

Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe

Edited by

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4 Places of sanctification: the liturgical sacrality of Genevan Reformed churches, 1535–1566

Christian Grosse

To understand how the Reformed viewed the relationship between place and 'sacred' one must first reconstruct the Reformed definition of 'sacred', but to do so entails addressing the considerable historiographical legacy of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This legacy, which particularly found a set form in the thoughts of Max Weber, still establishes in contemporary minds the idea of the Reformation as a major factor in a process of desacralisation. Although this idea often continues to determine the way in which the Reformation is seen, historiography now reacts against the simplifications that it implies by demonstrating that the Reformed understanding of what 'sacred' constitutes is still a largely unresolved problem.¹ In questioning these Weberian ideas, Natalie Z. Davis stressed, in a study where the issue of place was of particular importance, that the Reformation had not merely assimilated the sacred and transcendent but had redefined the way in which this sanctity had to be 'present in the world'.² The way was thus opened for a re-examination that still continues to the present day. In the light of this historiographical debate,

I would like to thank Ronald Wilkens for translating the text and the Fondation Ernst and Lucie Schmidheiny for their grant towards this. I am also grateful to Irene Backus and William A. McComish for reading the translated text. I also wish to thank Isabelle Brunier for her guidance on the financial archives of Geneva which made up for my ignorance of the technical vocabulary of sixteenth-century building, as well as for reading this chapter.

¹ Alain Cabanous, for example, thinks that the writings of Jean Calvin 'évacuent non seulement la sacralité du bâtiment, mais aussi celle du culte, voire de la plupart des sacrements'; they 'permettent aux premiers théologiens réformés de conforter le sacré comme catégorie éphémère, singulière, peut-être aléatoire, s'effaçant derrière la spiritualité', *Entre fêtes et clochers. Profane et sacré dans l'Europe moderne. xvii^e-xviii^e siècle* (Paris, 2002), pp. 58–9. For another reaction, see R. W. Scribner, 'Perception of the sacred in Germany at the end of the Middle Ages', 'The impact of the Reformation on daily life', 'Magic and the formation of Protestant popular culture in Germany', 'The Reformation, popular magic, and the "Disenchantment of the world"', in his *Religion and Culture in Germany 1400–1800*, ed. L. Roper (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 2001), pp. 85–103, 275–301, 323–45, 346–65.

² N. Z. Davis, 'The sacred and the body social in sixteenth-century Lyon', *P&P* 90 (1981), 59. For her, the Calvinists 'thought in terms of a new measure, redefining how the holy should be present in the world'.

this chapter seeks to show that the liturgical conversion of the churches inherited from the Middle Ages, carried out by the Genevan Reformation from 1535 onwards, was not just a process of desacralisation, but rather the response to a desire to rearrange the formal 'presence of the sacred in the world'. Such an approach must first determine, at least in general outline, the Reformed conception of the 'sacred', in order subsequently to show how this concept was reflected in the theology and, especially, in the liturgical organisation of the place of worship.³

In order to grasp the meanings that the 'sacred' might have had for the faithful of Geneva, we must start by identifying its use in the documents that encompassed the religious devotion and instruction of the Genevan people: the liturgical formula (*Form of Prayers and Ecclesiastical Songs*, 1542) and the *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* (1542).⁴ In these documents, 'holy' and 'sacred' are most frequently used as adjectives and appear to be used interchangeably ('thy holy Gospel' or 'thy sacred Gospel').⁵ The first, however, is more common than the second. Essentially, there were three forms of use. 'Holy' was – apart from the divine being himself in his Trinity ('thy holy name', 'thy holy Spirit', and Jesus as 'the holy [saint] bread from heaven') – that which came directly from God: the divine word ('thy holy [saint] Commandments', 'thy holy doctrine', 'thy holy Gospel', 'his holy promises') and the sacraments ('his holy communion', 'this holy sacrament'). It is to be noted in this respect that both the liturgy and the Catechism insist on the fact that the holiness of the Holy Communion demands particular ritual protection: thus the liturgical formula of excommunication warns the excommunicated 'that they must abstain from this holy table for fear of polluting and contaminating the sacred viands'.⁶ Primarily, therefore, these texts associate

³ The systematic study of the usage adopted by reformed theology of such categories as 'sacré', 'sainteté', 'pureté', 'pollution', to which they associated those of 'décence', 'dignité' and 'honneur' has not yet to my knowledge been carried out. Here we shall limit ourselves, therefore, to a rapid indication of a certain number of approaches.

⁴ *Tracts Containing Treatises on the Sacraments, Catechism of the Church of Geneva, Forms of Prayer, and Confessions of Faith*. By John Calvin, ed. H. Beveridge (Edinburgh, 1849), pp. 33–99, 100–28.

⁵ This equivalence is general in the sixteenth century: Cabanous, *Entre fêtes et clochers*, p. 22; D. Julia, 'Sanctuaires et lieux sacrés à l'époque moderne', in André Vauchez (ed.), *Lieux sacrés, lieux de culte, sanctuaires. Approches terminologiques, méthodologiques, historiques et monographiques* (Rome, 2000), p. 245. 'Sacred' becomes distinct from 'holy' only through its uses by the historians of religion: Philippe Borgeaud, 'Le coupe sacré/profane. Genèse et fortune d'un concept "opérateur" en histoire des religions', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 211 (1994), 387–418.

⁶ *Tracts*, p. 120. The Catechism echoes these words from the liturgy: 'S. But in the Supper the minister ought to take heed not to give it to any one who is clearly unworthy of receiving it. M. Why so? S. Because it cannot be done without insulting and profaning the Sacrament', *Tracts*, p. 93.

holiness with the divine, that is to say with something that is separated from the temporal world. Thus, during a sermon, Jean Calvin reminded his audience that the *'Holy word of God'* implies that our Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, must be separated from the common ranks of men'.⁷ This definition of the sacred corresponds to that which the historiography has generally considered to be typically Reformed. At the same time, however, the above-mentioned texts reveal that a form of contact with this transcendent holiness remains possible. The particular ritual protection demanded for the celebration of Holy Communion is indeed an indication that during this celebration there is communication with this holiness. From the Reformed point of view, the divine service – and in particular the sacraments – therefore establishes a link between the believers and the sacred.

Holiness adopts at least two other forms in this context. The Apostles' Creed, recited during each service, requires the faithful to affirm that they believe in 'the Holy Church' and in the 'Communion of saints'. Mindful of clarifying every word in the Apostles' Creed, the catechism explains that the expression 'Holy Church' denotes all of those 'whom God has chosen'; that is to say all those that he 'forms to holiness and innocence of life'.⁸ A form of holiness resides therefore in the social reality, in so far as there is a group of human beings whose election has set them apart from other men. Submerged in society as a whole, but difficult to identify because of the impenetrable nature of the divine decrees, this group possesses a holiness that is more virtual than acquired: 'But is this holiness which you attribute to the Church already perfect?' continues the catechism; 'Not yet, that is as long as she has her warfare in this world', replies the pupil, who adds that 'she always labours under infirmities, and will never be entirely purged of the remains of vice, until she adheres completely to Christ her head, by whom she is sanctified'.⁹ Thus social reality shelters a kind of incomplete holiness that remains to be perfected.

