

Barbara Pitkin (ed.)

# Semper Reformanda

John Calvin, Worship,  
and Reformed Traditions



Academic Studies

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## Preface and Acknowledgments

Often depicted by scholars and critics alike as a static, sober, interior, and largely individual experience focused solely on the sermon, Reformed worship was and is rather an adaptable, affective, emotional, and communal activity engaging all the senses and involving the minds, hearts, and bodies of the participants.<sup>1</sup> Recent investigations into Reformed Christianity's earliest religious aesthetics and subsequent expressions of Reformed religious attitudes evident in liturgy and other ritual forms, architecture and ecclesiastical furnishings, psalters and their production and dissemination, and even in the nature and place of preaching have countered these long-standing stereotypes concerning the supposed sterility of Reformed piety.<sup>2</sup> Without a doubt, the early Reformed concern with false worship and idolatry led to a rejection of many elements of medieval ritual culture and devotional life and to the complete transformation of others, such as the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. In rejecting the religion of their forebears and creating "a new, scripturally-based, theological meta-

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1 This stereotypical view is expressed in the introduction to a classic English translation of Calvin's liturgy: "The liturgy itself was directed toward *solī Deo gloria*, though in the same subdued and austere fashion that shaped all of Calvinist piety." Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (1961; rpt. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 192.

2 For a small sampling of recent literature see the individual chapters in Lukas Vischer, ed., *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Christian Grosse, "L'esthétique du chant dans la piété calviniste aux premiers temps de la Réforme (1536–1545)," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 227/1 (2010): 13–31; English version available at <http://www.cairn-int.info/publications-de-Grosse-Christian-14926.htm>; John Witvliet, "The Spirituality of the Psalter: Metrical Psalms in Liturgy and Life in Calvin's Geneva," in *Calvin and Spirituality: Papers Presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, May 18–20, 1995, Calvin Theological Seminary; Calvin and his Contemporaries: Colleagues, Friends and Conflicts: Papers Presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, April 24–26, 1997, Louisville Theological Seminary*, ed. David Foxgrover (Grand Rapids: CRC for the Calvin Studies Society, 1998), 93–117; Andrew Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Barbara Pitkin, "The Reformation of Preaching: Transformations of Worship Soundscapes in Early Modern Germany and Switzerland," *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 1/2 (2015): 5–20.



physics” that Carlos Eire contends drew boundaries between spiritual and material more clearly than ever, Calvin and his Reformed colleagues and successors *were* intensely concerned with questions of proper worship and what they perceived as the ever-present danger of idolatry.<sup>3</sup> However, their constructive endeavors to reorganize communal worship and private devotion evidence a deep interest not in rejecting but rather redefining the proper, positive, and spiritually beneficial place of material objects and sensory experience in worship and facilitating the laity’s active participation in public services.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, their biblical orientation and insistence on God’s Word as the sole standard for determining true worship did not mean that worship practices were completely non-negotiable—quite to the contrary. An explosion of new liturgies in Protestant regions and intense civic debates over expectations for communal worship bear ample witness to both the variety of worship practices and to the ongoing debates and negotiations characterizing public reaction to and involvement in their implementation. Consideration of a broader range of Reformed sources in combination with the traditional theological polemics about proper worship can provide a much needed corrective and a more accurate historical picture of this arguably central feature of Reformed Christianity and its evolution through the ages and in different cultural settings.

The chapters in this volume build on this recent scholarly trajectory to explore from a range of perspectives the phenomenon of worship in the Reformed tradition. As in-depth case studies focusing on key moments in the broad stream of Reformed worship traditions, they yield collectively an image of the adaptive and negotiated character of worship attitudes and practices. One major contribution is thus to demonstrate that the traditional slogan *semper reformanda*, which constitutes the title of this volume, particularly applies to the worship life of Reformed communities. In addition, the chapters weigh in on and advance scholarship on four overarching themes.

Collectively the chapters in the volume demonstrate first of all the broad character of Reformed worship from its very beginnings and the value of studying worship from a multi-disciplinary perspective and employing a variety of sources. The contributions examine the phenomenon of worship in broadly con-

3 Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3.

4 On Calvin, see Elsie Anne McKee, “Context, Contours, Contents: Towards a Description of Calvin’s Understanding of Worship,” in *Calvin and Spirituality: Papers Presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, May 18–20, 1995, Calvin Theological Seminary; Calvin and his Contemporaries: Colleagues, Friends and Conflicts: Papers Presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, April 24–26, 1997, Louisville Theological Seminary*, ed. David Foxgrover (Grand Rapids: CRC for the Calvin Studies Society, 1998), 66–92, and *The Pastoral Ministry and Worship in Calvin’s Geneva* (Geneva: Droz, 2016).

