

Children at the Lord's Supper

Paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed Tradition

'from the least
to the greatest'



Peter G. Sinia

From the least to the greatest

Pieter Gerrit Sinia

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From the least to the greatest

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STICHTING AFBOUW KAMPEN

*I dedicate this dissertation to
my parents Fokko & Dineke Sinia-Hamoen,
my wife Inez Sinia-de Jager,
and my children
Wilrik, Thomas, Charlotte,
Ruben & Anna-Sophia*

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Foreword and acknowledgements

Background and personal motivation

Growing up in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands I experienced the introduction of children at the Lord's Supper in the 'Westerkerk' in Arnhem in the mid-eighties, when I was still a teenager¹. I have no other recollection of the discussion than one argument used by the pastor in a sermon, the excitement of some of my peers about drinking real wine, and some vague memories of the actual celebration. Little did I know that one day I would become a pastor myself, and that the first congregation I would serve would be the Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen; in all likelihood the first Reformed church in the Netherlands to welcome children at the Lord's Supper in - or just before - 1961. Though I studied the issue of paedocommunion before accepting the call to this congregation, my interest in, my reflection on, and study of the topic intensified during my tenure as pastor of this congregation. Ecumenical contacts and a growing friendship with my colleague Robert Roth, who pastored the Reformed Church liberated in the neighboring city of Breda, certainly contributed to this. My second charge was as the senior pastor of the First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada. Though the subject of paedocommunion was not new to this congregation, it was on the agenda of our church council, of classis and synod, which only intensified my interest in the subject. My third charge brought me back to the Netherlands, to serve the Dutch Reformed Church of Ede. In the same year I accepted the call to Ede, congregation members put the issue of children at the Lord's Supper on the agenda of council. As the issue was put on the back burner it would remain on the agenda of this church for almost the entire period of my PhD-study. After I had started my PhD research I became part of the national ecumenical committee of the Dutch Reformed Churches where the issue of paedocommunion was on the agenda in our ecumenical conversations with the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

Professor Dr. Henk J. Tieleman gave birth to my dream to write a dissertation by inviting me to do so as a sequel to my thesis on the relationship between faith and business ethics. My friend and former colleague Professor Dr. Michael W. Goheen revitalized that dream. I have always appreciated the

¹ See for example W. Blanken, "Kinderen en avondmaal," *Ons Kerkblad: ten dienste van de Geref. Kerken van Arnhem etc.* June 23, 1984.

value of participating in the academic discourse as a Christian. Gradually the desire grew to do so, not on business ethics, nor on a missional topic, but on the issue of paedocommunion. I became convinced that the story of the Church of Rijsbergen deserves to be retold, to be researched and to be understood in its context. The case of Rijsbergen for welcoming children at the table deserves to be heard, to be further explored, and to be evaluated in a fair and comprehensive overview of the arguments pro and con, and of other aspects relevant to the paedocommunion discussion. Professor Kees J. de Ruijter provided me with the unique possibility to do so at the Theological University of the Reformed Churches liberated in Kampen. Professor John D. Witvliet provided me with crucial support to do so from the broader, transatlantic perspective of the Dutch Reformed tradition.

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Paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed Tradition

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Ede, Saint Nicholas Day, Wednesday, December 6, 2017,

Peter Sinia

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Relevance of the topic

A first encounter with the topic of paedocommunion or infant Communion through theological encyclopedia², liturgical dictionary³, or even Wikipedia⁴ gives the impression paedocommunion is a practice with a long history. But paedocommunion has become and has remained a relevant topic over the last century. The Roman Catholic Church lowered the age of first Communion with the papal encyclical *Quam Singulari* of Pope Pius X in 1910. The discussion on – and the introduction of paedocommunion within protestant churches in the West and more specifically within the Dutch Reformed tradition began after the Second World War and continues until now. The discussion within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands started in the sixties, and regained relevance in the recent process of merging with the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church⁵, as well as in new openness towards the practice within the more traditional wing of these churches⁶. The Reformed Church liberated of Rijsbergen welcomed children since 1961 or even 1960. There was some discussion in the sixties and seventies, before and after the denomination split into the Reformed Church liberated and the Dutch Reformed Churches. The issue remains relevant within the Dutch Reformed Churches as several local churches have put the issue on their agenda and have decided to welcome children at the Table in recent years. The issue has regained relevance within the Reformed Church liberated as the discussion started afresh and with new openness in the last decade or so. The decision of both denominations to work towards a reunification will in all likelihood give a new impetus to the discussion. The discussion within the Christian Reformed Church in North America started in the early fifties, but the final synodical decisions on the issue are of quite recent date. My research will focus on the Dutch Reformed Churches, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Christian Reformed Church. All in all it is my impression that the issue of paedocommunion is currently still relevant within the Dutch Reformed tradition.

² E.g. *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, s.v. "Kinderkommunion."

³ E.g. *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Infant Communion."

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_communion (accessed September 9, 2017).

⁵ Anna W. Zegwaard, *Als kinderen meevieren: Een onderzoek naar de discussie over kindercommunie binnen de kerken* (Gorinchem: Narratio, 2006), 13.

⁶ E.g. "Dr. Noordegraaf: Kind aan avondmaal denkbaar," *Reformatorsch Dagblad* (August 24, 2007).
"Kinderen aan het avondmaal? Een omstrede onderwerp," *Theologia Reformata* (March 2008).

1.2. Research Topic

It is my aim to give a comprehensive overview in this dissertation of the most relevant aspects of the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition after the Second World War. This includes the case study of the discussion on and introduction of paedocommunion in three local congregations within that tradition. To provide relevant background I also intend to provide an overview of the history of paedocommunion prior to the Second World War, as well as an overview of the history of children and childhood in society and church. Together this will provide us with the material that will allow for systematic, practical theological reflection on the major themes and aspects within the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion, and arising from the paedocommunion praxis. I hope and trust that such reflection will contribute to the further development of Reformed doctrine regarding paedocommunion as well as the further development of Reformed paedocommunion praxis.

This leads to the following threefold research question:

1. What are the most relevant aspects of the discussion on, and the introduction of, paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition after the Second World War?
2. How does a systematic, multidimensional, and multidisciplinary interpretation of these relevant aspects explain the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition?
3. How can the evaluation of these relevant aspects – in terms of coherence, validity of claims, and the accurate and consistent use of normative texts – contribute to the development of a Reformed paedocommunion doctrine and praxis?

Several sub-questions guide the way in which I will answer this threefold research question. I will formulate those sub-questions or guiding questions at the beginning of the chapters of this dissertation. Two major introductory questions deserve to be mentioned here as the answer to those questions will shape the two introductory chapters. These major introductory questions are:

4. What is the history of paedocommunion prior to the 1950s?
5. What is the broader history of children and childhood in society and church of which that history of paedocommunion was part?

1.3. Definition

I will use the term paedocommunion, as the more technical English term commonly used in the Reformed debate, as well as other less technical descriptions. I use the term paedocommunion to describe a spectrum of views and practices ranging from what has been called strict paedocommunion to what has been called soft paedocommunion. Cornelis Venema defines the strict position as that which favors the practice of admitting any baptized child of believing parents who is physically able to receive the Communion elements. The so called soft view favors the practice of admitting children to the Lord's Supper only at an earlier age than is customary among Reformed churches; that is before middle to late adolescence⁷. In the Dutch language '*zuigelingencommunie*', Communion of sucklings, can be distinguished from '*kindercommunie*', Communion of children, and some speak of '*gezinscommunie*', Communion of families. The latter term is often used in the same broad sense as paedocommunion. The German language knows similar distinctions⁸.

1.4. Scope of this Research

The focus of this study is on the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition. I will limit myself by focusing on this tradition in the Netherlands and in North America. And I will further limit myself by focusing on the discussion and praxis within three denominations within this tradition, the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) and the Dutch Reformed Churches (DRC)⁹. The ecclesiastical fellowship or ecumenical relations between these three denominations are more than just a formal reason to treat these three denominations as a family of churches, representative of the Dutch Reformed tradition, even though there are relevant differences in theology, praxis and context¹⁰. The denominational scope is somewhat widened by the fact that the Dutch Reformed Churches

⁷ Cornelis P. Venema, *Children at the Lord's Table: Assessing the Case for Paedocommunion* (Reformed Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, 2009), 2f.

⁸ The German language also has one word for the Communion of sucklings, '*Säuglingskommunion*', a word for paedocommunion in general, '*Kinderkommunion*', as well as one word for Communion at an earlier age, '*Frühkommunion*'. See for example *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed. s.v. '*Kinderkommunion*'. Similar in meaning to '*Kinderkommunion*' is the German word '*Kinderabendmahl*', though that word is less common than the expression '*Abendmahl mit Kindern*'. Cp. Eberhard Kenntner, *Abendmahl mit Kindern: Versuch einer Grundlegung unter Berücksichtigung der geschichtlichen Wurzeln der gegenwärtigen Diskussion in Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus Gerd Mohn, 1980), 11.

⁹ I chose the translation Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) for the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN), and Dutch Reformed Churches (DRC) for the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken (NGK).

¹⁰ As indicated, I have been a member of all three denominations, and I have served two of the three denominations as a pastor.

originated from the Reformed Churches liberated (RCL) round 1967¹¹, and the fact that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands merged with the Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church into the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) in 2004¹². I will pay secondary attention to denominations most closely related to these three denominations as far as such attention seems warranted¹³.

The case study of the discussion on and introduction of paedocommunion will involve three local churches: the Reformed Church liberated, later Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen in the Netherlands; Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, in the United States of America; and First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster, British Columbia, in Canada. Case studies and empirical research on local congregations within the Protestant Church in the Netherlands have already been performed by Anna Zegwaard¹⁴. As much as possible I intend to include the results of her research in mine.

In my study of the paedocommunion discussion within these three denominations I will limit myself to the national or bi-national denominational periodicals, and the handful of popular theological publications associated with these denominations¹⁵. Regarding the discussion on the floors of synods or national assemblies of these three denominations I focus on the discussion as it is described in the agendas and acts. I have mostly limited myself to the adult perspective on paedocommunion, while trying to be sensitive to all information about children's perspectives.

1.5. Survey of Research

My dissertation is not the first one on the subject of paedocommunion. Three earlier dissertations have been most relevant for my research. Eberhard Kenntner published his dissertation *Abendmahl mit Kindern* in 1980¹⁶. Similar

¹¹ I chose the translation Reformed Churches liberated (RCL) for the Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt (GKv).

¹² I chose the translation Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC) for the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (NHK), Evangelical Lutheran Church for the Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, and Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) for the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN).

¹³ E.g. The Reformed Church of America, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Canadian Reformed Church, the American Reformed Churches, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), and the Dutch denomination of Christian Reformed Churches or Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken.

¹⁴ Zegwaard (2006).

¹⁵ There is limited academic discussion on the subject, and it is almost impossible to use the available academic discussion to shed light on the specific denominations or part of the Dutch Reformed tradition on which we focus.

¹⁶ Kenntner (1980).

to my dissertation Kenntner concludes a study on the discussion on paedocommunion and its historical roots, with laying the foundations of a systematic and practical theology of paedocommunion. But his focus is on the German Protestant tradition, and mine on the Dutch Reformed tradition. His research also presents a practical theological perspective, but my practical theological approach differs, among others, in the case study of three local congregations and in the use of empirical methods.

In 1987 Jo Hermans published his dissertation on the celebration of the Eucharist with children¹⁷. This impressive book of over eight hundred pages studies paedocommunion from the perspective of the science of liturgy. Similar to my dissertation it includes rich detail about the history of paedocommunion and about the history of children and childhood in society and church. But Hermans' focus is on the Roman Catholic Church, its theology and liturgical practice. My chapter on the history of paedocommunion not only concludes with a focus on the Reformed tradition, but even the earlier history is written with the Reformed paedocommunion debate in mind. My chapter on the history of children and childhood in society and church is written after further developments in the historiography of this specific part of history.

In 2006 Anna Zegwaard published her dissertation, presenting the results of her research on the discussion on paedocommunion within the three denominations which had just merged into the Protestant Church in the Netherlands¹⁸. That means that both our studies include research on the discussion within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. But I had the advantage of standing on her shoulders, following up on her manual work in a more digitalized decade. Both our dissertations include case studies of local congregations using similar empirical methods. But with the choice to do my case studies in two other Dutch Reformed denominations I hope our studies will be complementary.

¹⁷ Jo Hermans, *Eucharistie vieren met kinderen: Een liturgie-wetenschappelijke studie over de deelname van het kind aan de Eucharistie in het verleden en volgens de huidige kerkelijke richtlijnen* (Brugge: Tabor, 1987). Translated into German as *Eucharistie Feiern mit Kindern: Eine Liturgie-wissenschaftliche Studie* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1991).

¹⁸ Zegwaard (2006).

1.6. Method

The method most significant in guiding me in my research and shaping this dissertation is the so-called method of “thick description” of Clifford Geertz¹⁹. Geertz though, does not provide a systematic summary of thick description²⁰. Practical theologian Don S. Browning, on the other hand, more systematically applied thick description in his *Fundamental Practical Theology*²¹ and further developed this for a practical theology of families when directing the Religion, Culture and Family Project²². This makes the method very suitable for my research with a similar combination of practical theology and a subject related to children. I would describe a thick description as applied in my research as one that explains the discussion on and the introduction of the paedocommunion practice in their context by taking into account the several dimensions or levels of human behavior, such that both discussion and introduction become meaningful to an outsider²³. I have used the dimensions or levels that Browning distinguishes as initial framework for my research and my thick description. He distinguishes the following dimensions 1) visional, 2) obligational, 3) tendency-need, 4) environmental and 5) rule-role²⁴. I will use these dimensions with some liberty, especially when organizing material which in itself is multidimensional²⁵ and when choosing what to emphasize²⁶.

¹⁹ Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” and “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*. 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000). I do realize that having served two of the researched local congregations and having participated in the discussion on paedocommunion in our denominational periodicals, may add some elements of participant observation to my research, Christopher P. Scholtz, “Teilnehmende Beobachtung,” in Dinter, Heimbrock, Söderblom, *Einführung in die Empirische Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 214-225. Elisabeth Arweck and Martin D. Stringer, eds., *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2002).

²⁰ Achim Knecht “Dichte Beschreibung,” in Dinter et al. (2007), 225-241.

²¹ Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 107.

²² Don S. Browning, “Empirical Considerations in Religious Praxis and Reflection (2005),” in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies*, edited by Ed. Don S. Browning (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 31-50. John Witte Jr., M. Christian Green, and Amy Wheeler, eds., *The Equal-Regard Family and Its Friendly Critics: Don S. Browning and the Practical Theological Ethics of the Family* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

²³ Cp. *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Thick Description” (accessed August 5, 2017).

²⁴ Browning (1996), 71.

²⁵ For example, anything moral seems to fall under the obligational dimension and panic is clearly a psychological phenomenon and falls under the tendency-need dimension. But I will treat moral panic as part of the environmental dimension, as it seems first and foremost a cultural phenomenon. Emphasis on the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11, or the ethical problem which Paul addresses in that chapter, could be classified as obligational, but I will choose to treat such issues as visional, considering the place the Bible has in Christian faith.

²⁶ Browning speaks of the rule-role dimension, but I will emphasize the role aspect of this dimension, among others because some of what might be considered rule is treated under the obligational dimension.

Or as Browning writes: “I will let the five dimensions loosely guide my description”²⁷.

The choice to add a chapter on the history of children and childhood in society and church to a certain extent is a methodological choice itself. John Wall distinguishes how at least four major methodological approaches are involved in childhood studies, which he terms as developmental-psychological, family-psychological, politico-sociological, and family-sociological²⁸. My second chapter most closely resembles the politico-sociological methodological approach, whereas certain denominational study reports on paedocommunion take a developmental-psychological approach²⁹. I will take such developmental-psychological arguments into account, as far as they have been part of the denominational and congregational discussions.

While keeping in mind my general methodological approach, I realize that the case studies of three local congregations, and the empirical nature of such studies³⁰, require additional methodological choices³¹. I have chosen the methodological approach of qualitative research³² rather than quantitative, and the specific tool of semi-structured or responsive interviews³³. Even though children did sometimes participate in my interviews with their parents, I have not specifically targeted those children or adapted my methods of research to them³⁴.

²⁷ “In the description that follows I will let the five dimensions loosely guide my description,” Browning (1996), 223. Cp. this dissertation chapter 4.1.2.

²⁸ John Wall, “Childhood Studies, Hermeneutics, and Theological Ethics,” in Witte et al. (2007), 97f.

²⁹ E.g. N.N. “Kinderen naar het Avondmaal?” *Kerkinformatie*, December 1976.

³⁰ I thank Prof. Dr. R.Ruard Ganzevoort, Prof. Dr. Marcel Barnard and my fellow PhD. students of the NOSTER Seminar Empirical Research in Theology for the valuable insights and advice they provided me with.

³¹ See for example Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley and William McKinney, eds., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998) and Helen Cameron, Philip Richter, Douglas Davies and Frances Ward, eds., *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2005).

³² David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010).

³³ Or ‘responsive interviews’ or ‘open interviews’, Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012); D.B. Baarda, M.P.M. de Goede, and A.G.E. van der Meer- Middelburg, *Basisboek Open Interviews: Praktische Handleiding voor het voorbereiden en afnemen van open interviews* (Groningen: Stenfert Kroese, 1996); Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009); Susan Friese, *Qualitative Data Analysis with Atlas.ti* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012); David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2006).

³⁴ An example of such research is found in Susan Ridgely Bales, *When I was a Child: Children’s Interpretations of First Communion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

Practical theology is said to be essentially dialogic³⁵. More than Kenntner for example has done, I hope to create a dialogue between theory and praxis. Among others, this means comparing arguments that are used in local congregations, reasoning that people find attractive and effective, convictions which are expressed in the praxis, with more theological and doctrinal statements which are part of the denominational, theological and academic debate. Dialogue takes place when theory does justice to and is enriched by empirical data, and when praxis gains from theoretical insights.

When Ballard and Pritchard state that practical theology is essentially dialogic, they do so in explanation of its interdisciplinary character³⁶. Richard Osmer speaks of a cross-disciplinary dialogue and distinguishes, among others, intra-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary dialogue³⁷. My aim is certainly to perform this practical theological research in an intra-disciplinary fashion, harvesting from fields within theology such as church history, historical theology and systematic theology, while maintaining a practical theological focus. My aim is also to seek interdisciplinary dialogue, making use of the human sciences, as is characteristic for practical theology³⁸. A large contribution to this dialogue comes from the discipline of childhood studies. Unforeseen, but very helpful, have been some insights from the sociology of science, economic theory, and the theory of diffusion of innovations.

Speaking in terms of practical theology as dialogue is closely connected to understanding it as hermeneutics. Ruard Ganzevoort suggests that describing practical theology as hermeneutics of lived religion best reflects what the various approaches hold in common³⁹. Browning describes practical theological research as “a multidimensional hermeneutic enterprise”⁴⁰. In this process Browning distinguishes four movements or moments: 1) descriptive, 2) historical, 3) systematic, and 4) strategic⁴¹. Browning’s descriptive, systematic and strategic movements most closely resemble what has been considered a consensus in practical theological methodology⁴². Browning

³⁵ Paul Ballard and John Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 2006), 113. Cp. Browning (1996), 3f., 37, 47.

³⁶ Ballard and Pritchard (2006), 113f.

³⁷ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 163.

³⁸ Ballard and Pritchard (2006), 113; Kees de Ruijter, *Meewerken met God: Ontwerp van een gereformeerde praktische theologie* (Kampen: Kok, 2005), 58f.

³⁹ R.Ruard Ganzevoort, “Forks in the Road when Tracing the Sacred: Practical Theology as Hermeneutics of Lived Religion,” Presidential address to the 9th conference of the International Academy of Practical Theology, Chicago, 2009, http://www.ruardganzevoort.nl/pdf/2009_Presidential.pdf (accessed September 8, 2017).

⁴⁰ Browning (1996), 47.

⁴¹ Browning (1996), 223f.

⁴² De Ruijter (2005), 117.

describes the historical movement in terms of answering the question, *what do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis when they are confronted as honestly as possible?*⁴³ In a sense that question is already being raised by those involved in the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion, and as such is recorded in the descriptive part of my dissertation. As part of my practical theological research it is integrated with the systematic movement. The two historical chapters are introductory in nature, but if classified in terms of Browning's four movements should be considered primarily descriptive and to a lesser degree historical, as most of the documents treated in those chapters do not qualify as normative texts.

The following outline of my dissertation will show how these movements have been part of my research process. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 could all be qualified as descriptive⁴⁴. Within the Dutch Reformed tradition only that part of my historical chapter that deals with the confessions comes close to what Browning qualifies as the historical movement⁴⁵. Of those descriptive chapters, chapter 4 is most empirical in character. Chapter 6 reflects the systematic movement⁴⁶ of the process, but also includes the historical movement⁴⁷. At the end of chapter 6 I will formulate conclusions, but I will also formulate constructive proposals which fall under Browning's classification of the strategic movement⁴⁸.

1.7. Outline

The dissertation on confessional subscription by Roelf Janssen⁴⁹ provided me with the basic format of a study that would do justice to the subject of paedocommunion in its complexity, by first studying the discussion within a certain tradition as it has taken place in a specific era, and then studying the major themes of that discussion, its systematic aspects and their cohesion. In combination with three dissertations mentioned above and preliminary study

⁴³ Browning (1996), 49.

⁴⁴ What others have called description, understanding, empirical, descriptive-empirical, or observation, Gerben Heitink, *Praktische Theologie: geschiedenis theorie handelingsvelden* (Kampen: Kok, 1993), 159, 219; Osmer (2008), 4; De Ruijter (2005), 120.

⁴⁵ Browning (1996), 49.

⁴⁶ What others have called interpretation and explanation, explaining, hermeneutical, interpretive, or insight. Heitink (1993), 159, 219; Osmer (2008), 4; De Ruijter (2005), 120.

⁴⁷ What Osmer calls the normative, Osmer (2008), 4.

⁴⁸ What others have called action or practice, changing, strategic, pragmatic, or vision Heitink (1993), 159, 219; Osmer (2008), 4; De Ruijter (2005), 120.

⁴⁹ Roelf Christiaan Janssen, *By this our conscription: confessional subscription in the Dutch Reformed tradition since 1816* (Kampen: Theologische Universiteit Kampen, 2009).

in the field of practical and empirical theology, this leads to the following outline of my study.

The first part of this study provides an overview of paedocommunion in history. Simply put, this historical chapter on the historical practice and theology of paedocommunion aims to present a verifiable account of how and why things have become the way they are now⁵⁰. Especially Hermans and Kenntner have modeled how to perform such historical research and how to include the results in a practical theological study. As much as possible I have made use of the English translation of primary resources, while interacting with those authors whose works have been published in English, German or Dutch⁵¹.

The second part of this study provides an overview of the history of children and childhood in society and church. The total of changes regarding children and childhood in society and church have been identified as one of the most significant incentives for the debate on-, and the introduction of paedocommunion. The purpose of the chapter on the history of children and childhood in society and church is not only to understand and evaluate this role in recent paedocommunion history, but also to shed more light on the prior history of paedocommunion. Only in some cases of specific relevance have I consulted primary sources for this part of my research, but mostly I have depended on secondary resources. Hermans once again modeled to me how to include such notions in a dissertation on paedocommunion, but more than Hermans I have tried to take account of the development of the historiography regarding children and childhood.

The third part of this study consists of two chapters which bring us to the core of this research. The first of these, chapter 4, treats the introduction of paedocommunion in Dutch Reformed Congregations. In this chapter I provide a thick description⁵², considering several dimensions, of the introduction of

⁵⁰ Daniël Timmerman, *Heinrich Bullinger on Prophecy and the Prophetic Office (1523/1538)*, Vol. 33 in *Reformed Historical Theology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 22.

⁵¹ I have consulted the original Latin or French text of sources only in a few cases, as my rusty knowledge of Latin and high school French makes that quite laborious.

⁵² Clifford Geertz' thick description as developed for practical theology by Don S. Browning. Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," and "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*. 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 107, and "Empirical Considerations in Religious Praxis and Reflection (2005)," in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies*, edited by Ed. Don S. Browning (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 31-50; also Achim Knecht "Dichte Beschreibung," in Dinter, Heimbrock, Söderblom, *Einführung in die Empirische Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

paedocommunion in three local congregations in the Dutch Reformed tradition: the Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen, Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, and First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster, British Columbia. The church of Rijsbergen and Fourteenth Street have been chosen, among other reasons, for the pioneer role they played within their denomination. A special section on the significance of pioneer churches in the introduction of paedocommunion therefore precedes the thick description of these local churches. For these three case studies qualitative research through semi structured or responsive interviews, rather than quantitative research, seemed most appropriate⁵³. In addition to these interviews we have used a wide variety of published and unpublished documents.

The second of these, chapter 5, treats the denominational discussion on paedocommunion within the respectively the Christian Reformed Churches, the Dutch Reformed Churches, and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. This chapter is divided in six sections as the discussion within denominational periodicals and at synods or national assemblies of each of these three denominations is treated separately. Once again the multidimensional approach of Browning serves as analytical framework. But the six thick descriptions provided in this chapter are presented in a chronological way, rather than per dimension.

In the fourth part, or chapter 6, I systematically analyze, interpret and explain the material presented in the first five chapters. I roughly distinguish those aspects which set the stage for the discussion and the introduction from those elements which were part of the discussion itself or arose from its introduction. These two are presented in chronological order. For the rest I have organized this chapter according to the same dimensions and further subdivisions I used as framework for my research. My own conclusions will be presented throughout the sections of this chapter. A summary of some of my most significant conclusions will be presented at the end of this chapter followed by a number of pragmatic or strategic theorems or propositions into which my conclusions could be translated.

⁵³ Silverman (2010); Rubin and Rubin (2012); Baarda et al. (1996).

Chapter 2 Paedocommunion in History

2.1. Introduction

The ultimate focus of this study is on the introduction of paedocommunion in churches of the Dutch Reformed tradition on both sides of the ocean and the debate within that same tradition. Both the introduction and the debate began in the second half of the twentieth century and continue to take place in the first decades of the twenty first. An overview of paedocommunion in the nineteen previous centuries helps in more than one way to bring clarity to and evaluate this more recent introduction and debate.

2.1.1. Periodization

I have chosen a periodization of the history of paedocommunion in three periods, in line with how this history is commonly divided in the Reformed paedocommunion debate. These three periods correspond with the three sections of this second chapter.

The first period of five centuries is treated in a section on the early church, tracing the first two and a half centuries, in which the practice of paedocommunion is undocumented, into the second two and a half centuries, where we see the first explicit references to the practice and personal theological statements in support of it, as well as the advance from local regulations to the papal statements in support of it⁵⁴.

The second section roughly covers the Middle Ages, starting around the year 500 when paedocommunion seems to have been the well-established church-wide practice, until the time just before the Reformation when the practice of Communion of infants and small children below the age of seven had almost disappeared.

The third section covers the period from the Reformation until approximately the Second World War. In light of my focus on the Dutch Reformed tradition, the Reformation by Luther or the Reformation in Geneva could be considered the starting point of this tradition. But I have chosen to start with the Hussites

⁵⁴ Within the Reformed debate many have paid attention to the era of the Reformation. Attention to what preceded the Reformation has been less, even though the Reformers themselves have always been intentional about the patristic roots of their worship. See for example H.O. Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975). For many in the Dutch Reformed tradition it was the liturgical movement of the twentieth century which led the way in going back beyond the Reformation in its study.

as forerunners of the Reformation, because of the significance of the Hussite Reform in paedocommunion history.

2.1.2. Guiding questions

The main question I will try to answer in this second chapter is simple and straightforward: What is the history of paedocommunion prior to the era on which my research focuses? But, of course, many sub-questions guide the way in which I will answer this question. Did theology shape and change paedocommunion practice, and if so, how? Or did paedocommunion practice also shape paedocommunion theology, and if so, how? Do the earliest documents suggest continuity or discontinuity with the practice and theology of the apostolic church, and do they corroborate with a certain interpretation of scripture? Is there either continuity or discontinuity in paedocommunion practice and theology before and after the Reformation? And is there continuity or discontinuity between practice and theology in the early days of the Reformation and the Reformed tradition as it developed in the following centuries? From a practical theological perspective, it is interesting not only to understand the interplay between practice and theology, but also to understand whether and how practice and theology of paedocommunion are shaped by aspects such as politics, economy, culture, education, and personal health. This may also make us more aware of similar influences on recent Dutch Reformed paedocommunion practice and theology. I hope to be especially sensitive to information linking this history of paedocommunion with the broader history of children and childhood in society and church. For the sake of comparison with the recent paedocommunion debate, one set of questions I seek to answer is what Bible texts, what theology, and what arguments were used in regard to paedocommunion, and with whom, and about what were our ancestors arguing? My intention is also to evaluate different historical claims within the paedocommunion debate, a humble search for the true history of paedocommunion⁵⁵, in the awareness that I may have to settle for a subsidiary understanding of how certain historical sources – or lack thereof – allow multiple interpretations. At the end of the longer subsections of each section I will provide short summaries and some preliminary conclusions. I intend to draw more final conclusions after the more integral analysis which will conclude this dissertation.

⁵⁵ Interestingly enough, the search for truth, or to establish facts, is mentioned as the ultimate aim of scientific research in the code of conduct for scientific research of the Association of Dutch Universities, Vereniging van Universiteiten (VSNU), *De Nederlandse Gedragscode Wetenschapsbeoefening: Principes van goed wetenschappelijk onderwijs en onderzoek*, 3rd ed. ('s Gravenhage: Vereniging van Universiteiten (VSNU), 2014), 5.9. Translated as *The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Academic Practice*.

2.2. Paedocommunion in the Early Church

2.2.1. Introduction

The challenge of researching paedocommunion practice and doctrine in the early church is that there are only a few books from the ancient world that deal specifically with children⁵⁶. What we can discover about children is taken largely from incidental comments, hints or asides by authors⁵⁷. Though references to the Eucharist are more frequent in this period, they are still relatively scattered, unsystematic, and allusive⁵⁸. So it is not surprising that when searching for sources that deal with the combination of these two subjects, Strange summarizes: “We have to proceed by way of inference from a few stray references”⁵⁹.

Between the period that the New Testament was written and the year 150 we have few extant writings⁶⁰, and there is no document which explicitly mentions paedocommunion that can be dated with certainty before the year 250. In this section I will first treat the dozen or so documents and authors most relevant to the paedocommunion discussion from this ‘undocumented era’, that is from the *Didache* until Origen. It is only round the year 250 that we find our first explicit, but still indirect, reference to the paedocommunion practice. And it is not until Augustine, in the late fourth and early fifth century that the issue is dealt with directly⁶¹. I will treat these documents and authors from the second half of the first five centuries, in a second, separate part of this section. The relatively small amount of documents and authors relevant to the history of paedocommunion in these first five centuries allow me to treat the documents or their authors chronologically one by one.

While giving an overview of the most relevant data regarding paedocommunion practice and doctrine in history, I keep in mind that this information has been interpreted and assessed differently by the participants in the debate that I research. Several aspects play an important role in the

⁵⁶ W.A. Strange, *Children in the Early Church: Children in the Ancient World, the New Testament and the Early Church* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 1.

⁵⁷ Strange (2004), 1.

⁵⁸ G.W.H. Lampe, “The Eucharist in the Thought of the Early Church,” in *Eucharistic Theology Then and Now*, ed. R.E. Clements (London: S.P.C.K., 1968), 34, in Tommy Lee, *The History of Paedocommunion: From the Early Church until 1500* (accessed June 6, 2011), 1.

⁵⁹ Strange (2004), 103. Strange also contributed material to a report on the admission of children to Communion within the Church of Wales, see Strange (2004), viii.

⁶⁰ Blake Purcell, *The Testimony of the Ancient Church*, in Gregg Strawbridge, ed., *The Case for Covenant Communion* (Monroe: Athanasius Press, 2006), 132.

⁶¹ Strange (2004), 103.

assessment of the relevance of the different sources for the paedocommunion debate, including: the amount of written sources, their age and order, the directness or indirectness of the references, the authority of the author and his conservative or innovative reputation, the area in which the author operated or in which the described practice could have taken place, the size of that area and the likelihood of the original liturgical practice being continued in that area.

2.2.2. *The Didache*

*The Didache*⁶², Justin Martyr's *First Apology*⁶³ and the *Apostolic Tradition*, together form the three key sources regarding the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the first centuries⁶⁴. The *Didache* originates from Syria and is the oldest witness regarding admission to the Lord's Supper⁶⁵. Going beyond the explicit requirements of the New Testament⁶⁶, it requires participants of the Eucharist to be baptized⁶⁷. This continues to be the general guideline for admission to the Lord's Supper⁶⁸, except among the Gnostic sects who were notoriously casual about such matters⁶⁹.

Whether this connection of baptism and Communion implies paedocommunion depends on whether the early church baptized its children. There is no general consensus about this⁷⁰, not even among writers on paedocommunion⁷¹.

⁶² *The Didache* (c. 80 – 120).

⁶³ And also Justin Martyr's *Testimony of the Dialogue with Trypho*, here mentioned in a footnote as it is less significant in the paedocommunion debate.

⁶⁴ Ernest Bartels, *Take Eat, Take Drink: The Lord's Supper through the Centuries* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 69.

⁶⁵ E.C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, Rev. by Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 1.

⁶⁶ J. Van Beelen, *Doet dit tot Mijn gedachtenis: Een onderzoek naar de relatie tussen avondmaal en ambt: over avondmaalsmijding van ambtsdragers en het probleem van de bediening* (Leiden: Groen en Zoon, 1996), 194.

⁶⁷ The *Didache* says: "But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving (Eucharist), but they who have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord hath said: Give not that which is holy to the dogs (Matthew 7:6)." *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. IX,5, Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., Vol. 7 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Hereafter ANF) (1886; repr., Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 379-380.

⁶⁸ Johann Baumgärtler, *Die Erstkommunion der Kinder, Ein Ausschnitt aus der Geschichte der katholischen Kommunionpraxis von der Urkirchlichen Zeit bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters* (München: Verlag Josef Kösel & Friedrich Pustet, 1929), 13.

⁶⁹ Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, vol. 1 of *The Penguin History of the Church*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin Group, 1993), 261.

⁷⁰ See for example Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 66.

⁷¹ Like most Reformed participants in the paedocommunion debate I am inclined to think the early church did baptize infants, as it seems most consistent with Scripture, and is supported by the evidence such as

The Didache also requires weekly Communion⁷². According to some this makes participation of baptized children all the more likely⁷³. This connection between frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper and participation by children is certainly found in the twentieth century⁷⁴. The possibly implied requirement of instruction before baptism⁷⁵ does not equal a requirement of catechism and public profession of faith prior to the celebration of the Eucharist for those who were baptized as children. The Didache does require holiness and or repentance⁷⁶, public confession of transgressions⁷⁷, and reconciliation with one's fellow⁷⁸.

2.2.3. Justin Martyr

Halfway through the second century, writing in Rome, Justin Martyr provides us with the second key source regarding the celebration of the Lord's Supper in his *First Apology*⁷⁹. In chapter 65⁸⁰ Justin connects baptism and Communion. This connection is found at three levels. First, baptism is a requirement for Communion. Secondly, the two are doctrinally related. And thirdly, they are liturgically integrated, within the rite of initiation.

presented by Jeremias in his debate with Aland. Joachim Jeremias, *Infant Baptism: In The First Four Centuries*, Trans. David Cairns (1958; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004) and Kurt Aland, *Did The Early Church Baptize Infants?*, Trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray (1961; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004) and Joachim Jeremias, *The Origins of Infant Baptism: A further study in reply to Kurt Aland*, Trans. Dorothea M. Barton (1962; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004).

⁷² *Didache or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. XIV, ANF 7:381.

⁷³ Purcell (2006), 133.

⁷⁴ See for example the 4-step development within the history of the Hussite Reformation: 1. frequent celebration, 2. lay participation, 3. lay reception of both elements, 4. infant Communion. See David R. Holeton, "The Communion of Infants and Hussitism," *Communio Viatorum* XXVII (1984): 207-225, and "The Communion of Infants: The Basel Years," *Communio Viatorum* XXIX (1986): 15-40, and Thomas A. Fudge, "Hussite Infant Communion," *Lutheran Quarterly* X (1996): 179-194. See for a Dutch twentieth century example Paul Oskamp, *Liturgische broedplaatsen* (Kampen, Kok, 1973), 116.

⁷⁵ *Didache*, chap. VII.1, ANF 7:379.

⁷⁶ *Didache*, chap. X.6, ANF 7:379.

⁷⁷ *Didache*, chap. XIV.1, ANF 7:381.

⁷⁸ *Didache*, chap. XIV.2, ANF 7:381. Van Beelen (1996), 199.

⁷⁹ Justin Martyr, *First Apology* (c. 150 – 160).

⁸⁰ "But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized person, (...) Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. (...) And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion." Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. LXV, ANF 1:185.

This rite of initiation follows a threefold pattern of baptism, anointing⁸¹ and first Communion. Of all baptismal documents known in 1970, ninety-five percent conclude with the Eucharist⁸². Since then, owing to new scholarly and critical reading of the sources, assumptions such as the existence of a single, monolinear, and original unitive pattern of baptism, confirmation and first Communion, have been revised⁸³. But these revisions seem to focus primarily on the meaning of the anointing and consequently the origin of confirmation, as well as the diversity in sequence. Though the ninety-five percent may need adjustment, strong evidence still supports that baptism and Communion liturgically belonged together and have been separated over the course of history⁸⁴.

It is unlikely that Justin meant his description “who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching”⁸⁵ to exclude young children of believers, neither his words in chapter 16⁸⁶. There is not sufficient ground to conclude that, besides being baptized, each person must first receive instruction and make a public profession of faith before being admitted to the Lord’s Supper, which would exclude children, as opponents of paedocommunion claim.

Similar in relevance to the threefold pattern of the initiation rite is the four-action shape of the Eucharist that Gregory Dix recognized: offertory, prayer, fraction, and Communion⁸⁷. This “constituted the absolute invariable nucleus of every Eucharist rite known to us throughout antiquity from the Euphrates to Gaul”, says Dix⁸⁸. Current general consensus questions the presuppositions of Dix’ theory of the four-action shape of the Eucharist and the existence of such uniformity in the early church. Further research is needed to establish how common the offertory was in the early church, how relevant this makes

⁸¹ Anointing with laying on of hands developed into confirmation.

⁸² Percy (1980), 43, referring to the 1970 edition of Whitaker’s *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*

⁸³ Whitaker (2003), xiii-xiv.

⁸⁴ See also J.D.C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West; A study in the disintegration of the primitive rite of initiation*. (1965; repr., Chicago: Hillebrand Books, 2004).

⁸⁵ Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. LXV, ANF 1:185.

⁸⁶ “And this food is called among us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these.” Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. LXVI, ANF 1:185.

⁸⁷ Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy; New Edition with an introduction by Dr Simon Jones*. (1945; London: Continuum, 2010), 48f.

⁸⁸ Dix (1945 -2010), 48.

the boy of John 6:9⁸⁹, and what openings this might offer to a more active participation of believers, both young and old, in Communion⁹⁰.

Discussions on the order of words of chapter 61⁹¹ and 66⁹² of Justin Martyr's First Apology have taken place, similar to discussions on Mark 16:16. Some suggest the word order indicates what should precede participation in the Lord's Supper for anybody, no matter their age and ability. I am of the opinion that it describes the most logical and common order in a missionary context without implications for children.

From a more dogmatic historical perspective Justin's words are also considered "the first formulation of spiritual realism, which the Church confesses in its sacraments"⁹³ or "dynamic realism"⁹⁴, the elements effecting regeneration while not outside of faith and therefore not *ex opere operato*. It is often suggested by opponents that the practice of paedocommunion is only possible in the context of an *ex opere operato* sacramental theology, or even a magical understanding of the Lord's Supper.

2.2.4. Irenaeus

The relevance of Irenaeus⁹⁵, bishop of Lugdunum, Gaul⁹⁶, for the paedocommunion debate is that he treats children as regenerated as well as sanctified in his *Against Heresies*⁹⁷. It is true that Irenaeus gives the instruction

⁸⁹ A similar new light is shed on Acts 6, and the possible active role of women and widows in the administration of meals (and Eucharist?) in Retra Halteman Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 274-275.

⁹⁰ I thank Dr. Kees de Ruijter for this eye-opener. Cp. Kenneth W. Stevenson suggests the reintroduction of the offertory "served to engender a sense of the Eucharist being a people's liturgy, especially if the bread and the wine had been literally been prepared at home," *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Offertory."

⁹¹ "As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated." Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. LXI, ANF 1:183.

⁹² Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. LXVI, ANF 1:185.

⁹³ J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, W.F. Dankbaar, *Handboek der kerkgeschiedenis, Deel I, De kerk tot Gregorius de Grote*, 5th ed. (Leeuwarden: De Tille, 1979), 75.

⁹⁴ J. Van Genderen, "Het avondmaal in de oude kerk en in de kerk van het oosten," in *Bij brood en beker: Leer en gebruik van het Heilig Avondmaal in het Nieuwe Testament en in de geschiedenis van de westerse kerk*, ed. W. Van 't Spijker, 2nd ed. (Kampen: de Groot Goudriaan, 1999), 74. See also Coppes (1988), 37f.

⁹⁵ Irenaeus (c. 126-202).

⁹⁶ Now Lyon, France.

⁹⁷ "For He came to save all through means of Himself — all, I say, who through Him are born again to God — infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men. He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness, and submission; a youth for

that the celebration of the Eucharist should not be carnal, but in spirit and in truth⁹⁸. It is not necessary to conclude that for this reason covenant children would be barred from the Eucharist, effectively nullifying their regenerated and sanctified status.

2.2.5. *Clement of Alexandria*

Clement of Alexandria⁹⁹ wrote *The Instructor* in about 190-195. In chapter VI of Book I he deals with several food¹⁰⁰ and nourishment¹⁰¹ metaphors that the Bible uses, in relation to the biblical use of images of life stages, growth and development¹⁰², while also mentioning baptism and alluding to the Eucharist. Nevertheless the chapter does not provide direct evidence regarding paedocommunion and certainly not the possible evidence of an Egyptian practice of excluding children, as Beckwith claims¹⁰³. Clement strongly argues for the spiritual equality of Christians over against the division created by the Gnostics, and therefore his words about full-grown drinking (the blood of the Lord), while babes suck, do not suggest such division and exclusion¹⁰⁴. In the same chapter we do (again) find indirect support for paedocommunion in the presupposed unity between baptism and the Lord's Supper¹⁰⁵.

youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord. So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise." Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, bk. 2, chap. 22.4, ANF 1:391.

⁹⁸ "And therefore the oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but a spiritual; and in this respect it is pure. For we make an oblation to God of the bread and the cup of blessing, giving Him thanks in that He has commanded the earth to bring forth these fruits for our nourishment. And then, when we have perfected the oblation, we invoke the Holy Spirit, that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal. Those persons, then, who perform these oblations in remembrance of the Lord, do not fall in with Jewish views, but, performing the service after a spiritual manner, they shall be called sons of wisdom." Irenaeus, *Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus*, chap. XXXVII, ANF 1:574.

⁹⁹ Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – 215).

¹⁰⁰ Clement mentions (forms of) the words milk (77x), blood (60x), food (20x), meat (16x), bread (11x), honey (10x), wine (7x), butter (3x), and (olive) oil (2x).

¹⁰¹ Clement mentions (forms of) the words eat (40x), nourish (26x), drink (18x), nutriment (11x), breast (13x), nurse (6x), suck (4x), feed (4x), swallow (1x).

¹⁰² Clement mentions (forms of) the words child (44x), babe (14x), grow (6x), wise (6x), old (people) (2x), little one (1x) and full-grown (1x).

¹⁰³ Roger T. Beckwith, "The Age of Admission to the Lord's Supper," *Westminster Theological Journal* XXXVIII, No. 2 (Winter 1976), 125, fn3.

¹⁰⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, bk. I, chap. VI, ANF 2:218.

¹⁰⁵ "With milk, then, the Lord's nutriment, we are nursed directly we are born; and as soon as we are regenerated, we are honoured by receiving the good news of the hope of rest (...) receiving through what is material the pledge of the sacred food." Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, bk. I, chap. VI, ANF 2:220.

See Tim Gallant, *A Catena of Quotes from the Ancients*,

http://www.paedocommunion.com/articles/fathers_quotations.php (accessed July 4, 2011), see also Gallant (2003), 121.

Book II of *The Instructor* offers a code of morals and manners, opening with a first chapter on eating followed by a second chapter on drinking. Again these chapters do not deal with paedocommunion directly, but they provide us with relevant remarks by Clement. He speaks of [the necessity of] faithful participation in the Eucharist¹⁰⁶; he seems to locate the abuse of 1 Corinthians 11 in the context of the agape and not of the Lord's Supper¹⁰⁷, applying Paul's words as a more general instruction regarding moderation versus gluttony, in chapter 1, and a guideline to always conduct ourselves as in the Lord's presence, in chapter 2¹⁰⁸.

In his preface to Book I of *The Stromata* Clement mentions a custom of some to choose individually whether to participate or to shun the Eucharist. The translator adds in a footnote that this was apparently allowed, but exceptionally so¹⁰⁹. In this context Clement quotes 1 Corinthians 11:27-28. On the one hand, it is remarkable that this self-examination with the option of Christians shunning the Eucharist is the custom of some, and maybe even exceptionally so. On the other hand, Clement does seem to agree with an application of these words on worthiness and self-examination that go beyond the specific context of the Corinthian church and even beyond the context of the Eucharist.

2.2.6. Tertullian

Tertullian, from Carthage in North Africa, does not provide us with any evidence regarding children's participation in the Lord's Supper¹¹⁰, unless you hear his remark that the sacrament of the Eucharist is to be taken by all alike as including children as part of the "all"¹¹¹. Though the translators of the Ante-Nicene Fathers apply this to men and women, rich and poor, it could be deduced from Tertullian's mentioning of the regular practice of infant

¹⁰⁶ "And the mixture of both — of the water and of the Word — is called Eucharist, renowned and glorious grace; and they who by faith partake of it are sanctified both in body and soul." Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, bk. II, chap. II, ANF 2:242.

¹⁰⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, bk. II, chap. I, ANF 2:240 n8.

¹⁰⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, bk. II, chap. II, ANF 2:246.

¹⁰⁹ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, bk. I, chap. I, ANF 2:300 n4.

¹¹⁰ Contrary to the claim of C. FitzSimons Allison, "Anglican Initiatory Rites: A Contribution to the Current Debate," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 56 (1987), 32. As quoted in Mark D. Tranvik, "Should Infants Be Communed?" *Word & World* XV, no. 1, (Winter 1995), 87.

¹¹¹ "We take also, in congregations before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the presidents, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal times, and enjoined to be taken by all alike." Tertullian, *The Chaplet, or De Corona*, chap. III, ANF 3:94 (dated c. 200).

baptism¹¹² that infants are also included in these words. Tertullian's *To His Wife* is one of three early documents that evidence women's participation¹¹³.

2.2.7. *Didascalia Apostolorum*

The *Didascalia Apostolorum*, composed in North Syria during the first half of the third century, probably round 230¹¹⁴, gives instructions in chapter XII regarding seating arrangements in the church building and physical dispositions during the assemblies for bishop, presbyter, deacons, men, women, as well as children¹¹⁵. The paragraph also mentions the Eucharist and the implication seems to be that the seating arrangements apply to those who also partake of the Eucharist. When chapter IX instructs: "honour the bishops, who have loosed you from sins, who by the water regenerated you, who filled you with the Holy Spirit, who reared you with the word as with milk, who bred you up with doctrine, who confirmed you with admonition, and made you to partake of the holy Eucharist of God, and made you partakers and joint heirs of the promise of God"¹¹⁶ it is (theologically) illogical to interpret this as a strict chronological description of consecutive actions separating baptism from the Eucharist by periods or the occasion of being filled with the Spirit, being reared with the Word, being brought up with doctrine and being confirmed with admonition. On the other hand, interpreting baptism as the occasion on which all the other mentioned privileges are being received would do more justice to this quote, thereby providing possible indirect evidence for paedocommunion.

2.2.8. *Origen*

The absence of an English translation of Origen's complete *Homilies on Judges*¹¹⁷, and the apparent lack of access to the original text for many of the participants in the paedocommunion debate has led to the persistence of the mistaken claim that Origen states in *Homilies on the Book of Judges* 6.2 that

¹¹² Purcell mentions Tertullian's treatise on Baptism, art. 18.

¹¹³ Tertullian, *To His Wife*, bk. 2, chap. IV.8, ANF 4:46. Beckwith does refer to Tertullian in order to show that the evidence for women participating in the Lord's Supper appears in about the same time as the evidence of infant baptism (i.e. the last twenty years of the second century) whereas the first evidence for infant and child Communion is decidedly later. Hence, Beckwith argues, the first Christians recognized the disparity between the case of infant or children and the case of women. Beckwith (1976), 135.

¹¹⁴ Bradshaw (2002), 79.

¹¹⁵ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, chap. IX, R. Hugh Connolly (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), 57-59.

<http://www.bombaxo.com/didascalia.html> (accessed August 15, 2011).

¹¹⁶ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, chap. XII, Connolly (1929) 40. <http://www.bombaxo.com/didascalia.html> (accessed August 15, 2011).

¹¹⁷ *Homilies on Judges* (c. 238 – 248).

children are not given Communion¹¹⁸. This mistake led to the conclusion that a clear denial of access to the Lord's Supper for children preceded the first definite reference to infant or child Communion by Cyprian by sixteen years¹¹⁹.

In 2010 a new, possibly even first-ever, English translation of Origen's *Homilies on Judges* by Elizabeth Ann Dively Lauro was published as volume 119 of *The Fathers of the Church* series. Lauro has not only provided us with a translation of *Homilies on the Book of Judges* 6.2 that carries more authority¹²⁰, but with her translation of the full treatise has also provided an English-reading audience with the context needed for the proper interpretation of Origen's statement. Lauro's translation makes clear that Origen is only speaking of children or babes metaphorically. Origen applies Deborah's Song from *Judges* 5 allegorically to "those things which in the last times and at the end of the age are accomplished through the Church"¹²¹ and interprets "the leaders of Israel" as "the angels whom the Lord appoints to attend to every least person in the Church"¹²². We know that Origen is very much aware of Paul's allegorical interpretation of the Red Sea crossing as baptism in *1 Corinthians* 10:1-2¹²³ which leads to my conclusion that baptism is mentioned allegorically in the same section. In *Homily* 6.2 Origen speaks about the time "when at first we begin to come to the worship of God, when we receive the beginnings of the word of God and of the heavenly doctrine from "the leaders of Israel"¹²⁴. This supports the conclusion that Origen is speaking of unbaptized adult catechumens via the imagery of childhood. Considering the fact that he refers to the angels, mentioned in *Exodus* 14:19,

¹¹⁸ Beckwith, Coppes, Leithart, Gallant, Dalby, and Venema all quote the same translation of Origen's *Homilies on the Book of Judges* 6:2, where he writes: "Before we arrive at the provision of the heavenly bread, and are filled with the flesh of the spotless Lamb, before we are inebriated with the blood of the true Vine which sprang from the root of David, while we are children, and are fed with milk, and retain the discourse about the first principles of Christ, as children we act under the oversight of stewards, namely the guardian angels." Origen, *Homilies on the Book of Judges*, 6.2; Beckwith (1975), 127; Coppes (1988), 41; Leithart (1998), 39; Gallant (2002), 110; Dalby (2003), 9; Venema (2009), 13f.

¹¹⁹ In the paedocommunion debate Origen's *Homilies on the Book of Judges* have been dated c. 235, slightly earlier than Lauro does. She dates the text between 238 and 248 and most probably between 245 and 248 Cyprian's words are generally dated in 251 Lauro (2010), 13-20.

¹²⁰ Lauro translates: "Before we may obtain the yearly provision of "heavenly bread" and may be satisfied by the flesh "of the unblemished lamb," before we may become intoxicated with the blood of the "true vine" which has risen up from the root of David, so long as we are "babes" and are nourished "with milk" and hold to discourse about the first principles of Christ, we act just as "babes under the angel-'overseers' and angel-'stewards'." Origen, *Homilies on the Book of Judges*, 6.2, trans. Elizabeth Ann Dively Lauro: *The Fathers of the Church* (hereafter FOTC) vol. 119 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 87.

¹²¹ Origen, *Homilies on Judges*, 6:1, FOTC119, 84.

¹²² Origen, *Homilies on Judges*, 6:2, FOTC119, 85.

¹²³ See for example: Origen, *Against Celsus*, bk. IV, chap. XLIX, ANF 4:520.

¹²⁴ Origen, *Homilies on Judges*, 6:2, FOTC119, 85.

that fought on behalf of the Israelites just before and while they were crossing the Red Sea, Origen appears to be speaking about the same angels now fighting for, teaching and helping the catechumens until the time they are baptized, which is until the time they start to celebrate the Lord's Supper¹²⁵.

2.2.9. Summary

I conclude that the dozen of documents from this era, which recur in the paedocommunion debate, do not mention paedocommunion. In that sense we could speak of an 'undocumented era'. Possible exception is *The Apostolic Tradition*, which has been ascribed to Hippolytus of Rome, which would justify dating it round 215. But as we will see, its authorship is debated and it cannot be dated in this era with certainty. For that reason I have chosen to treat it later. The documents which can be dated in this first era provide circumstantial evidence in the paedocommunion discussion. They do so by revealing the close connection between baptism and Communion, by mentioning the frequency of Communion and by speaking about all enjoining it, as well as by speaking about the identity of children and their place in worship.

2.2.10. Cyprian

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage in North Africa from 248-258, provides us with the first definite and indisputable references to the practice of infant Communion. Both references are found in Cyprian's *On the Lapsed*¹²⁶. In chapter 9 Cyprian's words presuppose the practice of paedocommunion as he puts words in the mouths of children of lapsed Christians who will say on Judgment Day, "We have done nothing; nor have we forsaken the Lord's bread and cup to hasten freely to a profane contact; the faithlessness of others has ruined us"¹²⁷.

¹²⁵ I do not question whether Origen also speaks of angels as guardians of children of Christian parents, as he does in his *Commentary on Matthew*, bk. XIII, 26-28. ANF 9:490-491. Cp. Roger Beckwith and Andrew Daunton-Fear, *The Water and the Wine: A Contribution to the Debate on Children and Holy Communion* (London: Latimer Trust, 2005), 51, fn.118.

¹²⁶ *On the Lapsed* (c. 250).

¹²⁷ The full text reads: "But to many their own destruction was not sufficient. With mutual exhortations, people were urged to their ruin; death was pledged by turns in the deadly cup. And that nothing might be wanting to aggravate the crime, infants also, in the arms of their parents, either carried or conducted, lost, while yet little ones, what in the very first beginning of their nativity they had gained. Will not they, when the day of judgment comes, say, "We have done nothing; nor have we forsaken the Lord's bread and cup to hasten freely to a profane contact; the faithlessness of others has ruined us. We have found our parents our murderers; they have denied to us the Church as a Mother; they have denied God as a Father: so that, while we were little, and unforeseeing, and unconscious of such a crime, we were associated by others to the partnership of wickedness, and we were snared by the deceit of others?" Cyprian, *Treatises, On the Lapsed*, chap. 9, ANF 5:439.

In chapter 25, Cyprian describes an incident which takes place in the context of paedocommunion practice¹²⁸. As Cyprian himself points out in the first sentence of chapter 26, the child is not yet able to speak¹²⁹, which makes this a case of infant Communion in the true sense of the word. Cyprian's words in chapter 9 do not allow the existence of a practice of paedocommunion up to a certain age, only to be admitted anew at a more mature age¹³⁰. Cyprian's speaks of a sacrament and the Eucharist, even though only one element of Communion is mentioned and even though in this unique situation it is force-fed¹³¹.

Chapter 9 does not allow the incident of chapter 25 to be the one and only instance of paedocommunion¹³². Nor do the words of the children in chapter 9 allow that Cyprian was speaking of a local practice of Carthage or nothing more than the churches under his oversight as a bishop, while being aware of a widespread different practice in which children were excluded from the table, either currently or in history. The North African church may have shown a relative independence in disciplinary issues¹³³, but it is unlikely to be the case in paedocommunion. The complaint or defense of the children would make no sense if this were the case. It would certainly not fit in a text specifically treating the problem of lapsed Christians, if believing Christian parents would also make their children forsake the Lord's bread and cup. At

¹²⁸ "Learn what occurred when I myself was present and a witness. Some parents who by chance were escaping, being little careful on account of their terror, left a little daughter under the care of a wet-nurse. The nurse gave up the forsaken child to the magistrates. They gave it, in the presence of an idol whither the people flocked (because it was not yet able to eat flesh on account of its years), bread mingled with wine, which however itself was the remainder of what had been used in the immolation of those that had perished. Subsequently the mother recovered her child. But the girl was no more able to speak, or to indicate the crime that had been committed, than she had before been able to understand or to prevent it. Therefore it happened unawares in their ignorance, that when we were sacrificing, the mother brought it in with her. Moreover, the girl mingled with the saints, became impatient of our prayer and supplications, and was at one moment shaken with weeping, and at another tossed about like a wave of the sea by the violent excitement of her mind; as if by the compulsion of a torturer the soul of that still tender child confessed a consciousness of the fact with such signs as it could. When, however, the solemnities were finished, and the deacon began to offer the cup to those present, and when, as the rest received it, its turn approached, the little child, by the instinct of the divine majesty, turned away its face, compressed its mouth with resisting lips, and refused the cup. Still the deacon persisted, and, although against her efforts, forced on her some of the sacrament of the cup. Then there followed a sobbing and vomiting. In a profane body and mouth the Eucharist could not remain; the draught sanctified in the blood of the Lord burst forth from the polluted stomach. So great is the Lord's power, so great is His majesty. The secrets of darkness were disclosed under His light, and not even hidden crimes deceived God's priest." Cyprian, *Treatises, On the Lapsed*, chap. 25, ANF 5:444.

¹²⁹ "This much about an infant, which was not yet of an age to speak of the crime committed by others in respect of herself." Cyprian, *Treatises, On the Lapsed*, chap. 26, ANF 5:444.

¹³⁰ Contra Bolkestein (1964), 35.

¹³¹ Contra Winzer (2007), 32.

¹³² Contra Waterland. As quoted by Dalby (2003), 11.

¹³³ Baumgärtler (1929), 32.

the same time, it is fair to ask to what extent Cyprian had an oversight of the historic practice since the days of the Apostles and to what extent Cyprian had knowledge of the practice in the whole Christian church, or even the complete Western branch.

It is also unlikely that these first references to paedocommunion are also its first occurrence, its innovation by Cyprian, or even a relative recent innovation at that time. I agree with Gallant who writes “Cyprian was a strong promoter of the catholicity of the Church, and his writings reveal to us a mindset that would not likely allow for an individualistic and radical innovation in church practice”¹³⁴. With Gallant, I point to *Epistle LXII*¹³⁵. Cyprian’s argument in that epistle is summarized in his words that there should be no departure from what Christ both taught and did. Cyprian reminds Caecilius that Christ is to be followed before man, and that Christ’s teaching and practice preceded traditions that may have existed. Cyprian also emphasizes that this is especially true when it comes to the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Compared to the first definite references to infant baptism, Cyprian’s references are approximately seven decades younger. The amount of references to infant baptism in the early church is also higher than the amount of references to infant Communion. But as documents with explicit references for both practices are scarce in the early church one wonders whether there is any statistical significance to this time-gap or discrepancy¹³⁶. It is interesting to notice that Cyprian speaks of both infant baptism and infant Communion and also mentions the threefold pattern of initiation by baptism,

¹³⁴ Gallant (2003), 115. Contra Kenneth Gentry as quoted in Gallant (2003), 115. Contra Winzer (2007), 30. Some refer to Joachim Jeremias as authority regarding paedocommunion as innovation, and the time in which this innovation would have taken place. In Jeremias’ first book on infant baptism he writes that from this work by Cyprian we learn that it was customary to admit little children to Communion (1958/2004), 85. In his second book on infant baptism he seems to suggest that he does not consider it possible that it was already customary at the beginning of the second century, as Aland thinks (1962/2004), 39. That suggests that the innovation took place somewhere in between. But Jeremias does not specify his reasons for this opinion..

¹³⁵ Cyprian, *The Epistles of Cyprian*, Epistle LXII (Oxford LXIII), esp. LXII.14, 17, 18, ANF 5:358-364.

¹³⁶ Rylaarsdam for example speaks of Cyprian as the first theologian in the early church to offer a significant rationale for infant baptism as well as the first undisputed witness to infant Communion (as the conclusion of the baptismal rite). David M. Rylaarsdam, “Reconnecting Baptism and the Lord’s Supper: Sacraments of the Covenant Community,” 2004-2005 http://www.dereformatie.nl/content/files/Files/Bijlagen/86/86-14_Robert_Roth.pdf (accessed July 5, 2011), 12.

Rushdoony argues along the same lines, referring to Cyprian’s *Epistle to Fidus* on Baptism of infants. Cyprian, *The Epistles of Cyprian*, Epistle LVIII (Oxford ed. LXIV), ANF 5:353-354. Rushdoony calls attention to the persistence of the Old Testament pattern regarding baptism and believes that the same would be true for the participation of children in what Rushdoony calls the Christian Passover. Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: A Chalcedon Study with three appendices by Gary North*. 6th ed. (New Jersey: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1980), 752 f.

anointing and Eucharist in his *Letter to Januarius*¹³⁷. In light of later discussion, it is remarkable that the practical circumstances behind these two texts have closer links with 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 than they do with chapter 11. In other words, the choice is between participating in the Christian Eucharist or in the pagan meals, and not between participating as a Christian and abstaining or being barred as a Christian.

2.2.11. Sicilian Inscription

Dating from about 200 several inscriptions on tombstones marking the graves of infants and children provide supporting evidence for the practice of infant baptism¹³⁸. As far as infant baptism is related to infant Communion, all these inscriptions provide indirect evidence for the latter. One tombstone inscription that should be dated before 337 refers to an emergency baptism and to the Eucharist (in esoteric terms), saying: "To Julia Florentina, a most sweet and innocent child, who had been made a believer, her parent raised this memorial. Having been born a pagan before daybreak on 5th March when Zoilus was Corrector of the Province, at the age of eighteen months and twenty-two days she was made a full believer at 2 am. She yielded her spirit at last, having survived for four hours with the result she received the customary rites¹³⁹ once again"¹⁴⁰. The Council of Nicea had decreed that those about to die should not be deprived of the Viaticum¹⁴¹. Jeremias mentions that in the fourth and fifth centuries in some places it was even reckoned important that the Eucharist should be in the mouth at the moment of the soul's departure¹⁴².

2.2.12. Egeria's Diary

Egeria provides us with a pilgrim's observation of worship in Jerusalem during her stay between approximately 381 and 384 She does not write about

¹³⁷ Cyprian, *The Epistles of Cyprian*, Epistle LXIX.2 (Oxford LXX), ANF 5:376.

¹³⁸ See the discussion between Jeremias and Aland on the significance of these inscriptions. The inscriptions were already referred to by for example in Robert L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, lecture 66 (1878; repr., St. Louis, Presbyterian Publishing Company of St. Louis, 1996), 792.

¹³⁹ *Consueta*.

¹⁴⁰ Dalby (2003), 11.

¹⁴¹ The Council of Nicea (325), can. 13: "Concerning those about to die, the ancient church and canonical law is to be kept even now, so that if someone is about to die he should not be deprived of the last and absolute necessary Viaticum," NPNF2 14:29. Purcell also refers to Canon 25 of the Arabic Version of the Nicene Canons, stating "That no one should be forbidden Holy Communion unless such as are doing penance." But there is consensus that these canons are falsely attributed to the Council of Nicea and they may have been written closer to the end of the millennium. Purcell (2006), 136.

¹⁴² Jeremias (1958-2004), 90. For further evidence Jeremias refers to F.J. Dölger, *Ichthys II*, Münster, 1922 (*Mysterium fidei. On the history of the Last Sacrament*), 527-535.

children participating specifically in the Eucharist, but she does write about little boys who actively participate as a specific group responding to the deacons' commemorations with a repeated "Lord, have mercy" in loud voices¹⁴³. In her description of the Holy Week we find a reenactment of the Gospel story in which children met the Lord with palm branches. Egeria notices how not just children, but even babies and those too young to walk are included in this procession¹⁴⁴.

2.2.13. *The Apostolic Tradition*

The Apostolic Tradition, chapter 3-46 of book 8 of *The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* has been attributed to Hippolytus of Rome in the past, which would justify a date of approximately 215. More recently, scholars such as Maxwell Johnson, L. Edward Phillips and Paul F. Bradshaw have come to the conclusion that it is a compilation of material from "different sources, quite probably arising from different geographical regions and almost certainly from different historical periods, from perhaps as early as the second half of the second century to as late as the middle of the fourth century"¹⁴⁵.

Children are mentioned four times in *The Apostolic Tradition*; twice as participants in the worship service¹⁴⁶, and twice in relation to the celebration of the Eucharist¹⁴⁷. Children of believers are not removed: mothers take up

¹⁴³ "Then, when they have finished singing everything which is appointed, the bishop rises and goes in front of the railed area (i.e. the railed area before the tomb of Christ). One of the deacons makes the normal commemoration of individuals, and each time he mentions a name, a large group of boys responds Kyrie eleison (in our language, "Lord, have mercy"). Their voices are very loud." *Egeria's Diary*, 24.5. Lester Ruth, Carrie Stewart, and John D. Witvliet, eds., *Walking Where Jesus Walked: Worship in Fourth-Century Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 48.

¹⁴⁴ "At five o'clock the passage is read from the Gospel about the children who met the Lord with palm branches, saying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." At this the bishop and all the people rise from their places, and start off on foot down from the summit of the Mount of Olives. All the people go before him with psalms and antiphons, all the time repeating, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." "The babies and the ones too young to walk are carried on their parents' shoulders. Everyone is carrying branches, either palm or olive, and they accompany the bishop in the very way people did when once they went down with the Lord." *Egeria's Diary*, 31.2-3. Ruth, Stewart, and Witvliet (2010), 53.

¹⁴⁵ Bradshaw (2002), 83.

¹⁴⁶ "But at the naming of every one by the deacon, as we said before, let the people say, Lord, have mercy upon him; and let the children say it first." *The Apostolic Tradition, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, bk. VIII, chap. VI.9, ANF 7:483. "And let the children stand at the reading-desk; and let another deacon stand by them, that they may not be disorderly." *The Apostolic Tradition, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, bk. VIII, chap. XI.10, ANF 7:486.

¹⁴⁷ Deacons are instructed to speak the following words: "Let none of the catechumens, let none of the hearers, let none of the unbelievers, let none of the heterodox, stay here. You who have prayed the foregoing prayer, depart. Let the mothers receive their children; let no one have anything against any one; let no one come in hypocrisy; let us stand upright before the Lord with fear and trembling, to offer." *The Apostolic Tradition, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, bk. VIII, chap. XII.2, ANF 7:486. Dalby translates "Mothers, take up your children," which suggests that some at least were little more than babes. Dalby

their children and children are mentioned in the order in which several groups partake of the Eucharist¹⁴⁸.

Some have apparently dismissed this information as (semi) Arian. But their pattern of worship was probably not much different than that of the orthodox. We can conclude that the Apostolic Tradition gives us another example of paedocommunion in the period at least before Augustine and possibly going back even before Cyprian. It also appears to be the first known document regulating the participation of children in the Lord's Supper.

2.2.14. *Testamentum Domini*

Instructions similar to those in the *Apostolic Tradition* are given in the late fourth, early fifth century church order *Testamentum Domini*¹⁴⁹. Villien translates the instruction from the *Testamentum*: "The bishop is the first to communicate, then the priests, deacons, widows, readers, subdeacons, those who are endowed with charismata, the newly-baptized, and the children. The people draw nigh in the following order: old men, bachelors, other men; among the women, the deaconesses and then the other women"¹⁵⁰. The *Testamentum Domini* provides another example of the existence as well as the regulation of paedocommunion.

2.2.15. *Augustine*

Augustine, bishop of Hippo Regius from 396 to 430, argues for the controversial doctrine of original sin on the basis of the known and well-accepted practice of paedocommunion. With Gallant I believe that for Augustine to assume that his argument was valid, paedocommunion had to be

(2003), 12. "And after that, let the bishop partake, then the presbyters, and deacons, and sub-deacons, and the readers, and the singers, and the ascetics; and then of the women, the deaconesses, and the virgins, and the widows; then the children; and then all the people in order, with reverence and godly fear, without tumult." *The Apostolic Tradition, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, bk. VIII, chap. XIII.4, ANF 7:490. Dalby also notes that the Apostolic Constitutions refer to children (paidia) rather than infants (nepioi), but that the two are treated as interchangeable in bk. VI, chap. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Hermans suggests that the order of participation may even indicate a certain spiritual hierarchy in which God gives children the first place. This may have been based on Jesus' words about children and the Kingdom, but also on their possession of yet unblemished baptismal grace. According to Hermans, there is similar significance to the children's nearness to the altar during worship, where they would be placed in front of the people. J. Hermans, *Eucharistie vieren met kinderen: Een liturgie-wetenschappelijke studie over de deelname van het kind aan de eucharistie in het verleden en volgens de huidige kerkelijke richtlijnen* (Brugge: Tabor, 1987), 46-47.

¹⁴⁹ For this date see Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012), 159.

¹⁵⁰ Antoine Villien, *The History and Liturgy of the Sacraments*, trans. H. W. Edwards. (1932; repr., London: Burns Oates, 2010), 341.

practiced in North Africa, Rome and Milan, where Augustine had worked, as well as in Palestina and the East, where his Pelagian opponents sojourned, and possibly even in Britain, where Pelagius originated¹⁵¹. Paedocommunion also had to be viewed as an ancient, even apostolic, tradition from the earliest church by both Augustine¹⁵² and his opponents.

It is this line of arguing from practice to theology that makes Augustine say: “They’re infants, but they receive his sacraments. They are infants, but they share in his table, in order to have life in themselves”¹⁵³. And: “Why is the blood, which of the likeness of sinful flesh was shed for the remission of sins, ministered that the little one (parvulus) may drink, that he may have life, unless he hath come to death by a beginning of sin on the part of some one?”¹⁵⁴.

In his book *On forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism* Augustine writes: “Let us, I say, hear what the Lord says – not indeed concerning the sacrament of the laver, but concerning the sacrament of His own holy table, to which none but a baptized person has a right to approach”¹⁵⁵. Then Augustine quotes John 6:53 “Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye shall have no life in you”. In the next chapter, he responds to those who might say that this statement from John 6:53 has no relation to infants by saying that infants, who would have been unable to hear and understand these words from John 6:53, are embraced in the statement, because of the words of Jesus in John 6:51: “The bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world”. Augustine concludes: “From all this it follows, that even for the life of infants was His flesh given, which He gave for the life of the world; and that even they will not have life if they eat not the flesh of the Son of man”¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵¹ Gallant (2003), 119f.

¹⁵² “Whence, however was this derived, but from the primitive, as I suppose, and apostolic tradition by which the churches of Christ maintain it to be an inherent principle, that without baptism and partaking of the Supper of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation for everlasting life?” Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 34, NPNF1 5:28.

¹⁵³ “Those who say that infancy has nothing in it for Jesus to save, are denying that Christ is Jesus for all believing infants. Those, I repeat, who say that infancy has nothing in it for Jesus to save, are saying nothing else than that for believing infants, infants that is who have been baptized in Christ, Christ the Lord is not Jesus. After all, what is Jesus? Jesus means Savior. Jesus is the Savior. Those whom he doesn’t save, having nothing to save in them, well for them he isn’t Jesus. Well now, if you can tolerate the idea that Christ is not Jesus for some persons who have been baptized, then I’m not sure your faith can be recognized as according with the sound rule. Yes, they’re infants, but they are his members. They’re infants, but they receive his sacraments. They are infants, but they share in his table, in order to have life in themselves.” Augustine, *Sermon*, 174, 7, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle, 11 vols., Part III sermons (New Rochelle, New York: New City Press, 1992), 5:261.

¹⁵⁴ Lee (accessed April 12, 2011), 9.

¹⁵⁵ Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 26, NPNF1 5:25.

¹⁵⁶ Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 27, NPNF1 5:25.

In chapter 34, Augustine drives his point home: "And what else do they say who call the sacrament of the Lord's Supper life, than that which is written: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven;" and "The bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world;" and "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you?" If, therefore, as so many and such divine witnesses agree, neither salvation nor eternal life can be hoped for by any man without baptism and the Lord's body and blood, it is vain to promise these blessings to infants without them. Moreover, if it be only sins that separate man from salvation and eternal life, there is nothing else in infants which these sacraments can be the means of removing, but the guilt of sin"¹⁵⁷. These words are even clearer than those from the earlier chapters as infants and sacraments (plural, thus both) are explicitly mentioned¹⁵⁸.

In chapter 36 of the same work Augustine speaks again of administering the sacraments (plural) to children. Interestingly Augustine seems to argue in that same chapter 36 from Paul's saying "Be not children in understanding"¹⁵⁹ that the lack in children's understanding proves that they are not enlightened and therefore need the sacraments^{160 161}. Lack of (intellectual) understanding in children is also considered an extra reason to participate in the Lord's Supper in Sermon XLV on the miracle of the seven loaves in Mark 8:5¹⁶². Augustine explains Psalm 34 in sacramental terms. Augustine takes David's insanity before Abimelech as a model for our approach to the sacrament, calling us to be foolish, weak and humble (as children)¹⁶³. A similar thought (that eating the sacrament requires being a child or babe within) is expressed by Augustine in light of the gospel of John¹⁶⁴.

¹⁵⁷ Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 34, NPNF1 5:28.

¹⁵⁸ Another beautiful example of Augustine connecting John 3: 3,5 and John 6:53 -54 while alluding to 1 Corinthians 10: 1-4 is found in Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, Tractate XI.4, NPNF1 7:75f.

¹⁵⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:20.

¹⁶⁰ Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 36, NPNF1 5:29.

¹⁶¹ Holeyton shows that Augustine already took an interest in (nursing) children before his anti-Pelagian writings. Examples are found in his *Confessions* (Augustine, *Confessions*, I, VII, II; I, Vim 7-8, NPNF1 1:47, 48) and in his Psalm commentary (Augustine, *On the Psalms*, Psalm 54:24 (55:23), NPNF1, 8:217). Holeyton (1981), 81.

¹⁶² Augustine, *Sermon XLV*, NPNF1 6:406f. Matthew 15:38 remarks that women and children did not belong to this number. Augustine comments: "As though the void of understanding, and the effeminate were without number. Yet let even these eat. Let them eat: it may be the children will grow, and will be children no more; it may be the effeminate will be amended, and become chaste. Let them eat; we dispense, we deal out to them. But who these are, God inspects His feast, and if they do not amend themselves, He who knew how to invite them thither, knows also how to separate them from the rest."

¹⁶³ Augustine, *On the Psalms*, Psalm 34 (33), NPNF1, 8:72f.

¹⁶⁴ Augustine, *On the Gospel of St. John, Tractates XXVI*, chap. VI. 41-59, NPNF1 7:168.

In light of all this evidence it comes as no surprise that he refers to both paedocommunion texts by Cyprian with approval¹⁶⁵. Augustine emphasizes the innocence of the children in both cases, while speaking in strong terms about the sin of the parents or other responsible adults.

In light of the twentieth century debate about paedocommunion it is important to note that Augustine does recognize the importance of self-examination and sacramental understanding and appreciation. He speaks about “eating and drinking judgment unto oneself” (for example in Tractate LXII¹⁶⁶), and of “*eating and drinking unworthily and being guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*” (for example in Sermons LXII¹⁶⁷, LXXXII¹⁶⁸, and Tractate XXVI¹⁶⁹), thereby taking into account the apostle Paul’s words from 1 Corinthians 11. And his sermons XLV¹⁷⁰, LXII¹⁷¹, LXXXI¹⁷² and Tractate XXVI¹⁷³, among others, all give examples of the spiritual nature of eating and drinking of the sacrament.

But Augustine does not use 1 Corinthians 11 with the intent to bar Christians from the table¹⁷⁴. Sermon LXII speaks on the parable taken from Luke 14:16, about the invitations to a great supper. Augustine encourages accepting the invitation¹⁷⁵, and – alluding to the laws made against the Donatists by the Christian emperors – even suggests compulsion to make people accept the invitation, trusting that willingness to participate will follow¹⁷⁶. In Sermon LXXXII, right after quoting 1 Corinthians 11:29, Augustine says (to the

¹⁶⁵ He refers to Cyprian, *Treatises, on the lapsed*, chap. 9 in *Letter XCVIII.3* NPNF1 1:407 and to chap. 25 in the same *letter XCVIII.4*, NPNF1 1:408.

¹⁶⁶ Augustine, *Tractate LXII.1*, NPNF1 7:313. 1 Cor. 11:27.

¹⁶⁷ Augustine, *Sermon LXII.4*, NPNF1 6:448. 1 Cor. 11:29.

¹⁶⁸ Augustine, *Sermon LXXXII.1*, NPNF1 6:504. 1 Cor. 11:29.

¹⁶⁹ Augustine, *Tractate XXVI.11*, NPNF1 7:171. 1 Cor. 11:29.

¹⁷⁰ Augustine, *Sermon XLV*, NPNF1 6:406. “The feast of God (...) is for the heart, not for the belly.”

¹⁷¹ Augustine, *Sermon LXII.5 & 7*, NPNF1 6:448, 449. “We receive but little, and we are nourished in the heart,” “looking for the inner sense of faith, He offered Himself to the outward senses of the body.”

¹⁷² Augustine, *Sermon LXXXI*, NPNF1 6:501. “what is taken in the Sacrament visibly is in truth itself eaten spiritually, drunk spiritually.”

¹⁷³ Augustine, *Tractate XXVI.12*, NPNF1 7:172. “He that eats within, not without; who eats in his heart, not who presses with his teeth.”

¹⁷⁴ Except in the case of catechumens, in the period before their Baptism. “What, moreover, is all that time for, during which they hold the name and place of catechumens, except to hear what the faith and pattern of Christian life should be, so that first they may prove themselves and then eat of the Bread of the Lord and drink of the Chalice, since ‘he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself?’” Augustine, *Faith and works*, chap. 6.9, FOTC 27, 231.

¹⁷⁵ “Let us way then with vain excuses and evil excuses, and come we to the supper by which we may be made fat within.” Augustine, *Sermon LXII.8*, NPNF1 6:449.

¹⁷⁶ “‘Compel them’, saith he, ‘to come in’. Let compulsion be found outside, the will will arise within.” Augustine, *Sermon LXII.8*, NPNF1 6:449.

catechumen): “But they who do not yet eat and drink, let them hasten when invited to such a Banquet”¹⁷⁷.

We conclude that in the praxis of Augustine’s days and in the theology of Augustine, paedocommunion coexisted with an awareness of the spiritual nature of participating in the sacrament and the need for self-examination. Augustine may have believed that self-examination and spiritual participation are required according to age and ability¹⁷⁸. He may also have assumed that the faith required was present in the parents or sponsors of the children or more precisely that the faith expressed by those sponsors at baptism reflects the fact that the infant “although he is not yet a believer in the sense of having that faith which includes the consenting will of those who exercise it, nevertheless becomes a believer through the sacrament of faith” or even that the necessary faith is found in “the whole society of saints and believers”¹⁷⁹.

2.2.16. *Innocent I*

In his letter to the Council of Milevis in the year 417, Pope Innocent I condemns the teaching of Pelagius, writing: “That other doctrine which your Fraternity claims that they preach, that little children can attain the reward of eternal life without the grace of baptism is very foolish. For, unless they eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood they will not have life in them” (...) “But in order to disarm the vicious doctrine of vain men by the swift reasoning of truth, the Lord proclaims this in the Gospel by saying: ‘Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come to me.’”¹⁸⁰

2.2.17. *Leo the Great*

Leo the Great was bishop of Rome from 440 till the year of his death, 461 In a letter dealing with the Manichean denial of the human nature of the Son of God, Leo mentions that “even the tongues of infants do not keep silence upon

¹⁷⁷ Augustine, *Sermon LXXXII.1*, NPNF1 6:504. And in *Sermon LXXXII.2*, NPNF1 6:505: “But if the Catechumen, my Brethren, are to be exhorted no to delay to approach to this so great grace of regeneration; what great care ought we to have in building up the faithful, that their approach may profit them, and that they eat and drink not to their own judgment.”

¹⁷⁸ Marta Ellen Stortz writes that Augustine adopted a view of the human life-cycle that featured graduated guilt for one’s actions: with age one moved from non-innocence into greater accountability. Martha Ellen Stortz, “Where or when Was Your Servant Innocent?” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 83.

¹⁷⁹ As he did with Baptism according to Augustine, *Letter XCVIII,7,10 (to Boniface)*. NPNF1 1:409-410.

Regarding the faith of parents or sponsors see Augustine, *Letter XCVIII,5 & 7*, NPNF1 1: 408-409.

¹⁸⁰ *Letter 182*, Pope Innocent to the Council of Milevis, *Letters 165-203, Vol. IV*, trans. Wilfrid Parsons, FOTC Vol. 30, 3rd ed. (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1981), 130 (127-132).

the truth of Christ's Body and Blood at the rite of Holy Communion"¹⁸¹. Without understanding and believing this truth, the Amen is vain, and the Eucharist not beneficial. Yet the tension for Leo is not in infants participating, but in the participation of heretics such as Eutyches' followers¹⁸². Asked, whether children, captured by the enemy, should be baptized when coming back to Roman territory, Leo responds: "Those who can remember that they used to go to church with their parents can remember whether they received what used to be given to their parents"¹⁸³.

2.2.18. Gennadius of Marseille

I conclude my overview of paedocommunion in the first five centuries with two quotes. Peter Browe, who wrote extensively about the Eucharist, opens his essay on children at the Lord's Supper in the Middle Ages with a quote from Gennadius from the year 492: "But if they are infants, or so dull as not to take in teaching, let those who offer them answer for them, after the manner of one about to be baptized; and so, fortified by the laying on of hands and chrism, let them be admitted to the mysteries of the Eucharist."¹⁸⁴ Browe states that (at least) by the fifth century the ritual in which children received the Eucharist directly after being baptized was widespread.

2.2.19. Gelasius I of Rome

Even the most critical participants in the paedocommunion debate agree with Browe that by the end of the fifth century the Eucharist was given to (baptized) infants, as Gelasius I of Rome ordered in the year 495: "No one should venture to exclude any child from this sacrament, without which no one can attain to eternal life"¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸¹ Leo the Great, *Letter LIX.II*, NPNF2 12:59. Leo seems to allude to the Eucharist practice of the Priest saying *Corpus Christi* and the recipients answering: Amen. "Infantia" referred to children up to the age of 7, "pueritia" up to the age of 14 and "adoloscentia" up to the age of 28. Browe (1930-2009) 96 n55, 100 n84.

¹⁸² Leo the Great, *Sermon XCI.III*, NPNF2 12:202.

¹⁸³ As baptized children will not remember their baptism, but will remember receiving the Eucharist. Leo the Great, *Letter CLXVII, Q. XVII*, NPNF2 12:112.

¹⁸⁴ Cited in W. Smith, S. Cheetham, John Murray, eds. *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* (London, 1876), s.v. "Infant Communion," by W. Smith., 836. Peter Browe translates in German: "Kinder und Blöde, die die Lehre nicht fassen können, sollen die Antworten durch ihre Taufpaten geben und mit dem Chrisam verwahrt und zum Geheimnis der Eucharistie zugelassen werden." Peter Browe, *Die Kinderkommunion im Mittelalter* in Browe Peter, *Die Eucharistie im Mittelalter: Liturgiehistorische Forschungen in Kulturwissenschaftlicher Absicht; Mit einer Einführung herausgegeben von Hubertus Lutterbachj und Thomas Flammer*. 4th ed. (repr. Berlin: Lit Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2009), 89.

¹⁸⁵ Winzer (2007), 36.

2.2.20. Summary

I conclude that Cyprian's words imply a practice of Communion of infants and children as widespread and as old as Cyprian could oversee. The practice of communing children directly after baptism was widespread at least as early as the fifth century. Sources, varying from tombstone inscriptions to council decrees, testify to Communion as Viaticum for dying children. But participation of children in worship and in Communion was not restricted to the moment directly after baptism or just before dying. Augustine is a significant witness to, and defender of, the paedocommunion practice. He also exemplifies how one may embrace paedocommunion while still recognizing the importance of self-examination, sacramental understanding, and appreciation. Augustine applies John 6:53-54 to paedocommunion, while Cyprian seems to deal with paedocommunion more in line with 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. While Augustine does cite 1 Corinthians 11, he does so not in relation to children and not with the intent to bar Christians from the table.

2.3. Paedocommunion in the Middle Ages

2.3.0. Introduction

In this section, I will give an overview of paedocommunion in the Middle-Ages. In my overview of the earliest history of paedocommunion, I mentioned the earliest explicit witness to the praxis by Cyprian, the earliest theological rationale provided for the praxis by Augustine, and, in conclusion, the order by Pope Gelasius I of Rome, near the end of the fifth century, that no child may be excluded from the sacrament of the Eucharist. As the focus of my study is on paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition I have chosen to begin the final historical section on the history of paedocommunion with the Reformation and the Hussites as forerunners of the Reformation. The Middle Ages, on which I will now focus, stands right between the period when paedocommunion was a well-established, widespread praxis and the time of the Reformation.

In terms of paedocommunion praxis, the Middle Ages can be divided into two eras, before and after the major shift that takes place around the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. When our perspective is not limited to the Western church, the year 1054 divides the Middle Ages into the era before and the era after the Great Schism. The Great Schism is relevant to the history of paedocommunion since the Eastern Church has continued to practice paedocommunion to the present day. Different eras can also be distinguished in terms of the availability of sources. The literary sources of the era of the

Merovingian Dynasty¹⁸⁶, for example, are relatively silent regarding paedocommunion¹⁸⁷. Because of a questionnaire on the rites of the baptismal liturgy that Charlemagne circulated, the Carolingian period left us more sources regarding at least part of the paedocommunion practice and theology¹⁸⁸. In the twelfth century, we see a further increase of documents reflecting increasing systematical reflection on the sacrament and strong developments of the practice¹⁸⁹. With each new period we also see an increase of liturgical documents.

In the first section of this chapter, I spoke of revised views on the existence of a threefold pattern of baptism, anointing and first Communion as followed in the rite of initiation. But I also spoke of the strong evidence that, at least originally, baptism and Communion belonged together liturgically, only to be separated over the course of the history of the medieval church. Therefore, I will pay close attention to this pattern or close connection of rites, as well as to what may have reinforced this connection, and to what ended up causing the disintegration of the initiatory rite. That includes views on the necessity of Communion, times and seasons for initiation, the Episcopal privilege or prerogative of consignation, the frequency of Communion celebration, and developing concepts of ages and life stages.

2.3.1. Sixth and Seventh Century

I begin my overview of paedocommunion in the Middle Ages with the sixth and seventh centuries. Together, the sixth and seventh centuries make up an era in which liturgical texts of initiation, including those of baptismal Communion, are developed¹⁹⁰. Turner points out that the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire at the end of the fifth century allowed for regional variation in sacramental practice in the following centuries¹⁹¹. For this reason, I will organize the primary material regarding paedocommunion geographically. This may help us to get a better sense of whether paedocommunion practice showed similar regional variation or whether it was more uniform.

¹⁸⁶ From the end of the fifth century until 752.

¹⁸⁷ Peter Browe, "Die Kinderkommunion im Mittelalter," in *Die Eucharistie im Mittelalter: Liturgiehistorische Forschungen in kulturwissenschaftlicher Absicht*, 4th ed. (Berlin: W. Hopf, 2009), 90.

¹⁸⁸ Owen M. Phelan, *The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism, and the Imperium Christianum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 164.

¹⁸⁹ J. Hermans, *Eucharistie vieren met kinderen: Een liturgie-wetenschappelijke studie over de deelname van het kind aan de Eucharistie in het verleden en volgens de huidige kerkelijke richtlijnen* (Brugge: Tabor, 1987), 63.

¹⁹⁰ Paul Turner, *Ages of Initiation: The First Two Christian Millennia* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 12.

¹⁹¹ Turner (2000), 12.

2.3.1.1. Syria

Early sixth century¹⁹² Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite's *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, in all likelihood from Syria, reflects the threefold pattern of initiation by baptism, anointing and first Communion¹⁹³. James of Edessa¹⁹⁴, also in Syria, describes the same pattern in the *Orders of Baptism and Confirmation of the Syrian Church*¹⁹⁵. In an account of Constantine's baptism, probably by the Syrian poet Jacob of Serûgh around 522, blessing and anointing are followed by baptism and Communion: "Now that you are pardoned by the living waters, come and enjoy the supper of the King's Son"¹⁹⁶. That even children receive these sacraments is explicitly mentioned by Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite. He defends the practice against non-Christians who seem to have ridiculed baptism and Communion of infants, because of the infants' lack of understanding and the fact that others speak on behalf of the infants¹⁹⁷. In his early seventh century book, *Spiritual Meadow*, the Byzantine monk John Moschus¹⁹⁸ shares two stories in which children in their play perform the Mass and the complete 'ecclesiastical rituals' of initiation¹⁹⁹. Baumgärtler argues that this does not prove

¹⁹² Or late 5th century, Johann Baumgärtler, *Die Erstkommunion der Kinder: Ein Ausschnitt aus der Geschichte der katholischen Kommunionpraxis von der Urkirchlichen Zeit bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters* (München: Verlag Josef Kösel & Friedrich Pustet, 1929), 79.

¹⁹³ "Then drawing the candidates out, the other priests hand them over to the sponsors, or the minister of admission, and when together with them they have wrapped the newly baptized with an appropriate garment, they lead them back to the bishop. He, signing them with divinely consecrated oil, declares them participants of the most sacred Eucharist," Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 2:2,7, in Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom. Cp. Maxwell E. Johnson, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, 3rd ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 61

¹⁹⁴ James of Edessa (c. 640-708).

¹⁹⁵ Johnson (2003), 62.

¹⁹⁶ Jacob of Serûgh, *Baptism of Constantine*, in Turner (2000), chap. 4, CD-Rom.

¹⁹⁷ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7:3,11: "Now the fact that even children, not yet able to understand the things Divine, become recipients of the holy Birth in God, and of the most holy symbols of the supremely Divine Communion, seems, as you say, to the profane, a fit subject for reasonable laughter, if the Hierarchs teach things Divine to those not able to hear, and vainly transmit the sacred traditions to those who do not understand. And this is still more laughable than others, on their behalf, repeat the abjurations and the sacred compacts. But thy Hierarchical judgment must not be too hard upon those who are led astray, but, persuasively, and for the purpose of leading them to the light, reply affectionately to the objections alleged by them, bringing forward this fact, in accordance with sacred rule, that not all things Divine are comprehended in our knowledge, but many of the things, unknown by us, have causes be seeming God, unknown to us indeed, but well known to the Ranks above us. Many things also escape even the most exalted Beings, and are known distinctly by the All-Wise and Wise-making Godhead alone. Further, also, concerning this, we affirm the same things which our Godlike initiators conveyed to us, after initiations from the early tradition."

http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areopagite_14_ecclesiastical_hierarchy.htm#c3.2 (accessed October 6, 2016). Cp. Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom.

¹⁹⁸ John Moschus (c. 550-619).

¹⁹⁹ John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, chap. 196, 197, translated as *The Spiritual Meadows*, "The miracle which happened to the children of Apamia, when in play they repeated the words of the prayer of consecration," and "The story told by Ruffinus about the holy Athanasius and his childhood companions," <http://www.vitae-patrum.org.uk/page158.html> (accessed October 26, 2016).

Communion of the little children²⁰⁰, but with Horn and Martens I do believe that this shows how they were imitating what they had seen at church²⁰¹, and considering the *disciplina arcani* we may wonder whether the church allowed non-baptized, non-communing witnesses to these sacraments in the history described here²⁰².

2.3.1.2. Rome

Around 500, John the Deacon, of the church of Rome, describes in his letter to Senarius a similar threefold pattern, starting with anointments with oil, followed by baptism, after which the baptized person, now clothed in white raiment like a wedding garment, may approach the table of the heavenly bridegroom²⁰³. John the Deacon then explains: "I must say plainly and at once, in case I seem to have overlooked the point, that all these things are done even to infants, who by reason of their youth understand nothing. And by this you may know that when they are presented by their parents or others, it is necessary that their salvation should come through other people's profession, since their damnation came by another's fault ..." ²⁰⁴ In this first Communion, milk and honey are included²⁰⁵. John the Deacon seems to suggest that for those who die without all the rituals being performed by the bishop, baptism suffices for salvation²⁰⁶. According to Turner, the late sixth, early seventh century *Order 11* contains the baptismal liturgy as led by popes. It reflects the threefold pattern of baptism, anointment and Communion. The instruction to fast in preparation for participation in Communion seems specifically written with regard to suckling infants²⁰⁷.