Finally, holiness also takes on a moral meaning in designating a whole body of behaviour. In the prayer for intercession, the minister prays that the Church may serve its God 'with all holiness and honesty', or for the clergy to bring back the 'wretched sheep' in order that 'they may increase in righteousness and holiness every day'. By the Eucharistic exhortation, the Church commits itself to 'live henceforth holily and according to God'.¹⁰ Through these texts and those of the catechism, holiness appears to be an objective rather than a condition. In the temporal world it is

⁷ G. Baum, E. Cunitz and E. Reuss (eds.), *Joannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*, 59 vols. (Berlin, 1863–1900), xlvii, col. 739.

⁸ *Tracts*, p. 51. ⁹ *Ibid.* ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 120.

unattainable but it suggests itself in the form of 'propriety', 'dignity' and 'honesty'.

The liturgy and catechism indicate that the concept of holiness is considered more in relation to time than to place. Indeed, Jesus' Ascension precludes its localisation. The catechism is very clear on this point: 'Did he [Jesus] ascend so that he is no more on earth?' asks the master. 'He did', replies the pupil, 'for after he had performed all the things which the Father had given him to do, and that were for our salvation, there was no need of his continuing longer on earth.' 'But', asks the master, 'did Christ, in going to heaven withdraw from us, so that he has ceased to be with us?' 'Not at all', asserts the pupil, 'he has engaged to be with us to the end of the world.' 'When we say he dwells with us, must we understand that he is bodily present', continues the master. 'No', concludes the pupil, 'the case of the body which was received into heaven is one thing; that of the virtue which is everywhere diffused is another.'¹¹ Present in the world not as a material and localised reality, but as a 'virtue', divine holiness animates a process of sanctification. In that sense, it exists within time. It represents an ideal towards which Christians are inclined by detaching themselves from the world and renouncing their passions. In this respect, the theological writings of Jean Calvin are more explicit. He admits a form of holiness in human beings that exists precisely through the link that unites them with their God.¹² It is this link that commits them to the way of holiness: 'We are consecrated and dedicated to God', writes Calvin, 'in order henceforth no longer to think, meditate or act except for his glory. For it is not permissible to utilize a sacred thing for a profane purpose'.¹³ The Christian therefore constitutes – together with the Church and the act of worship that it celebrates – one of the ways in which the sacred is present in the world. Just as the holiness of the Church is never perfect, however, the achievement of holiness by humankind here on earth is unattainable. The process of sanctification can only be completed after the final judgement: 'only the beginning of this sanctifying can appear here; the end and accomplishment of it will be completed when Christ, the holy of holies, has filled it with all His holiness'.¹⁴

The elements of this summary definition of the Reformed conception of holiness are to be found in Jean Calvin's pronouncements on the subject of places of worship. His views on the subject, which are rare and

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48–9.

¹² 'Quand nous oyons qu'il est fait mention de la conjunction de Dieu avec nous, il nous doit souvenir que le lien d'icelle est sainteté', *Institution de la religion chrétienne*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1953–63) iii, vi, 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, iii, vii, 1. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, iv, viii, 12.

far from verbose, essentially transfer holiness from its inscription in space to the faithful and their Church. In a frequently cited passage, he warns his readers very clearly against considering churches as 'real dwelling-places of the Lord', and not to attribute 'any secret holiness' to them. 'The rejection of any localisation of holiness is thus clearly asserted. Substituted for the sacralised conception of the place of worship was a vision of the believer himself as being the real place for communication with the divine: 'For if we are the real temples of the Lord, we must pray to him within ourselves if we wish to invoke him in his real temple.'¹⁵ This idea is resumed in the catechism and numerous sermons that stress that Christians, in so far as they are 'sanctuaries and temples' of the divine, ought to protect the holiness with which they are invested: 'If we wish to have a horror of profligacy, we must adopt this principle that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Therefore those who have to do with such pollution drive away God and banish him from themselves, and profane the temple in which his majesty resides.'¹⁶ The meeting of Christians for the purposes of worship also invests the place with a divine presence, which is both spiritual and social, but by virtue of a promise, as recalled by the liturgy: 'We have been told by [Jesus] and by his apostles to assemble ourselves together in one place in his Name, with the promise that he will be present with us.'¹⁷ It is precisely in its functional dimension, as a place where Christians are assembled around their God, that the temple, according to Jean Calvin, finds its true justification: 'Since God has ordered all his people to pray together, it is also necessary that temples be assigned for this purpose.'¹⁸ In the Reformed terminology, moreover, the word 'church' more rarely designates the place of worship (for which the word 'temple' is used) than the meeting of the faithful for communicating with the deity, in accordance with the instruments he instituted for this purpose: preaching and sacraments.¹⁹

From the functional perspective and especially from that of worship adopted by Jean Calvin, there came about progressively within the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, III, xx, 30.

¹⁶ *Calvini Opera*, xxvii, col. 407; XLIX, col. 624. See also, *Tracts*, p. 65.

¹⁷ According to Bernard Reymond, 'l'espace liturgique est formé de toute la communauté célébrante'. Similarly Bernard Roussel recalls that for Calvinists 'le lieu de la cène, ce n'est pas un édifice, mais l'assemblée des fidèles'. B. Reymond, 'Les chaires réformées et leurs couronnements', *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 74 (1991), 47; B. Roussel, "'Faire la Cène" dans les églises réformées du royaume de France au seizième siècle (ca. 1555-ca. 1575)', *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 85 (1994), 105; *Tracts*, p. 101.

¹⁸ *Institution*, III, xx, 30.

¹⁹ W. Richard, *Untersuchungen zur Genesis der reformierten Kirchentypologie der Westschweiz und Frankreich, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Namengebung* (Bern, 1959), pp. 72-85.

Reformed discourse a requalification of the liturgical place through the concept of holiness. Agostino Mainardo (*circa* 1487-1563), in his *Anatomie de la messe et du messel*, arrived at this requalification by defining the act of consecration. For him, 'the object that is consecrated remains the same as it was at first, and does not change at all in its substance: it is only dedicated, or rather assigned, to some holy and sacred purpose'. Since they are destined for the divine service, both the temple and the Christian must be considered as consecrated. It is their purpose, as a place of communication with a divine presence, which confers this character upon them. 'A house is consecrated to God when it is assigned and ordered to some holy usage, such as for preaching the holy word, administering the Sacraments and for public prayer. Thus a man is consecrated to God when he is dedicated and assigned to the sacred purpose of his service, which is a holy thing.'²⁰ According to Rudolf Wirth (1547-1626), a Zurich theologian, the *raison d'être* of temples also resides in their purpose as places of worship accommodating 'the Word [of God], his sacraments, the presence of his Spirit, and his gifts and the communication of his Grace'. It is its use for the purpose of worship that determines the rules governing its construction.²¹ This redefinition of the Reformed position concerning places of worship that re-established the idea of holiness, was officially rendered subsequently by the Helvetic Confession, drawn up by Heinrich Bullinger and adopted by the majority of the Reformed Churches of Switzerland, including that of Geneva in 1566. Recalling the conviction of its adherents that 'God never dwells in temples built by the hands of men', this confession adds that 'places dedicated to God and to his worship are not profane, but holy because of God's word and the use of holy things to which they are devoted'; in consequence, 'those who frequent them must converse in all modesty and reverence, remembering that they are in a holy place, in the presence of God and his holy Angels'.²² On two occasions, therefore, this doctrinal declaration of the Swiss Reformed Churches affirms unambiguously the holy character of the places of worship. There is no doubt that this constitutes a step away from the positions held by Jean Calvin.

