CHAPTER 7[1]

"*Docere et movere*." Preaching, Sacrament, and Prayer in the Reformed liturgical system of 16th century Geneva

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For a long time, the idea prevailed that Protestantism, especially in its Reformed variants, provoked a rejection of ritual forms of devotion. Against excessive Catholic ritual obligations, the Calvinist Reformation supposedly preferred a type of piety that was more interior than liturgical, more individualistic than community-based, and built more on the understanding of the faith and the reading of the Scriptures than on participation in ecclesiastical ceremonies.

It is now increasingly clear that this conception of the relationship of the Reformation to worship is the result of an interpretation that originated with the Protestant Enlightenment and which became in the 19th century, with liberal Protestant historiography, so self-evident as to become a stereotype. The French historian Pierre Chaunu sums up in a few words the equivalence that has thus settled in the minds of many between the Reformation and the rejection of rites: "the non-act, the withdrawn act" would be, according to him, "typically Reformed." The anthropologist Mary Douglas indicates the cultural significance of this heritage: "The evangelical movement has accustomed us to think that every rite is nothing but

[1] The chapter was translated from the French by C. Jon Delogu.

empty, meaningless formalism, that any codification of behavior is foreign to the movements of the heart which are natural, and that any external religion betrays the true, inner religion."[2]

Starting in the 1980s, under the combined influence of social history, cultural history, and historical anthropology, historians began to distance themselves from this conception and to take a greater interest in the religious practices adopted by the Reformed communities. Breaking with the perspective of a primarily ecclesiastical and dogmatic history, they turned to documents that allow us to grasp religious customs and the Reformed religious culture more generally. Margo Todd conveys this change of perspective when she denounces the idea "inherited from historians of past generations," according to which [**p. 166**] "Reformers have vigorously dismissed all external forms, rituals, and symbols in favor of a concentration on interiority, conversion, and doctrine."[3]

At the end of the twentieth century, this historiographical turning point came to have an impact on the religious history of Geneva. The change of perspective, which may be credited to the influence of social history, led to a new interest in the registers left by the Consistory, the disciplinary tribunal of the Church of Geneva, which no historian had systematically studied before the 1970s. But consistorial sources have also revealed a great deal of information about the religious practices of the Reformed in Geneva. The work of the historian Robert Kingdon illustrates perfectly this change in focus and has simultaneously done a great deal to further it. After working on institutional and political history, he turned his attention to the issue of ecclesiastical discipline, before becoming interested in issues of

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[2] Mary Douglas, *De la souillure* (1967; repr. Paris: 2001), 80; id., *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: 1966).

[3] Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven and London: 2002), 21.

cultural history and worship.[4] Kingdon's research, along with the work of Elsie A. McKee, demonstrates the rise of a new historiography dealing with the religious practices that emerged in Reformed Geneva.[5] We are therefore in a much better position to know the formation of the different aspects of Reformed worship and to analyze its meaning.

It is now possible to demonstrate that the Reformation in Geneva was not a movement of de-ritualization of religious life, but instead consisted in the gradual substitution of one ritual system by another. After a relatively long process, occurring mainly between 1530 and the early 1560s, a Reformed ritual system was constituted and consolidated. It replaced the

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[4] Robert W. Kingdon, "The Genevan Revolution in Public Worship," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 20/3 (1999): 264-80 (republished in: Robert M. Kingdon with Thomas A. Lambert, *Reforming Geneva. Discipline, Faith and Anger in Calvin's Geneva* (Geneva: 2012), 25-46).

[5] Elsie McKee, *John Calvin on the diaconate and liturgical almsgiving* (Geneva, 1984); *Elders and the plural ministry. The role of exegetical history in illuminating John Calvin's Theology* (Geneva, 1988) ; John Calvin, *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, ed. Elsie A. McKee (New York: 2001); *The Pastoral Ministry and Worship in Calvin's Geneva* (Geneva: 2016); Thomas A. Lambert, *Preaching, praying and policing the Reform in sixteenth-century Geneva* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1998); Max Engammare, *L'ordre du temps. L'invention de la ponctualité au XVI^e siècle* (Geneva, 2004); Karen E. Spierling, *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: the shaping of a community, 1536-1564* (Aldershot: 2005); Christian Grosse, *Les rituels de la cène. Le culte eucharistique réformé à Genève (XVI^e – XVII^e siècles)* (Geneva: 2008); Erik de Boer, *The Genevan School of the prophets. The congregations of the Company of Pastors and their influence in 16th century Europe* (Geneva: 2012); Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609* (New York: 2013).

Mass as a way of certifying the divine presence with a set of closely articulated practices [**p. 167**] which function was likewise the confirmation of this presence. After reviewing how this system was formed, we will examine first the place occupied by the singing of psalms, then the liturgical dynamics of the practices of preaching and communion, and finally the formation of that elementary devotional manual, the psalter. In a concluding part, we will analyze how this ritual system fit into space and gave rhythm to a collective time.

The Ritual Overthrow of the Mass

The events that marked the conversion of Geneva to the Reformation can surely be seen as the work of rejecting the liturgical system which framed religious life at the end of the Middle Ages. The first manifestations of religious dissent among the Genevan population were expressed by refusing to participate in certain rites. Thus, those fighting on behalf of the gospel ate meat during Lent, worked on feast days, disrupted processions, and did not participate in the annual confession prior to the Easter communion. The iconoclastic violence perpetrated by these same individuals, which regularly erupted between 1530 and 1536, can be interpreted as reflecting the rejection of a material modality of the presence of the divine.[6]

The rejecting of rites and the engaging in iconoclastic violence form one and the same movement alongside the adoption of new religious practices. The rejection of the divine presence in the mass or in images takes place at the same time as the establishment of other forms of attestation of this presence: the sermon and the sacraments. It was by first meeting to hear preaching starting in the summer of 1532, to celebrate the Lord's Supper at Easter in 1533, and to celebrate baptisms and marriages as early as February 1534, that the first groups

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[6] Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols. The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: 1986).

of evangelicals truly formed a separate church. Their worship immediately took on an orderly, liturgical form. This church was formed under the direction of the Dauphinois preacher Guillaume Farel, who in 1533 published a liturgical booklet, *La Maniere et fasson* [*The Manner and Way*].[7]

This booklet of less than one hundred pages was of foundational significance. It was the first collection of texts used for worship in French-speaking [**p. 168**] Reformed Churches. Written "in the common language,"[8] it shows from the outset a key trait by which the practices of the new church differed from those of the old one. Endeavoring to give practical expression to the idea of the "universal priesthood," the use of French indicates that the religious culture codified by this liturgy is addressed to all of the faithful. At the same time, it establishes the foundation of a culture in which the language of worship and of daily life interact.

