace, the "sacrifice" is brought by a deacon to the one who presided, after which the thanksgiving was expressed and then the one who presided exhorted the congregation: "Let us raise our hearts" (*sursum corda*). The congregation then answers and then follows a prayer in which God is thanked for the sending of His Son.

Also in the fourth century, an important place is still reserved for the preaching, such as is shown in the sermons of Chrysostom (345?-407) in the East and Augustine (354-430) in the West.

Change and Degeneration

The fourth century, however, also saw a change in the liturgy. In the liturgy of Jerusalem which dates from the second half of the fourth century, which came into existence under the leadership of Bishop Cyril (412-444 A.D.), the Lord's Supper occupies a central place, and then an emphasis is put on the acts being dramatized by the bishop, who represented Christ.

The Lord's Supper liturgy of Cyril is also very elaborate. After the washing of the hands and the kiss of peace, the 'sursum corda' followed. After this there was a prayer of thanksgiving and then the congregation sang the "Sanctus." A special prayer (*epiklese*) for the coming of the Holy Spirit, clearly shows that a change has taken place in the Lord's Supper: "We plead the good God to send the Holy Spirit down upon the sacrificial gifts, so that He can change the bread into the Body of Christ and the wine into the Blood of Christ. In addition to this sacrifice of atonement, says Cyril, we offer our litanies, first for the living then for the dead. Afterward: the Lord's prayer is prayed and then the invitation comes from the cantor, who in a song encourages everyone to participate in the "holy mysteries." Everyone is then supposed to approach "not with extended hands, nor with spread out fingers." But with your left hand make a throne for your right hand which is going to receive the King. Receive then the Body of Christ in the hollow of your right hand and then say, "Amen." When you have sanctified your eyes through the contact with this Holy Body, carefully eat it and make sure that you do not lose any." Then the 'participation in the blood of Christ' follows, and then finally the liturgy is closed with a prayer of thanksgiving (Cross 1966:67ff.).

From Jerusalem, this liturgy, dating from the second half of the fourth century, was spread throughout the East and the West. Slowly but surely the changes crept in. Not only did these changes over-evaluate the office-bearers (all the liturgical acts of the bishop receive great attention), but the Lord's Supper becomes the heart of the liturgy and in the place of the thankoffering they substituted the offering of atonement.

More and more in the times that follow, the essential aspect of the worship service, the meeting of the speaking God and the responding congregation, is lost. God speaks less and less. The pulpit is moved to the side. In a secret manner, more or less substantially, God is almost exclusively present in the sacraments. More and more, the congregational participation is eliminated. The two who meet each other, are God and the priest, God and the clergy, and the congregation may watch and follow this spectacle from afar. At the beginning of the Middle Ages, when the dogma of 'transsubstantiation' has been officially established and the altar has become completely dominant, they have become miles separated from the worship service of the New Testament and the ancient church of the first centuries. And that's the way it still is in the Roman Church. For: has contemporary Rome changed anything at all?

Rome Today

Then we must state that, despite all the elasticity characteristic to Rome — I could also say: regardless of all the diplomacy which Rome regularly uses —, essentially nothing has changed. Yes, indeed, Rome herself is ostensibly busy with reformation of the liturgy. In more than one document, Roman theologians have given assurances that much has changed through Vaticanum II. Have they not put great emphasis on

the use of the vernacular languages in the worship services? But the foundation of the Romish worship service, the core of the issue, has been left untouched.

The Constitution of the second Vatican council clearly says: "By means of the last supper, our Saviour, in the night He was betrayed, instituted the eucharistic Sacrifice of His Body and Blood, so that the sacrifice on the cross could be continued throughout the ages until He returns." And soon after this, the "Christian believers" are encouraged to dedicate the "unblemished sacrifice" (Mulders/Kahmann, 1967:29).

It is then noteworthy that the Latin text of the Constitution continually uses the word "Sacrificium" and then time and again writes this word with a capital letter. As far as Rome herself is concerned, it is here that the emphasis is made. And then we have arrived precisely at the same characterization which Luther already gave concerning the popish mass. Luther says: the mass of Rome can be represented by the one word: sacrificium. And with this we touch the heart of the Romish worship service. It is by means of the sacrifice cult, that they want to appease God. But, Luther continues: the mass which our Saviour instituted is not a sacrificium, but a *beneficium*, God's *gift* to us, His goodness. In reference to this, the Swedish Lutheran theologain, *Vilmos Vajta,* has correctly shown that behind this whole Romish concept of the mass, there is an incorrect understanding of God and His image. He says: Luther sees a merciful God approach us, who comes with the ministry of atonement, but the Romish mass recognizes a God, whom *we* must reconcile (Vajta, 1954:55). After Vaticanum II, the Romish theologians wrote beautiful things concerning the importance of the participation of the faithful in the liturgy of the church. Controversially, they emphasize the idea that the liturgy is not the concern of the individual, but a communical act of the Body of the church, which must always be considered present in the liturgy.