The second Helvetic Confession bore witness to the fact that, within a Reformed discourse highly engrossed in denouncing as superstitious

²⁰ *Anatomie de la messe et du messel* (Geneva, 1557), pp. 167-8.

²¹ R. Hospinianus (Rudolf Wirth), *De origine, progressu, usu et abusu templorum, ac rerum omnium ad templum pertinentium* (Geneva, 1681), p. 41. On Rudolf Wirth, see R. Bodemann, 'Que penser des Catholiques?' Enquête menée dans les écrits du protestant Rudolf Wirth (1547-1626)', in G. Bedouelle and F. Walter (eds.), *Histoire religieuse de la Suisse. La présence des catholiques* (Paris, 2000), pp. 141-58.

²² O. Fatio (ed.), *Confessions et catéchismes de la foi réformée* (Geneva, 1986), p. 289.

the localisation of the divine within the material world, a reflection on religious edifices as liturgical places nevertheless progressively developed. This reflection succeeded in restoring to these buildings a specifically Reformed connotation of sacrality, by making it dependent – not upon the building as such – but upon both the people who meet there and the liturgical acts performed there. In the light of this doctrine, it is the act of worship that takes place there that distinguishes the temple from every other edifice: it becomes consecrated as a place dedicated to the divine service. Remaining very close to this definition, the theologian Bénédict Pictet even went as far as confining the sacred character of the temple to the duration of the service celebrated there.²³ Contrary therefore to the generally held ideas, the Reformation did not completely reject the idea of holiness being present in the world. In its conception of the place of worship, the sacred is coincident with the liturgical communication that the Church maintains with its God. To gain a full understanding of this concept one must therefore view it in relation to the use made of these buildings by the Reformed.

The first places of worship used by the evangelical activists between 1532 and 1535 in Geneva were profane: large rooms within private houses, a garden beyond the city walls and, more exceptionally, a public place.²⁴ Some witnesses have provided details of the way in which these places were arranged in order to embrace these religious services. Thus we know that during the first evangelical communion celebrated in Geneva, on 10 April 1533, the preacher stood 'near a table'.²⁵ Assembling more than fifty persons, including many women, in a garden not far from one of the city gates, this 'inaugural' communion had already adopted a disposition that would subsequently be recognised as typically Reformed.²⁶ There is every reason to believe that the piece of furniture

²³ 'On doit regarder les lieux, où se font les Assemblées Chrétiennes, comme saints, par rapport à l'usage auquel ils sont destinés, et cela seulement pendant le temps, qu'ils sont employés à cet usage', *Dissertation sur les temples, leur dédicace et plusieurs choses qu'on y voit, avec un sermon* (Geneva, 1719), p. 299.

²⁴ The term 'réformé' only appeared at the end of the 1540s. Militants for the evangelical cause preferred at first to call themselves 'évangélistes' or 'évangéliques' (Richard, *Unter-suchungen*, pp. 8–60); V. van Berchem, 'Le premier lieu de culte public des évangéliques à Genève', *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève* 3 (1912), 312–40; V. van Berchem, 'Une prédication dans un jardin (15 avril 1533). Episode de la Réforme genevoise', in *Festschrift Hans Nabholz* (Zürich, 1934), pp. 151–70; *Registres du Conseil de Genève*, ed. E. Rivoire, V. van Berchem and F. Gardy, 13 vols. (Geneva, 1900–40), xii, p. 184.

²⁵ Berchem, 'Une prédication', p. 166; A. Froment, *Les actes et gestes merveilleux de la cité de Genève* (Geneva, 1854), p. 48; Jeanne de Jussy, *Le levain du calvinisme ou commencement de l'hérésie de Genève*, ed. Adolphe-Charles Grivel (Geneva, 1865), p. 64; M. Roset, *Les chroniques de Genève*, ed. Henry Fazy, Georg et Cie (Geneva, 1894), pp. 168–9.

²⁶ I have adopted the 'inaugural' designation from Roussel, 'Faire la Cène', p. 102.

near to which the preacher was standing was actually a communion table and that the place of worship was indeed orientated towards the two ways of communication with the divine: the Word and the Sacraments. This arrangement probably represented a desire to break with the Christian concept of the relationship between the sacred and the place dating back to medieval times, for during this rather 'rustic' celebration the preacher was at pains to remind his audience that, from an evangelical point of view, churches were not 'houses of God'.²⁷

A little less than a year later, the services of the evangelical community were moved to within the walls of the city, in a house recently acquired by a local noble, a citizen of Bern. Witnesses inform us quite precisely of the manner in which the building was arranged for celebrating the divine service. According to one of these, on the occasion of a baptism celebrated in February 1534, more than 300 persons attended,

in a large room, which . . . had been lengthened . . . and had, at the said place, some seats made expressly for accommodating those who came there to listen to the sermons . . . Preaching there was by a person named Viret, seated upon a higher seat than the others, and beside him sat two men, one here and the other there, who were heard to be called [Guillaume] Farel and [Antoine] Froment, also preachers.²⁸

This description provides two features of the arrangement of the first liturgical places. Firstly, in mentioning that the place of worship had the appearance of a 'room', it indicates that the assembly occupied a single place comprising a sole liturgical centre. Secondly, it mentions the presence of 'seats'.²⁹ These two facts show that the evangelical service, which was then still partly clandestine, was held in some sort of fairly spacious auditorium. The presence of seats underlines the function of the room as a place of communication with the divinity through his word as expounded by the preachers, and clearly distinguishes this place from the medieval churches, which, as we shall see below, had only a restricted number of seating places.

Shortly after the services had been transferred to this venue, the evangelicals arrogated to themselves by force a public place of worship, but unfortunately we do not know how it was adapted for liturgical purposes.³⁰ This first victory, establishing the official existence of a dissident Church in Genevan society, accelerated the process of spiritual

²⁷ Berchem, 'Une prédication', p. 167.