The Manner and Way contains a set of statements regulating, in order, baptism, marriage, celebrations of the Lord's Supper, and the way to behave during preaching. These instructions are supplemented by guidelines for visiting the sick. Although the booklet is short, it contains guidelines for the celebration of the sacraments considered to have a scriptural foundation and the most important rites. In addition, the instructions on proper care for the sick indicates the shift of attention that the Reformation undertakes from merely performing funeral rites to accompanying spiritually those who suffer. Communion is interpreted in a distinctly communal sense. The faithful share in the belief that they are

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[7] Guillaume Farel, *Maniere et fasson qu'on tient en baillant le sainct baptesme, et en espousant, et à la saincte Cene* (Neuchâtel: 1533).

[8] Guillaume Farel, *La maniere et fasson qu'on tient es lieux que Dieu de sa grace a visites*, ed. Jean-Guillaume Baum (Strasbourg and Paris: 1959), 8.

equally recipients of the promise of salvation found in the Gospel. The community that celebrates communion according to this liturgy is clearly one that is based on the idea of the priesthood of all believers: "All the faithful take from the same bread, and drink from the same chalice, visibly, without any distinction, just as invisibly all must be nourished by the same spiritual bread, by the holy word of life, by the gospel of salvation, living all in one spirit, with one faith."[9]

This first liturgy is clearly influenced by the liturgical forms used in Bern: the succession of texts (baptism, marriage, supper, preaching) is identical and the liturgies of baptism and marriage are directly inspired by the Bernese model, even if the one for the supper differs somewhat. John Calvin would use this text in the worship in Geneva from the time of his arrival in the summer of 1536.

The Formation of Calvinist Liturgical Culture

The Genevan worship service followed the Farel liturgy until the end of 1541. Following a conflict between the Genevan churches and magistrates in the spring of 1538 over matters of ecclesiastical discipline and conformity with Bernese liturgical practices, Calvin and Farel were banished from the city. [**p. 169**] When Calvin returned in September 1541, a new stage in the history of Geneva's religious practices began.

Calvin had developed his initial thinking on liturgy in 1536 in Basel when he was writing the *Institutes of the Christian Religion.* He then came into contact, through Farel, with the Zwinglian liturgical tradition. During Calvin's stay in Strasbourg, between 1538 and 1541, he was influenced by Martin Bucer. In this context, while head of the French Protestant

[9] Farel, *La maniere et fasson*, 42.

community who had taken refuge in the city, Calvin wrote his first liturgy: *The Manner of Praying in French Churches.*

Calvin revised this text during his first few months back in Geneva. This revision constitutes the basis of his *The Form of Prayers and Ecclesiastical Songs, with the Manner of Administering the Sacraments and Consecrating Marriage*, published in the first half of 1542. This text, which underwent some adaptation between 1542 and 1552, formed the heart of the liturgical culture of the Calvinist Reformed Churches, until the revisions that took place at the end of the seventeenth century.

The structure ordering this document testifies to the choices that resulted from the evolution of Calvin's liturgical conceptions. After witnessing in Basel, Geneva, and Strasbourg several ways of considering the relationship between the practices of preaching and communion, he opted for a liturgical system organized around divine services with the sermon at the heart of the liturgy. While Farel featured the liturgy of the preaching service after that of baptism, marriage, and the supper in *The Manner and Way,* Calvin instead opened his *Form of Prayers* with the preaching service followed by the prayer, baptism, and the supper, before closing with the marriage service and instructions for visiting sick people.

The Form of Prayers signals first the centrality of the sermon in liturgical life and secondly the complementarity of the different ways recognized by Calvinist theology to attest to the promises of salvation, to communicate with the divine, and to manifest his presence: sermons, prayers, and the sacraments. The structure of *The Form of Prayers* highlights an essential element of the Reformed ritual system, which revolves around different forms of Bible commentary. Preaching, prayer, and the sacraments present themselves as ways of presenting and experimenting with the meaning of the biblical text: the sermon is constructed from verses read at the beginning and then commented on; prayer develops as a paraphrase of

the Our Father and the psalms; the liturgy of Holy Communion offers a commentary on the narrative of institution to which it adds a visible illustration of the promise of salvation.[10]

[**p. 170**] By its very structure, *The Form of Prayers*, thus, indicates that communication with the divine combines two principles derived from classical theories of rhetoric, which Calvin sees as characteristic of "biblical eloquence": *docere et movere*. According to Calvin, the effectiveness of the biblical style, which God has accommodated to human abilities, rests on his capacity to bring education and emotion together.[11] "As the understanding must look carefully to God, so it is required that the affection of heart follow," Calvin says very clearly.[12] The Reformed liturgical system implements this convergence by linking the instruction given in the sermon to the sensory experience given through the visible signs of the sacraments. It is on this condition that "true communication" with the divine works, in the strong sense which Calvin ascribes to this notion. It is a form of communication through which is transmitted not only a meaning addressed to the intellect but also a conviction of "participating" in the "life" of Christ itself, so that "his life is joined with ours, and is made ours."[13]

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[10] On this notion of commentary, see Bernard Roussel, "Comment faire la cène? Rite et retour aux Ecritures dans les Eglises réformées du Royaume de France au XVIe siècle," in *Les retours aux Ecritures*, eds. C. Patlagean and A. Le Boulluel (Louvain-Paris: 1993), 197, 214, 215.

[11] Olivier Millet, *Calvin et la dynamique de la parole. Etude de rhétorique réformée* (Paris: 1992).

[12] Jean Calvin, *Institution de la religion chrestienne*, ed. Jean-Daniel Benoit, 5 vols. (Paris: 1957-1963), III, XX, 5 (hereafter, *IRC)*.

[13] Calvin, *IRC*, IV, XVII, 5.

Calvin was not satisfied merely to juxtapose the liturgies of various churches in his *Form*. Rather, he intertwined them tightly. It is, thus, clearly stated that baptism cannot take place independently from the celebration of ordinary worship which centered on the sermon. Baptism is, therefore, always inserted into the ordinary worship service as an extension of the sermon. Above all, the liturgical form that regulates the practice of preaching also includes a prayer and a formula of thanksgiving or grace which are pronounced during the communion services. The process, which consists in including in the liturgy (which is centered around the sermon) texts which belong to eucharistic worship, emphasizes the close relationship these two forms of celebration maintain. It is also clear that, as with baptism, the supper never takes place except as an extension of the sermon. The latter finds in Holy Communion its necessary complement and Holy Communion can only be celebrated in the light of the sermon.