²⁰⁰ Baumgärtler (1929), 90.

²⁰¹ Cornelia B. Horn and John W. Martens, *"Let the Little Children Come to Me": Childhood and Children in Early Christianity* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2009), 299f.

²⁰² The *Disciplina Arcani*, the discipline of the mysteries, may have ended near the end of the sixth century, *The Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, s.v. "Arcani Disciplina."

²⁰³ John the Deacon, *Letter to Senarius*, 3-6, in Johnson (2003), 209f. Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom.

²⁰⁴ John the Deacon, *Letter to Senarius*, 7, in Johnson (2003), 211.

²⁰⁵ John the Deacon, *Letter to Senarius*, 12, in Johnson (2003), 211f. Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom.

²⁰⁶ John the Deacon, *Letter to Senarius*, 14, in Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom. The custom to offer milk and honey is also found in the *Veronese - or Leonine Sacramentary*, dated at the end of the 6th century, *Veronese Sacramentary* May 10:1, in Turner (2004), chap. 4 CD-Rom.

²⁰⁷ *Order 11* (Ordo Romanus XI), 96 –105: "Then the bishop baptizes one or two or however many of these infants he likes, and the rest are baptized by the deacon whom the bishop instructs. Then raising up these infants in their hands, they offer them to a presbyter. This presbyter then makes the cross out of chrism with his thumb on the crown of their heads, saying, Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc. And those who will receive them have been prepared with cloths in their hands, and take the infants from the bishop or the deacons who baptize them. Then the bishop comes out of the font, having a chair arranged in the church where he wishes, sitting in it. And these infants are brought before him and he gives to each a stole, a chasuble and a chrismal, and ten coins, and they are dressed. Fully dressed, they are arranged in a circle according to the order in which their names were inscribed, and the bishop gives a prayer over them, confirming them with the invocation of the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit. When the prayer is finished,

2.3.1.3. France

The 585 Council of Mâcon, in France, decreed that remaining fragments of the consecrated Communion bread were to be consumed by children, *innocents*, on Wednesdays and Fridays²⁰⁸. The Gaul custom may have originated from the Greek Church. Crawford considers it an indication of how widespread the custom of distributing the remainders to children was²⁰⁹. Browe suggests it may have been rare in the Western medieval church²¹⁰. In 594 the Syrian Evagrius Scholasticus describes a similar custom in the imperial city of Constantinople: "It is an old custom in the imperial city, that, when there remains over a considerable quantity of the holy fragments of the immaculate body of Christ our God, boys of tender age should be fetched from among those who attend the schools, to eat them"²¹¹. Regarding the frequency of Communion, the decree of the Council of Mâcon reveals how Communion was also celebrated on weekdays, and thus gives evidence of the existence of frequent Communion in at least parts of Gaul in this era²¹². Did children receive the fragments because the smallest children do not participate in regular Communion celebration after their first Communion, as Browe suggests²¹³, or do children receive Communion primarily because of their innocence, and therefore more frequently than adults?²¹⁴ The perceived

he makes the cross with his thumb and chrism on the foreheads of each, saying, In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you. And they respond, Amen. This above all must be avoided, that this part not be neglected, because then every legitimate baptism will be confirmed in the name of Christianity. After this, they go up to the Mass and all these infants receive Communion. This must be prearranged, that after they have been baptized they neither take any food nor nurse before they receive Communion. And afterwards for the whole week of Easter they come to Mass every day and their parents offer on their behalf. Now this order of baptism written above may be celebrated at the vigil of Pentecost in the same way as on the vigil of holy Easter." Turner (2000), chap. 4, CD-Rom.

²⁰⁸ "We likewise decide that no presbyter stuffed with food or drunken with wine may handle the sacrifices or presume to concelebrate Masses on ordinary and feast days. For it is not right that bodily food be placed before spiritual food. But if anyone wants to try this, he loses the dignity of honor. For, it has already been defined worthy in the councils of Africa concerning such a matter, which we direct to associate with our decree, adding at the place, "Sacraments may not be concelebrated without fasts except on Holy Thursday." Whatever remainders of the sacrifices are still sitting in the sacristy after the end of Mass are brought to the church from that place where it was on Wednesdays and Fridays. It is announced that children who fast receive those same remainders soaked in wine." Council of Mâcon (585), 6, in Turner (2000), chap. 4, CD-Rom.

²⁰⁹ Charles Crawford, "Infant Communion: Past Tradition and Present Practice," *Theological Studies* 31, no.1 (1970), 528.

²¹⁰ Peter Browe, "Wann fing man an, die in einer Messe konsekrierten Hostien in einer anderen Messe auszuteilen?" in Browe (1938/2009), 386, 387.

²¹¹ Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. IV, chap. XXXVI,

http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/evagrius_4_book4.htm (accessed October 6, 2016). The miracle is also described in the biography of Menas in the *Acta Sanctorum*, Browe (1938/2009), 386, fn. 35.

²¹² Peter Browe, "Die öftere Kommunion der Laien im Mittelalter," in Browe (1929/2009), 72.

²¹³ "Das heißt wohl, daß um jene Zeit diese ganz kleinen Kinder zur gewöhnlichen Kommunion nicht zugelassen werden." Peter Browe, „Die Kommunion in der gallikanischen Kirche der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit," in Browe (1922/2009), 454.

²¹⁴ Hermans (1987), 94f.

similarity with the celebration of Communion is suggested by the requirement of prior fasting²¹⁵. Distribution of the remains of the Eucharist among school boys was not the only option. Other options were to give them to clergy or the altar boys, burn the remains, throw them in the river, or bury them²¹⁶.

2.3.1.4. Spain

In 675, the Eleventh Council of Toledo, Spain, laid down that no censure or ecclesiastical condemnation, should be passed on infants who were unable to retain the Eucharist²¹⁷: “Those of the faithful constrained by any unavoidable illness who vomit the Eucharist they have received, undergo no ecclesiastical condemnation. Nor does the threat of some punishment affect those who do so at the time of infancy, or who are placed in a certain remoteness of mind that they seem not to know what they do”²¹⁸. Turner concludes that, apparently, the participation of infants who might vomit in this sacred meal must have alarmed some people, whereas Fisher concludes that the church was not yet so disquieted by such unfortunate occurrences as to call into question the propriety of infant Communion²¹⁹. A little earlier, Ildefonsus²²⁰, bishop of Toledo from 657 to 667²²¹, described baptism as a ritual that primarily involved infants, and mentioned the Eucharist as one of the acts of the baptism ritual²²²: “After the regeneration of spiritual birth, after the grace of the heavenly unction, after the teaching of the Lord’s Prayer, after the invocation of God the Father, it is convenient now to come to a participation in the heavenly refreshment”²²³.

2.3.1.5. Threefold Pattern

The documents mentioned above reflect the threefold pattern of the rite of initiation, and reveal that for infants as well, baptism and Communion belong together. Browe will conclude regarding the Middle Ages that the custom of baptismal Communion was found all over the Orient and Occident, as attested by authors, synods and ordinations²²⁴. Mark Dalby agrees, but notes that the

²¹⁵ Peter Browe, “Die Nüchternheit vor der Messe und Kommunion im Mittelalter,” in Browe (1932/2009), 37.

²¹⁶ Browe (1932/2009), 303.

²¹⁷ Dalby (2003), 17.

²¹⁸ Council of Toledo XI (675), 11, in Turner (2000), chap. 4, CD-Rom.

²¹⁹ Turner (2000), chap. 4, CD-Rom; Fisher (2004), 106.

²²⁰ Ildefonsus (607-667).

²²¹ Fisher (2004), 99.

²²² Baumgärtler (1929), 81,82.

²²³ Translation Fisher (2004), 105.

²²⁴ Browe (1930/2009), 89. (89-114). Cp. Baumgärtler (1929), 81f.

rationale in the East and the West differed²²⁵. In the East, fifth century Theodore of Mopsuestia denied that Communion was given to children for the remission of sins²²⁶, while Isidore of Pellusium emphasized participation in the divine mysteries as incorporation into the body of Christ²²⁷. We have seen how Augustine linked John 6:53 with John 3:5 in his argument against the Pelagians²²⁸. In the West, this line of reasoning became the rationale for infant Communion²²⁹. Fifth century Marius Mercator²³⁰ and another writer²³¹ connect John 6:53 and John 3:5 in similar ways.

2.3.1.6. Necessity

A certain Ferrandus consulted Bishop Fulgentius²³² of Ruspe in Africa about a case in which death interrupted the initiatory rite with the result that the person had been baptized, but had not received the Eucharist yet²³³. With a reference to sermon 272 of Augustine, Fulgentius answers that one becomes a partaker of the body and blood of Christ in the moment of baptism, and thereby of the benefits of the Eucharist, even if one departs before actually receiving the sacrament²³⁴. Dalby notes how Fulgentius' interpretation of Augustine then became normative²³⁵. Turner's summary that people believed that baptism alone sufficed for eternal life, and that the faithful believed Communion was inessential does no justice to a concern such as that of Ferrandus²³⁶. The Church fathers often emphasized the salvific and live-giving effect of the Eucharist, but rather than believing it to be an absolute necessity for salvation, they attributed the gravity and necessity of divine command to

²²⁵ Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion: The New Testament to the Reformation*, Joint Liturgical Studies 56 (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2003), 15.

²²⁶ Theodore of Antioch (Mopsuestia), *Against those who say that men sin by nature and not by intention*, in Photius, *Bibliotheca* CLXXVII, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/photius_copyright/photius_04bibliotheca.htm#177 (accessed November 6, 2016).

²²⁷ Dalby (2003), 15, referring to *Ep.* LII.195 (PG 78.879).

²²⁸ Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 27, 34, NPNF1 5:25, 28; *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, Tractate XI.4, NPNF1 7:75f.

²²⁹ Dalby (2003), 15.

²³⁰ http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/02m/0390-0451,_Marius_Mercator,_Liber_Subnotationum_In_Verba_Juliani,_MLT.pdf (accessed November 9, 2016).

²³¹ N.N. *Epistola XXXVIII or Homilia de Corpore et Sanguine Christi*, VII, in PL 30.280. The author is uncertain, but the text has been attributed to Faustus of Riez (c. 405-495) by some, Dalby (2003), 15f.

²³² Fulgentius (c. 467-533).

²³³ *Letter 11, Ferrandus to Fulgentius* in Fulgentius, *Selected Works: The Fathers of the Church; Volume 95*, Trans Robert B. Eno (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1997), 475. Baumgärtler (1929), 67.

²³⁴ Fulgentius "Letter to Ferrandus" 12:25f, quoted in Turner (2000), chap. 4, CD-ROM.

²³⁵ Dalby (2003), 16.

²³⁶ Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-ROM.

it²³⁷. Baumgärtler makes the observation that Communion of infants was not made into a dogmatic core issue²³⁸ by Augustine, nor any of the popes²³⁹. The necessity of Communion served primarily as common ground in other debates.

2.3.1.7. Other developments

Some other developments in this era are relevant for the history of paedocommunion. The sixth century, for example, marked the beginning of private Masses with only a priest present. Bartels notices how with this innovation the sense of all the people participating in the Lord's Supper celebration began to be lost²⁴⁰. Frank Senn speaks about the sociofugal, or scattering, impact of the individual private reception of the Mass²⁴¹. The sixth century also provides the first examples of councils legislating minimal participation per year, possibly indicating the declining frequency of Lord's Supper celebration, at least by some²⁴². Also in this era, society's understanding of a child's identity and life stages began to change, as Turner highlights, which in time would affect the celebration of Communion for children²⁴³. In chapter 3, I show that Turner is wrong in suggesting that a division of life into stages of seven years *began* in this period²⁴⁴. Yet I do recognize that the practice of Christening and further theological development of the meaning of childhood and life stages, have had an influence on the history of paedocommunion.

2.3.1.8. Ministerial roles

Sixth and seventh century documents also show a development of the ministerial roles of presbyters and bishops in the initiation rites. The Episcopal privilege to confirm is attributed a primary role in the history of paedocommunion. Bradshaw suggests that increasing importance was given

²³⁷ Baumgärtler quotes O. Lutz: "Die Väterlehre über die Notwendigkeit der heiligen Eucharistie führt über eine gravis necessitas praecepti divini, innerlich motiviert durch ihre moralische Heilsnotwendigkeit, nicht hinaus," Baumgärtler (1929), 74.

²³⁸ 'einer dogmatischen Hauptfrage'

²³⁹ Baumgärtler (1929), 75.

²⁴⁰ Ernest Bartels, *Take Eat, Take Drink: The Lord's Supper through the Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2004), 83.

²⁴¹ Frank C. Senn, *The People's Work: A Social History of the Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 180.

²⁴² The 506 Council of Agde ruled: "The laity who do not receive Communion on Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost are not believed to be Catholic, nor are they regarded among Catholics," Council of Agde: 18, quoted in Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-ROM.

²⁴³ Turner (2000), 13.

²⁴⁴ Turner refers to the commentary on Job 13:26 by Gregory the Great, *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job*, Book 11:46, and Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, Book XX, 11:2,1-8; and his *The Book on Numbers*, 46. Mentioned in Turner (2000), chap. 4, CD-ROM.

to authoritative leadership in the Church's struggle against heresy and schism, already during the second century²⁴⁵. One of the questions of the sixth and seventh century was what part of the initiation rite could be performed by presbyters or priests and what part was a privilege of the bishop. On the Iberian Peninsula, presbyters originally anointed the baptized²⁴⁶, but with the conversion of the Spanish king in 589 Rome gained influence, and would continue to do so until the Arab invasion of 712²⁴⁷. Great Britain may have known customs similar to those on the Iberian Peninsula²⁴⁸. Sometimes presbyters were allowed to sign on the chest, but only bishops to sign on the head²⁴⁹. Sometimes exceptions were made in case of the bishop's absence²⁵⁰, in case of sickness or approaching death²⁵¹, or as long as the chrism was blessed by bishops²⁵². Eventually the Roman custom would prevail, making chrism or confirmation a privilege of the bishop alone²⁵³. Rylaarsdam speaks of the West insisting on the principle 'no bishop, no confirmation' "out of concern to preserve the power of bishops"²⁵⁴. I notice with Turner that the documents reveal how confirmation was sometimes deferred in the absence of a bishop²⁵⁵, especially as baptisms performed by bishops started to decline, but that (in this stage) no deferral of Communion is found in the records²⁵⁶.

2.3.1.9. Summary

I conclude that the documents reveal the threefold pattern for the initiatory rite whenever the bishop was present. In light of other regional variations, the custom of baptismal Communion is remarkably uniform and widespread. Newly baptized babies continued to receive Communion in the East and the

²⁴⁵ Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁴⁶ E.g. Martin of Braga *Second Council of Braga* (572) : 5. Council of Barcelona II (599) : 2. Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom

²⁴⁷ E.g. Council of Seville II (619) : 7. Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom

²⁴⁸ E.g. Bede *Ecclesiastical History* 2:2; 3:21; 4:13. Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom

²⁴⁹ E.g. Gregory, "Letter" 4:9; Isidore, *Ecclesiastical Offices* 2:27,1,4. Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom

²⁵⁰ E.g. In Sardinia in 594, Gregory, "Letter" 4:26; Martin of Braga, *Second Council of Braga* (572) : 52; Isidore, *Ecclesiastical Offices* 2:27,1,4. Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom

²⁵¹ E.g. Council of Epaone (517): 16; Pseudo-Sylvester *Council of Rome*.

²⁵² E.g. Braulio "Letter" 2:3; cp. Council of Mérida (666), 9.

²⁵³ E.g. Gregory "Letter" 11:3; Ambrosiaster *Questions of the Old and New Testament*: 93; Council of Seville II (619) : 7; Ildephonse, *Book on the Understanding of Baptism*, 128f., 131, 136; Council of Paris II (573); Gregory, "Letter" 13:20; Turner (2000), chap. 4 CD-Rom.

²⁵⁴ David M. Rylaarsdam, "United, Separated, Re-united: The Story of Baptism and the Lord's Supper," *Calvin Theological Seminary Forum* (Spring 2007): 5.

²⁵⁵ Percy explains how it was not only travel distance which could cause delay, but also the recurring issues of Episcopal sees remaining unoccupied for three and four years, and lack of diligence in visitation by the bishops, a practice condemned by several councils. David L. Percy, "Infant Communion – Part I: The Historical Practice," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 7 (1980): 44f.

²⁵⁶ Turner (2000), 12f.

West, though the rationale differed. Whether or not some of our sources express the first objections to this practice is up for debate. Until the end of the Merovingian dynasty the sources remain relatively silent regarding the participation of older children. But stories of children playing Mass and customs of distributing the remains of the Eucharist among schoolboys may hint at their continued participation. Communion of infants was not a dogmatic core issue. For many theologians, John 3:5 and John 6:53 seemed to put baptism and Communion on par in terms of necessity, though in cases of emergency, baptism provided the benefits of both. The necessity of baptismal Communion should be distinguished from the necessity of continued frequent Communion participation. Legislation of councils regarding minimal participation may indicate that this frequency declined, though the decree of the Council of Mâcon exemplifies the continued custom of more frequent celebration.

2.3.2. Eighth and Ninth Century and the Reign of Charlemagne

Political realities helped different liturgical threads to form a more unified pattern. Charlemagne became king of the Franks in 768 and emperor of the West in 800. Under his reign governmental unification was paralleled by ecclesiastical standardization of prayer and ritual²⁵⁷. This was accomplished by, among other things, compiling sacramentaries and producing and collecting orders of service. Sacramentaries were the books *that from the early Middle Ages supplied bishops and presbyters with the prayers they needed for the Eucharist and other liturgical occasions*. Orders or *ordines (Romani)* provided *more detailed instructions for liturgical celebrations*²⁵⁸. In the year 811 or 812 Charlemagne circulated a brief questionnaire on the rites of the baptismal liturgy among the metropolitan bishops of his empire²⁵⁹. The last question of the questionnaire read: Why do the baptized receive the body and blood of the Lord?²⁶⁰ Because of the questionnaire we have more material from the Carolingian period providing insight in at least part of the

²⁵⁷ Michael Driscoll speaks of attempts to impose liturgical uniformity from the time of Charlemagne and after, but also concludes that the Middle Ages knew no such liturgical uniformity. *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Liturgical Books." Martin D. Stinger speaks of Charlemagne's aim with the *Hadrianum* to impose "a model for all the churches (...) in order to bring uniformity where there had previously been diversity." Regarding the questionnaire Owen M. Phelan speaks of Charlemagne's principal interest in Christian formation, not in ritual uniformity. Martin D. Stringer, *A Sociological History of Christian Worship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 111; Owen M. Phelan, *The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism, and the Imperium Christianum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 165.

²⁵⁸ *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Liturgical Books."

²⁵⁹ Phelan (2014), 164.

²⁶⁰ Browe (1930/2009), 90.

paedocommunion practice and theology of this era. In a time that political realities standardized ritual and prayer for most of Western Christianity, the Moorish invasion of 712 isolated the churches on the Iberian Peninsula, causing the Spanish practice to diverge from that of Rome²⁶¹. Nevertheless, even in the Spanish churches the close connection between baptism and baptismal Communion remained²⁶². The sacramentaries, orders, questionnaire and responses by the Carolingian bishops, together with letters, treatises and council decrees, present the following picture of paedocommunion during this era.

2.3.2.1. Britain

I begin my overview of paedocommunion in these centuries in the two British church provinces. In his 734 *Letter to Ecgbert*, Archbishop of York, Bede encourages daily celebration of Communion, in a context where even those considered more devout take Mass only thrice a year²⁶³. But Bede writes: “And yet there are innumerable boys and girls, young men and maiden, old men and women, of most chaste life, who, beyond all doubt or controversy might be allowed to communicate in the heavenly mysteries every Sunday”²⁶⁴. The fact that according to Bede married people would also qualify, if they would observe the ecclesiastical discipline of continence, supports Nelson’s assumption that the young and old qualify because they are uncontaminated by sexual pollution²⁶⁵. Hermans suggests in this context that in the first half of the Middle Ages children may have participated more frequently than adults²⁶⁶. I also note that Bede appeals to the custom of the Roman Church, which Ecgbert himself had witnessed, and furthermore speaks about it as customary “throughout Italy, Gaul, Africa, Greece, and the whole East”, which

²⁶¹ Fisher (2004), 106.

²⁶² Baumgärtler (1929), 84.

²⁶³ Janet L. Nelson, “Parents, Children, and the Church in the Earlier Middle Ages,” in Wood (1994), 87.

Quoting from Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, chap. 15. https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost08/Bede/bed_epec.html (accessed October 3, 2016).

²⁶⁴ “How profitable (salutaris) is the daily reception of our Lord’s Body and Blood to every class of Christians, according to the practice which you well know the Church to uphold throughout Italy, Gaul, Africa, Greece, and the whole East” ... “This kind of piety and devout consecration of oneself to God is so alien to the customs of almost all the laity of our province, on account to the negligence of their teachers, and is so perfectly strange to them, that even those among them who appear most religious only venture to communicate in the holy mysteries at Christmas, the Epiphany, and Easter. And yet there are innumerable boys and girls, young men and maiden, old men and women, of most chaste life, who, beyond all doubt or controversy might be allowed to communicate in the heavenly mysteries every Sunday, and also on the feasts of the apostles and martyrs, as you yourself have seen them do in the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church. Even the married people, if they would observe the ecclesiastical discipline of continence, might be permitted to do the same, and would indeed gladly do it.” T.E. Bridgett, *History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain: Vol. I Britons, Picts, Scots and Anglo-Saxons* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881), 221.

²⁶⁵ Nelson (1994), 87.

²⁶⁶ Hermans (1987), 94f.

suggests that in many places unmarried youth participated in the Lord's Supper every Sunday and feast²⁶⁷. Thirteen years later, in 747, a council assembled in Clovesho, in the southern province of Canterbury, declared "Youth of the laity, not yet corrupted by the temptation to which their age is prone, are to be exhorted often to communicate. Even those who are older, whether unmarried or married, if they cease to sin, are to be admonished frequently to go to Communion, lest they faint for want of that saving food and drink, since our Lord says: "Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall have no life remaining in you."²⁶⁸ Browe understands these statements by Bede and the Synod of Clovesho as indications of further decline of frequent Communion celebration in both English church provinces²⁶⁹. Though we do not know how the northern province of York responded to Bede's plea, we do know that in 740²⁷⁰ Ecgbert of York stated in his *Excerptiones* that those who baptize "ought always to have the Eucharist with them, though they travel to places far distant."²⁷¹ His words do not address the desired frequency of Communion celebration, but they underscore the perceived necessity of Communion for infants.

2.3.2.2. *The European continent*

Bede's letter already provided some information about unmarried youth frequently participating in the Lord's Supper in Rome, Italy, Gaul and Greece. Further information on the practice on the European continent is for example found in the Gelasian Sacramentary. This second oldest liturgical book was compiled around 750, yet reflects the mixed Roman, Gallican liturgical practice of the Merovingian period²⁷². It provides that an infant baptized in sickness be given Communion, and that, if he recovers, he be subsequently confirmed by the bishop²⁷³. The 790/800 *Gelasian Sacramentary of Gellone*, a

²⁶⁷ Cp. Browe (1929/2009), 69, 71.

²⁶⁸ Bridgett (1881), 221. Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland; Vol. III* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1871), 370. Cp. Turner (2000), chap.5, CD-ROM.

²⁶⁹ Browe (1929/2009), 71.

²⁷⁰ Holloway provides this date for the *Excerptiones*. Holloway (1901), 83.

²⁷¹ Dalby (2003), 18. "Let the parent whose child is dead without Baptism through his neglect, do penance one year, and never live without penance. If the priest whose duty it was, neglected to come, though asked, let him be chastised by the doom of the Bishop, for the damnation of a soul. But all the faithful may do this when they find any dying unbaptized; nay, it is commanded that men should snatch a soul from the devil by Baptism; that is by Baptizing them with water simply blessed in the Name of the Lord, by immersing them, or pouring water upon them, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Therefore they who can, and know how to Baptize, faithful monks especially, ought always to have the Eucharist with them, though they travel to places far distant." Holloway (1901), 72-73.

²⁷² Or the liturgy of seventh century Rome with Frankish additions, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Liturgical Books."

²⁷³ Darwell Stone, *Holy Communion* (Longmans: Green, 1904), 303.

later Frankish edition of a more original version, also contained one baptismal rite for emergencies, as well as two for Easter. It instructs “After this, they go up to Mass and all receive Communion, seeing that those who were baptized take no food nor nurse before they receive Communion with the sacraments of the body of Christ. And on all seven days of Easter they always go up to Mass and they offer it for themselves and all receive Communion”²⁷⁴.

Ordo Romanus I, probably from the eighth century, likewise instructs that infants baptized on Easter Eve “take no food nor be suckled before they partake of the Sacraments of the Body of Christ”²⁷⁵. Ordo Romanus XV, from the second half of the eighth century, orders that baptized infants should be confirmed on the same day or, in absence of the bishop, as soon as possible²⁷⁶. Some partial texts imply a threefold pattern for the initiation rite performed by the bishop at Easter Vigil. Order 30 B, from northwest France round 780, is an example of the more common complete texts which explicitly describe all three elements of the rite²⁷⁷. Its description of infant Communion at Easter is also explicit: “And all the people receive Communion, even the infants who were baptized on this night. They do the same through the octave of Easter”²⁷⁸. An early form of the Gregorian Sacramentary also directs that at the Easter baptisms, if the bishop be present, infants be confirmed and then given Communion, and that, if the bishop be not present, the presbyter give them Communion²⁷⁹. A later form of the Gregorian Sacramentary refers, in similar fashion, to the Communion of the infants baptized at Easter²⁸⁰.

2.3.2.3. *Confirm and Commune*

Turner points out how in some documents of this period the verb ‘to confirm’ means ‘to give Communion from the cup’. *Order 23*²⁸¹ for example says: “After the bishop baptizes four or five infants, he goes out and the presbyters and two deacons baptize, and afterwards he consigns and chrismates them. (...) The choir sings Lamb of God and the four acolytes standing at the aisle respond, holding pitchers and goblets which they hold afterwards to confirm

²⁷⁴ *Gelasian Sacramentary of Gellone 2322–8*, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁷⁵ Ordo Romanus I, c. vii. n. 46, Scudamore (1872), 49; the Eucharistic fast or ‘leiumium eucharisticum’, Baumgärtler (1929), 82.

²⁷⁶ Ordo Romanus XV, number 119, mentioned by Hermans (1987), 80. Turner quotes *Order 15* 74–78, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁷⁷ Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁷⁸ *Order 30 B*; 63, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁷⁹ Stone (1904), 303-304. W.E. Scudamore, *Notitia Eucharistica: A Commentary, Explanatory, Doctrinal, and Historical, on the Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion According to the use of the Church of England* (London: Rivingtons, 1872), 49.

²⁸⁰ Stone (1904), 303-304.

²⁸¹ Appearing in a 9th century manuscript, but describing the liturgy from the first half of the 8th century.

the people”²⁸². The usage originates in Rome, whereas the usage of the term confirmation for the post-baptismal anointing is Gallic²⁸³.

2.3.2.4. *Alcuin and Charlemagne’s questionnaire*

Similar use of the term can already be found in Alcuin’s 798 *Letter 134* to the priest Oduin, in which Alcuin speaks of Communion as confirming²⁸⁴ baptism: “Thus they are confirmed with the Lord’s body and blood, so that they may become members of that head who suffered and rose for them”²⁸⁵. In his book on the offices of the church, Alcuin gives a very similar description of the rites “After an infant is baptized, he is to be clothed, and brought to the bishop, if he be present, who is to confirm him with chrism, and give him Communion: and if the bishop be not present, the presbyter shall communicate him”²⁸⁶. The progress from pagan to catechumen, *primo paganus*, is described in Alcuin’s *Letter 134*²⁸⁷. Charlemagne’s questionnaire on the rites of baptismal liturgy drew its topics from Alcuin’s *Primo paganus*²⁸⁸ and resembles his description of the rites of baptism so much that some suggest it may have originated with Alcuin²⁸⁹.

2.3.2.5. *Responses*

In response to Charlemagne’s last question, “Why do the baptized receive the body and blood of the Lord?”²⁹⁰, the Carolingian bishops often refer to John 6:53²⁹¹, often in combination with John 3:5²⁹². In his answer, Jesse of Amiens does so with what sounds like an echo of Alcuin’s words²⁹³. Alcuin’s pupil,

²⁸² *Order 23*: 31, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁸³ Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁸⁴ Some suggest in the sense of completing Baptism. E.g. Frank C. Quinn, “The Sacraments of Initiation and Christian Life,” *Spirituality Today* 34, 1 (1982), 27-38.

²⁸⁵ Alcuin, *Letter 134*, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM. Quinn gives the translation “Thus it [baptism] is confirmed [that is, completed] by the Lord’s body and blood, in order that he [the neophyte] might be a member of the head who for him suffered death and rose again,” Quinn (2016). Cp. Dalby (2003), 17.

²⁸⁶ Alcuinus Incertus, *De divinis officiis: De Sabbato Sancto Vigil. Paschae* Caput XIX. As quoted in English in Joseph Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Vol. IV (London: William Straker, 1844), 4f.

²⁸⁷ As well as in the *De divinis officiis*, the book on the offices of the church later attributed to Alcuin http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/xanfang.php?tabelle=Alcuinus_Incertus_cps2&corpus=2&lang=0&allow_download= (accessed December 12, 2016).

²⁸⁸ Phelan (2014), 165f.

²⁸⁹ Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM. Note that Alcuin died seven or eight years before the questionnaire circulated.

²⁹⁰ Browe (1930/2009), 90.

²⁹¹ E.g. Archbishop Magnus of Sens († 818), Bishop Theodulf of Orléans († 821), Bishop Jesse of Amiens († 836), Dalby (2003), 17. As well as the anonymous response, Anonymous, *Response to Charlemagne, Text 5*, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁹² E.g. Archbishop Leidrad of Lyons († 821), Dalby (2003), 17.

²⁹³ “The infant is confirmed with the body and blood of Christ, so that he is able to be his member, who suffered and rose for him. The Lord himself witnesses this for he says: ‘who eats my flesh and drinks my

Amalarius of Trèves uses the image of putting on Christ from Galatians 3:27²⁹⁴. Archbishop Leidrad of Lyons also refers to the bread that strengthens man's heart and the wine that gladdens him from Psalm 104:15²⁹⁵, and to the waters and table of Psalm 23²⁹⁶. When writing about its necessity, the Carolingian bishops refer to Augustine²⁹⁷. The responses by the Carolingian bishops Odilbert of Milan, Magnus of Sens, Theodulf of Orléans, Leidrad of Lyons, Maxentius of Aquileia²⁹⁸ and Amalarius of Trèves, unanimously confirm the perceived necessity of baptismal Communion²⁹⁹. The same sense of necessity is implied by the instruction in Charlemagne's own *Capitularies* from 810-813: "That priests have always the Sacraments ready to communicate sick folks, be they old or young, that they may not die without communicating"³⁰⁰. Darby may be right when suggesting that a stricter doctrine regarding the necessity of Communion began to re-emerge in the Carolingian era³⁰¹.

In his response, Amalarius of Trèves explicitly defends the Communion of children and infants: "Even though because of their age children may not be able to understand this conversion to God and belief, we nonetheless believe that they convert to God because of the sacrament of conversion and that they have faith because of the sacrament of faith (...) Concerning children who do not speak, it may happen that those who were bound by the sin of another may be loosed by the profession of another"³⁰².

2.3.2.6. Other occasions

It is good to realize that most of our sources provide information about baptismal Communion or Communion for the sick and dying. What can be said about other occasions of children communing? As Browe summarizes: It is

blood, remains in me and I in him because my flesh is true food and my blood true drink," as quoted in Phelan (2014), 157. Cp. Dalby (2003), 17.

²⁹⁴ Amalarius of Trèves or Trier († 850) writes: "He is confirmed with the body and blood of the Lord... so that we may confidently say "as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"," Amalarius, *Letter to Charlemagne on Scrutiny and Baptism*, 47f., Dalby (2003), 17; Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁹⁵ Dalby (2003), 17.

²⁹⁶ Leidrad *The Sacrament of Baptism* 9, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁹⁷ E.g. Bishop Odilbert of Milan († 814), Bishop Jesse of Amiens († 836), Baumgärtler (1929), 78.

²⁹⁸ Maxentius of Aquileia in Northern Italy († 837). Maxentius, *Letter to Charlemagne* 3, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

²⁹⁹ Baumgärtler notes that infants are not mentioned, but implied by the statements regarding its necessity, Baumgärtler (1929), 85. But Amalarius does explicitly mention children and infants.

³⁰⁰ L'Arroque, *The History of the Eucharist* (London: George Downes at the Three Flower de Lucas, 1684), 128. Dalby quotes "that the presbyter should always have the Eucharist ready that when anyone becomes infirm, or a child becomes sick, he may immediately communicate him, lest he die without Communion," *Capitulatia lxxxi 16*, Dalby (2003), 18, fn. 119.

³⁰¹ Darby (2003), 18.

³⁰² Amalarius, *Letter to Charlemagne on Scrutiny and Baptism*, 51, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

most likely that children were welcomed to the Eucharist without any regard to age. Whether they did so frequently or seldom, we do not know. There is hardly any report from the fifth until the ninth century about that³⁰³. Hermans suggests that the third Synod of Tours in 813 may mark the decline in the frequency of children participating in Communion³⁰⁴. In addition to Bede's letter I could mention Angilbert³⁰⁵, abbot of St. Riquier in the diocese of Amiens, who describes the order of Communion at Easter and Christmas. First monks and other clergy would receive Communion, then deacons would serve men and women separately, after which the boys at the door would receive it, and finally those who did not receive it at that location³⁰⁶. Browe notices that though Communion was clearly considered necessary, it was apparently not considered a special virtue to participate in it, considering that none of the biographers of the Carolingian period make special mention of participation in Communion during the youth of the Saints³⁰⁷.

2.3.2.7. First Eucharistic Controversy

Radding notes that it was not until the ninth century that the bread and wine of the Mass became the subject of sustained discussion³⁰⁸. Two lines of thought which can be distinguished in Medieval views on the Eucharist are Ambrosian's realism or metabolism and Augustine's symbolism³⁰⁹. Augustine's symbolism evolved into the symbolic or spiritual presence view³¹⁰. Ambrosian's realism or metabolism evolved into the real presence view, which found an explicit advocate in Paschasius Radbertus, who published his book *On the Body and Blood of the Lord* round 831³¹¹. King Charles the Bald visited Radbertus' monastery in 843. At his request, Ratramnus, another monk in the same monastery, wrote a response under the same title *On the Body and Blood of the Lord*, but from the other, symbolic, perspective³¹². The publications have been characterized as the first Eucharistic controversy of

³⁰³ Browe (1922/2009), 454.

³⁰⁴ 3rd Synod of Tours (813), can. 50, Hermans (1987), 95.

³⁰⁵ Angilbert (c. 760-814).

³⁰⁶ Angilbertus, *Statuta quaedam rubrica*, Hermans (1987), 93; Browe (1932/2009), 304

³⁰⁷ Browe (1922/2009), 454

³⁰⁸ Charles Radding and Francis Newton, *Theology, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Eucharistic Controversy: 1078-1079; Alberic of Monte Cassino Against Berengar of Tours* (New York: Columbia University, 2003), 3.

³⁰⁹ J. van Genderen, "Het avondmaal in de middeleeuwen," in *Bij brood en beker: Leer en gebruik van het Heilig Avondmaal*, ed. W. van 't Spijker, 2nd ed. (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1999), 91. But compare David S. Hogg, "Carolingian Conflict: Two Monks on the Mass," in *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ Until He Comes*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Matthew R. Crawford (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 128, fn.2.

³¹⁰ Hogg (2010), 129.

³¹¹ *De corpore et sanguine Domini*. Van Genderen (1999), 91. Hogg (2010), 130f. A revised edition was published in 844, cp. Bartels (2004), 109.

³¹² *De corpore et sanguine Domini*. Van Genderen (1999), 92; Hogg (2010), 135f.

the Middle Ages³¹³, but their irenic Eucharistic debate may only have become a controversy in later times³¹⁴. Eventually Radbertus' view would become the dominant view, and quite significant for the paedocommunion practice.

2.3.2.8. Other developments

Bartels mentions the development of Eucharistic piety in the ninth century, which continued in the following centuries, with an emphasis on the unworthiness of common people to celebrate the Eucharist. According to Bartels it was this emphasis that eventually led to the practice of confession of sins before each Mass³¹⁵. Turner mentions the *Rules of the Canons* by Chrodegang of Metz around 760 as the first time the church connected the confession of sins to the reception of Communion³¹⁶. Hendriks describes how the Irish monastic custom of doing confession became a custom in the Irish churches during the ninth century, then also of the Anglo-Saxon churches, and then further throughout Europe by Anglo Saxon missionaries³¹⁷. With the later decree of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, confession would play a key role in the history of paedocommunion³¹⁸. Turner also registers a growing expectation of, and emphasis on spiritual and moral preparation for Communion³¹⁹. In light of the Reformed requirements for profession of faith prior to admission to the Table it is interesting to note, for example, that Theodulf of Orleans³²⁰ requires candidates for baptism and confirmation, as

³¹³ Van Genderen speaks of *'De eerste strijd over het avondmaal'*, Van Genderen (1999), 90f.

³¹⁴ Willemien Otten, "Between Augustinian sign and Carolingian reality: the presence of Ambrose and Augustine in the Eucharistic debate between Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus of Corbie," *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 80, no. 2 (2000): 137-156.

³¹⁵ Bartels (2004), 114. Percy calls it one of the two major developments that brought about the decline of infant Communion, Percy (1980), 44f.

³¹⁶ "We decree that every year or twice a year our clergy should sincerely make their confessions to their bishop at these times, once at the beginning of Lent before Easter, the other between the middle of the month of August and the first of November. . . . Those among the clergy whose sins do not restrict them should receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ on all Sundays and special festivals," Chrodegang of Metz, *Rules of the Canons* 14, Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

³¹⁷ A.N. Hendriks, *Kinderen aan de tafel van Christus*, 2nd ed. (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1990), 27, fn.37.

³¹⁸ Rylaarsdam mentions it as the fourth out of five developments which led to the disappearance of paedocommunion, Rylaarsdam (2007), 6.

³¹⁹ As examples Turner quotes Theodulf and the Council of the Franks. "The people should be admonished never to approach the most holy sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord indifferently, nor to abstain from it for a long time," Theodulf, *Chapters to the Priests of His Parish*, 44; "It is indeed very necessary and worthy of the greatest correction that Communion of the sacred body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ never be neglected. Up to now it has been neglected by almost everyone, as if that which establishes the salvation of our redemption and the greatness of salvation were not in the least necessary. Jesus said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you." Hence all the faithful must be admonished and instructed that, cleansed and purified, they should approach that Communion, and receive Communion often and reverently, lest according to the apostle, "They eat and drink judgment on themselves."," Council of the Franks (818/819–829) 2f. Turner (2000), chap. 5, CD-ROM.

³²⁰ Theodulf of Orléans (c. 750/760- 821).

well as the godparents, to know the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer by heart³²¹.

2.3.2.9. Summary

I conclude that in this period baptismal Communion remained the norm. In the presence of a bishop an anointing was included in the initiation rite, but in the absence of the bishop Communion was still offered by the presbyters. Sometimes baptismal Communion is spoken of in terms of confirmation. Communion of sick or dying infants and children is also widely attested in the sources of this period. I lean towards Browe's position that it is most likely that children were welcomed to the Eucharist without any regard of age. The few sources suggest that the frequent Communion of children was custom in Rome, Italy, Gaul, Africa and Greece, and though encouraged by Bede, it was apparently not yet custom in England. In retrospect, the earliest developments that would later contribute to the end of Communion of infants and young children can be recognized in the publications of Rabertus and Ratramnus, in the growth of Eucharistic piety, and in the earliest requirement of knowledge of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

2.3.3. Tenth, eleventh and twelfth century – until Lateran IV

In this period, new kinds of liturgical books are developed, adding to the variety of our sources. In the ninth to fifteenth centuries, the Pontifical evolves³²², which is a liturgical book containing rites for exclusive use by the bishop. Over the tenth to the middle of the thirteenth century, all or most of the liturgical books of the mass are gradually brought together into what is called the missal—a single volume for use by the priest³²³. A further increase of documents in the twelfth century reveals an increasing systematical reflection on the sacrament as well as strong developments of the practice³²⁴. The eleventh century witnesses the formation of a new educational environment and the emergence of scholastic culture³²⁵.

³²¹ Hermans (1987), 80 fn. 101. Hermans refers to MANSI, 13, 1000.

³²² Or *Liber pontificalis*.

³²³ *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Liturgical Books."

³²⁴ Hermans (1987), 63.

³²⁵ Charles (2003), 10,14.

2.3.3.1. Threefold pattern

All sorts of liturgical books, orders, sacramentaries, Pontificals and missals of the tenth³²⁶, eleventh³²⁷ and twelfth³²⁸ centuries continue to mention baptism, chrism or confirmation and Communion as elements of the initiatory rite. Twelfth century Benedictine Geoffrey of Vendôme explains the significance of each: “In baptism, the forgiveness of sins is given through the Holy Spirit. In confirmation the Holy Spirit is invited to come and dwell in, strengthen, and defend that house which it sanctified. (...) Then in the reception of the body and blood of the Lord, the Christian soul is healed from the wound of sins, reformed into the state of eternal salvation, and made one body with Christ”³²⁹. Some of the documents describing the threefold pattern also prescribe a Communion fast³³⁰. Some of the documents mention how little children are held in right arms, whereas older ones stand on the foot of their godparents³³¹. Many of these documents describe how the baptized are dressed in white garments, some mention the additional giving of a candle³³². Those baptized on Easter, are instructed to celebrate the Mass and take Communion all seven days of Easter³³³.

³²⁶ Turner gives examples of -, and quotes from the *St. Remy Sacramentary* (c. 900), the *Roman-Germanic Pontifical / Order 50* 29:64-70; 72ff.; 78; 91f.; 99 (c. 950-064), the *Fulda Sacramentary* “Order of the Baptistry” (c. 975), and the *Missal of Robert of Jumièges* “Order of Baptizing” at Rouen (c. 1000), Turner (2000), chap. 6&7, CD-ROM.

³²⁷ Turner gives examples of -, and quotes from the *Triplex Sacramentary of Zurich* “Holy Saturday” 1295–1301 (c. 1020-1030), the *Besançon Pontifical* “Holy Saturday” (copied c. 1031-1066), the *Nevers Sacramentary* “Order of Baptizing Children” (c. 1050), the *Pontifical of Prudentius or Troyes Pontifical* (1060), the *Moissac Sacramentary* “Holy Saturday” (11th century), the *Pontifical of St. Thomas of Canterbury* “Blessing the Font” (11th century), and the *Codex Barberini 564 67^v* (11th century), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM. Bridgett mentions how the *Rede Boke of Darbye* (11th century) as well as the *Sarum Manual* (from Salisbury) prescribe both confirmation and Communion immediately after baptism, Bridgett (1881) Vol II, 23. Baumgärtler mentions the (Silos manuscript of the) *Liber Ordinum*, Baumgärtler (1929), 84.

³²⁸ Turner gives examples of -, and quotes from the *Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century* 32:26-33 (compiled from the time of Gregory VII (1073–1085) to the end of the 12th century), the *Pontificals of Winton* (Cambridge University Library), *Ely* (the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge) and *Magdalen College* (Oxford) “Baptism” (early 12th century), the *Pontifical of Magdalen College* (ms. 226) “Baptism” (early 12th century) and the *Apamea Pontifical* (1214, from Apamea, Syria), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³²⁹ Geoffrey of Vendôme *Works* 8, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³³⁰ E.g. *St. Remy Sacramentary*, *Roman-Germanic Pontifical / Order 50*, *Rieux Missal* “Holy Saturday” (12th century), Turner (2000), chap. 6&7, CD-ROM.

³³¹ E.g. “Infants are actually held in right arms. But older ones place a foot upon the foot of their godparents.” *Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century* 32:26-33; *Roman-Germanic Pontifical / Order 50*, *Triplex Sacramentary of Zurich* “Holy Saturday” 1295–1301, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³³² E.g. Elfric, “Letter” 3:19 (c. 1000), *Missal of Robert of Jumièges* “Order of Baptizing,” *Triplex Sacramentary of Zurich* “Holy Saturday” 1295–1301, *Besançon Pontifical* “Holy Saturday,” *Codex Ottobonianus* 312 f. 415^f, *Vaticanus* 4770 f. 112^v, *Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century* 32: (26-33?), 37, the *Pontifical of Magdalen College* (ms. 226) “Baptism,” the *Pontificals of Winton, Ely and Magdalen College* “Baptism,” Bernhard of Porto, *Order of Offices of the Lateran Church* 164 (the Lateran Basilica in Rome) (c. 1145), and the *Apamea Pontifical*, Turner (2000), chap. 6&7, CD-ROM.

³³³ E.g. *St. Remy Sacramentary*, *Roman-Germanic Pontifical / Order 50*, *Besançon Pontifical* “Holy Saturday,” *Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century* 32:37, *Rieux Missal* “Holy Saturday,” and the *Apamea Pontifical*, Turner (2000), chap. 6&7, CD-ROM.

2.3.3.2. *Baptismal Communion*

The tradition that both liturgical books and theologians hand down is that the initiatory rite only includes confirmation when the bishop is present and that presbyters serve Communion to the baptized whenever the bishop is not present³³⁴. The Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Elfric of York³³⁵ also instructs his priests to “give the Eucharist to children when they are baptized”³³⁶. The fact that this Episcopal privilege is also found in eleventh and twelfth century documents from Ireland and Spain³³⁷ may be an indication of the influence of Pope Gregory VII and his unifying reforms³³⁸. Even in absence of the bishop baptismal Communion is the rule³³⁹. Turner acknowledges this, but suggests that some places may have begun to share the Eucharist separately from baptism. In the Antiphonary from Leon in Andalusia-Beja round 950, for example, Communion is not mentioned at Easter Vigil, but only on the following Tuesday³⁴⁰.

³³⁴ E.g. *Fulda Sacramentary* “Order of the Baptistry,” *Missal of Robert of Jumièges* “Order of Baptizing,” *Triplex Sacramentary of Zurich* “Holy Saturday,” *Besançon Pontifical* “Holy Saturday,” *Nevers Sacramentary* “Order of Baptizing Children,” the *Pontifical of Prudentius* or *Troyes Pontifical*, *Moissac Sacramentary* “Holy Saturday,” *Pontifical of St. Thomas of Canterbury* “Blessing the Font,” *Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century*, the *Pontificals of Winton, Ely and Magdalen College* “Baptism,” the *Pontifical of Magdalen College* (ms. 226) “Baptism,” and the *Apamea Pontifical*, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM. An exception to the rule is the instruction that a deacon serves Communion, in Bernhard of Porto, *Order of Offices of the Lateran Church* 164.

³³⁵ Elfric of York or Aelfric of Eynsham (c. 955-1010).

³³⁶ “Ye should give the Eucharist to children when they are baptized, and let them be brought to mass, that they may receive it all the seven days that they are unwashed,” Elfric, *At the Distribution of Chrism* (*Quando Dividis Chrisma*) in Henry Soames, *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Its History Revenues and General Character*, 3rd ed. (London: John W. Parker, 1844), 311. Cp. Browe (1930/2009), 89; Dalby (2003), 18.

³³⁷ E.g. “And if the bishop is not there, let them receive Communion from the presbyter,” *Roda* (Osca) *Pontifical Book* “Holy Saturday”; see also *Roda* (Osca) *Pontifical Book* “Order of Confirmation” (c. 1000-1050); “Here the infant is vested and if a bishop is present, he must confirm the infant at once with chrism,” *The Manuscript Irish Missal* “The Order of Baptism,” Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM. See also F.E. Warren, *The Manuscript Irish Missal: Belonging to the President and Fellows of Corpus Christi College Oxford* (London: Pickering, 1879), 203. Also in the Visigothic-Mozarabic Antiphonary or Leon Antiphonary “The Easter Vigil” (c. 950), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³³⁸ As this differs from what was found in the *Stowe Missal* in Ireland and the *Book of Orders* from Spain. Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³³⁹ Scudamore mentions a Pontifical from the church of Sens in France (c. 980), which echoes the rule regarding baptismal Communion as found in the Gregorian Sacramentary, Scudamore (1872), 49. Bridgett mentions the instruction of Gilbert, Bishop of Limerick (1110-1139), who instructed priest to give Communion to those who have just been baptized, Bridgett (1881), Vol. II, 23. See also *Codex Ottonianus* 312 f. 415^r; *Vaticanus* 4770 f. 112^r, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁴⁰ Visigothic-Mozarabic Antiphonary or Leon Antiphonary “The Easter Vigil” & “Mass, Tuesday after Easter” (c. 950), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

2.3.3.3. Sick and dying children

Sources attest not only to baptismal Communion, but also to Communion of sick and dying children³⁴¹. More than once the two coincided, as reflected in the *Roman-Germanic Pontifical* instruction regarding the sick³⁴² and Bernard of Saintes' *Decree* regarding the dying: "We decree that newborns should be brought to baptism with all haste, lest the dying perish without the grace of baptism, and that after they are baptized, as quickly as it may happen, they receive Holy Communion or the blood (of Christ)"³⁴³. When instructing about communing dying children, the *Rieux Missal* simply refers to the instructions for baptismal Communion on Holy Saturday: "It ought to be given in the same way in their death"³⁴⁴. Charlemagne's instruction for priests from the ninth century³⁴⁵ was repeated in eleventh and twelfth century decrees, for example by Burkhard of Worms around 1010, "A presbyter should always have the Eucharist ready, so that when anyone is ill, or if a child takes ill, he may give them Communion at once, lest they die without Communion"³⁴⁶. Bernaldus of Constance strongly urged to commune dying children: "It must be known that some think viaticum is not necessary for dying children. . . . Since the Roman order directs that Communion be given to them immediately after baptism, how much more should it be in extreme necessity, when they begin to depart from this age? We never deny ecclesiastical Communion to children in health more than to other Christians whether they are well or near death, if we wish to follow the instruction of the holy fathers"³⁴⁷. An example of a sick or dying child requesting Communion is found in the miracle story by Caesarius of Heisterbach³⁴⁸. Though Bernaldus of Constance's words and the miraculous story by Caesarius both prove and support the practice of communing sick children, they also reveal the existence of other opinions, as *in the later eleventh century doubts began to arise about the propriety of communicating infants and sick persons*, as Fisher suggests, *in consequence of a growing scrupulosity regarding the consecrated elements, itself a result of the gradual victory of Realism over Symbolism*³⁴⁹. A Middle Age practice, already condemned by the church at that time, was to bury children who were

³⁴¹ Baumgärtler even argues that Communion for the dying children is the only other way in which children received Communion, Baumgärtler (1929), 59f., 77. 93. 96f.

³⁴² "After baptizing, you touch the [sick] infant with chrism (...). You give Communion and confirm the infant as above," *Roman-Germanic Pontifical* 109:9f. (c. 950–964), Turner (2000) chap. 6, CD-ROM.

³⁴³ Bernard of Saintes, *Decrees* 2 (12th century), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁴⁴ *Rieux Missal* "Holy Saturday," Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁴⁵ *Capitulary* 81:16.

³⁴⁶ Burkhard of Worms, *Decrees* 5:10. Also in Ivo of Chartres (c. 1040–1115), *Decretal* 2:20, and Gratian (1150), "Consecration" 2, 93, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁴⁷ Bernaldus of Constance, *The Sacraments of Dying Children* 2 (latter half of the 11th century), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁴⁸ Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogue of Miracles* 9:44 (early 13th century), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁴⁹ Fisher (2004), 114.

baptized before death with a chalice of wine in one hand and a chalice containing the Host in the other³⁵⁰.

2.3.3.4. Other occasions

In general, it appears that the frequency of celebrating Communion declined for infants and children, as much as for adult lay people³⁵¹. In a maxim from the school of Anselm of Laon a feeling is expressed, which was maybe shared by others, regarding Communion after the baptismal Communion³⁵². On the one hand, it considers letting children die without having received both elements of Communion a *great risk and carelessness of the ministers*³⁵³, but on the other hand it expresses that after the first Communion the next Communion can be postponed *for the long term*³⁵⁴. A practice in which infants only celebrate Communion in connection to their baptism may explain Huguccio's commentary on Gracia at the end of the twelfth century³⁵⁵. But while Baumgärtler argues that for children without the use of reason, Communion after their initial baptismal Communion was unknown³⁵⁶, there is evidence to the contrary found in other places. Children who apprenticed the monastic life are one such example. In the *Monastic Customs* from Cluny, France, children are urged to receive Communion on Holy Thursday³⁵⁷. A later version of these *Monastic Customs* urges the same for Holy Thursday and Christmas and counts with the possibility of Communion received at other Masses³⁵⁸. The custom to give the remains of the Eucharist to children continued until the eleventh century when it became common to distribute these at the next celebration of the Mass³⁵⁹. Some miraculous stories from

³⁵⁰ Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*. 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), 51. Shahar points out that the church, though condemning the practice, required only ten days of penance.

³⁵¹ Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁵² Anselm of Laon (1050-1117).

³⁵³ (my translation) "incuria et periculum est ministrorum"

³⁵⁴ (my translation) "usque ad longum tempus," quoted in Hermans (1987), 87, who refers to A. Landgraf, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. III, part 2, 193. Fisher seems to provide the same quote in his English translation and refers to J.C. Didier, *Le Baptême des Enfants*, Tournai, 1959, 189f., who quotes *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 1939, 139, Fisher (2004), 115, 121, fn.10.

³⁵⁵ "If children are present ..., they are admitted to the mysteries of the Eucharist' (Gratian). This refers to adults. But if it refers to children as it seems, it concerns that which happens to children after baptism in Easter week, in which each day baptized children are brought to the church and some of the blood of Christ is poured into their mouth, so that in this way they are nourished with the body of Christ and the blood of Christ in the image of the children of Israel who were fed with manna after the crossing of the sea," Huguccio, *Commentary on Gratian*, "Consecration" 4:28, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁵⁶ "Darnach war außerhalb der Taufe eine Kommunion der noch nicht vernunftfähigen Kinder etwas Unbekanntes," Baumgärtler (1929), 93.

³⁵⁷ *Monastic Customs*, "Holy Thursday" (990-1015), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁵⁸ *Monastic Customs*, "Christmas," "Holy Thursday" (1100), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁵⁹ Browe (1932/2009), 303. Though Browe also mentions how 14th century Nikephorus Kallistus adds the personal remark to this story, that he received the same remains as a boy. Browe (1938/2009), 386.

this period reflect a practice of very young children participating in the Eucharist³⁶⁰; for example, a mother carried “at her breasts her little girl, who she wanted to participate in the mysteries”³⁶¹ or a woman “brought her own infant to church with the intent of receiving Communion”³⁶². Further evidence of children receiving Communion after their baptism is found in statements of theologians. Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, expresses what he believes to be the majority opinion of the continental and English churches in his letter to the Irish Bishop Domnaldus round 1081³⁶³: “We do all universally believe that it is of great benefit to people of all ages to fortify themselves by receiving the body and blood of the Lord during their lives and when they are dying”³⁶⁴. Domnaldus’ doubts once again indicate the existence of resistance to Communion of children, and though it is hard to establish how widely these doubts were shared, Fisher is right in calling them a portent of what was to happen in the next century³⁶⁵. With an allusion to the biblical image of milk and solid food, William of Auxerre³⁶⁶ distinguishes how the body of Christ benefits children and adults³⁶⁷, meanwhile confirming that children do receive Communion. Speaking of the sacraments of dying children, Bernaldus of Constance also refers to the treatment of children in health, saying “We never deny ecclesiastical Communion to children in health more than to other Christians whether they are well or near death, if we wish to follow the instruction of the holy fathers”³⁶⁸. In addition, some theologians similarly categorize the Communion of children with that of the mentally impaired³⁶⁹.

2.3.3.5. *Second Eucharistic Controversy*

Of great importance for the future development of paedocommunion is the second Eucharistic controversy or Berengerian controversy of the eleventh

³⁶⁰ See also Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogue of Miracles* 9:44, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁶¹ *Acts of the Saints*, “Ursmari” (11th century), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁶² Guibert of Nogent (c. 1055–1124), *The Commitments of the Saints* 1:2,1, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁶³ Domnaldus, but see Hermans (1987), 86, fn. 140. Dalby gives 1070 as date, Fisher 1089, Dalby (2003), 18; Fisher (2004), 115.

³⁶⁴ Lanfranc, *Lanfranc to Domnall, Letter 49*, Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson, eds., *The Letters of Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 155f. See also Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁶⁵ Fisher (2004), 115.

³⁶⁶ William of Auxerre (c. 1140–1231).

³⁶⁷ “The body of Christ is milk for those who imitate Christ in human virtues, but it does not confirm or strengthen them. However, it is bread for adults who imitate him not only in human but also in divine virtues in which they are so delighted. (...) Children receive the body of Christ, and it is nothing for them but milk,” William of Auxerre, *The Golden Compendium*, “The Sacrament of Confirmation,” Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁶⁸ Bernaldus of Constance, *The Sacraments of Dying Children* 2, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁶⁹ E.g. Ivo of Chartres (†1115), *Decretal* 1:160, Gratian (first half 12th century), “Consecration” 4, 28, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

century³⁷⁰. Berengar of Tours³⁷¹ adhered to the teaching of Ratramnus and his symbolic perspective on the elements of the Eucharist and felt supported in this by Augustine and other Church fathers³⁷². His opponents, such as Lanfranc of Bec, adhered to the teaching of Paschasius Radbertus and his realism or metabolism and felt equally supported by the patristic teachings³⁷³. But since the first Eucharistic controversy, the balance had shifted and the realistic view would win this second controversy³⁷⁴. Berengar's view was condemned twice in 1050³⁷⁵, and in 1059 he was forced to recant and swear by oath³⁷⁶ that "the bread and wine which are placed on the altar are after consecration not only a sacrament but also the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the senses not only sacramentally but in truth are taken and broken by the hands of the priests and crushed by the teeth of the faithful"³⁷⁷. But Berengar further developed his views³⁷⁸, was condemned again in 1075 at the Council of Poitiers³⁷⁹, and in 1079 Pope Gregory VII forced him to recant, be it with a somewhat milder formula than in 1059³⁸⁰. Though it would take another century for transubstantiation to become an official dogma³⁸¹, Fisher explains how in the circumstances of the Berengerian controversy the Church began to feel uneasy about the Communion of persons who might not be able to swallow the host³⁸². Rylaarsdam mentions the development of the doctrine of transubstantiation in the thirteenth century as the second development leading to reluctance to give Communion to young children³⁸³.

³⁷⁰ Fisher (2004), 115.

³⁷¹ Berengar or Berengerius of Tours (c. 999 – 1088).

³⁷² Van Genderen (1999), 92f.

³⁷³ Charles (2003), 5.

³⁷⁴ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*. Vol. 3 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: Chicago University, 1978), 186f.

³⁷⁵ By the councils of Rome and Vercelli, Radding (2003), 6.

³⁷⁶ By the council of Rome, Radding and Newton (2003), 6.

³⁷⁷ Fisher (2004), 115. Radding and Newton (2003), 6. Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012), 224.

³⁷⁸ Among others in his treatise *De sacra coena*, Van Genderen (1999), 93.

³⁷⁹ Radding (2003), 27.

³⁸⁰ "I, Berengarius, believe in my heart and openly profess that the bread and wine that are placed on the altar are through the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of our Redeemer substantially changed into the true and proper life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord; and that after the consecration is the true body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin, as an offering for the salvation of the world hung on the cross, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and (is) the true blood of Christ which flowed from his side; not only through the sign and power of the sacrament but in his proper nature and true substance; as it is set down in this summary and as I read it and you understand it. Thus I believe, and I will not teach any more against this faith. So help me God and this holy Gospel of God," Bradshaw and Johnson (2012), 225. Cp. Radding (2003), 106.

³⁸¹ Van Genderen (1999), 94.

³⁸² Fisher (2004), 115.

³⁸³ Rylaarsdam (2007), 5.

2.3.3.6. Under the form of wine

Several sources attest to the practice of serving only wine to those infants not able to eat the bread³⁸⁴. The *Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century* instructs: "But children who do not yet know how to eat or drink are given Communion either with a leaf or with a finger dipped in the Lord's blood and placed in their mouth"³⁸⁵, "because such children can suck naturally", English twelfth century theologian Robert Pulleyn explains³⁸⁶. Pulleyn describes the use of the priest's finger dipped in the Holy Blood³⁸⁷. Fisher considers this an illustration of the growth of scruple concerning the consecrated host³⁸⁸. Serving Communion only in the species of wine to infants, and doing so by means of a finger dipped in wine, was also custom in most of the Oriental Church³⁸⁹. The *Order of Offices of the Lateran Church* specifies that "the deacon wets the mouths of the infants with his little finger"³⁹⁰. William of Champeaux³⁹¹ mentions the custom of intinction and explains why some object to that method³⁹². He also argues in favor of giving the chalice only, on the basis of the doctrine of concomitance³⁹³. Several sources make clear that serving Communion only in the species of wine is allowed as an exception for children (and the sick), who are unable to eat or swallow bread. Pope Paschal does so in his 1118 letter to abbot Pontius of Cluny³⁹⁴. The Rieux Missal states: "And if there are such children who are knowingly able to eat, we do not forbid them receiving Communion according to the authority of the canons. Otherwise they must receive Communion only by drinking the Lord's blood"³⁹⁵. I already quoted Bernard of Saintes simply stating: "they receive Holy Communion or the blood (of Christ)"³⁹⁶. Gilbert of Poitiers mentions how children often take of the cup alone, and the sick of the bread alone³⁹⁷. Surprisingly, Hildegard of

³⁸⁴ Bernard of Saintes, *Decrees 2* (12th century), *Apamea Pontifical*, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁸⁵ *Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century* 32:26-33, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM. Fisher notes that the text makes clear that Rome itself did not follow this custom. Fisher (2004), 116.

³⁸⁶ Robert Pulleyn (†1174), *Ecclesiastical Offices* 1:20, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁸⁷ Robert Pulleyn (or Robert Paululus), *Ecclesiastical Offices* 1:20, Baumgärtler (1929), 87.

³⁸⁸ Fisher (2004), 116.

³⁸⁹ Custom among the Jacobites, the Nestorians, the Copts, the Ethiopians, and the Armenians. The Greek used a spoon, according to tradition as early as in Chrysostom's days. A custom also recorded early among the Maronites. Baumgärtler (1929), 88f.

³⁹⁰ Bernhard of Porto, *Order of Offices of the Lateran Church* 164, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁹¹ William of Champeaux, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne (c. 1070–1121).

³⁹² "Dipped bread was forbidden to be received for a frivolous reason, namely, as a distinction from the dipped morsel which the Lord extended to Judas. But it is acceptable with faith," William of Champeaux, *The Sacrament of the Altar*, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM. Stone (1904), 303-304.

³⁹³ Fischer (2004), 115.

³⁹⁴ Paschal II, "Letter" 535, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁹⁵ *Rieux Missal* "Holy Saturday," Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM. Radulf Ardens (†1101) speaks in the same vein, Baumgärtler (1929), 85f.

³⁹⁶ Bernard of Saintes *Decrees 2* (12th century), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁹⁷ Gilbert of Poitiers (c. 1076–1154), "Letter to Abbot Matthew," Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM

Bingen speaks of children to whom the bread is offered and the wine is denied³⁹⁸.

The documents regarding the serving of wine to infants are part of a variety of sources attesting to the practice of paedocommunion. At the same time, they reflect a growing scrupulosity in dealing with the sacrament, the growing influence of the doctrine of Realism³⁹⁹. As Fisher notices, a “first step to obviate the great risk involved in communicating infants was to give them Communion sub specie sanguinis”⁴⁰⁰. Several authors link this practice and its underlying theology with the later disappearance of infant Communion. Serving laity Eucharist under the form of bread first became practice in England in the twelfth century⁴⁰¹. Then it became common practice in the thirteenth century⁴⁰². And finally it became canon law in the fifteenth century⁴⁰³. Simply put, the church had become accustomed to serving infants Communion under the form of wine, and when Communion under the form of wine was abolished, infants received no Communion at all⁴⁰⁴. The very custom of serving infants Communion under wine, as well as the related doctrine of the full presence of Christ in each of the separate elements (concomitantia), served as an argument in the Eucharistic debate, which led to this decision⁴⁰⁵.

2.3.3.7. Substitute

An important development that contributes to the end of infant Communion is the replacement of the Communion rite by one which reminds of Communion⁴⁰⁶ by distributing other wine that is still somehow blessed by the priest, but not so as to be considered the blood of Christ. In the third part of the twelfth century Robert Pulleyn admonishes those who serve children

³⁹⁸ Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), *Scivias / Visions* 2:6, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM, Browe (1930/2009), 92.

³⁹⁹ Fisher (2004), 117.

⁴⁰⁰ Fisher (2004), 115. Keidel mentions fear for spilling the wine and thereby profaning the actual body and blood of the Lord as primary reason for withdrawing the cup, but also mentions fear of disease and hygiene as reasons. He also suggests the removal of the cup from the laity enhanced the dignity of the priest. Christian L. Keidel, “Is the Lord’s Supper for Children?” *Westminster Theological Journal* XXXVII, no. 3 (Spring 1975): 302, fn. 15.

⁴⁰¹ Tommy Lee, *The History of Paedocommunion: From the Early Church until 1500*, http://www.reformed.org/social/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/sacramentology/tl_pae do.html (accessed June 6, 2011). Lee quotes Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946), 274.

⁴⁰² Common practice according to Fisher, who also mentions that Aquinas spoke of a usage ‘in certain Churches’, Fisher (2004), 117.

⁴⁰³ At the council of Constance (1415). E.g. Rylaarsdam (2007), 6.

⁴⁰⁴ Charles Crawford, “Infant Communion: Past Tradition and Present Practice,” *Theological Studies* 31, no.1 (1970), 530, fn. 31.

⁴⁰⁵ Baumgärtler (1929), 86. Hermans (1987), 85f.

⁴⁰⁶ Browe uses the German phrase “Ersatz- und Erinnerungsritus,” Browe (1930/2009), 92.

other wine: “The ignorance of presbyters, still keeping the form but not the reality, gives them wine in place of blood”⁴⁰⁷. According to Browe this is the first time the replacement by other wine is recorded⁴⁰⁸. The sick young boy in the (early thirteenth century) miracle story of Caesarius of Heisterbach does not want to be deceived with unconsecrated host, and demands the body of the Lord⁴⁰⁹.

2.3.3.8. Necessary

Communion is often spoken of in terms of necessity. Peter of Poitiers⁴¹⁰, for example, mentions the Eucharist among necessary sacraments “without which salvation can hardly be achieved”⁴¹¹. Often necessity is expressed in terms of death and eternal life⁴¹². The Synod of Arris in 1025 spoke of “*the very great necessity of receiving this food*” and said that “eternal life is promised only to those who worthily receive the Body and Blood of Christ”⁴¹³. The oft-echoed instruction of Charlemagne prepares priests for serving the sick and dying, “lest they/someone die without Communion”⁴¹⁴. Others speak of the necessity of Communion as *Viaticum*, the necessary spiritual sustenance for the journey from this life to the next⁴¹⁵. Some speak of the necessity in relation to this life. Lanfranc of Canterbury, for example, calls it “necessary for all men” (...) “whether living or dying, to fortify themselves”⁴¹⁶. But Lanfranc of Canterbury also adds: “but in no sense do we believe (which God forbid!) that if baptized people die at once before they take the body and

⁴⁰⁷ Robert Pulleyn, *Ecclesiastical Offices* 1:20, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM. Compare the Parisian canon 39 (1198), Dalby (2003), 21.

⁴⁰⁸ Browe (1930/2009), 92.

⁴⁰⁹ “When a certain young boy was sick after having been breathed on by the Holy Spirit, he asked that the body of Christ be given to him. When his parents constrained him, he called out loudly, “Give me the body of the Lord! Give me the body of the Lord!” Word was brought to the priest. He said it is not safe to give the body of the Lord to such a child who does not understand what it is, then he gave him an unconsecrated host. He picked it up to extend to the child and said, “Behold, this is the body of the Lord.” So that the Lord may perfect the praise from the mouth of an infant (Psalms 8:3) and destroy the faithlessness of many who think evil of the same sacrament, the Lord inspired the child to reply, “Why do you wish to deceive me? This is not the body of the Lord which you are offering me.” At this statement, the priest, admiring and judging something divinely inspired about the boy, brought him Holy Communion, which he received with adequate devotion,” Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogue of Miracles* 9:44, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

⁴¹⁰ Peter of Poitiers (c. 1130-1215).

⁴¹¹ Peter of Poitiers, *Sentences* 5:3, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

⁴¹² E.g. The school of Anselm of Laon. Dalby (2003), 19, Fisher (2004), 115.

⁴¹³ Dalby (2003), 18.

⁴¹⁴ E.g. Burkhard of Worms, *Decrees* 5:10; Ivo of Chartres, *Decretal* 2:20; Gratian, “Consecration” 2, 93, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

⁴¹⁵ *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. “Viaticum.” E.g. Bernaldus of Constance, *The Sacraments of Dying Children* 2; William of Champeaux, *The Sacrament of the Altar*, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

⁴¹⁶ Lanfranc of Canterbury, Letter 49 to Domnaldus, Clover and Gibson (1979), 155f. Dalby (2003), 18. Compare Bernaldus of Constance, *The Sacraments of Dying Children* 2, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

blood of Christ, they will perish everlastingly”⁴¹⁷. John 6:53 continues to be the key text, and Augustine the Church Father, to which theologians refer or allude⁴¹⁸. Inspired by Augustine, some used the distinction between sacramental and spiritual eating to explain how one could have participated in the sacrament without actually having participated⁴¹⁹. In short, the perception of necessity supported the practice of baptismal Communion and Communion for the sick and dying, and only to a lesser degree participation of children during childhood. Qualifying the necessity of Communion, and using the argument of spiritual eating may have helped to prepare the cessation of Communion of infants.

2.3.3.9. Summary

In conclusion, the custom of baptismal Communion continues to be well attested in this period, and the uniformity in regard to the Episcopal privilege even increases. Communion of sick and dying children is also well attested. But some of the theological treatises, letters, as well as miraculous stories reveal that reservations against paedocommunion do exist. In this period, they still seem to be expressed by a minority, but in light of history, this minority is the portent of changing opinions. While evidence is relatively rare that children participated after baptismal Communion, it does exist. Though some sources hint at postponement of Communion participation after the baptismal Communion, participation of children still seems to be supported by a majority, though in all likelihood the frequency declined at the same rate as that of adults. The second Eucharistic controversy reveals the development of opinions regarding the sacrament and these developments provide one explanation for the growing hesitation to serve Communion to those who might not be able to swallow it. In this light serving Communion only under the form of wine, and the careful manner in which this was done, now reflects this hesitation. The next step in this development is offering a substitute for wine or bread, documented since the end of the twelfth century. The perceived necessity of Communion originally supported the paedocommunion practice. But the way this necessity was theologically qualified later helped to prepare the cessation of Communion of infants.

⁴¹⁷ Dalby (2003), 18.

⁴¹⁸ E.g. Lanfranc of Canterbury, Letter 49 to Domnaldus, Clover and Gibson (1979), 157; Bernaldus of Constance, *The Sacraments of Dying Children* 2, Dalby (2003), 18, Baumgärtler (1929), 78, fn. 1, Radulphus Ardens († 1200), *Homilia* LI, “In Die Sancto Paschae,” Dalby (2003), 20

⁴¹⁹ E.g. Radulphus Ardens, cp. Fisher (2004), 115.

2.3.4. From the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 till the Hussite Reform

The general Fourth Lateran Council, held under Pope Innocent III in 1215, became a milestone in the history of paedocommunion, marking the transition to a new era. The second half of the eleventh century witnessed the emergence of scholasticism, which would strongly influence the theological debate on the Lord's Supper during the rest of the Middle Ages. The rise of scholasticism as method coincided with the foundation of the first universities in Europe and the increasing accessibility of education. Thomas Aquinas and Thomism gave new intellectual confidence, and would have great influence on the history of paedocommunion⁴²⁰. The Ritual is added to the variety of sources that provide information about paedocommunion. The focus of the Pontifical on services led by bishops necessitated a liturgical book containing all the services led by a priest besides those of the Missal and Breviary⁴²¹.

2.3.4.1. Fourth Lateran Council

There is great consensus that the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 plays a greatly significant role in the history of paedocommunion. Browe suggests that this council for the first time raised the question whether a minimum age or minimum use of reason should be required for the admission to Communion⁴²². Turner speaks of the canon of the Fourth Lateran Council becoming the catalyst for developments such as the disappearance of baptismal Communion for infants⁴²³. Fisher, on the other hand, suggests that "by the time of the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215) it could be assumed that this had come to pass"—that is, that in many places infants ceased to be communicated at all⁴²⁴. Baumgärtler emphasizes that the decision of this council did not lay the foundation for a new praxis, but flowed forth from an existing custom⁴²⁵.

⁴²⁰ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴²¹ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Liturgical Books," H.A.J. Wegman, *Geschiedenis van de christelijke eredienst in het Westen en in het Oosten: Een wegwijzer* (Hilversum: Gooi en Sticht, 1976), 125.

⁴²² "Ein bestimmtes Alter, vor dem man das Kind nicht zuließ, hat man bis zum 13. Jahrhundert so wenig gefordert wie den Vernunftgebrauch. Erst das große allgemeine Laterankonzil von 1215 hat sich mit seinem berühmten Beicht- und Kommuniondekret diese Frage angeregt." Browe (1930/2009), 101.

⁴²³ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴²⁴ Fisher (2004), 117.

⁴²⁵ "Der Beschluß des Laterankonzils von 1215, der nur von der Kommunionpflicht der Unterscheidungsfähigen spricht, bedeute nicht die Begründung einer neuen Praxis, sondern knüpfte an die bereits bestehende Gewohnheit an." Baumgärtler (1929), 93.

2.3.4.2. *Omnis utriusque sexus*

Canon 21⁴²⁶ of the Fourth Lateran Council, or more precisely its opening line, matters most to us. It reads: “All the faithful of both sexes shall after they have reached the age of discretion faithfully confess all their sins at least once a year to their own (parish) priest and perform to the best of their ability the penance imposed, receiving reverently at least at Easter the sacrament of the Eucharist, unless perchance at the advice of their own priest they may for a good reason abstain for a time from its reception; otherwise they shall be cut off from the Church (excommunicated) during life and deprived of Christian burial in death”⁴²⁷. In his commentary, Schroeder suggests that the *raison d’être* of the decree, is to enforce an annual minimum of Communion and to enforce that the faithful go their own parish priest⁴²⁸. The latter reason is necessary, as Schroeder explains, because the custom of the faithful is to pay their tithes in the church where they receive their Easter Communion, for which reason some priests tried to lure people of other parishes to their own churches⁴²⁹. But the required confession and the implied requirement of having reached the age of discretion are key in the development of paedocommunion. Bartels notices the emerging custom of confession from the ninth century. Senn mentions how along with making confession came the requirement of setting things right with one’s neighbor⁴³⁰.

While Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council neither concluded the cessation of infant Communion, neither started it, it did mark changing opinions and practices, and certainly influenced further changes. Early thirteenth century Thomas of Chobham⁴³¹ writes:

“Some say that because the Eucharist gives an increase of grace it should be given to infants in the liquid form of the blood of the Lord or in the form of the bread softened in water, because if it were withheld from them there would be a loss of grace and they would enjoy a lesser reward in heaven; thus anyone who withholds the Eucharist from them is guilty of sin. But others say that the Eucharist should not be given to children because of the danger of their vomiting it and because there would not be any advantage to them

⁴²⁶ The so-called *Omnis utriusque sexus* decree, H.J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1937), 260.

⁴²⁷ Schroeder (1937), 259f.

⁴²⁸ Schroeder (1937), 261.

⁴²⁹ Schroeder (1937), 262.

⁴³⁰ Senn (2010), 177. Senn gives the example of the thirteenth century invention of kissing the *pax board* in England.

⁴³¹ Thomas of Chobham (c.1168-c.1235).

unless they swallowed it. But some eminent men say that in receiving the Eucharist nothing matters but the taste, and a child experiences the taste as when he is bidden before baptism, "Receive the salt of wisdom". It is clear that he does not swallow the salt, and that the exorcism is effected in him by the tasting alone. It would therefore be better to give the Eucharist to every child with such caution that if, after tasting it, he rejected it, what he rejected should be burnt with fire as it says in Exodus (Ex. 12:10.)⁴³².

2.3.4.3. Continuation

On the one hand, there are indications that infants continued to receive Communion after the Fourth Lateran, at least in some places. Baptismal Communion was, for example, still included in the thirteenth century Ambrosian Rite from Milan⁴³³. Early thirteenth century theologian Johannes Teutonicus⁴³⁴ speaks of paedocommunion as a custom in some places, although his words imply that he considered the custom an exception to the rule⁴³⁵. The baptismal Eucharist also appeared in some other thirteenth⁴³⁶ and fourteenth⁴³⁷ century Rituals. These may have been copies of older rituals, not reflecting the practice at the time of publication, as Turner suggests⁴³⁸. The same may or may not be true for the early fifteenth and early sixteenth century examples provided by Balke and Stone. According to Balke, an early fifteenth century example of baptismal Communion may be found in the manuscript *Ordo faciendi catechumenum et catechumenam*⁴³⁹. And according to Darwell Stone "An Amiens Missal published in 1506 contemplated the

⁴³² Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, Dalby refers to Broomfield (1968), 104f., Dalby (2003), 21. Turner gives a quote of his *Compendium of Confessors* 4:2,4,5, Turner (2000), chap. 8 CD-ROM.

⁴³³ *Ambrosian Manual* "Method of Baptizing," Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴³⁴ Johannes Teutonicus (c. 1180-1252).

⁴³⁵ "This concerns adults because the body of Christ is not given to children as Gratian says later on in the same chapter on the church (canon 130), unless perhaps where it is the custom that the blood of Christ—not the body—is poured into their mouths, according to certain sources," Johann Teutonicus, *Commentary on Gratian*, "Consecration" 4:28, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴³⁶ E.g. "Afterwards they are given Communion by the priest," Amiens Ritual; "Newly baptized children should receive Communion during all of Easter week, and indeed only with the blood of the Lord, since they cannot yet take the body," *Augsburg Cathedral Ritual*, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴³⁷ E.g. "May the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ protect you for eternal life, Amen," *Ritual of a Church in Paris*.

⁴³⁸ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴³⁹ "Als de hele doopplechtigheid ten einde was, werd het kind de eerste communie toegediend. Dat ging als volgt: de priester doopte zijn wijsvinger in de wijn en stak die driemaal in de mond van het kind met de formule: Ik neem u op in de heilige gemeenschap van het heilige katholieke geloof. Het lichaam van onze Heere Jezus Christus beware u naar ziel en lichaam ten eeuwigen leven. Amen.'" W. Balke, "Middeleeuwse doopleer en dooppraktijk," in *Rondom de Doopvont: Leer en gebruik van de heilige doop in het Nieuwe Testament en in de geschiedenis van de westerse kerk*. Ed. W. Van 't Spijker, W. Balke, K. Exalto, and L. van Driel (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1983), 180, 183.

administration of Communion to infants after baptism”⁴⁴⁰. A unique example of how the Eucharist could play a role in children’s lives in the late Middle Ages, without implying their participation, is found in the pilgrimage epidemic in 1456, as described by the chronicler of a German Cistercian monastery. Hundreds of children left, without their parents’ or masters’ approval, on a pilgrimage to the Saint Michaels monastery in Normandy, because of the presence of a miraculous wafer⁴⁴¹.

2.3.4.4. Decline

Even before the Fourth Lateran Council, the 1198 Parisian Canon 39 already seems to forbid all paedocommunion, stating “Priests are strictly charged in no way to give hosts, even though unconsecrated, to children”⁴⁴². The canon is an example of how Communion of children was forbidden as part of regulations regarding the offering of substitutes for Communion⁴⁴³. Thirteenth century canons by councils and synods of Treves, Rouen, Sisteron, Bordeaux and Clermont fall in that same category⁴⁴⁴. Several documents give evidence of the disappearance of baptismal Communion in places where it was previously practiced. The *Sarum Missal* and *York Manual*⁴⁴⁵, for example, do so by making the proper age a condition⁴⁴⁶, as does a fifteenth century *Welsh Manual*⁴⁴⁷. The growing reservations against Communion of infants were also expressed in response to the continuing practice of the Eastern Churches⁴⁴⁸.

2.3.4.5. Substitutes

Where baptismal Communion was disappearing, substitutes became part of the ritual. Unconsecrated hosts and common blessed bread substituted the consecrated host. Several thirteenth century councils decreed that blessed

⁴⁴⁰ Stone (1904), 303. Cp. Holloway (1901), 17, 77. Both refer to Pelliccia, *Polity of the Christian Church*, respectively to page 19 and 61.

⁴⁴¹ Peter Browe, “Die eucharistischen Verwandlungswunder des Mittelalters,” in Browe (1930/2009), 283, fn. 79.

⁴⁴² Can. 39, Dalby (2003), 21. Baumgärtler seems to refer to the same canon when he speaks about the prohibition by Odo of Paris in 1197, Baumgärtler (1929), 106.

⁴⁴³ Baumgärtler speaks of “Eulogienpraxis,” Baumgärtler (1929), 105.

⁴⁴⁴ Treves/Trier (1227), can. 3, Rouen (1235), can. 19(?), Sisteron (c. 1244-1250), can. 16, Bordeaux (1255), can. 5, and Clermont (1268), can. 6, Dalby (2003), 22.

⁴⁴⁵ *Sarum Missal* “Rite of Baptism, Confirmation, and Communion,” and *York Manual* “Order of Baptizing,” printed in 1508 and 1509, but “representing an accumulation of material across the centuries,” Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck, *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006).

⁴⁴⁶ “Afterwards they are given Communion if they are of its age.” *Sarum Missal* “Rite of Baptism, Confirmation, and Communion,” Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁴⁷ *Welsh Manual* “Order of Making a Catechumen; Baptism,” Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁴⁸ Baumgärtler (1929), 121f. See for example Pope Benedict XII in the Council of the Armenians and the Armenian clarification at the Synod of Sis (1342).

common bread instead of the consecrated host⁴⁴⁹ and even instead of the unconsecrated host⁴⁵⁰ should be given to children. But there was opposition to this practice. The Synod of Liège forbade giving blessed bread to anyone, including little children⁴⁵¹. The Synod of Clermont forbade giving children unconsecrated hosts, but made an exception for Easter, under the condition of eating inside church⁴⁵². The 1404 Synod of Soissons explained that otherwise they would take it home and play with it⁴⁵³. Browe suggests another reason for forbidding unconsecrated hosts may have been to prevent unintentionally offering consecrated host⁴⁵⁴. Some forbade blessed bread on Easter and at certain feasts⁴⁵⁵. Others opposed Communion as well as giving blessed bread as substitute⁴⁵⁶ and completely prohibited the practice⁴⁵⁷. Consecrated wine was at times replaced by regular wine⁴⁵⁸, the unconsecrated wine used for the ablution of the chalice at the end of the Mass, wine mixed with water⁴⁵⁹, or the unspecified drink of our Lord Jesus⁴⁶⁰. John Peckham's *Constitutions* provide the interesting example of the combination of offering the Eucharistic bread with unconsecrated wine to the simple-minded⁴⁶¹. The 1512 *Speyer Ritual* deserves our special attention, because of the interesting argument in defense of the use of ordinary wine for children, "lest such ones seem to be at all outside the unity of the church."⁴⁶² Some opposed the use of

⁴⁴⁹ "panis benedictus communis." E.g. Council of Bordeaux, can. 5 (1255) under Archbishop Gérard de Mallemort, Council of Bayonne, can. 16 (1300), *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, s.v. "Kinderkommunion."

⁴⁵⁰ National Synod of Ofen (1279), Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁵¹ Synod of Liège (1288), Peter Browe, "Der Kommunionersatz im Mittelalter," in Browe (1935/2009), 423.

⁴⁵² "Furthermore, we forbid priests to give unconsecrated hosts to children, except on Easter day in place of blessed bread. Even then they should eat them first immediately and not carry them outside the church," Synod of Clermont (1268) can. 6, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁵³ Synod of Soissons (1404), can. 19, Browe (1935/2009), 423.

⁴⁵⁴ Browe (1935/2009), 424.

⁴⁵⁵ Council of Rouen (1235), can. 18, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁵⁶ Council of Treves/Trier (1227), can. 3; John of Liège, *Synodal Statutes* 5:44; Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁵⁷ It is noteworthy that this prohibition had to be repeated, Statutes of Bourges (1515), Karl Borromeo (1572 & 1573), and the *Rituale Ambrosianum* (1645), Browe (1935/2009), 424.

⁴⁵⁸ "Wine" in the *Cologne Ritual* (1485), *Amiens Ritual* (15th century), "Then they are brought to the altar where they are given Communion from wine," in the *Amiens Missal* (1506), Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁵⁹ And even that only in case of emergency: "However at the point of death or some other danger, wine with water may be offered them in a cup—not because this is a sacrament, but because of the faith and practice of the sacrament," Synod of Cahors, Rodez, and Tulli (1289), can. 16. Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁶⁰ "The drink of our Lord Jesus Christ," in the *Reims Ritual* Baptism (14th century). Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁶¹ John Peckham, *Constitutions of the Council of Lambeth* (1281) "Keeping the Eucharist," Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁶² "Since outside the unity of the church, which is signified by the Eucharist, there may be salvation for no one, all the baptized in the early church were accustomed to be given Communion after the Communion of the priest. But the present church forbids Holy Communion for children, since they are not able to possess

the use of unconsecrated wine, because of the superstitious beliefs about its benefits to infants⁴⁶³. Merely showing the elements of the Eucharist (to the godparents) could also substitute participation by eating and drinking, as Heinrich von Gorkum describes⁴⁶⁴. Gary Macy remark about the Feast of Corpus Christi provides context to this example. He writes how the “Feast of Corpus Christi was not widely embraced until the fourteenth century, but its promulgation in the thirteenth century demonstrates how devotion of the real presence was quite rapidly shifting the focus of the liturgy towards viewing rather than receiving the consecrated bread and wine”⁴⁶⁵. To what extent such substitutes truly replaced Communion, is reflected in the Council of Pavia’s requirement of an offering of money and of a fast before receiving the unconsecrated host, or some drops of blessed wine⁴⁶⁶. The 1511 *Zagreb Missal* even provides an example of a reading from the Gospel of John and a blessing taking the place of serving Communion⁴⁶⁷. The practice of offering substitutes not only marked the disappearance of baptismal Communion, but also would influence the age of reception. It is not unlikely that the offering of such substitutes did not meet much objection in light of the emphasis on spiritual or metaphorical sharing of the Lord’s body and blood, among others by Thomas Aquinas⁴⁶⁸, or Aquinas thought that “it suffices to have it in desire, not that it be directly obtained as such”⁴⁶⁹.

2.3.4.6. Tithing

We already mentioned Schroeder’s explanation of how Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran was directly related to the custom to pay tithes in the church

the real devotion required for the reception of the Eucharist; therefore, lest such ones seem to be at all outside the unity of the church, on the first three or more days after the reception of baptism children are thus accustomed in certain places to be carried to the priests at the altar after Communion, that at least tasting from the wine of ablution after the Communion of the priest, they witness that they are in the unity of the church, which is the mystical body of Christ,” *Speyer Ritual*, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁶³ “Moreover we forbid newly baptized children to be brought to the altar for the reception of wine from the chalice at the time of Mass, or that wine from the chalice be presented to them during the celebration of Mass, since many people rashly believe from this practice that such children become knowledgeable. They possess a misformed faith, at which occasion dangers of the soul originate,” Synod of Passau (1470) 2, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁶⁴ “For in some places after baptism the presbyter carries the body of Christ in a pyx to the baptized and takes a host from it, raising it with two fingers, so that the godparents may see the host,” Heinrich von Gorkum, *Treatise on Certain Superstitious Cases*, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁶⁵ Gary Macy, “The Medieval Inheritance,” in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, ed. Lee Palmer Wandel, 15-38 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 20.

⁴⁶⁶ Council of Pavia (1320) can. 15 & 13, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁶⁷ *Zagreb Missal* (1511), Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁶⁸ Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* 4:80,9,3, once again taken from Augustine’s tract on the Gospel of John XXVI, 11 & 15, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM. CP. Baumgärtler (1929), 68

⁴⁶⁹ Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* 4:73,3, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

where Easter Communion was received⁴⁷⁰. The existence and persistence of the custom is reflected in numerous statements against it⁴⁷¹. But there are also regulations in support of the custom⁴⁷². Some documents reveal how this discouraged frequent Communion and in all likelihood delayed First Communion⁴⁷³. It is noteworthy that this must have especially discouraged Communion by the poor⁴⁷⁴.

2.3.4.7. Knowledge

In the thirteenth and following centuries we find that before receiving Communion, children seven years and older were required to study and learn the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, often with the Hail Mary as well⁴⁷⁵. According to Turner that is the first time in history⁴⁷⁶, but decrees requiring the teaching of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed can be found earlier⁴⁷⁷, even as requirement for the participation in Communion⁴⁷⁸. Hermans points out that such teaching, before becoming a requirement for Communion, served as a reminder of one's baptism, as well as liturgical formation for the participation in the Eucharist⁴⁷⁹. But Turner may be right that under the influence of the Fourth Lateran this emphasis increased both in ecclesiastical instructions as well as in practice, and in its turn, would influence the age of first reception of

⁴⁷⁰ Schroeder (1937), 262.

⁴⁷¹ E.g. Robert Grosseteste (Bishop of Lincoln), *Letter 22*; Council of Worcester (1240) can. 29, "The Poor"; Walter de Kirkham, *Constitutions* (1255); Synod of Chichester (1289) can. 22, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁷² E.g. Maria Magdalena at Blijdensteden (1277), *Record Book*; King Birgers and Archbishop Nicholas "Stockholm: 13 July 1297"; Council of Pavia (1320) can. 15; Synod of Bremen (1351) can. 6; *Münster Book of God's House* (1384); *Namur Documents 2* (1406); Johann Knebel, *Daybook* (1474); Ludwig Pastor, *History of the Popes 7:249* (1518), Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁷³ E.g. "Furthermore, concerning a child of a weak age, who because of the malice of parents or friends, or of negligence of the same, did not approach the sacrament on the feast of Easter, and in sickness was not visited with the sacraments of the church, a full funeral is to be done for that deceased child, as for an adult, except for the fees of the holy anointing," Maria Magdalena at Blijdensteden, *Record Book*; Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁷⁴ This is interesting among others in light of 1 Corinthians 11, but also considering the Hussite reforms.

⁴⁷⁵ Robert Grosseteste, from Lincoln, *Statutes* (1239?) 8; Synod of Mans (1247); Council of Albi (1254), 17, 18; Henry of Segusia (+1271), bishop of Sisteron (1241–50) and later of Ostia, *Manual*, and Synod of Sisteron (1245), "The Communion of Children," Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁷⁶ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM. Johannes Herolt (c.1380-1468), *Die tafel des Kerstliken levens* (2nd half 15th century); Stefaan Lanzkrana (†1477), from Vienna, Hermans (1987), 69f.

⁴⁷⁷ E.g. Synod of Clovesho (747), canon 11, Hermans (1987), 68.

⁴⁷⁸ E.g. Regino of Prüm, who required this in his *Canones* of 906, Hermans (1987), 69.

⁴⁷⁹ Hermans (1987), 68f. The fact that children also had to be instructed how to consign themselves correctly with the cross, illustrates this aspect of liturgical formation, Robert Grosseteste, *Statutes*, 8.

Communion⁴⁸⁰. The CRCNA synodical study report of 1988 *Report 26* mentions Thomas Aquinas as an example, and his influence in this context⁴⁸¹.

2.3.4.8. Age of discretion

The Fourth Lateran Council was the first general council to mention the age of discretion in relation to confessing sins, and thus related to receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist. The laws of Howel the Good⁴⁸² may indicate a prior Welsh custom in which children in the tenth century started confession at age seven⁴⁸³. Unfortunately, the earliest manuscript of these laws dates from the second quarter of the thirteenth century⁴⁸⁴. Browe points out that Canon 21 only regulates by what time children are obligated to communicate, and that it does not say whether children may be allowed to communicate at an earlier age⁴⁸⁵. Yet he also notes that Canon 21, by requiring reverent reception of the Eucharist, implicitly necessitates discernment⁴⁸⁶. In the following centuries, discretion and reverence would be required in more than one sense. Sixteenth century Spanish scholastic theologian Domingo de Soto⁴⁸⁷ stated that “the Eucharist, by its own nature, requires devotion”⁴⁸⁸. His thirteenth century teacher Thomas Aquinas⁴⁸⁹ had specified this in terms of the use of reason⁴⁹⁰, of discretion enough to observe due caution⁴⁹¹, and of

⁴⁸⁰ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁴⁸¹ “The Western church moved toward required training before participation. For example, Thomas Aquinas believed that baptized children had the right to receive the body of Christ, but at the right time, not at once. He used the analogy of an inheritance; one acquires the right to it, but one does not take possession of it immediately,” *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 262. Unfortunately, the report does not provide a reference.