strued ways and from angles ranging from ritual studies, liturgical innovation, material culture, and social impact. Chapters by Sue Rozeboom on early Reformed eucharistic liturgies, by Andrew Spicer on communion ware in Dutch Reformed congregations, and by Randall Engle on debates over the use of the organ in the Netherlands focus on materials that shed light on the ways that different Reformed communities actually conducted worship—or debated how this ought to be done. Other authors examine materials on first glance not directly addressing worship to show that even in these instances the question of proper worship was central and, moreover, concerned both the theological elite and ordinary people. Jason Zuidema investigates a late theological writing by Guillaume Farel not explicitly concerned with the theology or practice of worship and finds that in fact this treatise suggests important continuities in Farel's views on these matters. Karin Maag uncovers in the Genevan Consistory records evidence of ordinary Genevans' more flexible attitudes toward non-Reformed worship practices and the persistence of a range of ideas about what constituted acceptable worship and devotional practices long after the implementation of religious reform. Jeannine Olson draws on archival materials to demonstrate that the commercial activities of the Genevan businessman Laurent de Normandie were key for the spread of Reformed worship into France. The final two contributions to the volume approach materials more directly concerned with Reformed theology and practice of worship with new kinds of questions to explore how these attitudes developed in perhaps unexpected or unintended ways. Charles Parker finds that the efforts of Dutch Reformed pastors and missionaries to account for what they perceived as false worship encountered through colonial expansion into Asia transformed the way they thought about world religions and religion as a category. Theodore Vial explores three Reformed liturgical battles through the lens of ritual theory to argue that these post-Reformation Reformed debates continue to influence modern secular theories of ritual. Together these eight investigations provide a rich mosaic of worship in the Reformed key—in theory, practice, context, and effects, and in such diverse settings as sixteenth-century Geneva and environs, the Dutch Republic, seventeenth-century Asia, and nineteenth-century Prussia and North America.

A second “red thread” running through many of the chapters concerns the material, sensory, emotional, and experiential dimensions of Reformed religious culture. Olson and Spicer demonstrate the centrality of material objects such as religious books and communion plate for Reformed worship and explore the role of these kinds of religious items in the phase in which Reformed worship was being implemented as well as their changing character and evolving attitudes toward them at later stages in the movement. Rozeboom unpacks early Reformed eucharistic liturgies with an eye toward their use to invite, inspire, and inculcate certain religious sensibilities in the participants. Vial argues that underlying the

three nineteenth-century debates over liturgy that form his examples are modern, post-Enlightenment assumptions about human beings that prioritize authentic individual and communal self-expression. Each of the debates takes as its criterion for appropriate ritual expression not the Bible per se but whether or not the prayers, liturgy, or understanding of the Lord's Supper authentically expresses and represents a particular Reformed communal experience and identity.

Of course, the early Reformed critiques of the material and sensual experience and efforts to eradicate physical and sensible elements perceived as threatening to true piety continued to shape Reformed attitudes. Engle and Parker explore the persistence of the theme of idolatry and the demonic among influential Reformed writers, including Gisbertus Voetius, who argued (ultimately unsuccessfully) against the use of the pipe organ in Dutch Reformed worship on the grounds that it prevented true worship and was spiritually malignant. Dutch pastors overseas lumped all the indigenous practices they encountered into the category of "devil worship" and fretted over the ever-present danger that their native converts might yield again to the sensual seductions of idols. Yet in neither case was this the *only* Reformed view. Voetius held a minority view and ultimately lost his campaign to ban the organ from worship. And Parker suggests that not only did the preoccupation with and moral evaluation of pagan idolatry and the reality of the devil diminish among some seventeenth-century Reformed thinkers, but also that global Calvinism may have thus played an underappreciated role in the emergence of early Enlightenment views.

Third, worship emerges as both site of conflict and renewal in Reformed traditions. These studies illustrate a few of the myriad ways in which worship has been a contested and negotiated space in Reformed communities over time. These include the earliest efforts to implement liturgical change under the guidance of pastors like Farel and Calvin and with the cooperation of the civil magistrates, touched upon by Maag, Olson, and Zuidema; the debates over the use of the pipe organ in Reformed worship in the seventeenth-century Netherlands traced by Engle; and the struggles on the part of Reformed scholars, pastors, and missionaries to understand and categorize indigenous religious practices in the Dutch East Indies analyzed by Parker; the liturgy battles noted by Vial. In all these cases, the phenomenon of worship has inspired not only confrontations and debates but also fruitful engagements that stimulated and continue to invite reflection on this critical category in Reformed faith traditions.

Finally, worship and the engagement with the religious other can be seen as key factors in the process of the formation of Reformed religious identities. Related to the reality of worship as a site for conflict and renewal, engagements over ideas about worship and liturgical norms and practices have provided opportunities for cross-confessional interactions that have stimulated formation of distinctive Reformed self-understandings. For example, the cross-confessional worship encounters in

Reformation Geneva analyzed by Maag can be brought into productive dialogue with Dutch Calvinist engagements with non-Christian faiths a century later investigated by Parker to probe the perceived yet “permeable” boundaries between different traditions and gain a fuller understanding of their influence in shaping Reformed confessional identities as well as Reformed understandings of religious others.