The Singing of Psalms

The worship dictated by *The Form of Prayers* also confirm the maturity which Calvin's liturgical conceptions had reached by 1542. Many elements that would become typical of the Reformed religious culture are definitively codified in it. [**p. 171**] One of the most famous, which itself would constitute a characteristic feature of Reformed identity, is the singing of psalms. As early as January 1537, Farel and Calvin had the singing which they introduced into the services approved by magistrates. Singing also took place in the divine services led by Calvin in Strasbourg, which is why he had produced for his Church a small collection of thirteen psalms versified by Clément Marot and six by himself.[14] In 1542, thirty-five versified psalms were incorporated into *The Form of Prayers.* The singing then occurs before the

[14] *Aulcuns pseaulmes and hymns mys in singing* (Strasbourg: 1939).

sermon, during the Wednesday and Sunday services. The expansion to fifty psalms versified by Marot made possible, no later than 1545, the insertion of an additional psalm following the sermon. The completion of the versification of all one hundred fifty psalms by Theodore de Bèze and the publication of the complete psalter in 1562 allowed the service to open with a psalm from that time onwards.[15]

Though absent from most weekday services centered on the sermon, the singing of psalms occupies an important place in the Wednesday and Sunday worship services. Two principles direct its execution. Contrary to the Catholic practice of polyphonic singing, the Reformed faithful sing in unison. The use of the French language, the printing of psalters in large quantities starting in 1562, and the recruitment by the Genevan authorities in 1541 of a cantor to teach music to children all made it possible to participate collectively in this dimension of worship. Although ministers in the countryside complained about the difficulty of getting the faithful to sing the psalms, the liturgical innovation of the collective singing of the psalms was palpable. It caused astonishment among observers. Describing the service as it was celebrated in 1553 in Geneva, the former monk, Antoine Cathelan, noted that the faithful would sing before the sermon "all together—men, women, girls, and boys."[16] The insistence of this witness on the participation of "all" in the singing shows how this practice differed from the usual custom. Its noteworthy intervention at the beginning of the service gave the singing in unison the ritual function of unifying the assembly of the faithful gathered in the temple. It made a disparate crowd into a true assembly of worshipers. Placed before and after

[15] The latest full reconstruction of the evolution summarized here is given by McKee in *The Pastoral Ministry,* 203-221.

[16] Antoine Cathelan, *Passevent Parisien respondant à Pasquin Rommain* (1556; repr. Paris: 1875).

the sermon, the singing also allowed for an alternation of speaking between ministers and the faithful.

The reflections on the use of singing developed by Calvin in the preface to the 1542 edition of *The Form of Prayers* and in the psalter published the [**p. 172**] following year set out the second principle, according to which there must be a close relationship between the melody and the "majesty" of the words (of the psalm) that it accompanies. While Calvin recognized in music a "secret and almost incredible virtue to move hearts," he equally stressed his fears it might become "an opportunity to throw off the constraints that keep us from dissolution."[17] Two rules were, therefore, put in place to channel the emotions that music awakens. The first involves the requirement that each note of the melody correlates to a syllable of the text. The letter of the text thus moderates the emotional strength of the music. The second rule sets down the strict requirement that only divinely-inspired words be used for singing: "No one can sing things worthy of God except that which he has received from Him: [...] we will find no better songs nor more appropriate ones than the Psalms of David." This rule, therefore, imposed the exclusive use of psalms, to which were added the Credo and the Decalogue, as textual sources for Reformed liturgical singing and forbade, until the end of the 17th century, the composition of hymns intended for worship services.

Reformed liturgical singing is a characteristic application of the complementarity between *docere* and *movere.* "After understanding must follow the heart and affection,"

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[17] For the full text of this preface, see *Joannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz et Eduardus Reuss, Brunswick, Berlin, 1863-1900, 59 vol. (hereafter CO), t. 6, cc. 169-172.

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Calvin writes in the psalter's preface from 1543. Melody and text complement each other in singing to promote a dynamic spiritual elevation.[18]

The Movement of the Liturgy in Preaching

The liturgical progression set out in *The Form of Prayers* was also, until the end of the seventeenth century, one of the stable elements in Reformed worship. All services began with the same invocation: "May our help be in the Name of God who made heaven and earth, amen."[19] Thereby, those who entered into communion with the divine began by recognizing His omnipotence. This formula spread widely into Genevan culture. One encounters it regularly at the opening of official registers, for example. This act of recognition of the divine was immediately followed, in the prayer services and Sunday services, by the confession of [**p. 173**] sins which expressed in extremely strong terms an Augustinian conception of human nature as deeply marked by sin. It was written in the first-person plural and pronounced by the whole assembly of the faithful while kneeling, according to the testimony of Antoine Cathelan. Its purpose was to lead them to recognize themselves as "born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do wrong, useless to all good," and thus incapable of contributing to their own salvation. Placing worship under this sign of repentance, the confession of sins put the faithful in a position to hear the sermon and to pray by first renouncing beforehand any idea of contributing to their own salvation.

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[18] Christian Grosse, "The Aesthetics of song in calvinist piety in the early Reformation (1536-1545)," http://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_RHR_2271_0013--the-aesthetics-of-song-in-calvinist.htm

[19] All quotes from *The Form of Prayers* which follow are taken from Grosse, *Rituels de la cène*, 633-657.

After the singing of a psalm (or part of a psalm depending on its length), which intervenes at that time in the prayer service and in Sunday services, all services followed with an identical succession of liturgical motifs: the minister prayed a prayer of illumination and attestation[20], recited the Our Father, and read some Bible verses before launching into his sermon. The sequence following the preaching is structured in a similar way in all the services as follows: an exhortation to prayer, a long prayer of intercession, then the recitation of Our Father and the Credo. During prayer and Sunday services, a psalm (or part of a psalm) is sung at that time, before the final blessing which is the same in all services.

In this arrangement, the prayer of intercession is a particularly important moment. Its introductory formula gives meaning to the religious assembly by emphasizing that it constitutes the true "place" of the divine presence. This place does not depend, according to the Reformed conception of the liturgical space to which we will return, on the sanctity of the church buildings, but on the meeting of the faithful to hear his word or celebrate the sacraments: "we are instructed by the doctrine of [Jesus] and his Apostles to assemble in his name with promises that he will be in our midst," stresses *The Form of Prayers.* The rest of the text includes the whole of this assembly in the prayer pronounced by the officiant. The latter prays in succession in favor of the civil authorities, the ministers, and the faithful of the parish. On the occasion of prayer services, this oration takes a particular form since it provides more room for the expression of repentance and allows individual prayers for a particular individual among the faithful.

[20] The generally adopted terminology for this prayer is "prayer of enlightenment" (Grosse, *Rituels de la cène*, 189-190, 666-669). After analyzing the texts of this prayer, McKee suggests designating it as "prayer for illumination-and-sealing" (*The Pastoral Ministry*, 234).

As can be observed, this structure establishes the relationship between biblical text (or one regarded as inspired) and commentary. This relationship is at the heart of the Reformed [**p. 174**] ritual system. The sermon and prayers alternate with the Our Father, recited twice,[21] the reading of the Bible and the Credo.