But with this it is simply maintained that redemptive history has been continued in the liturgy, that the bloody sacrifice on the cross on Golgotha must be bloodlessly repeated in the mass, and that the salvation-giving reality (heilschenkende werkelijkheid) "comes to existence *ex opere operato* in the sacramental signs and in particular in the eucharistic sacrifice, in which the measure of effect (uitwerking) depends on the disposition of the administrator and the one who receives it." (According to E.J. Lengeling in the R.C. standard work 'Liturgisch Woordenboek,' wherein as concerns the "ex opere operato," he especially points to the Encyclical of Pope Pius XII 'Mediator Die et hominum' (1947), and also continually quotes from the constitution concerning the liturgy of Vaticanum II (Lengeling, 1965/68:1573-1595). All of the R.C. liturgy continues to be directed by this Sacrificium, and also when the Constitution dedicates a paragraph to the *'sacrae Liturgiae instauratione'* this renewal must be read in the light of the chapter *"De sacrosancto Eucharistiae mysterio"* which completely maintains the basic thoughts of the Romish liturgy.

High Church (in the Netherlands state church).

Concerning the liturgical movement in the "reformation" integrated in the RCC: this movement tends to lean in the Romish direction. A few points:

1. Coming out from behind the Reformation and its decisions, they want to return to the liturgical style of the first centuries and strive to infuse a contribution from the Eastern Orthodox churches, which is coloured by dramatization;

2. They want to restore the sacramental acts in their liturgy to their full honour especially with respect to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in which the actualization of the salvation and the representation of Christ are established;

3. The (worship) service must be increasingly seen as a service of Scripture and

Table, in which the word is *spoken* and *broken* and in which salvation is proclaimed and demonstrated;

4. The preaching must be taken out of its exceptional position and be *reduced* to only *one* of the many elements, and they want: the sacraments in the church service, but preaching must not have a dominant position anymore;

5. A roster of Bible readings, order of events throughout the year and the calendar must be carefully dictated, as well as services for special hours (cf. Romish breviary, pht), special prayers and responsories.

In short: the Reformed acquisitions must be scrapped, the mystery of the sacrament must be central and there should be a multitude of liturgical elements according to the dictates of the high church.

Many of these matters have already been established in the "Dienstboek voor de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk." In this book you can find more than 30 "orders of service." For all possible events, a great number of prayers, following the sequence of the ecclesiastic (liturgical) year, for the house congregations, for the dedication of a church-building, etc., etc.

And then in addition to this they have the "Liedboek voor de Kerken" (a very comprehensive hymnal) with an inexhaustible supply of songs. There is even a "Dagboek bij het Liedboek" (a daybook) with a complete "kalendarium" which provides an ecclesiastical calendar covering ten years.

Liberal

For many years there have also been liberal thinkers who have given themselves lots of latitude in the liturgical sense. Was it not in the previous century in the sombre province of North Holland that a preacher made the announcement to his congregation: "Today I'm not going to preach from the Bible, but instead I will preach to you about the flowers?" And were there not also liturgics who refused to use the trinitarian form at the baptism, and then instead baptized in the name of "faith, hope and love" or even in the name of "freedom, equality and fraternity?" In the *liberally inclined* left wing of the liturgics we can also place a person such as *S. Krikke*, who did research into the causes of the increased secularization. The church gets the blame.

He writes: "Concerning the most important causes of the extensive development of the 'fringe-church' and the rejection of the ecclesiastical liturgy, it's my theory that the causes must be principally sought in the many changes present in the life-view of those in the fringe-church, changes which have far-reaching consequences for religious life" (Krikke 1976:5).

"Their experiences as they relate to life are no longer found in the doctrine of the church, and for their religious needs they find no satisfaction in the ecclesiastical liturgy. The worship services such as they are conducted today have no meaning for them."