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The contributions to this volume had their origin in papers delivered at the twentieth colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, held at Calvin Theological Seminary in April 2015. Participants engaged in conversation and reflection on historical, theological, liturgical, and theoretical dimensions of worship in the Reformed tradition. Each of the original plenary lectures has been revised in light of the rich discussion of issues at the colloquium and in response to reviewers’ comments and suggestions. Together they make a diverse but also coherent contribution to ongoing research into this central feature of Reformed Christianity. I am grateful first and foremost to each of the authors for their stimulating presentations at the colloquium and for the tremendous work each did to enrich his or her presentation for publication.

A further debt of gratitude is owed to the following organizations for their sponsorship of the 2015 colloquium: Calvin Institute of Christian Worship; Calvin Theological Seminary; Christian’s Library Press (ACTON Institute); Presbyterian Church (USA); Western Theological Seminary; and, especially, the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College. Karin Maag, Paul Fields, Ryan Noppen, and their capable team took care of all the logistical aspects of the colloquium and ensured a successful meeting. In addition, I wish to acknowledge the CSS Board Members who contributed to the shaping of the program and reviewed the papers as part of the publication process: Karen Spierling, Ward Holder, David Whitford, Ezra Plank, Jill Fehleison, Yudha Thianto, Jeffrey Watt, and Jeannine Olson.

The Calvin Studies Society is a partner organization of Refo500, and we are delighted that this collection of papers will appear in the Refo500 Academic Series (R5AS) published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. This marks the third set of Calvin Studies Society colloquium papers appearing in this series. Special thanks are warmly extended to Herman Selderhuis (director of Refo500 and general editor of R5AS) and to colleagues at Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht for their ongoing support of the Society’s work and for their particular oversight of this volume, as well as to Daniel Gullotta for assistance with proofreading and preparation of the index.

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**Part One.**  
**Foundations: Reforming Worship in Sixteenth-Century  
Thought and Practice**



Karin Maag

## **Permeable Borders: Cross-Confessional Encounters and Traditions in Reformation Geneva**

On January 4, 1615, a delegation of Genevan pastors appeared before the Small Council, the city's ruling body of magistrates, to voice their deep concern about the behavior of some of the German students in the Genevan Academy. According to the pastors, several of these young men were planning to get together on January 6 to mark the feast of the Three Kings with a procession on horseback and a banquet, and were going to elect some of their number to play traditional roles in the festivities, such as a king, a fool, a strolling musician, and a cleric. In response to the pastors' complaints, the magistrates prohibited the students from holding their feast at night and from parading through the city on horseback.<sup>1</sup> From the government's point of view, this scaled-down event would limit any scandal caused by the students' celebration of a feast day that had otherwise been banned in Geneva for eighty years. Upon hearing of the restrictions, on January 5 the students petitioned to be allowed to hold their feast as originally planned (apparently the food was already prepared) and parade on horseback, albeit in their ordinary clothes and without electing any of the traditional characters. That same day, the pastors came back to reiterate their complaints:

In spite of the offers they have made in their petition, the Germans intend to elect a king. In fact, they have already done so following the new calendar. They have also elected a constable, who will appoint the other characters, namely a cleric, a fool, a pimp, a servant, and other similar ones. This is profane and a form of orgy. Because they know people were talking about it, they will not have a pimp, but they have left the cleric. Their pretext is that they have elected one to lead in prayer, but in fact he will be doing Lutheran preaching (for these Germans are Lutherans, and Macadis, the strolling musician, is even a Papist). We have already told the magistrates how during the most recent Lord's Supper they were imitating our Lord's Supper by giving each other bread and saying "Here, have some of Calvin's bread."<sup>2</sup>

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1 Archives d'État de Genève, Registres du conseil de Genève 115, fol. 6.

2 Archives d'État de Genève, Registres du conseil de Genève 115, fol. 7.



The Small Council addressed the immediate problem by reiterating their prohibitions to the German students about any horseback processions and the election of stock characters to mark the feast of the Three Kings. However, this vignette provides an excellent illustration of the persistent confessional diversity that manifested itself in the otherwise strongly Reformed community and of the tensions that arose as a result. By 1615, John Calvin (1509–1564) had been dead for over fifty years, and his successor Theodore Beza (1519–1605) had been dead for a decade. Although the leadership of the Genevan church had passed into the hands of other pastors, the problems that had confronted Calvin and Beza and their colleagues still remained: how could a Reformed community of faith become strongly rooted when cross-confessional contacts persisted in offering alternate models of worship? In this instance, the magistrates had to trace a path between two equally important realities: the need to maintain the Reformed character of Geneva and the need to continue making the Genevan Academy an attractive institution for students from across Europe, especially wealthy ones, regardless of their confessional background. For their part, the pastors seemed convinced that opening the door even slightly to the commemoration of a feast day that had been removed from the Reformed calendar would be deeply problematic. In the eyes of the pastors, there was no room for such non-Reformed perspectives in Geneva.