The Movement of the Eucharistic Liturgy

When communion is celebrated, its liturgy sticks to this structure. It has been noted that elements specific to the liturgy of the supper are already inserted into the heart of this structure. During these celebrations, the sermon focuses on eucharistic themes and the prayer of intercession is extended by a specifically eucharistic prayer, the content of which is both doctrinal and penitential. It recalls that Jesus's saving sacrifice took place "once," thus implicitly rejecting the Catholic doctrine of Mass as a reiteration of that sacrifice. It, therefore, underscores that the eucharistic rite is a reminder of this unique event. Finally, it invites the faithful to extend the commitment they made in their initial confession of sins by renouncing any idea that they could contribute to their own salvation.

After the recitation of the Credo, which the liturgy of the supper shares with all services and which is intended to confirm the unity of faith within the congregation, the eucharistic portion of the rite properly begins. It is introduced by a succession of texts that prepare the assembly for communion. Singing the Decalogue is used as an oath of obedience to the divine will as expressed in the Ten Commandments. The narrative of institution then indicates that the rite which one is about to be celebrated is in keeping with the rite that Jesus

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[21] Calvin objected in 1549 to the wish expressed by the magistrates to have the Our Father recited three times in worship (Grosse, *Rituels de la cène*, 659-660; McKee *The Pastoral Ministry*, 272-275).

founded and serves as an act of consecration, in the sense that it establishes bread and wine as signs representing the saving virtue of the body and blood of Christ. It ends with verses 27 to 29 of the eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which invites the faithful to examine themselves to ensure they possess the faith, repentance, and obedience required to participate in communion. In the continuation of this call to examine one's conscience, the formula used concerning excommunication excludes from the rite all those who transgress the Ten Commandments in regards to belief or conduct. This solemn excommunication, pronounced "in the name and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ," reflects the set of disciplinary procedures implemented by the Consistory before the celebration and concluded for some of them by temporary [**p. 175**] prohibitions from participating in communion or, exceptionally, by definitive exclusion from the church. The introduction to communion ends with a long exhortation that offers the participants final instructions, partly polemical, on the meaning of the rite and invites them to conclude the movement that the liturgy has indicated so far by rising above the eucharistic symbols to grasp, both intellectually and inwardly, its spiritual meaning.

Once this preparation is completed, words yield to actions. This part of the rite must be reconstructed from sources other than *The Form of Prayers*, which speaks only succinct about it. Those participating in the communion formed two columns, one for men and one for women, that walk towards the communion tables at the foot of the pulpit. On the tables covered with white tablecloths are dishes containing the "bread" of the supper. To comply with the practice adopted in Bern, Farel and Calvin agreed to use unleavened bread and this use continued until the early 1620s, when the Church of Geneva changed to the ordinary bread used in the Churches of France. On the tables were also arranged pewter pitchers and large jugs, often decorated with the coat of arms of the city, for the distribution of wine. Until

1574, there was no particular order of precedence among participants. From then on, the magistrates took communion before the ordinary faithful.

One of the most striking elements of this rite is the participation of "lay people" in the administration of communion. Starting in 1538, magistrates distributed the wine. This practice, introduced at a time when ministers were few in number, then became customary in the Genevan eucharistic rite, despite Calvin's clear reluctance towards it. The practice of entrusting the distribution of bread to ministers and that of wine to magistrates holding the position of elder in the Consistory as well as to deacons, continued until 1623.[22] The scene created by this custom introduced a very important rupture in the eucharistic practice: the participation of members of the Church who did not have the status of minister or priest, although they were in charge of one of the ecclesiastical "vocations" (elder or deacon), constituted a symbolically very strong illustration of the "Christianity without clergy" idea established in the Reformation.[23] It [**p. 176**] underlined the distinctly communal nature of the Reformed understanding of the eucharist.

At the moment when the faithful were in line to take communion, the word did not lose all function. *The Form of Prayers* stipulated that one "should sing a few psalms or reads

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[22] The intervention of elders and deacons in communion is abolished as a result of a controversy over this topic in the early seventeenth century. See Christian Grosse, "La coupe et le pain de la discorde: émergence d'une orthodoxie rituelle au début du XVII^{e} siècle," in *Edifier ou instruire? Les avatars de la liturgie réformée du XVI^{e} au XVIII^{e} siècle*, ed. Maria-Cristina Pitassi (Paris: 2000), 33-55.

[23] Bernard Roussel, "'Faire la Cène' dans les Eglises réformées du Royaume de France au seizième siècle (ca 1555-ca 1575)," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 85 (1994): 108-109.

something from Scripture, suitable for what is meant by the Sacrament." Antoine Cathelan's description of communion indicates that a reading of the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of John actually took place during the celebration, probably alternating with the singing of a psalm. Led by the deacons, this reading offered another opportunity for a "lay" contribution to the administration of the supper. Thus, forms of instruction and support for the elevation of the soul continued during the rite, maintaining within it the complementarity of *docere* and *movere* that animates the whole liturgy.

The celebration of supper ended with a prayer for grace, the text of which was taken from the liturgy of Sunday worship. This prayer could be replaced by or added to the singing of the Song of Simeon. It was followed by the formula of blessing common to all the services and by an act of charity, also common to the prayer services of Sunday and communion, consisting of placing a donation in the collection boxes of the churches: the commitments made during the celebration thus found immediately at the end of the celebration a concrete application.

The Psalter, An Elementary Manual of Reformed Devotion

At first, *The Form of Prayers* appeared several times as an isolated booklet containing just over sixty pages. Although it was still printed regularly in this form until the early 1560s, it most often tended to be published, starting in 1549, together with the catechism and the versified psalms, initially with its own title and pagination which then disappeared starting in the mid-1550s. The uniting and then fusion under the same pagination of these three texts formed the embryo of a work that would constitute the elementary manual of Reformed devotion, usually placed under the title of *Psalms (of David) set in French verse by Clement Marot and Theodore de Bèze*.

This elementary collection was expanded early on with additional elements. Calvin's *Catechism* included, from the first known edition (1545), a small set of prayers composed by Calvin himself: "Prayer to say in the morning while getting up," "Prayer to say before studying one's lesson at school," "Prayer to say before one's meal," "Thanksgiving after one's meal," and "Prayer to say before sleeping." Over time, a dozen other prayer texts were added to this initial corpus. Clément Marot had, in 1543, composed two rhyming prayers, one [**p. 177**] for before the meal, the other for after, which the printers regularly integrated into the psalter, in place of Calvin's prayers, or in addition to them. During the 1550s, there were also occasional prayers, such as those to be said before working, and other more general prayers in which resonated the echo of the persecutions that the Reformed in France suffered at that time. Thus, there appears a "Prayer uttered by captives of the Antichrist" and a "General Prayer for the needs of the Church." The completion of the versification of the one hundred fifty psalms in 1562 gave a new impetus to this production. Some psalters made available to their readers prayers to recite before and after the sermon or reading of the Scriptures, "on leaving the house" or before engaging in any activity. Two different prayers used to accompany the sick also entered the psalters.