The question then arises: what are these experiences and needs? In his search for an answer to this question, S. Kirkke, points to the totality of religious doubt of modern man. One is in a position to believe much less. Only the form and the attitude still remain, but this form and attitude are empty. For that reason Krikke talks about a "Christian lack of faith" ("Christelijke geloofsloosheid"). The Holy Scriptures are time-bound books, which concern wars fought in God's Name or about a resurrection after death, etc., but one must interpret all of this extremely critically. The greatness of "God" must be swept out of the way. That's a minimum demand. Man regulates life himself. What he formerly ascribed to God or the gods, depending on whether he was

Jew or Christian or heathen, must now be attributed to man. Therefore: not the non-church (secular) people of today, but the church itself must be placed in the defendant's chair. Krikke analyzes the purpose and the aims of the books, the orders, the forms which are presently used in the liturgy. Everything is at fault.

In his criticism he finds fault with the Prayerbook, the Hymnal, etc. The final conclusion is: the churches are ignoring the changes in the structures, they are not receptive to the disappearance of the ancient sense of religion. They have continued almost completely on the old religious track which is based on an antiquated image of God, image of the world, image of man, and in this way they are at work to alienate even more people from the church.

Mystery without Myth

Of course, now the question inevitably arises: what content must the liturgy then have? According to Krikke, the liturgy must fit into the situation of modern man and must accommodate modern thought. Vulnerable man of today, must be brought into contact with the Mystery of life and history by means of an up-to-date service. This mystery could be given the name "god", but then it should be emphasized that this name should not be used in a traditional sense, in which God is seen as a person or spirit. It is to be a mystery without a myth. That is to say: without a personal God, without Christ as both God and man, without the testimony of the resurrection of the dead and a faith in God with all that it embraces. In this Nothing, in this emptiness there *does* seem to be a need for fellowship and allowance must be created for support, comfort and reception. You must be able to tell others about your restlessness, and fear, your joy and your suffering. There must be an empty space which breathes rest. "In all her parts and facets," Krikke writes, "the liturgy shall have to breathe this spiritual companionship and christian friendship, usually only verbalized indirectly but felt in everything and living in the consciousness of every participant. As core according to content and form, the liturgy of such a fellowship must incorporate the realization that we people, via the undercurrents of life are committed to each other and that we belong together" (Krikke, 1976:134).

So it concerns a liturgy of warmth, empty space, a liturgy of the mystery of the fellowship of friends.

Does Scripture have a function in this liturgy? No way. Krikke says: "The sanctification of one book has had its time. The only place where that could still be maintained would be within the walls of a solid fortress of orthodoxy. For the defenders of those walls it is painful, however, that such old bulwarks have absolutely no use anymore in modern war" (Krikke, 1976:160ff.). The question arises: is the preaching still necessary? Krikke says that we should rather speak about meditation. "The word meditation gives us a fairly accurate rendition of what is possible and desirable in this liturgy: gathering thoughts about all the possible aspects of the Mystery, process them, pass them on, and make them the subject of a communal reflection."

Krikke would like to begin a service as follows, for example — and that is then his formulation of the "Votum": "Let us dedicate this service (gathering) to the deepest and best things, which we may know, let us reflect on those things together so that we can live as humans" (Krikke, 1976:145).

It is unnecessary to mention here that we are confronted here with a modernistic mysticism, which has rejected the Word of God and that is completely humanistic and horizontalistic in its structure. This cult has nothing to do with worship service — a service to the glory of the LORD, the God of the Scriptures. Krikke has submitted himself to the teachings of a Bultmann and a Tillich, and has left behind the myths,

and the image of the God of the Scriptures. In fact, he has left the whole Bible behind, and he is left with an empty husk, indeed: an empty space, which has absolutely no filling or content.

Worship Service as Action

Those who started off as liberalists, raising the slogans of the French Revolution, should not be surprised that at a certain point in time they have arrived at *communism.* That progression is also noticeable in the development of modern theology. In the last decades those theologians travelled via liberal theology to the "*Entmythologisierung*" (= the de-mythologizing of the Bible, pht) of Bultmann and afterwards, via the 'God-is-dead theology' of Robinson, via the theology of evolution, of the revolution and liberation to what is essentially nothing other than a politicized neo-Marxist philosophy, critical of society. In liturgical respect, this development has led to the "*Gottesdienst als Aktion*" (= Worship service as Action).