This contribution will consider a number of cases that surfaced in the records of early modern Geneva, emphasizing the persistence of a range of confessional perspectives in the city, both in Calvin's day and beyond, as expressed in controversies surrounding worship.<sup>3</sup> Although the traditional narrative of the Reformation in Geneva has accurately highlighted the dramatic changes in worship that took place beginning in the 1530s and 1540s, several historians have pointed out that the transformation from Catholic to Reformed was never as clear cut as the traditional narrative (or indeed Calvin and his fellow pastors) may have wanted.<sup>4</sup> Thomas Lambert's dissertation research has highlighted the extent to which the transition from Catholic to Reformed worship practices left a number of Genevans bewildered and unclear about the new requirements, at least in the

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3 This contribution is indebted to Karen Spierling's very helpful presentation of the core issues in her "Friend and Foe: Reformed Genevans and Catholic Neighbors in the Time of Calvin," in *John Calvin and Roman Catholicism: Critique and Engagement, Then and Now*, ed. Randall Zachman (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 79–98.

4 See for instance Karen Spierling, "Daring Insolence toward God? The Perpetuation of Catholic Baptismal Traditions in Sixteenth-Century Geneva," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 93 (2002): 97–125; and Robert Kingdon, "Nostalgia for Catholic Rituals in Calvin's Geneva," in *Grenzgänge der Theologie: Professor Alexandre Ganoczy zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Otmar Meuffels and Jürgen Bründl (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 209–20.

1540s.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, as Scott Manetsch has noted, evidence survives in the Consistory records of people deliberately choosing to continue Catholic worship practices in Reformed Geneva.<sup>6</sup> Some Genevans clearly wanted to remain Catholic. Others seemed content enough to conform to Reformed worship practices while in Geneva, but displayed a flexible approach and a willingness to participate in Catholic rituals when outside the territorial borders of the city, to the dismay and frustration of the Genevan authorities. Still others asserted that they were convinced Protestants, but saw no particular problem in engaging in business practices that assisted or fostered Catholic worship. Karen Spierling's research has shown, for instance, that while the Genevan government and church leaders tried to keep their inhabitants solely loyal to the Reformed faith, those who travelled outside Geneva or had contacts with Catholic friends and relatives adopted a much less rigid stance.<sup>7</sup> In the end, in spite of the pastors' best efforts, Geneva was not a hermetically-sealed and homogenous confessional community: its permeable borders allowed for the comings and goings of a number of other kinds of Christians, who like the German Lutheran students, did not conform fully to Geneva's Reformed worship practices.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, by the early seventeenth century Geneva's borders were not only permeable but also shrinking, given the Catholic missionary resurgence in neighboring Savoy. As Jill Fehleison points out in her monograph, the confessional boundaries between Reformed Geneva and Catholic Savoy were not firmly set but remained in flux for decades.<sup>9</sup>

This contribution will build on this recent scholarship challenging the received notion of Geneva as a Protestant citadel where everyone lived and worshipped as Reformed Christians, providing evidence from a range of primary sources that shows that Genevans, their extended families, and visitors had a much more flexible attitude towards acceptable expressions of worship and devotion. In spite of extensive religious instruction provided by the city's pastors, a number of inhabitants seemed to follow a situational approach, in which their worship behavior depended more on pragmatic considerations, personal preferences, and the power of tradition than on a blanket allegiance. I will argue that while Reformed worship practices did take firm hold in Geneva, the pastors and the

5 Thomas Lambert, "Preaching, Praying and Policing the Reform in Sixteenth-Century Geneva," PhD diss., Wisconsin–Madison, 1998, especially 280–480.

6 Scott Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536–1609* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 203–4.

7 Spierling, "Friend and Foe," 84–98.

8 For more on permeable borders and their impact on religious authorities' attempts to delineate the community of the faithful, albeit outside Geneva, see Keith Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

9 Jill Fehleison, *Boundaries of Faith: Catholics and Protestants in the Diocese of Geneva* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2010), 9–12.

Consistory's unwillingness to come to terms with the roots of the more flexible approach adopted by some Genevans sowed seeds for some of the opposition faced by Geneva's pastors in the sixteenth century and beyond.