⁴⁸² Howel the Good or Hywel Dda (c. 880-950).

⁴⁸³ “From every person who has been baptized, the briduw may be taken, as well man as woman. Therefore both man and woman are to give briduw, from a child of the age of seven years, which shall go under the hand of the confessor,” Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, eds., *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, Volume I (Oxford: Clarendon, 1869), 273; Cp. T.E. Bridgett, *History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain, Vol. II. Anglo-Normans, Later English, and Scotch* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881), 24; Hinant (2005), 24. ‘Briduw’ appears to be a Welsh legal term referring to some sort of oath.

⁴⁸⁴ <https://www.bl.uk/taking-liberties/articles/laws-of-hywel-dda> (accessed December 19, 2016).

⁴⁸⁵ Browe (1930/2009), 101.

⁴⁸⁶ Browe (1930/2009), 101.

⁴⁸⁷ Domingo de Soto (1494-1560).

⁴⁸⁸ Quoted in Browe, who gives as reference IV d. 12 q. 1, a.9, Browe (1930/2009), 101.

⁴⁸⁹ Thomas Aquino (1225-1274).

⁴⁹⁰ “But when children once begin to have some use of reason so as to be able to conceive some devotion for the sacrament, then it can be given to them,” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 4:80, art. 9,3. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/4080.htm> (accessed January, 16, 2017). Turner (2000), chap.8, CD-ROM, Browe (1930/2009), 101.

⁴⁹¹ “But on the part of the recipient the greatest reverence and caution are called for, lest anything happen which is unworthy of so great a mystery. Now this could especially happen in receiving the blood, for, if incautiously handled, it might easily be spilt. And because the multitude of the Christian people increased, in which there are old, young, and children, some of whom have not enough discretion to observe due

devotion for the sacrament⁴⁹². A subjective element, according to CRC *Report 26*, that was later developed by the Reformers⁴⁹³. Others have understood the age of discretion as the age at which a child can distinguish right from wrong⁴⁹⁴ or when the child is capable of deception or severe sin⁴⁹⁵.

2.3.4.9. Seven, ten, twelve, or fourteen

Bishop Henry of Sisteron⁴⁹⁶, bishop between 1240-1250 stated: “Let priests admonish their parishioners to teach children from the age of seven and upwards the Pater Noster and the Credo, and on Good Friday bring them with them to the church to kiss the cross, and on Easter Day to receive the Body of Christ, having however previously confessed⁴⁹⁷”. He may have been the only one so explicitly suggesting Communion starting at age seven⁴⁹⁸. The prohibition of some synods to communicate below the age of seven years implies that Communion was allowed from age seven⁴⁹⁹. And even this implicit permission to communicate starting at age seven, was quite exceptional⁵⁰⁰. For others, serving Communion at age seven seemed out of the question. Thomas of Cantimpré, for example, recounts a story in his *Bee Book*⁵⁰¹ of a seven-year-old boy requesting Communion. But in spite of being seven, precocious, and about to die, his request was refused⁵⁰². Some theologians, such as Petrus Aureoli⁵⁰³ suggested determining the proper age in each individual case, as some children could already receive Communion at age seven, and others not even at age nine⁵⁰⁴. Turner suggests that under the

caution in using this sacrament, on that account it is a prudent custom in some churches for the blood not to be offered to the reception of the people, but to be received by the priest alone,” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 4:80, art. 12, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/4080.htm> (accessed January, 16, 2017).

⁴⁹² “The sacrament of extreme unction demands real devotion in the one receiving it, as also the Eucharist does. For this reason, as the Eucharist should not be given to children, so neither should this sacrament,” Thomas Aquinas, *Essay on the Sentences* 4:23,2,2,4,4; “But when children once begin to have some use of reason so as to be able to conceive some devotion for the sacrament, then it can be given to them,” Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* 4:80,9,3, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM. Cp. Browe (1930/2009), 99.

⁴⁹³ *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 262.

⁴⁹⁴ Cp. *Quam Singulari*.

⁴⁹⁵ “doli capax,” according to the *Ordinary Gloss*. Thomas M. Izbicki, *The Eucharist in Medieval Canon Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2015), 165; Also Browe (1930/2009), 102.

⁴⁹⁶ Also known as Henry of Segusia (†1271) and referred to as Hostiensis, Browe (1930/2009), 102.

⁴⁹⁷ Synod of Sisteron (?), can. 16, Bridgett (1881), 25.

⁴⁹⁸ Browe (1930/2009), 102f.

⁴⁹⁹ “Presbyters are forbidden in any way to give hosts to children determined to be below the age of seven years,” Council of Rouen (1235) can. 19, Turner (2009), chap.8, CD-ROM; repeated at the Synod of Bayeux (1300) , which belonged to the Diocese of Rouen, Browe (1930/2009), 103, 98 fn. 72.

⁵⁰⁰ Browe (1930/2009), 103.

⁵⁰¹ *Bonum universale de apibus* (1257-1263).

⁵⁰² Browe (1930/2009), 104.

⁵⁰³ Petrus Aureoli (†1322).

⁵⁰⁴ Browe (1930/2009), 104.

influence of Lateran IV the community delayed children's First Communion until age ten to twelve⁵⁰⁵. An anonymous author wrote in the twelfth century: "Give not the Lord's body to boys under ten years old, for though they are pure yet they know not what they receive. But if death is imminent Communion may be given them, though they are only nine, or eight, or seven years old, if they know the Our Father and are good"⁵⁰⁶. In his Sentences commentary, young Thomas Aquinas, determined the age of ten or eleven as the age of discretion: "When the children start to have the necessary discernment, that is with age ten or eleven, Communion can be given to them."⁵⁰⁷ Thomas Aquinas had great influence in the matter of the age of discretion⁵⁰⁸. In his 1312 Sentences commentary, Parisian theology professor Petrus Paludanus seems to have allowed Communion as Viaticum from age seven, but was more in line with Aquinas regarding regular Communion from about age nine or ten, suggesting that the innocence of children compensated for their ignorance⁵⁰⁹. John of Liège gathered that children reached discretion of faith at about age ten, and ruled: "Children may not receive Communion before they are discerned to have the discretion of faith, at about age ten"⁵¹⁰. Where age ten or eleven was often considered the *terminus a quo*, age fourteen was often considered the *terminus ad quem*⁵¹¹. Communion for children was still considered necessary, but in due time⁵¹².

2.3.4.10. Age for confirmation

Where the age of First Communion went up, it is remarkable that the age for confirmation continued to vary⁵¹³. Several British documents encourage remarkably early confirmation – not too long after baptism⁵¹⁴, within a year in earlier documents⁵¹⁵, before age five in fifteenth century documents⁵¹⁶ – until

⁵⁰⁵ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁵⁰⁶ Bridgett (1881) Vol. II, 24f.

⁵⁰⁷ Thomas of Aquinas, *Super Sententiis*, lib. 4 d. 9 q. 1 a. 5 qc. 4 co (my translation from German), Browe (1930/2009), 104. Cp. Hermans (1987), 91, Baumgärtler (1929), 140-155.

⁵⁰⁸ Browe (1930/2009), 104.

⁵⁰⁹ Browe (1930/2009), 103.

⁵¹⁰ John of Liège, *Synodal Statutes* 5:44, Turner (2000), chap.8, CD-ROM. Note that Calvin also spoke of approximately (environ) age ten, in his French edition of the Institutes, see below.

⁵¹¹ M.H. Bolkestein, "Confessio en admissio," *Kerk en Theologie* 15 (1964), 35. Bolkestein does not provide references for this age of fourteen.

⁵¹² Archbishop Walter Reynolds (†1327) stated: "of the seven sacraments of grace five must and ought to be duly received of all Christian men, which be baptism, confirmation, penance, Eucharist, or the body of our Lord, in His due time, and extreme unction in the article or point of death of such as yet be in their right mind, and have their wits, or at least with desire to receive it, while they were in their right minds and had their wits," Richard DeMolen, "Childhood and the Sacraments in the Sixteenth Century," *Archive for Reformation History* 66 (1975), 50.

⁵¹³ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁵¹⁴ Archbishop Reynold's *Constitutions* (1322), Holloway (1901), 42.

⁵¹⁵ Synod of Worcester (1240), Holloway (1901), 30.

opinions started to change in the sixteenth century⁵¹⁷. Thomas Aquinas seems to have allowed for early confirmation as well⁵¹⁸. Percy mentions the Council of Cologne (1280) as the one which reversed the rule of confirmation "not later than seven" to confirmation "not before seven" years old—a rule which would become widespread by the time of the sixteenth century⁵¹⁹.

Rylaarsdam describes how confirmation had become a practice looking for a theology; by the time that theology was developed, it supported the exclusion of children⁵²⁰.

Often the disintegration or dismembering of the threefold rite of initiation is mentioned as a major development bringing about the decline and disappearance of infant Communion⁵²¹. Initially the Episcopal privilege or prerogative to confirm broke the initiatory rite down into three separate elements, though baptism and baptismal Communion remained closely connected for a long time. After the Fourth Lateran Council people began to promote the reception of confirmation prior to first Communion⁵²². Percy mentions the 1281 Council of Lambeth under the leadership of John Peckham as the one establishing the new regulation that no person could be admitted to the Eucharist unless they had received confirmation⁵²³.

2.3.4.11. *Constance and Trent*

I have chosen to start the next section with the sacramental reforms of the Hussites, as they could be considered the forerunners of the Reformation. At

⁵¹⁶ John Mirk or Myrc of Lilleshall Abbey in Shropshire (1450); The Diocese of Lichfield (15th century), Holloway (1901), 40f.

⁵¹⁷ Holloway recognizes a first indication of such changing opinions in the protestation of the Lower House of Convocation in 1536, Holloway (1901), 44.

⁵¹⁸ Regarding Confirmation he states: "man is spiritually advanced by this sacrament to perfect age ... and just as it [the soul] can in old age attain to spiritual birth, so can it attain to perfect (spiritual) age in youth or childhood; because the various ages of the body do not affect the soul. Therefore this sacrament should be given to all," Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, ed. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: 1947), II, 2430. Cp. DeMolen (1975), 55.

⁵¹⁹ Percy, David L. "Infant Communion – Part I: The Historical Practice," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 7 (1980): 44f. Percy refers to the explanation that this may have been due to the large size of the diocese.

⁵²⁰ The fifth out of five developments that led to the disappearance of paedocommunion according to Rylaarsdam (2007), 6.

⁵²¹ Nathan D. Mitchell speaks of the "Dissolution of the Rite of Christian Initiation," in *Made, Not Born: New Perspectives on Christian Initiation and the Catechumenate* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1976), 50-82. He explains the process of dissolution as the problem of 'accumulated symbolism', that is that a cluster of symbols will begin to split apart when people fail to understand its cohesiveness. Mitchell (1976), 70f.

⁵²² E.g. Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM. The prescribed order for reception of the seven sacraments became: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Eucharist, Matrimony or Orders, and Extreme Unction. DeMolen (1975), 52.

⁵²³ Percy (1980): 44f.

the same time the response at the 1415 Council of Constance and the further decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1565) could be considered the conclusion of some of the developments that I have described above. The Council of Constance rejected the grounds for offering the chalice to the laity. The Council of Trent almost completely banned the practice of offering the chalice to the laity.

2.3.4.12. Summary

In conclusion, I would say that developments preceding the end of infant Communion preceded the Fourth Lateran Council and that paedocommunion continued for some time afterwards, but that the Fourth Lateran certainly both marked and influenced those changes. Three elements of Canon 21—the requirement of confession, the requirement of discretion and reverence, as well as the related tithing—led to the end of infant Communion, and the delay of first Communion. This development was further encouraged by initially providing substitutes and afterwards prohibiting the same. In many of these developments the emerging theology of transubstantiation was one of the underlying causes. The range of ages interpreted as the age of discretion coincided with the whole second stage of life between seven and fourteen, with Aquinas' suggestion of ten or eleven having great influence. After the disintegration of the threefold rite of initiation, and after a long period in which Communion directly followed baptism, confirmation now became required prior to first Communion. With the change of the nature of confirmation through the centuries, it now required some maturation. Though this did not *cause* the end of infant Communion, it did *support* that development and prevented an easy return to the old tradition of infant baptism.

2.4. Paedocommunion from Hussites and Reformation to World War II

2.4.1. Introduction

In this section I intend to describe the history of paedocommunion in the Reformed tradition until approximately World War II. The choice to focus on the history of paedocommunion in the Reformed tradition follows my ultimate focus on the paedocommunion debate within the Dutch Reformed tradition in the second half of the twentieth century. I will start this section with the Hussites, as they may be considered the forerunners of the Reformation. As time progresses, my focus will be more and more on the Netherlands and the Protestant traditions in its neighboring countries.

Therefore, I intend to describe how the Reformed tradition is further shaped in Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. I will pay attention to a few Roman Catholic developments, such as the Roman Catholic response to the Hussite Reformation at the Council of Constance, the conclusion of medieval paedocommunion developments at the Council of Trent and to the *Quam Singulari* of Pope Pius X as it helps one to understand the Reformed developments and discussions later in that century.

2.4.2. Hussites and Sacramental Reform in Bohemia⁵²⁴

The Hussites are the first after the Fourth Lateran Council to reintroduce infant Communion.

2.4.2.1. The first step

Though the Hussites are named after John Hus⁵²⁵, there is a sense in which Hussitism precedes Hus⁵²⁶, and it is John Milíč⁵²⁷, who could be considered the father of this Czech or Bohemian Reformation. After his resignation in 1363, Milíč starts a ministry among the prostitutes of Prague's Old Town quarter. The initial conversion of one prostitute leads to the transformation of the *Venice* brothel into the *Jerusalem* community. Convinced that moral and spiritual decay is related to infrequent celebration of the Eucharist, Milíč reintroduces regular celebration of this sacrament⁵²⁸, the first step of this sacramental reform.

2.4.2.2. The next two steps

Matthew of Janov⁵²⁹, disciple of Milíč, could be considered the theologian *par excellence* of the Hussite church. Matthew's theological essays *Regulae* are "a

⁵²⁴ On Hussites, paedocommunion and children: David R. Holeton articles "The Communion of Infants and Hussitism," *Communio Viatorum* XXVII (1984): 207-225, and "The Communion of Infants: The Basel Years," *Communio Viatorum* XXIX (1986): 15-40, and Thomas A. Fudge, "Hussite Infant Communion," *Lutheran Quarterly* X (1996): 179-194, and Noemi Rejchrtová "Hussitism and Children," *Communio Viatorum* 22 (1979): 201-204. On the Bohemian Reformation in general: Thomas A. Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), and *Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

⁵²⁵ Jan Hus (c. 1379 - 1415).

⁵²⁶ Fudge (1998), 47.

⁵²⁷ Jan Milíč Z Kroměříže (c. 1305 - 1374).

⁵²⁸ It is interesting to note that according to J.L. Klink the motive for the reinstatement of children's Communion (from the age of seven) by the Roman-Catholic Church in 1910 was the depravity of the world and the necessity for children to receive an antidote as early as possible. J. L. Klink, *Geloven met kinderen: Verkorte uitgave van de drielijge kleine theologie voor ouders en opvoeders: Kind en geloof / Kind en leven / Kind op aarde*, 4th ed. (Baarn: Ambo, 1976), 201.

⁵²⁹ Matěj of Janov (c. 1350 – c. 1393).

systematic reflection on his experience as a member of the Jerusalem community”⁵³⁰. These essays echo Milíč’s plea for frequent Communion. Matthew’s further plea for general reception of the Eucharist broke with the dominant practice of Communion of the clergy, which excluded laity. It also broke with the practice of Communion of the privileged, which excluded the poor, the simple and the unlettered. The latter he called *parvuli in Christo*: children in Christ. With this plea, Matthew paved the way for the next two steps in the sacramental reform: re-institution of the lay chalice and paedocommunion.

The revival of the practice of distributing both elements, called utraquism, began in the fall of 1414. Jacob of Mies⁵³¹ could be considered the prime mover. The remarkable success of utraquism in the two following years may have given Jacob the courage to take the next step and restore general Communion, including infants and very young children⁵³². This happened in 1417. Jacob also presented the first extensive argument in favour of infant Communion in his *Littera*. Regarding the practice of paedocommunion Fudge states: “Undoubtedly Václav Koranda was the first to implement the practice”⁵³³.

2.4.2.3. Hussite arguments

Innovation of sacramental practice and recalibration of sacramental theology are interwoven in this movement as we see in Matthew’s *Regulae*. The Hussites argued that in the Bible, children share with adults as equals⁵³⁴. Children are even presented as ideal inheritors of the Kingdom⁵³⁵, ideal citizens of the Kingdom who cannot be denied access to its banquet⁵³⁶. The Hussites recognized a strong corporate sense in the Bible⁵³⁷, rediscovered the Eucharist as consummate expression of the corporate life of the Christian community⁵³⁸, and experienced how the Eucharist community could transcend barriers in a world with clear social divisions and forge a new social order. Early church history provided the Hussites with a patristic case for paedocommunion. Medieval texts provided them with more witnesses to

⁵³⁰ Holeton (1984), 209.

⁵³¹ Jakoubek ze Střibra (1372 - 1429).

⁵³² Holeton (1984), 212.

⁵³³ Fudge (1998), 245-256, fn.275.

⁵³⁴ Cf. Isaiah 49: 22-23, Jeremiah 16: 5-7, Joël 2: 14b-16, 19. Holeton (1986), 21.

⁵³⁵ Cf. Matthew 18:3, Luke 18:16-17. Holeton (1986), 21.

⁵³⁶ Holeton (1984), 213. Hussites saw a strong relationship between Eucharist and the eschatological banquet. Holeton (1986), 21.

⁵³⁷ Holeton (1986), 21.

⁵³⁸ Holeton (1984), 218.

Communion of infants. Just like the theologians of the early church the Hussites linked John 6:53-54 with John 3:5, read both sacramentally⁵³⁹, and emphasized the importance of participation in the sacraments⁵⁴⁰. Along similar lines they argued that if a child can receive the Holy Spirit in baptism, a child can receive Christ in the Eucharist⁵⁴¹.

2.4.2.4. *Participation in church and society*

Noemi Rejchrtová has shown how the Hussites did not only reform sacramental theology and praxis, but also challenged medieval ideas about children, thus changing their participation in church and society. Children acquired their own dignity; besides participating in the Eucharist, they sang⁵⁴² and taught adults to sing new songs in church, they were actively involved in the war, and they were found among the first martyrs⁵⁴³.

2.4.2.5. *Summary*

The Hussite sacramental reform may be summarized in three steps: first, the reintroduction of regular celebration of the sacrament, second, the reintroduction of the lay chalice, and third, the reopening of the table to infants and little children. Some of the main arguments used by the Hussites in favor of paedocommunion are the biblical equality of children and adults, the corporate understanding of Christian community and of Communion, the link between John 6:53-54 and John 3:5, as well as the link between baptism and Eucharist, and the support of the early and medieval church. Hussite children participated both in church and in society.

2.4.3. *The Council of Constance*

As mentioned above, the Council of Constance, at its thirteenth session of June 15, 1415, made the practice of administering Communion under one species into canon law, outlawing the lay chalice⁵⁴⁴. As indicated, this practice had contributed to the end of Communing infants and small children who received Communion under the form of wine. It is interesting to note that according to Fudge the matter of infant Communion had arisen among the Hussites by the beginning of that same year, and was mentioned by the

⁵³⁹ Holeton (1984), 213.

⁵⁴⁰ The Lord's Supper should be common to all since it is essential to all.

⁵⁴¹ Holeton (1984), 213.

⁵⁴² Fudge mentions the "double or complete inversion of tradition. Not only are songs sung in Czech, but the usual priestly singers have been replaced by women and children," Fudge (1998), 255.

⁵⁴³ Fudge (1996), 183. Rejchrtová (1979), 201-204.

⁵⁴⁴ Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, 626/585. The fifteenth session, July 6, 1415, condemned the 'errors' of John Hus. Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, 627f. /522f.

Hussites in the context of a narrative on the ban of the lay cup by the Council of Constance⁵⁴⁵. The fact that other churches who were not part of the Hussite movement were tempted to imitate the practice of Communing infants may have encouraged the further rejection of the practice⁵⁴⁶. In the spring of 1418 Pope Martin V demanded complete renunciation of the Bohemian Eucharistic developments⁵⁴⁷. The Wenceslas Day Synod, September 28, 1418, seemed to respond by passing twenty-three articles of which the first one advocated Communion of infants at baptism⁵⁴⁸. The 1433 Council of Basel condemned Communion of infants immediately after their baptism with reference to 2 Corinthians 13:5 (!) and 1 Corinthians 11:29⁵⁴⁹. The Council of Prague permitted Communion under both kinds, but repeated the requirement of having reached the age of discretion⁵⁵⁰. In 1465 those who still continued the practice were reminded by their opponents of the actions of the Council of Constance⁵⁵¹. Even as late as 1513 Pope Leo X felt the need to criticize the Hussite practice in a letter to his legates in Bohemia⁵⁵².

⁵⁴⁵ Fudge (2010), 160.

⁵⁴⁶ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM. Turner distinguishes the Hussite movement from the Roman Church, but it remains unclear whether he has the Western Schism in mind, or considers the Hussites a separate church altogether.

⁵⁴⁷ Fudge (2010), 160.

⁵⁴⁸ "Following baptism, children must receive the Eucharist in the proper manner which is the form of the body and blood of the Lord. If the child is not able to receive the sacrament without spitting it out, then it will be necessary to wait before communing. If the child is able to receive, a small piece of the sacrament should be placed in his or her mouth. After the mouth has been closed for a time, place a drop of the blood of Christ in his or her mouth taken from the chalice with one's finger taking care to keep the paten under it," Art. 1, Fudge (2010), 160. Cp. Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁵⁴⁹ "These two texts of St. Paul the Apostle are noteworthy: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5); and "For all who eat and drink without discerning the Lord's body, eat and drink judgment against themselves" (1 Cor. 11:29). These condemn those who, with great irreverence for the most divine sacrament, give Communion to infants immediately after their baptism," Council of Basel (1433), Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁵⁵⁰ "The sacred council will grant to the priests of Bohemia and Moravia the faculty of giving Communion under both species to the people, namely to those persons determined to be in the years of discretion who ask reverently and devoutly," *Compact of Prague* (1443), 3, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁵⁵¹ "When the Council of Constance learned that the Bohemians were giving Communion to children, the council wrote immediately to the emperor, ordering him and demanding that he make them eliminate the Communion of children in the kingdom of the Bohemians and in no way allow them to practice it," *Disputation with Rogkyzana* (1465), Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

⁵⁵² "Regarding children not able to prove themselves and not having clear differences from the mentally impaired, it seems most serious that they are given Communion because of the danger of irreverence and spilling or spitting up or vomiting. Even the people of Basel wanting much to please the Bohemians did not dare to permit it. Therefore it does not seem safe to grant anything about this," Leo X, *Letter to Legates*, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

2.4.4. The Reformers

The Reformers did not follow the example of the Hussites⁵⁵³. Luther agreed with them on many points⁵⁵⁴, but did not side with the Bohemians in communing little children⁵⁵⁵. Regarding the age of admission, the Reformers stayed within the age range that was common in contemporary Roman Catholic practice⁵⁵⁶. Luther welcomed children to the table from the age of seven⁵⁵⁷. Calvin indicates the second stage of life, from seven to fourteen⁵⁵⁸,

⁵⁵³ Calvin for example writes in his commentary on John 6: "Nor were the Hussites in the right, when they proved from this passage that the cup should be given to all indiscriminately," John Calvin, *The Gospel According to St. John: Part One 1-10*, trans. T.H.L. Parker. Vol. 4 of *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. (Repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 169.

⁵⁵⁴ In 1521 Luther said: "I said" (at the Leipzig disputation of 1519) "that the Council of Constance condemned some propositions of Huss that were truly Christian. I retract. All his propositions were Christian, and in condemning him the Pope has condemned the Gospel," Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation*, Vol. 3 of *The Pelican History of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 55. Luther's theological relationship to the Bohemians or Hussites was a recurring theme. See for example J.P. Boendermaker, *Luther: Brieven uit de beslissende jaren van zijn leven* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1982), 95, 137, 141, 151-154, 157f., 165f., 176, 189.

⁵⁵⁵ "Right now I do not think badly about the Bohemian Brethren, having heard from their own representatives their faith concerning the Sacrament of the Eucharist. I do not approve of the Bohemians who commune little children, although I do not regard them as heretics in this matter," Martin Luther, *Letter to Nicholas Hausmann* (second half of October, 1523) English translation from Johann Gerhard, "Whether the Eucharist Should be Given to Children?" *Lutheran Forum* 30, no. 4 (Winter 1996), 13. For Latin original, see WA, Br. 3, 182-183 (Letter no. 678).

⁵⁵⁶ Contra W. Verboom who suggests a break with century old Roman Catholic tradition and who presents the age limit by Calvin of 12 and by Luther of 14 as significant movement upwards: W. Verboom, "Kinderen op weg naar het avondmaal: Een reactie n.a.v. de thematiek Doop-Belijdenis-Avondmaal," *Kontekstueel*, (March 1989): 17-21.

⁵⁵⁷ F. H. Kuiper, "Kinderkommunie in protestantse kring: een stap terug?" *Praktische Theologie* 1, no. 2 (1974): 104. Fodor states "Luther used age seven as the general rule, as also did most Lutheran Churches until the period of Rationalism in the 17th century," Patrick S. Fodor, "Should Baptized Infants Be Communed?: A Case for Infant Communion in the Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)," 7, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/18759332/A-Case-for-Infant-Communion-in-the-Lutheran-Church-Missouri-Synod> (accessed 2012). In his *Large Catechism* Luther writes: "Therefore let every father of a family know that it is his duty by the injunction and command of God, to teach these things to his children, or have them learn what they ought to know. For since they are baptized and received into the Christian Church, they should also enjoy this Communion of the Sacrament, in order that they may serve us and be useful to us; for they must all indeed help us to believe, love, pray, and fight against the devil," Martin Luther, "Large Catechism," in *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, ed. Paul T. McCain et al. transl. William H.T. Dau and Gerhard F. Bente, 2nd ed. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2006), 440. Luther mentions the participation of children, without specifying age, in his *The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests*, *Luther's Works, Volume 38* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 208, and in the context of his argument in favor of distributing the elements to the deaf and dumb in his *Treatise on New Testament*, *Luther's Works, Volume 35* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 110-111, and mentions children as well as the Bohemians in an argument in favor of celebration in both kinds in his *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, *Luther's Works, Volume 36* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 25. In *On the Councils and the Church* Luther writes regarding the holy sacrament of the altar "the question whether you are male or female, young or old, need not be argued – just as little as it matters in baptism and the preached word," *On the Councils and the Church, 1539*, *Luther's Works, Volume 41* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 152.

⁵⁵⁸ By speaking of children up to those almost reaching adolescence: "*Qua pueri aut adolescentiae proximi fidei suae rationem coram ecclesia exponunt*," John Calvin, *Institutes*, Book IV, chap. 19, 13. Compare *Institutes*, Book IV, chap. 19, 4.

Paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed Tradition

as the appropriate stage for profession of faith and consequently admission to the Lord's Supper. In the same section, he mentions the specific age of ten⁵⁵⁹. The Dutch Refugee Church in London started teaching the smaller catechism at age five⁵⁶⁰, teaching the larger catechism at age eleven⁵⁶¹, and expecting children of thirteen to do profession of faith⁵⁶². The Reformers seem almost unanimous in requiring catechism teaching⁵⁶³ and profession of faith prior to admission to the Lord's Supper⁵⁶⁴. Profession of faith focused on catechetical knowledge and knowing by memory the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed⁵⁶⁵, and the catechism teaching on the Lord's Supper⁵⁶⁶.

⁵⁵⁹ John Calvin, *Institutes*, bk IV, chap. 19, 13. Contra B. Kamphuis, J. Plomp, M.B. van 't Veer, and C. van de Velde who suggest an age of 15. They seem mistaken to take the age of 10 as terminus post quem, whereas it would be more logically understood as the average age of the stage of life which lasted from 7 to 12 for girls and 7 to 14 for boys. This also fits with Calvin's French translation of "puer decennis" as "l'enfant de dix ans, ou environ." They also think of (years of) continued catechism teaching when Calvin speaks of "siquid ignoraret, aut minus intelligeret doceretur" whereas translators of Calvin's *Institutes* such as C.A. de Niet seem to think of extra explanation on the spot. The latter would be more in line with the contemporary Church Order of the Palatinate. The Dutch refugee church in London may have had different standards than the church of Geneva, but the regulation that children "totten xiiij. iaren byna ghecomen syn, belijdenis zullen doen" (=children who have almost come to the age of 14, will do profession of faith) from their 1554 *Christlicke Ordinancien* fits well with Calvin's "pueri aut adolescentiae proximi" as terminus ante quem, and does not support an average age of 15 for profession of faith. B. Kamphuis, "Kinderdoop en kindercommunie I," *De Reformatie* (February 6, 1982): 284-287. Marten Micron, *De Christlicke ordinancien der Nederlantscher Ghemeinten te London 1554: Opnieuw uitgegeven en van een inleiding voorzien door W.F. Dankbaar*. Vol. VII of *Kerkhistorische Studiën*. Edited by J. Lindeboom, M. van Rhijn, J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink ('s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956). J. Plomp, *De kerkelijke tucht bij Calvijn*. (Kampen: Kok, 1969), 68f. M.B. van 't Veer, *Catechese en catechetische stof bij Calvijn* (Kampen: Kok, 1942), 310f. C. van de Velde, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?: Een vraag waar we geen "ja" op kunnen zeggen," *Credo* (June 1982): 4. M. Woudstra, *De Hollandsche Vreemdelingen-Gemeente te Londen: gedurende de eerste jaren van haar bestaan* (Groningen: Wolters, 1908).

⁵⁶⁰ Micron (1554-1956), 67.

⁵⁶¹ Woudstra (1908), 49.

⁵⁶² Micron (1554-1956), 68. Micron further regulate the teaching or disciplining of those baptized children who had not professed their faith by the age of 14, and excommunicating the unrepentant by the age of 18 or 20, Micron (1554-1956), 70f.

⁵⁶³ Several Reformers wrongly assumed that the early church treated children of believers as catechumen. See for example John Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. IV, chap. 19, 4 (see also J. Plomp (1969), 69 fn.48), and Beza in his Confession, *Geloofsbelijdenis van Theodorus Beza*, M. Te Velde, ed. *Confessies: Gereformeerde geloofsverantwoording in zestiende-eeuws Europa* (Heerenveen: Groen, 2009), 292.

⁵⁶⁴ Regarding Luther, see: M. H. Bolkestein, "Confessio en Admissio," *Kerk en Theologie* 15 (1964): 36.

⁵⁶⁵ In the preface to his Small Catechism (1529) Luther writes: "But with the young people stick to one, fixed, permanent form and manner. Teach them, first of all, these parts: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and so on, according to the text, word for word, so that they, too, can repeat it in the same way after you and commit it to memory. But those who are unwilling to learn the catechism should be told that they deny Christ and are not Christians. They should not be admitted to the Sacrament, accepted as sponsors at Baptism, or practice any part of Christian freedom. They should simply be turned back to the pope and his officials, indeed, to the devil himself. Furthermore, their parents and employers should refuse them food and drink, telling them that the prince will drive such rude persons from the country," Martin Luther, "Small Catechism," in McCain et al. (2006), 315. The Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Hail Mary had been considered the minimal Christian education for several centuries. Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 185.

Profession of faith focused less on a testimony of a personal relationship to God⁵⁶⁷. Similar to Calvin's regulations, the Church Order of the Palatinate suggests that the pastor should help those children whose knowledge failed⁵⁶⁸. In his Latin liturgy for the church of Wittenberg of 1523 Luther suggests a yearly repetition of this interrogation for all participants⁵⁶⁹. In addition, Luther seems to require confession of sin just as much as profession of faith⁵⁷⁰.

Many Reformers did explicitly reject Communion of infants and very young children. John Calvin, for example, rejected infant Communion in his Institutes⁵⁷¹, his commentaries on Exodus⁵⁷² and on the Gospel of John⁵⁷³ and

⁵⁶⁶ In the preface to his Large Catechism (1529) Luther writes: "This sermon is designed and undertaken to be an instruction for children and the simple folk. Therefore, in ancient times it was called in Greek catechism (i.e., instruction for children). It teaches what every Christian must know. So that a person who does not know this catechism could not be counted as Christian or be admitted to any Sacrament, just as a mechanic who does not understand the rules and customs of his trade is expelled and considered incapable," Luther (1529/2006), 356.

⁵⁶⁷ G.P. Hartveld, "Kindercommunie," *Centraal Weekblad* (January 31, 1971).

⁵⁶⁸ Kirchenordnung der Kurpfalz 1563, in Wilhelm Niesel, *Bekennnisschriften und Kirchenordnungen der nach Gottes Wort reformierten Kirche*, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A.G. Zollikon, 1938), 187, 188.

⁵⁶⁹ Bolkestein (1964), 36, who refers to W.A. XII, 215. Calvin wanted a similar yearly examination of faith in the context of pastoral visiting. H.A. Speelman, *Biechten bij Calvijn: Over het geheim van heilig communiceren* (Heerenveen: Groen, 2010), 6.

⁵⁷⁰ Article IV of the Augsburg Confession (1530) reads: "Confession is not abolished in our churches. For it is not usual to communicate the body of our Lord, except to those who have been previously examined and absolved. And the people are taught most carefully concerning the faith required to absolution, about which before these times there has been a deep silence. Men are taught that they should highly regard absolution, inasmuch as it is God's voice, and pronounced by God's command," <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds3.iii.ii.html> (accessed September 17, 2012). For the relation between confession and Communion in Calvin's thought, see Speelman (2010).

⁵⁷¹ "At length they object, that there is not greater reason for admitting infants to baptism than to the Lord's Supper, to which, however, they are never admitted: as if Scripture did not in every way draw a wide distinction between them," John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30. "When he (Servetus PGS) objects that it is strange why the infant does not partake of the Supper, I answer ... etc." and "Moreover he alleges that all Christians are brethren, and that infants cannot belong to this class, so long as we exclude them from the Supper, but I ...etc.," *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 31.

⁵⁷² "Since, then, the Paschal Lamb corresponds with the Holy Supper, we may gather from hence, that none can be duly admitted to receive it, but those who are capable of being taught," John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Four Last Books of Moses: Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*; Volume First. (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 450.

⁵⁷³ "The ancients made a bad mistake in supposing that little children were deprived of eternal life if they were not given the Eucharist. This sermon does not refer to the Lord's Supper, but to the continual communication which we have apart from the reception of the Lord's Supper. Nor were the Hussites in the right, when they proved from this passage that the cup should be given to all indiscriminately. As far as young children are concerned, Christ's ordinance forbids them to participate in the Lord's Supper, because they cannot yet try themselves or celebrate the remembrance of the death of Christ. The same ordinance makes the cup common to all as well as the bread, for it commands us to drink of it," John Calvin. *The Gospel According to St. John: Part One 1-10*. Trans. T.H.L. Parker. Vol. 4 of *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*. Ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. (Repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 169.

indirectly in a sermon on Deuteronomy 16⁵⁷⁴. In what has been called the first Reformed Dogmatics of the Netherlands we find a very similar rejection⁵⁷⁵. The Reformers distanced themselves from the infant Communion practice of church fathers such as Cyprian and Augustine⁵⁷⁶. This is remarkable considering that Augustine's influence on, for example, Calvin's Eucharistic thought has been called pervasive⁵⁷⁷. But their overriding concern seems to have been to refute the Anabaptist accusation⁵⁷⁸ that Reformed sacramental theology and practice was inconsistent⁵⁷⁹.

2.4.4.1. Reformed Catechisms and Confessions

Several Reformed Catechisms⁵⁸⁰ and Confessions explicitly reject participation of infants or young children in the Lord's Supper celebration. Calvin's successor Theodore Beza⁵⁸¹ did so in his 1560 Confession⁵⁸² and his other

⁵⁷⁴ John Calvin's 98th sermon, on Deuteronomy 16:5-8, held on Wednesday November 6, 1555: "And truly if it be not lawful to admit young children to the Lord's Supper, until they know what is meant by that Sacrament, and wherefore it was ordained: Should such as have lived a forty and threescore years come to it like dogs and swine?" John Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy* (1583; repr., Oxford: University Printing House, 1987), 607.

⁵⁷⁵ Joannes Anastasius Veluanus, *Wegwijzer voor gewone gelovigen*, translated by William de Boer (1554; Barneveld: Nederlands Dagblad, 2012), 120, 137.

⁵⁷⁶ Calvin for example adds the following remark to his 1543 edition of the *Institutes* "In the early Church, indeed, the Lord's Supper was frequently given to infants, as appears from Cyprian and Augustine, but the practice justly became obsolete." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30.

⁵⁷⁷ Keith A. Mathison, *Given for You: Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper* (Phillipsburg, P&R Publishing, 2002), 6. Compare: Old, Hughes Oliphant, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*. Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte, Band 5. (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975).

⁵⁷⁸ Much later and to a lesser degree the Eastern Orthodox Church challenged the Reformed theology on this point as well. Dalby mentions Jeremiah II of Constantinople responding to the Augsburg Confession in 1582 and Metrophanes Kritopoulos of Alexandria fifty years later. Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion: Post-Reformation to Present-Day*; Joint Liturgical Studies 67 (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2009), 4. Metrophanes Kritopoulos of Alexandria was answered by the Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Witsius in his book *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, Vol. II (1677; repr., Edinburgh: John Turnbull, 1803), 457f.

⁵⁷⁹ See for example Ulrich Zwingli's 1522 *Refutation of the Baptist Tricks in Selected Works Of Huldreich Zwingli: 1484-1531; The Reformer Of German Switzerland*, S. Macauley Jackson, reprint (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1901), 172 f. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, bk. 4, chap. 16. J. van Genderen "De doop bij Calvijn," in *Rondom de doopvont: Leer en gebruik van de heilige doop in het Nieuwe Testament en in de geschiedenis van de westerse kerk*, ed. W. van 't Spijker and W. Balke, and K. Exalto and L. van Driel, 263-295 (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1983), 283, Guido de Brès' *Oorsprong en weerlegging van de wederdopers*, ed. R. Pieterman. (1595; Barneveld: Stichting Heruitgave Werken Guido De Brès, 2011), 542.

⁵⁸⁰ The existence of Reformed catechisms in itself does not prove that Reformers emphasized knowledge as a requirement more than the Roman Catholics did. Richard DeMolen for example mentions how both Protestant and Catholic reformers turned to the catechism as the principal instrument of persuasion to win the support of children: Richard DeMolen, "Childhood and the Sacraments in the Sixteenth Century," *Archive for Reformation History* 66 (1975), 51. See also J. Hermans, *Eucharistie vieren met kinderen: Een liturgiewetenschappelijke studie over de deelname van het kind aan de eucharistie in het verleden en volgens de huidige kerkelijke richtlijnen* (Brugge: Tabor, 1987), 123f.

⁵⁸¹ Theodorus Beza (1509-1605).

short Confession⁵⁸³. The Scottish Confession of Faith (1560) speaks in similar terms⁵⁸⁴. The 1647 Westminster Larger Catechism excludes young children from the Lord's Supper in question and answer 177⁵⁸⁵. The 1563 Heidelberg Catechism does not mention young children in this context⁵⁸⁶, but co-author Zachary Ursinus does exclude them from the Lord's Supper in his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism⁵⁸⁷. Nor does the 1561 Belgic Confession deal

⁵⁸² "The declaration of the death of Jesus Christ and consequently of all that He did for us, with thanksgiving for the benefits received and examining and proving ourselves, are the substance of the Supper (1 Cor. 11:25-26). Therefore, they cannot be left out, nor perverted or altered without great sacrilege. Therefore, it follows that the Supper of the Lord ought not to be communicated to those who cannot prove or examine themselves because they do not have the use of reason, as young children and such (1 Cor. 11:28)." James T. Dennison Jr., ed., "Theodore Beza's Confession (1560)" in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: Volume 2 1552-1566* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 2010), 297-298. See also Te Velde (2009), 210.

⁵⁸³ "It is also necessary that we test ourselves and proclaim the death of the Lord in the supper, that means publicly profess with thanksgiving. This shows sufficiently that those who are not capable of that, ought not celebrate the sacrament, namely small children, who nevertheless will be saved, as they are included in the covenant of salvation with their fathers." My translation. Art. 33 of Theodore Beza's Confession: *Geloofsbelijdenis van Theodorus Beza*, Te Velde (2009), 350.

⁵⁸⁴ "Chap. XXIII. To Whom Sacraments Appertain. We confess and acknowledge that baptism appertains as well to the infants of the faithful as unto those that be of age and discretion. And so we damn the error of the Anabaptists who deny baptism to appertain to children before they have faith and understanding. But the supper of the Lord, we confess to appertain to such only as be of the household of faith, can try and examine themselves as well in their faith as in their duty towards their neighbors. Such as eat and drink at that holy table without faith or being at dissension and disunion with their brethren do eat unworthily. And, therefore, it is that in our kirks our ministers take public and particular examination of the knowledge and conversation of such as are to be admitted to the table of the Lord Jesus," James T. Dennison Jr., ed., "The Scottish Confession (1560)," in Dennison Jr. (2010), 204. See also Te Velde (2009), 432.

⁵⁸⁵ "177. Q. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ? A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once,, with water, to be assign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves," Johannes G. Vos *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary*, ed. G.I. Williamson (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2002), 509f.

⁵⁸⁶ Gallant rightly notes that the Heidelberg Catechism only mentions three categories of people: 1, those who are believing and repentant, 2- those who are secretly unrepentant, and 3- those who are openly unrepentant, and that covenant children do not fall into any of these categories. Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs: Companion Study Guide; 7 lessons on Paedocommunion; With a postscript on Paedocommunion and the Three Forms of Unity* (Grande Prairie: Pacta Reformandum, 2003), 26.

⁵⁸⁷ "Those unto whom the things signified belong, unto them the sign also belongs, unless there be some condition in the way of using it which would forbid it, or unless there be some circumstance connected with the institution which would not admit the observance of the rite, as females formerly were debarred from circumcision on account of their sex, and as infants at this day are excluded from the Lord's Supper because of their incapacity of showing the Lord's death, and proving themselves," "They are to be admitted to the Lord's supper by the church, 1. Who are of a proper age to examine themselves, and to commemorate the Lord's death, according to the command: "This do ye in remembrance of me." "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread." "Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:24, 25, 28.) The infant children of the church are, therefore, not admitted to the use of the Lord's supper, even though they are included among the number of the faithful." "Infants are not capable of coming to the Lord's supper, because they do not possess faith actually, but only potentially and by inclination," Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, translated G.W. Williard, 2nd ed. (Columbus: Scott & Bascom, 1852), 366-367, 425, 429.

explicitly with admission of young children at the Lord's Supper, but its author, Guido de Brès, does reject paedocommunion in his book against the Anabaptists⁵⁸⁸.

Considering the importance of infant Communion in the early Bohemian Reformation, it is noteworthy that the later Bohemian Confessions of 1535, 1573 and 1575/1609 speak of infant baptism, but not of infant Communion⁵⁸⁹. The 1535 Confession states that faith must precede the use of sacraments in order for the sacraments to do any good⁵⁹⁰. It also states that none are admitted until they have examined themselves as much as lies in them and behave reverently toward this sacrament⁵⁹¹. The 1573 Confession states that after baptism, presumably of children, "when they do desire to be partakers of the Lord's Supper, they may with their own mouths, and of their own accord, make profession"⁵⁹². Though Jan Hus' name is mentioned in the foreword of the 1575/1609 Bohemian Confession⁵⁹³, the legacy of the first Bohemian reformation is foremost preserved in utraquism⁵⁹⁴, and not in infant Communion. Children are not even mentioned in the context of the Lord's Supper⁵⁹⁵.

2.4.4.2. Reformed Church Orders

Several Reformed church orders regulate the admission to the Lord's Supper and the requirements to participate. In the 1561 Church Order of Geneva, articles 142 and 143 state that children should be allowed at the Lord's Supper only after proper catechism teaching and profession of Christian faith⁵⁹⁶. In

⁵⁸⁸ De Brès (1595/2011), 543. *De Brès' arguments are almost identical to the arguments of Calvin.*

⁵⁸⁹ Bohemian Confession (1535), art. 12, James T. Dennison Jr. *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: Volume 1: 1523-1552* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 2008), 320. Bohemian Confession (1573), art. 12, James T. Dennison *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation, Volume 3: 1567-1599* (Grand Rapids, Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 364. Bohemian Confession (1575/1609), art. 14, Dennison (2012), 422.

⁵⁹⁰ Art. 11, Dennison (2008), 319. But the text explicitly speaks only of adults.

⁵⁹¹ Art. 13, Dennison (2008), 324.

⁵⁹² Art. 12, Dennison (2012), 365.

⁵⁹³ Dennison (2012), 402.

⁵⁹⁴ Utraquism is even mentioned in the subtitle of this confession: "The Second Bohemian Confession of Faith: Confession of the holy Christian Faith, of all three estates of the Kingdom of Bohemia, thus professing the Testament of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and its use in both species," Dennison (2012), 402.

⁵⁹⁵ Art. 15, Dennison (2012), 422f.

⁵⁹⁶ Les Ordonnances Ecclésiastiques de l'Eglise de Genève 1561 in Niesel (1938), 48, 59, 60. Article 40 mentions the catechism of little children, articles 141–147 deal with the order toward children. The text of 142 reads: "Quand un enfant sera suffisamment instruit pour se passer du Catechisme, qu'il recite solennellement la somme de ce qui y sera contenu: et ainsi qu'il face comme une profession de sa Chrestienté en presence de l'Eglise, et que pour ce faire on reserve les quatre dimanches devant la Cene." And of 143: "Devant qu'avoir faict cela, que nul enfant ne soit admis a recevoir la Cene: et qu'on advertisse

the 1563 Church Order of the Palatinate⁵⁹⁷, profession of faith is also required. In the Dutch Reformed tradition, the 1618-1619 Church Order of Dordt is most significant. Article 61 of this church order requires prior profession of faith and proof of a Christian lifestyle⁵⁹⁸.

2.4.4.3. Reformed Arguments

We can easily summarize the arguments against infant Communion as articulated by the Reformers. First of all, they were aware of infant Communion in the early church, but felt that it was justly abolished⁵⁹⁹. In answer to the Anabaptists, most Reformers argued that there was a clear distinction between baptism and the Lord's Supper, and they based that distinction mainly on their interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11. Children could not do this in remembrance, they could not proclaim the death of Christ, nor could they examine themselves, and they are unable to distinguish the body of the Lord⁶⁰⁰. Based on verse 29 some Reformers even spoke of the Lord's Supper as deadly poison when administered to children⁶⁰¹. Luther distanced himself from this interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11, explaining that Paul spoke of adults, those who were quarreling among themselves⁶⁰². However, Lutheran theologians in this era did not necessarily follow Luther's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11⁶⁰³. The Reformers saw a similar distinction between the Old Testament institution of circumcision and the Passover, assuming that all boys were circumcised whereas children who participated in

les pères de ne les amener devant les temps. Car c'est chose fort perilleuse tant pour les enfans que pour les pères, de les ingérer sans bonne et suffisante instruction: pour laquelle cognoistre il est de besoin d'user de cest ordre."

⁵⁹⁷ From which context and year the Heidelberg Catechism originates.

⁵⁹⁸ Dordt Church Order (1618-16-19), art. 61: "None shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper except those who, according to the usage of the Church to which they unite themselves, have made Confession of Religion, besides being reputed to be of a godly conversation, without which also those who come from other Churches shall not be admitted," <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/neth-ref-order.txt> (accessed September 17, 2012).

⁵⁹⁹ See for example. Calvin *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30, and De Brès (1595/2011), 542.

⁶⁰⁰ Conform 1 Corinthians 11:24-29. See for example Calvin *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30, Anastasius Veluanus (1544/2012), 137, Zacharias Ursinus (1602/1852), 366-367, 425, 429, De Brès (1595/2011), 543, art. 33 of Theodore Beza's Confession, the Scottish Confession (1560).

⁶⁰¹ Calvin *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30, Anastasius Veluanus (1544/2012), 137 and De Brès (1595/2011), 543. One wonders whether this would constitute a negative example of *ex opere operato*.

⁶⁰² "When in 1 Corinthians (11:28) Paul said that a man should examine himself, he spoke only of adults because he was speaking about those who were quarreling among themselves. However, he doesn't here forbid that the sacrament of the altar be given even to children," *Luther's Works, Volume 54* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 58.

⁶⁰³ In his 1559 *Pastorale* the Lutheran theologian Erasmus Sarcerius, for example, rejected Communion of children on the basis of their inability to examine themselves conform 1 Cor. 11, C.T. de Groot, *Erasmus Sarcerius' Pastorale 1559 en de vorming van predikanten in de zestiende eeuw* (Apeldoorn: Labarum Academic, 2016), 134.

the Passover were only those of sufficient age to inquire into its meaning⁶⁰⁴. Zwingli's argument centers around the figure of speech called synecdoche in which a part represents the whole and vice versa, and he focuses not on 1 Corinthians 11, but on Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 10, which speak of both baptism and breaking of bread⁶⁰⁵. This is not a complete surprise, considering that infant Communion was only discussed in the context of the debate with the Anabaptists, who felt baptizing infants without allowing them to participate in the Lord's Supper was inconsistent. Anastasius Veluanus, who is willing to consider the existence of faith in infants when discussing infant baptism, rules out the possibility of this infant faith being of such nature that it would be ground for participation in the Lord's Supper⁶⁰⁶. Guido de Brès adds the interesting remark that the souls of children are fed with Jesus as the Bread of Life in a different way than by eating the bread of the Lord's Supper⁶⁰⁷. A similar paradoxical view was previously expressed by Calvin⁶⁰⁸, and is later found with Herman Witsius who denies children sacramental union with Christ, while granting them spiritual and mystical union⁶⁰⁹.

2.4.4.4. Reformed exception

Wolfgang Musculus (1497-1563) seems to have been the only significant Reformer who, according to his 1560 *Commonplaces of Christian Religion*, favored infant Communion⁶¹⁰. Like other Reformed theologians whom we meet later, he was hesitant to push the issue and advocate a reintroduction of the practice. But he did believe that the practice and theology of the Early Church Fathers was firmly based on Scripture. Musculus believed that children were admitted to the Passover and recognized the connection between Passover and Lord's Supper. He disagreed with the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 which considers self-examination as prerequisite for participation and did not believe that children could eat or drink judgment

⁶⁰⁴ i.e. Zwingli (1522/1901), 175, Calvin *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30 and De Brès (1595/2011), 543.

⁶⁰⁵ Zwingli (1522/1901), 173f.

⁶⁰⁶ Anastasius Veluanus (1544/2012), 120.

⁶⁰⁷ "Yes but, they say, it is a complete counter natural case that those who are born, don't eat. Little children are being reborn in a heavenly and spiritual life. Why shouldn't they eat spiritual food? We answer that the souls are being fed in another fashion than by eating the visible bread of the Supper. And we say that, though little children don't eat the sacrament, Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life for them, just as much as for grownups," De Brès (1595/2011), 543 (my translation).

⁶⁰⁸ "I answer, that souls are fed by other food than the external eating of the Supper, and that accordingly Christ is the food of infants, though they partake not of the symbol," Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 31.

⁶⁰⁹ Herman Witsius (1677), 458. Compare Joseph Bingham, mentioned below.

⁶¹⁰ Wolfgang Musculus, *Loci communes in usus sacrae Theologiae candidatorum parati* (Basel: Johann. Herwagen, 1560), 469-173. English translation of these pages: http://www.paedocommunion.com/articles/musculus_common_places.php (accessed September 17, 2012).

upon themselves by their mere inability to examine themselves. As Gallant notes, Musculus seemed to understand the church as Eucharistic community⁶¹¹.

2.4.4.5. Frequency

In light of the possible relationship between frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper and paedocommunion practice, it is significant that Calvin strongly favored weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, but was overruled by the Genevan council⁶¹². Others encouraged monthly celebration of the Lord's Supper⁶¹³. It was in 1525 that Zwingli took the significant step of pulling apart the two high points of the enduring structure of liturgy of word and sacrament and allocating them in a separate weekly preaching service and a Lord's Supper service, which was held only four times a year. This quarterly frequency of Lord's Supper celebration did become dominant practice within the Reformed tradition. It is important to note that this was intended as a measure to improve church discipline: "the table could now easily be fenced without driving those lax in discipline away from the services of the church"⁶¹⁴.

2.4.4.6. A Dynamic Process

In Calvin's theology, more than in the theology of other evangelicals, Communion was not merely a single act repeated over the course of a lifetime; rather it was an essential ongoing dynamic in a process in which the ability to "discern" the Lord's body deepened and grew greater over a lifetime of faith⁶¹⁵, deepening faith, just as Christ grows more one with us over time, through the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood⁶¹⁶. Remarkably

⁶¹¹ http://www.paedocommunion.com/articles/musculus_common_places.php (accessed January 7, 2013).

⁶¹² Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 17, 44. See also: T. Brienen, *De liturgie bij Johannes Calvijn* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1987), 44f and 214f. Calvin settled for monthly celebration or celebrating as frequently as the capacity of people would allow. See the *Articles concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva proposed by the ministers at the Council: January 16, 1537* and his 1540 *Short Treatise on the Holy Supper of our Lord and Only Saviour Jesus Christ*: John Calvin, *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, edited by J.K.S. Reid (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 50, 152.

⁶¹³ See for example the Palatinate Church Order, Niesel (1938), 187.

⁶¹⁴ Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Reformed Liturgy," in *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Donald K. McKim, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 294. He also writes: "There is, in my judgment, no more fundamental liturgical issue facing the Reformed churches today than this ancient dispute within the tradition over the place in the liturgy of the Eucharist: ought the liturgy of the Reformed churches to exhibit the enduring structure of word and sacrament, and ought the people of God to eat the Supper weekly?" Wolterstorff (1998), 295.

⁶¹⁵ Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 140, 171.

⁶¹⁶ Wandel (2006), 160. Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. IV, chap. 17, 10.

enough, Calvin could conceive this process of growing understanding in relation to baptism for infants and children who age⁶¹⁷, but in relation to the Lord's Supper only from the second stage of childhood and for consequent stages of life. Regarding baptism this sense of a process over a lifetime of faith may have been captured in the Belgic Confession article 34 which speaks of lifelong profitability of the baptism we receive only once⁶¹⁸.

2.4.4.7. Summary

I conclude that in many ways the Reformation meant a continuation of Roman Catholic practice and theology in its rejection of Communion of infants and the smallest children, with the Reformer Wolfgang Musculus being the exception. The Reformers stayed with the age limits of the Roman Catholics, Luther's seven years being in line with Bishop Henry Siceron and Calvin's ten years being in line with Thomas Aquinas. All, including the Dutch Refugee Church of London with age thirteen, considered the second, seven-year-long life stage the proper stage in life to start participating in the Lord's Supper. The Reformed requirement of knowing the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed was also in line with Roman Catholic practice; this is what had been considered minimal Christian education for several centuries and also what had been encouraged or required before Communion. It is remarkable that the Bohemian Confessions do not even mention infant Communion. The Reformers considered the question regarding paedocommunion primarily an issue in the debate with the Anabaptists about infant baptism. In the argument of the Reformers the inability of children to fulfill the perceived requirements of 1 Corinthians 11 plays a prominent role. Luther rejects this interpretation and one wonders and it remains unclear how strongly he rejected infant Communion and on what grounds. The arguments of several Reformers reveal the wrong assumptions that only those children participated in the Passover who were of sufficient age to inquire into its meaning, and that the early church treated children of believers as catechumen. I noted how several of the Reformed theologians deny children sacramental union, while granting them spiritual or mystical union, believing

⁶¹⁷ Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap.. 16, 21. "Should they reach an age when they can be instructed in the meaning of baptism, ..." (...) "And though, in adults, the receiving of the sign ought to follow the understanding of its meaning, yet, (...), a different rule must be followed with children." (...) "Wherefore, nothing more of present effect is to be required in paedobaptism, than to confirm and sanction the covenant which the Lord has made with them. The other part of the meaning of the sacrament will follow at the time which God himself has provided." In his translation of the *Institutes* De Niet summarizes this section under the heading '*Het kind groeit toe naar het begrip van zijn doop.*' (The child grows towards the understanding of its baptism).

⁶¹⁸ "Yet this baptism is profitable not only when the water is on us and when we receive it but throughout our entire lives," Belgic Confession, art. 34.

that children are spiritually fed with Jesus as the Bread of Life. At the level of practice, the fact that Calvin's desire for a weekly frequency of Lord's Supper celebration was overruled by the Genevan council and that the Reformed tradition would follow in the footsteps of Zwingli who made an end to the enduring structure of liturgy by separating the weekly preaching service from a quarterly Lord's Supper celebration, would help fencing the table in more than one way. I also noted how Reformed sacramental theology contains dynamic elements regarding, for example, a growing understanding of sacraments already received and lifelong profitability of baptism once received, which could be fruitful for the development of paedocommunion theology.

2.4.5. The Council of Trent

At this point in my historic overview it is good to mention that meanwhile the Council of Trent, at its twenty-first session on June 16, 1562, concluded or solidified the medieval disappearance of Communion of infants and small children with an anathema: "If any one shall say that the Communion of the Eucharist is necessary to little children before they come to years of discretion, let him be anathema"⁶¹⁹. The Catechism of the Council of Trent explains the rationale behind this anathema:

"Although this law, sanctioned by the authority of God and of the Church, concerns all the faithful, yet it must be taught that those are excepted who because of tender age do not yet possess the use of reason. For these neither know how to discern the sacred Eucharist from profane and common bread, nor can bring to the reception of it piety of mind and religion. And this also seems most alien from the institution of Christ; for he says: "Take and eat." And it is quite clear that infants are not fit to take and eat. It is true that in some places the custom of giving the Holy Eucharist even to infants was ancient; but nevertheless this has now been long discontinued by the authority of the same Church, both for the reasons which have been mentioned and for other reasons which are most consonant to Christian piety"⁶²⁰.

This Roman Catholic anathema had almost no influence on Reformed position on paedocommunion, except perhaps for the fact that it would later strengthen some Reformed paedocommunion advocates in their conviction that rejection of paedocommunion was typical for Roman Catholic theology.

⁶¹⁹ Council of Trent, Sess. XXI, Stone (1904), 196.

⁶²⁰ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, II. iv. 60, Stone (1904), 197f.

2.4.6. Further developments in the Reformed tradition of Great Britain

David Holeyton's study on the *Question of Infant Communion in Seventeenth Century English Baptismal Controversies* has created special awareness of British Reformed proponents of infant Communion. The Anglican churchman William Bedell⁶²¹, bishop of Kilmore, expresses his support for paedocommunion in a letter written to Dr. Samuel Ward round 1630⁶²². In 1633 George Herbert pleaded for a lower age limit for communicants⁶²³. Though in the early days the historic practice of paedocommunion had been mentioned by Reformed theologians to embarrass the Roman Catholics, soon it became part of the baptismal controversies, as Reformed theologians tried to refute the Baptist charge of inconsistency⁶²⁴.

2.4.6.1. Deepened discussion

Discussion of paedocommunion in this context deepened when in 1647 bishop Jeremy Taylor⁶²⁵ defended paedocommunion in his *The Liberty of Prophesying*⁶²⁶ concluding that it was neither prohibited nor commanded. In his 1653 book *The Life of Christ*, he states that there is more reason for infants to be communicated than for infants not to be baptized⁶²⁷. In the second volume of this book, Taylor states: "The primitive church gave the holy sacraments to infants immediately after baptism,' and by that act transmitted this proposition—that nothing was of absolute necessity, but innocency and purity from sin, and a being in the state of grace"⁶²⁸. Taylor gave the most extensive defense of the infant Communion practice of "the Greeks, the

⁶²¹ William Bedell (1571-1642).

⁶²² "So Children were circumcised, which could not understand the reason of it; and the same also did eat the Passover. And so did also Children baptized in the Primitive Church communicate in the Lord's Supper. Which I know not why it should not be so still," "Lastly: by this Doctrine, you must also maintain that Children do spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ, and drink his Blood, if they receive the Eucharist (as for divers Ages they did, and by the Analogy of the Passover they may, (perhaps ought): since they do not ponere contraria cogitationis aut prave operationi: And since the use of this Sacrament toties quoties must confer Grace; it seems it were necessary to let them communicate, and the oftener the better, to the intent they might be stronger in Grace," Richard Parr, ed., *The Life Of the Most Reverend Father in God, James Usher: Late Lord Arch-Bishop of Armagh, Primate and Metropolitan of all Ireland*. Letter 163 (London: Kings-Arms in St. Pauls Church Yard, 1686), 442, 445.

⁶²³ Holeyton in Müller-Fahrenholz (1981), 89.

⁶²⁴ Dalby (2009),9.

⁶²⁵ Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667).

⁶²⁶ Jeremy Taylor, *A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying*, Edited by R. Cattermole ed., (1648; London: Joseph Rickerby, 1836), 96, 97, 123, 200, 216, 330 etc.

⁶²⁷ Jeremy Taylor, *The History of the Life and Death of the Holy Jesus (a.k.a. The Great Exemplar)*, Volume I (London: James Flesher, 1653), 206.

⁶²⁸ Jeremy Taylor, *The Great Exemplar or the Life of our Ever Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ*, Volume II, Third part, (1655; New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1859), 257.

Ethiopians, the Bohemians and Moravians”⁶²⁹ in his 1660 treatise *The Worthy Communicant*. To avoid contention, he still concluded that communing infants is lawful, but not necessary, and “therefore, in this case, the present practice of the church is to be our rule and measure of peace, and determination of the article”⁶³⁰.

In his 1659 *Epilogue*, Herbert Thorndike⁶³¹, Canon of Westminster Abbey, denied that the primitive church had deemed infant Communion necessary for salvation⁶³² and concluded, like Taylor, that infant Communion was neither necessary nor unlawful. He believed that the contemporary church deferred far longer than it ought, and, again like Taylor, concluded that “he, that contents himself with the practice of the Church for unity’s sake, will prove the best Christian”⁶³³. James Peirce⁶³⁴, born and raised in a Congregationalist Church, who later served both Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches, wrote a more extensive treatment of 183 pages on paedocommunion, which was published posthumously in 1728 as *An Essay in Favour of the Ancient Practice of Giving the Eucharist to Children*⁶³⁵. Daniel Waterland⁶³⁶ mentions James Peirce in his 1737 book *A Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, writing that his suggestions bear plausibility; still he chooses to acquiesce to William Wall⁶³⁷. In his posthumously published 1742 book *An Inquiry concerning the Antiquity of the Practice of Infant Communion*, Waterland distanced himself more from Peirce’s position⁶³⁸.

⁶²⁹ Jeremy Taylor, *The Worthy Communicant*, Volume XV of *The Whole Work of the Right Rev. Jeremy Taylor, D.D., Lord Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore*, Edited by: Reginald Heber, (1661; London: Ogle, Duncan etc., 1822), 503. Section II of Chapter III deals with the question whether infants are to be admitted to the Holy Communion. Section III of Chapter III deals with the question whether innocents, fools and madmen may be admitted to the Holy Communion.

⁶³⁰ Taylor (1661/1822), 508.

⁶³¹ Herbert Thorndike (1598-1672).

⁶³² Herbert Thorndike, *An Epilogue to the Tragedy of the Church of England ...*, Volume II part II of *Theological Works of Herbert Thorndike*, (1659; Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1846), 456-457.

⁶³³ Herbert Thorndike, *An Epilogue to the Tragedy of the Church of England ...*, Volume IV of *Theological Works of Herbert Thorndike*, (1659; Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852), 182-183.

⁶³⁴ James Peirce (c. 1674-1726).

⁶³⁵ James Peirce, *An Essay in Favour of the Ancient Practice of Giving the Eucharist to Children* (London: J. Noon, 1728).

⁶³⁶ Daniel Waterland (1683-1740).

⁶³⁷ Daniel Waterland, *A Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist: With Four Charges to the Clergy of Middlesex Connected with the Same Subject*, Volume IV and V of his collected works (1737; Oxford, Clarendon, 1880), 121 fn. i. William Wall (1647–1728) wrote his 1705 book *The History of Infant Baptism* in answer to the Seventh Day Baptist theologian Joseph Stennett (1663 – 1713) and later expanded versions of the book in answer to the Baptist theologian John Gale (1680–1721).

⁶³⁸ Daniel Waterland, *An Inquiry concerning the Antiquity of the Practice of Infant Communion: As founded on the Notion of its Strict Necessity*, Vol. IX of *The Works of The Rev. Daniel Waterland, D.D.* (1742; Oxford, Clarendon, 1823). Waterland concluded that early church fathers had been speaking of young children, not infants, about the expediency and not the necessity of Communion, spiritualizing all their references to

2.4.6.2. *The Restoration ending the debate*

Holeton suggests that the Restoration (of the monarchy), beginning in 1660, meant the end of this debate within Anglican circles⁶³⁹. He also suggests that if the Restoration of the British monarchy had not made the Anglican Church into national church or state church again, that those Anglicans with a high view of the sacraments would have reintroduced the practice of infant Communion⁶⁴⁰. The party of the usagers within the movement of the nonjurors, though marginal, may be seen as an indication of how infant Communion could have been reintroduced in the Church of England had it not been for the restoration. Infant confirmation and Communion was sanctioned in bishop Thomas Deacon's⁶⁴¹ 1734 *A Complete Collection of Devotions*⁶⁴². Deacon gave a more detailed explanation of his position in his 1747 *A Full, True and Comprehensive View of Christianity*⁶⁴³.

2.4.6.3. *A new stimulus from the East*

According to Dalby, infant Communion is only of interest to antiquarians for the next century⁶⁴⁴. From about 1850 he registers a new stimulus in the debate from the East. But it is around the turn of the century that new significant publications appear. In his 1899 book *Holy Baptism* the Anglican theologian Darwell Stone⁶⁴⁵ expresses the hope for restoration of "the primitive custom of administering Confirmation and First Communion, in the case both of infants and of adults, immediately after Baptism"⁶⁴⁶. In his 1904 book *Holy Communion*, Stone dedicates a chapter to the subject⁶⁴⁷. Stone disputes the distinction between "necessity of the means" and "the necessity

paedocommunion. Infants had not been actual, literal, communicants, but spiritual partakers, partaking in the mystical banquet, communicants in right, in effect, in real enjoyment, but not in reality.

⁶³⁹ Holeton in Müller-Fahrenheit (1981), 89. The Act of Uniformity of 1662 also included rules regarding the administration of the sacraments.

⁶⁴⁰ Holeton in Müller-Fahrenheit (1981), 89.

⁶⁴¹ Thomas Deacon (1697-1753).

⁶⁴² Deacon instructs, after sending those who do not belong to the faithful away, "Mothers take care of your children," and further on: "After all the Clergy have communicated, the officiating Priest, or according to his direction any or all of the Priests or Deacons there present, shall administer the Eucharist in both kinds to the Deaconesses, and then to the People in order into their hands, and last of all to the children, according to the form above prescribed," Thomas Deacon, *A compleat collection of devotions, both publick and private, Part 1* (n.p.: n.p., 1734), 80, 97.

⁶⁴³ Thomas Deacon, *A Full, True, and Comprehensive View of Christianity: Containing a Short Historical Account of Religion etc.*, (1747; repr., London: S Newton, 2010).

⁶⁴⁴ Dalby (2009), 22.

⁶⁴⁵ Darwell Stone (1859-1941).

⁶⁴⁶ Darwell Stone, *Holy Baptism* (London: Longmans, Green, 1899), 186.

⁶⁴⁷ Darwell Stone, *Holy Communion* (London: Longmans, Green, 1904), 188-200.

of the precept” as ground to baptize, but not to commune infants⁶⁴⁸. He argues against the postponement of confirmation till age fifteen or higher⁶⁴⁹. He remains unconvinced by the arguments against infant Communion of Joseph Bingham⁶⁵⁰. Stone argues that every scriptural and historical reason⁶⁵¹ for the baptism of infants applies to their Communion as well, and the need for grace, derived from reception of the elements, does not begin at age nine⁶⁵². He does not desire rash change, but well-considered restoration of the practice⁶⁵³.

Meanwhile, in 1901, the Anglican Henry Holloway had written *The Confirmation and Communion of Infants and Young Children*⁶⁵⁴ in favor of infant Communion. Holloway finds no support in Scripture for the required confirmation to participate in Communion⁶⁵⁵. The confession of sacraments as necessary for salvation⁶⁵⁶ and ordained by Christ⁶⁵⁷, and the administration of both elements to all Christians⁶⁵⁸ conflicts with a practice which is, according to Holloway, the effect of an evil rationalistic notion⁶⁵⁹. He points out that confirmation and Communion immediately following the baptism of infants is found in the early church⁶⁶⁰ up to the late Middle Ages, until a change starts round 1536⁶⁶¹, an era in which the separation of baptism, confirmation and Communion is completed⁶⁶². Only after the Reformation⁶⁶³ does the age for confirmation become seven⁶⁶⁴, with yet many examples of earlier

⁶⁴⁸ Stone (1904), 188-189.

⁶⁴⁹ Stone (1904), 197.

⁶⁵⁰ Joseph Bingham’s (1668-1723) arguments against infant Communion can be found in his *Origines Ecclesiasticae: The Antiquities of the Christian Church and Other Works*. Volume V, 1708-1722 (London: William Straker, 1834), 320. 1- Infant Communion lacks a foundation in Scripture. 2- Infants are already in effect partakers of the body and blood of Christ. 3- Infant cannot fulfill the requirement of doing this in remembrance. 4- The analogy with Passover shows that children can only partake when they can ask the meaning of this mystery (cf. Ex. 12:26).

⁶⁵¹ The infant Communion practice of the early church and some of the Biblical arguments provided by the church fathers, and the continued practice in the churches of the east and statements, such as in the Confession of Metrophanes Kritoopoulos, play an important role in Stone’s argument in favor.

⁶⁵² Stone (1904), 198.

⁶⁵³ Stone (1904), 199.

⁶⁵⁴ Henry Holloway, *The Confirmation and Communion of Infants and Young Children* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1901).

⁶⁵⁵ Such as required by the Prayer Book. Holloway (1901), 1-8. A practice in which confirmation and first Communion are postponed till age 14 or 15. Holloway (1901), 1.

⁶⁵⁶ As confessed in the Church Catechism.

⁶⁵⁷ As confessed in art. 25 of the Thirty Nine Articles.

⁶⁵⁸ As confessed in art. 30 of the Thirty Nine Articles.

⁶⁵⁹ Holloway (1901), 16.

⁶⁶⁰ Holloway (1901), 20-39, 58-73.

⁶⁶¹ For the specific year of 1536 see Holloway (1901), 44.

⁶⁶² Among others under the influence of Bucer, according to Holloway (1901), 45.

⁶⁶³ Fifty years after the Reformation according to Holloway. Holloway (1901), 45f.

⁶⁶⁴ Holloway (1901), 45f.

confirmation and a trend towards the upper limit of age fourteen⁶⁶⁵. The Council of Constance⁶⁶⁶ implicitly deprived children of the Lord's Supper⁶⁶⁷, and the Council of Trent⁶⁶⁸ and its Catechism explicitly forbade the administration of the Eucharist to children who are not yet come of the use of reason⁶⁶⁹. Holloway, who cannot foresee that in the near future a pope will be the first to lower the age of first Communion, considers these councils proof of the popish nature of raising the age of admission. He highlights the continued paedocommunion practice of the Russian Church⁶⁷⁰. He further registers eight objections to infant Communion⁶⁷¹ and responds to each with criticism for their popish nature and late origin. He emphasizes the parallels between Passover, baptism, preaching, and prayer on the one side and Lord's Supper on the other. He compares the biblical invitation of the penitents with the invitation of the innocents. He suggests a communal rather than individual approach, puts the emphasis on God's act instead of man's, and suggests that God's Holy Spirit operates instead of *ex opere operato*. Passover is connected with the Eucharist⁶⁷², and manna was a type of it⁶⁷³. The baptized, such as babies, should be taught all that Christ commanded, including the Lord's Supper⁶⁷⁴. The baptized are in communion with Christ, and should therefore receive Communion⁶⁷⁵. All who are baptized by one Spirit have been made to drink into one Spirit⁶⁷⁶. Lambs should be fed⁶⁷⁷. If children do not participate, the unity of Christ's mystical body is not signified⁶⁷⁸. Holloway further challenges the age of admission by comparing it to the legal age of marriage, the age children can give legal testimony, and the age at which Royal persons undergo certain rituals⁶⁷⁹.

⁶⁶⁵ An upper limit which is relaxed until fifteen and later sixteen and older: Holloway (1901), 47f.

⁶⁶⁶ Council of Constance (1418-1419).

⁶⁶⁷ By withholding the cup from the laity.

⁶⁶⁸ Council of Trent (1562).

⁶⁶⁹ Holloway (1901), 76-80. Referring to Catechism of Council of Trent Part II, chap. IV, Question LX and Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Session XXI, chap. IV.

⁶⁷⁰ Holloway (1901), 88-96.

⁶⁷¹ The four main objections can be summarized as children's incapability to fulfill the requirement of 1 Corinthians 11 to do this in remembrance, to examine themselves, to discern the Lord's body and to proclaim the Lord's death. Lord's Supper is not given to work the first grace but to establish already received grace. Children's participation further scandalizes adults, takes away from the solemnity of the Lord's Supper, and would turn it in a charm, assuming *ex opere operato* working of the sacrament.

⁶⁷² Holloway (1901), 123.

⁶⁷³ Holloway (1901), 121.

⁶⁷⁴ Cf. Matthew 28:18-20. Holloway (1901), 133.

⁶⁷⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 10:16. Holloway (1901), 136

⁶⁷⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 12:12,13. Holloway (1901), 141.

⁶⁷⁷ Cf. John 21:15. Holloway (1901), 134.

⁶⁷⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 10:17. Holloway (1901), 136.

⁶⁷⁹ Holloway (1901), 144-181.

We take note of the fact that these books with their plea for infant Communion were published a few years before the Roman Catholic Church, under the leadership of pope Pius X, took an important step towards lowering the age of first Communion with the publication of *Quam Singulari* in 1910. It would take another half century before similar Reformed theologians in Germany and the Netherlands would do similar proposals.

2.4.6.4. Summary

In summary, initially the British Reformed theologians refer to the historic practice of paedocommunion to embarrass the Roman Catholics. Considering that most Reformers dealt with the question of paedocommunion in the context of the debate with the Anabaptists, it is interesting to see how in the case of the British Reformed tradition that discussion continued and deepened in response to the Baptist charge of inconsistency. As the discussion deepens, the positions of several Reformed theologians shifted towards acceptance of paedocommunion. The political reality of the Restoration seems to have ended the chances of the reintroduction of the paedocommunion practice within the mainstream of the British Reformed tradition. The introduction of paedocommunion by the marginal party of the Usagers may indicate what alternative futures may have looked like. After a century in which paedocommunion was merely a matter of antiquarians' interest, new pleas are heard from within Reformed circles. Now the impulse for the debate also came from the Eastern Church. The British Reformed pleas for paedocommunion preceded the lowering of the age of first Communion in the Roman Catholic Church by a couple of years, and preceded similar pleas in the German and Dutch Reformed tradition by almost half a century.

2.4.7. Further developments in the Reformed tradition of Germany

When describing what was written by German Reformed and Lutheran theologians after the Reformation, two historical works should be mentioned first. In 1673 the German Lutheran theologian J.F. Mayer⁶⁸⁰ publishes a treatise of 73 pages⁶⁸¹ on infant Communion⁶⁸². Mayer denies that infant Communion was an apostolic tradition, explaining its later existence as flowing forth from a wrong sacramental interpretation of John 6, and supports the arguments of the Lutheran Quenstedt in opposition of infant Communion.

⁶⁸⁰ J.F. Mayer (1650-1712).

⁶⁸¹ Approximately 15.000 words.

⁶⁸² J.F. Mayer, *Commentarius Historico-Theologicus de Eucharistia Infantibus olim Data* (Leipzig: J.E. Hahn, 1673). A second edition mentioned by Dalby was printed in Jena in 1734. Mayer also wrote a book titled *Würdiger Communicant*, a book I was not able to obtain.

Dalby notes how Mayer was marred by his concern to lambast the Romans⁶⁸³. In 1736 another German Lutheran theologian, Peter Zorn⁶⁸⁴ published a book of more than six hundred pages on the history of infant Communion⁶⁸⁵. Though Zorn had written his book dissatisfied with Mayer's work, Dalby's summary shows that Zorn was convinced that the practice was not apostolic, but wrongly based on a notion of necessity from John 6. Zorn does argue his case, but, as Dalby notes, he primarily presents a history of infant Communion⁶⁸⁶.

2.4.7.1. Twenty German theologians

Regarding information on the issue of infant Communion in the writings of German Reformed and Lutheran theologians I further depend mostly on Eberhard Kenntner's overview in his dissertation *Abendmahl mit Kindern*⁶⁸⁷. Kenntner summarizes the position of twenty Lutheran and Reformed German theologians between 1700 and 1959⁶⁸⁸. Kenntner concludes that his overview provides no evidence of any paedocommunion debate or the existence of proponents of this practice in Germany until a first statement in 1957 by Otto Haendler⁶⁸⁹. He also concludes that the interpretation 1 Corinthians 11 is crucial in the Lutheran and Reformed position against infant Communion. He suspects that the relationship between confession of sin and Lord's Supper and not between knowledge and the Lord's Supper is most crucial as verse 28 of this chapter about worthiness is referred to most often, and not verse 29 about discerning the body. Likewise the German Calvinist theologian Heinrich Heppe⁶⁹⁰ considers self-examination of 1 Corinthians 11:28 so crucial, that in his Reformed Dogmatics he classifies children who are unable to examine themselves with the insane and the unrepentant sinners, while stating on the same page that the Lord's Supper was given to strengthen those weak in

⁶⁸³ Dalby (2009), 13.

⁶⁸⁴ Peter Zorn (1682-1746).

⁶⁸⁵ Peter Zorn, *Historia Eucharistiae Infantium* (Berlin: J.P. Schmid, 1736).

⁶⁸⁶ Dalby (2009), 18.

⁶⁸⁷ Eberhard Kenntner, *Abendmahl mit Kindern: Versuch einer Grundlegung unter Berücksichtigung der geschichtlichen Wurzeln der gegenwärtigen Diskussion in Deutschland*. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus Gerd Mohn, 1980), 51-70.

⁶⁸⁸ Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Claus Harms (1778-1855), Rudolf Ewald Stier (1800-1862), Carl Immanuel Nitzsch (1787-1868), Christian Friedrich Kling (1800-1862), Wilhelm Löhe (1808-1872), Christian Palmer (1811-1875), Gerhard von Zezschwitz (1825-1886), Theodosius Harnack (1816-1889), Ernst Christian Achelis (1838-1912), Alfred Krauss (1862-1938), Walter Caspari (1847-1923), Georg Rietschel (1842-1914), Friedrich Niebergall (1866-1932), Martin Schian (1869-1944), Leonhard Fendt (1881-1957), Alfred Dedo Müller (1890-1972), Otto Haendler (1890-1981), and Karl Dienst (1930-).

⁶⁸⁹ The first (East) German paedocommunion practice mentioned by Kenntner is in Magdeburg in 1958.

Kenntner (1980), 45.

⁶⁹⁰ Heinrich Heppe (1820-1879).

faith⁶⁹¹. The underlying anthropology of the child is defined in terms of *becoming* mature and *becoming* Christian and not of *being*. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon seventeenth century debates as researched by Holeton, neither the relationship between infant baptism and the Lord's Supper nor that between infant baptism and confirmation cause much discussion. Though his sources provide few explicit examples, Kenntner suggests that controversial theology—that is, the need to distance oneself from the practice and theology which was perceived as typically Roman Catholic -- might have played an implicit role.

2.4.7.2. *The age of admission*

The age of fourteen as proper age for confirmation and first Communion is mentioned most often by the German Reformed and Lutheran theologians in Kenntner's research⁶⁹². The Lutheran theologian Karl Immanuel Nitzsch mentions that the church order forbids confirmation before the age of fourteen⁶⁹³. The age of fourteen corresponds with what we find in other predominantly Lutheran countries such as Norway and Denmark⁶⁹⁴. As Nitzsch indicates it is the age at which most German children are finished with their school education and start their working life⁶⁹⁵. Claus Harms also allows age fifteen, an age which Alfred Krauss suggests as most proper⁶⁹⁶, but remarkably enough no bigger age deviations are suggested by these theologians⁶⁹⁷. Though Kenntner does mention that the age of fifteen to seventeen was more common in Reformed areas in earlier days⁶⁹⁸. Theology and praxis may have differed, as many parents urged for earlier confirmation. Philipp Jakob Spener even speaks of a common misuse in the countryside to allow children to do their first Communion earlier, partly due to the parents who apparently

⁶⁹¹ Heinrich Heppé, *Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformierten Kirche*, (1861; Neukirchen, Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins Neukirchen, 1935), 504. Heppé's book has been of special importance within the (Dutch) Reformed tradition. Dick Schinkelshoek speaks of the primal dogmatics (oerdogmatiek) of the Reformed tradition, Dick Schinkelshoek, "Waarom zou je een dogmatiek schrijven?" *Nederlands Dagblad*, October 12, 2012.

⁶⁹² Kenntner (1980), 55, 57, 62, 63, 67, 69.

⁶⁹³ Carl Immanuel Nitzsch, *Praktische Theologie: Dritter Band; Zweite Abtheilung: Die evangelische Kirchenordnung* (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1867), 142.

⁶⁹⁴ A Norwegian law from 1736 regarding the admission of new members set the age at 14. The age Norwegian children would normally finish school. A 1911 law stipulated that admission as church member included the right to participation in the Lord's Supper. In Denmark a similar law was changed in 1909 allowing children at the Lord's Supper "when the preacher is willing to receive them there." "Berichten van hier en daar," *Gereformeerd Gezinsblad*, December 14, 1963.

⁶⁹⁵ Nitzsch (1867), 141.

⁶⁹⁶ Kenntner (1980), 63.

⁶⁹⁷ Harms seems to allow not more than deviations of half a year or a year. Claus Harms, *Pastoraltheologie: In Reden an Theologiestudierende; Zweijtes Buch: der Priester*, 2nd ed. (Kiel: Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1837), 236-237.

⁶⁹⁸ Kenntner (1980), 57.

depend on the labor and financial contribution of their children⁶⁹⁹. Claus Harms seems to suggest similar economic grounds when he suggests in response that God has supported the parents thus far and that they should trust God to support them for one more year⁷⁰⁰. Spener also mentions parents' ambition as possible other ground for this practice⁷⁰¹.

2.4.7.3. The German Confirmation Debate

Kenntner, who did not find traces of a paedocommunion debate until 1957, does point to the existence of a confirmation debate which according to Kenntner started in 1845 and lasted for about 130 years⁷⁰². The first stage of this debate is characterized by proposals to increase the age for confirmation, or for aspects such as Lord's Supper celebration or the right to vote. This debate demonstrated the possibility of a division between confirmation and admission to the Lord's Supper. A second stage in this debate which started just before the Second World War and found a culmination in the 1960s suggested, on several grounds, the possibility of lowering the age of certain aspects of the confirmation.

The first stage of the debate is opened by Johann von Hofman⁷⁰³ in 1845, who pleads for a more biblical confirmation at a higher age⁷⁰⁴. From a church policy perspective Johann Höfling⁷⁰⁵ distinguishes admission in the sacramental community and admission in full and active 'civil' right of the congregation. He wants the former to remain at age fourteen and suggests the latter could take place at an older age.

A similar distinction is proposed by Gerhard von Zezschwitz⁷⁰⁶. Johann Wichern⁷⁰⁷ regards confirmation praxis as marking the transition from childhood to adolescence. He suggests that confirmation remain at the same age, but admission to the Lord's Supper be at an older age for the sake of worthiness. Adolf Stoecker⁷⁰⁸ agrees with Wichern, but from a church order perspective, as does Ernst Christian Achelis. From a the perspective of the

⁶⁹⁹ Philipp J. Spener, *Philipp Jakob Spener's deutsche und lateinische theologische Bedenken: In einer zeitgemäßen Auswahl herausgegeben von F. A. E. Henricke* (Halle: Gebauersche Buchhandlung, 1838), 276f.

⁷⁰⁰ Claus Harms, *Pastoraltheologie: In Reden an Theologiestudierende; Zweijtes Buch: der Priester*. 2nd ed. (Kiel: Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1837), 236. Nitzsch speaks of dispensation in cases where earning of bread, "Broderwerbe," necessitates it. Nitzsch (1867), 142.

⁷⁰¹ Spener (1838), 276.

⁷⁰² Kenntner (1980), 74f.

⁷⁰³ Johann Christian Karl von Hofman (1810-1877).

⁷⁰⁴ Kenntner (1980), 76.

⁷⁰⁵ Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Höfling (1820-1853).

⁷⁰⁶ Gerhard von Zezschwitz (1825-1886).

⁷⁰⁷ Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-1881).

⁷⁰⁸ Adolf Stoecker (1835-1909).

pedagogy of religion and child psychology Leopold Cordier⁷⁰⁹ criticizes the absurdity of the high point of confirmation being at the cutting line of two age groups. Erich Stange⁷¹⁰ wants to increase the age of confirmation but wants to grant the right to Communion at an earlier celebration when the child's education is finished. Ground for his opinion is his equal treatment of Word and Sacrament⁷¹¹.

The second stage of this German confirmation debate can be considered the first stage of the paedocommunion debate in Germany. Though Kenntner locates the start of this debate in the early 1940s, his quotes are all from the 50s and 60s. With that we enter the era that is the subject of other chapters of this dissertation. Here I summarize that this second stage of the confirmation debate is the stage in which pleas are heard to lower the age of first Communion⁷¹², in which requirements for admission other than baptism are questioned⁷¹³ and in which the point of discussion is whether admission is an individual or collective issue, a church or a family issue⁷¹⁴.

2.4.7.4. Summary

I conclude that, in spite of Luther's alternative interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11, both German Reformed and Lutheran theologians were rather unanimous in their rejection of children's Communion on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11. German theologians also seem to have been rather unanimous in considering age fourteen or fifteen the proper age for confirmation and admission. Though earlier we quoted Fodor who suggested the age was lower until the period of Rationalism in the seventeenth century⁷¹⁵. It is noteworthy that this also seems to have been the case for the fathers of German pietism. It is also noteworthy that, possibly under Lutheran influence, there is no evidence of a significant increase of this age during the nineteenth century. I note that the age of fourteen coincides with the conclusion of the second life stage of seven years, and for a long time approximately with the conclusion of education. Economic circumstances even seem to have pushed the age slightly downward in practice. I have not found evidence of extensive debates with

⁷⁰⁹ Leopold Cordier (1887-1939).

⁷¹⁰ Erich Stange (1888-1972).

⁷¹¹ "Hält man an der reformatorischen Anschauung fest, daß das Abendmahl verbum visibile sei, so scheint sich kein zwingender Grund zu ergeben, die Zulassung zum AM anders zu behandeln als diejenige zur Verkündigung des Worts, d.h. nach rein pädagogischen Gesichtspunkten," E. Stange, *Volkskirche als Organismus* (Dresden: Ungelenk, 1928), 52, quoted in Kenntner (1980), 78.

⁷¹² Kenntner (1980), 78f.

⁷¹³ Kenntner (1980), 83f.

⁷¹⁴ Kenntner (1980), 86f.

⁷¹⁵ Fodor (n.d.), 7.

other traditions, such as took place in England. Pleas to raise the age were heard in the ‘internal’ German Confirmation debate. The disconnection of confirmation, the right to vote, and first participation in the Lord’s Supper, may have prepared the second stage of this debate in which the first pleas to lower the age of admission were heard.

2.4.8. Further developments in the Reformed tradition of the Netherlands

When reading what over a dozen significant Dutch Reformed theologians⁷¹⁶ have written on infant Communion in the four centuries since Anastasius Veluanus wrote the first Dutch Reformed Dogmatics, we can conclude that the Dutch Reformed theologians were unanimously following the Reformers in their rejection and in the reasons given for such rejection, and that not many words were wasted on the issue⁷¹⁷. In 1554 Anastasius Veluanus speculates about children’s faith like Luther, but is sure that such faith can never be of such nature that it could be grounds for admission to the table⁷¹⁸. Instead he rejects infant Communion based on the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11, like his contemporary John Calvin⁷¹⁹. In 1595 Guido de Brès presents only a few arguments, and all identical to Calvin’s⁷²⁰. Three centuries later the same rational is still found. In 1890 Abraham Kuyper writes that in theory the elect should be invited to the Lord’s Supper, but that in practice those who are baptized, able to discern, and not censured by their conscience or the church should be invited⁷²¹. In 1859, the Ware Hollandsche Gereformeerde Kerk or Holland Reformed Church, had continued the practice of allowing only those confessing members who are orthodox in belief and blameless in life⁷²². In 1905 Kuyper explains that infants are physically and spiritually unable to

⁷¹⁶ I looked at writings of Joannes Anastasius Veluanus (1520-1570), Guido de Brès (1522-1567), Marten Micron (1523-1559), Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676), Herman Witsius (1636-1708), Isaïc Da Costa (1798-1860), Frederik L. Rutgers (1836-1917), Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), Herman Bavinck (1854-1921), G.H.J.W.J. Geesink (1854-1924), Anthonie G. Honig (1864-1940), Louis Berkhof (1873-1957), Kornelis H. Miskotte (1894-1976), Gerrit C. Berkouwer (1903-1996), J.L. Koole (1910-1997?), and Hendrik Jonker (1917-1990). Regarding Da Costa’s position I had to rely on secondary sources, as I was unable to trace it back to his writings. When discussing theological debate on other issues than infant Communion such as the pietistic writings on worthy Communion by Willem Teelinck (1579-1629), Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676), Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711), Petrus Immens (1664-1720), and Johan Verschuur (1680-1737) I have restricted myself mostly to secondary sources.

⁷¹⁷ A possible exception might be the Dutch poet and historian Isaïc Da Costa, for whom – as a converted Jew - it was a deep felt deficiency that the Lord’s Supper celebration lacked the question of the youngest child (Ex. 12:26). See, D.J. Karres, “Open- en oecumenisch Avondmaal,” *Woord en Dienst* (July 7, 1962).

⁷¹⁸ Anastasius Veluanus (1554/2012), 120.

⁷¹⁹ Anastasius Veluanus (1554/2012), 137.

⁷²⁰ De Brès (1595/2011), 543.

⁷²¹ Abraham Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek van Dr. A. Kuyper: Locus de Salute, Ecclesia, Sacramentis; Collegedictaat van een der studenten*. 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: n.p., 1890), 192f..

⁷²² *Minutes*, Classical Assembly Holland Reformed Church / Ware Hollandsche Gereformeerde Kerk Grand Rapids, February 2, 1859, art. 13.

communicate, as they cannot act as required by the Lord's Supper, and as their self-awareness has not awakened yet⁷²³. Round 1907-1909 the Reformed ethicist W. Geesink mentions the requirement of baptism, the use of reason, and self-examination, as justification for the exclusion of young children⁷²⁴. In 1911 Herman Bavinck argues against infant Communion based on the Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem which excluded the youngest children, the passive nature of baptism over against the active nature of the Lord's Supper, the institution and other New Testament reports which describes a celebration by adults only, the self-examination, discernment and worthiness required by 1 Corinthians 11, and the thought that the Lord's Supper has no added value for children who are already baptized⁷²⁵. By claiming that the early church only allowed those who had professed their faith, Anthonie Honig seems to prove that even some of the wrong assumptions of the Reformers regarding infant Communion were taken for granted⁷²⁶. In 1938, the same year as Honig's publication, Louis Berkhof, representative for the Dutch Reformed tradition in North America at that time, published his *Systematic Theology*. He follows the traditional interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 and requires self-examination, discernment of the body and therefore the age of discretion⁷²⁷. Gerrit Berkouwer's *Dogmatic Studies* illustrate how hardly any words were wasted on the issue, as I could not find any treatment of infant Communion in this work of over 10,000 pages⁷²⁸.

2.4.8.1. No significant debate with other traditions

The Dutch Reformed associate infant Communion with other traditions. Honig knows that infant Communion is a Greek and Eastern Orthodox practice⁷²⁹. Bavinck makes it sound as if exclusion of children from the Lord's Supper was a conscious break away from the Roman Catholic past⁷³⁰. And Honig suggests that allowing young children at the Lord's Supper was introduced by the Roman Catholic Church⁷³¹. There is some debate with other traditions. De Brès

⁷²³ Abraham Kuiper, *E Voto Dordraceno: Toelichting op den Heidelbergschen Catechismus, derde deel* (Amsterdam: Höveker & Wormser, 1905), 220.