The renewed theology (that's what they still call it), had to lead to new liturgy, namely, a liturgy of political action. In 1968 they started with this in Cologne. From there this so-called "worship service" blew over to other areas of Germany, and soon afterwards also arrived in the Netherlands, under the leadership of *Dorothee Sölle,* (presently a professor at Union Seminary, New York), and *Fulbert Steffensky.*

The point of departure for this new liturgy was the sad state of the official liturgy in which there was so little time for daily concerns, problems and needs, and in which there was hardly any place for a plea of solidarity with those who have been lost, those who suffer discrimination, the oppressed, the poor, the exploited and those suffering privation. But in this *Aktion-Gottesdienst* this would all be changed. Central to this liturgy they would have an analysis of the real state of this society: information about the deeper backgrounds of what ails this society; protest against the existing relationships; planning and action to thoroughly change those relationships, the present structures of this society. *"Aktion-Gottesdienst,"* according to one of their spokesmen means: "*Die Tagersordnung der Welt behandeln-sachgemäsz und unreligiös*" (= deal with the daily order of the world — orderly, to the point and non-religiously).

That is why in 1968, they arrived at the "politisches Nachtgebet," in Cologne, which consisted of 3 parts: information, meditation and action. After the reading of Matt. 25:42-44, they say: "Today the words of Jesus sound as follows: I was hungry; you chemically destroyed the harvest of my land! I was hungry for self-determination; you colonized my country! I was a stranger in my own country; you bombarded my country!" and it ends with: "I bled to death; you simply watched it happen on television" (Seidel/Zils, 1970:278ff.).

They do not close the Bible then, but by this means they have to "translate" the Bible for today.

Of course, the number of texts for this *Aktion-Gottesdienst* remains quite restricted. That does not matter, for they only use what they can profitably employ for their goals. They even admit that they make a "*selective*" use of the prophetic tradition in the O.T., a selection which is critical of cult and society, and in this way they, "*die spätkapitalistische Bürgergemeinde aufrüteln*" (= want to shake up the late capitalistic society.) As fruit of this movement, the Netherlands received an organization called "Christians for Socialism." According to their own admission, the church services have received a double task for them:

1. To pass on the perception that reality in society is marked by class struggle, for which the (neo) marxist analyses and criticism of society can provide all the necessary help;

2. To activate Christians to become involved in the liberation movements for the oppressed. In other words to activate Christians to become involved in making the necessary changes in society for which the Bible reveals previously unkown possibilities.

The Aktion-Gottesdienst has its own confession, developed by Dorothee Sölle. This credo is as follows:

"I believe in God
who did not make the world into a finished product
as something which had to remain the same
who does not govern according to eternal laws
which are unchangeably fixed
and not according to natural ordinances
wherein there are rich and poor present
people who know everything and
people who don't know anything
people who rule and others who
have been subjected to rulers.
I believe in God
who wants the opposition of the living
and the change of all situations
by means of our politics. . . .
I believe in Jesus Christ
who is resurrected in our lives
to make us free
of prejudice and high-handedness
of fear and hatred
so that we will continue his revolution
on the road to his kingdom."

Dorothy Sölle has simply discarded the 'God of the Christians.' Jesus chose to side with the outsiders, atheists, the rejects of society and the victims of exploitation. Therefore, those who want to meet Christ, will meet him in the suffering neighbour of today. For they will meet him exclusively in *this* says Solle.

World Council of Churches

It is remarkable how the development of Aktion-Gottesdienst parallels the development of the World Council of Churches, the W.C.C.

While the theology of Karl Barth dominated the assembly at Amsterdam in 1948, in the following meeting in Evanston, racism was the point of order. In New Dehli in 1961, the Russian church was admitted, who had declared that they supported and blessed the politics of the communists on "exclusively religious motives," because these were supposedly to rely on the principles of humanity and justice. This church was accepted as a full-fledged member. In Uppsala, in 1968, the theology of revolution was victorious, with the motto, "Everything will become new." Uppsala undeniably showed clear signs of marxism, and it was precisely that same year that the liturgy of political action was initiated in Germany. Also at Uppsala Bible texts were used for revolutionary purposes. Had the Lord Jesus Himself not given the example of revolutionary action over against the established structures, by turning the tables of the moneychangers upside down? Uppsala was followed by Nairobi in 1975. There the theology of liberation established a strong presence. But when they refer to "libera-

tion," they do not mean a liberation from sin and guilt, but the liberation — with force if necessary — from oppressive structures. In Vancouver 1983 Dorothee Sölle was applauded strongly.