The presence of these prayers in the psalters did not follow specific rules and was initiated by printers. One may observe, however, that as early as 1558, the printers made a habit of placing prayers in an order that structures a domestic liturgy. In 1561, this liturgy appeared for the first time under the general title, "Exercise for the father of the family and all his servants to pray in the morning." Subsequently, many psalters would adopt this title, until the beginning of the eighteenth century, or, less regularly, that of "Exercise for Christians in prayer, both in particular and in general, for the needs of the Church."

The domestic worship that took shape was, in fact, an adaptation for home use of the Sunday liturgy. With a few variations, it followed the same steps. It began with the

exhortation and confession of sins that open the Sunday services, omitted the whole part of the Sunday worship that surrounds the sermon, and then reconnected to the Sunday liturgy with the prayer of intercession, the Our Father, and the Credo. It ended, like all worship, with a blessing. The prayer of intercession is the element most accommodated to the domestic context. Depending on the time of day, the faithful may use for the prayer of intercession, the text of the prayer for the morning or evening, or other prayers among those contained in the psalters.

The prayers that the psalters propose for domestic devotion are always formulated in the first-person plural. They are, therefore, written for collective use, that of domestic worship that brings together all members of the household. Genevans were strongly encouraged to put this liturgy into practice at home. Especially when threats were mounting on the city such as epidemics, difficulties with the provision of needs, or the movement of enemy troops in the vicinity. Magistrates would order them to "pray generally and each in particular" or "both by houses and each privately and publicly."[24] Andreas Ryff, a [**p. 178**] bourgeois native of Basel who stayed for three years (1560-1563) as an apprentice with a Genevan grocer, left a very precise description of how the domestic worship was actually practiced by his hosts. "Every morning and also every evening, Master Jean, his wife, his brother-in-law and the entire household kneeled in the stove room, and there the Lady prayed very loud, thanking God with reverence for his grace and blessings, and praying fervently to Him to pour out on us his

[24] Archives d'Etat de Genève (désormais : AEG), R. Publ.2, f. 163r° (9 février 1560), f. 214r° (28 juillet 1564), f. 224r° (11 mars 1566).

Spirit, protection, blessing, and mercy. Later, my employer asked me to lead the prayer once he had taught it to me a little."[25]

On the liturgical level, *The Form of Prayers* is, therefore, an incomplete document. If we want to take into account all the worship performed in Geneva, we must consider it as part of a set of liturgical forms whose full version appears only in the psalter. It was by combining all the texts within the same book that the psalter would organize the continuity and coherence of the liturgical life of the faithful. It thus provided a way to complement ecclesiastical worship, where each person would testify to his faith in public and domestic worship, two elements which Calvin envisioned as closely related to each other. According to him, piety is nourished by the inner deepening of faith through private devotion and also by the external testimony which public worship allows to take place. Therefore, "one who refuses to pray in the assembly of the faithful only knows what it is to pray privately in isolation or in one's house; conversely, one who is not mindful of praying privately while alone, even though he attends public assemblies, can only make frivolous prayers full of wind."[26]

Prayers were not the only texts that were added to the initial corpus formed by the Psalms, *The Form of Prayers*, and the *Catechism.* The psalter also provided various means of appropriation of the psalms by the faithful. Starting in the 1540s, several indexes appeared that indicated when a particular psalm or part of the psalm was sung during the service or which psalms to use as the basis for an individual or collective prayer. Brief introductions also preceded each of the psalms. These "arguments" summarized the content of each while

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[25] Ad. Gautier, "Un jeune Bâlois à Genève au XVIe siècle (1560-1563)," *Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Genève* 17 (1872): 415.

[26] Calvin, *IRC*, III, XX, 29.

emphasizing under what circumstances and for what purposes it may be used. By inviting the intensive use of the psalms, the psalter made the whole book work within a piety animated by the principle of *sola scriptura*. It constantly implemented a dialogue between biblical text and commentary around which all Reformed religious life is organized. The interpretation which the "arguments" propose for each psalm was also repeated elsewhere in the psalter. The [**p. 179**] Apostle's Creed, the Decalogue, and the Our Father always appeared in it and they were commented on at length in the *Catechism.* But these texts were also found in the worship liturgy, which itself unfolds as another form of commentary. As an elementary manual of Reformed piety and an instrument for the participation of the faithful in the various services, the psalter invited them to conduct a continual circulation between biblical sources and commentary.

The psalter still made available all the texts that frame the rites of passage. *The Form of Prayers* provided not only liturgies of baptism and marriage, but also instructions to ministers for accompanying the sick. The latter finds its complement in the prayers for the sick which appear in many psalters and which allow relatives to aid or, if necessary, to substitute for the minister when it comes to the spiritual support of the dying. Though the role of the church stopped in Geneva once death has occurred, it played a heightened role during the agony of dying, as certain documents show. From 1551, the psalters incorporated a text, "The way of questioning children whom one wishes to receive the supper," which formed the basis of a confirmation ceremony celebrated in Geneva on Sundays before each celebration of the supper, thus ritualizing the transition from childhood to adulthood. On this occasion, the catechism session was replaced by this ceremony, which therefore took on a public and solemn character. This questioning took up the structure of the *Catechism* and summarized it while emphasizing the sacrament of communion. The wording of most questions in the plural

indicated that it was not the public testimony of a personal faith that was required of children on this occasion, but rather a public oath attesting to their adherence to a collective faith.[27]

The Liturgical Space

The complex ritual system framed by the psalter thus articulated public and domestic worship, biblical texts, and their commentaries, as well as a set of rites of passage. To understand how this system attests to the divine presence, we need to understand how the liturgical space was organized by the Genevans and to relate the character of the liturgy with this organization. The [**p. 180**] prayer of intercession, common to all worship services, recalled Christ's promise to be "in the midst" of those who gathered to hear his word. It was around this centrality that the liturgical space was built.