⁷²⁴ W. Geesink, *Van 's HEEREN ordinantiën; Tweede Deel; 's HEEREN ordinantiën in de zedelijke wereld, I, 2nd ed.* (Kampen: Kok, 1925), 201.

⁷²⁵ Bavinck (1911/1930), 561.

⁷²⁶ A.G. Honig, *Handboek van de Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Kampen: Kok, 1938), 677. We already noticed that several Reformers wrongly assumed that the early church treated children of believers as catechumen.

⁷²⁷ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology: New Edition containing the full text of Systematic Theology and the original Introductory Volume to Systematic Theology* (1932/1938; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 656f.

⁷²⁸ Of course we primarily focused on the volume which deals with the sacraments: G.C. Berkouwer, *Dogmatische Studiën: De sacramenten* (Kampen: Kok, 1954).

⁷²⁹ Honig (1938), 677.

⁷³⁰ H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, vierde deel*, 1911, 4th ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1930), 560.

⁷³¹ Honig (1938), 677.

touches on infant Communion as part of his argument against the Anabaptists, Witsius answers Metrophanes Kritopoulos of Alexandria⁷³², Bavinck responds to the arguments of Musculus and so does Honig⁷³³. But as far as I can see the issue of infant Communion has not caused extended debate in the Netherlands over all those centuries, neither with the Anabaptist, nor with the East, nor within Reformed circles.

2.4.8.2. Ages of admission

In the Dutch refugee church in London the age of admission was set at 13⁷³⁴. Approximately two centuries later not much had changed in the Netherlands considering the church order stating that “children of 12, 13 and 14 years, having been baptized, able to examine themselves, and professing their faith, should be admitted to the Supper with consent of the Church Council”⁷³⁵. The age of admission seems to have gone up over the course of the nineteenth century⁷³⁶. In 1878 F.L. Rutgers repeats Voetius’ plea not to finish catechism teaching with the age of fourteen⁷³⁷. In 1900 Rutgers supports the practice of waiting till age eighteen, or twenty and beyond, though he acknowledges that the Reformation considered children between age ten and twelve in Southern countries and at age fourteen in Northern countries ‘susceptible’ for profession and celebration of the Lord’s Supper, while it is rare for a child of fifteen to be admitted in the Netherlands⁷³⁸. In 1890 Abraham Kuyper states that the age of admission used to be fourteen⁷³⁹ and that it was raised to eighteen or twenty unjustified because of the rise of intellectualism⁷⁴⁰. Kuyper

⁷³² Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, Vol. II (1677; repr., Edinburgh: John Turnbull, 1803), 457f.

⁷³³ Honig (1938), 677.

⁷³⁴ Marten Micron, *De Christlike ordinancien der Nederlantscher Ghemeinten te London 1554: Opnieuw uitgegeven en van een inleiding voorzien door W.F.Dankbaar*. Vol. VII of *Kerkhistorische Studiën*, ed. J. Lindeboom, M. van Rhijn, J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink (’s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956).

⁷³⁵ “Kinderen van 12, 13 en 14 jaaren gedoopt zijnde, en zich zelven kunnende beproeven Belijdenis des Geloofs doende, behooren met advijs des Kerkenraads tot het Nagtmaal des Heeren toegelaaten te worden,” *Kerkelijke Wetten*, Tit. XXV. Art. III. G. Nauta, *Compendium der kerkelijke wetten van Vriesland: geëxtraheert uit 's lands en sijnodale resolutien etc.* 2nd ed. (1757; Leeuwarden: H.A. de Chalmot, 1771), 153f. In this same compendium we find the regulation that examination of children should start even earlier, that is at the age of ten. “Om dit bovenstaande dies te krachtiger aan te binden, dat de Kinderen 10, 12 of 14 jaaren oud zijnde, openlijk voor de kerkenraad zullen onderzocht worden, hoe verre zij in de kennis van de gronden der Waarheid gevordert zijn,” *Kerkelijke Wetten*, Tit. LX Van de Catechisatie Art. 4 G. Nauta (1757/1771), 247.

⁷³⁶ This also happens to be the century in which the age of confirmation within the Roman Catholic Church moved further upwards, Hermans (1987), 83, fn. 127.

⁷³⁷ F.L. Rutgers, *Kerkelijke Adviezen*, II (Kampen: Kok, 1922), 126.

⁷³⁸ Rutgers (1922), 68. N.B. Rutgers shares that one of his own children was admitted at age 15.

⁷³⁹ And claims this was also the case with Calvin.

⁷⁴⁰ Kuyper (1890), 194. In light of Kuyper’s remarks it is interesting to read that the 1988 minority report of the CRCNA synodical study committee blames Kuyper for intellectualizing profession of faith. *Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 308.

allows for differences per region, but discourages intellectualism by encouraging the invitation of children rather than at a younger than at an older age⁷⁴¹. Later Kuyper suggest the age of sixteen⁷⁴². Kuyper's suggestion does not cause significant change. In 1916 T. Hoekstra mentions a practice of doing profession of faith round the age of twenty⁷⁴³. In 1990 A.N. Hendriks speaks of an average age of eighteen for profession of faith⁷⁴⁴.

Church orders and synodical decisions give some insight in what issues were at stake. Until the age of twelve, for example, children would be baptized as included in their parents. But there was some uncertainty whether children between the age of twelve and fourteen could be baptized without any profession of faith. Therefore, the 1592 Frisian Synod of Leeuwarden ruled that it would be edifying to recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, *etc.*, before baptism⁷⁴⁵. I note that the Dutch church order was considerate of those who were not yet able to recite word by word, just like in the Palatinate⁷⁴⁶.

2.4.8.3. Participation and marriage

Regarding the question whether children between the age of twelve and fifteen should be admitted to the Lord's Supper right after their baptism, the 1591 Frisian Synod of Dokkum ruled that this would be left to the minister and the church council⁷⁴⁷. The Synod of South Holland dealt with this same question several times⁷⁴⁸. Bouwman explains that the context of this rule was that young people wanted to get baptized in order to be able to get married, but were not willing to participate in the Lord's Supper. The Synod of South

⁷⁴¹ Kuyper (1890), 192. Again, compare the 1988 minority report of the CRCNA synodical study committee, which mentions Kuyper when explaining profession of faith at the end of the teenage years or even later. *Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 308.

⁷⁴² A. Kuyper, *Onze Eeredienst* (Kampen: Kok, 1911), 435, 436, 438.

⁷⁴³ A number which does not take into account those Reformed Churches in which profession of faith was delayed because of pietistic sentiments. Hoekstra as quoted in A.N. Hendriks, *Kinderen aan de tafel van Christus?* 1986 2nd ed. (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1990), 121.

⁷⁴⁴ A number which applies to the Reformed Church (RCL), and which may have been slightly higher considering that in practice profession of faith at a younger age will have been more exceptional than at an older age. Hendriks (1990), 121.

⁷⁴⁵ Article 16, Bouwman (1934), 444.

⁷⁴⁶ Church Laws, chap. 30, art. 3 (Kerkelijke Wetten, Titulus XXX, Art. III.), "A person of pious life and conversation, and very eager to use the Lord's Supper, even if, after diligent and long education, he cannot recite the twelve articles of faith word for word, but knows the sum of faith, can be allowed in an edifying way, but such cases will be left to the judgment and discretion of the overseers of the local congregation," (my translation), Nauta (1757/1771), 135.

⁷⁴⁷ Article 28, Bouwman (1934), 444.

⁷⁴⁸ (1587, art. 17, 1592, art 7, 1595, art. 34), Bouwman (1934), 444.

Holland chose for patience with such encumbered members⁷⁴⁹. The 1595 Synod of North Holland or Amsterdam was stricter ruling that none shall be baptized but those who promise beforehand that they will go to the Lord's Supper at once⁷⁵⁰.

2.4.8.4. Participation and school laws

School, where catechism was primarily taught, generally ended at the age of thirteen or fourteen, which was also the age of admission to the Lord's Supper. When new school laws of the Netherlands determined in 1806 that school education should only be of general Christian purport and not tied to the teachings of a particular church, the consequent disconnection of school education and catechism teaching gave room for the rise to a higher age for ecclesiastical maturity⁷⁵¹, approximately at the age of eighteen. Kuiper suggests that this could happen without significant resistance in the context of a poor Lord's Supper perception⁷⁵². But Kuiper also mentions those who looked back gratefully believing that the time between fourteen and eighteen can hardly be missed to gain a solid knowledge of the truth⁷⁵³.

2.4.8.5. Participation and an agricultural economy

Related to a more agricultural economy and its seasons of labor is the fact that according to the Acts of the 1830 Synod of the Reformed Church, many congregations only taught catechism classes in winter⁷⁵⁴. This suggests that a similar need for young laborers led to parents asking for earlier confirmation in Germany while it may have led to a delay in catechism teaching and a subsequent rise in the age of profession of faith in the Netherlands⁷⁵⁵. In 1911 Kuyper still mentions winter catechisms as caused by the conflict with school and employment in spring and summer⁷⁵⁶.

⁷⁴⁹ "Not to withhold those from Baptism, who are still encumbered - by their scruples or otherwise - to promise this (to participate in the Lord's Supper), but to hold those under oversight after their Baptism and to admonish them towards the Supper," (my translation), Bouwman (1934), 444f.

⁷⁵⁰ Article 43, Bouwman (1934), 445.

⁷⁵¹ Kuiper (1974), 107.

⁷⁵² "Een schrale avondmaalsbeleving," Kuiper (1974), 107.

⁷⁵³ Moll, as quoted by Kuiper (1974), 107.

⁷⁵⁴ The acts mention 671 congregations, and concludes that two thirds of a year no catechism classes are taught. *Handelingen van de Algemeene Christelijke Synode der Hervormde Kerk in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in den jare 1830* ('s Gravenhage: Lands Drukkerij, 1831), 69-79. See also Kuiper (1974), 107.

⁷⁵⁵ The acts of synod do not mention such a rise in age of profession of faith, but it is my observation that the two phenomena coincided and my suggestion that they may have been related.

⁷⁵⁶ Kuyper (1911), 437.

2.4.8.6. Participation in the Nadere Reformatie

We mentioned encumbered believers who requested baptism, or profession of faith while hesitant to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Separation of baptism, profession of faith and Lord's Supper participation happened as many felt that only those who could be certain about their participation in Christ could also participate in the Lord's Supper celebration. The Dutch Reformed Voetius, key theologian within Dutch Pietism or Dutch Puritanism, supported this separation⁷⁵⁷. Cornelis Graafland writes about the development that takes place within this Dutch Puritan movement called *Nadere Reformatie*⁷⁵⁸ under three representative theologians: Voetius, Wilhelmus à Brakel and Johan Verschuur. He summarizes that the movement causes a shift from a focus on Christ and His salvation to the Christian and his status and worthiness, a shift from attention on the celebration to the preparation of the Lord's Supper, in which the attention on the unrepentant and the hypocrite and on barring those from the table, dominates. This movement creates a growing hesitance to celebrate the Lord's Supper⁷⁵⁹. Willem Teellinck, who has been called the father of the *Nadere Reformatie*, has certainly contributed to this hesitance, yet remarkably enough he did encourage those who celebrate in an unworthy manner, not to refrain from the Lord's Supper, but to attend in the right manner⁷⁶⁰. Lee Palmer Wandel seems to trace this approach to the Lord's Supper back to the Belgic Confession, which as Wandel claims "approaches the Supper through the lens of the division between the elect and the damned"⁷⁶¹. Wandel makes the observation "No longer is the Eucharist seen primarily as the means of nourishing faith. It has become that site where the true Church is made visible" and "*The process of faith was to precede the actual participation in the Supper.*"⁷⁶² An indication of the influence of this movement may be found in a remark made by Abraham Kuyper who speaks of hundreds and hundreds who wait for ten or more years after their profession

⁷⁵⁷ Gisbertus Voetius, *Politica Ecclesiastica*, Volume I, Amsterdam: 1663-1667, 670: Quoted in Bouwman (1934), 446.

⁷⁵⁸ Further Reformation.

⁷⁵⁹ C. Graafland, "Nadere Reformatie: G. Voetius, W. à Brakel, J. Verschuur," in *Bij brood en beker: Leer en gebruik van het heilig avondmaal in het Nieuwe Testament en in de geschiedenis van de westerse kerk*, ed. W. Van 't Spijker, W. Balke, K. Exalto and L. Van Driel, 248-278, 2nd ed. (1980; Kampen: Groot Goudriaan, 1999), 278.

⁷⁶⁰ See for example Willem Teellinck, *Het geestelijk sieraad van Christus' bruiloftskinderen (1620)* (Barneveld: Nederlands Dagblad, 2009). See also A.G. Knevel, "Willem Teellinck en de praktijk van het heilig avondmaal," in Van 't Spijker, Balke, Exalto and Van Driel (1980/1999), 284.

⁷⁶¹ Wandel (2006), 197. Wandel states "For those who accepted The Belgic Confession, the Lord's Table was a site where that division was not, as Calvin had it, experienced, but enforced" and "The Belgic Confession and the Reformed liturgies altered the relationship between the faithful and the Eucharist. The emphasis was no longer on preparedness – whether through education and / or catechizing or through discipline which might use temporary excommunication as one of its tools. The emphasis was on access itself," Wandel (2006), 200f.

⁷⁶² Wandel (2006), 203, 204.

of faith before attending the Lord's Supper and often enter eternity without ever having sought the strengthening of their faith in the Lord's Supper⁷⁶³. Also indicative of the influence of this movement is the problem that even office bearers refrain from celebrating the Lord's Supper⁷⁶⁴.

2.4.8.7. *The first to raise the issue*

Who was the first to raise the question of infant Communion in this Dutch Reformed context? My impression is that not theologians, but children are first, followed by other lay members. In 1898 we find the question of paedocommunion asked by some children, and answered in a special section for children of *De Heraut*, a weekly periodical of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands⁷⁶⁵. In 1953, still before any church reintroduced children at the Lord's Supper or any synod dealt with the question, a similar question is asked and answered in *De Saambinder*, a denominational periodical of the conservative and pietistic Reformed Congregations⁷⁶⁶. Another example of such a question by a reader is found in 1946, worth mentioning as the question is answered by the Reformed theologian Kornelis H. Miskotte⁷⁶⁷. In his answer Miskotte suggests that he would sooner choose in favor of believer's baptism than in favor of infant Communion⁷⁶⁸.

In 1949 the Dutch Reformed theologian Jan Koole suggests that the praxis of children's Communion in the apostolic church is not completely unthinkable, but that remark hardly qualifies as raising the issue⁷⁶⁹. Late 1961, early 1962, Hendrik Jonker⁷⁷⁰ seems to be one of the first Netherlands Reformed (NRC)

⁷⁶³ Kuyper (1905), 222. See also (1911), 425.

⁷⁶⁴ See for example J. Van Beelen's dissertation on the subject: *Doet dit tot mijn gedachtenis: Een onderzoek naar de relatie tussen avondmaal en ambt: over avondmaalsmijding van ambtsdraggers en het probleem van de bediening* (Leiden: Groen, 1996), the synodical reports of the Dutch Reformed Church, *De deelname aan het Avondmaal* (1960) and *Ambts en Avondmaalsmijding* (1986).

⁷⁶⁵ Hoogenbirk, "Voor kinderen," *De Heraut* (December 11, 1898): 4. The question was: "All those born into a house had to eat the Passover, even the little children. The Holy Supper has replaced the Passover. Should not all children for that reasons make use of this as well, as they are baptized and counted as members of the congregation without profession of faith?"

⁷⁶⁶ "Vragenbus," *De Saambinder* (August 27, 1953): 3-4.

⁷⁶⁷ K.H. Miskotte, *In de waagschaal: Verzameld werk 1*, edited by J.T. Bakker, A. Geense and G.G. de Kruijff (Kampen: Kok, 1982), 165f.

⁷⁶⁸ Miskotte (1982), 166.

⁷⁶⁹ "We zullen de gedachte van een kindercommunie [in de apostolische kerk PGS] niet geheel van ons kunnen afzetten," J.L. Koole, *Liturgie en ambt in de apostolische kerk* (Kampen: Kok, 1949), 46. Koole mentions participation of children in heathen ritual meals, participation of children according to the church fathers and participation of Jewish children in Passover as arguments which support the likelihood of such a practice. On the other hand he suggest that there is no analogy with the heathen magic perception of ritual meals, he also suggests that young children would not have been able to meet the requirement of conscious faith and discernment of the body, and he believes small children were not present at the meetings which often took place late in the evening. Pastor Koole, who at that time had already earned two PhD degrees, would become professor at the Reformed Theological University in Kampen in 1954.

⁷⁷⁰ Hendrik Jonker (1917-1990), professor of Practical Theology in Utrecht (1959-984).

theologians to suggest that children should be included in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper⁷⁷¹. He speaks of the personal renewal aspect and the communal aspect of the sacraments. In light of the latter he states that because children belong to the congregation they should not be excluded. Jonker seems to be thinking of the Lord's Supper as well, but the remark is not clear enough to conclude this beyond reasonable doubt. The story goes that Jan van Katwijk consulted professor Jonker before welcoming children at the Lord's Supper in Rijsbergen early 1962⁷⁷², which does support my interpretation. In October 1961, the same month that Jonker started his radio lectures, newspapers report that some Reformed pastors spoke in favor of allowing children at the Lord's Supper at a meeting of Synod of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands (NRC)⁷⁷³.

2.4.8.8. Summary

I conclude that Dutch Reformed theologians were almost unanimous in following the Reformers in their rejection of paedocommunion, and in the reasons given for that rejection. 1 Corinthians 11 remained the key text in this rejection. Not many words were wasted on the issue. Communion of infants and little children is associated with other traditions, but I found no significant debate with those traditions on this matter. The underlying theology did not show any significant development during those centuries. The original age of admission, set in the Dutch Reformed Church of London, was thirteen. The age seems to have gone up during the nineteenth century, remarkably simultaneous with the rise of the age of confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church. The original age of admission was influenced by the length of school education, and the age of marriage. The increase of the age of admission was influenced among other things by changing school laws and economic circumstances and possibly by the rise of intellectualism. The earlier indications of a higher age of first participation come from within the movement of *Nadere Reformatie*, in which participation is postponed for years if not for life. In that light the encouragement to participate from the father of this movement is remarkable. Children and lay-members seem to have been the first to raise the question within the Dutch Reformed tradition.

⁷⁷¹ H. Jonker, *Liturgische Oriëntatie: Gesprekken over de eredienst* (Wageningen: Zomer & Keuning, n.d.), 133. Note that this first edition has no date of publication, but the book is a publication of radio lectures held previously, between November 1961 and June 1962.

⁷⁷² Jan van Katwijk shared this information in a personal conversation with me in 1997.

⁷⁷³ "Oecumenische viering mogelijk? Stemmen op synode: ook kinderen aan Avondmaal," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, November 1, 1961, 11-12. The article mentions the names of Rev. G.P. Post from (classis) Eindhoven and Rev. G. Kaastra of classis Sneek (pastor of Oosthem since 1954) as speaking in favor.

Dutch Reformed theologians only started to give the question serious consideration after the Second World War.

2.4.9. *Reformation within the Roman Catholic Church*

In my study I focus on the Reformed tradition. As Pope Pius X⁷⁷⁴ may have had great influence on the paedocommunion practice within the Reformed tradition, he deserves some attention at the end of this chapter. Regarding my information on Pope Pius X and his decree *Quam Singulari*, I depend mostly on the impressive dissertation of the Roman Catholic liturgist Jo Hermans⁷⁷⁵. Against common practice, the later Pope Pius X already allowed first Communion of children younger than twelve years old, when he was Patriarch of Venice⁷⁷⁶. He also encouraged participation of especially boys in the church choirs⁷⁷⁷. In his 1905 encyclical Letter *Acerbo nimis* Pope Pius X first encouraged catechetical preparation of boys and girls for their first Communion, encouraged uniformity in catechetical teaching and provided a new catechism for his purpose⁷⁷⁸. In 1905 he also encouraged more frequent participation in the Eucharist in his decree *Sacra Tridentia Synodus* which raised the question at which age this frequent participation was proper⁷⁷⁹. In 1906 Pius X states that children should be prepared for first Communion as soon as they were capable. In the same year the decree *Romana et aliarum* is published in which frequent celebration by children is allowed. At what age is a decision left to the discretion of the father and confessor of the child⁷⁸⁰. At an international Eucharist conference in 1907 lots of pleas were heard for lowering of the age of first Communion and for an increase in the frequency of participation, but no decisions were made. In March 1910, the congregation of the sacraments rules that children should be allowed to the table as soon as they have reached the years of discretion⁷⁸¹. The decree *Quam Singulari* made the move to an earlier age for first Communion official. No longer were different ages of discretion used for confession and first Communion. Interesting is the remark that Jansenistic error had made had made the

⁷⁷⁴ Born as Giuseppe Sarto (1835-1914), Pius X was pope from 1903 until 1914.

⁷⁷⁵ Jo Hermans, *Eucharistie vieren met kinderen: Een liturgie-wetenschappelijke studie over de deelname van het kind aan de eucharistie in het verleden en volgens de huidige kerkelijke richtlijnen* (Brugge: 1987, Tabor). His dissertation is also available in German: Jo Hermans, *Eucharistie Feiern mit Kindern: Eine liturgie-wissenschaftliche Studie* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1991).

⁷⁷⁶ Hermans (1987), 238.

⁷⁷⁷ Convinced that women should not be part of such choirs, just like Gregory the Great. Hermans (1987), 238.

⁷⁷⁸ Hermans (1987), 239f.

⁷⁷⁹ Hermans (1987), 240.

⁷⁸⁰ Hermans (1987), 241.

⁷⁸¹ Hermans (1987), 242.

Eucharist into a reward instead of a medicine for human weakness⁷⁸². No complete knowledge of the catechism is required, before first Communion, but children will continue to learn gradually and according to their capability⁷⁸³. *Quam Singulari* specified the age of discretion as approximately age seven⁷⁸⁴.

Though the worldwide implementation of *Quam Singulari* did not happen without some resistance and problems⁷⁸⁵, it did lower the age of first Communion, a change of praxis with such an impact that the consequences would be experienced in the Reformed tradition. With *Quam Singulari* Pope Pius X did not only influence praxis, but also gave an important impetus to the study of and scientific publications on paedocommunion. I mention Louis Andrieux's study *La première communion*, published one year after *Quam Singulari*⁷⁸⁶. Two decades later we find significant publications in Germany, among which we find Johann Baumgärtler's *Die Erstkommunion*⁷⁸⁷, Peter Browe's publications on Communion⁷⁸⁸, and Heinrich Heiser's study *Die Kinderkommunion im Geiste der Kirche*.

⁷⁸² Hermans (1987), 243.

⁷⁸³ Hermans (1987), 244.

⁷⁸⁴ Hermans (1987), 248.

⁷⁸⁵ See besides Hermans, also Heinrich Aloys Heiser, *Die Kinderkommunion im Geiste der Kirche: Die Durchführung der Frühkommunion in der ganzen Welt* (Wiesbaden: Hermann Rauch, 1932).

⁷⁸⁶ Louis Andrieux, *La première communion* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1911).

⁷⁸⁷ Johann Baumgärtler, *Die Erstkommunion der Kinder: Ein Ausschnitt aus der Geschichte der katholischen Kommunionpraxis von der Urkirchlichen Zeit bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters* (München: Verlag Josef Kösel & Friedrich Pustet, 1929).

⁷⁸⁸ Peter Browe, *Die Eucharistie im Mittelalter: Liturgiehistorische Forschungen in Kulturwissenschaftlicher Absicht*, 4th ed. (1930; repr., Berlin: Lit. Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2009).

2.5. Summary

At the end of this chapter I want to draw some preliminary conclusions and answer some of the guiding questions that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The final and more detailed and nuanced conclusions and answers will be part of chapter 6.

I conclude that the historical documents of the ‘undocumented’ period before 251 only provide circumstantial evidence for the existence of a paedocommunion practice. I will elaborate on this circumstantial evidence in the final chapter. I hold that Cyprian’s words in 251 imply that at that moment the paedocommunion practice was as widespread and as old as Cyprian could oversee. I concur with the consensus that by the time of the fifth century the paedocommunion practice was certainly widespread. Children received Communion directly after their baptism, just before dying and in between. Documents between 251 and 500 proof the existence of paedocommunion, they provide regulations and defense for the practice. I conclude that paedocommunion continued to be a universal practice for many centuries. Then, just before the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 it became the practice of the majority. After the Fourth Lateran Council all three forms of paedocommunion disappeared rapidly. In the final chapter I will further elaborate on the reasons for this cessation. After this decline in the Western church, paedocommunion in its strictest form is continued in the Eastern Orthodox traditions, is temporarily reintroduced by the Hussites, and only reappears in the West in the twentieth century. The Reformation in many ways continues the Roman Catholic practice, and welcomes children at the Lord’s Supper between the age of seven and fourteen.

In the early church paedocommunion practice preceded and assumingly shaped paedocommunion theology. My historical overview provides multiple examples of ways in which practice further shaped and changed the paedocommunion theology. The practice of infrequent celebration, the practice of serving children and the sick Communion only wine, both contributed to the cessation of paedocommunion. In several cases reintroducing a more frequent celebration led to the reintroduction of paedocommunion. But theology also shaped the Communion practice, with the doctrine of transubstantiation providing the clearest example.

There is consensus that nothing in the earliest documents suggests a major discontinuity with the practice and theology of the apostolic church. My conclusion is that they corroborate most with the interpretation that the

apostolic church practiced paedocommunion, especially because the document do not register a major change from no paedocommunion to paedocommunion as widespread practice. My preliminary conclusion is that there is significant continuity between the Roman Catholic and Reformed Communion practice as far as paedocommunion is concerned. I will elaborate on the elements of this continuity in chapter 6. Theologically there is great continuity between Reformers such as Calvin and the Dutch Reformed tradition, as exemplified in the similarity of arguments rejecting paedocommunion. But over the centuries the changes in practice have been so significant that I suggest we should speak of a discontinuity in this respect. The age of first participation has almost doubled, the required prior catechetical training and knowledge, as well as the required personal faith have changed so significantly that reintroduction of the original Reformed practice would be considered intolerable in many Reformed churches of the twentieth and even twenty first century. Under the influence of Dutch Pietism the participation in the Lord's Supper was often postponed even longer.

From a practical theological perspective it is interesting to observe how several external factors seem to have influenced the paedocommunion practice. The political Restoration (of the monarchy) in England may have prevented the restoration of a paedocommunion practice. The political fact of the French occupation of the Netherlands contributed to the rise of the age of first participation in the Dutch Reformed tradition. Economical realities influencing the paedocommunion practice are for example the influence of the required tithing on participation of the children of the poor, child labor or seasonal labor influencing the age of participation in different ways in Germany and the Netherlands. In several ways education has influenced the age at which children or youth were admitted to the Lord's Supper. For several centuries first Communion coincided with the age at which the average child finished its education, and the age of first participation rose when secondary education became more common.

The earliest document suggests that admission to the Table is viewed in terms of the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:6 "Don't give that which is holy to the dogs." Cyprian seems to think in terms of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10; one either has part in the Table of the Lord or in the table of demons. For many centuries, under influence of Augustine, the central text used in relation to paedocommunion is John 6:53, often in combination with John 3:5. Paedocommunion is viewed in terms of necessity; the necessity of receiving the sacraments is closely related to the necessity of salvation. Since the Reformation 1 Corinthians 11 has been the central text in relationship to (the

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rejection of) paedocommunion, though the text is already used in that way at the 1433 Council of Basel.

As mentioned above, I intend to draw more final conclusions after the more integral analysis which will conclude this dissertation.

Chapter 3 Children and childhood in society and church

3.0. Introduction

In this chapter I want to provide an overview of the history of children and childhood in society and church. The focus of my larger study is on paedocommunion in the theology and praxis of the church. This chapter aims to provide some context to that study with an overview of the following concepts: childhood in society, the child within the theology of the church, significant ages and stages in childhood, the actual treatment of children, and the nature of their participation within these social and ecclesiastical spheres. Using this as a basic framework, each section and some of the smaller subsections will present the information in the order of these four subjects: 1) concepts and theologies, 2) ages and stages, 3) treatment, 4) participation in society, and in the church⁷⁸⁹.

3.1.1. Guiding Questions

With this overview on the history of children and childhood in society and church, I seek a better understanding of the history of children at the Lord's Supper during those same twenty centuries. I will also explain some of the major differences in how this history is presented by various authors. These different presentations reflect the developments in the historiography of childhood. Researching twenty centuries of social and church history will help us to understand and evaluate twentieth century paedocommunion praxis and debate, and to trace their developments within the Dutch Reformed tradition. Questions that have come to the surface in my study on the twentieth century paedocommunion praxis and discussion will guide me in shaping this chapter. For example, to what extent can claims about history be sustained? And to what extent can claims about the twentieth century be sustained? What does social history reveal about the discovery and disappearance of childhood and about the existence of unique epochs or centuries of the child? How uniform were concepts and theologies of children and childhood, how uniform was the treatment of children in society and church and how monolinear have developments in all of these been? What do minimum or average ages reveal about the length of childhood, the awareness of children's development, stages of life and faith, and a conscious age-and-ability-appropriate approach of children? To what extent can the spheres of society and church be distinguished? Were theological and other

⁷⁸⁹ Distinguishing cultural concepts from theologies is more complex than distinguishing participation in society from participation in church.

concepts differentiated? If so, to what extent did they mutually influence each other? Is there a correlation between more positive concepts of children and greater participation of children in society, in church, or in religious ritual? Though careful reading of this chapter will provide many of the answers to these questions, I will wait with drawing conclusions and explicitly answering these questions until chapter 6.

3.1.2. Geographical Scope

My focus on the Dutch Reformed tradition in both the Netherlands and North-America determines the geographical scope of my research, starting in the Mediterranean world of the Roman Empire with special focus on Judaism and the ancient Christian church as they spread from Israel. As the history of the church progresses, the focus of my overview moves towards Europe, the countries of the Reformation, slowly zooming in on Northern Europe and the Netherlands, while trying to provide enough information about North America and the Anglo Saxon world to understand what world the Dutch Reformed entered with their immigration across the Atlantic.

3.1.3. Periodization

I have chosen to divide the history of childhood into three periods: 1) from the Ancient World until the fifth century, 2) the Medieval period-(from the fifth to the fifteenth century), and 3) Modernity (from the fifteenth century to mid-twentieth century). Although the sections of this chapter follow this periodization, I hope the text does justice to the fact that this periodization is subject to debate. Included within the period of the Ancient World is the Roman Empire, the subculture of First century Judaism, and the Ancient Church. Within the period of Modernity the Reformation is treated separately. I have chosen to conclude with a section on the twentieth century, as this is when participation of children in the Eucharist or Lord's Supper is first reintroduced in the Roman Catholic Church and later within the Lutheran and Reformed traditions. It should be noted that the significance of the turn of the century is debatable⁷⁹⁰, and that these Roman Catholic and protestant changes occurred in periods that could be further distinguished as Late Modernity and Post-modernity.

⁷⁹⁰ André Klukhuhn, *De geschiedenis van het denken: Filosofie, wetenschap, kunst en cultuur van de oudheid tot nu* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2003), 27f.

3.1.4. Historiography

The historiography of childhood⁷⁹¹ as written during the last half of the twentieth century shows a somewhat Hegelian development from thesis, to antithesis, to synthesis⁷⁹². The “black legend” of the thesis (with a dark view on the history of children), was countered by the “white legend”⁷⁹³ of the antithesis (with a more optimistic view on the position of children in history), followed by other theories presenting a synthesis with more shades of gray⁷⁹⁴. Philippe Ariès’ book, *L’Enfant et la vie familiale sous l’Ancient Régime*, (1960)⁷⁹⁵, presents the thesis with an emphasis on discontinuity, an evolutionary process of development within society related to Norbert Elias’ concept of the “civilizing process”⁷⁹⁶. Linda Pollock’s, *Forgotten Children*⁷⁹⁷ (1983), represents the antithesis; a strong critique of Ariès’ and similar histories of children and childhood, with an emphasis on continuity based on evolutionary sociobiology and a choice for a different use of sources. Later books, such as Hugh Cunningham’s *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*, could be viewed as the synthesis trying to do justice to both continuity and discontinuity in the developing treatment of children and perception of childhood.

⁷⁹¹ Meyers notes that “Historical research tends to be carried out from the top down, by first examining the largest sociopolitical structures and only later, if at all, attempting to recover the smallest units of society,” Carol Meyers, “The Family in Early Israel,” in *Families in Ancient Israel*, Perdue, Leo G. et al. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 1-2. This turn toward social history was led by historians of the Annales School in France and the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. The study of “forgotten people,” such as subaltern classes, women and children, was initiated in the 1960s and 1970s. Joanne M. Ferraro, “Childhood in Medieval and Early Modern Times,” in *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, ed. Paula S. Fass, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 61.

⁷⁹² See for the historiography of childhood for example Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*. 2nd ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005), 3f., Rudolf Dekker, *Uit de schaduw in 't grote licht: Kinderen in egodocumenten van de Gouden Eeuw tot de Romantiek* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1995), Jeroen J. H. Dekker, *Het verlangen naar opvoeden: Over de groei van de pedagogische ruimte in Nederland sinds de Gouden Eeuw tot omstreeks 1900* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2006), 21f., Nelleke Bakker, Jan Noordam and Marjoke Rietveld-van Wingerden, *Vijf eeuwen opvoeden in Nederland: Idee en praktijk 1500-2000*, 2nd ed. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2010), 97-103.

⁷⁹³ The terms ‘black legend’ and ‘white legend’ were first used in the historiography of Spain, and imported into the historiography of children and childhood by Rudolf Dekker, Dekker (1995), 12f., 226.

⁷⁹⁴ Bakker (2010), 103, Dekker (2006), 22f.

⁷⁹⁵ Translated into English as: *Centuries of Childhood* (New York: Random House, 1962). I used the Dutch translation: Philippe Ariès. *De Ontdekking van het Kind: Sociale Geschiedenis van School & Gezin*, trans. L. Knippenberg and J. Tielen (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1987).

⁷⁹⁶ Cunningham (2005), 4f. Similar theories can be found in the work of Edward Shorter, Lawrence Stone, Simon Schama, Loyd Demause, and the Dutch J.H van den Berg and Lea Dasberg. Dekker (2006), 21.

⁷⁹⁷ Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-child relations from 1500 to 1900*, 6th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Similar reactions to Ariès can be found in the work of Alan Macfarlane, Harrie Peeters, Shulamith Shahar, Emmanuelle Roy Ladurie, Jacques Gélis, Jan Baptist Bedaux. Dekker (2006), 22.

Both thesis and antithesis are products of evolutionary theories⁷⁹⁸; the thesis being evolutionary in its stress on discontinuity and development; the antithesis being evolutionary in its argument that parental care is so fundamental for the survival of species such as human beings that it must have developed much earlier in the evolution of humankind. I lean toward Pollock's position that "evolutionary theory and sociobiology suggest that living things should be concerned with the production and rearing of offspring"⁷⁹⁹. Creatures, such as human beings, with low birth and death rates tend to have an engrained⁸⁰⁰ survival strategy of increased parental care and attention⁸⁰¹. Biological studies of primates and anthropological or ethnological studies have found evidence that parents in general give at least adequate, and often more than adequate, care to their children⁸⁰². Furthermore, biology must have some relevance to the maturation and acculturation process, as Barbara Hanawalt argues⁸⁰³.

I recognize, with Pollock, that Ariès and authors with similar theories about the history of childhood and children are strongly influenced by the nature of their sources: child rearing literature, evidence from art such as paintings, fictional literature, travelers' accounts, newspaper reports, biographies, and legislation. Pollock suggests that primary sources such as diaries, memoirs, and letters⁸⁰⁴ might provide us with more trustworthy evidence⁸⁰⁵. I realize, as others have pointed out, that even Pollock's primary sources have limitations as they mostly reflect views and practices of the higher classes⁸⁰⁶.

⁷⁹⁸ Though some distinguish them as evolutionary and structuralist. Dekker (2006), 21f.

⁷⁹⁹ Pollock (1983), 34.

⁸⁰⁰ If not genetically determined, then genetically influenced. Pollock (1983), 36.

⁸⁰¹ Pollock refers to David Barash, *Sociobiology and Behavior* (New York: Elsevier, 1977) and Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1975). Their theory of R- and K- selected species has been revisited in David Reznick, Michael J. Bryant, and Farrah Bashey. "r- And K-Selection Revisited: The Role of Population Regulation in Life-History Evolution," *Ecology* 83, Issue 6 (June 2002): 1509–1520.

⁸⁰² Pollock (1983), 38, 39. Bakker does not justice to the relevance of this notion, though she might be right that Pollock does not do enough justice to the influence of social and cultural circumstances, and the possibility of historical change. Bakker (2010), 102.

⁸⁰³ She also writes "It is also hard to suppress the disruptions of puberty, so that awareness of adolescence must have existed" and "biology plays a very basic role in shaping the cultural parameters of childhood," Barbara A. Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6,9.

⁸⁰⁴ Others mention tombstone inscriptions.

⁸⁰⁵ Pollock (1983), 22f.

⁸⁰⁶ Bakker (2010), 102.

3.2. Ancient World – the Roman Empire

3.2.1. Concepts or theologies

I want to start my overview in the Ancient World of the Roman Empire, in which context the church originated. There were concepts of childhood and youth in Roman society as well as recognition of children's and youths' needs and distinctiveness⁸⁰⁷. After all, an estimated third of the population of Rome was under the age of sixteen, and an even larger part of the population outside the city of Rome⁸⁰⁸. Children were seen as human beings⁸⁰⁹, flesh and blood of their parents⁸¹⁰, in spite of, for example, the metaphor of taming animals for education and the emphasis on children's inarticulate, unfinished and imperfect nature in pedagogical literature⁸¹¹. Parental love, by both mothers and fathers, was considered a law of nature⁸¹². In many sources, such as letters and tombstone inscriptions, parental love, tenderness, affection, care, and warmth are expressed⁸¹³. A sentimental ideal of the family in which children were increasingly prized, possibly originated and certainly flourished

⁸⁰⁷ Beryl Rawson, "Adult-Child Relationships in Roman Society," in Rawson (1991), 7. Emiel Eyben, "Fathers and Sons," in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*, ed. Beryl Rawson, 114-143. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 142.

⁸⁰⁸ Some estimates go as high as fifty percent of the population. Reidar Aasgard, "Uncovering Children's Culture in Late Antiquity: The Testimony of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas," in *Children in Late Ancient Christianity, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 58*, ed. Cornelia B. Horn and Robert R. Phenix (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 1,3.

⁸⁰⁹ A very clear example is found in Pliny *Letters 9.12* "Remember that he is a boy and you have been a boy yourself, and use your rights as a father without forgetting that you are only human and so is your son," (et hominem esse et hominem patrem) quoted in Eyben (1991), 127 and Peter Müller, *In der Mitte der Gemeinde: Kinder im Neuen Testament* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1992), 81.

⁸¹⁰ Dio has Augustus say: "And is it not a delight to acknowledge a child who shows the endowments of both parents, to nurture and educate it, at once the physical and the spiritual image of yourself, so that in its growth another self lives again? Is it not blessed, on departing from life, to leave behind as successor and heir to your blood and substance one that is your own, sprung from your own loins, and to have only the human part of you waste away, while you live in the child as your successor, so that you need not fall into the hands of aliens, as in war, nor perish utterly, as in a pestilence?" Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, bk. LVI, chap. 3. 4-5, trans. Earnest Cary Vol. VII (London: William Heinemann, 1955), 7, 9.

⁸¹¹ W.A. Strange, *Children in the Early Church: Children in the Ancient World, the New Testament and the Early Church* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 37. Similar metaphors are used regarding training or educating adults. For example by Cicero, quoting Africanus: "As, when horses have become mettlesome and unmanageable on account of their frequent participation in battles, their owners put them in the hands of trainers to make them more tractable; so men, who through prosperity have become restive and over self-confident, ought to be put into the training-ring, so to speak, of reason and learning, that they may be brought to comprehend the frailty of human affairs and the fickleness of fortune," Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis Book I. XXVI trans. Walter Miller* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913).

⁸¹² Emiel (1991), 116f. See for example Cicero, *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, Book II, chap XIII. 19, Loeb Classical Library 403, trans. Harry Caplan (London, William Heinemann, 1964), 92-93. "To the Law of Nature belong the duties observed because of kinship or family loyalty. In accordance with this kind of Law parents are cherished by their children, and children by their parents." (Natura ius est quod cognationis aut pietatis causa observatur, quo iure parentes a liberis et a parentibus liberi coluntur).

⁸¹³ Müller (1992), 162; Eyben (1991), 118; Strange (2004), 37; Rawson (1991), 7.

in the late Republic and early Empire⁸¹⁴. Overbeck speaks of the discovery of the child in the first century A.D.⁸¹⁵

3.2.2. *Ages and stages*

Both minimum legal age of marriage – twelve for girls, fourteen for boys⁸¹⁶ -- and normal age of marriage – late teens for girls, early twenties for boys -- indicate when children were eligible to make the transition into adulthood⁸¹⁷.

3.2.3. *Treatment*

All was not well. In the ancient world a high infant mortality rate indicates how childhood was endangered from the outset⁸¹⁸. A young child in the Roman world had no legal status of its own, but derived that legal status from its father, the *paterfamilias*⁸¹⁹. The *paterfamilias* had the right to expose, scourge, sell, pawn, imprison and even kill his child. That right had become largely theoretical at the beginning of the Empire⁸²⁰, though for example exposure of children still took place and the killing of an infant child was only considered parricide by law in 374⁸²¹. Though the legal status of free children was equal to slaves, the core family virtue of *pietas* normally prevented free children from being exploited, abused and corporally punished to the same degree as slaves⁸²². Even as adults, children of the *paterfamilias* could have an inferior legal status. In day to day reality, however, they enjoyed considerable independence⁸²³.

⁸¹⁴ Suzanne Dixon, "The Sentimental Ideal of the Roman Family," in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*, edited by Beryl Rawson, 99-113 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); Eyben (1991), 142.

⁸¹⁵ Johannes Overbeck. "Die Entdeckung des Kindes im I. Jahrhundert n. Chr.," in *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur und für Pädagogik Vol. 54* (Leipzig Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1924), 1-8. Note that Overbeck is not unaware of the importance of the 19th century for our understanding of the child: "Das vorige Jahrhundert hat uns dann das Verständniss des Kindes gebracht," Overbeck (1924), 7.

⁸¹⁶ Rawson (1991), 27.

⁸¹⁷ Emperor Augustus set the minimum age for betrothal at ten. Strange (2004), 36. Other indicators are the ceremony marking a boy's arrival at the age of adult citizenship – usually at age fifteen or sixteen – the beginning of military service – age seventeen, eighteen – the termination of guardianship for children without *paterfamilias* – age fourteen for boys – and reaching full financial autonomy for those same children – age twenty-five -. Rawson (1991), 28.

⁸¹⁸ Müller (1992), 161.

⁸¹⁹ In the Greek world the son was subject to his father's authority for a comparably short time. Eyben (1991), 115.

⁸²⁰ Eyben (1991), 115.

⁸²¹ Eyben (1991), 123.

⁸²² Richard Saller, "Corporal Punishment, Authority, and Obedience in the Roman Household," in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 144-165. Contra Strange's suggestion Strange (2004), 37.

⁸²³ Beryl Rawson, "The Roman Family," in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*, ed. Beryl Rawson, 1-57 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 8.

3.2.4. Participation

High esteem for the child was certainly found in cult⁸²⁴. Children actively participated in choirs and performed religious roles at home, such as declaring whether the family sacrifice offered during a meal was received favorably by the household gods. This high esteem and significant role in cult was related to their marginal role in society and their supposed innocence which fitted them to be intermediaries between the world of the gods and the world of humans. Several rituals centered on children such as those of the *dies lustricus*, the omen taking of schoolchildren before setting out from home, and the coming of age celebrations⁸²⁵.

3.3. Ancient World – First Century Judaism

3.3.1. Concepts or theologies

For our understanding of children and childhood in society and church the context which first century Judaism provided is relevant. First century Judaism⁸²⁶ had concepts of children and childhood⁸²⁷. Cohen suggests that structure, ideals, and dynamics of the Jewish family in antiquity were virtually identical with those of its ambient cultures⁸²⁸, though we will come across some more exceptional features as well. Judaism had a strong sense of collectivity⁸²⁹ and a long history of family solidarity. This meant that a child existed at the center of at least three concentric circles of kinship: the nuclear and extended family, the clan, and the tribe. Adding time as a third dimension to the two dimensional image of concentric circles would do justice to the

⁸²⁴ Müller acknowledges this high esteem for children in cult and in the expectation of a Child Savior. Müller (1992), 122. With Lenzen, Müller points to the possibility of a created hyper reality of high esteem for children and childhood coexisting with a cruel reality of child abuse and infanticide or even mass destruction. Müller (1992), 122. Dieter Lenzen, *Mythologie der Kindheit: Verewigung des Kindlichen in der Erwachsenenkultur; Versteckte Bilder und vergessene Geschichten* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1985), 210 f.

⁸²⁵ Strange (2004), 36

⁸²⁶ It is often difficult to establish beyond debate what time periods are reflected in the Bible books and to what extend their theology determined first century Judaism. Some beautiful essays on the child and childhood in the Old Testament are found in *The Child in the Bible*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim and Beverly Roberts Gaventa (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) and Richard S. Hess, and M. Daniel Carroll R. *Family in the Bible: Exploring Customs, Culture, and Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

⁸²⁷ Though Blenkinsopp gives Ariès' theory some credit regarding the First Temple period. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Family in First Temple Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel*, Perdue, Leo G. et al., 48-103 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 66f.

⁸²⁸ Shaye J.D. Cohen, *The Jewish Family in Antiquity: Brown Judaic Studies 289* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 2.

⁸²⁹ Though the sense of collectivity may have been stronger the more marginal the family's economic status was (cf. Meyers (1997), 22), yet with Dooyeweerd in mind, it seems wise not to reduce the several aspects of this sense of collectivity, such as the economic, political and religious, to another.

perceived connection with past and future members of the kinship network, the dead and those not yet born⁸³⁰.

3.3.2. *Ages and stages*

Childhood was short-lived. Out of economic necessity, children would have tasks by the age of five, and juveniles would work like adults by the age of twelve or thirteen⁸³¹, the age of maturity⁸³². Physical maturity and or biological age⁸³³ determined the age a girl was considered marriageable and subsequently married⁸³⁴. Boys could be slightly older⁸³⁵.

3.3.3. *Treatment*

The Jewish community considered procreation a divine blessing as much as a religious obligation. It was also deemed necessary for economic survival⁸³⁶, perpetuation of the parents⁸³⁷, and protection of national identity⁸³⁸. Infant life was highly appreciated⁸³⁹. There is, for example, no reference in scripture of intentional abortion or infanticide⁸⁴⁰. Jewish writers⁸⁴¹ condemned exposing unwanted children⁸⁴², an exceptional position in those days⁸⁴³. Philo calls birth

⁸³⁰ Blenkinsopp (1997), 50.

⁸³¹ Meyers (1997), 27.

⁸³² Strange (2004), 17. The rite of passage at this age is bat mitzvah for girls age 12 and bar mitzvah for boys age 13. No formal bar mitzvah ritual exists before the Middle Ages, bat mitzvah celebrations became popular only over the last decades. Elisheva Baumgarten, "Judaism," in *Children and Childhood in World Religions: primary Sources and Texts*, ed. Don S. Browning and Marcia J. Bunge (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 50.

⁸³³ Baumgarten (2009), 55f.

⁸³⁴ Marriageable in her early teens. Blenkinsopp (1997), 77. Actual marriage probably mid teens. Strange (2004), 17.

⁸³⁵ According to Collins "the rabbinic tradition regarded twenty the terminus ante quem for marriage," but Collins also quotes the apparent minority position taken in the Messianic Rule which prescribes that a man "shall not [approach] a woman, to know her by lying with her before he is fully twenty years old, when he shall know [good and evil]," Collins (1997), 130. An age requirement possibly based on Ezra 3:8, or similar texts in Ex. 30:14, 38:26, Num. 1: 3,18, 20, 22, where the age of twenty is linked with the ability to go to war. Comp. Baumgarten (2009), 56.

⁸³⁶ See for example Meyers (1997), 27. Blenkinsopp refers to the laws about miscarriage, which clearly took into account children's value as economic resource, in establishing penalties. Blenkinsopp (1997), 69.

⁸³⁷ See for example Baumgarten (2009), 26f.

⁸³⁸ Especially after the return from exile in Babylon "children conceived within purely Jewish marriages, and brought up strictly within the ancestral tradition, guaranteed a future for a community whose survival depended on loyalty to their covenant faith," Strange (2004), 11.

⁸³⁹ Strange (2004), 37.

⁸⁴⁰ Leo G. Perdue, Joseph Blenkinsopp, John J. Collins and Carol Meyers, *Families in Ancient Israel*, Perdue, Leo G. et al. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 189.

⁸⁴¹ Collins mentions Josephus and Philo. John J. Collins, "Marriage, Divorce, and Family in Second Temple Judaism," in Perdue et al., (1997), 140.

⁸⁴² Blenkinsopp notes that "In spite of some "texts of terror" (...) daughters were therefore not expendable, and we hear of no exposure of newborn females, a custom prevalent in ancient Greece and Rome. In fact

and breast milk the two gifts of nature, reflecting the two main responsibilities of parents towards their children: giving birth and providing nurture⁸⁴⁴. Mutual love between parent and child was considered to be natural⁸⁴⁵. Parental love is recorded and assumed in the Old Testament⁸⁴⁶, though the emotional display of it was not emphasized. The actual care for small children and the education of girls was primarily a maternal role⁸⁴⁷, the education of older boys a paternal one⁸⁴⁸. Care was also provided through supportive structures not always recognized as such by our contemporaries⁸⁴⁹.

3.3.4. Participation

Circumcision of boys, possibly originally a rite of passage from boyhood into manhood in other cultures⁸⁵⁰, took place at the eighth day and had increased in importance as an identity marker since the second century BC⁸⁵¹. A naming ceremony was part of that ritual⁸⁵². Later rabbinical opinion may

the only case of exposure in the Hebrew Bible is that of the male Hebrew infants in Egypt," Blenkinsopp (1997), 77.

⁸⁴³ Recognized for example by the Roman historian Tacitus, who wrote about the Jews: "It is a crime among them to kill any newly-born infant," Tacitus, *Histories*, 5.3. <http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/histories.5.v.html> (accessed January 13, 2012). Jona Lendering puts Tacitus' value for historians in perspective in Tacitus, *In moerassen & donkere wouden: De Romeinen in Germanië*, translated into Dutch by Vincent Hunnink, foreword by Jona Lendering (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep, 2015), 7-27.

⁸⁴⁴ Adele Reinhartz, "Parents and Children: A Philonic Perspective," in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity: Brown Judaic Studies 289*, ed. Shaye J.D. Cohen. 61-88 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 69.

⁸⁴⁵ "And it is for this reason, as it appears to me, that some most affectionate fathers disown and disinherit their sons, cutting them off from their homes and from their kindred, when the wickedness which is displayed in them has over-mastered the exceeding and all-pervading love which is implanted by nature in parents." Philo, *On Virtues*, 192. "It is not probable that both the parents will agree about putting their child to death unless his iniquities are very grievous, and weigh down by a certain undoubted preponderance that firm affection which is firmly implanted in the parents by nature." Philo, *The Special Laws*, 2.232. "The law says, "Let each man fear his father and his Mother," [Leviticus 19:3] enjoining fear rather than affection, not as being more advantageous and profitable with reference to the present occasion, for the first of these feelings affects foolish persons when they are being instructed or reproved, and folly cannot be cured by any other means than fear. But the second feeling, namely, affection towards their parents, it is not fitting should be inculcated on children by the injunctions of a lawgiver, for nature requires that that should be spontaneous. For it has implanted it so deeply from very infancy in the souls of those who are so completely united by blood, and by the services done by the parents to the children, that it is always self-taught and spontaneous, and has no need of commandments to enforce it," Philo, *The Special Laws*, 2:239. Reinhartz (1993), 75, 82.

⁸⁴⁶ Perdue mentions 2 Sam. 21: 8-14; Isa. 49:15; Isa. 66:13; and Jer. 31:15-22. Perdue (1997), 182. R. Menahem Ibn Zerah refers to Ez. 16:4 regarding the care for newborns. See Baumgarten (2009), 38.

⁸⁴⁷ Meyers (1997), 25.

⁸⁴⁸ Reinhartz (1993), 74.

⁸⁴⁹ Blenkinsopp (1997), 74.

⁸⁵⁰ David L. Gollaher, *Circumcision: A History of the World's Most Controversial Surgery* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 1f.

⁸⁵¹ Strange (2004), 15.

⁸⁵² Naming originally happened at birth (cf. Gen. 35:18, 1 Sam. 1:20), but probably influenced by Greek practice the naming ceremony had become part of circumcision ritual (cf. Luke 1:59, 2:21). Strange (2004), 15.

reflect the first century belief that a child was ready to study scripture at age six and Mishnah at age twelve⁸⁵³. Children, especially boys, began participating in religious rituals and practices at a very early age. According to tradition, first century Jewish rabbis Hillel and Shammai linked this obligation to the ability to travel to the temple⁸⁵⁴. Later sayings, which also seem to reflect first century Jewish sentiment, suggest a gradual course of initiation⁸⁵⁵. Whole families participated in the Passover celebration⁸⁵⁶. Yarbrough points out that “aside from the festivals, however, minors were not allowed to enter the Temple court, except when the Levites were singing.”⁸⁵⁷ Children were allowed to participate in more significant ways in the synagogue. Cases are known of a young boy being allowed to read and interpret Torah and of young children holding offices in the synagogues⁸⁵⁸, though it is assumed that children most often played a less prominent role⁸⁵⁹. Children participated in

⁸⁵³ Kethubot 50a. Yarbrough (1993), 44, also mentions tractate Abot 5:21: “He used to say: five years is the age for the study of Scripture, ten for the study of Mishnah, thirteen for becoming subject to commandments, fifteen for the study of Talmud, eighteen for the bridal canopy, twenty for pursuing etc.,” <http://www.halakhah.com/pdf/nezikin/Avoth.pdf> (accessed November 18, 2013).

⁸⁵⁴ Hillel said that a boy who could take his father’s hand and walk to the temple hill was obliged to keep the major feasts. Shammai said that the obligation began when a boy could ride on his father’s shoulders. Strange (2004), 17. Strange refers to Strack and Billerbeck, who comment that from these examples the rule can be extracted that Jewish boys were obligated to follow specific individual commandments as soon as they were able or capable, though the obligation to follow all the commandments when the first signs of pubescence appear. Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch: Zweiter Band*. 6th ed. 1974 (München: Oscar Beck, 1924), 146, 142.

⁸⁵⁵ “A minor who knows how to shake a lulav (palm branch) is obliged to observe the laws of the lulav; a minor who knows how to wrap himself in the tallit (prayer shawl) is obliged to observe the law of the zizit (threads on the corners of the tallit),” *Tosephta, Hagigah* 1.2 quoted in Strange (2004), 17.

⁸⁵⁶ See for example Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.4.8., but also *Pesachim* 10, and *Pisha* 3. The participation of children in the Passover is a detail of great importance in the Reformed paedocommunion debate.

⁸⁵⁷ O. Larry Yarbrough, “Parents and Children in the Jewish Family of Antiquity,” in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity: Brown Judaic Studies* 289, ed. Shaye J.D. Cohen (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 47. Yarbrough adds that children were not permitted to play instruments but only to sing to add spice to the music, referring to *Arachin* 2.6: “No minor could enter the court of the sanctuary to take part in the service except when the Levites stood up to sing. Nor did they join in the singing with harp and lyre, but with the mouth alone, to add flavor to the music,” <http://www.halakhah.com/pdf/kodoshim/Arachin.pdf> (accessed November 18, 2013).

⁸⁵⁸ Yarbrough (1993), 47.

⁸⁵⁹ Yarbrough (1993), 48, suggests some questioned whether children should come to the synagogue at all, and Yarbrough refers to the answer of rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah in *Tosefta Sota* 7:9: “Once R. Johanan b. Beroka and R. Eleazar Hisma came from Yavneh to Lod and paid their respects to R. Joshua at Peqi’in. Said R. Joshua to them: What new teaching was there at the College today? They replied: We are thy disciples and thy waters do we drink. Said he to them: Even so, it is impossible for a college teaching to pass without some novel teaching. Whose Sabbath was it? It was the Sabbath of R. Eleazar b. Azaria [they replied]. And what was the theme of his Haggadic discourse? “Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones (Deut. 31:12) . He said to them: What did the rabbi teach on this? They said to him: Rabbi taught thus: If the men came to learn, the women came to hear, but wherefore have the little ones to come? In order to grant reward to those that bring them,” <http://www.biu.ac.il/JH/Parasha/eng/haazinu/zol.html> (accessed November 18, 2013).

religious family gatherings and in the ritual acts of the congregation⁸⁶⁰. Participation in rituals would evoke questions and thus create strategic moments for education⁸⁶¹. Torah teaching was an important reason for the institution of a kind of primary education⁸⁶² in the first century, for which the Talmud credits Yehoshua Ben Gamla⁸⁶³.

3.4. Ancient World – Early Church

3.4.1. Concepts and theologies

I continue my overview by turning to the era of the early church⁸⁶⁴, realizing that the boundaries between the culture of the Roman Empire and of Judaism are fluid. Jerome Berryman⁸⁶⁵ distinguishes four traditions regarding children in the gospels⁸⁶⁶: a low view⁸⁶⁷, a high view⁸⁶⁸, an indifferent view⁸⁶⁹, and a

⁸⁶⁰ “In regard to virtually all the regular festive occasions, the text in one way or another, explicitly or implicitly, prescribes a family gathering across the generations,” Patrick D. Miller “That the Children May Know: Children in Deuteronomy,” in *The Child in the Bible*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, 45-62 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

⁸⁶¹ Miller (2008), 50-51.

⁸⁶² The Jews spoke of a Beth-ha-sefer, House of scripture, R. Bijlsma, “Geschiedenis van de catechese,” in *Kleine Catechetiek*. 6th ed. 37-100. (Nijkerk: Callenbach, n.d), 40.

⁸⁶³ Baba Bathra 21a, http://www.come-and-hear.com/bababathra/bababathra_21.html (accessed March 2, 2015).

⁸⁶⁴ I have chosen not to include a separate section in this chapter on children in the New Testament. Besides the many works quoted and referred to in this chapter I consulted Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, Perdue, Leo G. et al. (1997), Abraham J. Mahlherbe, “God’s New Family in Thessalonica,” and O. Larry Yarbrough, “Parents and Children in the Letters of Paul,” in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, edited by Michael L. White and O. Larry Yarbrough, 116-125 and 126-141 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995).

⁸⁶⁵ Jerome W. Berryman, *Children and the Theologians: Clearing the Way for Grace* (New York: Morehouse, 2009), 8.

⁸⁶⁶ Similar to the four perspectives on Jesus that the four gospels provide

⁸⁶⁷ Low view, according to Berryman, found in a cluster of six sayings from the synoptic gospels: 1- Matt. 19:29, Mark 10-29-30, Luke 18: 29-30, 2- Mark 13:12-13, 3- Luke 9:59-62, 4- Matt. 10:34-36, Luke 12, 51-53, 5- Matt. 10:37-38, Luke 14:26 and 6- Matt. 19:10-12. Berryman (2009), 9-12.

⁸⁶⁸ High view, according to Berryman, found in the synoptic gospels: 1- “children worth healing” Matt. 13:25, Mark 5:41-42, Luke 8:54-55, “children at play” Matt. 11:16-19, Luke 7:31-35, 2- “silent child” (becoming like and welcoming children) Matt. 18:1-5, Mark 9:33-37, Luke 9:46-48, Matt. 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17, 3- “millstone texts” Matt. 18:6-7, Mark 9:42, Luke 17: 1-2, 4- “entering the kingdom” formula Matt. 18:3, Mark 10:15, Luke 18:17, 5- “power of children’s intuition” Matt. 21:15-16, Matt. 11:25-26 and Luke 10:21. Berryman (2009), 12-20.

⁸⁶⁹ Indifferent view of children shown in the almost complete absence of children in the Gospel of John (with the exception of the lad from John 6:9, and possibly the implications of John 3:3-8 and rebirth, especially if understood as “second naïveté” (Paul Ricoeur) or James Fowler’s Stage Five Conjunctive Faith, Fowler (1981), 187-188. Indifferent view also revealed in the focus on adult concerns in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Berryman (2009), 20-23.

graceful view⁸⁷⁰. He also distinguishes four somewhat similar key threads emerging from church history regarding children: ambivalence or conflicting feelings, ambiguity or conflicting logics, indifference that can be either neutral or adversarial, and grace⁸⁷¹. With his observations in mind we are cautioned to harmonize different concepts of childhood in the early Church or to suggest an improvement of children in all areas of life with the growth of Christianity. Yet I do recognize that under the influence of Christianity significant changes did take place in this era. Richard Schröder highlights some of these changes by stating “the discovery of childhood belongs to Romanticism, but the ancient Church has implemented the prohibition on exposure of children, and founded homes for foundlings. Abortion has also been considered a sin in very early Christian texts.”⁸⁷²

When listening to the church fathers’ interpretation of Jesus’ exhortation to become like children⁸⁷³, the constructed ideal child⁸⁷⁴ gives us some sense of the concept of childhood within the early church⁸⁷⁵. When promoting childlikeness the church fathers think of qualities such as simplicity and innocence⁸⁷⁶, gentleness, loyalty and obedience⁸⁷⁷, lack of sexual desire⁸⁷⁸, indifference to status and wealth, lack of ambition⁸⁷⁹, truthfulness⁸⁸⁰, the inability to remain angry⁸⁸¹, and the unity of speech and thought⁸⁸². The ideals of the wise, virtuous, old man were also ascribed to children; in short, children

⁸⁷⁰ Interestingly enough Berryman on the one hand clearly distinguishes the Jesus Traditions from Pauline theology, but needs Paul to highlight this fourth view in the Jesus Traditions. By referring to John 1: 12 and 14 Berryman connects grace and children, and by referring to Nicodemus and the conversation about rebirth in John 3, Berryman locates the grace view on children in the gospels. Berryman (2009), 24.

⁸⁷¹ Berryman (2009), 203 f.

⁸⁷² As quoted in Hubertus Lutterbach, *Kinder und Christentum: Kulturgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf Schutz, Bildung und Partizipation von Kindern zwischen Antike und Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), 15-16 (my translation).

⁸⁷³ Matt. 18:1-4, Matt. 19:13-14.

⁸⁷⁴ Though Clement emphasizes that Jesus is talking about real children, O. M. Bakke, *When Children Became People: The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 59f.

⁸⁷⁵ Bakke (2005), 57f.

⁸⁷⁶ For example Clement, see Bakke (2005), 59; Hermas, Jerome, Bede, Chrysostom and Leo the Great, see S. Légasse, *Jésus et L’Enfant: Enfants, Petits et Simples Dans la Tradition Synoptique*. (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1969), 270-271.

⁸⁷⁷ For example Clement, see Bakke (2005), 59.

⁸⁷⁸ For example Clement and Origen, see Bakke (2005), 61, 63; and Bede, see Légasse (1969), 270.

⁸⁷⁹ For example Origen, see Bakke (2005), 63,64; and Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria, see Légasse (1969), 270, 271.

⁸⁸⁰ For example Clement, see Bakke (2005), 59; and Bede, see Légasse (1969), 270.

⁸⁸¹ For example Bede, see Légasse (1969), 270.

⁸⁸² For example Jerome, see Légasse (1969), 270.

embodied positive moral and religious values⁸⁸³. Chrysostom views children predominantly in relation to their parents. They are the image of God waiting to be revealed, restored and refined by their parents⁸⁸⁴, wax for forming proto-monks⁸⁸⁵. In these processes of revelation, refinement and formation, he acknowledges age appropriateness⁸⁸⁶.

The relationship which church fathers saw between the fall and children or childhood would be influential for many centuries. Chrysostom represents “the consensus of Greek patristic writers who interpret the fall as an inheritance essentially of mortality rather than sinfulness, sinfulness being merely a consequence of mortality.”⁸⁸⁷ Augustine, on the other hand, greatly influenced the Western Church with his perspective on original sin, as illustrated in his *Confessions*⁸⁸⁸, where he emphasizes the universal implication of Job 14:4-5, “None is pure before you, not even a child of one day upon the earth.”⁸⁸⁹ Martha Stortz suggests that Augustine chose a position between innocence and depravity by emphasizing children’s non-innocence, their inability to harm⁸⁹⁰. Margaret Miles argued that Augustine saw his conversion through the lens of childhood⁸⁹¹. Stortz adds: “Unfortunately the reverse is also true: Augustine saw his childhood through the lens of conversion.”⁸⁹²

To nuance the perceived pessimistic view of Augustine and the Western church and the optimistic view of Chrysostom and the Eastern Church, it must be noted that, in an earlier stage, Augustine was able to appreciate even non-baptized babies as martyrs⁸⁹³. And in spite of Augustine’s doctrine of original sin, he showed great care for his son and spoke against harsh punishment of children⁸⁹⁴. Chrysostom acknowledged sin in children, as expressed in his

⁸⁸³ Jo Hermans, *Eucharistie vieren met kinderen: Een liturgie-wetenschappelijke studie over de deelname van het kind aan de eucharistie in het verleden en volgens de huidige kerkelijke richtlijnen* (Brugge: Tabor, 1987), 36.

⁸⁸⁴ Vigen Guroian, “The Ecclesial Family: John Chrysostom on Parenthood and Children,” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, 61-77, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 64, 66-68

⁸⁸⁵ Berryman (2009), 49. The metaphor of children as wax is found earlier in Plutarch’s *The Education of Children*, “And as soft wax is apt to take the stamp of the seal, so are the minds of children to receive the instructions imprinted on them at that age,” <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/plutarch-education.asp> (accessed March 9, 2015).

⁸⁸⁶ Guroian (2001), 75.

⁸⁸⁷ Guroian (2001), 67.

⁸⁸⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.VII.11. NPNF 1 1:48.

⁸⁸⁹ Job 14:4-5 LXX, Martha Ellen Stortz, “Where or When Was Your Servant Innocent? Augustine on Childhood,” in Bunge (2001), 78.

⁸⁹⁰ Stortz (2001), 82.

⁸⁹¹ Stortz (2001), 100. Stortz refers to Margaret R. Miles, “Infancy, Parenting, and Nourishment in Augustine’s Confessions,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50 (September 1983): 349-64.

⁸⁹² Stortz (2001), 87.

⁸⁹³ Stortz (2001), 78.

⁸⁹⁴ Stortz (2001), 86.

Homilies on Colossians: “For all passions are tyrannous in children (for as they have not that which is to bridle them), vainglory, desire, irrationality, anger, envy.”⁸⁹⁵ The absence of original sin in Chrysostom’s view on newborn babies, and the presence of sin in children makes Bakke conclude that Chrysostom’s positive view is restricted to small children under the age of one⁸⁹⁶.

3.4.2. Ages and stages

Life, including childhood, was divided in stages. Hippocrates was influential among theologians with his division in seven stages of seven years: small child, boy, youngster, young man, man, old man, graybeard⁸⁹⁷. Irenaeus of Lyon divided life into slightly different groups: *infans, parvulus, puer, iuvenus* and *senior*⁸⁹⁸. Boswell, who deals with the era from late antiquity to the Renaissance, indicates that civil and religious laws show even more varieties and nuances of this concept of life stages⁸⁹⁹.

3.4.3. Treatment

How were children treated in the days of the ancient church? Many point to the changes that took place since Emperor Constantine’s conversion and the 313 Edict of Milan. Under Christian influence, Constantine turned against child exposure as early as May 315⁹⁰⁰, without directly forbidding it⁹⁰¹. He did forbid parricide in 318/319⁹⁰², established asylums for foundlings, and prohibited the abduction of girls⁹⁰³. But Constantine also dismantled the protections provided by law to freeborn children, and may have unintentionally increased abandonment by his tax on commerce and by ruling that no one could inherit

⁸⁹⁵ Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, Homily IV. NPNF 1 13:279.

⁸⁹⁶ Bakke (2005), 82.

⁸⁹⁷ Παιδιον, παις, μειρακιον, νεανισκος, ανηρ, πρεσβυτης, γερων. Hermans (1987), 35.

⁸⁹⁸ Hermans (1987), 35. Augustine recognized six stages: infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age and old age, see Stortz (2001), 83-85.

⁸⁹⁹ Boswell (1988), 30f.

⁹⁰⁰ Manfred Jacobs, *Zugänge Zur Kirchengeschichte 2: Das Christentum in der Antiken Welt von der frühkatholische Kirche bis zu Kaiser Konstantin* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 177.

⁹⁰¹ Lutterbach (2010), 15. But continuing what other emperors, had tried regarding exposure and started regarding the emancipation of children, slaves and women, under the influence of Stoicism; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Constantine,” <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04295c.htm> (accessed November 11, 2013).

⁹⁰² Justinian, *Codex Justinianus*, 9.17.1. ed. Frank-Michael Kaufmann, trans. Gottfried Härtel (Leipzig: Reclam, 1991), 200, and Darrel W. Amundsen, “Medicine and the Birth of Defective Children: Approaches of the Ancient World,” in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, ed. Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 691.

⁹⁰³ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Constantine.” By the fourth century care for orphans was provided in every diocese and parish, by the end of the fifth century, the first orphanage of Constantinople, the Orphanotropheion, was founded. Margaret L. King, “Children in Judaism and Christianity,” in Fass (2015), 47.

from an unmarried mother⁹⁰⁴. Emperor Valentinian ruled killing an infant to be a capital offense in 374⁹⁰⁵, and exposure was in the end also explicitly forbidden⁹⁰⁶. Regarding the sexual treatment of children Bakke concludes “that the Christian sexual ethic brought a dramatic decline in the number of children – especially boys – who were involved in sexual relations with adults.”⁹⁰⁷ Theodosius I established Christianity as the official religion of the state, which, as Guroian points out, meant increased influence from church on state and society, but also vice versa. This created “temptations of crippling compromise”, something that was addressed by Chrysostom, who “was especially troubled, even outraged, by the eagerness of some Christian parents to propel their children into the secular professions, while neglecting their spiritual and moral formation.”⁹⁰⁸

3.4.4. Participation

How did children participate in the life of the church? Horn and Martens argue that Christian children were aware that they differed from Jews and Greeks and that this negative identification correlated with a sense of belonging to the Christian community. Presence and participation in liturgy were among the more positive means to strengthen this self-identification as Christian⁹⁰⁹. Children participated in communal hymn and psalm singing at home and in church⁹¹⁰. Communal singing evolved into separate singing of children as a group, which further developed from children’s or boys’ choir singing to solo singing of children⁹¹¹. When women’s voices were silenced, children’s voices took their place⁹¹². Children also participated in communal prayer in addition to which children were given separate roles in intercessory prayer, litanies, and specifically praying or chanting the Kyrie Eleison⁹¹³. Young people and children as young as five years old were trained and ordained as lectors, reading or chanting scripture⁹¹⁴. Children sometimes even went to church as

⁹⁰⁴ John Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1988), 70, 72.

⁹⁰⁵ *Codex Justinianus*, 9.16.7. Härtel (1991), 200.

⁹⁰⁶ *Codex Justinianus*, 8.51.2. Härtel (1991), 184.

⁹⁰⁷ Bakke (2005), 151.

⁹⁰⁸ Guroian (2001), 63-64.

⁹⁰⁹ Cornelia B. Horn and John W. Martens. “*Let the little children come to me*”: *Childhood and Children in Early Christianity* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 271.

⁹¹⁰ Hermans (1987), 53. And occasionally may have played instruments such as the flute cf. Matt. 11:16-17. Aasgard (2009), 11.

⁹¹¹ Hermans (1987), 54. Originally girls participated in choirs more often, Aasgard (2009), 11.

⁹¹² Hermans refers to *Didascalia CCCXVIII partum*, 8 and Isidorus Pelusioti, *Epistula I*, 90 for the prohibition for women to sing (1987), 55.

⁹¹³ Hermans (1987), 56.

⁹¹⁴ Cyprian is the first to mention this when writing about the ordination of the “illustrious youth” Aurelius as a reader in 250, Cyprian, *Epistle XXXII.1*, ANF 5:311. Tombstone inscriptions reveal the same fact. Ages of

substitutes for their parents, according to Basil of Caesarea's warning during the famine in Cappadocia of the year 368⁹¹⁵. Stories of children re-enacting elements of worship such as the Eucharist in their play also confirm their presence and participation in liturgy⁹¹⁶. Some sources indicate the existence of play by children in or around the church service during the liturgical year⁹¹⁷. Horn and Martens suggest that some children in the early church had leadership roles in conjunction with a mentor such as Paul⁹¹⁸, and some had prophetic roles like the four unmarried daughters of Philip⁹¹⁹. In the ancient church, children who had been baptized as infants received no catechism, as catechism was considered teaching for the unconverted and recently converted⁹²⁰. The inclusion of instruction for children in the New Testament letters to the Ephesians and Colossians⁹²¹, letters which were supposed to be read in church⁹²², suggests that children were instructed with their parents during church gatherings⁹²³. Very soon, the tendency may have been to delegate this instruction to the families, both fathers and mothers⁹²⁴. Monastic schools, educating some of the Christian youth, started to develop with the emergence of monasticism around the fourth century⁹²⁵.

19, 18, 17, 14, 13, and even 5 are mentioned. In 546 Justinian decreed eight years as the minimum age for lectors. "We do not permit anyone to be ordained a priest who is under thirty-five years of age, or to become a deacon or subdeacon under twenty-five, or a reader under eighteen years. A woman who is less than forty years of age, or who has married a second time, shall not be made a deaconess in the Holy Church," Justinian *Novella CXXIII*, 13. Or *The Enactments of Justinian: The Novels*, Volume 17 of S. P. Scott, *The Civil Law* (Cincinnati: The Central Trust Company, 1932).

⁹¹⁵ Basil, *Homily VIII, In famem et siccitatem homilia*, 3. Mentioned in Hermans (1987), 43.

⁹¹⁶ Hermans (1987), 61.

⁹¹⁷ For example: *Egeria's Diary*, 31.2-3, in *Walking Where Jesus Walked: Worship in Fourth-Century Jerusalem*. Ed. Lester Ruth, Carrie Stewart, and John D. Witvliet (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 53, and Antonini Placentini, *Itinerarium*, 40, edited by J. Gildemeister. (Bonn: Reuthers, 1889), 58: "und Weiber mit Kindern uns entgegenkommend, in den Händen Palmen und Flaschen mit Rettigöl, salbten, uns zu Füßen fallend, unsere Fusssohlen und Häupter, indem sie in aegyptischer Sprache die Antiphon sangen: Gesegnet ihr vom Herrn und gesegnet eure Ankunft: Hosianna in der Höhe." See also Hermans (1987), 61-62.

⁹¹⁸ Horn and Martens (2009), 267. Possibly related to their suggestion that some of Jesus' disciples seem to have been teenagers, who were unmarried and travelling with their mother. Horn and Martens (2009), 265.

⁹¹⁹ Horn and Martens (2009), 267.

⁹²⁰ Bijlsma (n.d.), 51. Bijlsma does not refer to sources to support this claim. There is no doubt about the existence of catechism for the unconverted or the recently converted. Of course the absence of catechism for children in the ancient church can only be supported by an argument from silence.

⁹²¹ Ephesians 6: 1-3, Colossians 3:20.

⁹²² Colossians 4: 16.

⁹²³ Strange (2004), 74.

⁹²⁴ E.g. First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians XXI 6, 8: "let us train up the young men in the fear of God; let us direct our wives to that which is good," "Let your children be partakers of true Christian training," ANF 9:235. Polycarp, *Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, IV.2, ANF 1:33: "Next [teach] your wives (...) to train up their children in the knowledge and the fear of God," Strange (2004), 77.

⁹²⁵ King (2015), 48.

Several factors explain the fact that children had a more significant role in worship than in society⁹²⁶. First, their participation was considered beneficial for their own souls⁹²⁷. Second, in their prayer and song, children served the whole congregation, especially because their perceived innocence qualified them to ask for God's mercy and grace⁹²⁸. Third, a more aesthetic reason may have been that children's voices were considered to be more beautiful and pure. Fourth, a significant reason to employ children in liturgical functions was that pagan practice did the same⁹²⁹. Fifth, learning by participation was also an educational goal. Sixth, liturgical roles or even ordination at a young age was considered a first step into ministry. Seventh, a form of children's emancipation created new equality. Bakke writes, "Christianity seems not to have altered children's position in the hierarchical structures of family and society; nevertheless they were perceived as adults' equals in their relationship to God."⁹³⁰

3.5. Middle Ages

3.5.1. Concepts and theologies

As we enter the Middle Ages, we enter into the debate started by Philippe Ariès. I agree with his opponents that Ariès was wrong about the Middle Ages: there was care for child rearing, and there was recognition of childhood as a stage with its own characteristics. Ariès neglected differences among class and place and eras within the Middle Ages, and he underestimated parental love⁹³¹. There were concepts of childhood in the earlier Middle Ages, as Janet L. Nelson concludes, concepts which oscillated between extremes⁹³². She explains, "the child was channel, vessel, and sign of power beyond him/herself." This causes both extremes as "lack of control suggested diabolical influence", but "unpretentiousness suggested access to the

⁹²⁶ Bakke (2005), 256-259.

⁹²⁷ Hermans (1987), 54.

⁹²⁸ Chrysostom specifically indicates this: "and the third (prayer is) also (full of mercy) for ourselves, and this puts forward the innocent children of the people entreating God for mercy. For since we condemn ourselves for sins, for them that have sinned much and deserve to be blamed we ourselves cry; but for ourselves the children; for the imitators of whose simplicity the kingdom of heaven is reserved. For this image shows this, that they who are like those children, lowly and simple, these above all men are able to deliver the guilty by their prayers," Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew, chap. XXI. 4 NPNF1 10:435*.

⁹²⁹ Bakke (2005), 257.

⁹³⁰ Bakke (2005), 257.

⁹³¹ Janet L. Nelson "Parents, Children, and the Church in the Earlier Middle Ages," in Wood (1994), 81f.

⁹³² Nelson (1994), 89.

divine.”⁹³³ The practice of exorcism before baptism assumed this diabolical influence⁹³⁴. Young children and infants were being asked to open the Bible at random, when adults were seeking divine guidance⁹³⁵. Infancy and childhood were marked by physicality and willfulness, and early medieval penitentials recognized boys’ liability to stealing, sexual play, quarrelling, and lack of control in speaking⁹³⁶. In contrast, there was a notion of childhood purity, innocence, and virtue. It was probably this purity from sexual contamination that made Bede tell Archbishop Ecgbert that the more devout took Mass only thrice a year, yet countless boys and girls, young men and virgins, old men and women could without any shadow of doubt receive Communion every Sunday⁹³⁷. It was their innocence that, according to Gregory the Great, granted infants and children immediate entry into heaven at their death⁹³⁸. Isidore of Seville mentioned four virtues of little boys that adult men lack: they don’t bear rancor, they don’t persist in anger, they are not susceptible to beautiful women, and they don’t think one thing and say another⁹³⁹. The summary of these concepts of childhood already reveal that it is hard to distinguish between the concepts of church and those of society during this era.

Shulamith Shahar provides valuable information on the Central and Late Middle Ages⁹⁴⁰. The central thesis of her book *Childhood in the Middle Ages* is that “a concept of childhood existed”; “that scholarly acknowledgement of the existence of several stages of childhood was not merely theoretical, and that parents invested both material and emotional resources in their offspring.”⁹⁴¹ Medieval culture held ambivalent thoughts on procreation⁹⁴² and conflicting

⁹³³ Nelson (1994), 89.

⁹³⁴ Nelson (1994), 83.

⁹³⁵ A practice called *Sortes biblicae*, Nelson (1994), 88.

⁹³⁶ Nelson (1994), 84, 85.

⁹³⁷ In the year 734, Nelson (1994), 87, quoting from Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, chap. 15.

⁹³⁸ Nelson (1994), 87, referring to his *Dialogues IV*, 18.

⁹³⁹ Nelson (1994), 87, referring to Isidore, *Questiones XL*, 54, PL 83, col. 207.

⁹⁴⁰ 1100-1450, Shulamith Shahar. *Childhood in the Middle Ages*. 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), IX. See also Hanawalt (1993).

⁹⁴¹ Shahar (1992), 1. Against Ariès she makes clear that high infant mortality rate was due to limited medical skills, and ineffective methods of nurturing should be judged against the background of contemporary medical beliefs, and neither should be considered proof of the absence of emotional involvement. Close involvement of children in adult society does not mean there was no distinction between children and adults. There were various medical theories on infant and child development and on childcare; there were prevailing norms on parental duties; there was a tradition of childcare practices. Shahar does acknowledge that the life of children in the Middle Ages should not be idealized, but she doubts the occurrence of an emotional evolution in parental attitude (in this stage of history) or similar evolutionary advancement towards a more humane and enlightened educational theories and practices, Shahar (1992), 2f. Shahar does also acknowledge the occurrence of infanticide. Shahar (1992), 121f.

⁹⁴² Shahar (1992), 9.

images of children and childhood⁹⁴³. Interestingly, Shahar points out that the Romantic era, which many believe discovered childhood, derived the concept of childhood innocence from medieval Christian commentaries on scripture. Yet it seems equally true, according to Shahar, that Freud's theories of childhood sexuality were also anticipated by the belief that children were ruled solely by their drives, as expressed in other medieval commentaries⁹⁴⁴. Influenced by Augustine's theology, children were considered to be born in sin⁹⁴⁵, products of the lust of their parents, and inheritors of the sin of their first parents, Adam and Eve⁹⁴⁶. Yet even unborn children deserved protection⁹⁴⁷, and the rise of worship of the Virgin Mary provided a positive archetype of pregnancy and devoted motherhood⁹⁴⁸. Religious expression of parental care is also found in the existence of saints who were renowned as healers of children⁹⁴⁹ and in the existence of special prayers for the resurrection of small children⁹⁵⁰. Influenced by Aristotle's philosophy, childhood was considered the lowest stage of life, marked by incompleteness, lack of control, reason, and good deeds⁹⁵¹. Not surprisingly some biographies describe saints as skipping this lowest stage⁹⁵². On the other hand, worship of the infant Jesus did create room for appreciation of infancy and childhood more generally⁹⁵³. Children were considered harmless and innocent because of their ignorance of both sexual lust and the meaning of death⁹⁵⁴. They were also considered devoid of malicious intent⁹⁵⁵, incapable of bearing grudges,

⁹⁴³ Shahar (1992), 14.

⁹⁴⁴ Shahar (1992), 6.

⁹⁴⁵ But Shahar notes that unlike theologians parents certainly did not consider the children born to them miserable sinners, Shahar (1992), 46.

⁹⁴⁶ Shahar (1992), 14.

⁹⁴⁷ Shahar writes: "Even the unborn child of a woman condemned to death was accorded the right to life, and it was customary to postpone the outlawry or execution of pregnant women," Shahar (1992), 12.

⁹⁴⁸ Shahar (1992), 13.

⁹⁴⁹ Shahar (1992), 146.

⁹⁵⁰ Shahar (1992), 150. Note that historians first tended to deny the existence of infanticide in the Middle Ages, but historians who accepted Ariès' views began to see accidents as expression of parental disregard, and fatal accidents as disguised murder Shahar (1992), 143.

⁹⁵¹ Shahar (1992), 15. Traina describes Aquinas' position as embracing the contradictory theological anthropologies of Augustine and Aristotle, a synthesis which was especially challenged by infancy. The unbaptized who had wished to be baptized would enjoy salvation in Aquinas' theology, but unbaptized infants who were too young to wish for baptism, would end up in children's limbo. The Roman Catholic Church embraced this theological position on unbaptized infants until the work of Karl Rahner in the mid-twentieth century, Christina L.H. Traina, "A Person in the Making: Thomas Aquinas on Children and Childhood," in Bunge (2001), 106f, 113f.

⁹⁵² Shahar (1992), 15. See István P. Bejczy, "The Sacra Infantia in Medieval Hagiography," in Wood (1994), for a nuanced description of the different childhood models presented in hagiography.

⁹⁵³ Shahar (1992), 18f.

⁹⁵⁴ Shahar (1992), 19.

⁹⁵⁵ Shulamith Shahar, "The Boy Bishop's Feast: A Case Study in Church Attitudes Towards Children in the High and Late Middle Ages," in Wood (1994), 255.

eager to forgive and forget, and more generous⁹⁵⁶. In this positive view, the power of a child's prayer was greater than that of an adult⁹⁵⁷. In line with Nelson's notion of the medieval child as "channel of power beyond him/herself", and the lack of control suggesting diabolical influence in medieval thought⁹⁵⁸ Shahaar mentions incessantly crying infants who were seen as possessed by demons, or even as infants of demons, 'changelings', who had replaced the human child⁹⁵⁹.

Religious processions provide a unique insight into the place of children in relation to other groups at moments where segments of society had to be ordered or ranked by religious status, education, age, class and gender. This was a moment of self-representation of the local community⁹⁶⁰ shaped by all its concepts and paradigms. At the beginning of the early Middle Ages, in 590, Gregory the Great organized penitential processions in the following order: clergy and priest, abbots and monks, abbesses and nuns, children, lay men, widows, married women⁹⁶¹. At the end of the early Middle Ages, in the ninth century, processions at Easter and Christmas still put children in a very similar place: clergy, sons of the nobility who attended school, noblemen and noblewomen, the peasantry from outside the monastic centre, led by boys and girls who could sing the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, etc⁹⁶². Placing children at the head of many central and late medieval religious processions was a ritual expression of faith in the innocence of the child and its atoning power⁹⁶³.

3.5.2. Ages and stages

Childhood was divided into three stages according to Hippocratic tradition⁹⁶⁴: *infantia*, from birth to age seven, *pueritia*, from seven to twelve for girls, and from seven to fourteen for boys, and *adolescencia*, from twelve or fourteen to adulthood⁹⁶⁵. A child was born imperfect in body and spirit⁹⁶⁶. Laws of nature determined physical and intellectual development. But as natural drives

⁹⁵⁶ Shahaar (1992), 17f.

⁹⁵⁷ Shahaar (1992), 17.

⁹⁵⁸ Note that even Thomas Aquinas stated "all who are not baptized are subject the power of demons." Quoted in Traina (2001), 105. Traina refers to Aquinas' *ST III.71.2.1, 71.4*.

⁹⁵⁹ Shahaar (1992), 91.

⁹⁶⁰ Cf. Nelson (1994), 96.

⁹⁶¹ Nelson (1994), 96.

⁹⁶² Nelson (1994), 96.

⁹⁶³ Shahaar (1992), 19.

⁹⁶⁴ Berryman (2009), 85. Thomas Aquinas distinguished these stages with regard to the capacity to reason, Traina (2001), 112. Traina refers to Aquinas' *ST Suppl. 43.2*.

⁹⁶⁵ Shahaar (1992), 22.

⁹⁶⁶ Shahaar (1992), 16. In Thomas Aquinas' vision infants are spiritually and morally unformed. Traina (2001), 105.

develop stronger than reason, the first control the latter, and thus sinful inclinations grow simultaneous with natural development⁹⁶⁷. When entering the second stage of *pueritia* at age seven, a child reached the years of discretion⁹⁶⁸. At this age, a child could gradually distinguish good from evil and choose between them. Age seven was when a child's sinful inclination would commence, reaching its climax in adolescence⁹⁶⁹. This stage of childhood met with strongest rejection and condemnation⁹⁷⁰. Ferraro notes how the age of seven was in many ways a turning point in attitudes about childhood⁹⁷¹. An interesting remark regarding the age and life stages of children is Traina's summary of Aquinas' view that grace is no respecter of age⁹⁷².

Medieval biographies of saints confront us with the question to what extent Christian concepts of childhood and development were determined by concepts of salvation, sanctification, and spiritual maturation. Many lives of saints are described according to the pattern expressed by Augustine in his *The City of God*, that "no one will be good who was not first of all wicked."⁹⁷³ Other saints are portrayed as perfect in every respect from childhood⁹⁷⁴.

Awareness of more gradual development is expressed by those medieval authors who distinguish sub-stages. An age appropriate approach towards children was advocated throughout the Middle Ages⁹⁷⁵. The adolescent was given greater independence and responsibility⁹⁷⁶.

⁹⁶⁷ Shahar (1992), 16.

⁹⁶⁸ Annis discretionis. Shahar explains: "Though the 'age of discretion' was not strictly a legal term, it was none the less given some acknowledgement in law. By canon law a child of seven could be betrothed, as well as have his head tonsured to enter minor orders. According to secular law criminal responsibilities began legally only around fourteen years of age. However, unlike infants, children between the age of seven and fourteen could be placed on trial. Yet they did not receive the same sentence meted to adults for the same crime. The customary punishment imposed on a child was whipping. Only in extraordinary circumstances was the full penalty imposed on a child not yet fourteen years of age. The justification for this relative leniency was that the child of this age was still devoid of malicious intent," Shahar (1994), 254f.

⁹⁶⁹ Shahar (1992), 16, 27.

⁹⁷⁰ Shahar (1992), 15.

⁹⁷¹ Ferraro (2015), 69.

⁹⁷² Traina (2001), 110.

⁹⁷³ Augustine, *The City of God*, bk. XV, chap. 1, NPNF1 2: 285. See also Augustine, *Confessions*, bk. I, chap. VII, 11, NPNF1 1:49

⁹⁷⁴ See Bejczy (1994), 143. Interestingly Augustine points to crying for the breast as illustration of the sinfulness of his infancy, Augustine, *Confessions*, bk. I, chap. VII, 11, NPNF1 1:49. In hagiography, starting with the story of Nicholas of Myra, the opposite behavior of refusal of the breast illustrates saintliness in infancy, Bejczy (1994), 145.

⁹⁷⁵ From the rule of St. Benedict (c.480–543), which prescribes "for every age and degree of understanding its appropriate measure of discipline," Nelson (1994), 86, to the central and late Middle Ages, Shahar (1992), 22, 92, 94, and Shahar (1994), 254,255. Thomas Aquinas acknowledges a graded responsibility, Traina (2001), 111.

⁹⁷⁶ Shahar (1992), 27.

All in all childhood had not increased in length since the days of first century Judaism. Until the age of five, children freely engaged in play, but around age six or seven they started to participate by fulfilling chores appropriate to their age and physical capability⁹⁷⁷.

3.5.3. Participation

According to the 813 Council of Arles, religious education was the responsibility of parents and godparents. At home, parents held the office of pastor, just like bishops, priests and deacons, according to both Bede⁹⁷⁸ and Jonas of Orléans⁹⁷⁹, and were therefore responsible for teaching the mysteries of faith and baptism⁹⁸⁰. In the liturgical formation of children, knowing at least the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and later in history the additional Ave Maria, served as reminiscence of baptism, as preparation for the participation in the Eucharist liturgy, and sometimes as minimum requirement for the participation in the Eucharist⁹⁸¹. Religious education⁹⁸² at parish schools and within the monasteries prepared children for participation in worship -- especially scripture reading and singing-- and also served to recruit future clergy⁹⁸³. Hermans mentions several factors that hindered the liturgical formation of children. The schools played an important role in liturgical formation, but only a few were privileged enough to attend those schools. Liturgy itself has a formative potential, but this potential did not materialize because of the increasing inability to understand the language of the liturgy, as Roman liturgy was transplanted into the churches of the Frankish empire, and by the increasing division between altar and clergy on one side and lay people on the other, which made the latter into passive spectators⁹⁸⁴.

⁹⁷⁷ Ferraro (2015), 69.

⁹⁷⁸ Bede (672/673-735).

⁹⁷⁹ Jonas of Orléans (760–841).

⁹⁸⁰ Hermans (1987), 67.

⁹⁸¹ Hermans (1987), 68f.

⁹⁸² In light of the rise of schools providing religious education, and a growing emphasis on catechizing children it worthwhile quoting the sociologist Meredith McGuire: "The emphasis on intellectual learning and formal religious knowledge which characterizes religious socialization in many complex societies, is atypical. The idea of going to Sunday School to learn specialized religious knowledge is for example, foreign to most religions because their emphasis is on learning by doing. What the child needs to know can best be learned by accompanying adults and imitating them. By contrast, Western religions have emphasized the importance of formal religious knowledge." Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context*. 3rd ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1992), 54-55.

⁹⁸³ Hermans (1987), 70f. Note that this was restricted to boys, as girls were not allowed to perform the same functions in church as boys, and in some cases the singing of girls in church was even completely forbidden. As by the 605 diocesan Synod of Auxerre, Hermans (1987), 72.

⁹⁸⁴ Hermans (1987), 73f.