The whole so-called worship service of Aktion-Gottesdienst has become nothing more than a political meeting, and the word 'liturgy' is misused for the purposes of political indoctrination and provocation.

One wonders in the meantine, what is worse: to deny the Bible and leave it closed, as in the case of modernistic liberalism, or to annex the Bible for self-prescribed purposes and then select texts, which are torn out of context, to serve the purpose of political activities, as that is done in the case of Aktion-Gottesdienst.

The Apostolate

Elements of both of the last mentioned "theologies" (though they are not so consistently expressed) are to be found in the *"apostolate-theology"* of J.C. Hoekendijk (1912-1975). He was born in Indonesia, and died in the United States, held professorships in New York and Utrecht and before that he was associated with the W.C.C. in Geneva. He could justly boast of a varied experience in the area of mission and the ecumenical movement. Hoekendijk wants to reach what he calls, the "fourth person."

The first person is the heathen who has established his first contacts with the gospel.

The second person is the Christian who has accepted the gospel.

The third person is the Christian who maintains that he has enriched himself in the European personality culture (which, according to Hoekendijk is actually an impoverishment).

The fourth person is the one who has become totally estranged from the Bible through the new world view of modern learning. He is post-Christian, post-ecclesiastical, post-civilian, and post-personal. The gospel has no message anymore for this fourth person. The worship service in its present form has even less appeal. He is becoming more and more alienated.

One can see parallels with a liberalist such as Krikke. Also Hoekendijk maintains that this estrangement is as a result of the form and method in which Christians have delivered this to the people of our times.

But Hoekendijk does not end up in an empty space, as the new form of liturgy. But he does come to the conclusion that there must be a radical break-through in the structure of the congregation. All the rigidity and inflexibility must disappear. A mobile church must be developed, which concretely exercises solidarity with the neighbour by divesting itself completely of this sacral style, language and place.

The ideal is that in this way the church may overwin her civility, liberate evangelism from suspicion of expansionism of its own culture milieu and force a break-through in the direction of the afore-mentioned fourth person. Hoekendijk summarizes all of this under the term, the apostolate.

Just as the apostle once fought against Judaism, which had established a demand of circumcision of the heathens, similarly we must not reject the demand which the church exercises in her proselytizing zeal to those who come to her, namely, that these people must submit and accustomize themselves to codes, forms and mannerisms of the group. According to Hoekendijk, the church is only a vehicle by means of which the gospel propels itself through the world. The church is simply a function of the apostolate. The one and the other have important consequences for the worship service. The church should divest itself of the "monument-complex" (syndrome) and build churches which look as much as possible like tents, because the mobile society also

demands a mobile church. Therefore, in the place of the one cathedral of the large congregation, there should be small gatherings of *house-congregations* of students, for example, or nurses, inhabitants of one apartment, pensioners, military, and so forth: every possible forgotten group. Then, for all intents and purposes, the offices in the church may be dropped — the congregation is mature, is it not? — and after all, basically they were levers of conservatism, protectionism ("bevoogding") and hierarchy. The mature world demands the activity of the "lay-person." They are all mobile units, and then, this is the way the liturgy should function too. No preaching of the minister, no guardianship of the elders, but rather, the mutual edification in house congregations, and activities directed to the outside. The church can no longer be a separate building, no Divine habitation of the Spirit, but a mobile unit for a mobile God, who constantly breaks up camp. And what presently takes place in the congregation building (the present church), every Sunday, according to Hoekendijk, that can take place every day in the house congregation. With this difference, that here it will take place in an overseeable context: in a group where everyone knows the other, and therefore where they can also correct each other. If the need for office-bearers is called for — Hoekendijk thinks that they are actually a blockade to the Spirit — then everyone can pitch in and give a hand to lend assistance wherever necessary, strengthening the weaknesses and then also guarding the preservation of the congregation or its restoration. Furthermore, the congregation is mature and must help itself, also in the worship service of the house congregation.

The Mobile Unit

But Hoekendijk's house congregation — he speaks about a para-parish (=parochie) which rises above the normal one — is not the house congregation of the Scriptures. When the apostle speaks about this form of gathering, it concerns the small congregation which could meet in a house. And when Scripture speaks about a parish, the *par-oikia,* then it does not picture the image such as seen by Hoekendijk in the later corruption of the parish of the Middle Ages, but instead, it is simply a normal denotation of each local church.