²⁸ *Procès de Baudichon de la Maison Neuve, accusé d'hérésie à Lyon, 1534* (Geneva, 1873), pp. 112–13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³⁰ Berchem, 'Le premier lieu de culte', 22–3; *Registres du Conseil*, xii, pp. 493–5.

conversion by new religious ideas and the transformation of the places of worship. The final adoption of the Reformation, accomplished in several stages – from the official interdiction of the Mass, on 10 August 1535, to the confirmation of this decision by the assembly of the citizens (General Council) on 16 May 1536 – took place within the context of an iconoclastic celebration, during which the evangelical party finalised its victory by converting the places of worship.³¹ The churches were systematically emptied of their liturgical furnishings; in particular the altars and the images, but the utensils, vestments and liturgical decorations were also removed.³² At first, apart from the destruction, few changes in the city's churches appear to have been made in adapting them to the new form of worship. Once the place had been freed of most of the 'papist superstitions', it was considered sufficient to 'cleanse' these churches.³³ Very early on, communion tables were certainly a part of the furnishing of the buildings converted to the new cult. At the end of the 1530s, city officials started reorganising the churches that were retained for celebrating divine services. On 18 March 1539, when neither Calvin nor Farel were in Geneva, the authorities ordered – as proposed by the ministers – the restoration of these buildings and their equipment with 'whatever was necessary'. Among other items lacking in the temples, this decision mentioned benches.³⁴ Shortly afterwards, work began on the temple of La Madeleine with the construction of a stone pulpit, which was rapidly completed and placed in the middle of one of the longitudinal walls of the edifice.³⁵ The same period most probably saw the installation of benches, and certainly of new stained glass bearing the arms of the city in the temple windows.³⁶ During the summer of 1541, the authorities decided to undertake work in the cathedral of Saint-Pierre: demolishing the rood screen separating the choir from the nave, moving the canons' stalls within the choir, and installing a new pulpit.³⁷

³¹ *Registres du Conseil*, xiii, pp. 281–2, 576–7; C. Eire, *War Against the Idols. The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 122–51.

³² *Registres du Conseil*, xiii, pp. 279–386; M. Roset, *Les chroniques*, pp. 200, 214–15; Jussy, *Le levain*, pp. 152–5; Froment, *Les actes*, p. 144; P. Geisendorff, *Les annalistes genevois du début du dix-septième siècle. Savion-Piaget-Ferrin. Etudes et textes (Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève, 37, 1942)*, pp. 443–8; L. Motru-Weber, 'Dans les coulisses de la réforme: les recettes extraordinaires du trésorier Perrenet, 1535–1536', *Revue du Vieux Genève* 17 (1987), 4–10.

³³ Archives d'Etat de Genève (hereafter AEG), Finances m23bis, fol. 85v.

³⁴ AEG, R. c. 33, fol. 50v.

³⁵ AEG, R. c. 33, fol. 367v; Finances p4, 7 Feb. 1540; C. Martin, 'La restauration du temple de la Madeleine', *Genava* 2 (1924), 170.

³⁶ AEG, Finances p4, 6 Jan. 1540, 16 Jan. 1540.

³⁷ C. Charles, *Stalles sculptées du xve siècle. Genève et le duché de Savoie* (Paris, 1999), pp. 59–62; AEG, R. c. 35, fols. 245, 301.

When Calvin returned to Geneva, the appearance of the Genevan temples, and especially those of La Madeleine and the cathedral, had undoubtedly greatly changed. It is possible that benches had been installed everywhere. This requirement did not manifest itself again thereafter. Although the medieval churches of the Geneva diocese were not without this furnishing, their presence was far from being commonplace.³⁸ On his return, Calvin was able to observe an important change in this respect, but there still remained a lot to be done. For two years, however, the priorities were more towards the institutional reorganisation of the Church than the adaptation of the temples to the new form of worship. In particular, a new parish structure was instituted. The seven parishes of the medieval city were replaced in November 1541 by three parishes centred on the temples of Saint-Gervais, La Madeleine and Saint-Pierre.³⁹ From 1543 until 1547, there was a systematic transformation of the temples within the town and the dependent villages of Geneva.

The first works concerned the cathedral. The decision taken on 29 August 1543 to construct a pulpit in Saint-Pierre provided the initial impulse to this campaign.⁴⁰ It makes clear that the project for installing a pulpit adopted two years earlier had not been implemented. The new pulpit, constructed in 1543, backed against a pillar at the crossing of the transept, in what had formerly been the choir when the rood screen stood there.⁴¹ These works continued in 1544, particularly the covering over of the images and decorative items with a uniform coating of white paint.⁴² The furnishing of the cathedral was also changed. Since the city officials assigned themselves the duty of attending services regularly 'in order to set a good example for people to go to the sermon', a part of the cathedral was reserved for them.⁴³ From December 1546 to

³⁸ Although the aim of the diocesan ecclesiastical authorities in the fifteenth century was to remove benches from the churches, a number of exceptions were accepted, especially for the nobility and aged or sick people. In this way benches came to be installed in La Madeleine in the mid-fifteenth century, except in the central part of the nave. L. Binz, 'Un évêque italien réforme les bancs d'église du diocèse de Genève (1443–1446)', in M. Fol, C. Sorrel and H. Viallet (eds.), *Chénens d'histoire alpine. Mélanges dédiés à la mémoire de Roger Devos* (Annecy, 1997), pp. 49–57.

³⁹ This new parish structure was made official by the ecclesiastical ordinances adopted on 21 November 1541. *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève*, ed. J.-F. Bergier, R. M. Kingdon et al., 13 vols. (Geneva, 1964–2001), I, p. 5.

⁴⁰ AEG, R. c. 37, fol. 207.

⁴¹ W. Deonna, 'Le mobilier de la cathédrale Saint-Pierre à Genève', *Genava* 28 (1950), 53–5.

⁴² AEG, R. c. 38, fol. 187v, 6 May 1544. Images and decorations in the cathedral were not however completely suppressed at that time; further whitewashing took place in 1556 and in 1643. AEG, R. c. 52, fol. 163; W. Deonna, 'Cathédrale Saint-Pierre de Genève. La peinture', *Genava* 29 (1951), 56–87.

⁴³ *Sources du droit du Canton de Genève*, ed. E. Rivoire and V. van Berchem, 4 vols. (Aarau, 1927–35), III, p. 470.

October 1547, certain former canons' stalls were moved to this part of the cathedral in order to form a body of seating reserved for the Geneva authorities.⁴⁴

In Saint-Gervais, similar works to those in Saint-Pierre were undertaken. The desire expressed by the authorities in 1543 to carry out important changes at first remained almost transient.⁴⁵ Despite a new initiative in this direction in 1544, the works did not commence until 1546, following the intervention of Calvin.⁴⁶ Within a year, a new replacement pulpit together with a canopy was installed, the former pulpit was then offered to the parishioners of a nearby village. The new pulpit was placed against a pillar, situated (as in La Madeleine) in the middle of the longitudinal part of the temple.⁴⁷ The gravestones were removed and the ground covered with flooring, the walls were partly whitewashed and the stalls were laid out in four rows against one side of the former choir and to the right of the preacher. They were intended, as in Saint-Pierre, for the authorities.⁴⁸ The former chapels facing the new pulpit and those to the left and right of it were transformed to accommodate benches, while the others were closed or converted into waiting rooms.⁴⁹ At the same time, La Madeleine temple underwent further alterations. In 1545, city officials recorded that it risked becoming a ruin and so instigated repairs. The walls were systematically whitewashed, the stained glass repaired, the façade resurfaced and repointed, and a chapel possibly blocked off. This work continued until November 1547.⁵⁰

By 1548, therefore, the three parish temples of the city had essentially acquired the structures and general appearance that they were to keep during the whole of the *ancien régime*. Later on, only two events occurred

⁴⁴ AEG, Finances p5, 7 Apr. 1547, May 1547, 29 Sept. 1547, 15 Oct. 1547, 2 Nov. 1547; Deonna, 'Le mobilier', pp. 65–6; Charles, *Stalles*, pp. 84–5, 139.