After Geneva decided for the Reformation, the Genevans retained, of all the churches and chapels inherited from the Medieval period, only three buildings as regular places of worship: the temples of St. Peter, the Madeleine, and Saint-Gervais. After the period of iconoclastic violence that "purified" them from "idolatry," the authorities began a series of construction projects in the late 1530s which lasted until the mid-1550s and which profoundly transformed the spatial dynamics of buildings. Where they existed (Saint-Pierre and Saint-Gervais), the rood screens that separated the choir from the nave were removed: the separation they inscribed in the church by reserving part of it for the clergy was abolished. The side chapels with their altars were also removed so as to make the entire surface of the

[27] The Reformed ceremony of the confirmation is little studied; See in particular Grosse, *Les rituels de la cène*, 492-498; for Basel, Christine Burckhardt-Seebass, *Konfirmation in Stadt und Landschaft Basel. Volkskundliche Studie zur Geschichte eines kirchlichen Festes* (Bâle: 1975); for England, Phillip Tovey, *Anglican Confirmation 1662-1820* (Burlington: 2014).

church openly available. A pulpit was erected against one of the side pillars and rows of benches installed all around. The walls were completely whitewashed with lime.

At the end of these transformations, the liturgical understanding of the buildings was profoundly altered. Instead of presenting itself lengthwise along the axis from the entrance to the main altar directly opposite, the temple curled on its side (so to speak). Its new center of gravity was now the side pulpit which was placed in such a way that benches could be arranged all around it so that it was very much "in the middle" of the assembly. This organization gave meaning to the Reformed idea of the temple's "sacredness" as not being attached to the place itself, but instead derived from the gathering of the faithful to hear the divine word. According to the definition of the later *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), temples "are not profane, but sacred because of the word of God and the use of Holy things for which they are employed."[28] Organized around the means of witnessing the divine presence provided by the sermon and the sacraments, the liturgical space as it was reshaped in the early years of the Genevan Reformation certainly constituted one of the important elements of Reformed ritual.

The benches that occupy the liturgical space also assumed a dual disciplinary function. The religious assembly they order was, on the one hand, tightly supervised. The benches at the back of the pulpit and on its side, sometimes arranged in tiers as in Saint-Pierre where they produced an amphitheater [**p. 181**] effect, were reserved for ministers and magistrates. The women and children who sat in front of the pulpit with the men around them were thus all

[28] *Confessions et catéchismes de la foi réformée,* ed. Olivier Fatio (Geneva: 1986), 289. See also Christian Grosse, "Places of sanctification : the liturgical sacrality of Genevan reformed churches, 1535-1566," in *Sacred space in early modern Europe,* eds. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: 2005), 60-80.

subjected to their direct supervision. This spatial distribution of the faithful in the temple echoed the words of the prayer of intercession in which the officiating minister prayed successively for the various social groups that were visibly identifiable in the temple. The benches also served to impose on the faithful united in the temple an immobility that would foster the attention they must accord to what was happening at the center of the liturgical scene: the preaching or the celebration of the sacraments. In this respect, they played a role similar to the function of the whiteness of the walls: offering nothing that would hold the eye and inviting those who attended worship to focus their attention on the pulpit or the communion tables. Though they bore no images, the walls were not meaningless. Like the benches that organized the assembly into an audience, the walls helped to create the conditions for this "spirituality of listening" characteristic of Reformed piety.[29]

Liturgical Time

If the liturgical space played a more important role in Reformed piety than was recognized by the historiography for a considerable time, the same could also be said for the organization of liturgical time. The Reformation's elimination of all the feast days of the saints and most of the other feasts inscribed in the Catholic liturgical calendar has often been interpreted as a contribution to the secularization of time. However, far from secularizing ordinary life, the harmony that the Reformation established between the rhythms of daily life and religious life led instead to its sacralization. The absence of a distinction between social time and liturgical time inscribed within the ordinary course of the days a process of "edification" and "sanctification" through a deepening of faith, renunciation of self, and obedience to divine commandments.

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[29] Bernard Reymond, *L'architecture religieuse des protestants* (Geneva: 1996), 79.

The precise organization of the liturgical calendar underwent some instability in the early years of the Reformation. Starting on 23 May 1536, the Genevan authorities abolished all holidays and kept only Sunday as a public holiday. The break with the rhythms imposed by the Catholic liturgical calendar was therefore radical. Two years later, however, the Bernese magistrates obtained from their Genevan counterparts an alignment of a number of religious practices with the Bernese model, including the celebration of Christmas, Circumcision [**p. 182**] (1 January), Incarnation (25 March) and Ascension. These feasts and the way to celebrate them were the subject of many controversies and attempts at regulation in the following decade, until the city government decided on 11 November 1550 to again suppress all feasts. This decision stabilized for a long time the structure of time in Geneva and enshrined the principle that the liturgical calendar should be joined with social time. With the exception of Sunday, there were no more distinctions between sacred days and profane days. If time was in this sense made relatively uniform, it still included phases of intensification that corresponded to the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The framing of Reformed liturgical time was based on the continuous commentary on Scripture by the sermons.[30] Calvin adopted and implemented with great rigor the rule of *lectio*

[30] On preaching in Geneva, especially Calvin's, see Millet, *Calvin et la dynamique de la parole*, Engammare, *L'ordre du temps*, 47-81, McKee, *The Pastoral Ministry*, 60-171, 270-352, 441-567, Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors*, 145-181, all cited above. See also Richard Stauffer, *Dieu, la création et la Providence dans la prédication de Calvin* (Bern: 1978); T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's Preaching* (Edinburgh: 1992); Wilhelmus H. Th. Moehn, *"God calls us to His service:" the Relation between God and his Audience in Calvin's Sermons on Acts* (Geneva: 2001); Grosse, "'Le mystère de communiquer à Jésus-Christ'.

continua, which stipulates that the minister preach in a continuous manner through the whole of a biblical book, chapter after chapter, verse by verse. This method had the effect of matching the course of daily time with the thread of the biblical text and its commentary. It inscribed into ordinary life a continuous relationship with biblical discourse.

From the application of this method, one can discern several rhythms within Reformed liturgical timeframe as practiced in Geneva. At its heart, it consisted in the weekday and Sunday worship services. These followed one another according to the principle of *lectio continua* and as a rule took as their focus books of the Old Testament during the week and from the New Testament on Sundays, with the preaching on Sunday afternoons generally devoted to the Psalms. The precise order of the sermons becomes set gradually. Elsie McKee, who has analyzed this complex process in the most detail, distinguishes four phases. According to the order of worship dictated by the ecclesiastical ordinances (1541), the majority of the sermons were effectively established between 1542 and 1549. The calendar of worship in the Temple of the Madeleine was next completed between 1550 and 1555, and then again between 1555 and 1559. Finally, a series of worship services were added to St. Peter's in 1559.[31]

[**p. 183**] At the end of this process, the continual commentary on the Old Testament books took place every day of the week, Monday to Saturday in Saint-Gervais, at the time of the first service of the day at six or seven o'clock depending on the season; in Saint-Pierre at four or five o'clock, and at six or seven o'clock depending on the season; and at La Madeleine, at six or seven o'clock, except on Wednesdays. Sermons on the New Testament

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Sermons de communion à Genève au XVIe siècle," in *Annoncer l'Évangile (XVe-XVIIe siècle). Permanence et mutations de la prédication* (Paris: 2006), 161-182.