Regarding children and the sacraments, I note that neither baptism nor confirmation functioned as coming of age ritual⁹⁸⁵. Children were baptized as infants⁹⁸⁶, and confirmation took place within a few years⁹⁸⁷. Some argued for confirmation after age seven or even around age twelve⁹⁸⁸. Some theologians believed that children should do confession and penance from age seven⁹⁸⁹. But others in the central and late Middle Ages questioned whether children should do confession and penance, and similarly, whether they should be administered the Eucharist and Extreme Unction before adolescence⁹⁹⁰. It is interesting to note that in the almost complete role reversal that took place during the boy bishop's feast, related to the feast of the Innocents, the boy bishop gave the benediction and, assisted by other boys, performed all the priest's ceremonies, except administration of the Mass⁹⁹¹. It was not uncommon for a baptized child who died in childhood to be buried with a chalice of wine in one hand and one containing the Host in the other, though this practice was officially condemned⁹⁹².

3.6. Middle Ages – Renaissance

3.6.1. Concepts and theologies

The late Middle Ages or early Renaissance deserves to be mentioned separately because many authors have said that the Renaissance discovered childhood and youth⁹⁹³. Trexler states, "the angelic putto, the blonde adolescent, and the liveried fine young man of Tuscan Quattrocento art show how irrevocably Florentines had unmasked the physical and psychological stages of the pre-adult world."⁹⁹⁴ The development from worship of the infant Jesus to appreciation of childhood in general is reflected in the art of this period. For example, earlier, we see depictions of the Virgin Mary with her mother Anne in iconography⁹⁹⁵. Later, more everyday children are depicted. Another example can be seen in the types of situations depicted on the canvasses of this period. Earlier in this era one can observe the strong

⁹⁸⁵ Nelson (1994), 99.

⁹⁸⁶ Infant baptism was only opposed by heretic sects in medieval times, Shahar (1992), 46.

⁹⁸⁷ Nelson (1994), 99.

⁹⁸⁸ Shahar (1992), 23

⁹⁸⁹ Shahar (1992), 24.

⁹⁹⁰ Age 12 for girls, age 14 for boys. Shahar (1992), 24-25.

⁹⁹¹ Shahar (1994), 245.

⁹⁹² Shahar (1992), 51.

⁹⁹³ E.g. Richard C. Trexler, *The Children of Renaissance Florence: Power and Dependence in Renaissance Florence, Volume 1*. 2nd ed. (Asheville: Pegasus, 1998), 1.

⁹⁹⁴ Trexler (1998), 1.

⁹⁹⁵ Ariès (1996), 35.

influence of Christian and Renaissance polite conventions. Later art portrayed more natural subjects and settings. This is clear from the paintings of the Dutch Golden Age⁹⁹⁶. Trexler further notices how in Florence a new positive legal attitude toward youth and children had been put in place: the modern foundling home was instituted; schools and confraternities developed; and the notion of the young saving the old had emerged⁹⁹⁷.

3.7. Modern History – the Reformation

3.7.1. Introduction

Whereas Anglo-American historians use the term “early modern” for the period between 1400 and 1800⁹⁹⁸, historians in continental Europe use the term “modern history” for the period between the Middle-Ages and our contemporary world⁹⁹⁹. The significance of children and childhood in the Enlightenment period as expressed in the works of John Locke¹⁰⁰⁰ cannot be overlooked. Likewise, we cannot overlook the thought of Jean Jacques Rousseau regarding children and childhood within the Romantic Era. But I will start my overview of this period with specific attention to the Reformation in the first half of the sixteenth century, focusing specifically on Martin Luther, John Calvin and his Genevan consistory, and some of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Dutch Pietists and Anglo-Saxon Puritans who tried to follow in their footsteps.

3.7.2. Luther’s concept and theology

Jerome Berryman suggests the Reformation changed theologians’ perspectives on children as they started to experience children in their own homes¹⁰⁰¹. Some speculate that it was Luther’s relationship with his father which ultimately led to the Reformation¹⁰⁰². It is certain that Luther’s

⁹⁹⁶ Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Fontana/Harper Collins, 1987), 483f.

⁹⁹⁷ Trexler (1998), 6.

⁹⁹⁸ The period between the breakup of feudalism and the eighteenth century revolutions in politics and economics.

⁹⁹⁹ *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, s.v. “Early Modern Europe,” <http://www.faqs.org/childhood/Co-Fa/Early-Modern-Europe.html> (accessed November 24, 2015).

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, s.v. “The Enlightenment,” <http://www.faqs.org/childhood/Co-Fa/Enlightenment-The.html> (accessed November 24, 2015)

¹⁰⁰¹ Berryman (2009), 86f. Though Berryman also acknowledges that this new common experience did not lead to common perspectives. Berryman (2009), 90.

¹⁰⁰² See Erik H. Erikson’s *Young Man Luther: A study in Psychoanalysis and History*. I used the Dutch translation, *De Jonge Luther: Een psychoanalytisch en historisch onderzoek*, trans. Karel A. Soudijn (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1967). Erikson mentions other older studies. Jane Strohl mentions a more

experience as a son and as a father¹⁰⁰³ influenced his reflections on children¹⁰⁰⁴. Luther, who had been trained as Augustinian monk, adhered to Augustine's theology of original sin and believed that sin infected the child as much as the adult¹⁰⁰⁵. Luther also recognized that sin has a history in the life of each individual¹⁰⁰⁶. At the same time, Luther held a high view of children, considering them examples of guilelessness¹⁰⁰⁷, trust in God¹⁰⁰⁸, and simplicity of faith¹⁰⁰⁹. He considered children's play pleasing to God¹⁰¹⁰ and compared playing children to jesters, whose play is filled with grace, and thereby display the disposition of humans in paradise¹⁰¹¹. In Luther's defense of infant baptism, he considered infant faith a possibility but emphasized God's promise attached to the sign rather than emphasizing the recipient's faith¹⁰¹². In line with that thought, he considered infant baptism the most certain form of baptism precisely because of the infant's incapability of conscious discernment¹⁰¹³.

3.7.3. Luther's ages and stages

Luther divided life in seven year stages¹⁰¹⁴. He rejected the idea that certain stages of life were religiously superior or more spiritual¹⁰¹⁵, yet some suggest he did perceive children in terms of what they should become, and not in terms of what they were¹⁰¹⁶.

3.7.4. Luther and treatment

Luther stressed the responsibility of parents as well as of other adults towards children. Strohl summarizes, "No neighbor closer than one's own children, no

recent study on Luther's relationships by Scott Hendrix, "Beyond Erikson: The Relational Luther," Jane E. Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology: "For What Purpose Do We Older Folks Exist, Other Than to Care for ... the Young?" in Bunge (2001), 135, 138.

¹⁰⁰³ Luther fathers three sons and three daughters and welcomed four orphans into his home, Strohl (2001), 157.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Strohl (2001), 135-138, 156-158. E.g. Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, 1583, Vol. 54 of *Luther's Works: American Edition*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 157.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Strohl (2001), 144. E.g. *Table Talk*, 138, LW 54, 20.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Strohl (2001), 144. E.g. *Table Talk* 1601, LW 54, 158.

¹⁰⁰⁷ E.g. *Table Talk*, 660, 3566A, LW 54, 120, 234-235.

¹⁰⁰⁸ E.g. *Table Talk*, 1631, LW 54, 159.

¹⁰⁰⁹ "there is lack of reason but not of faith," quoting Ambrose, *Hymns*, 24, in *Table Talk*, 4367, LW 54, 335.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Table Talk*, 3964, LW 54, 300.

¹⁰¹¹ *Table Talk*, 4364, LW 54, 334.

¹⁰¹² E.g. *Table Talk*, 365, LW 54, 55.

¹⁰¹³ Strohl (2001), 141. Compare *Table Talk*, 549, LW 54, 98.

¹⁰¹⁴ Strohl (2001), 145. A small, but interesting example is Luther's opinion that "before the age of eight years no child should be given wine to drink," *Table Talk*, 1707, LW 54, 163.

¹⁰¹⁵ Strohl (2001), 139.

¹⁰¹⁶ Strohl (2001), 134.

claim upon society more pressing than that of the young.”¹⁰¹⁷ The male household heads were considered to be bishops in their own homes¹⁰¹⁸. Parental responsibility involved four crucial duties: “to provide the sacrament of baptism for infants, to form children in the true faith as they mature, to attend to their education for vocation, and to provide them with a suitable spouse in a timely fashion.”¹⁰¹⁹ Luther considered the duties of the fourth commandment to be reciprocal¹⁰²⁰. He advocated disciplining children with understanding¹⁰²². Advising that “one shouldn’t whip children too hard”, meant an improvement when compared to his own youth¹⁰²³. Regarding education, some have pointed out that the Reformation increased opportunities for education, especially female education. Some scholars point out that this increase was counterbalanced by the abandonment of monastic life, the forced closure of monasteries, and the devastating effects this had on schooling¹⁰²⁴.

3.7.5. Luther and participation

Preaching in the vernacular increased the sense of participation of children in church. In his preaching, Luther sought to be understood by young people and children¹⁰²⁵.

3.7.6. Calvin’s concept and theology

From Luther, we move on to Calvin. Calvin’s concept of children did not differ significantly from many of his contemporaries’¹⁰²⁶ ideas. In most of his

¹⁰¹⁷ Strohl (2001), 158.

¹⁰¹⁸ Jeffrey R. Watt, “Calvinism, Childhood, and Education: The Evidence from the Genevan Consistory,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 445.

¹⁰¹⁹ Strohl (2001), 140-141.

¹⁰²⁰ In line with the Roman Catholics, Luther counts as fourth commandment the commandment that other Protestants and Jews would count as fifth. See for example *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions; A Reader’s Edition of the Book of Concord. 2nd ed.* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2006).

¹⁰²¹ Strohl (2001), 147. E.g. *Large Catechism*, in *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2006), 377. But he agreed with the proverb “One father can support then children better than ten children can support one father,” *Table Talk* 3751, LW 54, 267.

¹⁰²² *Table Talk* 3566A, LW 54, 234.

¹⁰²³ *Table Talk* 1559, LW 54, 157.

¹⁰²⁴ Strohl (2001), 150-151.

¹⁰²⁵ *Table Talk*, 3573, LW 54, 235.

¹⁰²⁶ Barbara Pitkin “The Heritage of the Lord: Children in the Theology of John Calvin,” in Bunge (2001), 163. Anneke G. Kloosterman-van der Sluys, “Calvijn en de jeugd: Kinderen en jongeren in de theologie van Johannes Calvijn,” in *Calvijn en de Nederlanden*, ed. Karla Apperloo-Boersma and Herman J. Selderhuis (Apeldoorn: Instituut voor Reformatieonderzoek, 2009), 163.

writings, children functioned as symbols or metaphors¹⁰²⁷, but with some exceptions¹⁰²⁸, particularly when arguing against the Anabaptists¹⁰²⁹. His remarks about real and metaphorical children reveal an often nuanced view. Children, on the one hand, are a gift or benefit bestowed upon men by God, and parenthood is an honor graciously granted by God¹⁰³⁰. On the other hand, “the majority of children are not always a source of joy to their parents.”¹⁰³¹ Infants are involved in original sin and are polluted by its stain. They bring their own condemnation with them from their mothers’ wombs, according to Calvin¹⁰³². However, Calvin understands that infants have not yet produced the fruits of their own unrighteousness¹⁰³³. Children who have not arrived at the years of reason have no knowledge of good and evil and do not willfully provoke the wrath of God¹⁰³⁴. Calvin praises children for their innocence¹⁰³⁵, while acknowledging their many faults, reminding his readers more than once of Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 14:20 “Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.”¹⁰³⁶ While Calvin believes we should be mature in our thinking, children’s simplicity and ignorance of degrees of honor make them examples of humility¹⁰³⁷. Young men are prone to impetuous feelings and impulses, becoming heated more quickly in controversies than those of mature age¹⁰³⁸. By the providence of God, infants, who in themselves are incapable of speech, can be heralds of the

¹⁰²⁷ Pitkin (2001), 161. E.g. Calvin on Matthew 18:5, John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark & Luke*, trans. T.H.L. Parker. Vol. 2 of *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries*, Ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. Repr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 214.

¹⁰²⁸ E.g. Calvin on Psalm 8:2, John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms: Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 120.

¹⁰²⁹ E.g. Calvin on Matthew 19:14, *Harmony of the Gospels, Vol. 2*, 252.

¹⁰³⁰ Calvin on Psalm 127:3, John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms: Volume 5* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 95.

¹⁰³¹ *idem*.

¹⁰³² Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.8. But Calvin does not emphasize this according to Pitkin (2001), 164. Calvin on Genesis 8:21 on the one hand confirms the thought of original sin, “*men are born evil*,” on the other hand suggests that only in the second stage of life, “as soon as they are able to form thoughts, they have radical corruption of mind,” John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis: Volume I* (Grand Rapids, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 205f.

¹⁰³³ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.8.

¹⁰³⁴ Calvin on Deuteronomy 1:39. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony, Volume 4* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 72f.

¹⁰³⁵ Calvin on Psalm 127:5, John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms: Volume 5* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 96.

¹⁰³⁶ Calvin on Matthew 18: 2-4, Calvin, *Harmony of the Gospels, Vol. 2*, 214.

¹⁰³⁷ *idem*.

¹⁰³⁸ Kloosterman (2009), 153. Calvin on 2 Timothy 2:22, , John Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, trans. T.A. Smail, Vol. 10 of *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries*, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. Repr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 319.

glory of God¹⁰³⁹. In addition, by divine accommodation, enigmas and dark sayings can be declared to children: “however high may be the majesty of the Word of God, this does not prevent the benefits or advantages of it from reaching even to the unlearned and to babes.”¹⁰⁴⁰ Arguing against the Anabaptists, Calvin states that it is false to apply to children what is true for adults: that we are reconciled to God and become heirs of the adoption only by faith; that infants “are renewed by God’s Spirit according to the measure of their age, until by degrees and in its own time this power hidden within them increases and shines forth openly.”¹⁰⁴¹ Pitkin states that Calvin “based his theology of baptism on the conviction that the elect are from birth full inheritors of God’s covenant and members in the church.”¹⁰⁴²

3.7.7. Calvin’s ages and stages

Calvin also followed the medieval division of childhood in three stages, though he treats the lines between these stages as fluid¹⁰⁴³.

3.7.8. Calvin and treatment

In spite of Calvin’s theology of original sin, total depravity, and double predestination, he did not argue for harsh treatment of children¹⁰⁴⁴. He understood that the formation of children by holy discipline would only succeed by the special grace of God¹⁰⁴⁵.

3.7.9. Calvin and participation

Participation of children in worship was encouraged by Calvin’s introduction of Psalm singing. Calvin suggested “that children, who beforehand have practiced some modest church song, sing in a loud distinct voice, the people

¹⁰³⁹ Pitkin (2001), 164. Calvin on Matthew 21:16, John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark & Luke*, trans. T.H.L. Parker. Vol. 3 of *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries*, Ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. Repr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 7f. See also Calvin’s *Commentary on the Book of Psalms: Volume 1*, 120f.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Calvin on Psalm 78:1-6, Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Volume 3* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 199.

¹⁰⁴¹ Calvin, *Harmony of the Gospels, Vol. 2*, 252.

¹⁰⁴² Pitkin (2001), 164, 185f. Some evangelicals consider it the weakness of the Reformed argument for infant baptism that covenantal theology was developed for the sake of defending an already existing praxis. See for example Willem J. Ouweneel, *Het verbond en het koninkrijk van God: Ontwerp van een verbonds-, doop- en koninkrijksleer*. Volume IX of *Evangelisch-Dogmatische Reeks*. (Heerenveen: Medema, 2011), 108.

¹⁰⁴³ Pitkin (2001), 164f. Kloosterman (2009), 151f.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Pitkin (2001), 163-164.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Calvin on Psalm 127:5, John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms: Volume 5* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 97.

listening with all attention and following heartily what is sung with the mouth till all become accustomed to sing communally.”¹⁰⁴⁶

3.7.10. Geneva Consistory and children

In the days of Calvin, the Geneva Consistory was entrusted with the enforcement of Reformed morality¹⁰⁴⁷ and had great influence by its authority to grant and deny the right to participate in the Eucharist¹⁰⁴⁸. Children played a role in the consistory's battle against remnants of Roman Catholic praxis, such as baptism by midwives¹⁰⁴⁹ and postmortem baptisms¹⁰⁵⁰. The consistory quarreled over the selection of children's names, demanding biblical names and trying to eliminate names of saints, interfering in what had been a parental privilege¹⁰⁵¹. With its rulings, consistory also tried to ban superstitious explanations for children's illnesses, contributing to a desacralization of mentality¹⁰⁵².

3.7.11. Geneva Consistory and treatment

The Geneva Consistory also dealt with generational conflicts, physical assault of parents by children, abuse of children by parents, often siding with the parents¹⁰⁵³. Parents and masters were admonished to show restraint, were rebuked about neglect, and were particularly instructed about sleeping arrangements¹⁰⁵⁴. There may have been unintended negative effects of the Reformation on the treatment of children. Some believe that “there was an increase in the postnatal mortality rate of bastard children, because until then women and men who engaged in extramarital relations which produced bastards were not severely reprobated or punished. As a result of the Reformation and the Counter Reformation both censure and pressure increased, and (with the exception of monarchs and nobles) people no longer dared to rear their bastards openly.”¹⁰⁵⁵

¹⁰⁴⁶ John Calvin, *Articles concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva proposed by the Ministers at the Council, January 16, 1537*, 48-55. In *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, ed. J.K.S. Reid (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 54.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Jeffery R. Watt, “Childhood and youth in the Geneva Consistory Minutes,” in H.J. Selderhuis, ed., *Calvinus praeceptor ecclesiae: papers of the International congress on Calvin research, Princeton, August 20-24, 2002*. (Genève: Droz, 2004), 43.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Watt (2002), 439. Watt (2004), 63f.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Watt (2002), 440. Watt (2004), 44.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Watt (2002), 441.

¹⁰⁵¹ Watt (2002), 443f. Watt (2004), 46f.

¹⁰⁵² Watt (2002), 451 f., 455.

¹⁰⁵³ Watt (2004), 57f.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Watt (2004), 59f.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Shahar (1992), 131.

3.7.12. Geneva Consistory and participation in society

The value of being able to read scripture and to study the catechisms contributed to the desire to make education available to everyone¹⁰⁵⁶. This led to the establishment of the Collège de Rive in 1536. A more significant reform of education took place in 1559 with the creation of the Genevan Academy¹⁰⁵⁷.

3.7.13. Geneva Consistory and participation in church

Religious education was deemed essential in this era of religious conflict¹⁰⁵⁸. In pre-Reformation Geneva, religious education at home had been a well-established practice¹⁰⁵⁹. It included teaching children to recite prayers, the Ave Maria, and the creeds. Though Calvin and the consistory tried to increase the role of the patriarch in religious education, their emphasis on catechism as a requirement for taking Communion caused a shift from the household to the church¹⁰⁶⁰. There was rising resistance to participation in weekend catechism, as more boys were educated during the week¹⁰⁶¹, and as it conflicted with the participation in traditional festivals and martial games on Sunday afternoons¹⁰⁶². Regarding the participation in worship, it is interesting to note that in the early years of the Reformation in Geneva, children were also involved in teaching adults to recite the Our Father and the Creed in French, as children picked up this information more easily¹⁰⁶³.

3.7.14. Further developments regarding participation in church

There are further indications, as early as the end of the sixteenth century, of the existence of groups of youth, boys and girls, gathering together to pray, sing and study scripture for the sake of spiritual formation. Synods apparently spoke with concern about these independent initiatives¹⁰⁶⁴. A century later, we come across the first example of a more officially organized youth group. Bavinck mentions the *Verein lediger Brüder* that was founded by Meyenrock in Basel in 1768 as the first official Christian youth or young adults group¹⁰⁶⁵. It

¹⁰⁵⁶ On May 21, 1536, the General Council ordered mandatory elementary education. Watt (2004), 53.

¹⁰⁵⁷ The Genevan Academy was only open to males. Watt (2002), 449 f.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Watt (2002), 445.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Watt (2002), 446.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Watt (2002), 447f. Watt (2004), 48f.

¹⁰⁶¹ Watt (2004), 56.

¹⁰⁶² Watt (2004), 49f.

¹⁰⁶³ Robert M. Kingdon, "Catechesis in Calvin's Geneva," in *Educating People of Faith: Exploring the History of Jewish and Christian Communities*, ed. John Van Engen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 305.

¹⁰⁶⁴ J.C. Sturm, *Een goede gereformeerde opvoeding: Over neo-calvinistische moraalpedagogiek (1880-1950) met speciale aandacht voor de nieuw-gereformeerde jeugdorganisaties* (Kampen: Kok, 1988), 167.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Herman Bavinck, *De opvoeding der rijpere jeugd* (Kampen: Kok, 1916), 44.

took approximately another century for youth movements to be nationally and internationally organized.

In the early years, as the 1563 Pfälzische Kirchenordnung shows, afternoon or evening services with catechism preaching were targeted toward the youth. These services had the character of public catechism classes, as the discussion at the 1618-1619 Synod of Dordt reveals¹⁰⁶⁶. Beerekamp suggests that to keep adults attending these services, those adults were targeted with more and more, as children or youth would be sent to those services by their parents anyway¹⁰⁶⁷.

3.7.15. Pietists, Puritans and children

L.F. Groenendijk describes how, under the influence of Dutch Reformed Pietism¹⁰⁶⁸, families were transformed into “little churches” between 1600 and 1800¹⁰⁶⁹. Many convictions of Dutch Reformed Pietism can be traced to the practical writings of the Puritans¹⁰⁷⁰. Many Puritans and Pietists believed that conversion of the nation depends on the transformation of families. For that reason, parents were instructed on partner selection, marriage, the duties of husband and wife, and the joint task of running the household. Children first and foremost had to respect their parents. Parents had to provide godly education by encouraging participation in religious exercises, by corporal punishment, and by setting a good example¹⁰⁷¹. But young children could also set examples as a Reformed version of the hagiography reveals in books on exemplary lives of converted children¹⁰⁷². Interestingly, Groenendijk remarks that bourgeois children could afford to develop early godliness as they did not have to participate in the labor process¹⁰⁷³. In these Pietist circles there is emphasis on the need for children to convert, to pray for that conversion, and to search for evidence of that conversion in tokens of God’s grace¹⁰⁷⁴. Early examples of sermons targeted at youth are found in Dutch

¹⁰⁶⁶ J.W. Beerekamp, *De jeugdendienst: Zijn geschiedenis, principe en opzet* (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1952), 4f.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Beerekamp (1952), 5.

¹⁰⁶⁸ *De Nadere Reformatie* in Dutch.

¹⁰⁶⁹ L.F. Groenendijk, *De Nadere Reformatie van het gezin: De visie van Petrus Wittewrongel op de christelijke opvoeding* (Dordrecht: J.P. van den Tol, 1984), 182.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Groenendijk (1984), 182.

¹⁰⁷¹ Groenendijk (1984), 183-184.

¹⁰⁷² See for example James Janeway, *A Token for Children*, originally (1671/1672; Repr., Worcester, Massachusetts, James R. Hutchins, 1795), Thomas White, *A Little Book for Little Children*, 12th ed. (1674; London: Bible and Three Crowns, 1702), and also L.F. Groenendijk and F.A. Lieburg, *Voor edeler staat geschapen: Levens- en sterfbedbeschrijvingen van gereformeerde kinderen en jeugdigen uit de 17^e en 18^e eeuw* (Leiden: Groen, 1991).

¹⁰⁷³ Groenendijk (1991), 47.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Groenendijk (1991), 15, 38.

Pietism in the translation of sermons by the English independent John Jennings and his student Philipp Doddridge¹⁰⁷⁵. According to Beerekamp, the first Dutch youth sermon was preached by Jacobus Fruytier in 1724 in Rotterdam¹⁰⁷⁶. In C. John Sommerville's *Discovery of Childhood in Puritan England*¹⁰⁷⁷, he argues that the English Puritans showed great interest in children by their unprecedented quantity and variety of publications on children. I will limit myself to two of the most well known Puritans, Bunyan and Edwards.

3.7.16. John Bunyan and children

Although the seventeenth century Puritan John Bunyan¹⁰⁷⁸ did not say much about children¹⁰⁷⁹, his famous 1678 *The Pilgrim's Progress*¹⁰⁸⁰ reveals the Puritan weakness of focusing on the eight steps to personal salvation that could come at the cost of spouse and children, as the protagonist Christian flees without his wife and children. Six years after the publication of this allegorical story, a sequel was published about the journey to salvation of Christian's family¹⁰⁸¹.

3.7.17. Jonathan Edwards and children

The early eighteenth century American preacher Jonathan Edwards¹⁰⁸² viewed children as both sinners¹⁰⁸³ and saints: children of wrath tainted with original sin and saints, capable of genuine faith. Edwards took seriously their humanity as well as their religious thoughts and questions and recognized their particular needs¹⁰⁸⁴. This meant that Edwards considered the conversion of children to be a symbol of God's extraordinary grace¹⁰⁸⁵. Converts were most often between fourteen and twenty five years old, but Phebe Bartlett was converted at age four, and many others between age nine and fourteen¹⁰⁸⁶. For Edwards, infancy was from birth to age six or seven,

¹⁰⁷⁵ John Jennings (c. 1687 – 1723), Philipp Doddridge (1702-1751), Beerekamp (1952), 6f.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Beerekamp (1952), 8.

¹⁰⁷⁷ C. John Sommerville, *Discovery of Childhood in Puritan England* (Athens: University of Georgia: 1992).

¹⁰⁷⁸ John Bunyan (1628-1688).

¹⁰⁷⁹ Berryman (2009), 122f.

¹⁰⁸⁰ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress (First Part/Second Part)*, (1678/1684; London: Penguin Books, 1987).

¹⁰⁸¹ Bunyan (1987), 145f.

¹⁰⁸² Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758).

¹⁰⁸³ Quoting for example Psalm 58:3 "The wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."

¹⁰⁸⁴ Catherine A. Brekus, "Children of Wrath, Children of Grace: Jonathan Edwards and the Puritan Culture of Child Rearing," in Bunge (2001), 301f.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Brekus (2001), 313.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Brekus (2001), 300, 313.

childhood was from age seven to fourteen or sixteen, and youth was from age sixteen to twenty five. He recognized an initial turning point in terms of ability to reason around age seven and a second important transformation during puberty. He organized separate religious meetings and preached specific sermons for these age groups¹⁰⁸⁷. As with other Puritans, Edwards has been accused of creating a climate of fear in which children were raised¹⁰⁸⁸. The theoretical right to put to death children who cursed or struck their parents is an indicator of parental power in the Puritan New England colonies¹⁰⁸⁹. Fathers tried to influence the choice of their children's future spouse, but children realized pregnancy was their weapon against fathers who were strong-willed in this respect¹⁰⁹⁰. An important reason for Edwards to target children and youth in his sermons was to prevent a later disposition to evil hardened with age¹⁰⁹¹. In his desire to purify the church Edwards excluded many children from baptism¹⁰⁹² but remarkably allowed a number of children under the age of fourteen at the Lord's Supper for some time¹⁰⁹³. There is no evidence that he allowed children to testify in public about their religious affections as other revival preachers did¹⁰⁹⁴.

3.8. Modern History – Enlightenment, Romantic Era and Late Modernity

3.8.1. Discoveries of the child and centuries of childhood

As we move on from the sixteenth century Reformation, we enter the seventeenth century. In his introduction to Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood*, Adam Phillips writes, "If the seventeenth century brought the new concept of childhood, then hot on its heels the eighteenth century brought the new concept of the family."¹⁰⁹⁵ As Ariès describes this transition as an evolutionary process, it is hard to pinpoint the exact beginning¹⁰⁹⁶, but in an earlier

¹⁰⁸⁷ Brekus (2001), 302f.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Brekus (2001), 304.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Brekus (2001), 307.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Brekus (2001), 308.

¹⁰⁹¹ Brekus (2001), 302, 313, 326.

¹⁰⁹² Brekus (2001), 322.

¹⁰⁹³ Brekus (2001), 318.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Brekus (2001), 319.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Adam Phillips, "Introduction to the Pimlico Edition," in Ariès (1996), 8. Ariès writes about "the importance of the seventeenth century in the evolution of the themes of childhood," Ariès (1996), 44.

¹⁰⁹⁶ At a certain point Ariès writes: "No doubt the discovery of childhood began in the thirteenth century, and its progress can be traced in the history of art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But the evidence of its development becomes more plentiful and significant from the end of the sixteenth century throughout the seventeenth," Ariès (1996), 45. Paula S. Fass speaks of Ariès' suggestion that the changes of the sixteenth century marked the radical revolution Paula S. Fass, "Introduction: Is There a Story in the History of Childhood?" in Fass (2015), 4.

publication Ariès claimed that childhood was one of the great inventions of the eighteenth century, an invention bequeathed to the nineteenth century¹⁰⁹⁷. The twentieth century writer Ariès may have been most influential in suggesting that childhood was an invention of the Romantic Era, but that claim had already been made in the Romantic Era itself. The nineteenth century Romantic writer Victor Hugo, boldly claimed, “Christopher Columbus discovered nothing but America. I have discovered the child!”¹⁰⁹⁸ Without acknowledging Hugo’s individual claim, many have credited the Romantic Era with the discovery of the child or the invention of childhood¹⁰⁹⁹. Many authors perceive childhood as a discovery of the second half of the eighteenth century. It is no surprise that the nineteenth century could become the century of the child in the eyes of many¹¹⁰⁰.

3.8.2. Norbert Elias’ civilizing process

Earlier, I mentioned that the evolutionary process of development within society described by Ariès is related to Norbert Elias’s *civilizing process*¹¹⁰¹. Elias’s book *The Civilizing Process* does not focus on childhood, but it does suggest that childhood and adulthood are increasingly distinguishable and that children and adults become segregated as a result of this civilizing process. In Elias’s words, the civilizing process involves a growth of psychological nuances in the stock of ideas¹¹⁰², refinement of feeling¹¹⁰³, an increasing consideration of what others might think¹¹⁰⁴, a rise of the shame threshold¹¹⁰⁵, and also the internal formation of more pacified societies¹¹⁰⁶. In the course of this process the distance in behavior and whole physical

¹⁰⁹⁷ Philippe Ariès, “Le XIX^e Siècle et la Révolution des Moeurs Familiales,” in *Renouveau des Idées sur la Famille*, ed. by Robert Prigent (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), 116.

¹⁰⁹⁸ “Christophe Colomb n’a découvert que l’Amérique. J’ai découvert l’enfant, moi!” Quoted in Claude Salleron “La Littérature au XIX^e Siècle et la Famille,” in *Renouveau des Idées sur la Famille*, edited by Robert Prigent, 60-80 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), 67. Victor Hugo (1802-1885).

¹⁰⁹⁹ E.g. “Die Entdeckung der Kindheit gehört in die Romantik,” Richard Schröder in Lutterbach (2010), 15-16. Compare Postman’s claim: “The period between 1850 and 1950 represents the high watermark of childhood,” Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 67. In Dutch literature Heijboer-Barbas registers the change between 1750 and 1800. M.E. Heijboer-Barbas, *Een Nieuwe Visie Op De Jeugd Uit Vroeger Eeuwen: Een Letterkundige Studie Ter Vergelijking Van Het Nederlandse Kind Vroeger En Nu* (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1956), 18.

¹¹⁰⁰ E.g. “Men heeft wel de negentiende eeuw de eeuw van het kind genoemd,” A.L. van Hulzen, *Bijbel en kind* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1929), 7.

¹¹⁰¹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, rev. ed. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

¹¹⁰² Elias (2000), 55.

¹¹⁰³ Elias (2000), 96.

¹¹⁰⁴ Elias (2000), 71.

¹¹⁰⁵ Elias (2000), 114.

¹¹⁰⁶ Elias (2000), 70.

structure between children and adults increases¹¹⁰⁷ and, as a consequence, people come to spend the first twelve, fifteen or even twenty years of their lives in a segregated area¹¹⁰⁸. Elias pinpoints the starting point of the concept of *civilité* in 1530 with the Erasmus's publication of *On Civility in Boys*¹¹⁰⁹. Elias's "civilizing process" starts at the end of the Middle Ages and continues until the early twentieth century. But Elias does not indicate the starting point of the concept of childhood.

3.8.3. Van den Berg's *metabletica*

It is worth mentioning the Dutch psychiatrist J.H. van den Berg and his 1958 book *Metabletica*¹¹¹⁰. His book precedes Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood*¹¹¹¹ but presents a similar view of the historical changes in the concept and experience of childhood. Van den Berg, like many others, credits Rousseau with recognizing the child as a child¹¹¹², and with speaking of adolescence as a moment of crisis¹¹¹³. According to Van den Berg great minds of the past generally show early ripeness, whereas contemporary great minds often exemplify late ripeness¹¹¹⁴. This change in the nature of the child originates from a change in the nature of the adult, and the increasing discontinuity between childhood and adulthood¹¹¹⁵. The first cause for the increased childishness of the child and of the birth, the extension and deepening of the process towards adulthood lies in the "polyvalent pluralism", characteristic for

¹¹⁰⁷ Elias (2000), xi. What previously was considered as general misdemeanors is now mentioned as bad manners of children. Elias (2000), 83.

¹¹⁰⁸ Elias (2000), 148.

¹¹⁰⁹ *De civiliate morum puerilium*. Desiderius Erasmus, *Etiquette*, translated into Dutch by Jeanine De Landtsheer and Toon van Houdt (Amsterdam: Atheneum-Polak & van Genneep, 2001). For Erasmus on childhood see Richard L. DeMolen, "Erasmus on Childhood," in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook 2* (1982), 25-46.

¹¹¹⁰ J. H. van den Berg, *Metabletica: of Leer der veranderingen; Beginselen van een historische psychology*, 7th ed. (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1958). Simultaneously published with Heijboer-Barbas (1958); a book which was originally intended to be included in *Metabletica*, Van den Berg (1958), 23.

¹¹¹¹ Though Van den Berg does quote Ariès (1954).

¹¹¹² Quoting Rousseau, "Nature wants children to be children before being men. If we want to pervert this order, we shall produce precocious fruits which will be immature and insipid and will not be long in rotting," Van den Berg quotes in French (1958), 27, English translation from: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or on Education*. Trans. Allan Bloom. (London: Penguin Books, 1991). Cp. Postman who credits Rousseau as the first who insisted that the child is important in himself, not merely as a means to an end and second that a child's emotional and intellectual life is important because childhood is the stage of life when man most closely approximates to the "state of nature" – Postman (1994), 57-58. Before Rousseau, for example Montaigne's 1580 chapter *De l'institution des enfans* reveals a non childish interpretation of the child, just like Locke's 1693 *Concerning Education* treats children as if their reasoning is that of an adult.

¹¹¹³ Van den Berg (1958), 29. According to Van den Berg the subject of becoming an adult is absent before Rousseau except for some lines on the subject by Aristotle.

¹¹¹⁴ Van den Berg (1958), 31-35.

¹¹¹⁵ Van den Berg (1958), 44-47.

the state of contemporary adulthood¹¹¹⁶. The second cause lies in the invisibility of the adult¹¹¹⁷. The third cause lies in a new rationality typical for adulthood¹¹¹⁸.

3.8.4. *Heijboer's metabletica*

M.E. Heijboer supports Van den Berg's claims as summarized above by registering a change of children and childhood as portrayed in Dutch literature between the second half of the eighteenth century and halfway through the nineteenth century¹¹¹⁹. Prior to the 1950s, youth was not a value in itself; hence paradoxically children were taken more seriously¹¹²⁰. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the topics of sexuality and death were increasingly obscured from children¹¹²¹ under the influence of Locke and Rousseau, according to Heijboer. Children were not considered "ripe" for religion. Resistance grew against early intellectual development, thus creating a widening gap between children and adults¹¹²². According to Heijboer, early Dutch literature lacks references to stages of development such as the "Trotzphase", the awkward age of external expansion, puberty with its internal exploration, or adolescence with its trial and error¹¹²³. Heijboer suggests that the ultimate explanation for this change lies in the erosion of religious tradition by political changes, scientific development, and industrialization, but most fundamentally by a growing rationalism begun in the Renaissance. The erosion of religious tradition meant that, generally speaking, pure religious life could only be reached through a period of crisis¹¹²⁴.

¹¹¹⁶ Van den Berg (1958), 48.

¹¹¹⁷ E.g. Labour, married life, Van den Berg (1958), 48.

¹¹¹⁸ Van den Berg (1958), 56-78.

¹¹¹⁹ Heijboer-Barbas for example compares the children in the work of Hieronymus van Alphen, Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken with that of P.A. de Génestet. Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 9f.

¹¹²⁰ In other words they were treated in a more mature way, because childish nature was less appreciated, Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 19, 22.

¹¹²¹ A development reflected in children's Bibles, Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 24f., 37f.

¹¹²² Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 33f. Larry Wolff notices the paradoxical reality that Rousseau on the one hand attempted to postpone the advent of adolescence and sexual awareness, and thus prolonged innocence, but on the other hand was tempted to sexually violate that innocence crossing the border between tender fondness and erotic excitement as in his purchase of the girl Anzoletta as future sexual partner. Larry Wolff, "Childhood and the Enlightenment," in Fass (2015), 82f.

¹¹²³ Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 40-41.

¹¹²⁴ Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 42-46.

3.8.5. Ariès' thesis on the discovery of the child

Ariès claimed there was no idea or concept¹¹²⁵ of childhood in the Middle Ages, and there was no awareness of the particular nature of the child or of the young adult¹¹²⁶. Little ones did not count because they could “disappear”¹¹²⁷. Ariès suggests that personality was recognized in children commencing in the fourteenth century¹¹²⁸. Ariès considered this the beginning of an evolution that resulted in clothing children in specific children’s clothing in the sixteenth and seventeenth century¹¹²⁹. In the sixteenth century a new attitude towards the child is revealed in the coddling of children. According to Ariès, prior to the sixteenth century, coddling was reserved for mothers and wet nurses¹¹³⁰. This new attitude was met with criticism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and led to the desire to keep children apart from adults¹¹³¹. The first concept or fondness of childhood, as expressed in coddling and amusement, evolves into a second concept or fondness that was more psychological in nature as it was defined by moralists and pedagogues of the seventeenth century¹¹³². This second attitude change was related to the growing awareness of the innocence and weakness of children¹¹³³. It was believed that innocent little children should be formed into persons of honour and probity¹¹³⁴. Ariès suggests that in the eighteenth century, concern for health and hygiene was added to the fondness and moral and psychological awareness of children¹¹³⁵. The second attitude change resulted in the extension of childhood with the school- or college stage. Although in the beginning school was attended by students of all ages¹¹³⁶. Just as school determined childhood, adolescence crystallized as a separate stage of life with

¹¹²⁵ Ariès mostly uses the French word “sentiment.” He speaks of “le sentiment de l’enfance” which he explains as “une conscience de la particularité enfantine,” and also speaks of “l’égard des enfants.” Ariès warns that “le sentiment” should not be confused with “l’affection des enfants.” In the English translation by Baldwick “sentiment” is mostly translated as “idea” and “concept” and in some cases as “attitude” and “fondness.” In the Dutch translation by Knippenberg and Tielens “sentiment” is mostly translated as “gevoel.” Ariès his “sentiment” refers to thoughts, as well as attitudes and feelings, whereas the English and Dutch translations emphasize either the first or the latter. Philippe Ariès, *L’enfant et la vie familiale sous l’Ancien Régime*, abr. ed. (Paris: Seuil, 1973), 177f. 4; *Centuries of Childhood: With a New Introduction by Adam Phillips*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Pimlico/Random House, 1996); *De Ontdekking van het Kind: Sociale Geschiedenis van School & Gezin*, trans. L. Knippenberg and J. Tielens (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1987).

¹¹²⁶ Ariès (1996), 125.

¹¹²⁷ Ariès (1996), 125.

¹¹²⁸ Ariès (1996), 125.

¹¹²⁹ Ariès (1996), 126.

¹¹³⁰ Ariès (1996), 126,127.

¹¹³¹ Ariès (1996), 127.

¹¹³² Ariès (1996), 128 f.

¹¹³³ Ariès (1996), 129, 317.

¹¹³⁴ Ariès (1996), 129.

¹¹³⁵ Ariès (1996), 129 f.

¹¹³⁶ Ariès (1996), 316 f.

compulsory military service in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries¹¹³⁷. In the seventeenth century, school was not yet a privilege of the elite, but it was a privilege of boys¹¹³⁸. The introduction of discipline, the expansion of the school program from five years, and the growing focus on educating children and the young contributed to the extension of childhood through the duration of the school cycle¹¹³⁹. After the eighteenth century, a dual educational system was introduced in countries such as France and England with primary education for the lower classes and secondary education for the middle class¹¹⁴⁰. Based on iconographic sources Ariès concludes that, until the seventeenth century, life was lived in public¹¹⁴¹ and though family existed, in reality it did not exist as a concept. Against the opinion that individualism has triumphed over social constraints such as the family, Ariès argues that not individualism but the family and the concept of family have triumphed. Since the eighteenth century, private life was reinforced at the expense of neighborly relations, friendships, and traditional contacts¹¹⁴². Family and school removed the child from adult society¹¹⁴³.

3.8.6. *Pollock's antithesis*

As I suggested before, Pollock's book could be considered the antithesis to Ariès'. She disagrees with Ariès's claim that there was no concept of childhood before the seventeenth century¹¹⁴⁴. Pollock and likeminded authors demonstrate that there were such concepts in the Middle Ages and sixteenth century in Europe and in the early Puritan colonies, and that they may have become more detailed through the centuries¹¹⁴⁵. She does observe an increased emphasis on the abstract nature of childhood and parental care from the seventeenth century onwards. Pollock notes that there are some fluctuations in the concept of childhood with some perceiving children as depraved in the seventeenth century, innocent in the eighteenth century, and as both depraved and innocent in the nineteenth century¹¹⁴⁶. Her primary sources provide clearer insight into parental care and childhood in these

¹¹³⁷ Ariès (1996), 316.

¹¹³⁸ Ariès (1996), 318 f., 321.

¹¹³⁹ Ariès (1996), 320 f.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ariès (1996), 321 f.

¹¹⁴¹ Ariès (1996), 392.

¹¹⁴² Ariès (1996), 393.

¹¹⁴³ Ariès (1996), 397.

¹¹⁴⁴ Pollock summarizes the reasons of Ariès and likeminded authors: 1) a renewal of interest in education, 2) developments within the family, 3) the rise of capitalism, 4) the emergence of some indefinable spirit of benevolence, 5) the increasing maturity of parents. Pollock (1996), 262.

¹¹⁴⁵ Pollock (1996), 263, 267-268.

¹¹⁴⁶ Pollock (1996), 140.

centuries than the secondary sources on which Ariès relied¹¹⁴⁷. Regarding the treatment of children, she concludes that there have been very few changes in parental care and child life from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century in the home, apart from social changes and technological improvements. Parent to child relationships were not formal. Children were desired. Developmental stages aroused interest and concern¹¹⁴⁸. Parents revealed anxiety and distress over the illness and death of a child¹¹⁴⁹. Within limits¹¹⁵⁰ child-rearing techniques differed. Pollock notes that beginning in the eighteenth century there is greater parental concern for training children for model citizenship than in the previous century. In addition, she sees an intensification of adult demands for obedience and conformity, especially in schools in the early nineteenth century. In contrast, Pollock's study of late nineteenth century reveals a lessening of parental control regarding marriage and a reduction in parent offspring conflict¹¹⁵¹. Methods of discipline varied more per parent and child than according to time period¹¹⁵². Evidence also suggests there is no correlation between belief in original sin and physical punishment¹¹⁵³. The majority of children were not subjected to brutality¹¹⁵⁴.

3.8.7. *Cunningham's synthesis*

Social historian, Hugh Cunningham claims to present a synthesis between Ariès and Pollock¹¹⁵⁵. Ariès paid little attention to the nineteenth century, and Pollock stopped short of the twentieth century, but according to Cunningham it is in the twentieth century that there has been most rapid change in conceptualization and experience of childhood. Yet there has been a long

¹¹⁴⁷ They reveal a greater amount of concern and interest felt by parents, large amount of individual variation. In general children were not ignored, or unwanted. Parents were aware of the individuality of their children. Pollock: "Of particular interest is the amount of paternal concern for children in earlier centuries, even infants," Pollock (1996), 260-261.

¹¹⁴⁸ Pollock (1996), 268.

¹¹⁴⁹ Pollock registers no change in parental reaction to illness or death. Through the centuries, older children more deeply mourned than young infants. Large amount of parents from 16th to 19th century who were unable to reconcile their emotion at the death of a child. Pollock (1996), 141f., 268.

¹¹⁵⁰ The limits of the dependency of the child and the acceptance of the responsibility for the protection and socialization of that child by the parents. Pollock (1996), 271.

¹¹⁵¹ Pollock (1996), 269.

¹¹⁵² With the possible exception of early 19th century, Pollock (1996), 199.

¹¹⁵³ Pollock (1996), 199.

¹¹⁵⁴ Pollock notices diaries do not present a picture of repression or severe discipline and that child diarists noted even less punishment than the adult diarists. Autobiographies as a genre describe stricter discipline and greater parental authority, but only a small minority contains evidence on strict discipline and only 4 out of a sample of 121 autobiographies studied by Pollock describe actual cruelty. Pollock (1996), 263-268. Pollock also explains how for example the term "whipping" was used for a wide range of physical punishment, regardless of whether an implement was actually used. Pollock (1996), 200. This explanation is challenged by Bakker (2010), 102, referring to Dekker (1995), 135.

¹¹⁵⁵ As does the Dutch Dekker (2006). Cunningham (2005), 3f.

lead-in to this. He argues that “in the long view (...) continuity is the key to medieval and sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the crucial imprint being made by Christianity”, “the beginning of a secular view of children and childhood in the eighteenth century marks the onset of a period of significant change both in conceptualization of childhood and in treatment of children”¹¹⁵⁶ and “the popularity of the ideas of Locke and Rousseau, and later of the Romantic poets, indicates the beginning of a period when children began to cease to be seen as the embodiment of souls in need of salvation, and became instead either like the young of domestic pet in need of habit training or like a seed which should be allowed to grow naturally.”¹¹⁵⁷

At this point, it is helpful to move beyond the different theories on the concepts of childhood and provide examples of the place of children in society and church.

3.8.8. Participation in society

3.8.8.1. Children and literature

Children’s literature, in the modern sense, began to appear in the eighteenth century. In England John Newbery¹¹⁵⁸ is often credited for publishing the first children’s book with *Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, including the story *Jack the Giant Killer*¹¹⁵⁹. Hieronymus van Alphen¹¹⁶⁰ is often credited as the Netherlands’s first children’s author with his children’s poems *Proeve van kleine gedigten voor kinderen*, published in 1778¹¹⁶¹. That same year, Pieter ‘t Hoen¹¹⁶² published *Nieuwe proeve van klyne gedichten voor kinderen*¹¹⁶³. The Dutch writer Betje Wolff¹¹⁶⁴ claimed in 1779, “Our century can be distinguished from all prior centuries in one regard, this is the century in

¹¹⁵⁶ Compare Heijboer who notices that until the 19th century the child was raised in a religious tradition. Though opinions about religious doctrines may have been diverse, there was no fundamental doubt about faith as value itself. Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 45.

¹¹⁵⁷ Cunningham (2005), 202.

¹¹⁵⁸ John Newbery (1713-1767).

¹¹⁵⁹ Postman (1994), 43. Newbery’s most popular story is *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, published in 1765. Rudolf Boon, “Child and Church, Communion and Culture,” in *Omnes Circumstantes: Contributions toward a history of the role of the people in the liturgy; Presented to Herman Wegman*, ed. Charles Caspers and Marc Schneiders (Kampen: Kok, 1990), 231.

¹¹⁶⁰ Hieronymus van Alphen (1746-1803).

¹¹⁶¹ Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 9.

¹¹⁶² Pieter ‘t Hoen pseudonym for J.A. Schasz (1744-1828). *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland*, s.v. *Hoën, Pieter ‘t*.

¹¹⁶³ Boon (1990), 231.

¹¹⁶⁴ Betje Wolff (1738-1804) co-authored books with Aagje Deken (1741-1804).

which one writes for children.”¹¹⁶⁵ It should be noted that eighteenth century children’s stories and poetry books were preceded by books for children on etiquette, children’s catechisms, children’s Bibles, and Puritan and pietistic children’s books on holy and exemplary lives¹¹⁶⁶. In the nineteenth century the amount of children’s literature would further increase¹¹⁶⁷. In the mid-nineteenth century, Van Alphen and Wolff were criticized for their eighteenth century view on children¹¹⁶⁸. This is indicative of the changing perspectives of children at this time.

3.8.8.2. Children and education

In essence Ariès had defended two theses¹¹⁶⁹. Most criticism as mentioned above was directed toward the first thesis¹¹⁷⁰; the second thesis received more support¹¹⁷¹. This second thesis suggested that when school started to replace apprenticeship, and when the idea developed that schooling was for children only, children were segregated from adult life and adult labor by a sort of quarantine¹¹⁷². Cunningham argues that *the introduction of compulsory schooling, normally in the late nineteenth century, did more than any other factor in these (last) five centuries to transform the experience and meanings attached to childhood by removing children, in principle, if not immediately in fact, from the labour market, now reserved for those who were no longer children*¹¹⁷³.

The importance of education had already been stressed in the Greek tradition. This can be seen in Plato’s *Republic* as well as in the Jewish tradition. The

¹¹⁶⁵ “Onze eeuw is in een opzicht zeer wel van alle voorgaande te onderscheiden: dit is de eeuw, waarin men naamentlyk voor kinderen schryft,” Willem van der Meiden, *‘Zoo heerlijk eenvoudig’: Geschiedenis van de kinderbijbel in Nederland* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), 38.

¹¹⁶⁶ Bakker (2010), 181. On children’s books on holy and exemplary lives, see Groenendijk and Lieburg (1991).

¹¹⁶⁷ An overview of children’s literature in the 19th century is offered in P.J. Buijnsters and Leontine Buijnsters-Smets. *Lust en leering: Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Kinderboek in de negentiende eeuw* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2001).

¹¹⁶⁸ Van Alphen for example by De Génestet in 1849, Wolff by A. de Vletter in 1915. Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 10,16.

¹¹⁶⁹ Willem Koops speaks of the discontinuity hypothesis and the change hypothesis. Willem Koops, “Het kind als spiegel van de beschaving,” in *Het kind als spiegel van de beschaving: Een moderne antropologie van het kind*, Willem Koops, Bas Levering and Micha de Winter ed. (Amsterdam: SWP, 2007),16.

¹¹⁷⁰ In which Ariès spoke on children in traditional societies, Ariès (1973), 7.

¹¹⁷¹ See his foreword to the 1973 edition, Ariès (1973), 5.

¹¹⁷² Ariès (1973), 7f. Cunningham (2005), 5f. Compare Heijboer-Barbas who notices the examples of highly educated young people in earlier centuries with responsibilities in society similar to adults. She suggests because youth was not perceived as a value, a significant period in and by itself, early intellectual development was not shunned. Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 19.

¹¹⁷³ Cunningham (2005), 15.

Paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed Tradition

Reformers¹¹⁷⁴ and the churches of the Reformation¹¹⁷⁵ also stimulated education of the people. Philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau gave another impetus to the importance of education¹¹⁷⁶. Education became compulsory for children of noblemen and freeholders as early as 1496¹¹⁷⁷. Half a century later, in 1559, education became compulsory for all boys¹¹⁷⁸. Under the influence of the Reformation, the German Duchy Pfalz-Zweibrücken became the first territory with compulsory education for boys and girls in 1592. The United States of America introduced compulsory education between 1852¹¹⁷⁹ and 1918¹¹⁸⁰. England and France were relatively late in doing so. England made school attendance compulsory in 1880¹¹⁸¹, France in 1882¹¹⁸².

In the Netherlands, public schools were Reformed in nature¹¹⁸³ until the French occupation¹¹⁸⁴ of 1795, followed by further changes in school laws in the years 1801-1803-1806¹¹⁸⁵. Even before the first constitution the decision had been taken to separate church and state with direct consequences for the

¹¹⁷⁴ See Luther's 1524 *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools* (*An die Retherren aller Städte deutsches Lands, daß sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen*) and his 1530 *A Sermon on Keeping Children in School* (*Eine Predigt, daß man Kinder zur Schulen halten solle*), Luther's Works: The Christian in Society II and III, Vol. 45 and 46. School reforms were not initiated, but supported and transformed by Calvin. Pitkin (2001), 180f.

¹¹⁷⁵ E.g. Art. 21 of the Dordt Church Order (1618-1619) reads: "De kerkenraden sullen alomme toesien, datter goede schoolmeesters zyn, die niet alleen de kinderen leeren leesen, schrijven, spraken, ende vrije konsten, maar ook deselve in der Godsaligheyd en in den Catechismo onderwysen," (Everywhere, church councils will see to it that there are good schoolteachers, who will not only teach the children to read, write, speak and the free arts, but also educate them in godliness and the catechism. My translation). Gerrit Schutte, "De school van de ouders: De schoolstrijd op hoofdlijnen," in *De school met de bijbel: Christelijk onderwijs in de negentiende eeuw*, ed. George Harinck and Gerrit Schutte (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2006), 8. Contra J.M.G. Leune who suggests that the conviction that human is inclined toward all evil (H.C. Q8) made all education and upbringing relatively meaningless (also neglecting H.C. A8: "Yes, unless we are born again by the Spirit of God"). J.M.G. Leune, "Onderwijs en maatschappelijke verandering. Een terugblik op 200 jaar onderwijs en onderwijsbeleid in Nederland," in *Tweehonderd jaar onderwijs en de zorg van de Staat: Jaarboek voor de geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs 2002*, ed. P.Th.F.M. Boekholt et al. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2002), 14.

¹¹⁷⁶ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education, and Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, ed. Ruth W. Grant and Nathan Tarcov, (resp. 1693, 1709; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996). Regarding the impetus see for example J.M.G. Leune (2002), 14.

¹¹⁷⁷ E.g. the Education Act of 1496 in Scotland. Source Wikipedia.

¹¹⁷⁸ E.g. the South German Duchy Wuerttemberg. Source Wikipedia.

¹¹⁷⁹ Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Source Wikipedia.

¹¹⁸⁰ Mississippi. Source Wikipedia.

¹¹⁸¹ Elementary Education Act 1880. Source Wikipedia.

¹¹⁸² <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leerplicht>.

¹¹⁸³ Teaching for example the Heidelberg Catechism and singing Psalms according to the Reformed hymnal. Schutte (2006), 8.

¹¹⁸⁴ Frans-Bataafse omwenteling.

¹¹⁸⁵ Schutte (2006), 11.

influence of the dominant church on education¹¹⁸⁶. The school law of 1801 marked the beginning of the connection between the state and education¹¹⁸⁷. Only with the law on education in 1900 does schooling become compulsory for children from ages six to twelve in the Netherlands¹¹⁸⁸. An indication that school attendance had dramatically increased before it became compulsory is the percentage of brides and grooms able to sign the marriage certificate. In 1625 49% of the brides and 70% of the grooms were able to sign in the Netherlands. By 1800 this was respectively 75% and 92%¹¹⁸⁹.

3.8.8.3. Children and labor

Schooling of children and child labor could be seen as communicating vessels: when the schooling became compulsory, child labor was increasingly restricted¹¹⁹⁰. During the intermediate stage of transformation we come across pleas¹¹⁹¹ and initiatives to combine employment and education in factory schools¹¹⁹². Attending schools in the evening¹¹⁹³ or during the winter season was an existing practice to combine both¹¹⁹⁴. Child labor was considered necessary for the survival of poor families¹¹⁹⁵, and for that reason, it was encouraged¹¹⁹⁶. Child labor has been called an excess of the nineteenth century¹¹⁹⁷. In the Netherlands it increased until its decline in the last decades of that century¹¹⁹⁸. Since 1813 working in mines was only forbidden for children under ten in the Netherlands¹¹⁹⁹. The *Factory Act* of 1833 forbade children under the age of nine to work in factories and restricted the number of hours worked by children under the age of thirteen in England¹²⁰⁰. Around

¹¹⁸⁶ P.Th.F.M. Boekholt, "De onderwijswet van 1801 en het begin van de Staatszorg voor het onderwijs in Nederland," in Boekholt et al. (2002), 6.

¹¹⁸⁷ Boekholt (2002), 3.

¹¹⁸⁸ Van der Meiden (2009), 88.

¹¹⁸⁹ Bakker (2010), 512.

¹¹⁹⁰ Cp. Cunningham (2005), 15

¹¹⁹¹ For example in 1861 in the Netherlands, Vleggeert, J.C. *Kinderarbeid in de negentiende eeuw* (Bussum: Fibula – Van Dishoeck, 1967), 49.

¹¹⁹² First in for example Prussia, Lutterbach (2010), 74f., later also in the Netherlands, for example in 1868 in Enschede, Bakker (2010), 238.

¹¹⁹³ Providing minimal education. G.B. Lalleman (1855) e.g. 160 hours per year in evening schooling instead of the 1400 of day schooling, Vleggeert (1967), 34.

¹¹⁹⁴ Attendance in winter could double, Vleggeert (1967), 48. Compare Bakker (2010), 230.

¹¹⁹⁵ Bakker (2010), 231.

¹¹⁹⁶ Bakker (2010), 229.

¹¹⁹⁷ Vleggeert (1967), 90.

¹¹⁹⁸ Vleggeert (1967), 21. Bakker (2010), 202.

¹¹⁹⁹ Under French influence, Vleggeert (1967), 7. J.C. Vleggeert, *Kinderarbeid in Nederland 1500-1874: Van berusting tot beperking* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1964), 21.

¹²⁰⁰ Bakker (2010), 233.

1840, Prussia¹²⁰¹ and France introduced similar laws¹²⁰². In the thirties of the nineteenth century first protests were heard in the Netherlands¹²⁰³. In 1855 a schoolmaster by the name of Gerrit Lalleman wrote the first Dutch charge against child labor¹²⁰⁴. Only by 1874 would the Netherlands forbid child labor by law¹²⁰⁵, followed by more effective law in 1889¹²⁰⁶. Field work was not part of the legal restriction¹²⁰⁷. The church had mostly refrained from action against child labor¹²⁰⁸. There were several exceptions: Roman Catholic clergy protested against children working in factories before their first Communion¹²⁰⁹; Roman Catholic factory owners forbade child labor before first Communion¹²¹⁰; and the romantic and orthodox Reformed movement of the Réveil spoke out against child labor¹²¹¹. Ellen Key suggests that *it was not until the nineteenth century that the question of the rights of the child in this respect began to be noticed*¹²¹².

3.8.9. Participation in church

3.8.9.1. Children and traditions

Just as in the Middle Ages, children and adults in the Modern Age participated equally in the great seasonal and traditional festivals of the church in which children often played a part reserved for them by tradition¹²¹³. On Twelfth Night, one of the greatest festivals of the year, according to tradition it was a

¹²⁰¹ As Prussian and Hannoverian children were forbidden to work, Dutch children took their places.

Vleggeert (1967), 24, 47

¹²⁰² Bakker (2010), 233.

¹²⁰³ Vleggeert (1967), 12f.

¹²⁰⁴ G.B. Lalleman, "Slavernij in Nederland," *De Economist* (1855), included in Vleggeert (1967), 30-42.

Compare J.J. Cremer in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* of March 11, 1863, "How often are saddened by the fate of Negroes and Javanese. Let us not forget that in our own factory cities, day in day out, children of our people are literally murdered ..., "drops of blood stick to your and my clothing...", (my translation), quoted in Vleggeert (1967), 56f.

¹²⁰⁵ The so-called "Kinderwetje van Van Houten." Note that Abraham Kuiper voted against, as he desired more radical laws, Vleggeert (1967), 86, 88f.

¹²⁰⁶ Bakker (2010), 230.

¹²⁰⁷ Bakker (2010), 230.

¹²⁰⁸ Among others as classes were accepted as God's providence, happiness was not considered a right, labour was considered a blessing, and government interference with God given parental responsibility not desirable, Vleggeert (1967), 62.

¹²⁰⁹ "The devil ruled" in these mainly protestant factories. After their first Communion children were considered spiritual mature enough to resist these influences, Vleggeert (1967), 9. See also Vleggeert (1964), 33f.

¹²¹⁰ E.g. Petrus Regout in Maastricht in 1870, Vleggeert (1967), 73, who followed the example of factory owners in Tilburg, Bakker (2010), 239.

¹²¹¹ Which for example spoke of *the Moloch of the factories*, Vleggeert (1967), 68f.

¹²¹² Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909), 4 (in my unnumbered copy).

¹²¹³ Ariès (1996), 70f.

child who served the Twelfth-cake and it was a child who carried the candle of the kings¹²¹⁴. On Christmas Eve the youngest child played an essential role in lighting the Yule log, a ritual including intoning the sign of the cross¹²¹⁵. In other festivals, such as Holy Innocents and Shrove Tuesday, the youth were given monopoly of the active roles¹²¹⁶. In Reformed circles schoolchildren would learn those parts of the Heidelberg Catechism which would be preached the following Sunday, and were sometimes allowed to recite during the service¹²¹⁷.

3.8.9.2. Children, Psalms and hymns

Children would also practice the Psalms which would be sung the following Sunday¹²¹⁸. In addition to the Psalms which children sang, hymns specifically composed for children became a common part in several Protestant traditions. In 1715 Isaac Watts *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* was published¹²¹⁹. When John Wesley¹²²⁰ visited the Moravian Brethren at Herrnhut in 1738 he recorded in an abstract of their 1733 constitution "Our little children we instruct chiefly by hymns; whereby we find the most important truths most successfully insinuated into their minds."¹²²¹ It inspired both John and Charles Wesley to collect and compose hymns for children, which in 1763 resulted in the publication of John Wesley's own *Hymns for Children*. The first thirty hymns closely followed the outline of the 1745 catechism *Instruction for Children*¹²²². With the words of Hymn VI children would sing about the means of grace, prayer, fasting, God's Word, the Supper of the Lord, and the daily feeding on Jesus body by the saints of ancient days, singing as (if) participating and bidding never to be removed from these "channels of Thy love."¹²²³

¹²¹⁴ Ariès (1996), 71-72.

¹²¹⁵ Ariès (1996), 73.

¹²¹⁶ Ariès (1996), 73f.

¹²¹⁷ Bakker (2010), 522, 543.

¹²¹⁸ Bakker (2010), 523.

¹²¹⁹ Also published as *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*, with hymns such as *The Advantages of early Religion*, *The danger of Delay*, and *Examples of early Piety*.

¹²²⁰ John Wesley (1703-1791).

¹²²¹ John Wesley, *Journal*, August 11-14, 1738.

http://archive.org/stream/a613690402wesluoft/a613690402wesluoft_djvu.txt (accessed November 30, 2015).

¹²²² John Wesley, *Hymns for Children*, 1763.

http://divinityarchive.com/bitstream/handle/11258/501/65_Hymns_for_Children_%281763%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed November 30, 2015).

¹²²³ See also Richard P. Heitzenrater, "John Wesley and Children," in Bunge (2001), 279-299.

3.8.9.3. Children's sermons

A specific phenomenon in the history of children and childhood is the children's sermon. Cornelis Houtman traced 325 published Dutch children's sermons, the earliest dating from 1792 and the latest from 1916¹²²⁴. Those children's sermons were preached in worship services, at Sunday schools, and later in special church services of the Dutch *kinderkerk*, but they were also intended to be read individually at home or shared during family worship¹²²⁵. Considering that some of these sermons were translated from English¹²²⁶ and some were translated into French¹²²⁷, the children's sermon must have been a more widespread phenomenon. L. Edward Phillips explains how the brief children's message preached by many American pastors during Sunday morning services since the 1880s originated with the Sunday schools' monthly "concerts"¹²²⁸. Mary Jacobs, referring to Phillips's explanation, distinguishes these children's messages from those that occur under the influence of Vatican II since the 1970's¹²²⁹.

¹²²⁴ C. Houtman, *Kinderkerk en kinderpreek: Geloofsopvoeding in het negentiende-eeuwse protestantse Nederland* (Heerenveen: Groen, 2013), 62, 74. Considering that a second edition of a children's sermon of Masman was published in 1793, it is not impossible that even some earlier published copies of Dutch children's sermons can be found. We already mentioned earlier examples of youth sermons by Fruytier in 1724 and translated sermons by Jennings and Doddridge, and earlier examples of children's sermons by Jonathan Edwards preached between 1739 and 1742. Brekus refers to *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-42, volume 22 of The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Harry S. Stout and Nathan O. Hatch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), Brekus (2001), 313. (I would like to express my great appreciation to Gert André for lending me his original copy of Gerhardus Masman, *Kinder-preek over Lucas II. Vs. 51,52: Jesus Is het beste kind, tot een voorbeeld voor alle kinderen, etc.* 2nd ed.(Utrecht: G.T. Paddenburg, 1793), and providing me with a copy of Gerhardus Masman, *Zestal Kinderpreeken, etc.* (Utrecht: G.T. Paddenburg, 1801)). The first children's sermon in, for example, the *Kinderkerk* of Haarlem was preached by Pastor W. Mobachius Quadt on November 7, 1779. Noord Hollands Archief inventory no. 736 Memorie uit 1778 van de bestuurders van de Nederlandse Hervormde Gemeente aan burgemeesters en regeerders van Haarlem, waarin de bestuurders van de Nederlandse Hervormde Gemeente te kennen geven een Kinderkerk te willen oprichten, met resolutie van burgemeesters en regeerders van Haarlem tot de instelling van de Kinderkerk, 1779. Afschrift, 1929 (accessed October 16, 2015). I also know that the *Kinderkerk* continued after 1916, but apparently publication of the children's sermons came to an end.

¹²²⁵ Houtman (2013), 68.

¹²²⁶ Such as the *Short Sermons to Children by Three Cousins*. Houtman (2013), 85.

¹²²⁷ Houtman mentions Johannes van Bemmelen his translation of Masman's sermons in French, published as *Six sermons pour les enfants* in 1801. Gerard Masman, *Six sermons pour les enfants*, translated into French by J. van Bemmelen (Utrecht: Paddenburg, 1801). Houtman (2013), 98. Houtman also mentions Adolphe Monod as French preacher of children's sermons. Houtman (2013), 68.

¹²²⁸ L. Edward Phillips, "Worship as Education: the Sunday School," in *The Character of Christian Worship* (book manuscript in preparation), 91-92.

¹²²⁹ Mary Jacobs, "Kids' stuff: The tricky art of the children's sermon," *The United Methodist Reporter*, September 21, 2012.

3.8.9.4. Children and special church services

The Dutch *kinderkerk* or children's church, a relatively marginal¹²³⁰ and mostly urban phenomenon of church services targeted at children or youth. It originated in the revival of the last decades of the eighteenth century and faded away in the first half of the twentieth century¹²³¹. This provides an example of children participating to a higher degree in church, but at the same time indicates that regular church services were experienced as unfit for children¹²³².

3.8.9.5. Children and Sunday school

Though most childhood experiences may have remained the same, as Pollock concludes, the amount of religious education changed over time¹²³³. Sunday school would become important in providing such religious education. Robert Raikes¹²³⁴ is credited with starting the modern Sunday school movement in Gloucester, in 1780¹²³⁵, although there are rival claims regarding the origin of Sunday school¹²³⁶. Sunday school provided general education, soon within the context of Christian teaching, distinguished from catechetical teaching methods by its direct study of the Bible, and though originally more philanthropic than missionary in nature, it certainly contributed to faith formation¹²³⁷. Interestingly, it would become a phenomenon that for approximately a century and a half would keep Protestant youth in the English-speaking world and on the European continent away from full participation in the church services¹²³⁸. Young children were taught, and

¹²³⁰ Though some of these *Kinderkerken* had hundreds of children in their attendance, C.W. Coolsma, *Een Kinderkerk*, Bibliotheek voor Bijbelsche opvoedkunde 15, no. 4 (Hoenderloo: Stichting Hoenderloo, 1931), 5f.

¹²³¹ Houtman (2013).

¹²³² Houtman (2013), 260. The Dutch pedagogue Jan Ligthart (1859-1916) provides an interesting autobiographical perspective on "Kinderkerk en zondagschool," in *Jeugdherinneringen*, 5th ed. (Groningen: Wolters, 1916), 142-155.

¹²³³ Pollock (1996), 260.

¹²³⁴ Robert Raikes (1735-1811).

¹²³⁵ Elmer L. Towns, "Robert Raikes: A Comparison with Earlier Claims to Sunday School Origins," *Evangelical Quarterly* (April/June, 1971): 68-81.

¹²³⁶ E.g. Joseph Alleine, in Bath, between 1665-1668, John Brown, in Priesthill, Scotland, in 1680, John Wesley, in Savannah, Georgia, in 1737; brother Obed, in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in 1739; Dr. Joseph Bellamy, in Bethlehem, Connecticut, in 1740; Mrs. James Greeming, in Philadelphia, in 1744, Hannah Bell, in Wycombe, England, 1979. Towns (1971), 68-70. Tazelaar also mentions two examples of Roman Catholic Sunday schools, *avant la lettre*, founded by Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), archbishop of Milan, after 1565, and by Jean Baptiste de la Salle (1651-1719). J.P. Tazelaar, *Gedenkboek: Feestuitgave ter gelegenheid van het 40-jarig bestaan der gereformeerde zondagschool-vereeniging "Jachin"* (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1911), 3.

¹²³⁷ Towns (1971), 70f. Tazelaar (1911), 6,7,12. Jacques Dane, "Het onderwijs op de zondagschool – een vrucht van de 'lange' negentiende eeuw," in *De school met de bijbel: Christelijk onderwijs in de negentiende eeuw*, volume 14 of *Jaarboek voor de geschiedenis van het Nederland protestantisme na 1800*, ed. George Harinck and Gerrit Schutte, 55-72 (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2006).

¹²³⁸ Boon (1990), 231-232.

advanced pupils participated as monitors or teachers of the younger students¹²³⁹. The British Sunday School Union was founded in 1803¹²⁴⁰. The first Dutch Sunday school, new style, was founded in 1803 in Rotterdam¹²⁴¹, although Dr. Abraham Capadose¹²⁴² is credited as founder of the Dutch Sunday school *movement* having started a Sunday school in The Hague in 1836¹²⁴³. He subsequently founded the Dutch Sunday School Union in 1865¹²⁴⁴.

3.8.9.6. Children's Bibles

Whether or not the printing press gave birth to childhood, as Postman suggests¹²⁴⁵, can be debated. It certainly did not take long for the first children's Bibles to appear. Some consider Luther's *Passional* from 1529, containing illustrations and specifically targeting children and the simple, to be the first example¹²⁴⁶. If a children's Bible is defined as a book in which a large part of the Bible is put into words accessible to children and youth, then the first Dutch children's Bible originates from 1703. When a broader definition is used, one could consider *De Historie, ende leere des Bybels* by Pagit and Van Breen from 1640 as the first Dutch children's Bible¹²⁴⁷. The *Children's Bible* from 1763¹²⁴⁸ is the first one published in America. In the Netherlands the early children's Bibles were predominantly used at school and in catechism classes. It is only after the French epoch ending in 1813 and the new law on education of 1806 that the emphasis shifts toward use within families¹²⁴⁹. Opinions on how much revelation children can handle varies. In 1745 children's Bibles reveal openness toward sexuality; half a century later sexuality and death are increasingly kept away from children, as indicated earlier¹²⁵⁰. Around 1800 the plea not to give young children access to the Bible

¹²³⁹ Towns (1971), 77f. Examples of the practice of more advanced students helping the less advanced can also be found in regular education in for example 1591, 1806, and would become a method of training future teachers, Bakker (2010), 517, 551, 553f.

¹²⁴⁰ Tazelaar (1911), 8.

¹²⁴¹ Van der Meiden (2009), 90.

¹²⁴² Abraham Capadose (1795-1874).

¹²⁴³ Tazelaar (1911), 15f.

¹²⁴⁴ Van der Meiden (2009), 90.

¹²⁴⁵ "And then, without anyone's suspecting it, a goldsmith from Mainz, Germany, with the aid of an old winepress, gave birth to childhood," Postman (1994), 19.

¹²⁴⁶ Van der Meiden (2009), 21.

¹²⁴⁷ Van der Meiden (2009), 49, 67. Though later Van der Meiden mentions the Dutch translation of Heszi' Children's Bible of 1778 the first real Children's Bible. Van der Meiden (2009), 83.

¹²⁴⁸ Printed in Philadelphia, earlier printed in London in 1759.

¹²⁴⁹ Van der Meiden (2009), 44.

¹²⁵⁰ Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 24f.

is repeatedly heard. Children were not considered ripe enough to comprehend religion as revealed in scripture¹²⁵¹.

3.8.10. Immigrants and changes at the end of this era

The second half of the twentieth century saw the largest migration of the Dutch to North America¹²⁵². Krabbendam writes that the Dutch immigrants encountered a culture in which the modernization of the family had already started around 1830. This modernization was characterized in part by greater equality between husbands, wives and children and allowed children more freedom and more significant input in families¹²⁵³. The influence of American culture on the Dutch immigrants is noticeable; daughters of the second generation for example were more independent than those of the first generation¹²⁵⁴.

3.8.11. Animals and changes at the end of this era

I also note another significant development in the last quarter of the nineteenth century or more precisely in the Victorian Era¹²⁵⁵. Adults had embraced the idea that the defenseless should be protected. Interestingly, Sealander notes that it was defenseless *animals* that first caught their attention¹²⁵⁶. In that same period the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* supported the Romanticist view concerning the ties between humans and animals. Darwinism supported others in their less romantic acknowledgement that the weak shall perish when the fittest survive¹²⁵⁷. The launch of the national, American, and international child protective movement illustrates that a connection was made between protection of animals and protection of children. In 1873 a church worker sought help from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to stop the brutal treatment of a twelve year old by her foster parents. As a result of this Mary Ellen Wilson case, many other cases involving abuse and neglect of children were brought to the attention of the SPCA. The sheer amount forced the SPCA

¹²⁵¹ Heijboer-Barbas (1956), 37-38.

¹²⁵² Hans Krabbendam, *Vrijheid in verschiet: Nederlandse emigratie naar Amerika 1840-1940* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006), 13.

¹²⁵³ Krabbendam (2006), 149, 150.

¹²⁵⁴ Krabbendam (2006), 155.

¹²⁵⁵ 1837-1901.

¹²⁵⁶ Judith Sealander, *The Failed Century of the Child: Governing America's Young in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 55.

¹²⁵⁷ Sealander (2003), 55.

to found a sister organization in 1875, the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children¹²⁵⁸.

3.8.12. *The place of children at the table*

I want to close with a remark by Ariès on the place of children at the table. He argues that the child played an essential role at moments of social significance such as the family meal. "It was traditional for grace to be said by one of the youngest children and for the meal to be served by all the children present: they poured out the drinks, changed the dishes, carved the meat."¹²⁵⁹ Rudolf Dekker seems to suggest that the presence of children at the table was common for the bourgeois and lower classes, but not for the aristocracy¹²⁶⁰.

3.9. *Twentieth Century*

3.9.1. *The century of the child*

In her book *The Century of the Child*, Ellen Key¹²⁶¹ quotes a character from *The Lion's Whelp* in reference to the twentieth century saying, "The next century will be the century of the child, just as this century has been the woman's century. When the child gets his rights, morality will be perfected."¹²⁶² The title of Key's book, *The Century of the Child*, more than the actual book itself, became a vision statement that inspired reformers for most of the first half of the twentieth century¹²⁶³. However, Ellen Key's prediction that children's welfare would be central to any definition of twentieth century progress did not come true¹²⁶⁴.

¹²⁵⁸ <http://www.msppcc.org/about/history/msppcc-and-child-welfare-milestones/> (accessed August 31, 2015).

See also Sealander (2003), 75.

¹²⁵⁹ Ariès (1996), 73.

¹²⁶⁰ Dekker (1995), 43f.

¹²⁶¹ Ellen Key (1849-1926).

¹²⁶² Ellen (1909), English translation of *Barnets Århundrade* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers, 1900). A.L. van Hulzen, school principal, wrote: "The nineteenth century has been called the century of the child and the twentieth century the century of the woman." "Our (twentieth) century may claim the title of century of the child as well, as much as her predecessor," (my translation), A.L. Van Hulzen, *Bijbel en Kind* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1929), 7, 11.

¹²⁶³ Cunningham (2005), 172.

¹²⁶⁴ Sealander (2003), 1.

3.9.2. Concepts and theologies

A search for the discovery of the true nature of childhood¹²⁶⁵ resulted in increasing expertise on children, their minds, instincts, and delinquency¹²⁶⁶. The same search also resulted in greatly expanded services for children¹²⁶⁷ and in an increased volume of advice regarding the nature of childhood¹²⁶⁸. Trying to present an overview of a century in which not only the volume of advice escalates, but also in which the literature, theories, legislation, and information grow almost exponentially, forces me to paint with broad strokes and to provide only some detail as illustration of this larger picture.

3.9.2.1. The academic study of pedagogy

Nelleke Bakker speaks of an era in which professionalization, pedagogicalization, medicalization, and psychologization of the life of children took place¹²⁶⁹. The turn of the century marks the beginning of the academic study of pedagogy in the Netherlands. Gunning would be the first academic pedagogue at the Utrecht University with his inaugural held symbolically in the year 1900¹²⁷⁰, more than a century after Germany's first academic pedagogue¹²⁷¹. In 1918 Casimir became the first Dutch professor in pedagogics¹²⁷², a field of research that in North America is integrated into the social sciences¹²⁷³.

The end of the nineteenth century had given birth to a movement of pedagogical renewal, called the New Education Movement¹²⁷⁴. According to some rivaled a Copernican revolution, as it adapted education to children and not children to education¹²⁷⁵. Within the New Education Movement, two groups of pedagogues can be distinguished: the first group emphasized the individuality of the child and was exemplified by educators like Maria

¹²⁶⁵ E.g. Congress of the United States stressed the need to *get scientific data, and at actual facts, as well as the results of the best scientific treatments with regard to children*, in a 1909 report. Cunningham (2005), 172.

¹²⁶⁶ Cunningham (2005), 176-178.

¹²⁶⁷ Bakker (2010), 264.

¹²⁶⁸ Cunningham (2005), 183

¹²⁶⁹ Bakker (2010), 264f.

¹²⁷⁰ Johannes Hermanus Gunning Wzn. (1859-1951). Bakker (2010), 299. Jan Lenders, "Boekbesprekingen: Ivo van Holvoorde, *Grenswachters van de pedagogiek. Demarcatie en disciplinevorming in de ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse academische pedagogiek (1900-1970)*. Etc.," *Pedagogiek* 2 (2004): 191-201.

¹²⁷¹ Trapp in 1779, Ploeger (1993), 24.

¹²⁷² Rommert Casimir (1877-1957). Philipp Abraham Kohnstamm (1875-1951) would be the most influential in the Netherlands. Bakker (2010), 86. Jan Waterink (1890-1966). J.C. Sturm, ed., *Leven en werk van prof. dr. Jan Waterink: Een Nederlandse pedagoog, psycholoog en theoloog (1890-1966)* (Kampen: Kok, 1991).

¹²⁷³ Ploeger (1993), 25.

¹²⁷⁴ *Reformpedagogiek* in Dutch.

¹²⁷⁵ Bakker (2010), 73.

Montessori¹²⁷⁶; the second group emphasized the social dimension of nurture¹²⁷⁷ and was typified by educators such as John Dewey and the Dutch Jan Ligthart¹²⁷⁸. The pragmatist John Dewey showed how children learn by doing and practicing in direct contact with real life¹²⁷⁹. Pedagogues of the New Education Movement were critical of the more clinical child-studies that had advanced since 1890¹²⁸⁰.

In the twentieth century, three major schools of pedagogy can be distinguished in the Netherlands: *geesteswetenschappelijke* pedagogy with Martinus J. Langeveld as its representative, the empiric-analytical pedagogy, and critical pedagogy¹²⁸¹. Langeveld saw the child as an *'animal educandum'*, as a social individual, and as a moral being, that needed to be raised to become a person¹²⁸². In his book on children and religion Langeveld encourages giving children *waiting room* to make their own choices and decisions¹²⁸³.

In Dutch neo-Calvinism the pedagogical works of the well-known theologian Herman Bavinck are important¹²⁸⁴. Bavinck marks the end of an age in which it was considered natural for theologians to speak on pedagogy. Bavinck did not consider this an independent field of research¹²⁸⁵. Jan Waterink, the first Free University professor in pedagogy, was probably most influential in the Dutch neo-Calvinist circles¹²⁸⁶. The typical starting point for neo-Calvinist pedagogues was the child's identity as a child of God¹²⁸⁷.

¹²⁷⁶ Maria Montessori (1870-1952).

¹²⁷⁷ Bakker (2010), 75f.

¹²⁷⁸ John Dewey (1859-1952), Jan Ligthart (1859-1916).

¹²⁷⁹ Bakker (2010), 81.

¹²⁸⁰ Bakker (2010), 84.

¹²⁸¹ Ploeger mentions John Dewey's school of thought as a fourth. Albert K. Ploeger, *Inleiding in de godsdienstpedagogiek* (Kampen: Kok, 1993), 27-50.

¹²⁸² Bakker (2010), 89. See also M.J. Langeveld, *Kind en religie*, 2nd ed. (Utrecht: Bijleveld, 1966).

¹²⁸³ "Elke opvoeding die echtheid wil, zal het kind wachtruimte laten om zelf zijn keuzen te doen besluiten te nemen. En zij zal daartoe dan ook gelegenheid willen geven door het niet in een ledige ruimte te plaatsen of op een plaats waar slechts één bazuin klinkt. Zij zal ernaar streven de opvoeding de keus te geven tot het oplopen van echte, eigen levenservaringen. Zij zal daarbij echter onherroepelijk het kind van jongsaf aan bepaalde ervaringen besparen en anderen juist willen aanbieden," Langeveld (1966), 73.

¹²⁸⁴ E.g. Herman Bavinck, *Paedagogische Beginselen* (Kampen: Kok, 1904), Bavinck (1916).

¹²⁸⁵ Herman Bavinck, "Richtingen in de Paedagogiek," in *Verzamelde Opstellen* (Kampen: Kok, 1921), 215-219.

¹²⁸⁶ E.g. J. Waterink, *Aan moeders hand tot Jezus: De godsdienstige opvoeding van den kleuter en van het kind in de eerste schooljaren*. 5th ed. (Wageningen: Zomer Keuning, n.d.).

¹²⁸⁷ Sturm (1991), 10.

3.9.2.2. Youth as group

In my overview, concepts of childhood have largely referred to those held by adults. There is an interesting development since 1900 in which youth present themselves more emphatically as a group¹²⁸⁸. In the first half of the century, youth movements such as the German *Wandervögel* emerge¹²⁸⁹. These movements vary from *red* social-democratic¹²⁹⁰ and communist¹²⁹¹, to *blue* alcohol free¹²⁹², and to *green* nature or outdoor oriented youth movements, notably, Lord Baden-Powell's 1908 Boy Scouts and the corresponding Girl Guides begun by Baden-Powell's sister Agnes in 1910¹²⁹³. Confessional youth organizations had already existed since at least the mid-nineteenth century¹²⁹⁴, but in the 1930s they began to resemble the other youth movements¹²⁹⁵. Attendance was encouraged as it provided a healthy third environment in addition to that of family and school¹²⁹⁶. After the Second World War the significance of most youth movements dwindled with the exception of the scout movement and possibly some confessional youth movements¹²⁹⁷. A new less idealistic¹²⁹⁸ and more skeptical youth¹²⁹⁹ culture emerged, and participation in sports increased¹³⁰⁰.

¹²⁸⁸ Bakker (2010), 358. Jay Mechling on the other hand describes the history of scouting and other formal organizations of youth and children as a history of adults 'moral panics' in response to perceived threats. Jay Mechling, "Children in Scouting," in Fass (2015), 420.

¹²⁸⁹ Bakker (2010), 359.

¹²⁹⁰ E.g. the Dutch A.J.C.

¹²⁹¹ E.g. the Russian Komsomol.

¹²⁹² E.g. the Dutch KGOB.

¹²⁹³ Hermans notes how within the liturgical renewal movement in France after the Second World War an explicit connection was made between the principles of scouting and active participation in liturgy. Hermans refers to G. Morin and F. Picard, *Pour le brevet de liturgie: La liturgie méthode d'éducation active*, - LMD, 1945, no.1, 138-144, no.2, 117-124, no.3, 139-145. Hermans (1987), 235.

¹²⁹⁴ In the Netherlands *Het Nederlands Jongelings Verbond* was instituted in 1853, *De Bond van Jongelingsverenigingen op Gereformeerde Grondslag* in 1888. The English *Young Men's Christian Association* was founded in 1844 and the American YMCA in 1851. The earliest example I came across is the *Verein lediger Brüder* founded in Basel in 1768 by Jakob Friedrich Meyenrock. Bavinck (1916), 44f.

¹²⁹⁵ And for example, such as the *Jonge Wacht en Kruisvaart*, modeled after the scout movement. Bakker (2010), 370-371.

¹²⁹⁶ Bakker (2010), 369. Mechling also speaks of a third culture, a dynamic border culture between adults' formal culture and children's informal culture. Mechling (2015), 419.

¹²⁹⁷ I notice how within the CRC youth organizations were successfully started when others dwindled. The Calvinist Cadet Corps was founded in 1952 and the Calvinettes (later GEMS) was founded in 1958. <http://about.calvinistcadets.org/our-ministry/our-history/> http://www.gemsgc.org/main/our_history.html (accessed March 3, 2015).

¹²⁹⁸ Bakker (2010), 358.

¹²⁹⁹ Bakker (2010), 377.

¹³⁰⁰ Bakker (2010), 376.

3.9.2.3. *Changes in the second half*

These particular vicissitudes in youth movements reflect the broader changes in the concepts of childhood and in childhood itself during the second half of the twentieth century. Lutterbach states that the suffering of children in both World Wars provided the momentum to legally secure child protection policies¹³⁰¹. Cunningham also mentions the significance of wars impelling nation states to focus on children as the future, while exposing the same children to life threatening dangers. First World War created chaos, it also led to the founding of the Save the Children Organization in 1919¹³⁰². The Second World War showed how extermination of children could be a matter of state policy¹³⁰³. Bakker speaks of moral panic after the Second World War and notes that a department of government is instituted in the Netherlands to counter the erosion of the family¹³⁰⁴. Cunningham observes that others acknowledge the difficulty of preserving the territory of childhood¹³⁰⁵.

Cunningham registers a twist in the second half of the twentieth century. He states, "The children began to break out of the ghetto of dependency in home and school to which they had been assigned. Acquiring a degree of emotional, economic and legal power in relation to their parents, they were able to become participants in a commercial culture dominated by search for profits."¹³⁰⁶ Though Bakker mentions initiatives to counter the erosion of the family after the Second World War, it is primarily the first half of the century which is characterized by a moral battle against anything which could undermine the Christian family ideal.

3.9.2.4. *Childhood studies as indicator of change*

The publication of major works on the history of childhood initiated by Ariès's 1960 *Centuries of Childhood* and Van den Berg's 1956 *Metabletica*, is an indicator of changing perspectives regarding children. Though books on the history of children might suggest that children are now perceived important enough to be the subject of historical treatises, Neil Postman considers the sudden preoccupation with recording the history of childhood as a sign of the

¹³⁰¹ Lutterbach (2010), 23.

¹³⁰² By Eglantine Jebb (1876-1928) in the United Kingdom. In 1923 she drafted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. Lutterbach (2010), 23.

¹³⁰³ Cunningham states "Only 11 per cent of Jewish children survived the war," "It was a mockery to invoke 'the century of the child' when so many of them were killed as a matter of state policy" and "Jewish children suffered segregation and discrimination even before the war," Cunningham (2005), 186, 187. See also Dick Schumann, "Childhood and Youth in Nazi Germany," in Fass (2015), 451-468.

¹³⁰⁴ Bakker (2010), 282.

¹³⁰⁵ Cunningham (2005), 186.

¹³⁰⁶ Cunningham (2005), 203.

waning of childhood¹³⁰⁷. I note that Neil Postman wrote *The Disappearance of Childhood*¹³⁰⁸ only three decades after Ariès published on the *discovery* of childhood.

3.9.2.5. *Childhood and technology*

Cunningham summarizes Postman's thesis stating, "Childhood rose with one form of communication and fell when print culture was replaced by visual culture."¹³⁰⁹ Postman blames the television for the collapse of the information hierarchy¹³¹⁰. What television started, the internet takes to a new level. Willem Koops speak of a sudden jump in the uncontrollable access to information through mass media¹³¹¹. He suggests that between 1850 and 1950 the child infantilized as the gap between childhood and adulthood increased. Both childhood and adolescence change as this gap decreases. Because of this, early twenty-first century children tend to reach maturity earlier than in previous decades. However, adults infantilize and try to remain childish adolescents as long as possible¹³¹². Cunningham disqualifies such theories on the influence of print culture, television and mass media as technological determinism¹³¹³.

3.9.2.6. *Changes in the last quarter*

According to Bakker, secularization and individualization gave birth to the postmodern family around 1970¹³¹⁴. Janneke Wubs also registers a change around 1970 summarizing it as movement from focus on the family to focus on the child¹³¹⁵. In 1969, the cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead speaks of a change in culture from post-figurative, in which children learn primarily from their forebears, to cofigurative, in which children and adults learn from their peers¹³¹⁶. Bakker notices that yet another change takes place after the 1980s.

¹³⁰⁷ Postman (1994), 5.

¹³⁰⁸ Postman (1994).

¹³⁰⁹ Cunningham (2005), 188.

¹³¹⁰ Postman (1994), 77.

¹³¹¹ Koops (2007), 21.

¹³¹² Koops (2007), 24.

¹³¹³ Cunningham (2005), 188.

¹³¹⁴ The second demographic transition, Bakker (2010), 266, 289.

¹³¹⁵ A change which coincided with North American and English influence replacing the dominant position of German psychology in the Netherlands. Janneke Wubs, *Luisteren naar deskundigen: Opvoedingsadvies aan Nederlandse ouders 1945-1999* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2004). A position challenged by Hugo Röling, "Boekbespreking: Janneke Wubs, etc.," *Pedagogiek* 2 (2005), 141-144.

¹³¹⁶ Margaret Mead, *Culture & Commitment: A Study of the Generation Gap* (London: Bodley Head, 1970), 3.

Until then, youth culture was dominated by boys. This changed with the more visible role of girls in the sub-cultures of punk, new-wave, and disco¹³¹⁷.

3.9.2.7. *Theology of childhood*

It would be tempting to choose Karl Rahner's 1963 essay *Ideas for a Theology of Childhood*¹³¹⁸ as the starting point of the emerging field of theology of childhood, as it almost coincides with Ariès's discovery of childhood¹³¹⁹. Rahner notices the importance of our interpretation of time¹³²⁰. Rahner suggests, "In the last analysis all the stages of life have an equally immediate relationship to God and to the individual's own ultimate perfection", though he also recognizes "that man's life advances towards God precisely through a time-sequence consisting of a series of stages following one upon another."¹³²¹ Rahner defines human childhood as infinite openness¹³²². In the years after Rahner children continued to play a role in theological discussions on baptism and later on the Lord's Supper. With increasing frequency, children became the subject of exegetical, biblical theological¹³²³ and church historical works¹³²⁴. Most works that qualify as theology of childhood were published early in the twenty-first century¹³²⁵.

3.9.3. *Ages and stages*

Along with the concept of stages of life, the twentieth century gave birth to several theories of developmental psychology, which informed the popular views on the development of children. I note that almost all the scientists associated with theories of developmental psychology developed their

¹³¹⁷ Bakker (2010), 359.

¹³¹⁸ Karl Rahner, "Ideas for a Theology of Childhood," in *Theological Investigations: Volume VIII; Further Theology of the Spiritual Life 2*, trans. David Bourke (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 33-50. Originally published as "Gedanken zu einer Theologie der Kindheit," *Geist und Leben* 36 (1963): 104-114.

¹³¹⁹ See also Mary Ann Hinsdale, "'Infinite Openness to the Infinite': Karl Rahner's Contribution to Modern Catholic Thought on the Child," in Bunge (2001), 406-443.

¹³²⁰ Rahner (1977), 34.

¹³²¹ Rahner (1977), 47.

¹³²² Rahner (1977), 48.

¹³²³ E.g. Légasse (1969); Müller (1992); Perdue et al. (1997); Osiek & Balch (1997); Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight: Childhood and Children in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1997); Hess & Carol R. (2003); Bunge (2008).

¹³²⁴ E.g. Groenendijk (1984 & 1991); Cohen (1993); Wood (1994); Strange (2004); Horn & Martens (2009).