⁴⁵ AEG, r. c. 38, fol. 14v; Finances m27, fol. 144v, o2, fol. 81; N. Schätti, 'Le temple réformé (xvie–xviii siècle)', in A. Winiger-Labuda et al., *Les monuments d'art et d'histoire du canton de Genève, II: Genève, Saint-Gervais: du bourg au quartier* (Bern, 2001), p. 144.

⁴⁶ AEG, r. c. 38, fol. 187v; 41, fol. 89.

⁴⁷ AEG, Finances p5, 18 Dec. 1546, 21 Dec. 1546; Schätti, 'Le temple réformé', p. 146.

⁴⁸ AEG, r. c. 41, fol. 257v; Finances p5, 31 Dec. 1546, 4 Jan. 1547, 5 Jan. 1547, 27 Jan. 1547, 5 Feb. 1547. In 1566, the authorities ordered the covering over of the parts that had not been done in 1547. AEG, r. c. 61, fol. 8v. The temple was then whitewashed again in 1584, 1690, 1691, 1719 and 1773. A. Guilloi, *Le temple de Saint-Gervais à Genève. Notice historique* (Geneva, 1903), pp. 39, 42; Schätti, 'Le temple réformé', p. 144, fn. 249). Charles, *Stalles*, pp. 139–41.

⁴⁹ Schätti, 'Le temple réformé', p. 145.

⁵⁰ AEG, r. c. 39, fol. 120; 40, fol. 358v; AEG, Finances m30, fols. 17, 20, 21, 28v, 42v, 60, 66, 68v, 69, 76v, 80v, 97v, 99, 99v, 101v; Finances p5, 17 Sept. 1546, 22 Dec. 1546, 17 Sept. 1547, 21 Sept. 1547, 29 Sept. 1547, 2 Nov. 1547, 11 Nov. 1547. The temple was again whitewashed in 1611 (*Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs*, xi, p. 62 and n. 86).

to disturb significantly their new equilibrium: in 1549, cupboards were placed near the pulpits in all three temples in order to house the baptismal and marriage registers kept by the pastors; and then, from the mid-sixteenth century, and more frequently in the following century, a series of galleries, sometimes two-storied as at La Madeleine, served to increase the available seating but at the same time changed the spatial dynamics of the interior area of the temples.⁵¹ The adaptation of the Geneva country churches to the new form of worship began at the same time as in the city but took longer to achieve, for in 1555, Calvin was still recording that these buildings were in need of repair.⁵² The transformations were sometimes carried out at the behest of those who were in charge of the parishioners, such as the village guards of the village of Jussy, who in 1544 requested 'that a pulpit be constructed for them'.⁵³ Generally speaking, four objectives determined the works: whilst the upkeep of these buildings remained a high priority, the contribution of the Reformation essentially concerned the erection of new pulpits, and the installation of benches and new bells in these churches to call the faithful to worship.⁵⁴

At the end of this vast campaign, the appearance of Genevan temples was fundamentally transformed. Although the Genevan Reformers continued to occupy the churches constructed for other forms of worship than their own, they subverted their significance in a decisive way, thus creating 'a situation of tension between the architectural symbolism of the building and the major goal of the cult that would henceforth evolve there'.⁵⁵ The changes they had made to these buildings – at variance with the structures that organised them – made explicit their new religious identity and bore witness to a new relationship with the sacred. The external crosses that identified the churches as holy places had disappeared for the most part by 1537.⁵⁶ In 1556, lightning had struck near the

⁵¹ AEG, r. c. fol. 290v; Deonna, 'Le mobilier de la cathédrale', 53.

⁵² AEG, r. c. 49, fol. 178v.

⁵³ *Registres du Consistoire de Genève au temps de Calvin*, edited by T. A. Lambert, I. Wart, and W. McDonald, 3 vols. (Geneva, 1996–2004), I, p. 313.

⁵⁴ Thus, in 1544, the authorities ordered that the parishioners of the village of Vandœuvre should be given 'a pulpit for the sermon'. The same year, the minister of the village of Jussy complained of the passivity of his parishioners, whom he had asked to 'faire faire une chaire'. This pulpit eventually came, in 1546, from the temple of Saint-Gervais. There was also a request for a pulpit for the village of Lancy in 1547. AEG, r. c. 36, fol. 117; 38, fol. 337; 39, fol. 53v; 40, fol. 202v; 41, fol. 242; 42, fol. 53; 61, fol. 137v.

⁵⁵ B. Reymond, *L'architecture religieuse des protestants: histoire – caractéristiques – problèmes actuels* (Geneva, 1996), p. 52. The construction of new temples only started in the seventeenth century, and at first concerned only the villages surrounding Geneva. A new temple was not built in the city until 1715. W. Deonna, 'Les arts à Genève, des origines à la fin du xviii siècle' *Genève* 22 (1942), 321–2.

⁵⁶ AEG, r. c. 30, fol. 247v; Geisendorf, *Les aménagements*, p. 476.

belfry of Saint-Pierre causing a large fire, and was seen as a divine warning 'that it was shameful for such a cross, as mark or sign of papal devilry, to be left there'. The event provoked a new move to suppress the crosses that still dominated certain temples.⁵⁷ In the early 1560s, these edifices demonstrated by the absence of this sign on their belfries the Reformed desire to break with the 'idolatrous' religion. The arms of the city, which henceforth sometimes decorated the stained-glass windows, also served to indicate their new identity. Instead of appearing as separated from the profane world, they were assimilated to the community that celebrated the divine service there. They indicated that the *corpus christianum* was at one with the *corpus politicum*.

Within the churches, the disappearance of the altars, statues and reliquaries, as well as most of the painted images and tombs signified that the temple was no longer considered as a holy place with greater proximity to the divine.⁵⁸ And the ritual behaviour corresponded to these architectural features. As Bernard Roussel pointed out, the Reformed churches are not protected by any entry or exit rites.⁵⁹ 'And if someone offers up a prayer on entering the church', related Antoine Cathelan a Catholic observer, 'he is pointed to, made fun of, and held to be a Papist and idolatrous.'⁶⁰

One of the most striking characteristics of the new appearance of the Genevan churches lay in the extreme simplicity of their decors. 'When

⁵⁷ AEG, R. c. 51, fol. 255v. The chronicler, Michel Roset, reiterated this interpretation: 'Chacun disoit que Dieu avoit fait cest œuvre voulant purger ceste Eglise de telz reliquas'; *Les chroniques*, pp. 387–8.