[31] McKee *The Pastoral Ministry*, 60-105, 651-654; summary table, 104-105.

took place on Sundays at 4 or 5 a.m. in St. Peter's and St. Gervais, and then at 8 a.m. (occasionally at 9 a.m.) in St. Peter's, St. Gervais, and La Madeleine. Two other services were also held on Sundays, in each of the three temples: the noon one was centered on the catechism; the 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. service, according to the season, was centered again on the New Testament, and sometimes on the Psalms. While the Reformation resulted in a massive reduction in ecclesiastical staff, the supervision of the faithful through preaching was however greatly augmented. On the whole, the supply exceeded what was called for by the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* of 1541 and amounted to more than thirty sermons per week. Genevans were regularly encouraged by the authorities to attend sermons and their attention during the preaching and their understanding of the sermons was often questioned by the Consistory. They were free to attend or pass up the weekday services, however attending at least one of the Sunday worship services was obligatory. The two morning services should, moreover, foster respect for this obligation: the first would be more specifically aimed at domestic servants, who could then return and keep the house, and at the youngest children, while their masters would attend the second.

To the continual time devoted to sermons focused on biblical commentary, there was added a time of prayer. Calvin had obtained authorization, by October 1541, to have a worship service dedicated to prayer which would be celebrated at St. Gervais and St. Peter's on Wednesdays (some years on Thursday). It would later take place at the Madeleine as well. This worship was a highlight of the Genevan liturgical calendar. It was effectively invested with a status close to that of a Sunday service. The call to this prayer service was made with the same bell as that which invited the faithful to Sunday services; participation was obligatory, like on Sundays; and professional activities were suspended, like on Sundays, but in this case only until the end of the service. The prayer service marked a moment in the week when the theme of repentance was reinforced and where confessional solidarity was also

expressed with the other Protestant states regularly mentioned in the prayers during this worship service. Although it attached particular importance to prayer, it nevertheless included a sermon whose content did not interrupt, except in exceptional circumstances, the thread of the *lectio continua* preaching.

[**p. 184**] Alongside the rotation between services centered on preaching and those centered on prayer, the specific time devoted to the eucharistic liturgy was added. Calvin originally envisioned having communion on a weekly basis coinciding with Sunday worship. But he was forced to compromise with the practices established in the city since the Reformation. In accordance with Bernese usage, the supper was celebrated in Geneva three times a year between 1536 and 1541: at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The compromise that Calvin and the magistrates registered in the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* consisted in guaranteeing greater regularity by adding a celebration on the first Sunday in September. Communion, thus, took place at almost quarterly intervals. With the abolition of the feasts decided in 1550, the Communions no longer took place exactly on Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, but on the nearest Sunday. The compromise, thus, offered a solution that combined the regularity of the celebrations and the evocation of the important events in the life of Jesus for the story of salvation.

Calvin insistently indicated on several occasions that he preferred weekly or monthly communion. But in truth he adapted well to the rhythm that finally emerged, because it allowed the possibility of reserving a time for preparation of the supper. This period of preparation began one week before communion with what came to be called “Announcement Sunday.” At the time of the main Sunday worship service, the ministers preaching would announce the next celebration and issue an exhortation for people to examine their consciences and to repent of their sins. This call set the tone for the week that followed.

The city was effectively engaged, during this week, in a collective examination of conscience. No part of the city escaped it. “Censures” took place in all institutions. Initiated within the Company of Pastors, this procedure, which implied that the members of the institution examined their conduct reciprocally, was then imitated by the magistrates of the Little Council (1557), by those of justice (1563), and eventually the practice was also extended to the General Hospital and the Consistory (1570).

Starting in 1542, the ecclesiastical court held two sessions during the week of preparation for the supper instead of just one as was done ordinarily at other times. Multiple cases the Consistory would be dealing with were concluded during this week. The number of cases examined during the sessions on Tuesday and Thursday before communion would, therefore, be double compared to other weeks, while the number of sentences excluding someone from the supper increased proportionally. This intensification of ecclesiastical discipline was due in particular to the fact that since 1550 the Consistory had been organizing domestic visits before communion. On these visits, a delegation comprising the minister and the elder in charge of the district, as well as a *dizenier* (a civil leader in the district), would go to each household to check [**p. 185**] the state of instruction of its members, especially the servants, and to ensure they were well instructed. From 1561, these domestic visits would took place only before the Easter communion. During the week of preparation, the Consistory or some of its representatives also presided during its sittings or publicly over many reconciliation rituals between spouses, parents, neighbors, or colleagues. In the same vein, to ensure unity of spirit, all judicial proceedings were suspended three days before and three days after communion. The public ceremonies of repentance performed during the services by notorious sinners, also multiplied during the period of preparation. These rites clearly illustrated that the church had to present itself at the communion table table in a condition in which the unity of faith, the “bond of charity”, and the renouncement to sins is prevailing.

Preaching accompanied the momentum of communion preparation. The Easter communion ordinarily prompted an interruption of *lectio continua* preaching. In 1544, the Genevan magistrates ordered the ministers to "preach the passion" during this period.[32] Calvin followed this injunction, as did Theodore de Bèze after him, as well as probably all Genevan ministers. Before the other communion celebrations, greater freedom was left to preachers, at least if one judges from Calvin's practice. But even when he did not, during the week of preparation, interrupt the continual commentary on the biblical text to which he devoted his sermons at that time, Calvin did sometimes insert instructions or exhortations that referred directly to communion. This was especially true for the Saturday sermons on the eve of the celebration. Instructions which included an exhortation were still pronounced, that day, at the College of Geneva.

The four Sundays of the year during which the Genevans celebrated communion marked the culmination of the preparation process. These Sundays exhibited several distinctive characteristics compared to an ordinary Sunday. Marriages could not be celebrated on these days in order that "there is no distraction, and each person is properly disposed to receive the sacrament."[33] Juridical exemptions allowed those who had reason to fear legal action to still participate in communion. Finally, it was expected that all would adopt a demeanor marked by unity and humility. During the Sunday communion services, the Consistory often issued solemn rebukes or imposed spiritual sanctions on those who violated these provisions. The faithful who exhibited a "profane" attitude on the day of communion

[32] CO 21: 332 (21 March 1544).