## Changes in Worship in Geneva after 1535

On the face of it, given the wholesale changes in worship and in theology that took place in Geneva beginning in 1535 when the Mass was officially banned, it seems hard to understand how some Genevans could have persistently maintained non-Reformed worship practices for so long.<sup>10</sup> By 1542, following Calvin's return from his exile in Strasbourg, worship in Geneva took place in the vernacular rather than Latin; the Lord's Supper was celebrated quarterly (everyone receiving both the bread and the wine); the focus inside churches had shifted from the altar to the pulpit; images, candles, and vestments had been eliminated; and a Reformed liturgical handbook, *La forme des prières*, had been published.<sup>11</sup> This handbook provided a first set of metrical psalms, musical settings of the Song of Simeon, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, and liturgies for Sunday services, baptisms, celebrations of the Lord's Supper, and marriages.<sup>12</sup> Through catechetical instruction, sermons, and the admonitions of the Consistory, Genevans were taught to avoid Catholic superstitions, such as prayers in Latin, prayers to the saints or the Virgin Mary, feast days, rosaries, religious images in one's home, making the sign of the cross, prayers for the dead, and pilgrimages. Instead, Genevans memorized the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed in the vernacular, and learned metrical settings of the psalms to sing at church and at home. They were taught to mark sacred time through the observance of Sunday and weekday worship services, and through special days of prayer in times of natural calamity or threats of war.<sup>13</sup> To ensure that the rising generations were brought up with the Reformed understanding of genuine worship anchored in their hearts, all children in the city were sent to catechism services on Sunday afternoons, while the schoolboys in the lower level of the Genevan Academy were to attend worship services on Wednesdays and Sundays

10 See Robert Kingdon with Thomas Lambert, *Reforming Geneva: Discipline, Faith and Anger in Calvin's Geneva* (Geneva: Droz, 2012), esp. 25–46.

11 For more on the changes in worship, see Lambert, "Preaching, Praying," 156–221.

12 *La forme des prières et chantz ecclésiastiques, avec la maniere d'administrer les sacremens, & consacrer le mariage: Selon la coustume de l'Eglise ancienne* ([Geneva: Jean Girard], 1542; *La forme des prières et chants ecclésiastiques Genève 1542*, facsimile of the original edition, with a notice by Pierre Pidoux (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1959).

13 For more on the changes in worship and their impact, see Christian Grosse, *Les rituels de la cène: Le culte eucharistique réformé à Genève (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)*, (Geneva: Droz, 2008), esp. 115–333.

and the catechism service with the rest of their class under the supervision of their teachers. On a daily basis, the Genevan school curriculum emphasized a solid grounding in the Reformed faith. Schoolboys were to practice the fundamentals of Reformed worship by reciting in turn Calvin's prayer to be said before starting lessons, by engaging in an hour of psalm singing a day, and by taking turns saying the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed at the close of each day's classes.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the Genevan pastors worked to ensure that their congregants would be well versed in Reformed worship, starting at an early age. However, to make certain that this form of worship took firm root in the Genevans' lives, the pastors also worked with the city government to prohibit the practice of any other version of Christianity, especially Catholic worship.<sup>15</sup> Legislation passed by the Genevan magistrates from 1536 onwards barred Genevans from practicing Catholicism, whether inside or outside the city. For instance, already in March 1536, the Small Council proclaimed,

It is decided that in order to live in greater unity and agreement, in each district the announcement be made that no one should dare go hear a Mass or participate in a papal sacrament outside the city, given that they would not dare to do so within the city. Otherwise, they can simply remain outside, and will be considered enemies of the city.<sup>16</sup>

Here we see early evidence of the Genevan authorities' assertion that their population was to abide by the general commitment to Reformed worship, even while outside the political borders of the city. By January 1537, anyone in possession of religious images at home was ordered to destroy them or bring them to the authorities to be destroyed.<sup>17</sup> By March 1537, no one was to carry a rosary or books of hours or "other instruments of papal ceremonies."<sup>18</sup> These first measures targeting physical objects that could sustain Catholic worship were followed by edicts addressing specific Catholic worship practices. In September 1539, the government proclaimed that the only lawful sacraments were ones performed by Reformed pastors, thus rejecting Catholic baptisms or any other

14 Karin Maag, "Change and Continuity in Medieval and Early Modern Worship: The Practice of Worship in the Schools," in *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Change and Continuity in Religious Practice*, ed. Karin Maag and John Witvliet (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 115–31. This article includes an English translation of the statutes of the Genevan Academy that deal with worship (117–18).

15 For more on the campaign to redefine appropriate religious practice in Geneva, see Darren Walhof, "Beyond Disentanglement: The Politics of Reconstructing Religion and Superstition in Calvin's Geneva," *Il pensiero politico* 43/3 (2010): 318–39.

16 *Les sources du droit du canton de Genève* (henceforth *SDG*), ed. Émile Rivoire and Victor van Berchem, 4 vols. (Aarau: Sauerländer, 1927–35), 2: 543.

17 *SDG* 2: 334.

18 *SDG* 2: 336–37.