⁵⁸ Burial inside churches was reintroduced in Geneva and in the Vaud region from the seventeenth century onwards. It was in response to the needs for social distinction and for revering the memory of certain people. But this custom was not without its problems, such as the erection in 1659 of a partition in front of the tomb of the duc de Rohan, in order to stop people from praying there (W. Deonna, 'Cathédrale Saint-Pierre de Genève. Les monuments funéraires', *Genève* 29 (1951) 132–8). On this subject, see also M. Engammare, 'L'inhumation de Calvin et des pasteurs genevois de 1540 à 1620. Un dépouillement très prophétique et une pompe funèbre protestante qui se met en place', in Jean Balsamo (ed.), *Les funérailles à la Renaissance* (Geneva, 2002), pp. 271–93; M. Grandjean, *Les temples vaudois. L'architecture réformée dans le Pays de Vaud (1536–1798)* (Lausanne, 1988), pp. 509–26. For comparison see A. Spicer, 'Defyle not Christ's kirk with your carion': burial and the development of burial aisles in post-Reformation Scotland', in B. Gordon and P. Marshall (eds.), *The Place of the Dead. Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 149–69; A. Spicer, 'Rest of their Bones': fear of death and Reformed burial practices', in W. G. Naphy and P. Roberts (eds.), *Fear in Early Modern Society* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 167–83.

⁵⁹ B. Roussel, 'Comment faire la cène? Rite et retour aux écritures dans les églises réformées du royaume de France au XVI^e siècle', in C. Patlagean and A. Le Boulluec (eds.), *Les retours aux écritures, fondamentalismes présents et passés* (Paris, 1993), p. 198.

⁶⁰ A. Cathelan, *Passé et présent Parisien répondant à Pasquin Rommain. De la vie de ceux qui sont allés demeurer à Genève, au pais jadis de Savoye: et maintenant soubs les Princes de Bern, et se disent vivre selon la réformation de l'évangile, fait en forme de dialogue* (Paris, 1556), fol. 15v.

[the Papists]', recalls Jean Calvin, 'enter our temples, they are so astonished that they are completely taken aback or feel they have entered a new world. What? (they say) a Church without any pictures.'⁶¹ Uniformly coated with whitish distemper, the walls of these temples probably bear no inscription dating back to before the seventeenth century, when walls started to carry verses from the Bible and the Ten Commandments.⁶² This lack of decoration can be seen as the expression of a new aesthetic, as recognised by Lee Palmer Wandel.⁶³ This aesthetic is based upon the idea that it is through the simplicity of his Word and his Sacraments that the divine 'majesty' communicates with Christians. Any addition of human origin, tainted with sin, obscures and necessarily soils this communication. Simplicity, the central value of this aesthetic, is thus associated with the notion of purity. For Guillaume Farel, as for Calvin, worship based on preaching and the celebration of the Sacraments constitutes the sole ornament that may adorn the temples:

And that the Church [writes the former] be adorned and decorated by Jesus Christ and his word according to the Gospels and the holy Sacraments. This great sun of justice Jesus Christ and his evangelical light have naught to do with our smoking flames, our tapers and candles. May the true sermon ordained by God manifest this light, together with the holy Sacraments in their simplicity, and let that serve us as sole magnificence.⁶⁴

Similarly Calvin recalled:

When I consider to what purpose the temples are dedicated and ordained, it appears to me a thing unseemly to their sanctity to display there any other images than those which God has consecrated with his word, and which bear his true imprinted mark. I mean the Baptism and the Holy Communion of the Lord, together with the ceremonies.⁶⁵

Here again is the idea that holiness does not reside in the places where worship takes place, but in the worship itself. Shared by all Reformed sensibilities, this aesthetic of simplicity is built into a dogmatic affirmation by the second Helvetic Confession, according to which

⁶¹ *Calvini Opera*, XLIX, col. 613.

⁶² The temple of the village of Jussy bears a verse from Psalm 119 on one of the partition walls. In 1639, the displaying of a table of the decalogue was envisaged for all the country temples. AEG, Cp. Past. r. 8, fol. 383; C. Bonnet, 'L'église de Jussy', *Genève*, new series, 25 (1977), 87. On the internal decor in the temples of the Vaud region, see Marcel Grandjean, *Les temples vaudois*, pp. 367–74, 429–49, 527–32.

⁶³ L. P. Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands. Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 194–5. On the 'chromoclasm' of the protestants, see M. Pastoureau, 'La Réforme et la couleur', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 138 (1992), 324–42.

⁶⁴ G. Farel, *Du vray usage de la croix de Jesus Christ* (Geneva, 1865), p. 157.

⁶⁵ *Institution*, I, xl, 13.

... must be cast far from Christian temples and places of worship, all pomp and excess of clothing and ornament, all pride and all that is unseemly and contrary to humility, discipline and Christian modesty. Thus, according to the confession, the true ornamentation of the temples lies not in ivory, gold, and precious stones: but in frugality, temperance, piety and all the virtues of those who are in the Church.⁶⁶

But the uniform whiteness of all the decor adopted by the Reformed temples does not only reflect a properly Reformed aesthetic, it also fulfils a definite liturgical function. The ornamental profusion characteristic of the 'papists' is seen indeed as distracting the attention of the faithful rather than helping them to concentrate. 'This external brilliance of the temples', points out Rudolf Wirth, 'hinders devotion and distracts the eye and mind of those who see it from spiritual thoughts.'⁶⁷ The absence of decoration, however, contributes to drawing the attention of the faithful towards what is said and done during the service. 'Be thy eyes fixed upon [the pastor], in order to be more attentive to the preaching of the word of God', is the recommendation of a preparatory treatise for the communion in the seventeenth century.⁶⁸ For Calvin as well, the effect of this lack of ornamentation was to concentrate all the attention on the service: 'our eyes must be so attentive [to it], and all our senses have such a predilection for it that there is no longer any question of craving an image created by the imagination of man'.⁶⁹ By avoiding the production of the slightest visual stimulation, the bare walls compel the faithful to see no other image than that produced by the service, in particular the Sacraments, as 'visible signs'.⁷⁰ Far from expressing the idea of the remoteness and abstract character of the divine, as noted for example by Susan Karant-Nunn, the sober decor therefore constitutes a liturgical device destined to engage the faithful in a spiritual process.⁷¹ Inducing a form of ascetic liturgical communication with the divine, it must lead them to seek within

⁶⁶ Fatio (ed.), *Confessions et catéchismes*, pp. 289–90. See, for example, Ludwig Lavater, *Die Gebäuche und Einrichtungen der Zürcher Kirche. Erneut herausgegeben und erweitert von Johann Baptist Ott* (Zürich, 1987), p. 35.

⁶⁷ Wirth, *De origine*, p. 39.

⁶⁸ J. de Focquembergues, *Le voyage de Beth-el, ou les devoirs de l'âme fidèle en allant au temple* (Geneva, 1665), p. 17.

⁶⁹ *Institution*, I, xi, 13.

⁷⁰ Calvin, 'souligne à plusieurs reprises l'aspect proprement iconique du sacrement. Celui-ci est "signe visible", "forme visible", "parole visible"... Le sacrement est donc iconique, il est une image au sens plein, symbolique, du terme; il est le prototype de toute image'; J. Cortin, *Le regard et la Parole. Une théologie protestante de l'image* (Geneva, 1994), pp. 296–7.