¹³²⁵ E.g. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like a Child* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988); Bunge (2001); David H. Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability: A Theology of Childhood* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005); Martin E. Marty, *The Mystery of the Child* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Don S. Browning, *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Berryman (2009); Browning & Bunge (2009). I also note that the *Journal of Childhood and Religion* started in 2010 <http://childhoodandreligion.com/> (accessed December 17, 2015).

theories during the twentieth century¹³²⁶. Theories regarding religious development are developed later in this century. James Fowler's Faith Development Theory, as presented in his book *Stages of Faith* has been the most influential theory¹³²⁷. The faith and stages Fowlers distinguishes are *undifferentiated faith* or *primal faith*, between zero and three years, *intuitive-projective faith* from four to seven, *mythic-literal faith* from seven to eleven, *synthetic-conventional faith* from twelve to eighteen, *individuated-reflective faith*, during the early twenties, thirties or forties, *conjunctive faith* during midlife and beyond, and *universalizing faith*.

3.9.4. Treatment

To what kind of treatment are children entitled in the twentieth century? How do laws and government policies affect their treatment, well-being, health and safety, education, housing and living conditions? How does their present treatment compare to their treatment in past centuries?

3.9.4.1. Children's rights

Regarding the rights of children, Key's hope or prediction came true. She and Kate Douglas Wiggin¹³²⁸ were among the individuals who played an important role in the history that led to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹³²⁹. In 1923, Eglantyne Jebb¹³³⁰ drafted the first *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* which was adopted by the League of Nations as the *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1924¹³³¹. Although it does not grant legal rights, this document appeals to men and women of all nations to acknowledge children's human rights¹³³². This declaration was adopted by the United Nations in 1946¹³³³ and evolved into the 1959 *Declaration of the Rights*

¹³²⁶ Miller mentions for example Jean Piaget (1896-1980), Sigmund S. Freud (1856-1939), Erik H. Erikson (1902-1994), Lev S. Vygotsky (1896-1934), Konrad Z. Lorenz (1903-1989), Nikolaas Tinbergen (1907-1988), Eleanor J. Gibson (1910-2002), Patricia H. Miller, *Theories of Developmental Psychology*, 5th ed. (New York: Worth, 2011).

¹³²⁷ James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper, 1981). In the paedocommunion discussion within the CRC the name of John H. Westerhoff III is mentioned He developed theories of faith development in *Will our Children Have Faith?* (New York: Seabury, 1976) and *Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1980).

¹³²⁸ Kate Douglas Wiggin (1856-1923), educator, writer, pioneer in the American Kindergarten movement, and author of *Children's Rights: A Book of Nursery Logic* (Cambridge: Houghton, 1892).

¹³²⁹ Lutterbach (2010), 21f.

¹³³⁰ Eglantyne Jebb (1876-1928), teacher and founder of *Save the Children*. Lutterbach (2010), 23.

¹³³¹ See <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instreet/childrights.html> (accessed October 10, 2011)

¹³³² Lutterbach (2010), 24f.

¹³³³ Lutterbach (2010), 24.

of the Child¹³³⁴. In 1978 and 1979, the international year of the child, Poland suggested coming to an international legal agreement on the rights of children by way of a convention. This suggestion materialized in the 1989 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*¹³³⁵. The most fundamental right, the child's right to life, is protected in Article 6, but there is no indication within the document whether life starts with conception or birth¹³³⁶. The Children's Convention provides protection, promotes children's well-being, and encourages their participation in community and society¹³³⁷. Several articles use the concept of age- or ability-appropriateness¹³³⁸. International protocols which further protect children and their rights would follow¹³³⁹.

3.9.4.2. Laws and policies

Laws and government policies already affected children before the documents on the rights of the children were adopted. In the Netherlands four laws changed the condition of Dutch children from the start of the twentieth century: regulation of compulsory education¹³⁴⁰, intervention in the case of child neglect¹³⁴¹, promoting hygiene¹³⁴² and addressing housing conditions¹³⁴³. In the Netherlands, the first half of the twentieth century is particularly characterized by improvement of living conditions¹³⁴⁴. In her 2009 historical survey of America's government policy regarding children's welfare, work, education and health, Judith Sealander takes a more critical stand describing "the high aspirations and serious failures of the Century of the Child."¹³⁴⁵

¹³³⁴ Adopted unanimously by all 78 Member States of the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 1386 (XIV) on 20 November 1959. Lutterbach (2010), 26. See

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/child.asp> (accessed January 6, 2014).

¹³³⁵ https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtmsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en (accessed January 6, 2014).

¹³³⁶ See for an in-depth study: Pieter Willem Smits, *The Right to Life of the Unborn Child: In International Documents, Decisions and Opinions* (Bedum: Scholma, 1992).

¹³³⁷ Lutterbach (2010), 28f. The participation in the community is implied by the promotion of such participation by mentally and physically children in Article 23. Participation in specific areas of life such as art and culture is promoted by Article 31.

¹³³⁸ "in accordance with the age and maturity" (Art. 12), "appropriate to the age" (Art. 31), "takes into account the child's age," "taking into account his or her age or situation" (Art. 40).

¹³³⁹ The *Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict* in 2000, and the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, in 2002, see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPACCR.C.aspx> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPSCCR.C.aspx> (accessed January 13, 2014).

¹³⁴⁰ *Wet op Leerplicht* (1900).

¹³⁴¹ *Burgerlijke Kinderwet* (1901).

¹³⁴² *Gezondheidswet* (1901).

¹³⁴³ *Woningwet* (1901).

¹³⁴⁴ Bakker (2010), 266.

¹³⁴⁵ Sealander (2003), 260.

3.9.4.3. Child abuse

Regarding child abuse we have seen that at the end of the nineteenth century prevention from cruelty to animals led to prevention from cruelty to children. By 1910 all states and most large cities in the United States had taken legal measures against cruelty to children and animals¹³⁴⁶. Sealander speaks of “a change in social consciousness” in which the interest in the fate of one unprotected creature helped rouse interest in the protection of other creatures¹³⁴⁷. In the early twentieth century lists of saved children joined those kept for rescued dogs¹³⁴⁸. Between approximately 1925 and 1962 the issue of child abuse was not high on the agenda, at least in North America¹³⁴⁹. But by the 1950s, X-rays started to prove what parents had denied, and allegations of abuse surged after reporting laws were adopted in the 1960s¹³⁵⁰. The existence of sexual abuse of minors and the trauma that ensues began to be recognized in the mid-eighties and led to new legislation. The Netherlands became aware of the sexual abuse of minors in the early 1990s¹³⁵¹. It is hard to estimate the number of children who become victims of abuse; in research, there are many variables to consider. Definitions vary as to what constitutes abuse¹³⁵². This adds to the complexity of the issue. Many victims do not report the abuse¹³⁵³. A significant number of claims by those who do report being victims of abuse appear to be false, whether intentionally or unintentionally¹³⁵⁴. Critics charge that figures on child abuse and neglect underestimate the number of children maimed or murdered by abusive caretakers¹³⁵⁵ while simultaneously overestimating cases of sexual abuse¹³⁵⁶.

¹³⁴⁶ Sealander (2003), 53, fn.1.

¹³⁴⁷ But as she also notes fines for maltreatment of children were generally less steep than those magistrates’ courts imposed for cruelty to animals, Sealander (2003), 56-57.

¹³⁴⁸ Sealander (2003), 56.

¹³⁴⁹ Sealander (2003), 53.

¹³⁵⁰ Sealander (2003), 61, 72.

¹³⁵¹ See for example Wim Deetman *et al.*, *Seksueel misbruik van minderjarigen in de rooms-katholieke kerk: English Summary* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2011), 7 and H.W. Samson-Geerlings *et al.*, *Omringd door zorg, toch niet veilig: Seksueel misbruik van door de overheid uit huis geplaatste kinderen, 1945 tot heden; Rapport commissie-Samson* (Amsterdam: Boon, October 8, 2012), 145.

¹³⁵² Sealander (2003), 73.

¹³⁵³ Samson-Geerlings (2012), 46.

¹³⁵⁴ See for example Elizabeth Loftus and Katherine Ketcham, *Graven in het geheugen: De mythe van de verdrongen herinnering* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1995), originally published as *The Myth of Repressed Memory* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1994), and several of the cases as discussed in H.F.M. Crombag, P.J. van Koppen and W.A. Wagenaar, *Dubieuze zaken: De psychologie van strafrechtelijk bewijs* (Amsterdam: Contact, 1992). Sealander refers to research by a grand jury which decided that of 300 cases 83 percent needed reevaluation and estimated that 60 percent of all changes involved innocent families. Sealander (2003), 81.

¹³⁵⁵ I note that early 21st century UNICEF reports (reflecting late 20th century statistics) reveal a significant difference in percentages of child maltreatment deaths between the Netherlands and the United States. UNICEF, ‘A league table of child maltreatment deaths in rich nations’, *Innocenti Report Card* no.5 (Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, September 2003).

3.9.4.4. *Demographic changes*

In the century of the child the improvement of children's lives becomes a battle cry¹³⁵⁷. Much improvement can be observed the Netherlands; Cunningham chronicles a broader improvement of sanitation and living conditions. Such advances contribute to a dramatic drop in infant mortality rates during the twentieth century¹³⁵⁸. Part of the same demographic transition -- which takes place after 1870 -- is that people marry at a younger age, and parents live longer. As a next step birth control is introduced¹³⁵⁹. In Dutch confessional circles this second phase begins around 1965¹³⁶⁰. Fewer children per parent may mean more parental care and attention per child. In the more recent past, medical science also contributes to that demographic change¹³⁶¹. In America the elderly benefit significantly more than children through federally sponsored programs such as retirement stipends and medical care¹³⁶². Sealander writes about America: "A toothless codger who shambled through the country's streets and slept under its bridges epitomized poverty in 1900. By 2000, that had long since changed. After 1960 a young child, with minorities, especially African Americans and Latinos, proportionally overrepresented, typified poverty."¹³⁶³

3.9.4.5. *Poor mothers and sacred motherhood*

As the twentieth century progresses, children in the Western world are valued more purely for emotional reasons and less for a combination of emotional and economic reasons¹³⁶⁴. I started my historical overview of childhood by noting that a sentimental ideal of the family, in which children were increasingly prized, flourished in the late Republic and early Roman Empire. In the twentieth century once again rhetoric sentimentalizes children and public regulations chronically lengthen childhood. Meanwhile, many American children grow up more quickly in homes where the one adult present

¹³⁵⁶ Sealander (2003), 77.

¹³⁵⁷ Sealander (2003), 15.

¹³⁵⁸ Cunningham (2005), 173, 174. "Before the early nineteenth century the average child was the dead child," Sealander (2003), 7.

¹³⁵⁹ Bakker (2010), 268.

¹³⁶⁰ Bakker (2010), 270.

¹³⁶¹ Cunningham (2005), 173, 174.

¹³⁶² Sealander suggests this may be due to the electoral power of the elderly which children lack, but she also notices how the Reform climate spawned by postwar social activism demanded justice not merely for those able to shout in the streets, but, gradually, also for those too young or too powerless to speak effectively for themselves. Sealander (2003), 4, 275.

¹³⁶³ Elsewhere she mentions that "at the end of the century, less than 3 percent of the nation's old lived in striking poverty." (...) "In the last twenty five years of the century, one half of the country's female headed families were poor," Sealander (2003), 98, 131.

¹³⁶⁴ Cunningham (2005), 185.

struggles with the shock waves of divorce or battles poverty¹³⁶⁵. Rhetoric often sanctifies motherhood, yet the majority of twentieth century Americans are convinced that poor mothers should work whenever feasible, and a system of meager benefits compels these mothers to do so¹³⁶⁶.

3.9.4.6. Increasing education

I have already described the introduction of compulsory primary education as a process which finished in 1900 in the Netherlands and in 1918 in the United States. Secondary education and preschool are nineteenth century innovations. After 1900, participation in secondary education increases significantly in both the Netherlands¹³⁶⁷ and the United States¹³⁶⁸. In the Netherlands, enrollment in colleges and universities dramatically increases in the second half of the century¹³⁶⁹. The Romantic or Victorian belief that children belong at home with their mothers determined the fate of young children up through the first half of the twentieth century¹³⁷⁰. After the Second World War participation in nursery schools and kindergartens increases in both the Netherlands¹³⁷¹ and the United States¹³⁷². Full participation of disabled children in the school community remains a challenge¹³⁷³. All these developments in education result in children being separated from their parents at an earlier age. It also results in children being held back from entering adult life and the labor market, thus prolonging childhood.

3.9.4.7. Children and parents

In the late sixties, Margaret Mead explained changing relations between the generations in terms of post-figurative and cofigurative. Cunningham also

¹³⁶⁵ Sealander (2003), 12f. I note that early 21st century UNICEF reports reveal a significant difference in relative poverty, and well-being of children in the Netherlands and the United States. E.g. UNICEF. *Child Poverty in Rich Countries, 2005: Innocenti Report Card No.6*. (Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2005) and UNICEF Office of Research (2013), *Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview, Innocenti Report Card 11* (Florence: UNICEF Office of Research, 2013).

¹³⁶⁶ Sealander (2003), 97.

¹³⁶⁷ In the Netherlands: 8% in 1900, 27% in 1930, 45% in 1950, 84% in 1960. Bakker (2010), 266.

¹³⁶⁸ In the United States < 7% in 1900, < 50% in 1940, >80% in the mid 70's. Sealander (2003), 187.

¹³⁶⁹ Bakker (2010), 381.

¹³⁷⁰ Sealander (2003), 223, 242, 248.

¹³⁷¹ In the Netherlands participation of four and five year olds had reached close to 100% in 1985. From that time education became compulsory starting at age 5. Bakker (2010), 635.

¹³⁷² In 1965 about 10% of two to five year olds participated, in 1999 almost 50% of the three and four year olds. Sealander (2003), 256

¹³⁷³ Sealander states regarding policies on public education of disabled children, "No other group of policies better illustrates the high aspirations and serious failures of the Century of the Child," Sealander (2003), 260.

notes that parents, and especially fathers, became less remote and authoritarian. Wubs speaks of a change around 1970 from focus on the family to focus on the child¹³⁷⁴. Cunningham seems to agree, noting that parents, and in particular fathers, became less the center of attention when present. It is interesting how Cunningham suggests that this social change in the home is related to improving housing conditions and the street losing some of its attraction as children's habitat¹³⁷⁵. Cunningham also suggests that even though children's rights were acknowledged, parental rights were more highly emphasized. Cunningham concludes that at the end of the twentieth century society was still grasping to find some resolution to the proper relationship between government, parents, and children¹³⁷⁶.

3.9.5. *Participation in Society*

North America's battle against child labor also started in the nineteenth century. But at the beginning of the twentieth century child labor peaked. In 1900 for example one in every six children between the age of ten and sixteen still worked ten hours a day, six days a week¹³⁷⁷. During the depression, child laborers began to be perceived as potential job-stealers, and women were viewed as an even greater threat¹³⁷⁸. In 1938 the Fair Labor Standard Act set federal standards for child labor¹³⁷⁹. Mechanization, economic change, and the emancipation of women may have had greater influence than legislation in decreasing the amount of child labor in the United States¹³⁸⁰. Critics suggest that at the end of the twentieth century both Canada and the United States still explicitly permit forms of child labor that are banned in much of the world¹³⁸¹.

Until approximately halfway through the twentieth century, working children contributed to the family income¹³⁸². After that, growing prosperity allowed especially older youth to keep part of their income. At the end of the century it was more common for youth to contribute nothing to the family income¹³⁸³.

¹³⁷⁴ Wubs (2004).

¹³⁷⁵ Cunningham (2005), 186.

¹³⁷⁶ Cunningham (2005), 183.

¹³⁷⁷ Sealander (2003), 138f.

¹³⁷⁸ Sealander (2003), 154.

¹³⁷⁹ Sealander (2003), 137.

¹³⁸⁰ Sealander (2003), 180.

¹³⁸¹ And that recent child labour laws of British Columbia are among the most neglectful in the world. Joel Bakan, "B.C.'s Child Labour Laws are the Most Neglectful in the World," *The Globe and Mail*, September 2, 2011.

¹³⁸² Cunningham (2005), 185. Bakker (2010), 345.

¹³⁸³ Bakker (2010), 345.

As children already had indirect economic power and acquired more direct economic power, they increasingly become participants in a commercial culture over the course of the century, up to the point where some believe childhood has been spoiled by commercialism¹³⁸⁴. Cunningham registers this twist in the second half of the twentieth century¹³⁸⁵. But possibly the process was more gradual¹³⁸⁶. Prior to 1915 there were no separate infants' and children's clothing departments. In the 1920s department stores started to welcome the bourgeois child, providing separate, modest toy departments¹³⁸⁷. In the 1930s, merchants, manufacturers and advertisers began to target children directly as individual consumers¹³⁸⁸. Television sponsors and broadcasters began to identify children as a special target audience for commercial messages in the mid-1960s¹³⁸⁹.

3.9.6. Participation in Church

3.9.6.1. Neo-reformed youth organizations

Although groups of Christian and more specifically Reformed youth existed since the sixteenth century, the neo-reformed youth organizations experience their heydays in the earliest decades of the twentieth century¹³⁹⁰. In the autonomously organized¹³⁹¹ Dutch neo-reformed youth organizations for youth between the age of sixteen and twenty four, youth activated, mobilized and organized other youth¹³⁹². The members were treated as covenant children of God¹³⁹³. The youth movements' goals were the religious, intellectual, and moral formation of their members¹³⁹⁴. Several leaders in church and society perceived these youth associations as a training ground¹³⁹⁵. Lectures, with great emphasis on foundations¹³⁹⁶ and discussions were the

¹³⁸⁴ Cunningham (2005), 189.

¹³⁸⁵ Compare Cunningham (2005), 203.

¹³⁸⁶ See for example Daniel Thomas Cook, "Children as Consumers: History and Historiography," in Fass (2015), 283-295.

¹³⁸⁷ Dan Cook, "Lunchbox Hegemony? Kids & the Marketplace, Then & Now," *LiP Magazine*, (August 20, 2001).

¹³⁸⁸ Daniel Thomas Cook, "The Other "Child Study": Figuring Children as Consumers in Market Research, 1910s -1990s," *The Sociological Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (June 2000), 487f.

¹³⁸⁹ Lynda Sharp Paine, "Children as Consumers: An Ethical Evaluation of Children's Television Advertising," *Business and Professional Ethics Journal* 3, no. 3/4 (Spring/Summer 1984): 119.

¹³⁹⁰ Sturm (1988), 162f. See also Bavinck (1916), 43f.

¹³⁹¹ Sturm (1988), 199.

¹³⁹² Sturm (1988), 165.

¹³⁹³ Sturm (1988), 175

¹³⁹⁴ Bavinck (1916), 57. Sturm (1988), 196.

¹³⁹⁵ Sturm (1988), 162.

¹³⁹⁶ *Beginnselen*, Sturm (1988), 173.

main instruments to reach these goals. The youth groups were sometimes perceived as being in competition with catechism classes¹³⁹⁷, which in turn experienced competition from youth movements such as scouting¹³⁹⁸.

Similar organizations such as the *Knapenvereniging* in the Netherlands for younger youth ages twelve to seventeen, are a newer phenomenon. The Dutch *Bond van Gereformeerde Knapenleiders* was only founded in 1912¹³⁹⁹. Nine years later, the girls' associations, *jonge-meisjes-verenigingen*, also fell under the umbrella of this organization¹⁴⁰⁰. The younger youth were not autonomously organized¹⁴⁰¹. While Sunday schools often had missionary and philanthropic goals, the Christian boys' and girls' clubs aimed at nurture and education of believers¹⁴⁰² and used methods similar to the youth associations for adolescents.

3.9.6.2. Catechetical teaching

Catechetical teaching continued to be one of the ways in which youth participated in church life and remained one of the instruments for the ecclesiastical socialization of new generations¹⁴⁰³. For a long time content and purity of what was taught were central, with a growing emphasis on clarity and on visual appeal¹⁴⁰⁴. In the second half of the twentieth century there is an increasing attention on the student and the processes of learning¹⁴⁰⁵. In the fourth quarter of the twentieth century, dialogue as a catechetical method is encouraged¹⁴⁰⁶. Looking back on the twentieth century, Heitink paints a somber picture of the practice of catechism teaching in the Dutch mainline protestant churches. By the end of the century, catechism teaching beyond the age of thirteen is practically non-existent¹⁴⁰⁷.

¹³⁹⁷ Sturm (1988), 178.

¹³⁹⁸ Sturm (1988), 200.

¹³⁹⁹ Sturm (1988), 207.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Now under the new name *Bond voor Gereformeerde Jeugdorganisatie*. Sturm (1988), 209

¹⁴⁰¹ Sturm (1988), 208.

¹⁴⁰² Sturm (1988), 210.

¹⁴⁰³ Compare G.D.J. Dingemans, "Kort historisch overzicht van de geloofsopvoeding binnen de joodse en christelijke traditie," in *In de Leerschool van het Geloof: Mathetiek en vakdidactiek voor catechese en kerkelijk vormingswerk*. 2nd ed. 159-174. (Kampen: Kok, 1991).

¹⁴⁰⁴ Dingemans (1991), 176.

¹⁴⁰⁵ P. ten Have, *Een Methode van Bijbelse Catechese* (Groningen: Wolters, 1946) and Carl Rogers, *Freedom to learn: A View of What Education Might Become* (Columbus: Charles Merrill, 1969) represent this change. Dingemans (1991), 176.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Dingemans (1991), 176.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Gerben Heitink, *Een kerk met karakter: Tijd voor heroriëntatie*, 2nd ed. (Kampen: Kok, 2008), 111.

3.9.6.3. Sunday school and youth services

As previously stated, Sunday school began in the eighteenth century, and the Dutch phenomenon of *Kinderkerk* originated toward the end of eighteenth century and faded away in the first half of the twentieth century. In the first half of the twentieth century, special worship services for somewhat older youth, *Jeugdendiensten*, started to be organized. The first of such youth services in the Netherlands was organized by H.T. Oberman in Rotterdam in 1920 and by M.M. den Hertog in The Hague in 1926¹⁴⁰⁸. In both contexts, pleas were heard for more active participation in and for preparation for the sacrament¹⁴⁰⁹ although the sacrament was never administered in these youth services¹⁴¹⁰. The services also functioned as stepping stone for introducing ideas from the Liturgical Movement into regular church services¹⁴¹¹. In the second half of the twentieth century, *kindernevendienst* was introduced. Initially, it was shaped as a separate service for children with a child oriented sermon. Later it became more like a Sunday school and ran concurrently with part of the main service¹⁴¹². Similar developments are also found in North America, leading to the reality that greater attention to and increased targeting of children and youth decreases the intergenerational nature of worship in this era¹⁴¹³. Eventually the pendulum swings when at the beginning of the twenty first century a growing emphasis on intergenerational worship counters the trend¹⁴¹⁴.

3.10. Summary

Although chapter 6 is dedicated to my final analysis and conclusions, it may be helpful to draw some preliminary conclusions at the end of this chapter. At the beginning of this chapter I mentioned some guiding questions, some of which can be answered in this stage.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Josephus Fransiscus Lescrauwaet, *De Liturgische Beweging onder de Nederlands Hervormden in oecumenisch perspectief: Een fenomenologische en kritische studie* (Bussum: Paul Brand, 1957). See also Beerekamp (1952).

¹⁴⁰⁹ Lescrauwaet (1957), 87.

¹⁴¹⁰ Lescrauwaet (1957), 90.

¹⁴¹¹ Lescrauwaet (1957), 90.

¹⁴¹² Mentioned as a new initiative in 1960 "Amsterdams gereformeerd initiatief geslaagd: "Kindernevendiensten" voldoen heel goed: Gezamenlijke kerkgang met aparte preek voor de kinderen," *Zeeuws Dagblad*, Wednesday January 27, 1960. I note that *kindernevendienst* is first mentioned in the periodical *Opbouw* in 1979. T. Hoekstra, "Ingezonden: Ik zou wel eens willen weten ...," *Opbouw*, January 26, 1979 (39), reflecting a later introduction of this phenomenon in the more conservative denominations such as the Dutch Reformed Churches and the Reformed Churches liberated.

¹⁴¹³ Boon (1990), 231-232.

¹⁴¹⁴ See for example Howard Vanderwell, *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together* (Herndon: Alban Institute, 2008).

My aim has been to seek a better understanding of the history of children at the Lord's Supper. As the Bible contains no explicit statements about the participation of children in the Lord's Supper, knowledge of the position of children in the Roman Empire helps us understand the cultural and religious context in which the apostolic church operated, as well as the cultural and religious background of the gentile converts within that church. As far as this cultural and religious context is concerned, one would expect a natural tendency to include children in the Lord's Supper.

Understanding first century Judaism may be even more crucial in forming an opinion on the place of children within the apostolic church, and on the inclinations of the Jewish Christians. Important elements in first century Judaism in this respect are the strong sense of collectivity and family solidarity, the participation in Jewish rituals from a very young age, the gradual course of initiation in combination with religious education in the context of participation, and the fact that such participation seems to have taken place even before the age of maturity at age twelve or thirteen. I conclude that the Jewish Christians in all likelihood would show the same natural tendency towards including the children in the Lord's Supper.

From the moment that the paedocommunion practice is documented, understanding the broader history of children and childhood in society and church is not needed to answer the question whether children participated. But the history of concepts and theologies regarding children and childhood, the division of life in ages and stages, the treatment of children, and the participation of children in society and church, helps us understand the paedocommunion practice and its development over time in more than one way. An important conclusion is that an understanding of the historiography of children and childhood – the “black legend”, the “white legend” and the synthesis with its shades of gray – is essential for the evaluation of historical claims about children and childhood.

I conclude that the paedocommunion practice did not exist in the context of one uniform concept of theology regarding children and childhood. I do agree with Berryman that different threads emerge from church history regarding children, though I would challenge the four key threads he distinguishes. Theology perceived children as image of God, in relation to original sin, as innocent in relationship to those sins which emerge over time, as exhibiting those qualities implied by Jesus' exhortation to become like children. Theology could perceive childhood negatively in light of conversion, more neutrally in light of the rejection of the idea that certain stages of life are religiously

superior or more spiritual, or gracefully in light of the notion that grace is no respecter of age. We find theological support for hierarchical structures of for example family, but at the same time a strong sense of equality of parents and children in relation to God. It is also enlightening to understand how basically one medieval concept can lead to the extremes of children being perceived as channels with access both to the diabolical as well as the divine.

I conclude that different sorts of concepts on children and childhood – negative, neutral or positive – can coexist with a paedocommunion practice, though they may provide a different rationale. From the perspective of a negative concept the necessity of receiving the sacrament may be stressed. I think of Augustine. From the perspective of a positive concept a child may be better qualified to receive the sacrament, for example because of its innocence and sexual purity. I think of Bede’s remark about frequent participation. A positive or even a more neutral concept of children may encourage equal access to the Table.

I would conclude that phenomena such as the religious processions of the Middle Ages provide a unique way to see what place children is given in relation to other segments of society and church. In a sense it shows the balance or the net result of multiple concepts and theologies on children.

I conclude that starting with the first century, many centuries, including the twentieth have been perceived as centuries of the child. I conclude that the discovery of childhood has been attributed to many different era’s in these twenty centuries. Several of these centuries or eras do show a heightened focus on children and a renewed awareness or appreciation of childhood. My preliminary conclusion is that a simple connection between developments in paedocommunion and a unique discovery of childhood or a unique century of the child is not warranted by the historical data. I hope to evaluate the possibility of a more complex or nuanced relationship between the two in my final chapter.

Recognizing how life was divided in seven stages of approximately seven years each, from the days of the early church well into the time of the Reformation, helps us understand the meaning of ages and stages. The age of discretion, for example, is viewed in terms of ability to celebrate the Eucharist, but the same stage of life is also viewed in terms of the need to receive grace. Recognizing life stages helps us understand how different opinions on the age of admission to the Supper, of for example the Reformers, may reflect a rather uniform opinion on the life stage most suitable for such admission. Another

observation regarding ages and stages is that an age-and-ability approach of children can be found throughout this history in both society and church.

In my overview I mention numerous examples of minimum and average ages. I conclude that they reveal how childhood has been prolonged in more than one way. And in a certain period of history the age of admission to the Supper has risen accordingly. But hidden behind that simple fact lies a more complex reality in which certain processes have accelerated, others have remained quite stable, while others have prolonged. Children have greater access to education. School starts earlier, but takes longer. Physically children may grow and mature faster, but in terms of law or economic independence they mature much later. This means, for example, there is no simple formula to translate the age of admission of one era into the age of admission in another era. The lack of synchrony in these processes may have created the kind of tensions that often lead to changes in practices.

The treatment of children and therefore children's childhood experiences do not show a monolinear development. We saw how Constantine protected certain rights of children, while – unintentionally – undermining others. Luther supported children's education, but his Reformation caused the end of education as it was provided in many monasteries. Calvin and the Geneva consistory in several ways protected the well being of children. But unintentionally they may have harmed the well being of bastards. My preliminary conclusion is that the developments in the twentieth century are also not monolinear. Chapter 6 will provide a more detailed and nuanced analysis of these developments and their relationship to the discussion on and introduction of paedocommunion in the twentieth century.

One important conclusion regarding the participation of children in society and church is that a marginal role of children in society does not automatically mean that their role and participation in church and religion is marginal.

At the beginning of this chapter I also asked the question whether claims about history made by participants in the paedocommunion discussion can be maintained. To find the answer to this and some other questions I will first need to describe the introduction of and the discussion on paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition.

Chapter 4 The Introduction of Paedocommunion into Congregations

4.1. Introduction

This chapter tells the stories of introducing children at the Lord's Supper in three local churches¹⁴¹⁵: 1) The Reformed Church liberated, later called the Dutch Reformed Church, Rijsbergen, The Netherlands, 2). Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan, and 3). First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster, British Columbia. These three local churches represent only two of the three denominations with which our broader research is concerned; Anna Zegwaard has undertaken similar research in three local churches within the Protestant Church in the Netherlands¹⁴¹⁶.

4.1.1. Pioneers

The first two local churches I examine played a pioneering role in their contexts. In 1961/1962 the church of Rijsbergen was, in all likelihood, the first protestant church to welcome children at the Lord's Supper in the Netherlands. Also pioneering, Fourteenth Street CRC's overture to synod led to the final breakthrough for inviting children to the Lord's Supper at a denominational level. A section on paedocommunion pioneers in general, their situations and motives, will serve as an introduction to the sections on these two particular churches. The story of pioneers who innovate is not complete without the story of early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards¹⁴¹⁷. The story of New West CRC represents the majority in their adoption of children taking Communion, and possibly still fits within the early majority category. In all three cases I focus on the period during which the change took place, since this is also often a period of more intense and conscious reflection on a practice, making information on that period relevant not only from a historical perspective but also from a practical theological perspective.

¹⁴¹⁵ Helpful introductions into the study of local congregations have been Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley and William McKinney, eds., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998) and Helen Cameron, Philip Richter, Douglas Davies and Frances Ward, eds. *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2005).

¹⁴¹⁶ Anna Zegwaard, *Als kinderen meevieren: Een onderzoek naar de discussie over kindercommunie binnen de kerken* (Gorinchem: Narratio, 2006), 97f.

¹⁴¹⁷ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995), 252f.

4.1.2. Thick description

This chapter tells the stories of the three local congregations by providing what anthropologist Clifford Geertz has called a “thick description”¹⁴¹⁸. Since Geertz does not provide a systematic summary of thick description¹⁴¹⁹, this research’s initial framework depends on Don S. Browning’s more systematically applied thick description in his *Fundamental Practical Theology*¹⁴²⁰ and his development of it for a practical theology of families when directing the Religion, Culture and Family Project¹⁴²¹. A thick description of the local congregations and of their introduction of children at the Lord’s Supper takes into account several different dimensions or levels of human behavior. In that way a thick description serves to explain the praxis — its change, its context, and its meaning. The five dimensions (or levels) that Browning distinguishes are visional, obligational, tendency-need, environmental, and rule-role¹⁴²². Browning emphasizes the hypothetical status of these distinctions¹⁴²³ and easily embraces other divisions of praxis in multiple dimensions¹⁴²⁴. I am aware of other divisions¹⁴²⁵ and have contemplated using some of the fifteen modal aspects of Herman Dooyeweerd¹⁴²⁶ for its thoroughness, but in this research I give preference to

¹⁴¹⁸ Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” and “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*. 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

¹⁴¹⁹ See for example Achim Knecht “Dichte Beschreibung,” in Dinter, Heimbrock, Söderblom, *Einführung in die Empirische Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 226-241.

¹⁴²⁰ Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 107.

¹⁴²¹ Don S. Browning, “Empirical Considerations in Religious Praxis and Reflection (2005),” in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies*, ed. Don S. Browning (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 31-50.

¹⁴²² Browning (1996), 71, 106.

¹⁴²³ Browning (1996), 108.

¹⁴²⁴ For example Paul Ricoeur’s distinction of: 1- technical means-end, 2- goods aspired, 3- ideals and narratives that provide meaning, 4- higher-order principle which solves conflict, 5- and hermeneutic-descriptive and explanatory analysis, Browning (2007), 37.

¹⁴²⁵ For example the seven dimensions of religion as distinguished by the phenomenologist of religion, Ninian Smart: 1- ritual/practical, 2- doctrinal/philosophical, 3- mythic / narrative, 4- experiential / emotional, 5- ethical/legal, 6 organizational/ social, and 7- material / artistic. Mentioned in Bilal Sambur, “From the Dichotomy of Spiritualism/Ritualism to the Dichotomy of Insider/Outsider,” in Elisabeth Arweck, and Martin D. Stringer, eds., *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2002), 21, 31 fn.1.

¹⁴²⁶ 1- Quantitative, 2- spatial, 3- kinematic, 4- physical, 5- biotic/organic, 6- sensitive/psychic, 7- analytical, 8- formative, 9- lingual, 10- social, 11- economic, 12- aesthetic, 13- juridical, 14- ethical, 15- pistic. We note that Browning is aware of such divisions “derived through rigorous transcendental analysis of the kind associated with Kantianism, Husserlian phenomenology, or other various brands of transcendental metaphysics,” Browning (1996), 107. We also note that Dooyeweerd did enter into a dialogue with sociological theory of his days. H. Dooyeweerd, *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee: Boek III; De Individualiteits-structuren der Tijdelijke Werkelijkheid* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1936), 131f. Revised and expanded in the English edition: Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought: Volume III; The Structures of Individuality of Temporal Reality*, 3rd ed. (Jordon Station: Paideia Press, 1984), 157f.

Browning's model, which is better known in practical theological circles and already applied to similar fields of research in the Religion, Culture and Family Project.

4.1.3. Qualitative research

I also aim to tell the stories of these three congregations by listening carefully to how members of these congregations have experienced and perceived praxis — its change, context, significance, and meaning. This requires qualitative research¹⁴²⁷, rather than quantitative, and for that reason I chose to conduct semi-structured or responsive interviews¹⁴²⁸. I conducted a total of twenty-six interviews¹⁴²⁹ with fifty-five members or former members in total¹⁴³⁰, as several interviews became 'group-interviews' with couples or families. The interviews were recorded on audio¹⁴³¹, transcribed¹⁴³², coded,¹⁴³³ and analyzed with the help of the program ATLAS.ti¹⁴³⁴. From each congregation I included both those who were office bearers and also other congregation members¹⁴³⁵ and a combination of parents as well as children¹⁴³⁶ at the time of introduction. With the consent of our interviewees, I have chosen to mention their names¹⁴³⁷. As I served two of these three churches, to

¹⁴²⁷ David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research*. 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010).

¹⁴²⁸ What Rubin & Rubin call 'responsive interviews' and Baarda, de Goede and Van der Meer-Middelburg call 'open interviews'. Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012); D.B. Baarda, M.P.M. de Goede, and A.G.E. van der Meer- Middelburg, *Basisboek Open Interviews: Praktische Handleiding voor het voorbereiden en afnemen van open interviews* (Groningen: Stenfert Kroese, 1996).

¹⁴²⁹ 10 interviews DRC Rijsbergen, 8 interviews First CRC New Westminster, 8 interviews 14th Street CRC Holland.

¹⁴³⁰ 17 interviewees at DRC Rijsbergen, 13 interviewees at First CRC New Westminster, 25 interviewees at 14th Street CRC Holland. Not counting those children present at the interview, but too young to participate, and not counting three non-members who participated in the interviews (a visiting professor who was invited for the diner, after which Hofman and the Keeleys were interviewed, and the brother and sister in law who were present at the interview of Maria Wijngaards and provided valuable information on their mother).

¹⁴³¹ Three interviews were conducted in an earlier stage prior to the decision to make audio recordings. One interview had to be conducted by e-mail. Twice audio recording failed due to technical problems.

¹⁴³² Or notes where no audio recording was available.

¹⁴³³ Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009).

¹⁴³⁴ Susan Friese, *Qualitative Data Analysis with Atlas.ti* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012). David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2006).

¹⁴³⁵ Because the decision in Rijsbergen was made in 1962 we could only interview the widow of Jan van Katwijk and the children of the other two office bearers.

¹⁴³⁶ We are aware of more child-targeted research methods, such as used by Susan Ridgely Bales, but limited ourselves to including children who were able to participate with their parents in a family group interview. Susan Ridgely Bales, *When I Was a Child: Children's Interpretations of First Communion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

¹⁴³⁷ The parents of one minor were not available to sign a form of consent, and one family wanted to be mentioned by first names only.

a certain degree my own perspective is that of an insider with all the possible benefits and pitfalls that accompany an insider researcher¹⁴³⁸.

4.1.4. Main questions

In line with the choice of semi-structured or responsive interviewing I have formulated a limited number of possible main questions: 1) Can you tell me the story of the introduction of paedocommunion in your local church?¹⁴³⁹ 2) Why did this change occur?¹⁴⁴⁰ (With these first two questions I focused mainly on the change or innovation.) 3) How has the actual participation of children shaped your church's celebration of the Lord's Supper?¹⁴⁴¹ 4) What significance does the participation of children have for the congregation and its members both young and old?¹⁴⁴² (With the second set of questions I focused on the practice, its shape and meaning.) In our interviews I also was especially alert to notice any catechetical and liturgical frames that the congregations might provide to encourage full, conscious, and active participation of children.

In addition to these interviews I have used a wide variety of published and unpublished documents varying from diaries, speeches, minutes of meetings, material of Sunday schools to more academic works.

4.2 Paedocommunion Pioneers

4.2.1. Choosing a neutral metaphor

"Liturgical breeding grounds" is the English translation of the title of Oskamp's study on seven Dutch churches on the forefront of liturgical renewal¹⁴⁴³. He

¹⁴³⁸ Elisabeth Arweck and Martin D. Stringer, eds., *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2002).

¹⁴³⁹ With this question we hoped to get crucial information to reconstruct how the process unfolded, while looking for process, steps over time, sequences of causation and while remaining aware of tendency, needs, fears, obligations, rules, roles, etc.

¹⁴⁴⁰ With this question, and the follow up questions we hoped to discover all possible causes or intentions of the change. We had a particular desire to understand the arguments that were used within the congregation, what reasons did or did not appeal to the interviewees, and what reasoning people found attractive or effective.

¹⁴⁴¹ What does the celebration of the Lord's Supper (practice) look like? Are catechetical and liturgical "frames" provided to encourage "full, conscious, active" participation, and if so what kind of frames are provided?

¹⁴⁴² To what extent is this different from what was intended or expected when the change was initiated?

¹⁴⁴³ Paul Oskamp, *Liturgische Broedplaatsen* (Kampen: Kok, 1973).

later describes these same churches as creative and innovative¹⁴⁴⁴. The reintroduction of paedocommunion certainly fits the definition of innovation: “an idea or practice perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adaptation.”¹⁴⁴⁵ Aalbers uses the typical Dutch word “proefpolders”¹⁴⁴⁶ to describe the Reformed Church liberated of Rijsbergen and other congregations of the Netherlands Reformed Church, which are among the first to welcome children at the Lord’s Supper¹⁴⁴⁷. In the sixties Wiskerke and Kamphuis speak about the experiment of Rijsbergen¹⁴⁴⁸. In the seventies the word experiment reappears in a discussion about the, now, dozens of local churches in the Netherlands that have allowed children at the Lord’s Supper. In that discussion the word experiment is sometimes used in a neutral sense, concluding that praxis often precedes church order¹⁴⁴⁹, but often with strongly negative connotations¹⁴⁵⁰. Experiment is also used for those cases where local congregations defy church order, though in some cases experiments were tolerated¹⁴⁵¹ or even initiated¹⁴⁵² by a synod. I prefer to use the term “pioneers” for those churches, their pastors and other members, who were the first to introduce the practice of paedocommunion and/or who were

¹⁴⁴⁴ Paul Oskamp, “Liturgie op de berg: Een casestudy,” in *De Bergkerk te Amersfoort* (Amersfoort: Bekking & Blitz, 2007), 57. 57-71

¹⁴⁴⁵ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: The Free Press 1995), 35.

¹⁴⁴⁶ In the history of Dutch land reclamation, relatively small pilot polders (proefpolders) were created to research and prepare the creation of larger polders.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Aalbers, B.J. *Kinderen aan het avondmaal. Gemeentetoerusting 7*. (Kampen: Kok, 1971), 15.

¹⁴⁴⁸ J.R. Wiskerke, “Einde van het gereformeerde leven in schending van de liefde I,” *De Reformatie* 39, no. 44 (1964): 344. J.R. Wiskerke, “Einde van het gereformeerde leven in schending van de liefde II,” *De Reformatie* 39, no. 45 (1964), 352. J.Kamphuis “Kerkelijk leven, Het oude ideaal,” *De Reformatie* 40, no. 38 (1965): 303-304.

¹⁴⁴⁹ C. den Boer “Waarom zouden ook de kinderen niet komen? (1),” *Reformatisch Dagblad*, December 1, 1978. Hans, Eggenberger, ed. *Abendmahl – auch für Kinder?: Grundsätzliche Überlegungen, Praxisberichte und Materialien* (Zürich, Theologische Verlag, 1979), 7.

¹⁴⁵⁰ E.g. G. P. van Itterzon, “De verwoesting van het kerkrecht,” *Hervormd Weekblad* 80 (1969): 384-386. M. Groenenberg, “Vragen rondom de kindercommunie,” *Woord en Dienst* 19 (1970): 377. C. Bezemer, “Kindercommunie IV,” *Hervormd Weekblad* (July 26, 1973): 322-323. F.H. Kuiper, “Kindercommunie in protestantse kring: een stap terug?” *Praktische Theologie*, no. 2 (1974): 101-111. And in response: P. Oskamp, “Experimenten: Avondmaal en openbare belijdenis,” *Woord en Dienst* 18 (1969): 62. H. Bartels, “Nog eens: de Kindercommunie,” *Woord en Dienst* 20 (1971): 28-29.

¹⁴⁵¹ For example the 1978 Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN). Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. *Acta van de Generale Synode van Zwolle 1977-1979* (Kampen: Kok, 1979), art. 11, 54, 220, 221, 223, 225, 226, 227, 229, 242, 276, 277, 278, 279, 281, 282, 283. Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. *Bijlagen bij de Acta van de Generale Synode van Zwolle 1977-1979* (Kampen: Kok, 1979), bijlage 44, 45, 46, 60. “Besluit (syn.) gereformeerde synode: Ondanks kerkorde-problemen moet kindercommunie doorgaan,” *Nederlands Dagblad*, October 13, 1978.

¹⁴⁵² Such as the 1985 General Synod of the Church of England assigning three experimental dioceses. Donald Gray, “Pushing at the Door: (i) The Church of England,” in *Children at the Table: A Collection on Children and the Eucharist: The Communion of all the Baptized in Anglicanism Today*, ed. Ruth A. Meyers, 99-111. (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1995), 102.

instrumental in the growth of this practice within their tradition, denomination, or country¹⁴⁵³.

4.2.2. Worldwide pioneers

When we scan the literature for paedocommunion pioneers worldwide, we find the following early examples: David Holeyton provides evidence that by at least the late 1950s some clergy in the Anglican Church were communicating children as young as five years old¹⁴⁵⁴. Eberhard Kenntner mentions the church of Magdeburg under the leadership of U. Kühn in the year 1958 as the first example of the practice of paedocommunion in Germany and traces back to the early sixties, finding other examples of churches allowing children at the Lord's Supper¹⁴⁵⁵. Colin Buchanan refers to Brian Davis, then Dean of Waiapu in New Zealand, as "the pioneer of the admission of unconfirmed children to Communion within the Anglican communion", a practice he had pioneered in the late sixties¹⁴⁵⁶. Hans Eggenberger mentions the church of Dornach, under the leadership of Otto Streckeisen, and the church of Dagmarsellen, under the leadership of Martin Lienhard as examples of the pioneering days in the late sixties and early seventies¹⁴⁵⁷ in Switzerland¹⁴⁵⁸. In the Netherlands, the Reformed Church liberated¹⁴⁵⁹ of Rijsbergen, under the leadership of preaching elder Jan van Katwijk¹⁴⁶⁰, was the first protestant church to allow young children at the table in 1961 and to officially welcome them in 1962¹⁴⁶¹.

¹⁴⁵³ A word also used by Colin Buchanan, "The Boston Consultation: A New Introduction to the Essays," in Meyers (1995), 4,5,6,10.

¹⁴⁵⁴ David R. Holeyton, "Communion of All the Baptized and Anglican Tradition," in Meyers (1995), 34.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Eberhard Kenntner *Abendmahl mit Kindern: Versuch einer Grundlegung unter Berücksichtigung der geschichtlichen Wurzeln der gegenwärtigen Diskussion in Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1980), 45. Other pioneers within the Evangelische Lutherische Kirche of Germany were Georg Kugler and Herbert Lindner in the sixties or early seventies. Georg Kugler and Herbert Lindner *Neue Familien Gottesdienste: Kinder und Abendmahl; Alternatives Leben; Advent; Weihnachten* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1979), 9.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Buchanan (1995).

¹⁴⁵⁷ The process of the introduction of paedocommunion in Dornach started in 1967 and finished in 1971. Dagmarsellen welcomed children at the Lord's Supper since 1970 or 1971.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Hans Eggenberger, ed., *Abendmahl – auch für Kinder?: Grundsätzliche Überlegungen, Praxisberichte und Materialien* (Zürich, Theologische Verlag, 1979), 10. See also Otto Streckeisen "Das Dornacher Modell: Ein Gemeindefest," in *Mit Kindern Abendmahl feiern: Modelle Reflexionen Materialien*, ed. Martin Lienhard (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1978), 21-67; and Martin Lienhard "Das Modell Dagmarsellen: Unterrichtshilfen und Abendmahlsgottesdienste," Lienhard (1978), 69-98.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Now Dutch Reformed Church.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Later Jan van Katwijk probably introduced paedocommunion into the independent Reformed Church of Wolvega around 1978. A search of the archives by long-term members Jan and Janny Ruiters did not produce documents regarding the moment of introduction.

¹⁴⁶¹ We notice that these pioneer churches introduced paedocommunion in many different countries, approximately in the same era, while at least some of them did this independent of each other. This indicates that causalities transcending the local particularities and factors beyond the motives as expressed

4.2.3. Dutch pioneers

In the Netherlands, the example of Rijsbergen was followed by the Reformed Church liberated¹⁴⁶² of Dordrecht in 1965¹⁴⁶³. Not long after the church of Rijsbergen the Netherlands Reformed Church of Rozendaal, under the leadership of pastor, poet and liturgist Willem Barnard, was possibly the first within the largest Reformed denomination of the Netherlands to welcome children at the table¹⁴⁶⁴. Within that same denomination Oskamp mentions the “Thomaskerk” in Amsterdam¹⁴⁶⁵, the “Bergkerk” in Amersfoort,¹⁴⁶⁶ the “Domkerk” in Utrecht,¹⁴⁶⁷ and the church of Purmerend¹⁴⁶⁸ as examples of churches admitting children at the Lord’s Supper in the sixties and early seventies¹⁴⁶⁹. In 1974 the Netherlands Reformed Church report “Participation

may have played an important role. Economic theory possibly sheds light on this as, for example, similar clustering of innovations underlies the Kondratieff wave in economic growth. The sociology of science provides explanations of multiple discoveries; again a very similar phenomenon. On the Kondratieff wave see: Alfred Kleinknecht and Gerben van der Panne, “Technology and long waves in economic growth,” in *The Elgar Companion to Social Economics*, edited by J.B. Davis and W. Dolfsma (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2008), 597-606. On singletons and multiples in science see: Robert K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, ed. Norman W. Storer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1973). Merton for example states that science “advances through the uneven accumulation of knowledge and through immanently or socially induced foci of attention to particular problems (by many scientists) at about the same time,” (Merton, 1973, 355).

¹⁴⁶² Now called, Dutch Reformed Church.

¹⁴⁶³ M. Jansen-Cramer, *Ontstaansgeschiedenis van de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk Dordrecht: 1958-1972* (Dordrecht, DRC Dordrecht, 1997), 15.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Dr. Zegwaard mentioned Netherlands Reformed Church of Rozendaal, under the leadership of Willem Barnard, as possibly first within the NRC in a personal conversation. Neither she, nor Willem Barnard himself, nor Paul Oskamp in his book “*Liturgische Broedplaatsen*,” nor the current archivist of NRC Rozendaal could help me date the introduction. Willem Barnard was installed as pastor of Rozendaal January 14th 1962 (*Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, January 10, 1962) and left Rozendaal in 1971.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Under leadership of pastor, liturgist W.G. Overbosch in the services called “Matinen,” Oskamp (1973), 31. between 1963 – 1966. Oskamp says the children were introduced when Nocturnen became Matinen, which happened in 1963. The Matinen moved with Overbosch to the Thomaskerk in 1966.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Under leadership of pastor Elderembosch. Oskamp (1973), 46. See also: Bergkerk, *De Bergkerk te Amersfoort* (Amersfoort: Bekking & Blitz, 2007). This must have happened before 1969. “Gezagscrisis,” *Gereformeerd Weekblad* (March 15, 1969), 3-4.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Under leadership of Rev. Dr. J. van der Werf, after their move to the “Dom” round 1970, with the second grade of elementary school (approximately age 7) as limit.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Paul Oskamp, “Kindercommunie in ontwikkeling III: ervaringen uit de hervormde gemeente te purmerend,” *Praktische Theologie*, no. 2 (1974): 77-79.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Other churches which Oskamp classifies as liturgical breeding grounds, and therefore possibly paedocommunion pioneers, are the Reformed Churches of Amstelveen, Leischendam, Didam, Zwolle, Almelo. Groningen, Ginneken, Landsmeer, Purmerend, The Hague (Duinoordkerk), Amsterdam (Westerkerk), and Rotterdam (Laurenkerk). Oskamp (1973), 110. Oskamp also writes about the originally Roman Catholic, but since 1970 independent, student church “Studenten Ekklesia.” This church in Amsterdam, under the leadership of former priest and composer Huub Oosterhuis, indicates in 1972 that baptism before participation in the Eucharist is preferred, but not strictly required Oskamp (1973), 103. The Netherlands Reformed Church of Ginneken, approximately ten kilometres from Rijsbergen sends a letter to the Breda classis in May 1968, requesting permission to lower the age of profession of faith to approximately thirteen years of age or to welcome children to the Lord’s Supper without profession of faith. This permission should be grounded in the faith of the parents, just like infant baptism. Its purpose would

in the Lord's Supper" mentions a total number of fifty-eight local congregations practicing paedocommunion and fourteen considering it¹⁴⁷⁰. In the second largest Reformed denomination of the Netherlands, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Reverend B. J. Aalbers was an important trailblazer. In 1971 he published a book on children at the Lord's Supper¹⁴⁷¹. His Reformed Church (NRC/RCN) in Geldrop, located in the Roman Catholic south of the Netherlands, first allows children at agape meals and then later at the Lord's Supper¹⁴⁷². The Reformed Church (RCN) of nearby Eindhoven-Noord (Woensel) under the leadership of Reverend G.H. Harms allowed children at the Lord's Supper slightly earlier in 1973¹⁴⁷³.

4.2.4. *Pioneers and synods*

Some churches can be called pioneers as they were among the first to introduce the practice within their tradition, denomination or country. Some churches can be called pioneers as they took the initiative to bring the issue before synod¹⁴⁷⁴. Within the denomination of Reformed Churches in the Netherlands the church of Castricum and the church of Zwolle¹⁴⁷⁵, among others¹⁴⁷⁶, were the pioneers who brought the issue to their 1971/1972 Synod¹⁴⁷⁷. Within the Dutch denomination of Reformed Churches liberated and later Dutch Reformed Churches none of the pioneers has brought the issue before their synod or national assembly.

Within the Christian Reformed Church the issue of paedocommunion was brought before synod three times, and each time a different local church could be identified as the pioneer in the process. In 1984 Classis Rocky

be to increase the involvement of children in the congregational life. Kroniekschrijver (pseudonym of A. Vroegindewey), "Kleine Kroniek," *Gereformeerd Weekblad* (September 6, 1969): 276-277.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Kuiper, F.H. "Kinderkommunie in protestantse kring: een stap terug?" *Praktische Theologie*, no. 2 (1974): 101. Van Anandel mentions 40 NRC churches in *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976): 22. Van Anandel mentions between NRC 50-100 churches in 1978. Art. 223, Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 155.

¹⁴⁷¹ B.J. Aalbers, *Kinderen aan het avondmaal*. Gemeentetoerusting 7 (Kampen: Kok, 1971).

¹⁴⁷² B.J. Aalbers, "Kinderkommunie in ontwikkeling IV: verkenningen in de evangelische kerkgemeenschap te Geldrop," *Praktische Theologie*, no. 2 (1974): 80-82.

¹⁴⁷³ Aalbers (1974): 81, G. H. Harms, "Een (vrolijk) verhaal uit het veld," *Trouw*, October 13, 1976. Other possible pioneers may have been the "Gereformeerd Weeshuis" or "Burgerweeshuis" located at the Olieslagerslaan in Haarlem (RCN), the Reformed Church (RCN) in Westzaan under leadership of N.A. Schuman, and the Reformed Church (RCN) in Heemstede under the leadership of Dr. G.N. Lammens.

¹⁴⁷⁴ In 1968 J.M. van Minnen mentions the NRC church province of Zeeland insisting on communing children. J.M. van Minnen, "Kinderlokkers in een konsumptieve kerk," *Gemeentetoerusting* (August 10, 1968).

¹⁴⁷⁵ RCN Zwolle (district E).

¹⁴⁷⁶ Classis Groningen is mentioned in the acts of synod without identifying the specific churches which brought the issue to this classis.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Art. 129, 136, 172, 236, 294, Acts RCN 1971-1972 Synod, Suppl. 51, 81, Supplement to the Acts RCN 1971-1972 Synod.

Mountains overtured synod to appoint a committee to study the issue of covenant children partaking of the Lord's Supper. Behind this overture were the concerns of New Life CRC, Houston, Texas¹⁴⁷⁸, under the leadership of J.A. Holleman. An article in the *Banner* suggests that the question of the eight year old son of Al Helder, pastor of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church of Fort Collins, first led to a consistory study of the issue, and was also part of what led to the study and overture of Classis Rocky Mountains¹⁴⁷⁹. In 1991 Classis Alberta North overtured synod to clarify the requirement for public profession of faith by covenant children¹⁴⁸⁰. This overture was the result of an overture to the fall 1990 Classis from Third CRC, Edmonton, Alberta¹⁴⁸¹, under the leadership of J. Westerhof¹⁴⁸². In 2006 Classis Holland overtured synod to appoint a study committee to examine the admission of all baptized members to the Lord's Supper¹⁴⁸³. This overture originated with Fourteenth Street CRC Holland, Michigan, one of the pioneer churches on which our study focuses.

An additional example of a pioneer comes from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Hailu Mekonnen of the Kidane-Hiwot Chapel, ministering to the Ethiopian Community in Washington D.C., was granted permission to serve the Lord's Supper to children by the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. This decision was reversed when the issue was brought to the 1985 General Assembly¹⁴⁸⁴.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Classis Rocky Mountain, Minutes, September 14, 1982, art. 17. Classis Rocky Mountain, September 13-14, 1983, art. 14. Acts CRCNA Synod 1984, 424. The minutes do speak about issues and specific concerns, but do not specify the issues or concerns other than that covenantal theology is mentioned and that the minutes also speak of pastoral concerns.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Al Helder, "Should My Child be There With Me?" *Banner* (March 9, 1987): 12. Considering the time line and the fact that Al Helder's sons Chris and Chad were part of class 1988 and 1991 of Rocky Mountains High School I would assume that Chris asked this question round 1978.

¹⁴⁸⁰ "by declaring: "The church should provide ways for covenant children to profess their faith consistent with their individual stages of physical, intellectual, emotional, and faith development, and the church should distinguish these professions from a late adolescent / adult reaffirmation of faith."

¹⁴⁸¹ Currently known as Inglewood CRC, Edmonton

¹⁴⁸² Classis Alberta North of the CRC, *Minutes of the 102nd meeting on September 28 & 29, 1990*, art. 65. Classis Alberta North of the CRC, *Minutes of the 103rd meeting on March 1 & 2, 1991*, art. 47. Delegate at this classis is among others Nick Cornelisse, pastor of Maranatha CRC, Edmonton, and former pastor of the DRC Dordrecht in the Netherlands, which already allowed children at the Lord's Supper in 1965.

¹⁴⁸³ "... and to consider the nature and practice of profession of faith both in the life of individuals and the church," Agenda CRCNA Synod 2006, 526.

¹⁴⁸⁴ J. Geertsema, "More decisions of the OPC General Assembly," *Clarion* (August 23, 1985): 375-376. The example is interesting as it not only provides an example from a pioneer within the Reformed tradition, but also a rather unique example of the issue of paedocommunion arising from the interaction between the Reformed tradition and tradition of the Coptic Church / Orthodox Church of Ethiopia. See also Report of the Committee on Paedocommunion submitted to the 54th G.A. (1987): http://opc.org/ga_papers.html (accessed September 4, 2012).

4.2.5. Motives of Dutch pioneers

When we look at the Dutch pioneers we find a number of motives and causes that led to the participation of children. First, increasingly frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper — sometimes under influence of the Liturgical Movement, but also under the influence of Calvin and or the first church of Acts¹⁴⁸⁵ — intensified the perceived problem of non-participation and increased the perceived advantages of participation by children¹⁴⁸⁶. The Liturgical Movement certainly contributed to a greater awareness of sacramental tradition in the history of the church and hence of the long history of paedocommunion¹⁴⁸⁷. And in similar ways awareness of the lower ages mentioned by Calvin and practiced by the historical Reformed practice as for example reflected in the 1563 Church Order from the Palatinate¹⁴⁸⁸ was an incentive to rethink the age barriers for the Lord's Supper.

Exposure to other church traditions such as that of small Protestant churches in the predominantly Roman Catholic south of the Netherlands¹⁴⁸⁹, the exposure to ecumenical contacts with Roman Catholics¹⁴⁹⁰, the exposure through membership transfer of Roman Catholics¹⁴⁹¹ and Lutherans¹⁴⁹², for example, play a role in several stories of pioneer churches¹⁴⁹³. Both the

¹⁴⁸⁵ Jan van Katwijk (RCL Rijsbergen), speaking about weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper and the participation of children: "Dat weet ik eigenlijk al van kind af aan, dat het niet deugde om zo nu en dan maar eens avondmaal te vieren. Dat dat heel onbehoorlijk is. Wij maken niet uit wanneer dat gebeurt. Dat behoort te gebeuren als de gemeente samenkomt, lees ik in Handelingen 4: 'Ze volhardten bij het onderwijs van de apostelen en het breken van het brood, en de gebeden.' Calvin heeft dat al gezegd," (=This I basically already know from childhood, that it was not proper to celebrate the Lord's Supper just every now and then. That this is really inappropriate. We do not decide when this takes place. I read in Acts 4 that it should take place whenever the church comes together: "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and the breaking of bread and the prayers." Calvin already said so). (Jansen-Cramer, 1997), 15. "We hadden een prachtige vergadering waar ter sprake kwam de avondmaalsviering van de kinderen. Hieruit vloeide voort: waarom niet iedere Zondag Avondmaal daar dit bij de eerste Christengemeente in Handelingen ook gebeurde; daar moeten we ons ook naar richten," (= We had a wonderful meeting at which the Lord's Supper celebration of the children was discussed. This led to a following question: why not Lord's Supper every Sunday as this also happened in the first Christian church in Acts, which should be our model). Unpublished diary of Sophia van Katwijk, Wednesday March 28, 1962.

¹⁴⁸⁶ E.g. NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort, Bergkerk (2007), 62.

¹⁴⁸⁷ E.g. NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort, Bergkerk (2007), 74.

¹⁴⁸⁸ E.g. RCL Dordrecht (At least that is one of the arguments of N. Cornelisse, be it in retrospective.

"Antwoord aan ds de Jong betreffende: Kinderen aan de tafel van de Heer," *Opbouw* (April 21, 1978): 122. Cornelisse seems to refer to G. Visee's articles).

¹⁴⁸⁹ E.g. RCL Rijsbergen, RCN Eindhoven-Noord (Woensel) (Aalbers, 1974), 80; NRC/RCN Geldrop, D.B. Heere, "Enkele sociologische kanttekeningen bij de kinderkommunie," *Praktische Theologie*, no. 2 (1974): 86-90.

¹⁴⁹⁰ E.g. RCN Utrecht Oost (Aalbers, 1971), 12; NRC/RCN Geldrop, Aalbers (1974), 80.

¹⁴⁹¹ E.g. RCL Rijsbergen, Van den Brink & Van der Kwast (1992), 224.

¹⁴⁹² E.g. NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort, Oskamp (1973), 46.

¹⁴⁹³ Van den Brink and Van der Kwast suggest that the opposite may also be true. The choice against paedocommunion, and in favor of an emphasis on adult profession of faith has happened in confrontation with charismatic groups. Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992), 225.

Ecumenical and Liturgical Movement are part of and have contributed to a changing ecclesiology and sacramentology. A vision of the church as dining room rather than classroom¹⁴⁹⁴, and consequently of a church service in which celebration of the sacraments is more central, and a vision of Communion that expresses the unity of the complete church community has motivated churches to welcome children. With a different sacramental theology came a different celebration and perception of the Lord's Supper¹⁴⁹⁵. Another cause has been a stronger emphasis on sacraments as faith-strengthening and conducive to faith formation and a correlated pedagogical vision or developmental psychological awareness of children's ability to understand sacramental mystery and hence the image of the Lord's Supper as "waybread", "manna in the dessert of puberty"¹⁴⁹⁶. Diaconal training was considered part of the faith formation while sharing the bread¹⁴⁹⁷. The analogy of the Lord's Supper with common meals helped in casting a vision for children being fed¹⁴⁹⁸, and in similar fashion the regular celebration of a less sacramental agape meal served as a stepping stone towards paedocommunion¹⁴⁹⁹.

Reformed theology of baptism¹⁵⁰⁰ or the perceived inconsistency of baptizing infants and barring those infants from children from the table also motivated a renewed paedocommunion practice. In similar ways participation of youth in other liturgical activities served as a stepping stone toward participation in the Lord's Supper celebration, thus solving the perceived tension between this liturgical activity and the non communicant status of youth.

Changes in the position of children in the church sometimes developed in opposite directions, creating new tensions. For instance, the changing position of children in church led to the organization of Sunday school, which moved children out of the church sanctuary and hence out of the church service, while simultaneously there was a growing desire to welcome children into the heart of the worship service. In several of these pioneers' stories the actions of children played a crucial and active role: the question of a young child¹⁵⁰¹,

¹⁴⁹⁴ Rev. P.A. Elderenbosch of NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort, Oskamp (1973), 116.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Oskamp writes about the NRC Purmerend: "The main reason was a changed perception and celebration of the sacrament. The accent gradually shifted from dogmatic certainty to thanksgiving, from funeral meal to feast of joy, from Good Friday to Easter, Oskamp (1974), 77.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Rev. P.A. Elderenbosch of NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort Oskamp (1973), 117.

¹⁴⁹⁷ E.g. NRC Thomaskerk, Amsterdam, Oskamp (1973), 31. This element is also emphasized by some of the German and Swiss pioneers.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Rev. W.G. Overbosch of NRC Thomaskerk, Amsterdam, Oskamp (1973), 31.

¹⁴⁹⁹ E.g. NRC/RCN Geldrop, Oskamp (1973) 87; Aalbers (1974), 80-81.

¹⁵⁰⁰ E.g. NRC Thomaskerk Amsterdam, Oskamp (1973), 31.

¹⁵⁰¹ E.g. RCL Rijsbergen, see below.

an official written request by older youth¹⁵⁰², the spontaneous participation of Roman Catholic children¹⁵⁰³ or young people¹⁵⁰⁴ in a Reformed Lord's Supper celebration, the somewhat provocative participation of a youth group¹⁵⁰⁵.

4.3. The Reformed Church liberated or Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen¹⁵⁰⁶

I will now focus on three individual congregations and their story of the introduction of paedocommunion. I will start with the story of the Reformed Church of Rijsbergen, The Netherlands.

4.3.1. From meat cannery to paedocommunion pioneer

In the mid-1950s two butchers from the predominantly Reformed town of Sliedrecht cross the river into the Roman Catholic South to start a meat cannery¹⁵⁰⁷. The butchers, Marinus Meijwaard and Daniël Christiaan Overduin, are also brothers-in-law. Their meat cannery *D.C.O. Vleeswarenfabriek* is located in the heart of the village of Rijsbergen near the Belgium border¹⁵⁰⁸. Both brothers-in-law and their families join the Reformed Church liberated in the nearby city of Breda. A combination of practical factors¹⁵⁰⁹ and of missionary zeal¹⁵¹⁰ leads to the decision to plant a new church in the village of Rijsbergen. The Reformed Church liberated of Rijsbergen is instituted on March 29, 1959 in a service led by Pastor Telder from Breda¹⁵¹¹. Meat cannery owners Meijwaard and Overduin are installed as elder and deacon, and Jan van Katwijk, whose military career has ended in a car accident¹⁵¹², completes

¹⁵⁰² E.g. NRC Utrecht Oost, Aalbers (1971), 12.

¹⁵⁰³ E.g. RCL Rijsbergen, Van den Brink & Van der Kwast (1992), 224.

¹⁵⁰⁴ E.g. NRC/RCN Geldrop, Aalbers (1974), 80.

¹⁵⁰⁵ E.g. RCL Dordrecht, Jansen-Cramer (1997), 15.

¹⁵⁰⁶ I would like to express my great appreciation to all those who made my research on Rijsbergen possible: the council of the Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen, Pastor Frans van Deursen, Maartje van Eck-de Vries, Herman Gerritsen, Pastor Jan van Katwijk †, Walter Rompa, and the interviewees Pastor Reinier Drop, Sofie van Katwijk-Polderman †, Kees & Marianne Kurpershoek-Malda, Jo & Christa Merx-Ruis, Arjan & Helena and Ira van der Steen-Los, Arie & Linda Ruis-Overduin, Dick & Marianne Vermeulen-Malda, Mario & Marianne van Zanten-Vermeulen, Maria Wijngaards, Gerard & Gerda Wijngaards, and Dick de Wild.

¹⁵⁰⁷ http://d-compu.dyndns.org/genbook/Overige_Links/kadastrale_leggers_dordrecht_27000.htm

¹⁵⁰⁸ Between the Roman Catholic Church and the town hall

(<http://www.regionaalarchiefwestbrabant.nl/zoeken/films-en-fotos/resultaat/weergave/record/layout/default?id=c5767be4-d156-11df-8ddc-86e145576265> and

<http://www.regionaalarchiefwestbrabant.nl/zoeken/films-en-fotos/resultaat/weergave/record/layout/default?id=c567025e-d156-11df-8ddc-86e145576265>)

¹⁵⁰⁹ M. Meijwaard, "Het Begin ...," in N.N. (*Samen: Herdenkingsboekje n.a.v. het 25 jarig bestaan van de ned. geref. kerk diakonia te rijsbergen* (Rijsbergen: n.p., 1984), 9.

¹⁵¹⁰ W. Van der Veer, "God Alleen de Eer!: Een interview met Ds. J. Van Katwijk," in N.N. (1984), 1.

¹⁵¹¹ N.N. "Kerknieuws: Kerkinstituering," *Opbouw* 3, no. 2 (April 10, 1959): 16.

¹⁵¹² F. van Deursen, "In memoriam ds. Jan van Katwijk: 8 aug. 1914 - 31 januari 1998," *Opbouw* 42, no. 4 (February 20, 1998).

the small council as teaching elder¹⁵¹³. The church plant starts with seven families, fourteen professing members, and twenty-three baptized members; thirty-seven in total¹⁵¹⁴. The local Roman Catholic priest, Dr. Van Oosterhout¹⁵¹⁵, arranges for their worship services to be held in the arts and crafts room of the local girls' patronage building, '*het meisjespatronaat*'¹⁵¹⁶. The Roman Catholics also allow the congregation to place a small house organ in the patronage building, which can be played by the wife of Jan van Katwijk during worship. In October 1960 the small congregation is growing,¹⁵¹⁷ and so the church starts making plans for a new building¹⁵¹⁸. Later the church buys a wooden shack, previously used as a workshop in Utrecht for the training of young *Werkspoor* railway workers, and rebuilds it as a community center and sanctuary¹⁵¹⁹. On November 18, 1962 the new building is dedicated¹⁵²⁰. During the few years before the dedication of the building the congregation has welcomed children at the Lord's Supper, becoming the first protestant church in the Netherlands to do so.

4.3.2. *The short story*

The story of children at the Lord's Supper in Rijsbergen may be best told by first sharing the short summary of Van den Brink and Van der Kwast¹⁵²¹:

"On a certain Sunday, when the Lord's Supper table was set, a woman from Roman Catholic background and mother of fourteen children took her daughter named Maria to the table; completely unsuspecting. The church council was in complete shock: this, of course, could not be. The woman was admonished, but the office bearers could not match her conviction that the Lord loved her little daughter. Eight Reformed liberated pastors, one Netherlands Reformed (NRC, PGS) and one synodical Reformed (RCN, PGS) professor were consulted about the question where public profession of faith originated from. None of the answers satisfied the church council. In the end the church council decided to leave it to parents

¹⁵¹³ Maikel de Kreek, and Jannet M. van de Wal-Noorman, eds., *50 jaar 'Diakonia' te Rijsbergen* (Rijsbergen: Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk Rijsbergen, 2009), 9.

¹⁵¹⁴ Minutes *Manslidmaten vergadering*, March 5, 1959. N.N. (1984), Of.

¹⁵¹⁵ Dr. Cornelius Adrianus Christiaan van Oosterhout (1899-1969). Albert DelaHaye, *Parochie en kerk van Rijsbergen (eerste deel)* (Zundert: Archivaat "Nassau-Brabant," 1973), 44.

¹⁵¹⁶ Minutes *Manslidmaten vergadering*, March 5, 1959.

¹⁵¹⁷ 37 members in 1959, 43 in 1960, 60 in 1961, 78 in 1962. N.N. (1984), 0.

¹⁵¹⁸ Minutes *Manslidmaten vergadering*, January 27, 1961.

¹⁵¹⁹ H. Malda, "Het ontstaan van wat nu onze kerkzaal is," in N.N. (1984), 20

¹⁵²⁰ Minutes council meeting, January 4, 1963.

¹⁵²¹ Pastor G. van den Brink served the church of Eindhoven from May 1961 until August 1970. The church of Eindhoven in that period is part of the same Classis as the church of Rijsbergen.

whether or not to celebrate the Lord's Supper as a whole family. The parents were responsible and would be taught in the doctrine of the covenant. An explicit decision to admit children, has never been made, nor a decision to discard the public profession of faith."¹⁵²²

To understand how this change could take place I will provide a thick description by 'thickening' this short summary with more relevant details, and by 'thickening' the story with context that helps to understand its meaning¹⁵²³.

4.3.3. Liberation and article 31

At that time the church of Rijsbergen belongs to the denomination of Reformed Churches liberated. This denomination broke away from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in 1944, stressing that God's covenantal promises determine the status of the children of believers and that those promises are sufficient and solid ground for their baptism and thus strongly disagreeing with the alternative Kuyperian perspective as supported by synod that presumed regeneration determines the status and provides the grounds for baptism. In the eyes of the new denomination, synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands had not respected the authority of local churches as safeguarded in article 31 of the church order. The denomination perceived itself as the true continuation of the Reformed Churches, but in order to be distinguished from the other Reformed Churches they nicknamed themselves Reformed Churches *maintaining article 31*, or Reformed Churches *liberated*, as the denomination felt liberated from the yoke of synod with its unbiblical demands. Importantly, in this context from the very beginning the church of Rijsbergen puts great emphasis on God's covenantal promises as determining the status of children¹⁵²⁴; they feel liberated and free to reform doctrine and practice in obedience to Scripture¹⁵²⁵; they have a historical distrust of church hierarchy; and they have renewed their emphasis on the local church as in church order article 31, to

¹⁵²² G. Van den Brink and H.J. van der Kwast, *Een kerk ging stuk: Relas van de breuk die optrad binnen de Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt) in de jaren 1967-1974* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1992), 224 (my translation).

¹⁵²³ Cf. Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," and "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz* (New York: Basic Books, 2000). A. Dinter, H.G. Heimbrock and K. Söderblom, eds., *Einführung in die Empirische Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 226f.

¹⁵²⁴ In his (concept) speech to classis in 1966 Jan van Katwijk would appeal to this shared history: "Het zal in een vergadering van gereformeerde broeders, die zich in 1944 vrijmaakten van een leerbesluit waarin aan de vastigheid van Gods verbond werd getornd, duidelijk zijn ...," etc. Jan van Katwijk, *Concept Getuigenis* (Rijsbergen: 1966), 4.

¹⁵²⁵ Van Katwijk described the change as continuing reformation and edited that to continuing return ("voortgaande reformatie" "voortgaande wederkeer"). Van Katwijk (1966), 7.

the point that others will accuse the congregation of independentism or congregationalism¹⁵²⁶.

4.3.4. *The mother congregation in Breda*

It is also good to realize that the church is a church plant of the Reformed Church liberated of Breda. This congregation had distinguished itself by a number of divergent customs such as monthly celebration of the Lord's Supper every first Sunday of the month¹⁵²⁷. Even before the church is instituted, the male church membership meeting of March 5, 1959 decides to celebrate the Lord's Supper with the same monthly frequency. Every last Sunday of the month Pastor Telder of Breda will serve the Lord's Supper in the afternoon service¹⁵²⁸. In the same spirit of freedom, the young congregation of Rijsbergen takes the liberty to make decisions regarding the administration of the sacraments and the status of children within the congregation. On January 12, 1960, the meeting of male members decides that the congregation, which is still without an official pastor, is not bound to invite pastors from other congregations to serve the sacraments. One of the arguments used in the meeting is that only the two offices of deacon and elder should be distinguished¹⁵²⁹. On January 27, 1961, Meijwaard communicates on behalf of church council that in the information provided for the denominational yearbook of 1961 no distinction has been made between professing members and baptized members. "The children are members of the congregation as well." The brothers are challenged to lead their children accordingly¹⁵³⁰.

4.3.5. *A Roman mother and her daughter*

On January 12, 1960 the minutes of the congregation's male members' meeting mention that Mrs. Wijngaards and her daughter Rietje have come

¹⁵²⁶ For example "Een exponent kreeg het independentisme in die jaren te Rijsbergen," C.G. Bos, *Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis na 1945* (Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1980), 108. Wim Nabers would write what appears to be his master's thesis about the congregational nature of Rijsbergen: Wim Nabers, *De 'Vrije Gemeente' te Rijsbergen: Een studie over een kerkelijke gemeente als organisatie*.

¹⁵²⁷ Other distinguishing features are the emphasis on tithing, the refusal of classical church visitation, life-long serving office bearers, the refusal of wedding ceremonies in church other than a prayer for a blessing in the Sunday services, the abolishment of the celebration of Christian holidays other than the Sunday services. B. Telder, *Vrijgemaakt tot gehoorzaamheid: Memorabilia uit het gemeentelijk leven van de Gereformeerde Kerk van Breda (vrijgemaakt)* (Breda: Kerkeraad Gereformeerde Kerk te Breda (vrijgemaakt), 1960).

¹⁵²⁸ Minutes, Manslidmatenvergadering RCL Rijsbergen, March 5, 1959, decision 7.

¹⁵²⁹ Minutes, Manslidmatenvergadering RCL Rijsbergen, January 12, 1960. See also Minutes of council meeting August 15, 1960.

¹⁵³⁰ Minutes, Manslidmatenvergadering RCL Rijsbergen, January 27, 1961.

over from the Roman Catholic Church in the past year¹⁵³¹. An interview with the daughter, her brother and his wife provides extra information¹⁵³². Carolina Wijngaards was born in 1907¹⁵³³. In her youth she must have attended elementary school, but she is portrayed as an illiterate woman by Jan Van Katwijk¹⁵³⁴. Carolina married a devout Roman Catholic¹⁵³⁵ uneducated factory worker¹⁵³⁶, and became the mother of eight boys and seven girls¹⁵³⁷. Her youngest daughter Maria Cornelia Wijngaards was born two years after World War II and was nicknamed Riet¹⁵³⁸. In 1959 when the Roman Catholic pastor fails to visit her son in the hospital, while another church member in the same hospital room does receive visits, she joins the Reformed Church¹⁵³⁹, taking her youngest daughter with her¹⁵⁴⁰. When the daughter joins the Reformed Church she is twelve years old. Maria remembers how she had already received her first Communion, the so-called small Communion around age seven or eight¹⁵⁴¹ and the so-called large Communion at age twelve¹⁵⁴². Maria does not remember when her mother took her to the Lord's Supper in the Reformed Church for the first time.

4.3.6. *Sofie's diary 1961-1962*

The minutes of council and of the male members' meetings do not mention her participation either, let alone the date of it. Remarkably enough they do not even mention the issue of children at the Lord's Supper. For more information we depend on the memory of Sofie van Katwijk, wife of teaching

¹⁵³¹ Minutes, *Manslidmatenvergadering*, January 12, 1960. Or more likely since the last council meeting of November 12, 1959.

¹⁵³² Maria, Gerard and Gerda Wijngaards, interview by author, November 21, 2012.

¹⁵³³ Carolina Wijngaards-de Bruin (1907-1994).

¹⁵³⁴ Jan van Katwijk, *Concept Getuigenis* (Rijsbergen: 1966), 5.

¹⁵³⁵ His children share how their father attended Mass daily and, though uneducated, was able to recite the Latin Mass by heart.

¹⁵³⁶ Working at the Hero factory in Breda.

¹⁵³⁷ One daughter by the name of Maria had died at a very young age and according to custom the next daughter was given the same name.

¹⁵³⁸ Maria Cornelia Wijngaards, born June 1947.

¹⁵³⁹ The way her children remember the story, their mother was deeply insulted by this negligence and perceived favoritism of the pastor. One wonders whether the story should also be understood in light of class conflict. The pastor served the majority Roman Catholic Church in the village and was a former seminary professor, DelaHaye (1973), 44. The Reformed Church represented a minority in the village, a church of people belonging to the new factory, and served by an elder who did not even have a theological degree.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Note that all the older children as well as Maria's younger brother Theo remained Roman Catholic.

¹⁵⁴¹ Small Communion (*klein communie*) at the 'age of discretion' coincided approximately with the entry into elementary school. See Eddie Niesten, *Op de wijze van de chef: Keuken en tafel: 1* (Antwerpen: Garant, 2011), 122-124.

¹⁵⁴² Large Communion (*groot communie*) at the age of twelve coincided with the end of the school career for most children and entry into the workforce and in that sense formed a rite of passage into adulthood. Niesten (2011), 122-124.

elder Jan van Katwijk, who makes short notes in her diary about sermon texts, about the names of guests, and also on congregational meetings. On Wednesday, March 28, 1962, she writes “Our 3rd congregational meeting. We had a beautiful meeting in which the Supper celebration of children was discussed. From this flowed forth: Why not Supper every Sunday, as this also happened in the first Christian church of Acts; we should take our direction from that. Everyone who spoke out in favor also appeared to be in favor of gathering only once on the day of the Lord. And then a complete service with the Supper, according to brother Adam. Before we implement this home visits will be made by our leaders.”¹⁵⁴³ Before that congregational meeting we find notes in her diary about the whole congregation or all attendees celebrating the Lord’s Supper¹⁵⁴⁴. But the most important diary note is that on Tuesday August 29, 1961: “Celebrated Supper, almost the whole congregation, among whom Arie Ruis and Linda Overduin and Dick Vermeulen.”¹⁵⁴⁵ At that moment Arie Ruis and Linda Overduin are seven years old, Dick Vermeulen is seventeen years old¹⁵⁴⁶. It is Sofie’s first recording of a Lord’s Supper service. The first Lord’s Supper celebration after the congregational meeting is the first time that children are mentioned again. Sofie van Katwijk writes on Sunday, April 29, 1962 in the afternoon: “The whole congregation celebrated Supper. The children as well.”

4.3.7. A teenage girl

It is impossible to pinpoint the date that Carolina Wijngaards took her daughter Maria to the Lord’s Supper. It must have been between the moment the Wijngaards joined the church at the end of 1959 and that Sunday, August 27, 1961, when other participating children are mentioned¹⁵⁴⁷. Taking all

¹⁵⁴³ “Onze 3^e gemeenteverg. We hadden een prachtige vergadering waar ter sprake kwam de avondmaalsviering van de kinderen. Hieruit vloeide voort waarom niet iedere Zondag Avondmaal, daar dit bij de eerste Christengemeente in Handelingen ook gebeurde; daar moeten we ons ook naar richten. Ieder die zich er voor uitsprak bleek ook voor één maal samenkomen op de dag des Heren en dan een complete dienst volgens br. Adam met avondmaal. Hier zal nog huisbezoek gedaan worden door onze voorgangers voor we hiertoe overgaan.”

¹⁵⁴⁴ Sundays January 28 and March 25, 1961.

¹⁵⁴⁵ “Avondmaal gevierd. Bijna met de geheele gemeente, waaronder Arie Ruis en Linda Overduin en Dick Vermeulen.” She also mentions that 42 persons attended that afternoon service.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Arie Ruis was born August 24, 1954, Linda Overduin, December 9, 1953, and Dick Vermeulen September 28, 1943.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Van Katwijk suggests that some were already open to the idea of children participating, but stresses that Maria was the first to actually participate. “We zaten met deze punten Hoewel het voor velen onzer reeds duidelijk was dat de Schrift nergens de tafel toesloot voor de kinderen en dat de Bijbel van een doen van Openbare belijdenis als middel om toegelaten te worden niet afweet (...) Maar tot een zekere verandering kwamen we niet. We zaten er mee en bleven er mee zitten. Totdat dan geschiedde waarop we reeds wezen - een R.K. zuster, sedert kort tot ons overgekomen kwam naar tafel met haar dochtertje,” Van Katwijk (1966), 5.

things in consideration, I posit that likely this happened in the first half of 1961¹⁵⁴⁸. So even though Van den Brink, Van der Kwast and Van Katwijk speak of a little daughter¹⁵⁴⁹, Maria would have been age thirteen¹⁵⁵⁰.

In the short version of the story we heard how the first response of council was shock and the conviction that this could not be¹⁵⁵¹. Knowing who Jan Van Katwijk was, and who Marinus Meijwaard and Daniël Cornelis Overduin were, may help to understand their initial shock but also their willingness to reconsider their position on this issue.

4.3.8. Teaching elder Jan van Katwijk

Jan van Katwijk was born on August 8, 1914. He grew up in Schiedam and was greatly influenced by Pastor Cornelis Vonk who served the church of Schiedam from 1932 until 1972. Vonk was a prominent pastor in the Reformed Churches liberated. Vonk was part of the *Scripture Movement*¹⁵⁵² in the 1930s and put great emphasis on exegesis and teaching in his sermons and popular commentaries on Scripture¹⁵⁵³. Vonk probably deserves credit for the fact that Van Katwijk was praised for his knowledge of Scripture¹⁵⁵⁴. Vonk also

¹⁵⁴⁸ Lord's Supper was celebrated in the afternoon. Until 1962 Sofie Van Katwijk also registers only Lord's Supper celebrations in the afternoon, and so Jan Van Katwijk must be mistaken when, in 1966, he recalls that famous Sunday morning "daar zat zij dan op die voor ons zo beroemde Zondagmorgen," Van Katwijk (1966), 6. And we have to consider the possibility that Wijngaards may have normally attended morning services. The intention was to celebrate Lord's Supper services monthly, but we know that, due to absence of pastors, sometimes Lord's Supper was skipped three months in a row. Minutes council meeting August 15, 1960. 22 years later Jan van Katwijk says in retrospect "all in all we took a long time," ("al met al hebben we er lang over gedaan"). Van der Veer (1984), 4. But considering the speed at which other major decisions were taken and implemented, more than the eight months it seems to have taken at least may have been considered long anyhow. This also best explains the silence on the issue of the prior minutes of council meetings and male members meetings. Otherwise the second half of 1960 would have been just as likely.

¹⁵⁴⁹ "dochtertje," Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992), 224. Van der Veer (1984), 2.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Later Van Katwijk estimates her age at the time of first participation at 8. ("Het meisje zal toen acht jaar zijn geweest"). But she reached that age in 1955. Van Katwijk (1966), 3. Van Deursen, a colleague and good friend of Van Katwijk, speaks of a thirteen year old daughter, and though he does so 36 years later, by memory, he is probably right. Van Deursen (1998).

¹⁵⁵¹ Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992), 224. Jan van Katwijk recounts: "To our shock we saw how the woman took her little daughter to the Supper. That shocked us terribly as office bearers. That could not be, of course," Van der Veer (1984), 2

¹⁵⁵² The "Schriftbeweging," also "reformatorische beweging" or "reformatorische opleving" has been defined as renewal in listening to Scripture as the Word, which our Covenant God speaks to his people in the present time. H. Smit, "Reformatorische opleving: De reformatorische opleving binnen de gereformeerde kerken in de dertiger jaren van de twintigste eeuw," in *Begeleidend Schrijven: 25 Jaar Theologische StudieBegeleiding*, J. Bouma *et al.* (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1994), 121.

¹⁵⁵³ The series *De voorzeide leer* by C. Vonk and F. van Deursen is currently translated into English by Theodore Plantinga and Nelson D. Kloosterman and published by the Christian Library Press under the title *Opening the Scriptures*.

¹⁵⁵⁴ Dick de Wild for example comments about his Bible studies, "He knew an awful lot about the Bible," interview with author, October 2012.

influenced Van Katwijk in his emphasis on the covenant¹⁵⁵⁵. His military career probably brought Jan van Katwijk to the garrison town Breda where he befriended Pastor Bartus Telder. Van Katwijk shared Telder's views on Christian mortalism or soul sleep¹⁵⁵⁶, and also shared the spirit of freedom to independently change traditional church practices which were not deemed according to Scripture. In Breda, Van Katwijk also befriended A. Janse, the schoolmaster from Biggekerke, who probably already had influenced Van Katwijk in Schiedam¹⁵⁵⁷. Janse was similarly part of the *Scripture Movement* of the 1930s, emphasized the covenant, and probably influenced Van Katwijk significantly in his views on mysticism and self-examination¹⁵⁵⁸. Also influential in Van Katwijk's life was his grandmother, a devout Christian with Jewish roots. When he was hardly eight years old she had prophesied that "little Jan will proclaim the gospel,"¹⁵⁵⁹ and she also instilled a love for the Jewish people and for Israel in her grandson¹⁵⁶⁰. It is not unlikely that Jan van Katwijk had been confronted with the question of children at the Lord's Supper even before Maria Wijngaards participated. Charter member Dick Vermeulen, who was sixteen when the church was instituted and eighteen when children were officially welcomed to the Lord's Supper, remembers discussing the question with Jan van Katwijk in catechism class¹⁵⁶¹.

4.3.9. *The brothers-in-law Meijwaard, Overduin*

We already mentioned that Marinus Meijwaard¹⁵⁶² was the other elder and that Daniël Christiaan Overduin¹⁵⁶³ was the only deacon. The two became brothers in law when Meijwaard married Anna Overduin in 1952. Their mutual father, Johannes Overduin, came from a family of many pastors¹⁵⁶⁴ and was pastor of the conservative and pietistic Reformed Congregation in Restored

¹⁵⁵⁵ Frans van Deursen, "Alle vormen zijn geoorloofd, behalve de vervelende: Ds. C. Vonk (1904-1993), leraar van de Schrift," in *Vuur en Vlam: Kinderen van de Vrijmaking: Deel III*, edited by R. Kuiper and W. Bouwman (Amsterdam: Buiten & Schipperheijn Motief, 2004), 70-91. Note how Van Deursen explicitly mentions Jan van Katwijk's loyalty to Vonk on page 75.

¹⁵⁵⁶ B. Telder, *Sterven ... en dan? Gaan de kinderen Gods, wanneer zij sterven, naar de hemel?* (Kampen: Kok, 1960). See also W.L. de Graaff's master's thesis: *De 'Kwestie Telder': Een kerk-historisch onderzoek* (Kampen: 1999).

¹⁵⁵⁷ Van Deursen (2004), 71.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Geert van Dijk, *Het concrete is het wezenlijke: Het denken van A. Janse van Biggekerke (1890-1960) over Gods verbond met mensen* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Academic, 2014). See on the broader discussion on self-examination, Jan Veenhof, "Discussie over het zelfonderzoek – sleutel tot verstaan van het schisma van 1944: Terreinverkenning ten dienste van verder onderzoek," in *Vrij gereformeerd: Verzamelde artikelen etc.* (Kampen: Kok, 2005).

¹⁵⁵⁹ Van Deursen (1998).

¹⁵⁶⁰ Jan van Katwijk, conversation with author, autumn 1997.

¹⁵⁶¹ Dick Vermeulen, telephone conversation with author, July 2011.

¹⁵⁶² Marinus Meijwaard (1922-1998).

¹⁵⁶³ Daniël Christiaan Overduin (1927-2003).

¹⁵⁶⁴ "De naam Overduin is bekend onder de predikanten," *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, March 7, 1975.

Bond¹⁵⁶⁵ of Sliedrecht. Of this large congregation only a handful of professing members would dare to participate in the Lord's Supper. This spiritual climate was not new for Meijwaard because he attended a similar conservative and pietistic Christian Reformed Church in Sliedrecht¹⁵⁶⁶. Van Katwijk speaks about the "fact that remarkably many brothers and sisters from spiritualistic, subjectivist denominations or groups have joined our congregation (...) who, especially regarding the seed of the Covenant, have been imprinted with evil, baneful teachings"¹⁵⁶⁷. The move of both brothers-in-law and their families across the river into Roman Catholic area, and their choice to join the Reformed Church liberated, signifies a major spiritual shift from a pietistic climate where self-examination nurtured uncertainty about one's election and salvation toward a covenantal climate where solid trust in God's own promises gave believers certainty. The next generation explains how Meijwaard and Overduin — and other family members who would follow them — experienced this as liberating¹⁵⁶⁸. Their excitement about these new insights and the important role that Van Katwijk probably played in their 'conversion' become visible in the initiative of Meijwaard to take Van Katwijk to Sliedrecht to lead his family members in Bible study¹⁵⁶⁹. Overduin shares how, apparently before the episode with Maria Wijngaards, his daughter Linda had raised the question of children's participation. Overduin tells how his children behaved well while he and his wife participated. When father Overduin complimented his children on their obedience afterwards, daughter Linda replied that she also would have been obedient if she would have celebrated the Lord's Supper¹⁵⁷⁰.

¹⁵⁶⁵ Gereformeerde Gemeente in Hersteld Verband.

¹⁵⁶⁶ With pastors such as Everard du Marchie van Voorthuysen, from 1945 until 1952, who would later join the even more pietistic Old Reformed Congregations in the Netherlands (Oud Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland). Cornelis Smits who also served the Old Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids between 1954 and 1956. Dick de Wild, interview with author, October 2012. Dick de Wild was married to a sister of Marinus Meijwaard.

¹⁵⁶⁷ "het feit dat er tot onze gemeente opmerkelijk veel broeders en zusters waren toegetreden die afkomstig waren uit spiritualistische, subjectivistische kerkgemeenschappen of groepen. Broeders en zusters, die men met name ten aanzien van het zaad des Verbonds kwade, verderfelijke leringen had ingeprent. Ik behoef in deze kring niet te wijzen op welke manier men in genoemde kerkengroepen over het zaad des Verbonds pleegt te spreken. Slechts noem ik: "Er moet wat met Uw kind gebeuren" "Het is maar bij een uitwendig Verbond," "Het moet nog in het echte komen" "En het moet maar afwachten of het Gode behaagt enz.," Van Katwijk (1966), 4.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Arie and Linda Ruis-Overduin, interview with author, October 2012. Linda is Overduin's daughter and Meijwaards niece, Arie is Overduin's son in law, but also Meijwaards nephew.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Dick de Wild, interview with author, October 2012.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Overduin, "Uit de kindermond," in N.N. (1984), 23. See also Van Katwijk (1966), 4.