[33] *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève*, publ. Jean-François Bergier *et al.*, 13 t. (Genève, 1962-2012) (hereafter, *RCP*), t. I, p. 9.

were, thus, accused of having "polluted the [**p. 186**] holy sacrament of the supper" and some were forced to make public repentance for this scandal.[34]

The Introduction of fasting in the Liturgical Calendar

With the complementarity of the services of preaching, prayer, and communion, the calendar acquired, starting in the 1550s, a certain stability. Adjustments were only made in the direction of increasing the number of services celebrated. A single meaningful innovation occurred thereafter was the introduction of a Reformed approach to fasting. Calvin, like other reformers, rejected the practice of fasting on a fixed date but did not reject fasting itself. He recognized it as truly useful, especially as preparation for prayer and as a testimony of one's repentance.[35] In his lifetime, however, no fasting regimen was ordered in Geneva.

It was in the context of the religious wars in France that it was implemented. The first fast was celebrated at the request of the ministers on Sunday, 5 October 1567, which marked the beginning of the Second War of Religion. Theodore de Bèze defended this proposal by urging the magistrates to follow "the example of the holy prophets and good kings of Israel."[36] From the outset, therefore, the celebration of fasting conveyed a strong association between the trials the Reformed Church was going through and those which the Hebrew believers in the

[34] Aeg, A. Consist. 11, f. 60v (24 September 1556); A. Consist. 16, f. 251v (4 January 1560); A. Consist. 18, f. 58 (5 June 1561).

[35] Calvin *IRC*, IV, XII, 14.

[36] AEG, RC 62, f. 113v-114 (3 October 1567).

Old Testament endured and, beyond this similarity, an identification of the Reformed as the chosen people.[37]

After the celebration of a second fast in September 1572, when the news of the Saint Bartholomew massacres reached Geneva, the rhythm of fasts settled into greater regularity.[38] Fasts occurred in 1578 and in 1582, and then almost annually from 1584 until the end of the 16th century. From then on, fasting truly entered into the customs of the Church of Geneva on account of a greater variety of motives: it responded not only to events related to the religious wars in France, but also to military unrest that sometimes directly threatened the survival of [**p. 187**] the city, such as the war with Savoy, and, more generally because of situations of famine, plague, high prices and poverty.

The form that fasting took also stabilized. In 1567 and 1572, one only fasted until the end of the second sermon. The fast then lasted until two or three o'clock in the afternoon depending on the occasion. A common liturgical structure developed at the same time, although it was always adaptable to circumstances. Starting in 1578, the morning and noon services continued in a single liturgical action, so that the celebration lasted from four or five o'clock in the morning until about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. The faithful remained in the church for the duration of this celebration and therefore did not break their fast until its conclusion. This service used elements from the Sunday liturgy, but also incorporated more singing and modified the content of the sermon, which sometimes lasted up to two hours, and that of the prayers according to the circumstances that provoked the fast.

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[37] See Charles H. Parker, "French Calvinists As the Children of Israel: An Old Testament Self-Consciousness in Jean Crespin's History of Martyrs Before the Wars of Religion," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24/2 (1993): 227-248.

[38] AEG, RC 67, f. 136v (1 September 1572); *RCP*, t. III, 86.

This arrangement was supplemented by numerous biblical readings, exclusively from the Old Testament. The identification between the tribulations of the Reformed Churches and those of the Hebrews was therefore also maintained through these readings.

Fasting was also a means of expressing a confessional solidarity among geographically dispersed Reformed Churches. While it initially marked a shared destiny between the Genevan Church and the French Reformed Churches, this collective consciousness extended, at the end of the century, to all Protestant churches and states. Fasting ritualized the denominational bond, and this function was reinforced starting in the 1620s when Genevan ministers accepted the invitation, which tended to become annual from 1640, to join the fasts participated in by the Swiss Reformed Churches. The result of this evolution was in the end paradoxical: while the initial concern was to maintain the exceptional status of the penitential celebration of fasting, it gradually evolved into a fixed element of the Reformed liturgical calendar.[39]

A Ritual System Centered on Ecclesiastical Services

With the introduction of fasting, the Reformed liturgical form, as it took shape in Geneva, reached maturity and fully replaced the ritual system of the Mass. [**p. 188**] In the early days of the Genevan Reformation, the church, particularly as represented by the Consistory, and the magistrates, endeavored to focus the whole of religious life on the worship services which

[39] Grosse, "Liturgische Praktiken und die Konfessionalisierung des Kollektiven Bewusstseins der Reformierten. Das Beispiel Genf (16./17. Jahrhundert)," in *Liturgisches Handeln als soziale Praxis. Kirchliche Rituale in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Jan Brademann und Kristina Thies (Münster, 2014), 221-227; McKee, *The Pastoral Ministry*, 320-326.

were at its heart. Far from rejecting ritual forms of devotion, the Reformation was built in Geneva by giving liturgical coherence to different methods of deepening the faith.

This coherence resided largely in the fact that the liturgies of the various services pursued a common path that functioned to prepare the faithful to allow themselves to be persuaded and possessed by the divine word and its commentary. The succession of invocation, the confession of sins, and prayer forms the heart of this preparation, with its double recognition of divine omnipotence and human impotence and with the petition therefore addressed to God "to lead us through his holy Spirit to true knowledge of his holy doctrine."[40] During the celebrations of the supper, this preparation was expanded into a very ritualized collective process which in its most intense phase extended over an entire week. It also aimed to put the faithful in a state in which, according to the last prayer the minister prayed before communion, the penitential renunciation to which they commit themselves ("we confess that we are in death") opened the way to the experience of a possession of the promise of salvation: "let us believe in these promises, that Jesus Christ, who is the infallible truth, uttered from his mouth, namely, that he would truly have us be part of his body and blood, so that we wholly possess him, so that he lives in us, and we in him."[41]

This coherence also comes from the fact that all the liturgical forms adopted in Reformed Geneva were presented fundamentally as biblical commentaries. The coherence is based on an attempt to make the ritual system of ecclesiastical and domestic worship and their Bible-centered piety, the exclusive dimensions of religious culture. One of the most emblematic reforms was their attempt to transform the city's taverns into places of religious

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[40] On the prayer of enlightenment used by Calvin before the sermon, see Grosse, *Rituels de la cène,* 666.

[41] Grosse, *Rituels de la cène,* 650.

edification and Bible reading. According to the ordinance adopted by the Genevan magistrates in May 1546, each innkeeper "forbids drinking and eating in his house by anyone, of whatever character, who does not first pray a blessing and also at the end pray in thanksgiving, as is the duty of all faithful Christians. Furthermore, it will be required that said host will have in his house and in a public place a Bible in French in which each who wishes may read, and he will not prevent anyone from freely and honestly speaking about God's word in an edifying [**p. 189**] manner."[42] This reform of the taverns ended in failure. It was abandoned less than a month after the enactment of this law. It marked simultaneously the pinnacle and the limitation of the project to reform religious life carried out in the Genevan Reformation.

[42] *Sources du Droit du Canton de Genève,* eds. Emile Rivoire and Victor van Berchem, 4 t. (Aarau: 1927-1935), t. II, 481 (28 May 1546).