Catholic sacramental rites.<sup>19</sup> In November 1546, the Small Council acted on the Consistory's request and published a list of names that could not be given to infants at baptism. In many cases, the prohibited names were ones closely associated with Catholic beliefs, such as the names of the three Wise Men (Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar) or the name Claude (associated with the nearby Catholic shrine of Saint Claude).<sup>20</sup> In May 1547, in a series of laws regulating church life in Geneva's rural hinterland, the city authorities dealt with what they termed "superstitions," including pilgrimages, observance of feast days and fast days, and attendance at Mass. Keeping feasts and fasts resulted in admonitions, whereas participating in a pilgrimage led to an appearance before the Consistory, and attending Mass meant being sent before the Small Council for punishment, either imprisonment or fines.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, given that the law against going to Mass was being repeated eleven years after it was first issued, the practice was still a matter of concern. The government also sought to prevent any flourishing of Catholic worship due to the workmanship of Genevan craftsmen. Hence in April 1566, the edicts regarding goldsmiths included the following clause: "all goldsmiths living in this city are prohibited from making crosses, chalices, or any other object that serves the papacy and idolatry. These craftsmen and all others are not allowed to sell or display such objects for sale."<sup>22</sup> Finally, as late as January 1606, the Genevan Small Council ordered that "no one subject to Genevan jurisdiction should from henceforth get married in a papist ceremony, under penalty of discretionary punishment."<sup>23</sup> From the mid-1530s onward, therefore, the Genevan government worked hard to prevent and prohibit any activities or practices that would sustain other forms of worship, especially Catholicism.

Yet in the context of these multiple measures designed to teach and shape the Genevan inhabitants' allegiance to Reformed worship, this combination of practice, instruction, and legislation apparently left some unmoved and unconvinced. The following section will present a number of cases where Genevans got into trouble with the authorities for their unwillingness to remain within the boundaries of acceptable Reformed worship. The analysis will focus on the specifics of each case, but also on the person's rationale for his or her actions, if available. It is worth pointing out that the time frame of these various cases is significant. Cases of persistent Catholic worship practices in Geneva were more numerous in the first decade after the establishment of the Reformation but

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19 SDG 2: 356.

20 The document dated November 22, 1546 appears in the *Registres de la compagnie des pasteurs de Genève au temps de Calvin*, vol. 1, 1546–1553, ed. Robert Kingdon and Jean-François Bergier (Geneva: Droz, 1962), 29.

21 SDG 2: 500–5, esp. 503.

22 SDG 3: 163.

23 SDG 3: 504.

subsequently decreased in number, largely due to generational shifts. Those coming to adulthood in Geneva by the 1550s had little to no personal memory of living and worshipping as Catholics. However, the Catholic world was never far away: Geneva's small political territory was situated right next to Catholic Savoy. Thus those who forged links with Catholic neighbors or family members outside Geneva for kinship or business reasons continued to draw the Consistory's attention throughout the sixteenth century. Finally, the number of cases of Genevan residents and religious refugees investigated for participating in Catholic rituals while in France ebbed and flowed in part in response to changing circumstances. For instance, at the time of the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572, the pressure on Protestants in France was such that many of those arriving in Geneva had to confess to participating in Catholic rituals, albeit under duress. In the 1540s and 1550s, by contrast, the more open atmosphere allowed Genevans to travel to France with relative ease and to decide without undue external pressure whether or not to attend Catholic worship.

### One Possible Response: Continued Catholicism

In the first years following the start of the Reformation in Geneva, there is clear evidence that a small but determined section of the Genevan population had little to no interest in being Reformed and wanted to continue practicing their Catholic faith.<sup>24</sup> The Consistory minutes, beginning in 1542, offer a number of cases of individuals, generally older, and often women, who signaled their unwillingness to abandon the worship traditions taught to them by their parents. It is worth remembering that the women in particular had no voting rights in the city at the time, and so could not have made their voices heard when the Reformation was officially accepted by the (male) voting population of the city in May 1536. Among these women was Lucesse Curtet, the sister of a prominent Genevan political leader, Jean-Ami Curtet. Lucesse Curtet came to the Consistory's attention already on March 20, 1543, when she was asked about her "papist superstitions, fasting, vigils, foods, and other matters." At that time, she prudently responded with generally pious statements such as, "that she believes firmly in God and trusts in God and his justice." She also explained her absence from Reformed worship services by blaming the cold weather for her non-attendance.<sup>25</sup> Three years later, however, on August 31, 1546, she was back before

24 For an overview and analysis of several of these cases, see Thomas Lambert, "Cette loi ne durera guère: Inertie religieuse et espoirs catholiques à Genève au temps de la Réforme," *Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Genève* 23/24 (1993/94): 5–24.

25 *Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, vol. 1, 1542–1544, ed. Robert M.

the Consistory, after she was apprehended trying to leave Geneva with cash in hand to go to the neighboring Catholic town of Annecy to have masses sung. When asked about her beliefs, she responded, “that her mother and father dedicated her to another law than the one practiced here, and that she was very devoted to Saint Claire, but that she does not despise the current practice.” Questioned further by the Consistory, she correctly gave the date of the feast of Saint Felix, and admitted that she fasted when she was able to do so. She also admitted that “she prays to Saint Felix and the other saints who pray for her.” The Consistory scribe noted, “She is very stubborn.”<sup>26</sup> Here was a woman who was committed to practicing her Catholic faith in a Reformed context, even to the point of being arrested in her attempt to fund masses outside Geneva and likely causing her brother considerable embarrassment.