4.3.10. *Conversations with Carolina*

We have heard about the initial shock of Van Katwijk, Overduin and Meijwaard, when Carolina Wijngaards took her daughter Maria to the Lord's Supper. Van den Brink and Van der Kwast write that the mother was admonished. Van Katwijk simply mentions that the office bearers decided he had to visit her¹⁵⁷¹. When Van Katwijk visits her, she expresses "her conviction that the Lord loved her little daughter"¹⁵⁷². Van Katwijk recalls how she said: "Yes, that is what you always preach about on Sundays. You always say that God loves our children. Well, if God loves me, He also loves little Maria. And that's why I take her with me. She belongs there too, doesn't she?"¹⁵⁷³ In other versions of the story she more explicitly mentions his preaching on the covenant¹⁵⁷⁴ and even reminds Van Katwijk how he had repeatedly said, "It is for you and your seed"¹⁵⁷⁵. Van Katwijk appreciates how an illiterate woman like Carolina Wijngaards completely depends on preaching and teaching¹⁵⁷⁶. Carolina Wijngaards possibly also threatens to leave the church, if Maria is not allowed to take Communion¹⁵⁷⁷. Van Katwijk recalls how he quickly left¹⁵⁷⁸. He and the other office bearers can not match her conviction¹⁵⁷⁹, as they feel she is completely right¹⁵⁸⁰.

4.3.11. *Consulting pastors and professors*

Nevertheless their challenge remained how to solve the situation. Van Katwijk mentions congregational meetings which were organized in response to the question¹⁵⁸¹. There is no trace of additional congregational or male members'

¹⁵⁷¹ "We talked about it: what must we do? I would have to go there," Van der Veer (1984), 2. (my translation).

¹⁵⁷² Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992), 224.

¹⁵⁷³ "Ja, daar preekt U 's zondags toch altijd over. U zegt altijd dat God ook van onze kinderen houdt. Nu als God van mij houdt, dan houdt Hij ook van Marietje. En daarom neem ik haar mee. Ze hoort er toch ook bij?" Van der Veer (1984), 2.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Jan van Katwijk, conversation with author, autumn 1997.

¹⁵⁷⁵ "Blijkbaar was het "U en Uw zaad" bij haar in de ziel verzonken," Van Katwijk (1966), 6. Van Deursen (1998). Cf. Gen. 17:7 etc.

¹⁵⁷⁶ "... omdat dit schaap van Christus Jezus analfabete is. Ons zeggen is vaak: ze kan niet lezen, ze kan niet schrijven, ze kan alleen maar geloven. Als we onze Bijbelkringavonden hebben ligt voor haar de Bijbel dicht. In haar geval geldt het dat wij, als haar broeders en zusters, haar het Woord moeten openen. Ze moet alles van horen zeggen hebben. U zult verstaan dat onze verantwoordelijkheid daarin groot is. Het luistert juist bij haar zo nauw. Zij mist het vermogen als de mensen van Berea om later thuis te onderzoeken of deze dingen alzo zijn. Wel, zij dan heeft uit wat zij hoorde, hoewel in de Zondagse samenkomsten niet gesproken was over de kinderen behoren ook aan de dis des Verbonds, zij heeft uit wat de Schriften leren blijkbaar begrepen: Maria mag ook aan tafel," Van Katwijk (1966), 5.

¹⁵⁷⁷ She said "Als zij niet binnen [mag PGS] dan kom ik ook niet mee," remembers Gerard Wijngaards, son of Carolina, from the stories he has heard. Interview with author, November, 2012.

¹⁵⁷⁸ "Toen ben ik maar haastig weggegaan," Van der Veer (1984), 2.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992), 224.

¹⁵⁸⁰ "Maar ja, het is eigenlijk helemaal waar," Van der Veer (1984), 2.

¹⁵⁸¹ "We zijn toen gemeentevergaderingen gaan houden," Van der Veer (1984), 2.

meetings in the archives of the church, nor of the subject being on the agenda in the minutes of the regular meetings. Considering that the congregation had approximately sixty members and that only professing male members had voting rights, these extra meetings likely were rather informal meetings of the church ‘patriarchs’, of whom there were less than a dozen. A few fundamental questions were asked: *How should the Lord’s Supper really be? What does Scripture say about that? What does history say about it? Where does public profession of faith come from? That’s where it is stated that thus one receives admission to the Lord’s Supper*¹⁵⁸².

Van Katwijk is given the task to consult with some pastors about the questions, especially the last question: where does public profession of faith come from? Van Katwijk approaches eight pastors from the Reformed Churches liberated, one professor from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and one professor from the Netherlands Reformed Church¹⁵⁸³. The latter was probably Professor Hendrik Jonker¹⁵⁸⁴, one of the first Netherlands Reformed theologians suggesting that children should be included in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, late 1961 or early 1962¹⁵⁸⁵.

4.3.12. *The Dutch church in London*

All ten answer that they do not know for sure where public profession of faith originated¹⁵⁸⁶. The Netherlands Reformed professor suggests that the origins can be traced to the first Dutch refugee church in London. In the days of the Reformation many people from Flanders sought refuge in England. The church they instituted started to require public profession of faith because there were so many among those refugees who had fled because of relational or business trouble and not because of the new doctrine¹⁵⁸⁷. The story of the

¹⁵⁸² “Hoe zit het eigenlijk met het Avondmaal? Wat zegt de Schrift daarover? Wat zegt de geschiedenis ervan? Waar komt het doen van openbare geloofsbelijdenis vandaan? Daar wordt immer gesteld: Aldus toegang krijgend tot de Maaltijd des Heren,” Van der Veer (1984), 2.

¹⁵⁸³ “Ik kreeg de opdracht om één en ander na te vragen bij een aantal predikanten. Ik heb dat gedaan bij 8 vrijgemaakte, 1 synodaal gereformeerde en 1 hervormde professor. Alle tien heb ik de vraag voorgelegd: Waar komt het doen van openbare geloofsbelijdenis vandaan?” Van der Veer (1984), 2f.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Jan van Katwijk, conversation with author, autumn 1997.

¹⁵⁸⁵ H. Jonker, *Liturgische Oriëntatie: Gesprekken over de eredienst* (Wageningen: Zomer & Keuning, n.d.), 133.

¹⁵⁸⁶ “Van alle tien kregen we hetzelfde antwoord: Dat weten we niet precies,” Van der Veer (1984), 3.

¹⁵⁸⁷ “Waarschijnlijk heeft die hervormde professor de vraag het beste beantwoord. Hij vermoedde dat het ontstaan is in de Engelse vluchtelingenkerk. In de tijd van de reformatie zijn er veel mensen uit Vlaanderen gevlucht naar Engeland. Die hebben daar een kerk geïnstitueerd. Daar waren de predikanten à Lasco en Maarten Mikronius. Er bleek dat er veel mensen overgestoken waren naar Engeland, niet vanwege de nieuwe leer, maar omdat ze moeite hadden met de vrouw of zakelijke moeiten. Dus er zat veel ‘vuil’ volk tussen. Ds. Mikronius stelde daarom voor om alle gemeenteleden voo de kerkenraad te laten komen om

Dutch Church in London seems to have intrigued Jan van Katwijk. His copy of the book *De Hollandsche Vreemdelingen-Gemeente te Londen*¹⁵⁸⁸ shows the marks of intensive reading¹⁵⁸⁹. Remarkably, both congregations provided catechism for youth starting at the age of five¹⁵⁹⁰, and such practice might suggest that Jan van Katwijk's interest in this congregation predated his conversation with Jonker. Possibly this first Dutch, Reformed congregation in the eyes of Van Katwijk shared its original unspoiled character with the first apostolic church of Acts 2.

4.3.13. Scripture studied

As much as Van Katwijk appreciates the answer by Jonker, none of the answers satisfies the church council¹⁵⁹¹. Therefore the question remains, and Scripture is once again searched for answers¹⁵⁹². The brothers come to the conclusion that Scripture nowhere closes the table to children¹⁵⁹³ and that the Bible does not know about public profession of faith as means to be admitted to the table¹⁵⁹⁴. The participation of the children of Israel in the Passover and the fact that covenant children are equal to these children of Israel has great significance for the Rijsbergen congregation¹⁵⁹⁵. The brothers come to the understanding that the reference of the Lord's Supper form to 1 Corinthians 11 regarding eating and drinking condemnation is fundamentally incorrect and that the required discernment does not exclude children¹⁵⁹⁶. They also feel encouraged by the practice of the earliest Christian churches, where

publiek hun geloof te belijden. Volgens die hervormde professor ligt daar waarschijnlijk de oorsprong. Maar hij wist het niet zeker," Van der Veer (1984), 3.

¹⁵⁸⁸ M. Woudstra, *De Hollandsche Vreemdelingen-Gemeente te Londen: gedurende de eerste jaren van haar bestaan* (Groningen: Wolters, 1908).

¹⁵⁸⁹ We received his copy as a personal gift. Underlining, marginal notes, and exclamation marks reveal intensive reading.

¹⁵⁹⁰ Minutes, Manslidmatenvergadering RCL Rijsbergen, March 5, 1959, decision 6.

¹⁵⁹¹ Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992), 224.

¹⁵⁹² "We hebben ons daarna weer afgevraagd: Wat zegt de Schrift ervan?" Van der Veer (1984), 3.

¹⁵⁹³ E.g. "het voor velen onzer reeds duidelijk was dat de Schrift nergens de tafel toesloot voor de kinderen," Van Katwijk (1966), 5.

¹⁵⁹⁴ E.g. "Dat de Bijbel van een doen van Openbere belijdenis als middel om toegelaten te worden niet afweet," Van Katwijk (1966), 5.

¹⁵⁹⁵ E.g. "We dachten aan het Pascha. Daar zitten de kinderen erbij. Hoe oud waren die kinderen? Uiteindelijk hebben we gezegd: We zien geen enkel bezwaar om de kinderen mee te laten vieren. Als het kinderen van Gods verbond zijn dan zien wij ze niet anders dan de kinderen in Israël destijds, die aan de viering van het Pascha meededen, ja zelfs móesten meedoen." Van der Veer (1984), 3. "We begrepen reeds lang dat waar in Israël ook de jonge kinderen mee aanzaten als de opstanding uit de Egyptische dood werd herdacht (...) de tegenwoordige Avondmaalspraktijk eenvoudig een na-apostolische nieuwigheid was," Van Katwijk (1966), 5.

¹⁵⁹⁶ E.g. "We begrepen voorts dat het beroep in het z.g. Avondmaalsformulier op 1 Cor. 11 terzake van het zich 'ten oordeel eten en drinken' door en door onjuist was." "Hadden wij haar met een verkeerd beroep op 1 Corinthe 11 moeten zeggen dat haar dochtertje nog niet onderscheiden kon? Waarom wij in de Gereformeerde wereld spreken van 'tot onderscheid van jaren gekomen zijn'?" Van Katwijk (1966), 5,6.

mothers took their infants to the table¹⁵⁹⁷. Van Katwijk will later emphasize that welcoming children at the table is not a novelty¹⁵⁹⁸. The church community is perceived in covenantal terms, and “[w]ords such as ‘admission’ and ‘barring’ do not belong in a covenantal community”¹⁵⁹⁹. The Lord’s Table is understood accordingly as “the table at which the congregation, and not a certain part of it, together remembers the death of Christ”¹⁶⁰⁰. Van Katwijk feels that “the celebration of the Lord’s Supper never should have been eclipsed behind the very dangerous word sacrament, a word which is alien to the Bible”¹⁶⁰¹.

4.3.14. *The Spirit of the Lord and a congregational meeting*

At the third congregational meeting on March 28, 1962, the deliberations and discussion come to a conclusion. Van den Brink and Van der Kwast write: “In the end the church council decided to leave it to parents whether or not to celebrate the Lord’s Supper as a whole family. The parents were responsible and would be taught in the doctrine of the covenant. An explicit decision to admit children, has never been made, nor a decision to discard the public profession of faith”¹⁶⁰². The documents confirm that an explicit decision has not been recorded in any minutes. But they do suggest that a decision was made by consensus in the congregational meeting. Sofie van Katwijk seems to have experienced this harmony and consensus as sign that the Spirit of the Lord rested on this meeting¹⁶⁰³. The feeling that God’s own work could be recognized in these developments was shared by many in the congregation¹⁶⁰⁴.

¹⁵⁹⁷ “We begrepen (...) dat waar in de vroege Christengemeenten moeders zelfs hun schootkinderen meenamen naar de Dis, de tegenwoordige Avondmaalspraktijk eenvoudig een na-apostolische nieuwigheid was,” Van Katwijk (1966), 5. Sofie van Katwijk registers this argument in her diary notes on the 3rd congregational meeting.

¹⁵⁹⁸ Van Katwijk (1966), passim.

¹⁵⁹⁹ “En dat woorden als toelaten en afhouden in de Verbonds gemeente duidelijk niet thuishoorden,” Van Katwijk (1966), 5.

¹⁶⁰⁰ “Maar dat wij positief uit de Heilige Schriften verstonden wat de tafel des Heren is, namelijk de tafel waaraan de gemeente, en niet een zeker deel daarvan, gezamenlijk de dood van Christus gedenkt,” Van Katwijk (1966), 6.

¹⁶⁰¹ “Dat verder de viering van het Avondmaal nooit had mogen worden verduisterd achter het Bijbelvreemde en zeer gevaarlijke woord sacrament,” Van Katwijk (1966), 5.

¹⁶⁰² Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992), 224.

¹⁶⁰³ “We mogen terugzien op een saamhorige avond waar kennelijk de Geest des Heren op rustte,” Sofie van Katwijk, diary, Wednesday March 28, 1962.

¹⁶⁰⁴ Hence probably Jan van Katwijk’s testimony (“getuigenis”) of God’s action and not defense of human decisions to Classis. “Wij wilden allereerst met nadruk stellen dat wat wij te zeggen hebben geen verdediging is van wat Uw broeders en zusters te Rijsbergen in hun gemeentelijke praktijk hebben gedaan en doen, nog minder een verantwoording van hun doen of laten, maar dat wij slechts getuigenis willen geven, van wat naar onze diepste overtuiging, de Heer der gemeente ten onzent heeft gedaan en doet. Het zal in dit getuigenis en in de discussie die daar uiteraard op volgen zal uitsluitend mogen gaan over Zijn

4.3.15. *It is the Lord's Passover*

When on Sunday April 29, 1962 the first Lord's Supper celebration takes place where children are not just tolerated but are officially welcomed, Jan van Katwijk preaches on Exodus 12: 1-10 with a sermon titled "It is the Lord's Passover"¹⁶⁰⁵.

The denominational discussion which is ignited within the Reformed Churches liberated and which, after the denomination splits, continues in the Dutch Reformed Churches, is the subject of another part of this dissertation. Both the opposition within the classis against Rijsbergen's decisions and also the procedures that follow deserve a separate study¹⁶⁰⁶. I will now focus on the developments from the perspective of visitors to the congregation and of the interviewed members and former members.

4.3.16. *The visitors' perspective*

Over the course of years Rijsbergen welcomed many visitors: at first Protestants who would go on holidays in the Roman Catholic south or fellow believers from a network of like-minded congregations, then journalists who found out about the developments in Rijsbergen, and in their wake Christians from all over the country, professors and students, sometimes as many as fifty guests on a Sunday¹⁶⁰⁷. Some of these visitors to the congregation will provide

werk," Van Katwijk (1966),1. Van Katwijk makes the discussion almost impossible by framing the developments as God's work. Ironically, this is exactly how some had framed the denomination's split or liberation of 1944 as God's work, making critical self-reflection on this denominational history almost impossible. In retrospect Arie Ruis comments "in many things the direct guidance of God was experienced," interview with author, October 19, 2012. Later qualifications of these developments as experiment would therefore certainly do no justice to the congregation's intention or perception of the developments. E.g. W.G. De Vries: "Zo haalde een experiment in de kerk te Rijsbergen zelfs de landelijke pers. Voorganger was daar een vroegere ouderling van Breda. Afgevaardigden naar de classis werden niet meer gezonden. Men hield één kerkdienst per zondag. Kinderen namen deel aan de wekelijkse avondmaalsviering," in *De Vrijmaking in het vuur: Het ontstaan van de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken in de jaren zestig* (Ermelo, Woord en Wereld, 1990), 23, 117.

¹⁶⁰⁵ "Het is des Heeren Pascha," diary Sofie van Katwijk, Sunday, April 29, 1962.

¹⁶⁰⁶ The headlines give a first indication how soon after the first news spread, the opposition started, and how the congregation's 'membership' of the denomination was at stake. "Kerknieuws: Rijsbergen," *Gereformeerde Gezinsblad*, July 25, 1964; "Voorstel aan classis: Kerk Rijsbergen buiten verband vrij. Kerken?" *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, July 27, 1964 (about the opposition by Pastor W. Vreugdenhil of Den Bosch); "Gereformeerde Kerk? Neen!" *Trouw*, September 15, 1964 (about the opposition by Pastor Tj. Boersma of Urk); "Breda en Rijsbergen in geding: Vrijgemaakte classis kan niet vergaderen," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, January 26, 1965; "Vrijgemaakte classis Brabant/Limburg weer samengeroepen," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, May 25, 1965; "Kerknieuws: Classis Noord-Brabant-Limburg en P.S. van het Zuiden," *De Reformatie*, June ...1965 (?) (about classis meeting in which the credentials of the delegates of Breda and Rijsbergen were not accepted, and the delegates not officially seated); "PS erkent minderheid: Vrijgemaakte classis uiteengevallen," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, June 11, 1966; "Nieuwe eenheid in Zuiden," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, September 16, 1967.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Van der Veer (1984), 7.

eyewitness reports in national newspapers, denominational periodicals and even women's magazines.

A visitor describes the practice in 1963: *"Every Sunday the congregation sits around the table with the children to use bread and wine together, according to the word of Paul. How simple and how relaxed. No form and no old and outdated expressions. Together faith was professed with the 12 articles. Psalm and hymn completed everything in that remarkable (and so hard to express) unique fashion. The whole service had that nice, unpretentious, pleasant character, which inspires someone - who over the course of years has felt numbed by the dark décor and set choice of words and phrases - to new active experience. Rijsbergen brings to the forefront the essence of faith and simulates personal contact with God which is otherwise suffocated under so many human outward appearances. Here tradition does not have the final say"*¹⁶⁰⁸.

An article in the national Christian newspaper *Trouw* of September 5, 1964, also gives an impression of the praxis as it develops: *"The reading of 'the law' is not part of it anymore. The sermon is rather short and after that the Holy Supper is celebrated - every Sunday -. All attend, that is the expectation: also visitors from outside the congregation and children as well, down to the very small ones"*¹⁶⁰⁹.

Several of the eyewitness reports from those years pay specific attention to children taking bread and wine and to the support provided to younger children by their parents. *"The older children at the Supper table are able to take bread from the plate and to hold the cup with wine, in the case of youth of five and six years father and mother help out and hold the cup at the mouth of children"*¹⁶¹⁰. *"The school youth takes bread and wine themselves, preschoolers of about five years are being supported by father or mother with taking the bread or holding the cup"*¹⁶¹¹. *"I saw the parents go with their*

¹⁶⁰⁸ W. van Rheeën and P. Aalbersberg, "Rijsbergen een Oase!" *Contact* (October 26, 1963): 11-12.

¹⁶⁰⁹ "Het voorlezen van "de wet" is er echter niet meer bij. De prediking is vrij kort en daarna wordt - elke zondag - het Heilig Avondmaal gevierd. Allen gaan aan, zo wordt er verwacht; ook bezoekers van buiten de gemeente en ook de kinderen, tot en met de heel kleintjes." "'t Is een doodgewone christelijke gemeente: In Rijsbergen gaan kleuters naar het heilig avondmaal en is er geen catechisatie," *Trouw*, September 5, 1964.

¹⁶¹⁰ "De oudere kinderen aan de avondmaaltafel kunnen zelf al brood van de schaal nemen en de beker met wijn vasthouden, bij de jeugd van vijf en zes jaar helpen vader of moeder even en houden de beker aan de mond van de kinderen," "Terug naar de oergestalte van de christelijke gemeente," *De Rotterdammer, Nieuwe Haagsche Courant, Nieuwe Leidsche Courant, Dordts Dagblad*, July 18, 1964.

¹⁶¹¹ "De schooljeugd neemt zelf al brood en wijn; bij kleuters vcan een jaar of vijf helpen vader of moeder wel met het nemen van brood of het vasthouden van de beker," "'t Is een doodgewone christelijke

*children and it moved me whenever such a tiny toddler received a little piece of bread in its mouth out of the hands of father or mother, and some drops from the cup were being drunk*¹⁶¹².

The chronicle writer of the Netherlands Reformed *Gereformeerd Weekblad* quotes a mother's eyewitness report as published in a women's magazine: "Some time ago I received a clipping, if I am not mistaken from the magazine *Prinses*¹⁶¹³, in which a mother tells about her experience when she participated in the Lord's Supper with her husband and children of 9, 7 and 5 years old in a church in Noord-Brabant. They were on holidays. The mother writes: We knew that the Supper was celebrated with children, but did not intend to participate. Why? I don't know. Unfamiliar possibly? After the liturgy and sermon, which fascinated us, the invitation to the Table followed. Guests and their children included. Before the service we had already met with the pastor. He knew that just because of the children we did not want to come to the Table. He already said to us then: Oh, when you see it, it will be so normal! We were seated rather in the back and therefore we saw how things went at the first Table. But our second said: Neat, eh, mom that we are allowed to here. I did not dare to just say no and asked: Do you think that's neat, son! What does it mean? His answer: well, you may join Lord Jesus at table. And our oldest son said: Daddy, we are allowed here as well, do you see? We felt all our objections melt away and participated. The children sat at the table very reverently; the children that participated every week, just as much. The little ones were supported; the taller ones took for themselves. I have not often experienced the celebration of the Supper as intense as there. After the service we talked with several people. There were Reformed article 31, Netherlands Reformed, Reformed (RCN, PGS) and Lutherans. In that way they started to work together in Brabant"¹⁶¹⁴.

4.3.17. The members' perspective

More important than the perspectives of the visitors are the perspectives of the members of this congregation. Prior to my research I had the privilege of meeting several of the older members in my role as pastor of the church of Rijsbergen. By the time my research had started the only adult charter member I could interview was Sofie van Katwijk, who at her late age had

gemeente: In Rijsbergen gaan kleuters naar het heilig avondmaal en is er geen catechisatie," *Trouw*, September 5, 1964.

¹⁶¹² "Ik zag de ouders gaan met hun kinderen en het ontroerde me als zo'n kleine peuter uit de handen van vader of moeder een stukje brood in de mond werd gebracht of een enkele druppel uit de beker werd gedronken," J. Jansen "Ingezonden Rijsbergen," *Contact* 18, no. 17 (September 17, 1966).

¹⁶¹³ *Prinses* was a weekly Christian women's magazine, which was published from 1961 until 1974.

¹⁶¹⁴ Kroniekschrijver (pseudonym of A. Vroegindewey), "Kleine Kroniek," *Gereformeerd Weekblad* 70, no. 35 (September 6, 1969): 4-5 / 276-277.

become somewhat forgetful. Fortunately I was able to interview several of the charter members who were children at the time and in addition several others who joined in later years.

4.3.18. Emotions and feelings

Dick de Wild, brother in law of Marinus Meijwaard, shares how, before they came to Brabant the brothers in law and their siblings already felt discontent with the church in Sliedrecht and that church's spiritual climate. Van Katwijk's testimony and anecdotes shared by the interviewed children of the Sliedrecht families illustrate how the move across the river and into another spiritual climate was experienced as liberating. Leaving this church climate was inseparably connected with taking distance from their father and father-in-law Pastor Overduin, as daughter Linda suggests¹⁶¹⁵. But as much as their discontent had helped them to leave Sliedrecht and its spiritual climate, and as much as Van Katwijk's Bible studies and preaching had convinced them, getting used to the new spiritual climate still took time. In similar ways their Bible studies on the covenant and on the position of children within the covenant had prepared them to welcome children at the table. Nevertheless, the shock was great when Carolina Wijngaards took her daughter Maria to the Lord's Supper. Arie Ruis' perception was that Jan van Katwijk took great pride in Carolina Wijngaard and her daughter as the first Roman Catholics who had been reached by the Reformed Church and touched by his preaching. Such feelings suggest the stakes were high when the issue of children at the Lord's Supper may have also meant the risk of losing them. Both the Bible studies and preaching which had prepared them for the great consensus on welcoming covenant children to the Table, as well as the perceived blessing of the Holy Spirit may explain why, instead of emotional clashes, harmony and other positive feelings seemed to set the tone within the congregation during this process. As we will see this contrasts with the strong emotions which we come across in the discussion on the issue in the national denominational periodicals. The congregation, and especially Jan van Katwijk to whom most letters were addressed¹⁶¹⁶, did suffer from what they experienced as nationwide discrimination, despise, insult and defamation within the denomination¹⁶¹⁷. During those same years some of the congregation

¹⁶¹⁵ It is interesting that some new members had to go through a similar process of breaking with the tradition that they had grown up with at home as part of embracing the paedocommunion practice of Rijsbergen as well as part of a personal spiritual renewal.

¹⁶¹⁶ Van der Veer (1984), 4f. Unfortunately Jan van Katwijk ended up burning most letters in his stove, when it became impossible to answer all of them.

¹⁶¹⁷ "En wat ons te Rijsbergen aangaat - op allerlei manier gediscrimineerd, beledigd en belasterd - wij heffen met volle vrijmoedigheid de belijdenis van psalm 119 op : wij zijn wel klein, veracht maar niet verleid, wij vergeten in smaad noch armoe Gods bevelen," Van Katwijk (1966), 10.

members also suffered from the treatment by some of the Roman Catholics¹⁶¹⁸, in contrast to the practical support of the Roman Catholic Pastor Van Oosterhout, which the congregation received with appreciation, and in contrast to the good relations with a number of Roman Catholic nuns¹⁶¹⁹.

The — now matured — children remember the emotions of those days in a range from excitement about the first personal participation in the Lord's Supper at age nine with the dedication of the new building in 1962¹⁶²⁰, to a sense of security and belonging which was experienced in the congregation, to feelings of jealousy that Roman Catholic girl friends received gifts and wore beautiful dresses at their first Communion. At the table Van Katwijk would often spontaneously let a child read Scripture or ask a child to explain what the Lord's Supper was. This filled some children with pride, others with fear and trembling. The emphasis on reconciliation and on the consequences for those who failed to reconcile before coming to the table could also fill children with a sense of awe.

Among those of the next generation who joined the church later in life, pride and gratitude for the remarkable history is expressed. Some, who wanted to participate in their youth but could not, express gratitude that at least their children are now allowed.

4.3.19. *Obligations and ethics*

In the Dutch Reformed tradition the spirit of Reformation is valued whereas the spirit of (especially the French) revolution is often detested¹⁶²¹. This may explain why Jan van Katwijk stresses that the changes regarding the Lord's Supper did not originate in a revolutionary spirit but were a matter of continued reformation.

Within the congregation, church order and denominational procedures carried little weight in the process. Within classis and the wider denomination, many raised objections to this disregard of church order. To some it seemed clear

¹⁶¹⁸ In April 1963 the church prays for a young Roman Catholic woman who dates one of the young men of the congregation and who is discriminated by Roman Catholics as she has refused to take Communion in the Roman Catholic Church. Diary, Sofie van Katwijk, April 14, 1963. A story about the same girl or young woman illustrates the nature of this suffering: One day she is chased by youth from the village, who throw stones at her. She escapes the threat by seeking refuge in the home of Van Katwijk.

¹⁶¹⁹ Jan Hendriks, ed., *Kijken met andere ogen: Een rondreis langs open en gastvrije kerken* (Kampen, Kok, 2004), 92.

¹⁶²⁰ Some of the small children were kept at home in the afternoon services. Now there would be only one morning service with weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper.

¹⁶²¹ Illustrative of this is the name Anti Revolutionary Party for the Christian political party.

that the congregation has disregarded church order¹⁶²² or proper denominational procedures to change that church order. But the perception of many in the congregation is that others were to blame for their loss of trust in church order and in the fairness of classes and synods.

Though the freedom of parents to let their children participate has been expressed over and over again, most of the interviewees do not know of members who did not allow their children to participate. Certainly that did not happen in this first decade, except maybe for the first few weeks of a member's attendance. Visiting parents were reminded that they are free to choose to take their children along, but at the same time there has also been a strong emphasis on the privilege and responsibility, or the right and duty to come to the Table as the Lord has commanded¹⁶²³. Obedience is also key in the anecdote of little Linda making clear to her father that her participation would have been true obedience.

Both written documents and the interviewees tell about the importance of hospitality in the church of Rijsbergen. This hospitality was experienced in the invitation to guests and children at the Supper but also in the warm personal welcome by Jan Van Katwijk at the door¹⁶²⁴, in drinking coffee after the service, and in the invitations to guests for a meal in the parsonage.

None of our documents and none of our interviewees mention the matter of children drinking alcohol as an ethical issue during the period of discussing and introducing the practice. Serving alcohol does become an issue many years later, when one of the congregation members has become an alcoholic. When the council decides to serve grape juice for this member's sake, one of the 'patriarchs' of the church (and a family member of the alcoholic) who had been so supportive of the earlier changes now leaves the church in disagreement. When a son in law of the 'patriarch' becomes chair of council, wine is once again served. Round 2009 an epidemic of the swine flu¹⁶²⁵ encourages the congregation to start celebrating the Lord's Supper with small cups. The opportunity is seized to serve both wine and grape juice. It is only afterwards that some parents express how they appreciate that their children

¹⁶²² Esp. Church Order, art. 61.

¹⁶²³ "Ieder Christenmens dat in de samenkomst der gemeente komt heeft direct de plicht en het recht mee aan te zitten. Omdat de Heer daartoe verplicht en het recht geeft," Van Katwijk (1966), 8.

¹⁶²⁴ E.g. "Ieder die binnegaat krijgt van hem (Br. V. Katwijk) de hand en een enkel woordje. Of je nu 2 jaar bent of over de 70, als de herder komt hij je tegemoet," J. Jansen, "Ingezonden Rijsbergen," *Contact* 18, no. 17 (September 17, 1966). Also emphasized in the interview with Kees Kurpershoek who has welcomed people at the door himself for the last couple of decades.

¹⁶²⁵ Commonly known in the Netherlands as "Mexicaanse griep."

do not have to drink wine anymore in order to participate¹⁶²⁶. Once again a member of the early days stops participating in the Lord's Supper, having great objections against the fact that the shared cup is not used anymore¹⁶²⁷.

4.3.20. Roles and rule

Thus far I have examined the personal role of a number of the individuals in this particular story. However, it is striking in studying the available documents and analyzing the interviews how many people have played key-roles, such that speaking of a communal process does more justice to the story than speaking about individual key roles. This is remarkable considering several noticeable forms of inequality and potential power imbalances. The council of three consisted of people who had all sorts of power. Van Katwijk was perceived as a charismatic man with a booming voice and a commanding presence. Meijwaard and Overduin were owners of the local meat cannery. Yet it is not at council but the congregational meeting at which the crucial decision seems to have been made; a congregational meeting of which only the contribution of the custodian, Derk Adam is recorded¹⁶²⁸. Women were not allowed to be office bearers and had no voting rights; therefore the congregational meeting is most often referred to as male members' meeting, "manslidmaten vergadering"¹⁶²⁹. Yet Carolina and Maria Wijngaards, a mother and her daughter, put the issue on the agenda and in important ways contributed to this historical change¹⁶³⁰. The individual stories confirm how the relationships between parents and children were marked by authority. Yet young children such as Linda Overduin and teenagers such as Dick Vermeulen paved the way for children at the Lord's Supper in their conversations with adults. With a reference to Psalm 8, where the mouth of children is instrument in God's victorious work, father Overduin concludes the story of his daughter Linda: "*It is beautiful when children listen to their parents, but let us never forget to listen to them as well*"¹⁶³¹.

¹⁶²⁶ The practice of serving wine or grape juice in small cups was not widely spread in the Netherlands. There seems to have been a significant amount of churches who introduce this form of celebration because of the swine flu. S.F. Tiggelaar published a popularised version of her master's thesis on the subject: *Eén Heer, één tafel, één beker: Is het drinken uit één Heilig Avondmaalsbeker ethisch beoordeeld vanuit medisch, bijbels, historisch en communiaal perspectief, opgeefbaar of niet?* (Zoetermeer: Free Musketeers, 2012).

¹⁶²⁷ Dick de Wild (member since January 1963), interview with author, October 2012.

¹⁶²⁸ Diary, Sofie van Katwijk, March 28, 1962. Van der Veer (1984), 4.

¹⁶²⁹ Charter member Marianne van Zanten-Vermeulen says during the interview: "And I think they started to research that. And then they, those people, well just the men, they came to the conclusion that etc. etc.," interview with author, October 2012.

¹⁶³⁰ Van Katwijk speaks about "when our sister led us," ("toen onze zuster ons voorging,") Van Katwijk (1966), 6.

¹⁶³¹ Overduin (1984), 23.

4.3.21. *Vision and theology*

Many interviewees confirm the high priority given to what Scripture says. The sense that God was working through this continued unexpected reformation and the sense that the Spirit rested on their harmonious congregational discussions and consensus, should not be disconnected from the priority of Scripture; the guidance of the Word and Spirit belonged together. The perceived significance of the Old Testament Passover was also related to Van Katwijk's love for the Jewish people, suggests Dick Vermeulen. This is reflected in the specific messianic Jewish material which was used by the congregation to study the Lord's Supper.¹⁶³² Within the New Testament, the church of Acts 2 had great significance. Interviewees and supporting documents suggest that the four characteristics of the Acts 2 church guided this Rijsbergen congregation in shaping its identity. The answer to another important question, "How did the first Christians do that," was sought in Scripture and early church history¹⁶³³. Discussion about the meaning of 1 Corinthians 11 was important in the early days and in later years when the congregation reflected on the Lord's Supper¹⁶³⁴. The only interviewee to address the text was Pastor Drop. Jo Merx and other interviewees allude to Bible texts on Jesus' treatment of children¹⁶³⁵, Van Katwijk to Jesus and Him crucified¹⁶³⁶, emphasizing what Jesus accomplished on the cross on our behalf.

As confirmed by the interviews, an emphasis on the covenant and its solid promises played an important role in the story of Rijsbergen. What remains intriguing is how this familiar covenantal message had unfamiliar consequences when it was embraced by the Roman Catholic Carolina Wijngaards. Baptism of infants is also mentioned by several interviewees as an argument for the administration of the Supper to children. Van Katwijk and some of his successors even seem to use the argument for administration of the Supper to infants.

¹⁶³² A. U. Michelson, *Het Joodse Paasfeest en het Avondmaal des Heren* (Amsterdam: Hebreeuwse Evangelische Vereniging, n.d.), originally published as Arthur Uriah Michelson, *The Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper* (Los Angeles: Jewish Hope: 1936 or 1939). *The booklet was used in the days of Van Katwijk, but it is unclear whether the Dutch translation was already available and used during the discussion on children at the Lord's Supper*, see Age Bakker, *Bezinning op het avondmaal* (Rijsbergen: Kerkenraad Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk Rijsbergen, 2001), 3.

¹⁶³³ In 1966 Van Katwijk refers to W. Moll, *Geschiedenis van het kerkelijk leven der christenen gedurende de zes eerste eeuwen: Tweede deel*, 2nd ed. (Leyden: Noothoven van Goor, 1857), 239f. In chapter XXIX Moll deals with the question who administered the Supper ceremony and who participated in it.

¹⁶³⁴ Bakker (2001).

¹⁶³⁵ Matt. 18: 3 "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" and Matt. 19: 14 "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

¹⁶³⁶ 1 Cor. 2:2.

The priority of Scripture is underlined by the almost complete absence of positive references to history and tradition, except when referring to the early days of the Christian Church, of the Dutch Reformed church in London, and of the Reformed Church liberated in 1944. The same seems true of the confessions¹⁶³⁷. The influence of pastors and other theologians is undeniable, but remains mostly unmentioned.

The congregation's vision for the Supper and its vision and experience of what it means to be a church are related. Van Katwijk, but also more recent members such as Arjan and Helena van der Steen, emphasizes how the whole congregation celebrates the Lord's Supper. Class, age, or denominational background is never reason for exclusion. The experience of the congregation as one tight knit community within an often-hostile denomination and Roman Catholic culture may have strengthened this conviction. The sacrament is perceived as the Lord's Supper and not the church's Supper; those who guard the table should be careful not to hinder the Lord. The Supper is an image of grace which is as essential for life as food and drink. Christa remembers how Van Katwijk was able to teach children how the Supper was all about grace, a grace that young and old could not do without. Many interviewees stress that the Lord's Supper is an essential part of a complete service. This is not just a liturgical matter of following the pattern of the first Christians, but closely linked to the weekly, if not daily, need for grace. Christa: *"In fact, you need it every day, so how arrogant to suggest celebrating it only once a month."* When the church introduced monthly seeker-targeted services in the nineties and played with the idea of skipping the Supper celebration during those services, Sofie van Katwijk successfully pled for weekly celebrations, stressing the missionary significance of the Lord's Supper in making non-believers hunger and thirst for grace.

Finally, the Van Katwijks lived with strong eschatological expectations. A sky filled with cumulus clouds would often make Sofie van Katwijk express her longing for Jesus to return on the clouds. Jan van Katwijk was quite convinced that he would live to see the day of Christ's return. This makes it remarkable that the only eschatological notion I found was Sofie closing her diary notes on that crucial congregational meeting with the word: Maranatha!

¹⁶³⁷ Note how in the denominational discussions for example Visee would also go back to the time and context in which the Heidelberg Catechism originated, in support of the admission of younger children at the table.

4.3.22. *Children*

Van Katwijk mentions in his testimony how, even before Carolina Wijngaards came to the table, the position of children in the church had been discussed a lot. The position of the child was viewed in covenantal terms. Not what a child experienced, or what a child had done, determined their status, but what had happened to Christ and what Christ had done “*in the year 33.*” Arie Ruis remembers how his father called him “*firewood for hell*” when they still attended the conservative pietistic Christian Reformed Church in Sliedrecht, and he remembers how the doctrine of grace as taught in Rijsbergen completely changed his father.

Other kinds of special attention for children are remarkably absent in the early years of Rijsbergen’s history. No pedagogical arguments are recorded in the documents or remembered by the interviewees. In the beginning of its history no activities other than nursery and weekly catechism teaching is offered to the children. It is fair to notice that most of the interviewed children nevertheless felt quite involved in the congregational life, and in other ways experienced a strong sense of belonging.

It could be tempting to speculate how developments may have been influenced¹⁶³⁸ by the fact that Van Katwijk and his wife remained without children¹⁶³⁹ or by the high number of children in the other families, but none of the interviewees or documents help to substantiate such speculations.

4.3.23. *Context and culture*

Those with superficial knowledge of the church of Rijsbergen might be tempted to explain its pioneering role in welcoming children at the Lord’s Supper solely on the basis of its roots in the Reformed Church liberated with its strong covenantal emphasis. But that would do no justice to the more complex interplay between the different denominational backgrounds, convictions, and customs of the members of this church. The fact that two of the three council members had been raised in conservative pietistic denominations and were son and son-in-law of one of its pastors could just as well have led to developments in a different direction. With Carolina Wijngaards as a third party, complexity increases. The three children, who in different ways raised the questions, represent these same three parties. Listening to Van Katwijk, one almost gets the impression that a covenantal

¹⁶³⁸ Carolina Wijngaards had fourteen children; the Vermeulen family had fourteen children. On the day the decision on children at the Lord’s Supper was taken a family with 9 children joined the church.

¹⁶³⁹ Until they became foster parents.

message aimed at Overduin and Meijwaard had unforeseen consequences when it was embraced and applied by Roman Catholic Carolina Wijngaards. It is interesting how Van Katwijk mentions Wijngaards' Roman Catholic background, but stresses how her action flowed from her acceptance of this covenantal message. Interviewees more readily acknowledge how her Roman Catholic background explains her action, though nobody questions that she defended her action with an appeal to Van Katwijk's covenantal preaching. The introduction of children at the Lord's Supper happened in a church with an 'ecumenical' mixture of backgrounds and in a church with a high exposure to its Roman Catholic context. The introduction of children also coincided with welcoming all Christ believers to the table in a very ecumenical spirit. Some of the trailblazers in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands are also found in this same Roman Catholic context of the province Noord-Brabant¹⁶⁴⁰. Yet in contrast to other stories of paedocommunion pioneers this ecumenical spirit and exposure to Roman Catholicism did not mean that there was openness to or appreciation of Roman Catholic theology at that time. Mario suggests another relationship between the practice and this context of the church when he says that new members may feel differently about the necessity of weekly celebrations, because the church is not perceived as a little island in a Roman Catholic world anymore¹⁶⁴¹.

Rijsbergen was one of those first pioneer churches found in many different countries and introducing paedocommunion in approximately the same era as one another. The documents and interviewees all suggest that this happened without an awareness of any of those other pioneers. Likely, something in the international context or more precisely something in Western culture did play an important role in these developments, even if none of those who played a role in the local process were aware of the larger context.

4.3.24. *Catechetical and liturgical frames*

Articles in newspapers¹⁶⁴² and periodicals¹⁶⁴³ give the impression that catechism teaching came to an end with the decision to welcome children at

¹⁶⁴⁰ The Reformed Church (RCN) of Eindhoven-Noord (Woensel) under the leadership of Pastor G.H. Harms and the Reformed Church (NRC/RCN) of Geldrop under the leadership of Pastor B.J. Aalbers, writer of the book *Kinderen aan het avondmaal*. Gemeentetoerusting 7. (Kampen: Kok, 1971).

¹⁶⁴¹ Compare David Holeton who writes "Whenever the church has come to see itself as a small, gathered, Eucharistic community, the community of all the baptized quickly becomes a real question." "Similarly, when the church sees itself as established, encompassing the whole of society, there is little question of communicating all the baptized," Holeton (1995), 35.

¹⁶⁴² E.g. "Terug naar de oergestalte van de christelijke gemeente," *De Rotterdammer, Nieuwe Haagsche Courant, Nieuwe Leidsche Courant, Dordts Dagblad*, July 18, 1964.

the table. But this is only true to the extent that after the dedication of the new building there were no more afternoon services in which the Heidelberg Catechism was preached. Children were still catechized on a weekly basis¹⁶⁴⁴, starting at age five. Marianne van Zanten-Vermeulen remembers how the children of the large Vermeulen family were even catechized in two separate sessions for sons and daughters¹⁶⁴⁵. What may also be true is that the Heidelberg Catechism was not the primary content of this education anymore. In later years, the age for catechism classes once again coincided with high school age.

Several documents and interviews reveal how parents, but especially Van Katwijk, would make sure that children understood what the Lord's Supper meant. In preparation of his testimony to classis in 1966, Van Katwijk made several young children write this down¹⁶⁴⁶. Other than the messianic Jewish booklet, which was used to study the Lord's Supper, I have not come across special material made available or developed to provide a catechetical framework to instruct the children about the Lord's Supper¹⁶⁴⁷.

Regarding liturgy, the congregation from its earliest beginnings had been willing to embrace new practices which also had implications for the liturgy, such as more frequent Supper celebrations and administration of the Lord's Supper by non clergy. At the same time the Bible quotes from the Dutch equivalent of the King James Version, *de Statenvertaling*, and quotes from the Genevan Psalter, reveal a liturgy that had very classical, if not conservative, features. Lord's Supper continued to be celebrated, with the congregation seated at large tables near the pulpit¹⁶⁴⁸, with small pieces of bread from tin plates and wine from shared tin cups¹⁶⁴⁹, and with a Psalm or hymn sung at the conclusion of each seating. What was new was the weekly frequency. Teaching on the Lord's Supper was not provided by reading a form; rather it was found in sermons on the Supper once in a while, in the Scripture that was

¹⁶⁴³ E.g. J.R. Wiskerke, "Goede Gastvrijheid?" *De Reformatie* 39, no. 43 (August 8, 1964): 337. J. Kamphuis, "Kerkelijk leven: Kandelcer Kerkverband," *De Reformatie* 39, no. 47 (September 12, 1964): 368.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Van Katwijk also taught catechism in the sister congregation of Dordrecht. Kees Kurpershoek, interview with author, October 2012.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Marianne Van Zanten-Vermeulen, interview with author, October 2012.

¹⁶⁴⁶ "Ik heb hier bij me enige opstellen over het Avondmaal, afkomstig van kinderen beneden de tien jaren. Ik geef ze U gaarne ter lezing, zo U dat wenst," Van Katwijk (1966), 7.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Though more standard curriculum used in later years for catechism teaching of the teenagers would include standard teaching on the Lord's Supper.

¹⁶⁴⁸ When monthly seeker targeted services were introduced at the end of the century, the congregation started celebrating the Lord's Supper with only part of the congregation seated at the tables and the others in the pews. In 2015 council has suggested to make this into the new standard.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Tin plates and cups as well as a baptismal font were bought a month after the institution. Minutes council meeting, April 9, 1959.

always read at the beginning of the Supper celebration, and in short moments of teaching now and then at the Supper table itself. Including children in these last two features was especially done in Van Katwijk's days. In the early days liturgy was not adapted to children in any other way. Sunday school was introduced during the tenure of Van der Veer¹⁶⁵⁰.

4.3.25. Significance and consequences

The weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper with the children and the process which made such Supper celebration possible, have significance and meaning in many different ways, as the story above implicitly reveals. But when asked more specifically about this significance the interviewees speak of the experience of community, the experience of being comforted and strengthened by the grace received at the Supper, and the realization of how grace and reconciliation strengthens the community. The weekly remembrance of Christ's sacrifice is described as important for remaining focused on the heart of the Gospel and for internalizing its message. When children participate with childlike faith, it is experienced as enriching. For some, the significance of the responsibility of parents and children has dramatically increased, by many going to the Supper is experienced as a more conscious decision, almost like a weekly public profession of faith.

One of the consequences of allowing children at the Lord's Supper was that formal public profession of faith did not happen for many years. Especially in the early years, the professing nature of celebrating the Supper was stressed. The congregation was so small and the community so closely knit that public profession of faith may have felt superfluous. Teenagers who expressed a desire for a public profession of faith to Van Katwijk were encouraged to profess their faith first in daily life. And even though the public ceremony was not officially discarded, in practice a public profession of faith did not even happen when teenagers desired to do so. This changed in later years. Some consequences of allowing children at the Lord's Supper were experienced as family or individually. One set of parents mentions peace at home among their children as one of the unforeseen consequences of their children being allowed at the Lord's Supper and the new emphasis by the parents on reconciliation. For one of the newer members the process of accepting children at the Lord's Supper was closely linked with an experience of renewal or revitalization of his faith. As less positive consequences, new dilemmas

¹⁶⁵⁰ W. van der Veer pastored the church of Rijsbergen from 1978-1986. Children always first return from Sunday School before the Lord's Supper is celebrated. Some remember that even children from the nursery would be picked up before the Lord's Supper was celebrated.

arose, such as the question of whether grandparents should take grandchildren to the Lord's Supper when the parents of those grandchildren were not actively involved in a church. Several interviewees mention the danger that in a next generation or over the course of time, the awareness of the meaning of the Lord's Supper decreases.

4.4. Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan¹⁶⁵¹

4.4.1. A church founded for young people

What must we do to keep our young people in the Christian Reformed Church?

That question asked by the consistory of the Ninth Street Church in 1899 led to the organization of the first English speaking Christian Reformed congregation in Holland in 1902: Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church¹⁶⁵². Even before the church is organized, plans were developed to build a church. The church, built by the Daverman brothers, in all likelihood had an Akron floor plan with semi-circular seating wrapped around the pulpit area¹⁶⁵³ and no room for a large Lord's Supper table¹⁶⁵⁴. In the year of its twenty-fifth anniversary¹⁶⁵⁵ the congregation began to use individual Communion cups in the service of the Lord's Supper¹⁶⁵⁶.

4.4.2. Linked to a advocate of young participation

Of its many pastors, Herman Hoeksema, who served the church between 1915 and 1920, is of note. In 1924 he formed the Protestant Reformed Churches, after a controversy over the doctrine of common grace. During his tenure at Fourteenth Street, Hoeksema got involved in controversies for refusing to

¹⁶⁵¹ I would like to express my great appreciation to all those who made my research on 14th Street CRC possible: Stichting Zonneweelde, the council of 14th Street Christian Reformed Church, Prof. Dr. Jacob & Leona Nyenhuis, Prof. Dr. Jan Peter Verhave and the interviewees Kristen De Vries, Pastor Marvin Hofman, Ryan & Bethany Wolter, Paul & Brenda Katerberg, Prof. Dr. Robert J. (Bob) & Laura Keeley, Mary Koster, Mike & Amy Luce and their children Mason, Audrey and Elijah, Tamara & Matthew Stilwell, their children Micah, Isaac, Jael, and Rebecca, and their young friend who will remain anonymous, Reanne Walters, Meika Weiss and her daughters Maryam and Chloe.

¹⁶⁵² G.J. Steggerda, "History of the Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church," in *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourteenth Street Chr. Ref. Church Holland, Michigan: 1902 June Twenty-Fifth 1927*. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071424520;view=1up;seq=8;size=125>

¹⁶⁵³ Harms (2002), 7.

¹⁶⁵⁴ Round this time more and more Christian Reformed congregations start to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the pews. Hans Krabbendam, *Vrijheid in het verschie: Nederlandse emigratie naar Amerika 1840-1940* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006), 130.

¹⁶⁵⁵ On March 27, 1927.

¹⁶⁵⁶ Steggerda (1927), 8.

display the American flag during the church services¹⁶⁵⁷ and also for stressing Christian education and orthodoxy¹⁶⁵⁸. Later, in 1952, Hoeksema will be among the first who write in support of participation in the Lord's Supper at a much younger age¹⁶⁵⁹.

The story of Fourteenth Street is a story of periods of growth and decline. In 1913 the grown church gives birth to Maple Avenue CRC. Thirty-three families and fifteen individuals leave; 150 families stay¹⁶⁶⁰. Around 1955, a third of the congregation, 82 families, leaves to start Faith CRC¹⁶⁶¹. With this growth and decline, the numbers of youth fluctuate as well. The record Sunday school enrollment of 542 is reached in 1927. The record attendance of 506 is reached in 1933¹⁶⁶². Founded out of concern for such CRC youth, the congregation has also been involved in several programs with young people from outside the Christian Reformed Church. In more recent years for example the congregation has been involved in the tutoring programs of Kids Hope USA¹⁶⁶³ and Step.

4.4.3. Thrust to the forefront of denominational developments

When describing the process which led to welcoming children at the Lord's Supper in Fourteenth Street we want to be aware of how this congregational process unfolded in the context of a denominational process. In the beginning of this denominational process other churches were the pioneers and innovators, and Fourteenth Street was an early adopter at best, letting synod set the pace. Later the role of Fourteenth Street evolved into that of a pioneer, thrust to the forefront of the denominational development by its leadership, first overturing synod and later moving ahead of synod.

¹⁶⁵⁷ During World War I this was perceived as anti patriotic and by some even as treason, especially since the Dutch were suspected of German sympathies. Robert P. Swierenga, "Disloyal Dutch? Herman Hoeksema and the 'Flag in Church' Controversy during World War I," *Origins* 25, no. 2 (2007): 28-35.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Robert P. Swierenga, "The Anne (Andrew) Hoekstra Family," unpublished paper, revised February 2013, 7.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Herman Hoeksema, *The Triple Knowledge: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism; Volume 2*, 3rd ed. 1947-1952 (Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1988), 561.

¹⁶⁶⁰ Steggerda (1927), 7.

¹⁶⁶¹ Nyenhuis (2012), 16. <http://www.faithcrc.org/#/about-us/history-of-our-church> (accessed June 13, 2015).

¹⁶⁶² Nyenhuis (2012), 15f.

¹⁶⁶³ <http://www.kidshopeusa.org/About/History/> (accessed July 6, 2015). 1996 Lincoln School, 2001 Jefferson, 2006 East K-7. Jacob E. Nyenhuis, "Growing and Gathering God's Family for One Hundred and Ten Years: A Brief History of Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan," in draft version of Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church: 110th Anniversary Celebration, June 24, 2012, 20.

4.4.4. Implementing the decision of Synod 1988

I begin the story of Fourteenth Street and children at the Lord's Supper in 1988, when synod took a step in the direction of allowing children at the Lord's Supper, among others by deciding that "*Covenant children should be encouraged to make public profession of faith as soon as they exhibit faith and are able to discern the body and remember and proclaim the death of Jesus in celebrating the Lord's Supper*"¹⁶⁶⁴. In line with that decision, Fourteenth Street has been inviting and encouraging young children to make profession of faith since the eighties¹⁶⁶⁵. The policy of Fourteenth Street allowed baptized members to become professing members with the privilege of Communion at an earlier age by giving a testimony of their faith in Christ and consenting – as far as the person can understand – to the doctrinal standards¹⁶⁶⁶. A story shared by Bob Keeley suggests that some in this period might have wanted to include even younger children. Communion was being served at tables. The bread and juice were passed over the head of his nine year old daughter and the words "*the body of Christ broken for you*" were spoken. The pastor's wife said to her "*it is for you too.*"

4.4.5. Directors of Children's Ministries, Robert and Laura Keeley

Jacob Nyenhuis writes in his brief history of the congregation: "*Because the Children's Ministry program for twenty years had been educating children about worship and about the celebration of the Lord's Supper, there was growing sentiment within the congregation that we should return to the practice of the early church and welcome all baptized members to the Communion table*"¹⁶⁶⁷. In 1989, Robert (Bob) and Laura Keeley join the congregation, and in 1991 they join the staff as directors of Children's Ministries¹⁶⁶⁸. Fourteenth Street has had a history of children's work even

¹⁶⁶⁴ Article 72 & 76, Acts of 1988 CRCNA Synod, 557-559, 560.

¹⁶⁶⁵ Marv Hofman, "14th Street's Pathway," March 2015.

<http://www.crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits/welcoming-children-lords-supper/14th-street%E2%80%99s-pathway> (accessed July 7, 2015).

¹⁶⁶⁶ The Lord's Supper and Adult Faith Commitment: 14th Street Christian Reformed Church, April 7, 2008.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Depending on whether the twenty years are prior to October 30, 2005, mentioned in the next sentence, or prior to 2012, when Nyenhuis writes this, we should think of mid eighties or early nineties. Nyenhuis (2012), 21.

¹⁶⁶⁸ The church website summarizes: "Laura Keeley has an M.A. in Reading from the University of Colorado and Bob has a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Denver. Laura is also a Regional Catalyst for the Christian Reformed Church as part of the Faith Formation Initiative. Bob is also professor of Education at Calvin College and Director of Distance Learning at Calvin Theological Seminary. Bob and Laura have written a number of articles, curriculum units, Christmas plays for children, and books. Their publications include *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith* (Baker, 2008), *Celebrating the Milestones of Faith* (Faith Alive, 2009) *Shaped by God* (Faith Alive, 2010), the WE Intergenerational curriculum (Faith Alive, 2011, 2012) and *The Church Staff Handbook* (Faith Alive, 2014)." <http://www.14thstreetcrc.com/about/staff/> (accessed July 7, 2015).

before the Keeleys join. It is the program *Children and Worship*, which was only published in 1989, and which is now used for the children's ministry which especially educates children about worship and about the celebration of the sacrament¹⁶⁶⁹.

4.4.6. *Children and Worship*

The *Children and Worship* program deserves some special attention in this story. The program is based on the work of Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman who co-authored the book *Young Children and Worship*¹⁶⁷⁰. The approach of Stewart and Berryman stands in the tradition of Maria Montessori and is inspired by the work and material of Sofia Cavaletti¹⁶⁷¹. Her Roman Catholic curriculum, *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, was redesigned by Stewart and Berryman from a Reformed perspective and was endorsed for use by the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America¹⁶⁷². As Nyenhuis already indicated, the program educates children about worship by creating a worship context instead of a school environment¹⁶⁷³. Using the approach of *Children and Worship*, Stewart and Berryman remain faithful to the liturgical perspective of Cavaletti and Montessori¹⁶⁷⁴. In more than one way, the program also educates about the Lord's Supper. The program follows a fourfold order of worship in which the third part consists of thanksgiving (Eucharist) followed by a feast, at which fruit, cheese, bread, and juice are served¹⁶⁷⁵. Stewart and Berryman write, "*Of course, the Lord's Supper is not celebrated in the children's worship centers.*

¹⁶⁶⁹ Laura Keeley remembers the program was well in place before they joined the congregation in 1989, possibly as early as 1985. The official publication of the book was in 1989, but the congregation may have had access to earlier samples of the material. Kristen De Vries mentions 1992-1993. Laura Keeley, e-mail to author, August 10, 2015. Kristen De Vries, interview with author, June 2012.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman. *Young Children and Worship*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989). The co-authored book by Stewart and Berryman was the first publication of Godly Play stories which would be developed into a similar, but separate curriculum called Godly Play. Jerome W. Berryman, *Godly Play: A Way of Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991); *The Complete Guide to Godly Play: Volume I; How to Lead Godly Play Lessons*. 2nd ed. (Denver: Morehouse, 2006).

¹⁶⁷¹ Sonja M. Stewart, "Letting the Story Stand; Developing a Separate Worship Center for Children," *Reformed Worship*, June 1989. For an in-depth study of Berryman's approach see Martin Pranieß, *Das Godly Play-Konzept: Die Rezeption der Montessori-Pädagogik durch Jerome W. Berryman*. Arbeiten zur Religionspädagogik Band 35. (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2008).

¹⁶⁷² Stewart (1989). We note that Cavaletti's covenantal and redemptive historical perspective fits in a reformed perspective. Cavaletti writes "The pivotal point of the catechesis is the covenant, the underlying theme of the Bible" and "The covenant reality is further expand in the dimension of time by being placed in the context of sacred history," S. Cavaletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child*, xi, quoted in Pranieß (2008), 339.

¹⁶⁷³ A worship context is chosen to experience God, to transform time and place, and to meet the need of children. Stewart and Berryman (1989), 13. See also Berryman (1991), 17f.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Pranieß (2008), 338.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Stewart and Berryman (1989), 20f., 80f. See also Berryman who stresses the difference between a feast and a snack, Berryman (1991), 38f. (2006), 16f.

*But indirect preparation for the Eucharist is*¹⁶⁷⁶. The second part of the fourfold order of worship, the proclamation of God's Word, starts with telling a story. The children respond first by wondering and reflecting on the story and then by allowing for personal reflection through arts, crafts, and play¹⁶⁷⁷. Several of these stories educate on the Lord's Supper — indirectly, such as in the two lessons on the Good Shepherd, in which Psalm 23 and John 10 are connected, and in which the image of the Good Shepherd is connected with the image of the feast or Lord's Supper¹⁶⁷⁸, and directly, such as in the story on Jesus' Last Passover¹⁶⁷⁹. Berryman explains how Holy Communion is a central liturgical event in the Christian tradition, an intermediate, overlapping area that, in the terminology of Winnicott, is the place of transitional phenomena. Holy Communion invites us into this overlapping space to play, and it is in this Godly play that we may experience God¹⁶⁸⁰. The approach of Stewart and Berryman shares its multisensory¹⁶⁸¹ nature with the sacraments¹⁶⁸². On their journey of faith¹⁶⁸³, children are prepared for participation by the *Children and Worship* program not only through education about the Lord's Supper in an age and ability appropriate way¹⁶⁸⁴, but also through the anticipation of participation in the Lord's Supper via the feast; the children learn by doing¹⁶⁸⁵.

4.4.7. Pastor Marvin Hofman

Continuing the story of Fourteenth Street, in 2000 Marvin J. Hofman accepts the call to become Fourteenth Street's pastor. The celebration of the Lord's Supper in that period changes when the congregation is asked to come to the front instead of remaining in the pews. Some of the children and youth who have not yet professed their faith remain in the pews; others join their

¹⁶⁷⁶ Stewart and Berryman (1989), 21.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Stewart and Berryman (1989), 20; Berryman (2006), 13-16; Pranieß (2008), 345-355. Stewart and Berryman differ from Montessori in this central role for story and the role of play and imagination, wondering, and discovery learning, Pranieß (2008), 340, 342, 345.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Stewart and Berryman (1989), 85-91. Both Berryman and Stewart credit Cavalletti for this "important and elegant connection between the Good Shepherd and the Holy Eucharist," Stewart and Berryman (1989), 8, 11. Berryman (1991), 20.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Stewart and Berryman (1989), 189f.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Berryman (1991), 12. Pranieß (2008), 181. Play is the appropriate response to the ultimate limits of human kind and the existential questions of young and old, Berryman (1991), 16-17. Pranieß (2008), 356f.

¹⁶⁸¹ Pranieß for example comments on the visual appeal of the materials, which is another feature which connects Stewart and Berryman with Montessori, Pranieß (2008), 333.

¹⁶⁸² Stewart (1989).

¹⁶⁸³ Jerome Berryman, ed., *Life Maps: Life Maps: Conversations on the Journey of Faith; Jim Fowler & Sam Keen*. (Waco: Word, 1978), 3.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Berryman references Jean Piaget, James W. Fowler and Erik H. Erikson, Berryman (2006), resp. 94, 129, 140.

¹⁶⁸⁵ In line with John Dewey's pragmatic North American approach, Pranieß (2008), 175.

families coming to the front, but do not receive the elements. Either way it is accentuated that part of the congregation is not participating. Over the next three years new ways of serving Communion are introduced. The elders are encouraged to include children and youth who are not participating yet by getting down on their level and saying something to the children. To make the celebration memorable, they are given a red ribbon to let them know that Jesus loves them as well. At a certain moment in this history it becomes custom for children and youth who have not yet professed their faith to receive a blessing with a hand on their head. The practical challenge for the elders, especially as they rotate, is to know which children and youth have professed their faith and should receive the elements and which have not and should receive the blessing¹⁶⁸⁶.

4.4.8. *The issue raised by a family*

The cooperation of Hofman with the Keeleys will be significant to the process. The issue of children at the Lord's Supper is raised by a family who previously attended an Episcopal Church where their children were allowed to participate. When the issue is also raised at a conference¹⁶⁸⁷ Hofman and the Keeleys start a conversation on bringing baptized members to the table at their staff meetings, probably around 2004¹⁶⁸⁸. The elders are included in the conversations,¹⁶⁸⁹ and an intern is asked to do some research on the subject¹⁶⁹⁰. In retrospect, Hofman writes about these discussions: *"We looked at the scriptural issues and talked about the practical issues and we became convinced that inviting baptized children to the table was appropriate and that the present profession of faith system wasn't working well in our congregation. We had children who professed their faith at 10 years old taking Communion and 18 years old teens who demonstrated a love of the Lord in their lives but hadn't made profession of faith who weren't at the table. In addition our congregation included people like Dalton, a person with disability who would never be able to make a profession of faith and Owen, a man with Alzheimer's disease who needed help taking the elements. These two extreme cases also caused us to reconsider our practice"*¹⁶⁹¹.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Paul Katerberg, interview with author, June 2012.

¹⁶⁸⁷ The Worship Symposium of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in 2003 or 2004. Marvin Hofman, interview with author, June 2011.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Hofman (2015).

¹⁶⁸⁹ Paul Katerberg, interview with author, June 2012.

¹⁶⁹⁰ Reanne Walters, interview with author, June 2012.

¹⁶⁹¹ Hofman (2015). Hofman notes how both Dalton and Owen belonged at the table because of their full membership in the church, e-mail to author, August 23, 2015.

4.4.9. *Encouraged to write an overture*

Over the course of the next year, Hofman preaches on 1 Corinthians 11, a number of round table discussions with the congregation are organized¹⁶⁹², and an open forum or town hall meeting on October 30, 2005 involves the congregation in the discussion¹⁶⁹³. Some private conversations between staff members and leaders within the denomination are significant as well; a conversation with Syd Hielema on 1 Corinthians 11 and a conversation with *Banner* Editor and Pastor Bob de Moor who believes synod is ready for the next step and encourages the congregation to write an overture¹⁶⁹⁴. In a joint effort, Hofman and the Keeleys write a proposal for such an overture, and on December 19, 2005? Fourteenth Street council approves this overture to Classis Holland calling for “*the admission to the Lord’s Supper of all baptized members of the covenant*”¹⁶⁹⁵. Classis Holland meets in special session, and when Chairman Len Vander Zee senses that it is not going to pass, an amendment is made to the overture¹⁶⁹⁶. The amendment or revision to the original overture entails that it no longer asks for admission of all baptized members, but merely asks synod to study this possibility¹⁶⁹⁷.

4.4.10. *The overture’s arguments*

The overture¹⁶⁹⁸ mentions a renewed sense that ministry and worship ought to be intergenerational, that baptism is a sign of the covenant and signifies full membership in the church, and refers to the arguments of 1988 majority report and 1995 *Report B*. In addition it considers that the phrase “*body of the Lord*” in 1 Corinthians 11:29 refers to the church not the crucified flesh of Christ, and argues several things: 1. that there is a partnership between the preached Word and the sacramental Word, 2. that historical reasons for the separation of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in medieval church have not been explored enough, 3. that participation of children in the early church sets a precedent, and 4. that the current understanding of profession of faith is confusing and inconsistent.

¹⁶⁹² Hofman (2015).

¹⁶⁹³ Nyenhuis (2012), 21.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Bob Keeley, interview with author, June 2011.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Nyenhuis (2012), 21.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Bob Keeley, interview with author, June 2011.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Nyenhuis (2012), 21.

¹⁶⁹⁸ Overture 16, Agenda CRCNA 2006 Synod, 526-530.

4.4.11. *Synod 2006 and Hofman*

Synod 2006 accepts the majority advisory report's¹⁶⁹⁹ recommendation not to accede to the request to appoint a study committee. As a delegate, Pastor Hofman moves to put the minority report¹⁷⁰⁰ on the floor. The minority agrees with the majority that another study committee is not warranted, but recommends synod to recognize that "*there is no basis in the theology of the covenant or the theology of the sacraments for denying to growing children the Lord's Supper*"¹⁷⁰¹. In line with this recommendation, synod decides in favor of allowing the admission of all baptized members to the Lord's Supper on the basis of their full membership in the covenant community¹⁷⁰². Ratification of Synod 2007 is needed before church order can be changed accordingly.

4.4.12. *Moving ahead in good faith*

When Synod 2007 does not ratify its 2006 decision, Fourteenth Street staff and council are disappointed and want to move forward, but in good faith with the denomination, honoring the denomination's present position¹⁷⁰³. In March 2008, council takes a decision which honors the denominational position that a profession of faith is required, but moves forward by stretching the definition¹⁷⁰⁴ of this profession so that a child of three indicating their love of Jesus or even nodding in agreement is welcomed to the table¹⁷⁰⁵. The decision is shaped into a policy which welcomes the youngest children as professing members, but at the same time invests in encouraging teens and young adults to publicly affirm this profession. This adult profession at age seventeen or higher includes accepting adult responsibilities and privileges, such as the right to vote¹⁷⁰⁶. A letter to the congregation is drafted¹⁷⁰⁷ and

¹⁶⁹⁹ Article 71, Acts CRCNA 2006 Synod, 727-729.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Article 71, Acts CRCNA 2006 Synod, 729, written by Pastor Erick J. Schuringa.

¹⁷⁰¹ Cf. Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 283.

¹⁷⁰² The Faith Formation Committee notices that this statement suggests broader admission than ground three which speaks of evidence of faith, and age-appropriate expression of faith or knowledge. Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2008, 235.

¹⁷⁰³ *Bringing Children to the Lord's Table: a response to Synod's 2007 decision*, proposal from Robert and Laura Keeley and Marv Hofman to council, October 2007.

¹⁷⁰⁴ One of the objections of some congregation members is that the policy "has a feel of skirting the expressed wishes of Synod," Summary Notes, Meeting of Steve Van Rees, Duane Baker & Marv Hofman, July 17, 2008, revised draft, August 6, 2008.

¹⁷⁰⁵ *Bringing Children to the Lord's Table: a response to Synod's 2007 decision*, Council Fourteenth Street, March 11, 2008.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Policy Regarding Profession of Faith and the Lord's Supper at 14th Street Christian Reformed Church, March 31, 2008.

¹⁷⁰⁷ *The Lord's Supper and Adult Faith Commitments: 14th Street Christian Reformed Church*, Draft April 7, 2008.

approved in May 2008¹⁷⁰⁸. Remarkably, for the part expressing adult faith commitment, teens will be asked to sign a letter stating among other things their agreement with the creeds. The policy offers a sample public worship form for the adult faith commitment¹⁷⁰⁹.

4.4.13. *Opposition and objections*

The new policy does meet some opposition, and an Ad Hoc Committee¹⁷¹⁰ is formed to meet with those in the church family who have raised objections. The summary notes of the meeting on July 2007 mention three main objections: 1. the policy was rolled out too quickly, giving the congregation too little information and input, 2. the policy has a feel of skirting the expressed wishes of synod regarding a profession of faith prior to coming to the table, 3. young people of late and post high school age are put in an awkward position, confused whether to make communal profession, profession of faith old style, or an adult faith commitment¹⁷¹¹. Studying all the documents and interviewing some of those who have been involved in council and the Worship Planning Committee, one gets the impression that the followed procedure has taken years and has been very careful¹⁷¹². On the other hand the interviews reveal that even some who are not necessarily opposed to the new practice were surprised by the speed of some decisions. The Ad Hoc Committee responds to the second objection that “nodding in agreement” may have gone too far and needs to be restated. The Ad Hoc Committee sympathizes with the third objection about putting teenagers in an awkward position.

The discussion continues. In December 2008 and January 2009 Marv Hofman drafts guiding principles, defining and distinguishing baptism, communal professions, public profession of faith, confessing membership, and reaffirmation of faith¹⁷¹³. In October¹⁷¹⁴ there is a meeting, in November¹⁷¹⁵

¹⁷⁰⁸ *The Lord's Supper and Adult Faith Commitment Policy: 14th Street Christian Reformed Church*, May 2008. The policy refers to two sources: *Children's Profession of Faith: A Guidebook for Pastors and Elders*. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 1996; Robert J. Keeley, "In My Humble Opinion: Children at the Lord's Table," *Banner*, June 2006 (8).

¹⁷⁰⁹ Adapted from Roger E. Van Harn, "Perspectives: One Lord, Four Questions, and Three Stories," *Reformed Worship*, March 1990.

¹⁷¹⁰ Duane Baker, Marv Hofman and Steve Van Rees form the Ad Hoc Sub-committee.

¹⁷¹¹ Summary Notes, Meeting of Steve Van Rees, Duane Baker & Marv Hofman, July 17, 2008, revised draft, August 6, 2008.

¹⁷¹² When classical church visitors review the process they affirm the patience and integrity of 14th Street. *Church Visitors Report by Dave Van Der Wiele and Chris DeVos*, March 23, 2010.

¹⁷¹³ *Guiding Principles: Children's Faith Development*, Marv Hofman, December 9, 2008, revised January 13, 2009.

¹⁷¹⁴ Children at the Table: Summary Discussion, October 13, 2009.

and December¹⁷¹⁶ the elders meet and continue the discussion. In the end the motion to open the Communion Table to all baptized members is approved¹⁷¹⁷. In January the Ad Hoc Sub-committee reports on this outcome of the two and a half years of struggle “*with our conviction to open the Table by virtue of a person’s baptism*”. The Sub-committee mentions two grounds for the decision: 1. We believe that the Lord’s Supper – along with baptism and the preaching of the Word – is a ‘means of grace’ that should be freely offered to the covenant community, 2. Jesus commanded that the church celebrate the Lord’s Supper “until he comes again”¹⁷¹⁸.

4.4.14. Implementation in 2010

In the process, at least one person who objected to their decisions contemplated taking the issue to classis¹⁷¹⁹. Marvin Hofman also encourages communicating with classis about the intentions of the elders. Classical church visitors meet with Pastor Marv Hofman and on the evening of March 23 with council of Fourteenth Street. The church visitors recommend to Classis Holland that it withhold action on the grounds first, that the elders are following the leading of the Holy Spirit and responding to the unique needs of their congregation and second, that their actions are in line with the direction of the Faith Formation Committee¹⁷²⁰. In April or May 2010 classis discusses the issues, and chooses to do so in small groups¹⁷²¹. The classis’ response to Fourteenth Street council was to send the notes from the small groups to Fourteenth Street council. No official action was taken. At classis it becomes clear that other congregations have already moved ahead without consulting classis¹⁷²². Then finally on June 10, 2010 a letter is send to the congregation announcing the implementation of the decision. “*Starting on September 12, 2010, anyone who has been baptized will be welcome to the table of the Lord*”¹⁷²³.

¹⁷¹⁵ 14th Street Christian Reformed Church Elders’ Meeting Minutes, November 2009.

¹⁷¹⁶ Agenda Elders’ Meeting, December 8, 2009.

¹⁷¹⁷ Art. 7, 14th Street Christian Reformed Church, Elders Meeting December 8, 2009 Minutes.

¹⁷¹⁸ Proposal Children at the Lord’s Supper 14th Street Church Sub-committee Draft, January 6, 2010.

¹⁷¹⁹ According to Laura Keeley, Interview with author, June 2011.

¹⁷²⁰ Church Visitors Report, March 23, 2010.

¹⁷²¹ Marvin Hofman, Interview with author, June 2011.

¹⁷²² Mary Koster, Interview with author, June 2012

¹⁷²³ Letter to 14th Street Congregation, from the Elders, June 10, 2010. For our purposes we will consider this the conclusion of the process, but we realize that the story could be continued. On February 14, 2012 for example the policy is reviewed by the Elders. *Agenda Elder’s Meeting*, February 14, 2012.

4.4.15. *People's perspective*

In addition to the documents I studied to reconstruct the story above I interviewed over a dozen adult members and nearly ten of their children. These interviews once again also help to retell the story from the perspective of individual believers, distinguishing different dimensions¹⁷²⁴.

4.4.16. *Emotions and feelings*

In almost all interviews with members of Fourteenth Street the word 'awkward' was used. Awkwardness, according to the online Oxford Dictionary¹⁷²⁵, is a synonym of or related to uneasy feelings such as embarrassment, self-consciousness, and discomfort. Early adolescence is sometimes referred to as the awkward age, because of the physical clumsiness as well as the psychological shyness which often characterize this stage of development. Interestingly, the online Oxford Dictionary also mentions tension as a concept related to awkwardness, as change or innovation often takes place to resolve tension. The interviewees use the word awkward to describe the situation, especially after Fourteenth Street had implemented the decision of 1988 Synod to encourage younger profession of faith, and when it became more common for Fourteenth Street to invite the congregation to come forward to celebrate the Lord's Supper instead of remaining seated in the pews. Teenagers who had not publically professed their faith felt awkward coming to the front, but awkward too when remaining in the pew. Elders and parents sympathized with these feelings of awkwardness. Elders also felt awkward in those situations when they did not know whether teenagers coming forward had made profession of faith or not. From a psychological perspective, the desire to resolve this tension seems to have played a significant role in thrusting Fourteenth Street to the forefront of change within the denomination.

When the congregation starts to discuss whether and how to move forward the discussion is not perceived as heated. But interviewees observe how a range of emotion came out in the Town Hall meeting, from those who expressed bitterness for having been excluded from the Lord's Supper in their youth, to those who expressed fear that the children who participate will

¹⁷²⁴ Similar to those suggested by Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 106 f. See also Don S. Browning, "Empirical Considerations in Religious Praxis and Reflection (2005)," in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies*, Ed. Don S. Browning (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 37.

¹⁷²⁵ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english-thesaurus/awkwardness> (accessed June 10, 2015).

distract them and cause the celebration of the Lord's Supper to lose some of its significance.

When the congregation starts to welcome children without a profession of faith, some of the strongest feelings of hurt and anger were expressed by those older teenagers and adolescents who had had to wait until their profession of faith before they could participate. At least one felt so disrespected that he refused to go to church for some time. The Luce family shares how their children grumbled in similar ways about the unfairness of children being treated differently, as the Luce children were not allowed by their parents to participate right from the beginning when the other children were. When the Luce family attended the celebration for the 150th anniversary of the denomination in the Van Andel Arena, the Lord's Supper was celebrated, and the Luce children could not participate. They felt left out and were so upset that they had tears streaming down their faces. With her voice breaking, Amy Luce explains that for her *"that kind of hit it home, because that is the church"*. And that is exactly what the Luce family still appreciates; Mike says *"it is moving to see two year olds and eighty two year olds all coming up, and parents and their children all coming up and partaking of the sacrament"*. Amy adds *"just seeing everyone from all walks of life, it is quite beautiful to see", "parents have children in their arms; they have others at their hands. We have people in wheel chairs being pushed up. It is quite beautiful"*.

4.4.17. Obligations and ethics

Children of both the Stilwell and Luce family express how they wondered about whether participation might mean drinking wine; but one of the parents explains how grape juice had already been used for quite some years. When they were still members of the Episcopal Church, which allowed children to participate, the Stilwell parents held back their children as they were cautious not to just follow the crowd. Other interviewees only highlight the obligational or ethical dimension of the procedure followed. Interviewed members express appreciation for how the voice of the congregation was heard and how respect was given to all views. Respect for the broader church and proper procedure as well as the hard work of writing an overture is expressed by several interviewees. Though the elders decided to disobey synod when it did not ratify the 2006 decision in 2007, they attempted to do so in good faith

with the denomination¹⁷²⁶. Some members may have felt that the elders had the authority and obligation to take this step even earlier in the process. At least one member of the denominational Faith Formation Committee expresses that council should have waited for Synod 2012, and several congregation members object that decisions were taken too hastily and the policy was rolled out too quickly.

4.4.18. Roles and rule

In the perception of all interviewees, central roles in the process were played by Pastor Marvin Hofman and the directors of Children's Ministries, Bob and Laura Keeley. The only interviewees who somewhat downplay their role are Hofman and the Keeleys themselves. They mention several names of theologians who inspired them¹⁷²⁷, the opinions of leaders who encouraged them,¹⁷²⁸ and others who played crucial roles at classis and synod¹⁷²⁹. All the others mention the crucial role of Hofman with appreciation, for his handling of church policy as a respected elder statesman, for preaching on such issues in thought-provoking ways, and for leading with a pastoral heart. The crucial role of the Keeleys is spoken of with appreciation for their talent and knowledge in the area of faith formation, for their dedication to the Children's Ministries, and for their emphasis on the sacraments as means of God's grace, which is offered to all. Even the one interviewee, who praises them for great ideas but is somewhat critical of their eye for detail, is quick to add "*if Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, or any of those guys would have worried about that, there would have never been any change back then*".

Even though Hofman and the Keeleys lead, the elders' role and authority is clearly acknowledged. The awkwardness experienced by the elders is an incentive to move forward, and when the congregation moves ahead in response to the disappointment about Synod 2007's decision, the elders take the responsibility.

Marvin Hofman mentions the role of one or two families whose children had participated in the Lord's Supper prior to joining Fourteenth Street. In the perception of almost all interviewees, Dalton, a disabled child, was a passive yet crucial catalyst in this discussion. Also, the case of Owen, a man with

¹⁷²⁶ *Bringing Children to the Lord's Table: a response to Synod's 2007 decision*, a proposal by Robert and Laura Keeley and Marv Hofman, October 2007. *Bringing Children to the Lord's Table: a response to Synod's 2007 decision*, a communication by Fourteenth Street council, March 3, 2008.

¹⁷²⁷ Such as David Rylaarsdam, Jeff Weima, Syd Hielema, Norman Shepherd and Wayne Brouwer.

¹⁷²⁸ Such as Bob De Moor.

¹⁷²⁹ Such as Leonard Vander Zee, Erick Schuringa and John Witvliet.

Alzheimer's disease, caused many to reconsider the Lord's Supper practice. In a more or less passive way, the awkward teenagers played a similar role as catalyst in the process.

Others mention how they were swayed to being more accepting of participation of children by the fact that, to their great surprise, some of the older, well-respected members of the congregation were very much in favor.

4.4.19. *Vision and theology*

The interviewees make clear that what Scripture says is crucial both for their personal views on the issue of children at the Lord's Supper and also for the congregation's view on the same. The interviewees are well-read and informed. Several refer to speeches at the Calvin Symposium on Worship and articles in the *Banner* and the *Calvin Seminary Forum*¹⁷³⁰. A renewed understanding of 1 Corinthians 11 and its requirements in its context plays a key role for many of them. One interviewee still has some reservations about whether all the children who now participate are truly able to remember. The words of Paul, which were intended against separation within the Corinthian church, in the course of history were used to create such separation, according to Bob Keeley. One of the children, Isaac, mentions the baptism and Communion of whole families in Acts, as argument. The family nature of both the Passover and the Jewish seder tradition is also mentioned by several. One parent shares how her child used Jesus' words "*let the children come to me*" to convince her mother that she should be allowed at the Lord's Supper. Another parent alludes to Isaiah's prophecy "*a child shall lead them*"¹⁷³¹ when she recalls the story of her child convincing her with a simple child's faith.

Interviewees use the ecclesiological argument that children are invited as part of the body of Christ, and several interviewees are touched when children come forward with the older generations and better reflect the church and its intergenerational and family character.

The covenant is also mentioned as a major theme of the conversations, particularly the inclusion of believers' children in the covenant and its promises. Others mention how the Keeleys highlight the covenantal nature of faith formation.

¹⁷³⁰ David Rylaarsdam, "United, Separated, Re-united: The Story of Baptism and the Lords Supper," *Forum* (Spring, 2007). Jeffrey A.D. Weima, "Children at the Lord's Supper and the Key Text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34," *Forum* (Spring, 2007).

¹⁷³¹ Isaiah 11: 6.

The tension between the theology and practice of infant baptism on the one hand and the former theology and practice of excluding the children from the table is also mentioned more than once. *“In baptism we are Reformed, in the Lord’s Supper we are Baptists,”* as someone said before children participated. Some even call baptism the essential reason to welcome children. One interviewee mentions *“the sacrament of the Word”* as well. Now that children are welcomed at the Lord’s Supper, a new emphasis on the celebration of baptism and other milestones of faith emerges¹⁷³².

A large number of quotes reflect the importance of people’s sacramental vision for the discussion. Hofman recalls how in the past Communion seemed to be about holiness instead of grace. The sacraments are not only sign and seal of the promise of that grace but are also means of grace. The Keeleys have opened the eyes of the congregation to how the sacraments as a means of grace are a faith forming event and not a reward for those who have figured it out. Kristen De Vries expresses a sacramental view of life by saying *“I think every time we take a shower, we are supposed to remember our baptism, at some level”* and *“the pictures of food and water are so universal. I think that every time we come together to break bread it is a reminder of the Lord’s Table”*.

4.4.20. Context and culture

The discussion of children at the Lord’s Supper is influenced in several ways by discussions and practices in other denominations. A family coming from an Episcopal Church where the children were allowed to participate helps to put the question on the agenda. A family that spent a year living in New Mexico with a similar experience is also mentioned. At least half of the mature interviewees had previously been members of different denominations. Several of those denominations allowed children to commune: for example the Episcopal Church, a non-denominational church, the Reformed Church of America, and the Roman Catholic Church. Some were even open to infant Communion such as the International Lutheran Church in Japan. Significant exposure to other denominations and their practices in ways other than former membership is even more abundant. One example is Tamara Stilwell’s interaction with the Greek Orthodox in Grand Rapids through her work. For some this meant that even the open policies of Fourteenth Street were

¹⁷³² Notice how this is advocated by the Keeleys, but also by the Faith Formation Committee. Laura Keeley and Robert J. Keeley. *Celebrating the Milestones of Faith: A Guide for Churches*. (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2009).

stricter than they were used to. For many this previous exposure had created openness toward participation of children. However, based on the testimony of several who experienced possible downsides, we know this openness is not unconditional. The Roman Catholic and Baptist background of Matthew Stilwell makes him stress the conversation with elders, making sure it is not just a matter of age but is about a relationship with Jesus Christ. Another way in which the Roman Catholic Church has influenced Fourteenth Street is through the sacramental nature which the program *Children and Worship* inherited from *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*.

In this way the introduction of children at the Lord's Supper is partly related to decreasing denominational loyalty and increasing membership transfer and exposure to other views and practices. Somewhat related is how some interviewees notice a relationship between changing value of membership and changing nature of profession of faith. Interviewees fear that the introduction of children to the Lord's Supper is part of this complex of changes and therefore is accompanied by the unwanted change in nature of profession of faith.

Kristen De Vries suggests that the culture becoming less formal paved the way for the presence of children at the table.

4.4.21. Children

Reanne Walters emphasizes that Fourteenth Street has always had a tenderness towards children. As new as the developments regarding admission to the Lord's Supper may have been, those developments resonated with the heart of this congregation in which children were very integrated, says Hofman. When speaking of children, the interviewees use covenantal language¹⁷³³. Children are part of the covenant and are therefore baptized. It should be obvious they belong, as Laura Keeley says. Reanne Walters suggests children are not just the future of the church, but the children are part of the church (today)¹⁷³⁴.

Interviewees demonstrated a great awareness of the development of children, and the terminology they use reflects that of the authors of *Children and Worship* and those they have been inspired by¹⁷³⁵. Interviews suggest

¹⁷³³ Compare Keeley (2006), 8.

¹⁷³⁴ Compare Keeley and Keeley (2009), 11.

¹⁷³⁵ Kristen De Vries says: "One of the things that might have paved the way for that is the early adoption of Children and Worship."

widespread awareness of multisensory learning and the participatory nature of learning. Interviewees mention learning by doing and learning through play, but also worship through play, through story, through imagination and through doing. Awareness of child development also translates into an emphasis on faith formation as we move through life¹⁷³⁶. Interviewees credit the Keeleys for the congregation's emphasis on such faith formation. The phrase age-and-ability-appropriate as used by the Faith Formation Committee of the denomination fits the mindset of Fourteenth Street and has shaped the speech and practice of the congregation.

The age and the way the interviewed children and the children of the interviewed parents came to the Lord's Supper reflects the different stages in the process and the different choices parents or children made within that process. A young friend of the Stilwell's who participated in the interview did profession of faith at age ten, and talked with an elder. The children of Mary Koster did profession of faith at age ten and round age thirteen, the two oldest Luce children had their conversation – when it was no longer required – round that same age. Paul Katerberg remembers six, seven and eight year olds professing their faith prior to the current policy. Rebecca Stilwell fits that category. When she was only five years old, before the 2010 policy was implemented, she came to the front leaned over to her parents and said, "*I want to take Communion*". Pastor Hofman gave her permission, and she has celebrated Communion ever since. But Brenda Katerberg indicates that most often children who professed their faith were at least ten. Reanne Walters shares how her daughter was allowed to help serving Communion, before she was allowed to take it. Her son expressed his desire to participate when he was only three or four, but he was not allowed. When he was old enough to profess his faith he hesitated because of the institutional character of profession of faith. Pastor Hofman then opened the way to the Lord's Supper by having a short conversation with him while playing basketball in the parking lot of the church. After the 2010 policy had been implemented much younger children participate. Some mention children being carried in parents' arms, others mention ages two and three, and others mention the physical ability to eat as a practical requirement for setting the minimum age.

¹⁷³⁶ Note how the Keeleys quote Goheen and Bartholomew's *The Drama of Scripture* when speaking of Scripture as one cohesive story and about weaving our stories with God's story. Keeley and Keeley (2009), 7. Craig G. Bartholomew, and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004).

4.4.22. *Catechetical and liturgical frames*

According to the interviewees no specially designed catechetical frames have been introduced to encourage “full, conscious, active” participation. But they do point out that *Children and Worship* with its sacramental focus and the feast element is a catechetical preparation of sorts. The adult profession, which includes agreement with the creeds, seems to imply that children at later age become aware what the creeds teach about the sacraments. Some suggest it might be good to develop material for parents to be used at home and hint that the talents to do so are available in the church¹⁷³⁷. One interviewee suggests that the teaching changes as the hearts of the teachers are changed during this whole process.

Liturgical frames to encourage such participation are especially mentioned when speaking of the period prior to the current policy, such as elders addressing the children at their level, giving the children a red ribbon, and later blessing the youth. As Mike Luce indicates, “*I haven’t noticed that there has been specific liturgy or songs that have been changed or tailored since children have come to the table. (...) We still sing the same songs the liturgy is the same*”. Those involved in the Worship Planning Committee give several examples how under the leadership of Hofman great attention is paid to including the youth in meaningful ways in all worship. In the interview with Hofman and the Keeleys, they mention the books *A More Profound Halleluia*¹⁷³⁸ and *Desiring the Kingdom*¹⁷³⁹ as important inspiration for shaping the liturgy in Fourteenth Street.

4.4.23. *Significance and consequences*

One unforeseen consequence of welcoming children to the Lord’s Supper was that teenagers were caught in the change, feeling hurt and angry. Several wonder what the consequence for profession of faith will be. In the first stage the number of professions of faith seems to be increasing. But after 2011 the number of professions has dropped off and the church is seeking better ways to encourage profession of faith by their young people¹⁷⁴⁰. One child shares, “*Sometimes it is sort of hard to do the part where you drink the grape juice, because sometimes it spills and there are no tiny cups*”. So some decorum

¹⁷³⁷ In the book about nurturing faith, *Shaped by God*, edited by Bob Keeley, one chapter is dedicated to the sacraments. Robert J. Keeley, ed., *Shaped by God: Twelve Essentials for Nurturing Faith in Children, Youth, and Adults* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2010).

¹⁷³⁸ Leanne Van Dyk, ed., *A More Profound Alleluia: Theology and Worship in Harmony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

¹⁷³⁹ James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Volume 1 of Cultural Liturgies (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).

¹⁷⁴⁰ Hofman (2015).

might be lost. Others wonder whether the sacredness and importance will be lost: *“If we open the table you always have the risk of it being cheap grace, but the table should be open. It is one of those holding tensions”*. Another interviewee notices that the feast component of *Children and Worship* is no longer needed.

The greatest significance, as the interviewees experience the change, lies in witnessing the entire congregation — whole families and all generations — celebrating the Lord’s Supper together. Families enjoy sharing this experience together. A mother enjoys seeing her teenage boys, who argue all the time, passing the peace. Others express that the significance is that faith is now being nurtured, whether or not we can see that already. One interviewee says the conversations with parents regarding the sacrament may be the most meaningful experience in the change. Some express the inclusiveness as significant, but one notices that the church was already inclusive or intergenerational in so many other ways. A young child confesses that now it has become so natural the sense of awe has somewhat disappeared, adding that it is still meaningful, but just not brand new anymore.

4.5. First Christian Reformed Church New Westminster, British Columbia¹⁷⁴¹

4.5.1. Planting a church by building a school

After World War II, especially in the late forties and fifties, a large wave of Dutch immigrants flowed into Canada. The Vancouver Christian Reformed Church burst at the seams and the decision was taken to plant new churches in neighboring municipalities under the leadership of missionary Pastor Paul De Koekkoek. The First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster, New West for short, was founded as one of those church plants on October 10 1952¹⁷⁴². One year later Henry Van Andel was called, becoming the congregation’s first pastor in 1954. Giving high priority to Christian education for its children, the congregation built the John Knox Christian School in 1955. With the school building, which was used as a place of worship on Sundays, the church moved two blocks into the city of Burnaby, without changing its

¹⁷⁴¹ I would like to express my great appreciation to all those who made my research on First Christian Reformed Church, New Westminster possible: the council of 1st CRC New Westminster, Art Boersma, Johanna Voogd and the interviewees: Eric, May Baelde, Pastor Peter Brouwer, Pastor Andrew Beunk, Prof. Dr. Michael & Marnie Goheen, Len & Yolanda Noort and their children Allison, and Leonard, Hank van Ryk, John & Corrie VanderWoude.

¹⁷⁴² Cf. the Minutes of the founding meeting as found in the anniversary booklets *The First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster: 1952-1977* (New Westminster: 1977) and *50 Years of God’s Faithfulness: 1952-2002* (Burnaby: 2002).

name. On February 27, 1962, seven years and many hours of free labour later, a church building across the road from the school could be dedicated¹⁷⁴³. In the archives of New West the issue of children at the Lord's Supper is mentioned for the first time in the eighties¹⁷⁴⁴. But it was certainly not the only issue which occupied the congregation during that decade. Starting in the early eighties New West, under leadership of its deacons, sponsored approximately 1500 Vietnamese refugees, assisting them in the process of entering Canada¹⁷⁴⁵. Missionary zeal and a heart for Christian education resulted in the Beehive Christian preschool, a ministry of the congregation in a building next door. Doctrinal differences within the denomination, for example about women's ordination, resulted in a group of ten families leaving the congregation in 1988 or 1990¹⁷⁴⁶. They started the Orthodox Church, later United Reformed Church in New Westminster. Several families with similar conservative views have remained part of the congregation.

4.5.2. Children at the Lord's Supper in New West

Even before 1952, the year of New West's foundation, the question of whether children should partake of the Lord's Supper can be found in the denominational periodicals¹⁷⁴⁷. Van Andel's New West catechism students ask similar questions in the fifties and sixties, and his answer is that the privilege of participation in the Lord's Supper belongs to those who spiritually come of age by making profession of faith¹⁷⁴⁸. But the question is not put on the agenda of the First Christian Reformed church before the late eighties. At that moment the church is served by Pastor Peter Brouwer and Bill Tuininga¹⁷⁴⁹. Brouwer already came to the conclusion that children should be allowed at the Lord's Supper when writing a paper at seminary in the sixties¹⁷⁵⁰. Pastor Bas Nederlof¹⁷⁵¹ also joins the congregation after his retirement in 1986.