⁷¹ S. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual. An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London, 1997), p. 191.

the assembly and its act of worship an attestation of a real but spiritual divine presence. In this sense, it is a means of contributing to the process of spiritual elevation that underlies the progress of the Reformed liturgy, and which culminates during the celebrations of the Holy Communion, in the exhortation to the *sursum corda*, the elevation of hearts that the minister invokes just before the communion: 'Let us raise our hearts and minds on high, where Jesus Christ is, in the glory of his Father, and from whence we look for him at our redemption. And let us not amuse ourselves with these earthly and corruptible elements which we see with the eye, and touch with the hand, in order to seek him there, as if he were enclosed in the bread or wine.'⁷² Thus the whitewashed Genevan temples clearly reflect a Calvinist conception of communication with the holy; instead of being mediated by material reality, it is inscribed in time, like a process of elevation and sanctification.

The new manner of structuring space and the general orientation that it gives to religious buildings also profoundly changes their meaning. A place which had been subdivided into a multitude of chapels and altars that attracted a similar number of private devotions gave way to a unified space converging around a single centre of worship. This spatial levelling reflects a unified ecclesiastical society where, with the disappearance of all confraternities, religious sociability has no other field of expression than the family circle and parish assembly. What is more, this egalitarian place has eliminated the separation between the choir and the nave, marked sometimes – as at Saint-Pierre – by the rood screen.⁷³ By thus eliminating the distinction between a sacred order and a profane order, it reflects the 'Christianity without clerics' adopted by the Reformation.⁷⁴ The abolition of the former ecclesiastical order was particularly evident at Saint-Pierre; the congregation there, following the removal of the rood screen and the rearrangement of the stalls, occupied the area taken up by the choir of the church prior to the Reformation.

Furthermore, instead of the lengthways perspective characteristic of churches where the high altar represented the vanishing point, an arrangement 'in width' was employed, directed towards a liturgical centre.

⁷² *Tracts*, pp. 121–2.

⁷³ There had not been a rood screen at the church of Saint-Gervais since the early fourteenth century, and it appears that there was no longer a rood screen in the church of La Madeleine either. P. Broillet and N. Schätti, 'Les remaniements de l'église paroissiale au début du xiv^e siècle – La reconstruction de l'église paroissiale (après 1431 – après 1449)', in Wüthrich-Labula et al., *Genève, Saint-Gervais*, p. 115; Martin, 'La restauration du temple de la Madeleine', p. 169; C. Bonnet et al., *Eglise de la Madeleine. Genève* (Geneva, 1992).

⁷⁴ Roussel, 'Faire la Cène', p. 108–9.

Henceforth, it was the relation between the pulpit and the benches that structured the area. For all observers, but also for the Genevan reformers themselves, this relationship formed the characteristic feature of the new arrangement of the temples. 'It is just like the interior of a college or school; benches everywhere and a pulpit in the middle for the preacher', noted Antoine Cathelan in the 1550s.⁷⁵ Théodore de Bèze, for his part, underlined how faithfully these temples reflected the simplicity of the primitive Church, for these contained 'just a pulpit and lots of chairs and benches'.⁷⁶ On communion days, two communion tables, arranged 'close to the pulpit', completed this furnishing.⁷⁷ The place of worship was therefore organised as an area of communication oriented towards the centre of gravity represented by the sermon and the Holy Communion.

This spatial arrangement was especially directed towards ensuring the best possible listening conditions for the largest number of participants.⁷⁸ The installation of canopies and benches in the form of an amphitheatre served the same purpose. But the answer also lay in enforcing disciplinary surveillance during the divine services in order to impose silence. According to Jean Calvin, the 'correct policy' for ensuring the unimpeded progress of these services included, among other things, 'the silence needed when harkening to the Word'.⁷⁹ Regulations for country churches legalising this discipline stipulated that 'during the sermon, everyone shall listen intently and not engage in any dissolute or scandalous behaviour'.⁸⁰ In circumstances where silence was difficult to ensure – as witness the repeated complaints of the ministers – the benches were intended to impose upon the faithful an ascesis of listening to what was happening during the service. Constrained to remain motionless and silent, they were placed in that very attitude of obedience and renunciation that the liturgy required of them before participating in the communion: 'Our Lord', it recalled, 'has given us this desire and affection to renounce our own desires, to follow righteousness and his holy commandments'.⁸¹ The whitewashed walls of the temples, as well as the benches, therefore fulfilled a real liturgical purpose: they constituted just so many technical devices for assisting the faithful in an effort to forget themselves in order to ascend towards the divine.

⁷⁵ Cathelan, *Passèrent Parisien*, fol. 15.

⁷⁶ *Le passavant de Théodore de Bèze: épître de Maître Benoît Passavant à Messire Pierre Lizet où il lui rend compte de sa mission à Genève et de ses conversations avec les hérétiques* (Paris, 1875), pp. 56–7.

⁷⁷ *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs*, I, p. 9.

⁷⁸ Reymond, 'Les chaires', 39.

⁷⁹ *Institution*, IV, x, 29.

⁸⁰ *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs*, I, p. 15.

⁸¹ *Tracts*, pp. 120–1.

The lay-out of the benches in the Genevan temples and the way in which the faithful were distributed also gave meaning to the temple. The deployment 'widthways' did not imply that the pulpit faced the benches, it was on the contrary integrated into the auditorium created by them. They not only faced it but also surrounded it on both sides, and since the pulpit in every temple backed onto a pillar and therefore advanced a little into the nave, some of the benches were actually distributed behind it. Thus the pulpit did not form one side of the devotional area, but its very heart.⁸² This arrangement had a liturgical significance as it essentially reflected within the area of worship the divine promise, recalled in the liturgy, according to which Christ would be 'in the midst' of those who assembled to pray for him. Although not holy in itself, the Reformed liturgical scene was laid out in such a way as to convey the belief that during the services the faithful were gathered around a divine spiritual presence.⁸³

Within the temple, the faithful enjoyed a relationship of spiritual equality with this 'milieu'. Calvin thus reminds the faithful in one of his sermons 'that concerning our Salvation, and concerning the Holy Kingdom of God, which is spiritual, there is neither distinction nor difference between man and woman, between servant and master, between poor and rich, great and small'.⁸⁴ Being at one with Christ, the worshipping congregation represented a local and temporal expression of a Church society that brought together all the disciples of Christ. Here was a highly communal dimension that the temple underlined, for in surrounding the pulpit, the faithful sat facing one another. Their looks not only converged towards the minister, but also encompassed the whole body of this Church of which they formed a part.

At the same time, however, this Church also existed as a social reality, and Calvin did not fail to stress this point. In the same sermon, he continued: 'Nevertheless, if there is to be some degree of order between us . . . A man in his house must instruct his children, and they must be subject to him. The servants must also recognise their degree and condition, and employ themselves in what they are called upon to do'.⁸⁵ The

⁸² This disposition was different from the 'schéma organisationnel type' of the Reformed temples that emerged at the end of the sixteenth century, where the pulpit 'apparaît plutôt comme un élément appartenant thématiquement au côté du quadrangle choral occupé par le bancs des anciens'. In this 'quadrangle', it was the communion tables and the baptismal fonts that constituted the 'centre architectonique de l'édifice et non la chaire'. Reymond, *L'architecture*, pp. 142–7.