Madame Curtet was not the only woman to be brought before the Consistory for persistently engaging in Catholic worship practices. On May 15, 1550, during the week of Pentecost, the Consistory was appalled to discover that a young girl called Claudine was being brought up practicing Catholic rituals by her aunt, Bartholomé Achard. The child had innocently admitted that she knew how to pray in Latin and demonstrated her skill to the Consistory. Furthermore, “she confessed that they fasted on the Great Friday [Good Friday] and that she and her aunt did not eat fish that day. She also confessed that they did not eat meat this week because it was rogations. She also admitted that her aunt still recites her hours.” When the aunt in turn was called before the Consistory,

she was reprimanded for continuing to ignore the truth and she is still superstitious, making the said girl fast. She denies it but does admit that she exhorted the little girl to fast on the eve of Easter, which she did. And as for the hours, she said that she only recites the Gospels in Latin, and says that she will abstain from doing so from now on, “since it displeases all of you.”<sup>27</sup>

In this instance, Bartholomé Achard seems to have maintained her Catholic devotional practices within the household, though there is no evidence that she made any attempt to attend Mass outside Geneva. She conformed outwardly to public Reformed worship though as late as 1556, the Consistory accused her of continuing to murmur her Catholic prayers during sermons.<sup>28</sup>

These women were only two of several people, particularly in the first years of the Consistory’s work, who seemed to persist in their Catholic worship practices

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Kingdon, Thomas A. Lambert, and Isabella M. Watt, trans. M. Wallace McDonald. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 209.

26 *Registres du consistoire de Genève au temps de Calvin* (henceforth *RConsist*), ed. Thomas A. Lambert, Isabella Watt, Jeffery Watt, and Wallace McDonald, 9 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1996–2015), 2: 285.

27 *RConsist* 5: 93–94.

28 *RConsist* 5: 94 note.

in spite of the city's changeover to the Reformed faith.<sup>29</sup> In many instances, they justified their activities by pointing out that they were simply doing what their parents had taught them to do. For instance, Guilliermon Moyne appeared before the Consistory on September 14, 1542, to give evidence of her proficiency in reciting her prayers. Unfortunately for her, she “said the prayer in French terribly badly, against the Word of God, and also as her mother taught her in Latin. And that she is old, and cannot remember. And her confession, she says ‘I beg mercy of God,’ and then all wrong.”<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that Moyne and the Consistory were talking at cross purposes when it came to the confession: the Consistory expected her to recite the Apostles’ Creed, whereas she turned to the prayer of confession that was a standard feature of Catholic ritual. On the same day, the mason Pierre Calabri responded to the Consistory’s questions about his faith by stating “he does not know the prayer except as his father and mother taught him.”<sup>31</sup> These cases and others highlight the persistent power of Catholic worship practices and rituals in the minds and hearts of Genevans, especially given the close ties between these practices and their sense of family loyalty and tradition.

### Continued Catholic Worship Linked to Kinship or Business Networks

These upholders of Catholicism were not the only ones to underscore the role played by family in maintaining certain worship practices. Among those investigated by the Consistory for their willingness to cross confessional boundaries when it came to worship were those who put a greater emphasis on family and kinship ties than on Reformed orthodoxy. Consider, for instance, the case of Jeronime Patron, who appeared before the Consistory on May 24, 1548. The Consistory secretary noted, “[He] was called in because the Consistory has learned that while he claims to be a Christian, he has his wife living and dwelling in papism, and lets her participate in idolatry and superstition.” In this instance, two issues troubled the Consistory: the couple was not living together, and the wife was seemingly attending Catholic worship. Patron explained, “This was true, but she does not dare abandon her father, and that she is waiting to inherit from him. And he does not want to change things, and says he does not know what else to do.”<sup>32</sup> Here we have a situation where family bonds trumped confessional allegiances, albeit with a financial motive (the desire to safeguard an inheritance) complicating the matter as well. Kinship ties also played a role in the case of

29 For more examples, see Kingdon, “Nostalgia for Catholic Rituals,” 210–17.

30 *Registers of the Consistory*, 120.

31 *Registers of the Consistory*, 122.

32 *RConsist* 4: 69.