Moreover: with his house congregation, Hoekendijk wrenches the richly varied life of the congregation to pieces. It is part of election that the LORD brings together great and small, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, and makes them into a pluriform congregation. But Hoekendijk has dissolved God's one congregation into a number of sociologically pre-determined groups. And then: is the congregation not mature? And does she not have the Spirit? Indeed, but God has given the ministry of reconciliation and He has given the ministry of the offices to work the perfection of the saints, and through His Word and Spirit He wants to gather a congregation for Himself.

Can the world save herself without "God" in the old sense of the word? Must the "church-guardianship (=kerk-voogdij), such as Hoekendijk calls it be abandoned? But this abandonment will lead irrevocably to lawlessness on the one side and to the autonomy of modern man on the other side, while the "liturgy of the mobile unit" will be conducive to spiritualism, causes neglect of the ministry of the Word and splits the church up into a number of groups which are like-minded and directed to similar ends (cf. Trimp, 1971:90ff; cf. also Van Gurp, 1989:335, where he points to the fact that Hoekendijk advocates a liberation of the "world which is enacted without atonement through the blood of Christ").

Seeing and hearing

In the meantime, the ecumenical movement has continued on. In the early days of the W.C.C., between the first and second assemblies, the conference for liturgy, convened by the section "Faith and Order," still attempted to find the *greatest-common-denominator-subject* for the liturgy. The preparatory committee, chaired by G. v. d. Leeuw, who died before the conference in Lund in 1952, came with an extensive report, embodied in the work, "Ways of Worship" (Edwall, 1951). Theologians of various feathers worked together: people of the liturgical movement, Lutheran, Romish, Anglicans, Baptists, Quakers, etc.

They looked especially at the Anglicans and Lutherans who are situated somewhere in between the "liturgy of seeing" and the "liturgy of hearing." For that reason they felt that they should not distinguish too much between the "churches of the sacrament" and the "churches of the Word." The fulness lies in the unity of both. There will have to be a *compromise.* At the conference in Lund, one of the Anglicans said: Word and sacrament are inseparable anyway. Sacrament without the Word could add to superstition, but conversely the Word without sacrament could soon degenerate to a Word without power.

But: they could not find a conclusive formula, regardless of the six points on which they did agree. Lund's achievement was that the liturgical movement was led into ecclesiastical lines. For the rest they did not achieve more.

Pluriform

The thread was finally and seriously taken up again in Uppsala, the assembly of the W.C.C. in 1968. But also here the matter stagnated. At the plenary session of the section dealing with *liturgy and a secularized world,* a noteworthy incident took place. A French interpreter, whose task was nothing more than to translate the speeches of the delegates into the official languages spoken at the conference, involved himself in the discussion and informed the leaders of the section that he was of the opinion that any attempt to come to a compromise would be useless. Whatever other churches were planning was their business, but what really concerned him was that the European churches would radically change their liturgy so that they could take up contact with the non-believers, because the latter are in the majority almost everywhere. The debate that was taking place was useless, according to him, because the non-believers were not present at the conference.

Uppsala stranded. Where it concerned the worship service, they chose a representative from the Eastern Orthodox church. Even though the topic was supposed to deal with the liturgy in a secularized world. The Eastern Orthodox concept of the church soon became an issue. Liturgy there is primarily an act of withdrawal from the world. It's something holy and heavenly. For the chairman, the issue of secularization was then also: the secularization of the worship service itself. Consequently, the matter became deadlocked before it even began. Several things were still said about the unity and diversity in the worship services in various churches, and new research projects were commissioned. No longer was there any talk of a compromise or a greatest-common-denominator. The *diversity,* the pluriformity variety of the different church liturgies came to the foreground.

The whole issue of the secularized world and the adaptation of the liturgy to that situation, did not even get off the ground. What they did establish at Uppsala was that we as Christians should refuse to take part in any form of division of races or classes in our worship services and also that our fellowship with Christ must demonstrate that we share our bread with the hungry brothers in the world.

In the worship service, are we not engaged in a battle with God against the demonic powers of the world?

The dialogue must be continued. But the complaint is: specifically in liturgical respect the dialogue does not "work."

In subsequent assemblies of the W.C.C. they did not get much further. At the meeting in Nairobi, the whole issue of liturgy was not even made a point of order on the agenda. But they do perceive that there is a tendency to allow the existence of the diversity or pluriformity in the matter of liturgy.