⁸³ According to Lee Palmer Wandel, the Zurich iconography of the communion also suggested the presence of Christ amidst those gathered around the communion table, 'Envisioning God: image and liturgy in Reformation Zurich', *SCJ* 24 (1993), 39.

⁸⁴ *Calvini Opera*, XLIX, col. 719.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

categories and functions that structured this social reality also organised the distribution of the faithful in the temple, and the men were separated from the women, who were seated in the temple with the youngest children. In front of the pulpit, according to Anthoine Cathelan, were 'the lowest benches for the women and young children and higher ones all around to seat the men'.⁸⁶ Up to 1545, there was no indication of an order having been introduced in the seats occupied by the men. But the decision taken by the authorities that year to allot reserved seats in Saint-Pierre and Saint-Gervais inaugurated a process in the course of which the same privilege was granted to other persons occupying public offices, as well as to representatives of the Church.⁸⁷ By the end of this process, the congregation who were seated in these temples found themselves strictly surrounded. In the apse at Saint-Pierre, for example, the authorities occupied the stalls that rose in tiers above the floor of the former choir; opposite and behind the pulpit were seated the ministers and the elders. In 1542, in addition to these reserved seats, other places were added near the pulpit intended for individuals that the Consistory compelled to attend in order to benefit from the preaching or as a penance for their sins.⁸⁸

This spatial division was partly a response to the supervisory requirements. It enabled the congregation to be placed under the surveillance of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, whilst conferring on the latter a certain prestige. But it also confronted the assembly with an order presented by the liturgy as divinely ordained. After having recalled the promise that Christ would be found 'in the midst' of those who prayed in his name, the minister first prayed 'for all princes and noblemen . . . and in particular for the nobility of this City'. The prayer specified that God had 'committed [to them] the regulation of [his] justice' in order that 'recognising Jesus Christ in true Faith . . . to be the King of kings, and Lord of lords', they 'shall seek to serve and exalt his Reign'. The authority of the rulers was thus both justified by divine intention, and limited and oriented in a Christian way. The minister then prayed 'for all those that [God had] ordained as Pastors to [his] faithful'. In this case also, he evoked the divine source of their function, its limit and its orientation

⁸⁶ Cathelan, *Passé et présent Parisien*, fol. 15.

⁸⁷ AEG, R. C. 53, fol. 36; 55, fol. 77v; 63, fol. 27v; 69, fol. 75; 79, fol. 43v; *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs*, VI, p. 14.

⁸⁸ *Registres du Consistoire*, I, p. 22; AEG, R. C. 67, fol. 198; 68, fol. 69v; R. C. 72, fol. 113v; Jur. Pen. A, no. 2, fol. 61; PCLère série no. 1552. See also A. Spicet, 'Accommodating of Thame Selfis to heir the Worde': preaching, pews and Reformed worship in Scotland, 1560–1638', *History* 88 (2003), 411–16.

(God has 'committed [to them] the custody of souls and the dispensation of [his] holy Gospel' in order that they shall 'always [have] this resolve, that all the poor erring and lost sheep shall be recovered and delivered to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd'). Lastly, the minister prayed for 'all mankind in general' and especially mentioned within this common category, 'those whom [God] visits and punishes, by the cross and tribulation'. That is to say, among others, the penitents who had been granted a place near the pulpit, and those who were 'gathered here', that is the congregation of worshippers before whom he was officiating. By addressing to God a particular request for each of these categories, the liturgical prayer was ordering Christian society according to the different 'vocations' of divine origin. And this order could be read by each participant in the service according to the way this society was seated in the temple.

Thus the distribution of the faithful in the temple produced a simultaneous representation of the two levels of reality in which the worshipping congregation was involved: a temporal society divided into social categories, but also a spiritual society, united in a relation of equality with the divine. There was a tense relationship between these two levels. Based on a common belief in Christ and on the charity that arose from this link, the spiritual society in reality constituted the ideal towards which the temporal society must be inclined. The entire process of the liturgy resembled a pledge by the body of worshippers to pursue this ideal. Before taking the communion, the faithful undertook to ponder whether he 'puts his trust in the mercy of God' and whether 'he truly intends and resolves to live in concord and brotherly charity with his neighbours'.⁸⁹ In a sermon delivered on a day of Holy Communion, Pierre Viret reminded his congregation that 'when we come to communicate with the Sacraments, we come to commit ourselves publicly in a desire to serve and obey our God'.⁹⁰ In this way, the liturgical space enrolled the congregation of worshippers in a process of sanctification.

It can be asserted overall that the Reformed organisation of the Genevan churches closely echoed the liturgical requirements. Both the place of worship and the conduct of the divine services aimed at producing the same effects. In accommodating communication with the divine, they signified that the latter was really present among those assembled for the purpose of worship. Together, therefore, they clearly combined to

⁸⁹ *Tracts*, p. 120.

⁹⁰ C. Schnetzler et al., *Pierre Viret d'après lui-même. Pages extraites des œuvres du Réformateur* (Lausanne, 1911), p. 199.

bring the worshipping congregation into the presence of the holy. In so doing they conveyed a specific perception of this presence, not as a local reality, but as a spiritual and internal reality, to be sought in the faith as well as in the liturgical texts and in the scene that the cult produced. It thus committed the faithful to an effort at elevation and self-renunciation. In this sense, the Reformed temple was less a holy place than a privileged venue for sanctification.

5 'What kinde of house a kirk is': conventicles, consecrations and the concept of sacred space in post-Reformation Scotland

Andrew Spicer

The introduction of the Scottish Prayer Book in 1637 was the culmination of a series of liturgical measures that changed the religious practices of the Kirk of Scotland during the early seventeenth century. The opposition that the Prayer Book faced meant that it soon became a symbol for the wider discontent towards the crown and its ecclesiastical and religious policies. It gave rise to the National Covenant, which was signed the following year, which condemned Roman Catholic errors, asserted the freedom of the Kirk of Scotland from civil control, defended the traditions of the Reformed Church and rejected the recent religious innovations of the Stuart monarchs. In this attack upon the policies of the Crown, the impact of liturgical change and developments in sacramental theology upon the parish churches of Scotland has been overlooked. For with the changes in religious practice, there also came a fundamental re-evaluation of sacred space and the sanctity of a church, which had by the later 1630s polarised opinion within the Kirk. It is this changing perception of the sanctity of the church in post-Reformation Scotland, which was intimately linked with the liturgical and religious changes of the early seventeenth century that provides the focus for this chapter.

Following his accession to the English throne in 1603, James VI had pursued a policy which sought to establish liturgical uniformity within his three kingdoms, a policy which was also actively pursued by his son Charles I. The Stuart monarchs were not seeking to 'Anglicanise' the Scottish Kirk but to bring about a convergence or establish congruity in the patterns of worship of the two Churches.¹ In particular the kings favoured the more ceremonial and reverential form of worship in the English Book of Common Prayer rather than that established by the Book of Common Order, which had been adopted at the Scottish Reformation.

¹ J. Morrill, 'A British patriarchy? Ecclesiastical imperialism under the early Stuarts', in A. Fletcher and P. Roberts (eds.) *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 220–1, 231, 233.