Guichard Recou, who was called before the Consistory on October 6, 1547: “He was reprimanded for having had his child baptized and having the baby carried to baptism by a papist from La Roche, which is against the edicts and admonitions.” La Roche was a Catholic community outside Geneva’s borders. Under Genevan rules, only Reformed godparents were allowed to present babies for baptism in Geneva. For his part, Recou “admitted it, given that the godfather has done a lot of good to his wife, and when they got engaged, he asked Master Guichard that he be the godfather to their first child, which Guichard promised to him.”<sup>33</sup> In this instance, long-standing ties of friendship and loyalty bound a Genevan couple to their friend from La Roche—having promised to have their friend be the godfather to their first child, Guichard wanted to honor that commitment, regardless of his friend’s Catholic faith. Guichard’s understanding of baptism, therefore, deviated from the officially taught Genevan approach, in which the sacrament of baptism signaled that a child was part of the Reformed covenant community. Godparents were meant to be Reformed, to make the promises in the child’s name, and see to it that the infant was brought up in that faith. For Guichard, it seems instead that this baptism provided an opportunity to mark a long-standing friendship and build on important networks of kinship and mutual support.

The strength of kinship also helps explain a number of cases where Genevans got into trouble with the Consistory for trying to give their babies names that appeared on the banned list issued by the Small Council in 1546. On May 31, 1548, a major conflict erupted at an afternoon catechism service led by pastor Michel Cop, when André Morel brought his son to be baptized. To honor the godfather (Jean-Baptiste Sept), Morel wanted to call his baby Balthasar, a traditional name in the Sept clan.<sup>34</sup> Cop, basing himself on the 1546 edict, refused and in the course of a tumultuous service baptized the baby John. None of those who protested vociferously during the service and afterwards about what they saw as the pastor’s high-handed actions were Catholic. In fact, several of them, including the then-secretary of the court of appeals, Philibert Berthelier, saw themselves as strong defenders of Geneva’s Reformed identity.<sup>35</sup> They simply did not believe that the choice of names at baptism was a marker of confessional identity.

33 *RConsist* 3: 211. See also Karen Spierling’s analysis of this case in her section on “inappropriate” godparents in her *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community, 1536–1564* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 120–28.

34 For the transcript of the case, see *RConsist* 4: 73–77. This case and others are discussed at length in William Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Genevan Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 145–53.

35 On Berthelier and his Reformed faith, see Christian Grosse, *L’excommunication de Philibert Berthelier: Histoire d’un conflit d’identité aux premiers temps de la Réforme genevoise* (Geneva: Société d’Histoire et d’Archéologie de Genève, 1995), esp. 146–55.

A second group of Genevans investigated for their confessional flexibility surrounding worship issues were motivated primarily by economic considerations. For example, the unfortunate baker Jacques Berlio appeared before the Consistory on September 13, 1548, to answer charges that he had gone to a nearby Catholic community to sell his wares at a Catholic festival on a Sunday when the Lord's Supper was celebrated in Geneva. Berlio was therefore in trouble for several reasons: he had worked on a Sunday, he had disrespected the quarterly celebration of the Lord's Supper, and he had seemingly upheld the validity of the Catholic festival by attending it to sell his baked goods in the shape of little bread men. "As a result, the Consistory told him that on the days when the Lord's Supper is celebrated, he must not go pollute himself with the papists in this way, even making small bread men as he has done."<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, the Consistory's response did not prohibit Berlio from selling his wares to the surrounding Catholic communities at other times—it was his presence at a Catholic festival on a Sunday when one of the quarterly celebrations of the Lord's Supper was occurring that drew the Consistory's ire. For his part, Mallard the goldsmith appeared before the Consistory on July 10, 1550. "He was reprimanded because he should know well that it is wrong to make tools for idolatry, as he has recently done in making a chalice. He answered that this is true, but gave excuses, saying he had to earn a living in some way."<sup>37</sup> In this instance, Mallard did not directly participate in Catholic worship, but his output was contributing to it by furnishing the liturgical objects needed for the celebration of the Mass.<sup>38</sup> Mallard's response about his need to earn a living was echoed by the bookseller Nicod du Chesne, who was reprimanded by the Consistory on July 30, 1551, for binding works of Catholic devotion, including missals. "He angrily admitted it, saying that it was to earn a living, and he does not offend God or Messieurs [the magistrates]. And he will do this work when he has some, and that the pastors pursue him too much and do not give him any work, and do not help him gain even a denier. And when he finds work, he will do it."<sup>39</sup> Du Chesne's frustration

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36 *RConsist* 4: 133.

37 *RConsist* 5: 149.

38 The Huguenot churches in France also struggled with the issue of Protestant craftsmen and artists commissioned to provide ritual objects for Catholics. See the minutes of the third national synod of the Huguenot church, held in Orléans on April 25, 1562: "Printers, booksellers, painters, etc. and all the faithful, especially those who hold offices in the church, are to be warned not to produce anything through their art, position, or occupation that is tied to the superstitions of the Roman church or that favors such superstitions." *Tous les synodes nationaux des églises réformées de France*, ed. Jean Aymon, 2 vols. (The Hague: Charles DeLo, 1710), 1: 27. The same prohibition was articulated at the sixth national synod meeting in Vertueil in 1567, and expanded to include sculptors, goldsmiths, embroiderers, glaziers, carpenters and masons. See 1: 73.

39 *RConsist* 6: 137.