¹⁷⁴³ "The Construction of Our Church Building," in *The First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster: 1952-1977* (New Westminster: 1977). C. Houweling, *Free Labour: Gedicht ter herinnering aan de kerkbouw van New Westminster* (New Westminster:1990).

¹⁷⁴⁴ We want to thank Mrs. Johanna Voogd, the archivist of New West, for her wonderful support.

¹⁷⁴⁵ In 1992 this resulted in the Vietnamese church Faith in Action in Vancouver.

¹⁷⁴⁶ The brief history on the internet mentions 1988, the 50th anniversary booklet mentions 1990, <http://www.nwrcr.ca/who-we-are/our-history/>.

¹⁷⁴⁷ Nicholas J. Monsma, "Should children partake of the Lord's supper?" *Banner*, January 6, 1950, 5.

¹⁷⁴⁸ "I remember a catechumen who asked the good question: Where in the Bible can we read that there is instituted in the church such a thing as making profession of faith?" writes Van Andel in 1967. The chapter could be considered an answer to that question. Henry Van Andel, "The Privileges of Full Communion," in *Thy Way is My Way*, ed. Michael De Vries, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Credo, 1972), 10. In 1986 Van Andel will be quoted in support of the 'traditional' position, Jelle Tuininga, "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook*, June, 1986.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Pieter (Peter) Brouwer and William Cecil Tuininga.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Peter Brouwer, interview by author, Surrey, BC, June 30 2011.

¹⁷⁵¹ Bastiaan Nederlof.

Nederlof has already led at least one Communion service including children at a conference in 1982¹⁷⁵² and makes a presentation to Classis B.C. North West in September 1986 concluding that children should be admitted to the Lord's Supper at an earlier age¹⁷⁵³. But neither Brouwer, nor Nederlof put the issue on New West's agenda.

4.5.3. Stage 1 – studying a synodical report

Synod 1986 decides to refer the report of the Committee on Children at the Lord's Supper to the churches for study and mandates the study committee to receive reaction from the churches by March 1, 1987¹⁷⁵⁴. In response New West council appoints a study committee¹⁷⁵⁵ which reports to the consistory in February 1987¹⁷⁵⁶. After studying the report, Calvin's *Institutes*, and several more recent articles and papers¹⁷⁵⁷, the committee reaches a consensus that, while there are sound reasons for moving in the direction of earlier participation of covenant children at the Lord's Supper, further study needs to be done by the churches and synod. Though the New West study committee does seem to report back to council on the decision of Synod 1988¹⁷⁵⁸, and though study material provided by the synodical committee is found in New West's archive¹⁷⁵⁹, there is no real proof of further study or classis initiated by

¹⁷⁵² Peter De Jong, "Children at the Lord's Table," *Outlook* (February, 1983). Syrt Wolters, "Als je 't mij vraagt," *Calvinist Contac* (November 26, 1982).

¹⁷⁵³ Bas Nederlof, *Covenant Children Partaking of the Lord's Supper – a Summary*, presented at Classis B.C. North West, September 1986.

¹⁷⁵⁴ Acts of Synod, article 35, 620.

¹⁷⁵⁵ The study committee consists of Art Boersma, Garret Brouwer (son of Peter Brouwer), Fred Herfst, Joanne Marees, Bas Nederlof and Cora Rook. In a letter to Consistory of December 18, 1986, Art Boersma strongly objects to children at the Lord's Supper. "Are we offering poison to our children, as John Calvin states in the *Institutes*?" He also objects that this matter is put to a sub-committee of the worship committee and not to the doctrinal committee. It seems likely that Boersma has been added to this sub-committee in response to his complaint. In 2015, Art Boersma writes "My current view is that the children are part of the body of the church and should be included in the celebration of the Lord's Supper as the Children of Israel participated in the Passover," e-mail to author on July 2, 2015.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Art Boersma et. al. *Study Committee on Children Partaking of the Lord's Supper New Westminster Christian Reformed Church: Report to the Consistory February 1987*.

¹⁷⁵⁷ The New West report mentions: Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Children At The Lord's Supper," *Banner*, March 26, 1984; Marsden, George M. "Children at the Lord's Table: a Reformed Dilemma," *Reformed Journal*, December, 1977; and the series of articles by the Dutch Reformed G. Visee, "May--and must--our children partake of the Lord's Supper?" published in four parts, *Christian Renewal*, resp. March 17, April 7, 21, May 5, 1986. All articles translated by Tony Heins. It also mentions the papers Bas Nederlof, *Covenant Children Partaking of the Lord's Supper – a Summary*. Presented at Classis B.C. North West, September 1986, and A. Vanden Pol, H. Salomons, B. DeMoor, *Covenant Children and Communion*, a paper presented to Classis B.C. South East at its 1986-1987 winter meeting.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Letter of December 23 1988 from Fred Herfst to members of the Study Committee.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Albert Helder, *Children at the Lord's Supper*. 1987/1988. As part of the material two *Banner* articles are provided: Helder, Albert. "Should my child be there with me?" *Banner*, March 9, 1987 (12-13). Kelderman, Duane K. "Why can't Johnny profess his faith?" *Banner*, March 9, 1987 (8-10).

New West for the next decade¹⁷⁶⁰. We may assume the attention must have been focused on other issues¹⁷⁶¹, considering the projects that New West was involved in during the late eighties and considering the tensions that preceded families leaving to start the Orthodox Reformed Church.

4.5.4. Stage 2 – implementing the decision of Synod 1995

At the 1993 and 1995 Synod a second round of discussions on children at the Lord's Supper takes place concluding in a reaffirmation of the 1988 conclusions¹⁷⁶². In 1996 the former chairman of the 1988 synodical study committee, Albert Helder, accepts the call to New West. An undated recommendation recommends the church (council) to implement the decision of Synod 1995. It is unclear whether we should recognize Al Helder's hand in this recommendation. But it seems that this recommendation has led to the request to Henry Hageman¹⁷⁶³ to once again study the issue. Hageman presents his report in July 1997. He emphasizes how both sacraments are signs and seals of the promises of God and opposes the suggestion that baptism reflects God's promises and the Lord's Supper our response to these promises. Hageman then distinguishes three basis approaches to both sacraments, the Roman Catholic, the Anabaptist, and the Reformed position, and how each relates to admission. That children, and in some Reformed circles even most adults, are barred from the table, Hageman considers the Anabaptist influence of the Pietist tradition, muddling the original Reformed position. Jesus' command to celebrate the Lord's Supper includes our covenant children, in the same way they were included in the Passover. 1 Corinthians 11 only excludes them when quoted out of context, as the official forms do, according to Hageman. For practical reasons the youngest children may be excluded, but Hageman suggests welcoming children in grade 1, approximately age six¹⁷⁶⁴.

¹⁷⁶⁰ In 1986 New West council had also formed a Lord's Supper Committee to advise consistory on issues such as the supervision on participation of guests, preparatory and applicatory services, and the frequency and logistics of the celebration. The committee consists of Ben Hendricks, Johanna Voogd, Wilma Bouma, Henry Hageman and Bill Tuininga. *Report to the Council of the First Christian Reformed Church of new Westminster from the Lord's Supper Committee*, December 1990.

¹⁷⁶¹ An assumption supported by another Lord's Supper Committee of New West which does not report by April 1987, as requested, but in December 1990, partly because the issue is not considered urgent.

¹⁷⁶² A letter from Fred Herfst to Administrative Council of January 26, 1993, suggests that New West does not take action in response to the study reports, prior to Synod 1993.

¹⁷⁶³ Henry Hageman was a relative new immigrant from the Netherlands who, if our information is correct, had attended the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in Amsterdam when Henk de Jong pastored this church. Henk de Jong played an important role in the discussion within the Dutch Reformed Churches. We note that Henry Hageman is of a different opinion than Henk de Jong.

¹⁷⁶⁴ Henry Hageman, *Who Participates at the Lord's Table*, Burnaby: July 1997.

Paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed Tradition

On February 18, 1998, council makes participation in the Lord's Supper available to covenant children and adopts a procedure to facilitate this¹⁷⁶⁵. Sunday school will be extended with a unit on the meaning of the Lord's Supper, which will be taught each year to all seven year old (grade 2) students. Initiating the process of children's participation, instructing their children, determining their understanding and requesting elders to affirm this judgment in a family visit, is considered a parental covenantal responsibility. The supervision of elders 'within the covenant community' is thus continued 'through covenantal channels'. At age seventeen young persons will be encouraged to prepare for a public profession of faith, as they will participate no longer as children of the covenant community but rather as responsible adults. A month later, March 1998, the congregation is informed of the new procedure¹⁷⁶⁶. An introductory remark notes that the issue "keeps coming up because there appears to be a contradiction between our theology and practice". As follow up on the pastoral letter a special Elders Workshop on Children at the Lord's Supper is organized for September 26 and postponed to December 9 that same year¹⁷⁶⁷. In between these two meetings, questions are prepared for the conversations between elders and children¹⁷⁶⁸.

My personal story and New West's story intertwine when I receive and accept a call in 2003, starting my ministry in March 2004, serving the congregation until July 2008, when a call from another church results in my return to the Netherlands. Coming from the Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen which has celebrated the Lord's Supper with all its children every week since 1962, the congregation once again receives a pastor convinced that covenant children belong at the Lord's Table. Even though a procedure has been in place to allow all covenant children to participate in the Lord's Supper, not all families have chosen to follow this procedure. And in the four and a half years I serve the church only a handful of children make use of the procedure. To my knowledge no records have been kept of those children who have gained access this way. The congregation receives the bread and wine while

¹⁷⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that at the same full council meeting the decision was taken to open the office of elder and deacon to women. *Draft Pastoral Letter from Council to the NWCRC Congregation*, March 5, 1998.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Pastoral letter from the Council of New West Christian Reformed Church to the Members (...): Regarding the subject of Children's participation in the Lord's Supper, March 1998

¹⁷⁶⁷ Attended by 19 members.

¹⁷⁶⁸ *Suggested questions when elders interview children wishing to participate to partake of the Lord's Supper*, October 10, 1998: Do you *want* to take part in the Lord's Supper? How long have you been *thinking* about that? *What* is the Lord's Supper? *Why* do we celebrate the Lord's Supper? *Why* did Jesus *die* for you and me? Did He *have* to die for us? Do you *love* Jesus? Is it difficult to be *obedient* to Him? Do you still do wrong and sin when you *want* to be obedient? What do *we do* about sin when we *know* that God loves us *more* than we can love Him? Do you *pray* and *talk* to God every day? Do you read the Bible *by yourself*? (Italics as in original).

remaining seated in the pews, which makes it hard to get a clear picture of which children participate. Some parents confide to me that they let their children participate without having followed the procedure. But even counting those unofficial participants it may be a majority of the children whose parents do not let them participate, especially taking into account that some of those families are relatively large. Reflective of those parents who do not support the idea of younger participation is the request of a precocious ten year old to do profession of faith, to which request, not council but, the father objects. As participation of children at the Lord's Supper seems to lack broad support I decide to preach a sermon series in May and June 2004 focusing on the question who should celebrate the Lord's Supper¹⁷⁶⁹. I choose to be transparent about my position but do not mention the participation of children in the sermons. Instead I challenge the congregation members themselves to answer the question whether children should participate in the Lord's Supper. In spite of the sermon series, support for participation of children does not change, and so I decide to offer a course in March and May 2005 using Tim Gallant's book *Feed My Lambs*¹⁷⁷⁰. Though the course, attended by a dozen participants, is appreciated, no dramatic changes in the participation of children occur. Over the course of those four and half years some small changes can be noticed. Sunday school children, who used to leave before its celebration, now witness the Lord's Supper and start asking their parents questions in the spirit of Exodus 12:26.

4.5.5. Stage 3 – A family raises the question anew

During those years Dr. Michael W. Goheen joins the staff as part-time preaching pastor and David Groen joins the staff as full-time youth pastor. In 2009 Andrew Beunk accepts a call from New West to become its new Senior Pastor. Not long after that the question is put on the agenda of New West once again. When Eric and Patsy, and their daughters Courtney, Lauren and Grace come over from a Presbyterian Church they express their desire to have their children participate. Parents of two sons who have been long term members express the same desire. The question of two other children is also mentioned in this regard. A teenage girl with parents from Latin American Roman Catholic background expresses her desire to profess her faith at a relative young age. A young teenage boy expresses his desire to participate in

¹⁷⁶⁹ On 1 Cor. 10 on May 16; 1 Cor. 11 on May 23; Ex. 12 on May 30; Rev. 19:9 on June 13, Matt. 26 on June 20, 2004.

¹⁷⁷⁰ Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord's Table Should be Restored to Covenant Children*, 2nd ed. (Grande Prairie: Pactum Reformanda, 2003). Tim Gallant, *Companion Study Guide to Feed My Lambs: 7 Lessons on Paedocommunion; With a postscript on Paedocommunion and the Three Forms of Unity* (Grande Prairie: Pacta Reformandum, 2003).

the Lord's Supper. His mother does not allow him even though he has been welcomed by the pastor.

In response to the request of Eric and Patsy, Youth Pastor Dave Groen and his wife Brittany visit the family and interview the children. Though Groen follows the procedure, other parents, Pastor Goheen, and Pastor Beunk indicate in the interviews that the pastors and most pastoral elders were not aware of the existence of the procedure to have all covenant children participate. It is indicative of how little participation of children at the Lord's Supper had become a noticeable practice. In terms of innovation the practice as allowed by the procedure had not been adopted by enough members to reach the critical mass needed to self sustain further adoption and to self sustain the practice of participation of children¹⁷⁷¹.

Based on previous experiences, Pastor Beunk fears that the issue might cause polarization and so chooses to have an extended conversation, spending two or three pastoral elders meetings, as well as a special meeting with elders and pastoral staff in which Dr. Goheen puts the issue in theological perspective. The elders start these discussions between March and May 2010¹⁷⁷². Dr. Goheen is also asked to preach on the topic in October 2010, followed up by a teaching service with discussion during a PM service¹⁷⁷³. At the February 2011 meeting of consistory a procedure for welcoming younger members to the Lord's Table is approved. In March 2011 the document *Children at the Lord's Supper - Procedure and guidelines for New West CRC* is shared with the congregation¹⁷⁷⁴. The procedure is revisited in November 2012, and shared with the congregation¹⁷⁷⁵. The language is now more in line with the synodical reports¹⁷⁷⁶, the revised church order¹⁷⁷⁷ and the law of British Columbia¹⁷⁷⁸. The general procedure of 2011 and 2012 is in large part that of 1998. It is still considered the covenantal responsibility of parents to initiate the procedure; elders exercise their responsibility by visiting the families; education continues to be provided to children and youth, and all procedures mark the transition

¹⁷⁷¹ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995), 313f.

¹⁷⁷² In March 2011 council writes: "During the last 10-12 months the elders have been discussing the matter." *Children at the Lord's Table: Procedures and Guidelines for New West CRC*, March 2011.

¹⁷⁷³ Unfortunately we were unable to obtain the text or audio of this sermon and teaching session.

¹⁷⁷⁴ *Children at the Lord's Table: Procedures and Guidelines for New West CRC*, March 2011.

¹⁷⁷⁵ *Welcoming Younger Members to the Lord's Table: Procedures and Guidelines for New West CRC*, November 2012.

¹⁷⁷⁶ "Understanding appropriate to their age level" becomes "age-and-ability-appropriate understanding."

¹⁷⁷⁷ Participating children are not registered as "confessing member (under 18)," but as communicant member.

¹⁷⁷⁸ In the article on profession/affirmation of faith of respectively the 1998, 2011 and 2012 procedures the age 17, 18 and 19 are mentioned; The latter being the age of majority in B.C.

into adulthood with a profession or affirmation of faith. What has changed is that children are additionally required to have an age-and-ability-appropriate understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ. Elders are required not just to assess this understanding, but also to discuss the parental responsibility of ongoing faith nurture. In 2011 the procedure speaks of an age appropriate public acknowledgement or profession within a worship service, whereas the 2012 procedure allows informing the congregation by a notice in the bulletin. This change may also reflect an ongoing discussion on the necessity of a public ceremony, as well as the fact that in the end profession of faith is required at the transition into adulthood and not for covenant children desiring to partake in the Lord's Supper. Education and ongoing faith nurture is now more explicitly a goal of all children's and youth ministries. Yet teaching on the Lord's Supper is still only explicitly mentioned for seven year old students.

4.5.6. People's perspective

Interviewing a dozen members has helped to reconstruct this process. But the interviews especially help to retell the story of the introduction of children at the Lord's Supper from the perspective of individual believers. I will distinguish different dimensions similar to those suggested by Don S. Browning¹⁷⁷⁹.

4.5.7. Emotions and feelings

In the interviews with members of New West several emotions are expressed. The passion of pastors to include children, perceived by some of the members as increasing with every new pastor, certainly motivated the pastors to implement change, but also influenced the willingness of members to change. Children and their parents remember how they were ready to participate, feeling it was unfortunate that they could not because they were considered too young to profess their faith. Others hesitated as they longed to participate in the Lord's Supper, but for example felt uncomfortable by being in the spotlights when professing faith. One anecdote illustrates how being allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper is also a matter of emotion for children: a young boy who was used to celebrating the Lord's Supper was in tears when a congregation member in whose care he was entrusted told him he was not allowed to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Those who are now allowed to

¹⁷⁷⁹ Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 106 f. See also Don S. Browning, "Empirical Considerations in Religious Praxis and Reflection (2005)," in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies*, Ed. Don S. Browning (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 37.

participate express their strengthened sense of belonging. The desire to belong, or for some the conviction that they belonged, also motivated the children whose questions helped put the issue on New West's agenda. As much as the passion of pastors may have motivated the change, fears and concerns expressed among others by the elders certainly have contributed to a slower pace of this change. And even as the change is being implemented those elders who are not fully convinced themselves express their fear to interview the children who desire to participate, and their uncomfortable and uneasy feelings when serving the Lord's Supper to children, especially when their own parents are not present to supervise¹⁷⁸⁰ or when children's behavior is perceived as disrespectful¹⁷⁸¹.

4.5.8. Obligations and ethics

A few obligational and ethical aspects of the issue are mentioned by the interviewees. Commitment is stressed as a prerequisite for participation. Mike Goheen characterizes the Supper even as meal for the community and committed. But commitment is also mentioned as a positive result of opening up the table. With words echoing the form for profession of faith, several interviewees stress that the privilege of the sacraments come with responsibilities for parents as well as children. These responsibilities are also mentioned in speaking of the promises, the warnings and the commands or obligations of the covenant, belonging to the Supper as covenantal meal. Several interviewees are very cautious that siblings or peers should not pressure others to participate; others notice that excluding people from the meal on the other hand would be exclusionary and even abusive. There is also caution that those children who do participate will not be treated different from those who don't.

4.5.9. Roles and rule

When looking at the different roles that people played in the process it is remarkable that New West, since Pastor Peter Brouwer, has had several pastors who were convinced that children are welcome at the Lord's Supper. Al Helder came from a classis and Peter Sinia from a local church which have been pioneers in this regard, yet they moved forward slowly and cautiously. The pastors' increasingly noticed passion plays a role. The trust they receive in their role as pastors and the authority as professor, but even more the trust

¹⁷⁸⁰ Note that the Indonesian children for example are supervised by Sunday School staff and not by their parents who worship in the school gym across the road.

¹⁷⁸¹ "kind of grabbing."

they gain as Christ followers, makes members willing to consider the legitimacy of their views.

But the children of those pastors, of the elders, and of the congregation in general also play significant roles. Mike Goheen's daughter asking at age three: "Daddy is the Lord's supper for the Lord's sheep?", "Am I one of the Lord's sheep?" and in response to her father's positive reply: "Why can't I have the Lord's supper?" The children of several families asking their parents similar questions played a crucial role in putting the issue once more on the agenda, even though we have seen that not all parents automatically allow their children's desire to be fulfilled. The experience of adult children leaving the church makes some more hesitant to welcome young children at the table; the experience of children's spiritual life flourishing after being welcomed to the table strengthens others to support the practice.

By leaving the decision about participation to the parents, the church has given parents a crucial role. The fact that possibly even a majority of parents have chosen not to let their children participate for already more than a decade is one way in which the crucial independent role of parents is emphasized¹⁷⁸². In several other ways New West emphasizes parents' responsibility to teach and to instruct regarding the Lord's Supper, but also to nurture faith at home. New West also tries to equip the parents through parenting classes¹⁷⁸³ and by sermons, for example on *parenting in the pews*¹⁷⁸⁴.

The role of synod is also interesting, when we consider that the three stages that we can distinguish in New West's process follow the three waves of the discussion at synod. In that sense synod sets the pace.

4.5.10. *Vision and theology*

I will now examine the visional or theological dimension to the process verbalized in interviews. One elder expresses his concern about the lack of biblical reference in the 2011 and 2012 procedure and guidelines. The documents both state, "This document is not intended to provide further Biblical or theological reflection on the issue of younger members at the Lord's Table. That kind of reflection has been carried out very capably by past

¹⁷⁸² John VanderWoude for example notices that "very few parents have their children participate in the Lord's Supper."

¹⁷⁸³ Led by Mike and Marnie Goheen.

¹⁷⁸⁴ A sermon by Mike Goheen on September 11, 2011.

Synodical study committees” and provide links to those resources on the internet. When we consider how several of New West’s pastors have specifically studied the issue, whether at the seminary, as part of a synodical study committee, or in other ways, and when we consider how the congregation has received several reports, several classes, and even more sermons on the subject, biblical and theological reflection has been quite abundant and thorough. It is good to notice that the most critical elder we interviewed did suggest a minimum age of twelve, assuming it was the age that Jewish children would come to the temple for the first time¹⁷⁸⁵, as well as the minimum age at which children are able to understand and remember as required in Corinthians 11. Mike Goheen most explicitly rejects the rationalist interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 and the phrase “discerning the body”: “The issue there was a moral issue, not a theological issue”.

Several interviewees use ecclesiological arguments. After the 1990s in which the different generations were treated as different target audiences and generations were found on opposite sides of the so-called worship wars, the first decade of the twentieth century became an era of new emphasis on the intergenerational nature of the church and its worship. The interviews show how both practices, such as fellowship time with coffee or soup and buns after church, as well as theological notions, strengthen the conviction that the church should be seen as a community, “one big family” which includes “even the smallest kid”. Eric remembers how, in his perception, Communion had become a status symbol in the Mennonite Brethren church of his youth, creating two classes of worshippers in the church¹⁷⁸⁶. Goheen speaks of the critical biblical order of cosmic, communal, and individual. The biblical story is one of cosmic salvation in which the whole creation will be renewed. Within that story a community¹⁷⁸⁷ is chosen to embody that good news. And within that community we find the individual. This biblical story is almost the opposite of the soteriological self centeredness that is often found in Western Christianity¹⁷⁸⁸. The children of the Ephesian church are treated as part of the community, and as called to own their faith, to believe, to obey and to

¹⁷⁸⁵ Alluding to the story of twelve year old Jesus at the temple, Luke 2:41-52.

¹⁷⁸⁶ In light of his remark about two classes of worshippers it is interesting that, although maybe half serious, Eric mentions twice how in New West the pastor drinks from a large cup whereas the other members drink from small cups.

¹⁷⁸⁷ Goheen quotes “You shall be My people, And I will be your God” (cf. Ex. 6:7 Jer. 11:4 Ez. 36:28).

¹⁷⁸⁸ Both in the interview and in his books Goheen refers to Berkouwer and Wright. Michael Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History and Issues*, (....), 91; G.C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ: Studies in Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 211-212. N.T. Wright writes “If we start with the future hope of the individual, there is always the risk that we will, at least by implication, understand that as the real centre of everything, and treat the hope of creation as mere embroidery around the edges,” Tom Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 5th ed. (London: SPCK, 2011), 92.

fear¹⁷⁸⁹. The covenant, the children of the covenant, and how they share in God's promises are mentioned often in the documents and interviews. The place of children in the Passover¹⁷⁹⁰ and later seder tradition is seen as an argument for children at the Lord's Supper and also as a model for a child-friendly way to instruct children when celebrating the Lord's Supper. Baptism of children is also mentioned by several interviewees.

When Eric, who was raised in a Mennonite Brethren church, found out CRC churches require public testimonies before a young person could be deemed eligible to receive Communion, he felt that Anabaptist distinctives had influenced the evolution of the Christian Reformed praxis. Marnie Goheen is the only one who explicitly mentions an eschatological argument when she states that the Supper "lightens the imagination for the hope that lies before us" and we are "to hold that hope before our children". Len Noort calls it a positive thing and a great celebration for a committed child to be so closely connected to Christ by eating the bread of life and drinking His blood. Mike Goheen highlights the missional orientation of the Supper¹⁷⁹¹ by sharing a story on a pastor who kept asking "is everyone fed?" until the congregation realized he was thinking of those hungry for grace not yet reached with the gospel. In Goheen's view, children need to be fed for their missional job to embody justice on the playground or to embody kindness to their friends. Mike thus emphasizes how the Supper nurtures faith. Marnie, possibly alluding to the manna during Israel's desert journey, uses the image of food for the journey. Andrew Beunk uses the image of the Supper as a family meal which is done more justice when you can celebrate with your whole family. Marnie Goheen builds on the same metaphor saying you don't withhold food from children until they can say "I love you" or "Thank you" for it. Mike Goheen shares a story from another congregation of celebrating the Supper in the context of a regular meal, and how a less ritualized setting moved many who had been hesitant before to bring their children.

In both documents and interviews I come across initial reservations based on tradition. 'Tradition' sometimes refers to Calvin's *Institutes*, the confessions, and the forms of the church, but several interviewees indicate that practice –

¹⁷⁸⁹ Cf. Ephesians 6:1.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Goheen: "I see the Lords supper if not a direct fulfillment of the Passover, certainly fulfilling a very similar role in the covenantal life of Gods people today. But the events now are no longer the exodus, but the exodus as is fulfilled in Christ."

¹⁷⁹¹ An article by Goheen on the missional orientation of both sacraments was translated into Dutch and published in *Opbouw*: Michael W. Goheen, "Goheen: 'Herstel de missionaire betekenis van doop en avondmaal': De kerk moet haar missionaire identiteit herontdekken," *Opbouw* (October 1, 2010).

the way we have always done things – had shaped their convictions: *lex orandi, lex credendi*.

4.5.11. Context and culture

When I look at these developments from the perspective of environment and context I notice a couple of things. Three out of the four families whose children are mentioned by the interviewees as those who raised the question came from other denominations than the Christian Reformed Church¹⁷⁹². Two out of those four families are from non Dutch ethnic background. May Baelde also observes that, “old, long time Dutch CRC people are not necessarily the ones whose children are participating in the Lord’s Supper”. Eric grew up in a Mennonite Brethren church and when joining a Reformed denomination embraced its theology on the place of children within the covenant. Marnie and Mike Goheen share a similar experience. Yolanda Noort mentions how the different background and experience of pastors Sinia¹⁷⁹³ and Goheen¹⁷⁹⁴ opened her eyes to something that was not even an option before. I already mentioned in a footnote that Henry Hageman who wrote an internal study report may have been influenced by his Dutch Reformed background. In short, exposure to other denominational practices and cultures has certainly influenced the process. At the same time we have seen that the pace is set at synod, and New West’s development in this regard is almost synchronized with what happens in the heartland of the denomination.

May Baelde believes the development also happens under the influence of society; a culture in which – as she experiences at her work at John Knox Christian School – parents allow children more and more to make decisions which really are parents’ decisions. The amount of authority that parents have in a certain culture has also been related to the distinction between high context and low context cultures¹⁷⁹⁵; in high context cultures authority is centralized and responsibility is at the top. In New West church the first generation of Dutch immigrants represents a higher context culture than second or third generations of Dutch immigrants. The North American West Coast culture represents a low context culture, but for quite some time now also experiences a great influx of immigrants from high context Asian cultures. It is interesting to realize that the issue of children at the Lord’s Supper plays out in the midst of this encounter between high context and low context

¹⁷⁹² The Presbyterian Church, Roman Catholic Church and an unknown denomination.

¹⁷⁹³ Dutch Reformed Church Rijsbergen.

¹⁷⁹⁴ Baptist during his youth, Presbyterian Church of America during his years as theological student.

¹⁷⁹⁵ See Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Book, 1981).

cultures. Children who decide to participate and children who are (perceived) as not respecting the reverent atmosphere of the Lord's Supper could be understood as a symptom of a low context culture. The argument that the identity of children is rooted in their believing families or in the covenant is more characteristic of high context culture.

Children have been the focus of attention of the New West congregation in more than one way. It is a striking feature of New West that the congregation, strongly influenced by Abraham Kuyper's Christian School movement, gave priority to building a Christian School before building a sanctuary. Reaching out to the community through the Beehive Christian preschool since 1988 may be seen as continued attention to children and their education. Several ministries of the church, such as the Calvinist Cadet Corps, G.E.M.S. girls club, Vacation Bible School, and Student Dynamics target the children and youth of the church and its community and have welcomed significant numbers of children from congregations without such ministries. The New West Sunday school also hosts the English speaking children of the Indonesian Church which worships in the John Knox School gym. The congregation is also involved in the International Student Ministries of Simon Fraser University, serves international students and scholars with the Mosaic ministry, and uses a former parsonage as Mosaic Home. The involvement of the congregation may be reflected by the fact that all interviewees are involved in one or more of those ministries. Not uncommon for North American churches this size, but remarkable from a Dutch perspective is the full time position of the Youth Pastor David Groen. The strong focus of attention to children seems to provide fertile ground for the belief that children belong at the Lord's Table, and it raises the question why the congregation was not more at the forefront of this development within the denomination.

How are children perceived by the interviewees? Alison Noort says that even the smallest kid, just being baptized as part of the family, needs to be treated as fellow brother or sister. John VanderWoude cautions that it is not up to us to determine whether a child will become a Christ follower or not and rejects "the idea that we can, kind of, help God in saving our children". I will resist the temptation to overload these short quotes with theological meaning as if they represent the spectrum of view ranging from Kuyper's presumptive regeneration to the Pietist view Kuyper so much opposed. Especially as almost all interviewees view children in light of the covenant and its promises, that is more in line with theologians such as Louis Berkhof¹⁷⁹⁶ and Klaas Schilder.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology: New Edition containing the full text of Systematic Theology and the original Introductory Volume to Systematic Theology* (1932/1938; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 639.

Regarding children's sacramental ability, the Goheens emphasize the ability of children to understand symbol and metaphor. The question and answer as integrated into the active participation of the Passover model points to how children have learned by doing throughout history except in the post-Enlightenment West. The ability of children from age one to five to drink in what is shared with them about Communion and other practices, and the tenderness of their hearts create a window of opportunity to lay a strong foundation for their future lives with God. In several ways age and ability are respected. *Children, even in a child's way, they show whether they love God or not*, says Corrie VanderWoude. *We wanted our kids owning it at three years old at a three year old level, and four year old at a four year old level and at five year old*, says Mike Goheen. It is sufficient when children understand at their level, suggests Alison Noort. Marnie Goheen states: "Following Christ is entering into a relationship with a person, and not a set of ideas that you have to assent to. Christ can touch every person. Every single person understands this touch of love, even if they can't hear and they can't see".

Even though almost all interviewees embrace the language of age and ability appropriate participation, listening to what they say about specific ages shows more diversity. Leonard Noort felt too young to participate when age twelve or thirteen, and has not started to participate when interviewed at age fourteen. We already heard John VanderWoude mention age twelve as a minimum. Marnie Goheen notices that this seems to reflect the minimum age of most children who participate at an earlier age, only slightly younger than Abraham Kuyper already envisioned. Marnie and Mike Goheen wonder why younger children, for who the table has been opened, are not coming. But Mike Goheen challenges parents of younger children to be bold, and hopes that his grandson Levi will start taking Lord's Supper when he turns two or three. Andrew Beunk mentions children age five or six as an example. Len Noort mentions tolerance in the church to seven years old who commit to Christ. No one mentions babies or infants as possible participants.

4.5.12. Catechetical and liturgical frames

With the latest procedure and guideline, education and ongoing faith nurture has been named more explicitly a goal of all children's and youth ministries, though teaching on the Lord's Supper is only explicitly mentioned for seven-year-old students. Interviewees involved in Cadets, G.E.M.S. , and Student Dynamics have not witnessed teaching on the Lord's Supper in these ministries. Andrew Beunk shares that nothing intentional has been done in terms of providing Sunday school curriculum or teaching, and recognizes how

the ideas as provided in a webinar of the denomination provide opportunities for growth¹⁷⁹⁷. Mike Goheen mentions more comprehensive plans to help children participate in the life of the congregation, which have not yet found support in the Sunday school staff. Parents are not provided with tools or resources, other than the conversation with the pastor or elders, the parenting class led by Mike and Marnie Goheen, and some sermons such as the one titled Parenting in the Pews. When the procedure had just been introduced, children were invited to come forward during the church service where the pastor shared with them what the elements mean. This had not become a regular element of Communion services.

For now the most significant change during Communion services is the fact that children come back from Sunday school and are present during the Lord's Supper. This presents some challenges, some of which at the time of the interviews still need to be addressed. Timing is one such challenge: providing Sunday school with enough time to finish their program and finding ways to make the children come back in the right time. The way children find their way back to their parents does not satisfy the congregation yet. And the Indonesian children who are supervised by Sunday school teachers provide a challenge how to handle parental supervision when parents worship across the road. The Worship Planning Team has played with ideas of using the Passover and seder tradition as format to encourage children's active participation and has picked up material from Grand Rapids, but at the time of the interview, nothing has developed beyond the planning stage yet. Some interviewees emphasize though that being present, even if only witnessing the Lord's Supper, already teaches the children a lot. And even without resources, the older generation of the church does have meaningful conversations with the younger generation.

4.5.13. Significance and consequences

According to the elder who opposes the change, the impact on the church has been little. The significance of children participating in the Lord's Supper according to others is that it has strengthened the acceptance of the children and the interaction between the generations. To see children participate is heartwarming, May Baelde shares. Without specifying why, parents share that it is especially significant for them to see their own children participate, and also how meaningful it is for their children. Marnie Goheen shares how

¹⁷⁹⁷ Webinar with Thea Leunk and Pat Nederveld on April 25, 2012

<http://network.crcna.org/elders/children-lords-table> A later webinar was recorded on February 20, 2013
<http://network.crcna.org/elders/children-lords-table-live-qa> (both accessed July 3, 2015).

significant it was for the families whose children desired to partake to experience the conversation with the Youth Pastor open up a conversation about faith within the family. When asked about the significance of the participation of children, Eric responds: “I think we are saying symbolically that our children are part of an amazing covenant in which they will be disciplined by not only their parents but the congregation as a whole. In short, there is a cross-generational interest in their well-being as they grow up in the faith”. Others feel that only time can tell what the significance for the faith of children is. For now the commitment of teenagers who have professed at a younger age is appreciated. An unexpected consequence according to Yolanda is that the practice has made new members feel even more integrated in the church family. Interviewees believe it draws in new families with children. The acceptance of the Indonesian children has also strengthened the relationship with the Indonesian church across the road. One unintended consequence is the sense of confusion that some feel about what should be considered profession of faith. A consequence not observed but feared by some is that those children who participate will be treated differently from those who do not.

4.6. Summary

A first important observation is that paedocommunion pioneers started to welcome children at the Supper in Protestant churches in the late 1950s and early 1960s across the Western world. The first of those pioneers did so independently from each other. A preliminary conclusion is that this is an indication that – consciously or unconsciously – broader cultural or social issues may have played a role in the introduction of paedocommunion. I conclude that multiple reasons – such as a more frequent Supper celebration, a growing awareness of sacramental tradition, exposure to other church traditions, a renewed vision on the church, and the Reformed theology of baptism – led Dutch pioneers to introduce paedocommunion.

Regarding the introduction of paedocommunion in the church of Rijsbergen I would like to draw the following conclusions. I conclude that the complex interplay between the Reformed liberated background of the church and Van Katwijk, the conservative pietistic denominational backgrounds of the members from Sliedrecht, and the Roman Catholic background of Carolina and her daughter played a significant role in the introduction of paedocommunion in Rijsbergen. A preliminary conclusion is that feelings of discontent of the Meijwaard Overduin brothers may have been highly significant in preparing the church of Rijsbergen for the move towards

welcoming children to the Table. If practical theology is about ‘tracing the sacred’, as Ruard Ganzevoort suggests¹⁷⁹⁸, then it is important to observe how the members of Rijsbergen perceived the harmony at the congregational meeting – at which paedocommunion was approved – as indication that the Holy Spirit rested upon the meeting. I conclude that in spite of the presence of a patriarchal culture, hierarchical relationship and charismatic personalities, so many members played a key-role in Rijsbergen’s process of welcoming children at the Table that we must speak of a communal process. I conclude that Rijsbergen’s strong emphasis on earliest practices, such as that of the apostolic church of Acts 2 and of the first Dutch Reformed Church of London, helped the congregation to break with tradition. No catechetical frames are provided to encourage full participation, other than the special spontaneous question and answer sessions in the early years after the introduction. It is remarkable that other kinds of special attention for children were remarkably absent in the early years of this first Dutch congregation to welcome children at the Table. Liturgically no special attempts seem to have been made to encourage full participation of children. Remarkably enough eyewitness reports reveal what an impact that little change had on people’s experience of the worship services. In retrospect most children felt at home in congregation and at its Lord’s Supper celebrations.

Regarding the introduction of paedocommunion in Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church I would like to draw the following conclusions. The overture that originated with Fourteenth Street CRC focuses primarily on the theological grounds in favor of paedocommunion: the intergenerational nature of church, baptism as covenantal sign signifying full membership, a renewed understanding of 1 Corinthians 11, the partnership between the Word in preaching and sacrament, the history behind the separation of baptism and Lord’s Supper, the participation of children in the early church, and the confusion regarding current profession of faith practice. But I conclude that the reasons behind the introduction of paedocommunion in Fourteenth Street CRC are more multidimensional, as acknowledged by the congregation and its members. Remarkable is the role of awkwardness of youth, and those who sympathize with their awkward feelings, in moving the congregation towards fuller participation of children in the Supper. I conclude that the role of the Keeleys as educators in the process, makes explicit what is

¹⁷⁹⁸ R. Ruard Ganzevoort, “Forks in the Road when Tracing the Sacred: Practical Theology as Hermeneutics of Lived Religion,” Presidential address to the 9th conference of the International Academy of Practical Theology, Chicago, 2009, http://www.ruardganzevoort.nl/pdf/2009_Presidential.pdf (accessed September 8, 2017).

more hidden in the process of other congregations, and that is the role of changing concepts of children and childhood on the introduction of paedocommunion. It is remarkable that all three local congregations in unique and very different ways showed sensitivity to children or youth from their earliest beginnings. Many of the interviewees attribute a special role to the disabled Dalton. Most of the liturgical frames were created in the process leading towards the introduction of paedocommunion in Fourteenth Street CRC. No significant later liturgical changes are mentioned by the interviewees. The material of *Children and Worship* in many ways had prepared the children for their participation. No need for new ways to prepare the children for participation was highlighted in the interviews and documents. The participation of children especially influenced the experience of the church as one body of believers.

Regarding the introduction of paedocommunion in New West CRC I would like to draw the following conclusions. The pace of the introduction of paedocommunion in New West CRC is set by synodical decisions; the three stages that we can distinguish in New West's process follow the three waves of the discussion at synod. Considering how a significant number of the pastors of New West CRC have been in support of paedocommunion in a relative early stage, it is remarkable that New West CRC has not been more at the forefront. A preliminary conclusion could be that the conviction of pastors and theologians is not necessarily decisive in the introduction of paedocommunion. Just like Fourteenth Street CRC, New West has had a focus on children and youth from the moment it gave priority to building a school over building a sanctuary. This focus has not put New West on the forefront of change in this regard, but it may explain why the congregation ended up welcoming children at the Table. Another remarkable feature is how the congregation has supported opening the Table to children, while at the same time a significant minority of parents, with possibly a majority of children, decided not to make use of this possibility. It may serve as an example that it is possible for two opinions about paedocommunion to be practiced within a congregation that worships in unity. At the same time this remarkable feature may explain why it was perceived necessary to raise the question after it had already been answered positively. Part of the congregational story as well as the individual stories of interviewees is how families and children raise the question. This feature that we have come across in all three case studies deserves to be evaluated in more detail in the final chapter. Though the Worship Committee has contemplated using material from Grand Rapids, no significant changes in the Lord's Supper have been introduced. This makes the presence of children the most significant change. And since children are

present during Supper celebrations of children, they start asking their parents questions in the spirit of Exodus 12:26, whether or not they participate. The actual participation of children has strengthened the acceptance of children and the interaction between the generations. Some feel that it has made it easier to integrate new members into the church family as well. Ongoing faith nurture is an explicit goal of the New West, teaching on the Lord's Supper is explicitly mentioned for seven-year-old students, but at the moment of our interviews these goals have not materialized yet. Catechetical training of parents is emphasized to equip parents, among other things, to teach and instruct their children themselves regarding the Lord's Supper.

Chapter 5 Denominational Discussion

5. 1. Introduction

This fifth chapter provides a description of how the paedocommunion discussion unfolds within three denominations within the Dutch Reformed tradition: 1) the Reformed Churches liberated¹⁷⁹⁹ and its offshoot the Dutch Reformed Churches¹⁸⁰⁰, 2) the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands¹⁸⁰¹ which merged with the Netherlands Reformed Church¹⁸⁰² and Evangelical Lutheran Church¹⁸⁰³ into the Protestant Church in the Netherlands in 2004, and 3) the Christian Reformed Church in North America. As indicated, these three denominations in the Netherlands and in North America are connected by more than just ecclesiastical fellowship or ecumenical relations and can be treated as a family of churches, representative of the Dutch Reformed tradition, even though there are relevant differences in theology, praxis and context.

In this fifth chapter I finish the descriptive-empirical or observation step in my research process, gathering the data which I will analyze in the sixth and final chapter of this dissertation. To describe how the paedocommunion discussion unfolded in these three denominations I will organize the material chronologically, per denomination, while distinguishing the discussion on two platforms. Per denomination I will first describe the discussion on the platform of national or bi-national denominational periodicals and popular theological publications associated with the denomination¹⁸⁰⁴. Then I will describe the debate on the platform of national assemblies or synods of that denomination, as it is described in the study reports, agenda's and acts.

I continue to work with the same multidimensional framework, similar to that developed by Browning. For that reason this chapter is based on an underlying coded analysis of the discussion, just like chapter four. This will allow chapter six to focus on the various arguments separately, to include other aspects relevant to this discussion, and to elucidate the inner coherence of the arguments.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt.

¹⁸⁰⁰ Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken.

¹⁸⁰¹ Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

¹⁸⁰² Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk.

¹⁸⁰³ Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Originally, the plan was to treat the discussion or academic discourse as found in theological journals and books separately. But considering the scarcity of academic articles on this subject in theological journals and the fact that most of the books written on the subject aligned with discussions found within periodicals targeting people in the pews, I have chosen to follow the discussion on only two platforms.

5.2. The CRCNA's Denominational Discussion in Periodicals and Books

5.2.1. The question raised

The first time the CRC Periodical Index¹⁸⁰⁵ registers the issue of children at the Lord's Supper, it is lay-members and children who raise the questions¹⁸⁰⁶. In 1950, a reader of the *Banner* argues that children should participate in the Lord's Supper because of the similar significance of both sacraments, the restriction of the injunctions of 1 Corinthians 11 to adults, the participation of children in the Passover, and the assumed participation of children in the breaking of bread in Acts 2:46.

In response, Nicholas Monsma¹⁸⁰⁷ defends the current practice, arguing that Acts is silent on children, that Deuteronomy 16 changed the initial participation of children in the Passover, and that both sacraments signify grace in different ways. Baptism signifies regeneration and requires no action, while Communion signifies spiritual growth and sanctification and requires faith along with a measure of mental and spiritual development.

5.2.2. First discussion in the fifties

In 1958, a first discussion takes place in the *Banner* when Clarence Vos¹⁸⁰⁸ takes up the question of little Margie wondering why she is not permitted to come to the Lord's Table¹⁸⁰⁹. For Vos, the child's question, desire, and need are arguments in themselves. He calls for biblical evidence in support of the current practice. Vos argues for a lower age of admission¹⁸¹⁰ based on children's participation in the covenant, in Passover, in baptism, and in the hearing of the Word. Considering the paedocommunion practice of the early church, Vos questions whether the restrictions of 1 Corinthians 11 apply to children. He questions whether we act in the spirit of the disciples who hindered children or in the spirit of Jesus who welcomed them.

In response¹⁸¹¹, Martin Monsma¹⁸¹² (not to be confused with Nicholas) points to the difference between the sacraments, adding that the required faith and

¹⁸⁰⁵ I made use of the CRC Periodical Index (CRCPI), which "is an index to periodicals which are official publications of the Christian Reformed Church or its institutions, or periodicals which have a significant number of contributors who are affiliated with the CRC or its institutions."

¹⁸⁰⁶ Nicholas J. Monsma, "Should children partake of the Lord's supper?" *Banner* (January 6, 1950): 5.

¹⁸⁰⁷ Nicholas J. Monsma, 1892-1973.

¹⁸⁰⁸ Clarence J. Vos, at that moment, serves as pastor of Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Paterson, New Jersey. Later Vos would become associate professor of Bible at Calvin Seminary.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Clarence J. Vos, "Suffer the Little Children; Thoughts on Children and Their Relation to Communion," *Banner* (February 28, 1958).

¹⁸¹⁰ But explicitly not for infant Communion.

¹⁸¹¹ Martin Monsma, "Children and the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (March 7, 1958).

understanding includes experiential knowledge of sin and misery. He disqualifies the testimony of the early church on the grounds that both the conception of transubstantiation and the necessity of the sacraments unto salvation originate at this time. Monsma suggests that during the Reformation, the age for profession of faith was raised to fourteen or fifteen because many lacked maturity and sincerity. He is against needless postponement but is happy with admission between ages seventeen and twenty. Even so, not age, but spiritual maturity should determine admission. The new emphasis on individual, personal conversion and commitment in the New Testament justifies a different treatment of children than in the Passover. Vos asserts that Baptists would agree¹⁸¹³. He believes the crux of the matter is whether or not children do possess enough faith to partake in Communion. He claims Monsma's requirement of full understanding excludes everyone, and turns a means into an end. Vos refers to Herman Hoeksema¹⁸¹⁴ who already in 1952 wrote in support of participation at a much younger age¹⁸¹⁵.

5.2.3. Questions, answers and second round of discussion in the sixties

We find the same pattern in the sixties: questions asked by readers¹⁸¹⁶, a single article by a Calvin Seminary student¹⁸¹⁷, and at the brink of the seventies, a second round of discussion. A significant difference with the fifties

¹⁸¹² Martin Monsma (1893–1968) pastored several churches and at that time served as professor of Practical Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary.

¹⁸¹³ Clarence J. Vos, "Suffer the Little Children," *Banner* (July 11, 1958).

¹⁸¹⁴ Herman Hoeksema (1886-1965), former pastor within the CRC, who, when refusing to accept the doctrine of common grace in 1924, formed the Protestant Reformed Churches, a more conservative denomination than the CRC, which for forty years he served as professor of theology.

¹⁸¹⁵ Vos quotes: "For the same reason I often wonder whether the practice of our churches not to administer the Lord's Supper to children before they have reached the age of adolescence* is not an error. Surely, long before they have reached this age, they are able to discern the Lord's body. There is, it seems to me, not sufficient reason to withhold from them this sacrament, by which they are nourished with the body and blood of Christ, and in which they commemorate Christ's death, until they have finished the course in catechetical instruction that is required in our churches and are capable of making a complete confession of faith. Let it rather be demanded that they continue to attend catechism until they have finished the course, but in the meantime let them partake of the Lord's Supper at least at a much earlier age than is usually the custom in our churches," Herman Hoeksema, *The Triple Knowledge: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*, Volume 2, 3rd ed. (1947-1952; Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1988), 561. *Adolescence in English refers to the stage between the age of 12 and 20, whereas the Dutch word refers to the stage which starts approximately at age 17.

¹⁸¹⁶ In 1963 a question by one of the CRC's medical missionaries on the foreign field, John H. Bratt, "The Reader Asks; At What Age Should We Admit to the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (January 25, 1963). In 1965 by one of the colleagues of John H. Bratt, who was professor of religion and theology at Calvin College, John H. Bratt, "The Reader Asks; Why Bar Children from the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 5, 1965).

¹⁸¹⁷ Stanley Vermeer, "Should Children Participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Stromata* (February 1968). *Stromata* is the annual publication of the student body.

seems to be that now most appeals in favor of children at the Lord's Table come from those within Calvin Seminary.

5.2.3.1. First question and answer

The first questioner suggests that the current practice lacks scriptural support, whereas children's sacramental ability, the parallel with infant baptism, and the benefits and meaning of Communion plead in favor. In response, Bratt mentions how church order¹⁸¹⁸ points out the difference between the sacraments, and emphasizes the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11. Bratt argues that thirteen-year-olds might be capable of meeting most requirements of 1 Corinthians 11, but the virile and strongly worded requirement to "prove" requires quite some maturity¹⁸¹⁹.

5.2.3.2. Second question and answer

The second questioner favors paedocommunion on the same grounds advanced for infant baptism: 1) the covenant concept, 2) the covenant practice, and 3) the household concept. In response, Bratt repeats his arguments, adding the suggestion that in infant baptism the conditions are levied on the covenantal parents, but in the case of Communion, on the prospective celebrant. He contends that Exodus 12:26-27 does not expressly support children's participation.

5.2.3.3. A student's contribution

Calvin student Stanley Vermeer's study of the grounds for infant baptism makes him question the inconsistency with Lord's Supper theology. Infant baptism is defended carefully, whereas children are easily eliminated from Communion by the same theologians. Vermeer's argument is based on the parallel between Passover and the Lord's Supper and on the relation of both to the covenant of grace. A Passover style question and answer could shape the participation of children. Vermeer also mentions Eastern Orthodox practice in support¹⁸²⁰.

¹⁸¹⁸ Article 61.

¹⁸¹⁹ *Banner* (January 25, 1963): 17.

¹⁸²⁰ *Stromata* (February, 1968): 9-12.

5.2.3.4. *The second round of discussion*

The second round of discussion is opened in 1969 by Veenstra with this remark: “The doctoral thesis of one of our professors of theology states that Scripture does not forbid children’s participation in the Lord’s Supper”¹⁸²¹. Veenstra briefly repeats the major arguments in favor, and closes with a plea for better understanding of, for example, the inclusion of children in both sacraments by the Eastern Church¹⁸²². In response, John VanderPloeg¹⁸²³ quotes Berkhof¹⁸²⁴, Bavinck¹⁸²⁵, and Geesink¹⁸²⁶, adding a number of quotes from Calvin¹⁸²⁷ in a subsequent article¹⁸²⁸. Vermeer concurs with Veenstra, calls for a more fair treatment of the issue, and rebuts each of Bavinck’s arguments¹⁸²⁹ as follows: 1) Even after the Temple was built, part of the Passover was celebrated with the entire family. 2) Requiring children to ask questions allows for participation at age three. 3) The mere impression that New Testament Communion was restricted to adults is a Baptist argument. 4) Requiring faith and self-examination from adults does not imply the same is required from children. 5) Vermeer has experienced the blessing of Jewish Passover which we withhold from our children. G. Henneveld also rebuts Bavinck’s arguments: 1) The Passover, as originally instituted, should overrule its later development. 2) Both sacraments signify our dependence on God’s gracious initiative. 3) The silence of the New Testament on children’s participation suggests continuation of Old Testament custom, while the requirements are not different from those for baptism. 4) We are not in a position to conclude that blessing is withheld from children who do not participate in what God has instituted.¹⁸³⁰

5.2.4. *The third round of discussion, early seventies*

A third round of discussion begins in 1973 with the first female contribution. Tena Feenstra Venema tells the story of her eight-year-old son asking, “Mom, why can’t I take of the Bread?”¹⁸³¹ After explaining the requirement of public profession of faith, her son declares, “But I love Jesus now.” Feenstra

¹⁸²¹ Rolf L. Veenstra, “Participation,” *Banner* (August 22, 1969).

¹⁸²² *Banner* (August 22, 1969): 3.

¹⁸²³ John VanderPloeg, “The Lord’s Supper for Children Also?” *Banner* (August 22, 1969).

¹⁸²⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology: New Edition containing the full text of Systematic Theology and the original Introductory Volume to Systematic Theology* (1932/1938; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 656-657.

¹⁸²⁵ Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, Volume 4*, 4th ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1930), 560-563.

¹⁸²⁶ W. Geesink, *Van ’s HEEREN Ordinantien, Tweede Deel ’s HEEREN Ordinantien in de zedelijke wereld, Volume III*, 2nd ed. (1908; Kampen: Kok, 1925), 201.

¹⁸²⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes*. VanderPloeg quotes bk. IV, chap. 16, 30.

¹⁸²⁸ John VanderPloeg, “Once Again -- Children at the Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (May 1, 1970).

¹⁸²⁹ Stanley Vermeer, Stanley, “Voices: Children at the Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (May 1, 1970).

¹⁸³⁰ G. Henneveld, “Voices: Children at the Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (May 1 1970).

¹⁸³¹ Tena Feenstra Venema, “Please Tell Me – What Should I Have Said?” *Banner* (January 26, 1973).

questions the Christian Reformed practice of not allowing all baptized members to participate in the Lord's Supper. She wonders what Jesus would have done and challenges her readers to provide an answer she can give to her child.

J. Harold Ellens accepts the challenge, exhorting that the Lord's Supper is for all believers; that the most minute glimpse of faith is saving faith; that all children who can say, "I believe in Christ, and I love Him", should be permitted; that the connection between Communion, church membership, and discipline is not warranted¹⁸³². He suggests telling her son "that the Lord wants him to take the bread and wine, but that the church does not realize that and understand that yet." R.J. Van der Borgh¹⁸³³ states that Ellens misunderstands the relationships between baptism, the Lord's Supper, church membership, and discipline. He argues¹⁸³⁴ that only after children are instructed and fully understand the Christian faith can they proclaim, themselves, appreciate the corporate nature of the Lord's Supper, and understand the sacredness of this sacrament for which the Reformation has struggled. Henry Buikema¹⁸³⁵ responds that love for Jesus is not enough. Involvement in the struggle of faith, repentance of sin, and determination to take up one's cross are also needed. He believes that faith can only be strengthened by taking the Lord's Supper when it is already being exercised in these ways. Buikema fears requiring nothing more than love for Jesus because even a four-year-old will say, "I love Jesus now."

5.2.5. *Entering a new stage after 1975*

In the first twenty-five years (1950-1975) of the CRCNA's denominational discussion of paedocommunion in periodicals, the tone is irenic. Arguments both pro and con are evenly represented, and equal space is allotted. While reference to Dutch theologians is made, corresponding developments in the Netherlands are not mentioned. That changes in 1975. Tim Gallant writes, "After stirrings in some mainline denominations, Christian L. Keidel's landmark 1975 article regarding the practice of paedocommunion published in the

¹⁸³² J. Harold Ellens, "Commends Jan 26 Banner," *Banner* (March 9, 1973).

¹⁸³³ R.J. Van der Borgh, "Voices: But Let a Man Prove Himself," *Banner* (April 1973).

¹⁸³⁴ With three somewhat puzzling references to Herman Ridderbos, *Paulus: Ontwerp van zijn theologie* (Kampen: Kok, 1966) and Herman Ridderbos, "De genademiddelen," in *Het dogma der kerk*, edited by G.C. Berkouwer and G. Toornvliet (Groningen: Jan Haan, 1949). These references are somewhat puzzling while the first two refer to statements of Herman Ridderbos that closely resemble arguments often used in favor of children at the Lord's Supper, i.e. the corporate nature of the Lord's Supper celebration, and the similarity between baptism and Lord's Supper among others in the required faith and discernment. The last reference to *Het dogma der kerk* may prove too much.

¹⁸³⁵ Henry Buikema, "Why Can't I Take the Bread?" *Banner* (May 11, 1973).

Westminster Theological Journal,¹⁸³⁶ dropped like a bomb into the more conservative and evangelical Reformed community, and things have not been the same since. Particularly in the 1980s, Presbyterian and continental Reformed churches (among others) found themselves embroiled in the issue.”¹⁸³⁷ Without suggesting a causal relationship, one can observe a similar new stage in the discussion within the periodicals of the CRCNA. For example, there is a sharp increase in the number of articles,¹⁸³⁸ and a greater awareness of the importance of the discussion in light of contemporary developments, such as overtures and study reports.

5.2.6. *Input from the RCA, late seventies*

In 1977, George Marsden discusses the study report¹⁸³⁹ of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) in the progressive *Reformed Journal*¹⁸⁴⁰. How well do the various options comport with Scripture and the best of tradition as we understand them? The burden of proof rests on those who desire change and is available in the current implicit assumption that children are unregenerate and in the withholding of means of grace from those who need them. Marsden puts forward two risks. The first risk is participating children are eating judgment on themselves. But, a reasonable interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 does not allow the conclusion that believing children should be excluded. At the same time, “every means of grace carries with it the potential of being a means of judgment to those who abuse it.” Marsden suggests, participation (preferably weekly) is the antidote to children’s irreverence. The second risk comes in abandoning the requirement of profession of faith. The RCA committee observes that “along with revivalism came the idea that the children of the church need to be converted in the same manner as those outside the church, (...) old covenant theology was jeopardized by a new conversionist, individualistic theology”¹⁸⁴¹. Requiring faith and love

¹⁸³⁶ Christian L. Keidel, “Is the Lord’s Supper for Children?” *Westminster Theological Journal* (Spring 1975): 301-341. A response followed: Roger T. Beckwith, “The Age of Admission to the Lord’s Supper,” *Westminster Theological Journal* (Winter 1976): 123-151.

¹⁸³⁷ Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord’s Table Should Be Restored to Covenant Children*, 2nd. Ed. (Grand Prairie: Pactum Reformanda, 2003), 17-18.

¹⁸³⁸ I registered almost seven times as many articles on the subject in the CRCNA periodicals in the three decades after Keidel’s article as in the three decades before his article.

¹⁸³⁹ Baptized Non-Communicants and the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper (1977). The report can be found in James I. Cook, ed., *The Church Speaks: Papers of the Commission on Theology, Reformed Church in America, 1959-1984. (The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985).

¹⁸⁴⁰ Marsden, George M. “Children at the Lord’s Table: a Reformed Dilemma,” *Reformed Journal* (December 1977).

¹⁸⁴¹ James Cook (1985), 79. Note that the RCA committee speaks of increased tension between church theology and practice.

appropriate to age and understanding provides a safeguard against these two risks. A profession of faith at a riper age, without the necessity of joining the church, remains desirable.

5.2.7. *The two crucial years, 1980 and 1981*

Two years, 1980 and 1981, seem crucial in the CRC's discussion. *The Banner* of November 1980 devotes much space to the discussion, granting six pastors a voice¹⁸⁴² and publishing the results of a poll among children¹⁸⁴³. *Banner* Editor Andrew Kuyvenhoven¹⁸⁴⁴ argues for the importance and relevance of the topic pointing to several Reformed denominations in North America, the Netherlands¹⁸⁴⁵ and Scotland which discuss, experiment with¹⁸⁴⁶ or allow paedocommunion. Within the CRC, articles are written and several pastors express favorable views¹⁸⁴⁷. Kuyvenhoven¹⁸⁴⁸ considers infant Communion a sacramentalist practice. Thus, Communion belongs to the church and not to the family as it did in the Jewish Passover. He suggests a bar mitzvah ceremony close to age twelve to open the table while instruction continues. This would be followed by a ceremony of covenant making, giving evidence of knowledge and faith, and pledging active participation in the church when maturity is reached.

5.2.7.1. *The first pastor*

The first pastor who contributes to this issue, Jelle Tuininga,¹⁸⁴⁹ emphasizes the difference between Passover and Lord's Supper— the first as national and familial, the second as fulfilment of that which is to be received in the assembly of God¹⁸⁵⁰. Tuininga maintains that there is still a legitimate place for the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11¹⁸⁵¹. Baptism and Communion are different in that the latter by nature includes an element of confession and requires genuine faith. Tuininga also argues that the potential blessing of

¹⁸⁴² Jelle Tuininga, James A. De Jong, John Vriend, Alvin L. Hoksbergen, Morris N. Greidanus, and Jacob Kuntz.

¹⁸⁴³ Cecilia Mereness, "Do children care?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

¹⁸⁴⁴ Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Awaking sleeping dogs?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

¹⁸⁴⁵ Kuyvenhoven specifically mentions the Dutch book B.J. Aalbers, *Kinderen aan het avondmaal?* (Kampen: Kok, 1971).

¹⁸⁴⁶ Harry Buis, President of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, responds in a letter to the editor that the RCA does not allow such experiments as a recommendation along such line at the 1979 Synod was defeated: Buis (1981), 4.

¹⁸⁴⁷ While, as Kuyvenhoven admits, their church members did not show interest.

¹⁸⁴⁸ Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Children and the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

¹⁸⁴⁹ Jelle Tuininga, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

¹⁸⁵⁰ Cf. Belgic Confession Art. 35.

¹⁸⁵¹ Cf. Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 76.

allowing a child manifesting genuine faith to participate in the Lord's Supper is outweighed by the potential dangers. It could jeopardize catechism classes, undermine public profession of faith and the confessional nature of the church, create jealousy and rivalry, and put the sacrament on equal footing with the Word.

5.2.7.2. *The second pastor*

The second pastor, James De Jong,¹⁸⁵² does not find sufficient support in the Bible, in the Passover, or in early church history for the participation of young children, but he would like to encourage profession of faith by children preferably at age thirteen or fourteen, or at least sixteen¹⁸⁵³. De Jong believes high school youth are able to understand the Lord's Supper sufficiently, are in need of this means of grace more than ever, and may in this way experience peer identity working for the Lord. In addition, by aligning with major Christian traditions such as Lutheran, Anglican, and Roman Catholic practices, their wisdom would be acknowledged.

5.2.7.3. *The third pastor*

The third pastor, John Vriend,¹⁸⁵⁴ favors frequent celebration with the whole covenant community instead of leaving children in a limbo of our creation. Vriend describes the family Communion practice of Church of the Servant in Grand Rapids. Children come forward with their parents. Professing children partake, while non-professing children participate in accord with the level of their awareness. Both the pastor and the elders bless the babies, identifying the children as God's own, and share a word of encouragement with each of them. Parents are encouraged to share their bread with their small children. Vriend concludes: "We have found the harmony that eludes us when we theorize about it".

5.2.7.4. *The fourth pastor*

A fourth contribution comes from Pastor Alvin Hoksbergen.¹⁸⁵⁵ He suggests that objective shaping of practice based on our Reformed theology with its covenantal flavor would mean great change in participation of children in worship, including the Lord's Supper. The covenant has already shaped our

¹⁸⁵² James A. De Jong, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

¹⁸⁵³ De Jong believes that the current average age in the Canadian changes

¹⁸⁵⁴ John Vriend, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

¹⁸⁵⁵ Alvin L. Hoksbergen, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

educational approach in Christian schools and our theology of infant baptism, but it has failed to shape our Lord's Supper theology.

5.2.7.5. *The fifth pastor*

Morris Greidanus¹⁸⁵⁶ provides the fifth pastoral contribution. He claims the covenant theme supports infant Communion even more soundly than that of infant baptism. Children, he proposes, should be allowed to participate when they can discern the body and examine themselves – around the age of ten¹⁸⁵⁷ or even seven. Parents have the responsibility to decide whether their child is still frivolous or faithfully eager. As maturing members, children need this means of grace. Greidanus suggests that lowering the age of admission requires rethinking of our practice of profession of faith.

5.2.7.6. *The sixth pastor*

Jacob Kuntz¹⁸⁵⁸ is convinced that the Lord's Supper is exclusively for believers and sees it as an *expression* of faith. While public in nature, Kuntz separates it from the public *profession* of faith, stating the latter is how we know whether or not one believes. Kuntz suggests allowing early profession of faith at age twelve, or even ten, as a means of strengthening the faith of young believers while continuing their catechism. These combine in preparation for a complete, public profession of faith at a more mature age when all the privileges of membership would be granted. In Kuntz's view the consistory remains responsible in consultation with the parents.

5.2.7.7. *Hundreds of children polled*

At the *Banner's* request, Cele Mereness, teacher trainer for the education department of the Board of Publications, asked a number of teachers to poll their children, asking, "Would you like to take Communion? Why? or Why not?"¹⁸⁵⁹ Until this time, only three children had been heard on this subject¹⁸⁶⁰. Now hundreds¹⁸⁶¹ of children are given a voice in the discussion— with striking results. For example, within one group of 267 children, the

¹⁸⁵⁶ Morris N. Greidanus, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

¹⁸⁵⁷ Cf. Calvin.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Note that Jacob Kuntz was pastor of 1st CRC of New Westminster from 1965 until 1972.

¹⁸⁵⁹ Cecilia Mereness, "Do children care?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980). Note that this is the 26th article, but only the second female writer in the discussion (as I have been able to register it).

¹⁸⁶⁰ Little Margie in 1958, Tena Venema Feenstra's eight year old boy in 1973, and John Boer's eleven year old son in Kuyvenhoven's 1980 editorial.

¹⁸⁶¹ Of the six teachers, mentioned in the article, who polled children, three mention the exact number of children, 467 children in total.

majority of younger children indicate they would like to participate in the Lord's Supper. Children aged twelve and thirteen are almost evenly divided. Most of the fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds say they would not like to participate. In a different group of 136 students, every age has a majority who want to participate in the Lord's Supper.

5.2.7.8. *Seventeen Voices in response*

The *Banner* received quite a number of responses to this survey and publishes at least seventeen in the "Voices" section of several *Banners*¹⁸⁶². Kristine Ellestad points to the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11: discernment, self-examination, knowledge of Christ's sacrificial love and atonement, and Paul's stern warning against unworthy participation¹⁸⁶³. Jacob Vandervate refers to Galatians 4:1¹⁸⁶⁴. Calvin Seminary Professor John Stek acknowledges the parallel of Passover as a celebration of the old exodus, and the Lord's Supper as a celebration of the new exodus. He concludes that only those who have participated in the new exodus—those who by faith in Christ can testify that they have passed from bondage to freedom—may participate in the Lord's Supper. He suggests that circumcision, which is related to infant baptism, belongs to the Abrahamic covenant; the Passover belongs to the old Sinai covenant; and, the Lord's Supper belongs to the new covenant. The two latter covenants are related to the Abrahamic covenant, which has bearing on the question of the participants in these sacramental meals¹⁸⁶⁵. Norman De Jong of Trinity College questions the wisdom of dedicating the *Banner* to this discussion¹⁸⁶⁶ and states, "When you distribute questionnaires to school children, you reduce theological decision making to counting uninformed

¹⁸⁶² I registered the following seventeen articles: Kristine Ellestad, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (December 8, 1980); John H. Stek, "Voices: Children and Lord's Supper," *Banner* (December 15, 1980); Norman De Jong, "Voices: Children and Lord's Supper," *Banner* (December 15, 1980); Harry Van Gorp, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (December 29, 1980); George Prins, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (December 29, 1980); Cornelius J. Van Schouwen, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (December 29, 1980); Richard N. Ostling, "Voices: Worthy Partakers," *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Jacob Vandervate, "Voices: Worthy Partakers," *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Harry Buis, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Eric B. Verhulst, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Diane Marie Patterson, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Christine Wiersma, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Jack Geschiere, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Gregg V. Martin, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (January 5, 1981); E. Vander Woude, "Voices: Covenant and growth," *Banner* (February 2, 1981); Lauri Brower, "Voices: Polling and Partaking," *Banner* (February 2, 1981); Tracey Shannon Kooy, "Voices: Jesus Loves Us Too," *Banner* (February 2, 1981).

¹⁸⁶³ Ellestad (1980), 4. Richard N. Ostling is even startled that in spite of 1 Corinthians 11 some found little guidance in the New Testament on the question: Ostling (1981), 4. See also Vandervate (1981), 4 and Martin (1981), 24.

¹⁸⁶⁴ Vandervate (1981), 4.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Stek (1980), 4.

¹⁸⁶⁶ A similar concern is expressed by Jack Geschiere (1981), 24 and Gregg V. Martin (1981), 24.

noses¹⁸⁶⁷.” Eric Verhulst, who is positive about Vriend’s opinions and about Kuyvenhoven’s bar mitzvah, suggests discounting a number of the reasons given by children in the poll¹⁸⁶⁸.

Harry Van Gulp seems to suggest the approaches were biased as he considers the viewpoints of the contributing pastors predictable¹⁸⁶⁹. George Prins has mixed feelings about the children’s contributions and expresses concern for the unity of the church. He considers some arguments weak in biblical support, is appreciative of Kuntz’s interesting approach, and judges Tuininga’s questions and concerns to be legitimate¹⁸⁷⁰. Based on her childhood experience as a Roman Catholic and as a mature adult participant in the Christian Reformed Church, Diane Marie Patterson favors requiring full understanding and self-examination as described in the preparatory form¹⁸⁷¹. Christine Wiersma is against children participating in the Lord’s Supper, citing her own story. She acknowledges that she only fully understood the meaning of “Do this in remembrance of me” years after her public profession of faith at age seventeen¹⁸⁷². Jack Geschiere expresses fear about a shifting emphasis from preaching and teaching to sacraments and a shift away from Reformed church government to an emphasis on family responsibility. Parents’ yearning for public profession of faith is legitimate, but children should be allowed time to grow¹⁸⁷³. Among other concerns in this debate, Gregg Martin perceives a small influential minority is trying to set the agenda for the entire CRC¹⁸⁷⁴.

5.2.8. Progressive action and further discussion early eighties

In the conservative magazine *Outlook* of February 1983, Peter De Jong¹⁸⁷⁵ reports¹⁸⁷⁶ that at a conference¹⁸⁷⁷ Hendrick Hart¹⁸⁷⁸ has argued that Communion of saints is expressed in participation of children, and describes how at that same conference Pastor B. Nederlof¹⁸⁷⁹ led a Communion service

¹⁸⁶⁷ De Jong (1980), 4. Similar concerns are expressed by C. Van Schouwen: C. Van Schouwen (1980), 2,4.

¹⁸⁶⁸ Vriend (1981), 4,24.

¹⁸⁶⁹ Van Gulp (1980), 2.

¹⁸⁷⁰ Prins (1980), 2.

¹⁸⁷¹ Patterson (1981), 24.

¹⁸⁷² Wiersma (1981), 24.

¹⁸⁷³ Geschiere (1981), 24.

¹⁸⁷⁴ Martin (1981), 24.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Peter De Jong, “Children at the Lord’s Table,” *Outlook* (February 1983).

¹⁸⁷⁶ In response to the source of this news: Syrt Wolters, “Als je ’t mij vraagt,” *Calvinist Contact* (November 26, 1982).

¹⁸⁷⁷ “From Communion to community.”

¹⁸⁷⁸ Professor of systematic philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies.

¹⁸⁷⁹ At that moment, pastor of the Christian Reformed Church of Victoria, BC, Canada. Later, he played a role in the paedocommunion discussion in the First CRC of New Westminster.

including children. De Jong speaks against this neglect of church order, “running ahead in anticipation of possible future changes”. Besides the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11, he also mentions the need for consistory supervision in conformance to 1 Corinthians 5.

In March 1984, Harry der Nederlanden¹⁸⁸⁰ wonders whether we have lost the simplicity of the basic human actions that underlie the two sacraments. Even babies can be washed and fed. His plea for child-Communion goes hand-in-hand with his plea for weekly Communion. Based on his experience, he concludes, “You can’t celebrate the Lord’s Supper every week and leave the children out of it”.

5.2.9. From the periodicals to the floor of Synod 1984

Apparently unaware of the overture that Classis Rocky Mountains had prepared for Synod 1984 six months earlier¹⁸⁸¹, Andrew Kuyvenhoven suggests an overture to synod to regulate the admission of children¹⁸⁸² as follows: 1) no admittance of infants, 2) consistory remains responsible for admittance, 3) admission after a bar mitzvah ritual between the ages of ten and fourteen, 4) continued instruction of teenagers, 5) public profession of faith at the conclusion of the teenage years, and 6) hence, removing the connection between admission and profession of faith.

5.2.9.1. Synodical process in the *Banner*, continued conservative discussion

After the question of children at the Lord’s Supper has been put on the agenda of Synod 1984 most contributions in the *Banner* for the next decade are closely related to the synodical process¹⁸⁸³. Meanwhile, the discussion is

¹⁸⁸⁰ Harry der Nederlanden, “Soapbox: Feeding the Children,” *Banner* (March 19, 1984).

¹⁸⁸¹ Classis Rocky Mountain, *Minutes*, September 14, 1982, art. 17. Classis Rocky Mountain, *Minutes*, September 13-14, 1983, art. 14, Acts CRCNA 1984 Synod, 424.

¹⁸⁸² Andrew Kuyvenhoven, “Children at The Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (March 26, 1984).

¹⁸⁸³ Sandra Vander Zicht, “More Wisdom Needed: Children at Lord’s Supper Subject to Scrutiny,” *Banner* (July 2, 1984). Rachel TeGrootenhuis, “Classis Seeks Time to Study Juvenile Communion,” *Banner* (April 28, 1986). Harvey Albert Smit, “Children at the Lord’s Table,” *Banner* (November 3, 1986). Harvey Albert Smit, “Children at the Lord’s Supper—again,” *Banner* (March 15, 1993). N.N. “Children-at-communion issue bumped back to committee,” *Banner* (June 29, 1993). John D. Suk, John Zevalking, Arthur Joosse. “Synod 1995: Let’s welcome children to the Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (June 5, 1995). Phyllis Ten Elshof, “Let the Children Come, But....,” *Banner* (July 3, 1995). N.N. “CRC Synod’s Decision on Children and Communion,” *Christian Renewal* (July 1995). Ruth Donker, “News Feature: What Our Churches Are Doing About Children at the Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (August 26, 1996). David Raakman, “Synod holds the line on children and the Lord’s supper,” *Banner* (July 5, 1999). Dan Postma, “Faith Formation Committee Reports,” *Banner* (July 2008). Gayla R. Postma, “Baptized Children at the Lord’s Supper, Take Two,” *Banner* (June 2010). Bob De Moor, “Hamming for the Folks Back Home,” *Banner* (January 2011). Bob De Moor, “No Communion Without Profession,” *Banner* (January 2011).

continued in two conservative magazines: *Outlook*, speaking against children at the Lord's Supper, and *Christian Renewal*, which, remarkably enough, publishes articles by G. Visee who is more in favor¹⁸⁸⁴.

In a response to Kuyvenhoven's 1984 editorial, Tuininga¹⁸⁸⁵ repeats a number of his principal objections, underscoring the reciprocal nature of Communion¹⁸⁸⁶. Infants can be baptized without their knowledge, but not commune without their knowledge. With a number of questions he adds practical objections: What will be the criterion for admission? Who is going to apply that criterion? Won't arbitrariness cause jealousy and hassles? Will admission be prior to teaching since at ages ten to twelve catechism generally has not even started? What about rebellious and indifferent youth? What about those who have not professed their faith yet at age twenty five? Will this not prove to be a time-bomb under public profession of faith and undermine the confessional nature of the church? Two years later, Tuininga¹⁸⁸⁷ repeats his old arguments adding supportive quotes from Calvin, the confessions, and Henry Van Andel¹⁸⁸⁸. He offers two fresh thoughts: he observes that there was more agitation for admitting children to the Lord's Supper in the sixties and seventies than at present, and he offers his own confession: "Personally, I have often felt that in general our young people wait too long to make profession of their faith. Young people who clearly love the Lord at age 15 or 16 should be able to make a credible confession of their faith"¹⁸⁸⁹.

5.2.10. One editor and two pioneers in 1987

The March 9, 1987 issue of the *Banner* contains three contributions by Editor Andrew Kuyvenhoven, and by Duane Kelderman and Albert Helder¹⁸⁹⁰. The

¹⁸⁸⁴ G. Visee, "May--and must--our children partake of the Lord's Supper?" published in four parts, *Christian Renewal*, resp. March 17, April 7, 21, May 5, 1986. All articles translated by Tony Heins. I discuss the original Dutch articles in the context of the discussion within RCL and DRC. K. Deddens responds in the magazine of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches with four articles "May Children Partake of the Lord's Supper?" 1,2,3,4, *Clarion*, resp. September 4, 19, October 3, 17, 1986.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Jelle Tuininga, "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook* (October, 1984).

¹⁸⁸⁶ Mentioning Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 76 and Belgic Confession.

¹⁸⁸⁷ Jelle Tuininga, "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook* (June 1986).

¹⁸⁸⁸ Henry Van Andel, "The Privileges of Full Communion," in *Thy Way is My Way*, ed. Michael De Vries (Toronto: Credo, 1967), 9-15. Henry Van Andel served the First CRC of New Westminster as its first pastor from 1954 until 1965.

¹⁸⁸⁹ Tuininga thinks that Calvin thought this was possible at age 12.

¹⁸⁹⁰ Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Come, eat and drink," *Banner* (March 9, 1987): 6-7; Duane Kelderman, "Why Can't Johnny Profess His Faith?" *Banner* (March 9, 1987): 8-10; Albert Helder, "Should my child be there with me?" *Banner* (March 9, 1987): 12-13.

latter two are introduced by Kuyvenhoven as pastors of churches which “have already judged the issue and set their own rules.”¹⁸⁹¹

5.2.10.1. The editor

Kuyvenhoven suggests combining the best of the 1986 majority and minority reports¹⁸⁹². He considers the weakness of the majority suggestion to lower the age of profession of faith that it will remove the motivation for continued education. He therefore suggests disconnecting admission to the Supper and profession of faith. Kuyvenhoven argues that the minority does not acknowledge the church’s need for an observable order. He therefore suggests setting a minimum age – infants should not be permitted – and letting the elders remain responsible. His compromise would allow junior high students to participate in the “storm and stress” period of their lives.

5.2.10.2. The first pioneer

Duane Kelderman shares how his church Ridgeview Hills Christian Reformed Church, Denver, Colorado, decided to interview forty young people in grade seven to twelve¹⁸⁹³. These young people view themselves as Christians¹⁸⁹⁴, are fearful of having to profess their faith before council, and think of profession of faith as something for older and mature people. Profession of faith is traditionally expected at the late adolescent age when young people are most paralyzed by peer pressure and most resistant to parental encouragement. In the end the Ridgeview Hills decides to take a two step approach separating an earlier professing membership from a mature voting membership¹⁸⁹⁵. The church liturgically emphasizes the link between profession of faith and Lord’s Supper celebrating by scheduling both on the same Sunday.

5.2.10.3. The second pioneer

Albert Helder’s article is interesting in more than one way¹⁸⁹⁶. At that time Helder serves a church in Classis Rocky Mountain. His personal story about his eight year old son asking to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, provides valuable insight in one of the stories that seem to have led to Classis Rocky Mountain’s

¹⁸⁹¹ Kuyvenhoven (March 9, 1987): 6.

¹⁸⁹² Kuyvenhoven (March 9, 1987).

¹⁸⁹³ Kelderman (1987).

¹⁸⁹⁴ “They know they are sinners, they trust in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation, and they desire to live for him,” Kelderman (1987), 8.

¹⁸⁹⁵ This new approach is initiated approximately eighteen months before the article is written, Kelderman (1987), 9.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Helder (1987).

overture. Later Albert Helder will serve New West Church as a pastor, and this article reveals what motivated Helder to study the issue and part of the process he followed doing that. He writes he was “motivated by a determination not to trivialize my son’s faith.”¹⁸⁹⁷ Jesus’ commandment to remember prevents Helder from believing covenant children have an automatic right to the Communion table. But based on child development expertise he does believe children are able to remember between the ages of five and seven. Children learn and their faith is nourished by participation in sacramental meals and feasts. Living in a time of history where children are exposed to the world at an early age, their faith needs to be strengthened and encouraged equally early. Supper participation should not be a reward for public profession of faith, but is itself a public statement of faith¹⁸⁹⁸. Formal public profession of faith can remain part of the public celebration when children in the covenant become adults in relationship with God. After giving some of his personal opinions, Helder closes as chairman of the Synodical Study Committee on Children at the Lord’s Supper inviting readers and churches to share their thoughts on the issue with the committee. Some readers respond to the articles by Kelderman and Helder¹⁸⁹⁹.

5.2.11. Last contributions before debate ceases in 1988

The following nine years the discussion in the *Banner* almost ceases until a young girl makes the next contribution¹⁹⁰⁰. Meanwhile the discussion continues in other periodicals.

5.2.11.1. Outlook 1988

In anticipation of Synod 1988, Tuininga addresses the majority and minority reports¹⁹⁰¹. He suggests that the majority report should provide more compelling evidence and should choose between the covenant and the participant’s faith as grounds for admission. Employing the covenant as the basis for admission would require major changes to the confessions. It is his opinion that the majority report is not in touch with the reality of unwilling fifteen year olds, and falls into the trap of biblicism, when suggesting that the

¹⁸⁹⁷ Helder (1987), 12.

¹⁸⁹⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 11:26.

¹⁸⁹⁹ David T. Koyzis, Linda Back and Cor Potstra in the *Banner* issues of April 6, 1987, pages 2,4, and April 20, 1987, page 4.

¹⁹⁰⁰ Jozina Vander Klok, “Let the Little Children Come,” *Banner* (April 22, 1996). Not counting the articles related to the synodical process and an article with the outcome of a survey of local churches, Phyllis Ten Elshof, “Permit the children at the supper too?” *Banner* (July 31, 1989).

¹⁹⁰¹ Jelle Tuininga, “Children at the Lord’s Supper,” *Outlook* (March, 1988).

Bible is silent on young people making profession of faith. According to Tuininga this is done in neglect of clear evidence of a training process¹⁹⁰².

In that same issue of *Outlook*, Peter De Jong¹⁹⁰³ concludes that in the majority report *our speculations* concerning covenant membership and a mechanistic educational theory of development¹⁹⁰⁴ overrule biblical principles; that the Lord's Supper is equated with Passover, neglecting the newness of the covenant; that two conflicting standards of admission, thus two ways of salvation, will encourage a false dependence on baptism for salvation and become an obstacle for effective evangelism; and finally, that church discipline will be eliminated. The disastrous experience of the Netherlands churches and of the New England Puritans with their "Half Way Covenant" should warn us.

5.2.11.2. *Stromata 1988*

In *Stromata* of that same year Linda Male¹⁹⁰⁵ shares the story of three generations hesitating to profess their faith early. Male suggests there is a sacramentalist view among those who favor very early participation, but a latent Zwinglian view among their opponents. Male suggest that a Calvinist who focuses on God's action while recognizing how the significance of the sacraments is accepted by the heart in faith, can favor earlier participation without supporting infant Communion. Baptism should be given its due; birth should be acknowledged; sensitivity to children and their stages of development should be heightened, thus implying changes to the way children are educated and profess their faith. She concludes, "It is time to take our children out of limbo".

5.2.11.3. *More input from the RCA*

In a special issue of *Reformed Worship* on including children in our worship experience, James I. Cook explains why the June 1988 General Synod of the Reformed Church in America voted to *encourage boards of elders of the RCA congregations to include baptized children at the Lord's Table*¹⁹⁰⁶. Cook distinguishes old reasons – a rediscovery of the church year¹⁹⁰⁷ and a return to

¹⁹⁰² Tuininga mentions: Deut. 6:1, Joshua 4:1-7,20-24, Ps. 78:1-8 and Eph. 6:1-4.

¹⁹⁰³ Peter De Jong, "Should covenant children take part in the Lord's Supper?" *Outlook* (March,1988).

¹⁹⁰⁴ With emphasis on learning by doing.

¹⁹⁰⁵ Linda K. Male, "In Memory Of Anne Butler: Reflections On Children At The Lord's Supper," *Stromata* (May, 1988).

¹⁹⁰⁶ James I. Cook, "The Toughest Issue: Why the RCA Said Yes to Baptized Children at the Lord's Supper" *Reformed Worship* (Summer 1989).

¹⁹⁰⁷ A consequent more frequent celebration made the exclusion of children more obvious.

Reformed theology of baptism – with new reasons, such as the contribution of faith development and the clarification of 1 Corinthians 11 as addressing adult sins.

5.2.12. Discussion picked up by twelve-year-old in 1996

Twelve-year-old Jozina Vander Kloek picks up the discussion which, in the *Banner*, had basically ceased nine years earlier¹⁹⁰⁸. Jozina feels left out, in spite of Jesus' words to *let the children come*, in spite of her understanding of the sacrament, in spite of the liturgy that declares *we all share the same loaf*. Through participation, she is eager to demonstrate that she loves God, too. She envisions a church where her children are allowed to participate. The childlike nature of her input is underscored with a drawing by eleven-year-old Jennifer Nanninga. That same year, an article with a cartoon in the *Banner* is the first that addresses children directly on this issue¹⁹⁰⁹.

5.2.13. Speaking from experience

As time progresses a new element is introduced in the discussion: articles by writers who speak from personal experience on admission of children. RCA Pastor Timothy J. Mulder is one of the first examples noted¹⁹¹⁰. He argues that those who have experienced children participating are more open to considering the option. Experiencing a mentally impaired girl professing her faith seems to have served as a stepping stone in Mulder's own thinking. He emphasizes the importance of teaching behaviour first, then making behaviour understood. He recognizes faith as a lifelong process including a growing understanding of the Lord's Supper, just like Calvin did regarding baptism¹⁹¹¹. Ushering children out of church before Communion is 1 Corinthians 11 in action.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Vander Kloek (1996).

¹⁹⁰⁹ Joanne E. De Jonge and Matt Vander Pol, "Adventures in Church History: Kids, Communion, and Confession," *Banner* (November 25, 1996).

¹⁹¹⁰ Timothy J. Mulder, "Adding a Leaf to the Table: In Defense of Inviting Children to the Lord's Supper," *Reformed Worship* (June, 1998).

¹⁹¹¹ Mulder refers to Calvin's *Institutes* bk. IV, chap. 16:21.

5.2.14. *The twenty first century*

5.2.14.1. *An orthodox Reformed plea in favor*

Tim Gallant¹⁹¹² continues the discussion in the first decade of the twenty first century with the publication of his book¹⁹¹³ with companion study guide¹⁹¹⁴, and simultaneously published articles¹⁹¹⁵ in *Christian Renewal*¹⁹¹⁶. More than others, Gallant takes note of paedocommunion in the Early and Medieval church and in the Hussite reform¹⁹¹⁷. Though Gallant acknowledges that mainstream churches and liberal theology contributed to the renewed interest in paedocommunion, he mentions the names of several orthodox and conservative Reformed theologians who favor it as well¹⁹¹⁸. Gallant explains the new Reformed interest by the influx of new blood in the Reformed camp¹⁹¹⁹, by the renewed attention paid to the covenant¹⁹²⁰, and by accessibility of knowledge concerning the early church. The Hussites acknowledged the importance of John 6:53, which Gallant defends with Calvin's connection between signified reality and sign. Children epitomize the Kingdom of God¹⁹²¹. The Table of the Lord and the Body of the Lord are coextensive¹⁹²². In light of 1 Corinthians 10, paedocommunion is the practical implication of covenantal theology in which the church consists of the believers and their seed. Chapter 11 should be read in connection with chapter 10, but also with the Old Testament in mind. The Old Testament helps us understand how remembrance does not exclude children from (sacramental) rites and how self-examination should be seen as a warning

¹⁹¹² One could question whether Tim Gallant should be included in this overview of the discussion in Christian Reformed periodicals. Two reasons to include him are the fact that some of his articles are included in the periodical index of the Christian Reformed Church and the fact that Tim Gallant did serve the Conrad Christian Reformed Church, Conrad, Montana, as an interim pastor between 2004 and 2006.

¹⁹¹³ Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord's Table Should Be Restored to Covenant Children*. 2nd ed. (2002; Grand Prairie: Pactum Reformanda, 2003).

¹⁹¹⁴ Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs: Companion Study Guide; 7 Lessons on Paedocommunion; With a postscript on Paedocommunion and the Three Forms of Unity* (Grand Prairie: Pactum Reformanda, 2003).

¹⁹¹⁵ Tim Gallant, Tim. "An Old Plank in a Program for Church Reformation: What the Hussites Wanted for the Lord's Supper – and Why," "An Old Plank in a Program for Church Reformation- part 2: Scripture: Some Positive Arguments," *Christian Renewal*, resp. February 11, 25, 2002.

¹⁹¹⁶ More recently described as: "a theologically conservative magazine, which seeks to serve the United Reformed Churches in North America (a break-away from the CRC) and the Canadian Reformed Churches," R. Scott Clark <http://clark.wscal.edu/sacred-cows-secret-societies.php> (accessed July 2, 2013).

¹⁹¹⁷ Gallant notes that the first article of the 23 Hussite articles, drafted by the Synod of Wenceslas (1417), demanding the right for children to participate in the Lord's Supper.

¹⁹¹⁸ The reformer Wolfgang Musculus, the Anglican Jeremy Taylor and current Reformed theologians such as G.I. Williamson, Robert Rayburn, R.C. Sproul Jr., Peter J. Leithart, James Jordan, Norman Shepherd, and Douglas Jones.

¹⁹¹⁹ Tim Gallant fits that category, as he was born as the son of a Pentecostal preacher.

¹⁹²⁰ Gallant mentions the debate between Klaas Schilder and the Kuyperians as an example.

¹⁹²¹ Cf. Mat 19:13-14

¹⁹²² Cf. 1 Corinthians 10: 16-17.

against covenant breaking. Proclamation is a description and not a prescription. Both sacraments convey the promise and the demand of the covenant, and a passive-active distinction does not hold in light of the Old Testament. The *ex opere operato* accusation would also count for Old Testament rituals in which children participated. The Lord's Supper is first of all a blessing, but judgment and blessing both belong to it, just as in baptism, the hearing of the word, and the swearing of the covenant.

5.2.14.2. *An overview*

In 2003, Ryan Faber provides an overview of the history of the discussion in *Stromata*¹⁹²³. Faber agrees with synod that faith – not just covenant membership – is required by the Bible as well as by the creeds. On the other hand, Faber believes the simplest expression of faith by a younger child should be considered adequate for admission while taking into account different levels of maturity. Profession of faith as public appropriation of the baptismal promises remains necessary.

5.2.14.3. *Future Faith Formation Committee member in favor 1*

In 2004, Syd Hielema¹⁹²⁴ claims we have lived a contradiction in the CRC – the tension between a covenantal vision¹⁹²⁵ and the two-tier system of membership¹⁹²⁶. On the basis of 1 Corinthians 11, we do almost the exact opposite of what Paul intends. Hielema reminds his readers how the image of the body of 1 Corinthians 12 follows chapter 11. Hielema advises among others to affirm what unites all generations and to start practicing what synod allows concerning children and Communion.

5.2.14.4. *Changing opinion*

In 2005, Wayne Brouwer¹⁹²⁷ shares how his opinion changed when he became aware of the several missteps on which the relationship between personal faith and the celebration of the sacrament is built, and of the history of confirmation with its perceived need of bishops to perform this rite, and of the original maximum age limits set (ages two, three, and five) and reset at

¹⁹²³ Ryan Faber, "Our Paedocommunion Discussion: Children and the Lord's Supper in the Christian Reformed Church," *Stromata* (Spring, 2003).

¹⁹²⁴ Syd Hielema, at that moment professor of theology and youth ministry at Dordt College and member of the CRC Children and Youth Advisory Committee. Later he would become a member of the Faith Formation Committee.

¹⁹²⁵ As embodied in Christian education.

¹⁹²⁶ Syd Hielema, "Editorial: Being Church Together," *Banner* (October 2004).

¹⁹²⁷ Wayne Brouwer, "Children at the Table," *Banner* (February 2005).

the Council of Trent to between ages seven and twelve. Brouwer also states the importance of becoming aware of the cultural context of 1 Corinthians 11 in which the rich were excluding the poor and slaves – both of whom were often called *children* and were treated as such. In addition, he compares the sacraments to “show and tell” and concludes they are thus better understood than many sermons.

5.2.14.5. Future Faith Formation Committee member in favor 2

Syd Hielema¹⁹²⁸ speaks of the current practice of excluding children as a tangled web of history, cultural context, and anxiety trumping Scripture and Reformed theology. Children did participate in the Lord’s Supper for most of history, but as the doctrine of transubstantiation developed, anxiety grew, and young children were excluded. The Reformers reformed transubstantiation theology, but held onto the anxiety, grounding it in a misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 11. The old elitism that Paul addressed was replaced by a new elitism of rationalism. The “works” of right understanding and personal commitment have become requirements for receiving a communal means of grace. Covenant theology, the unity of the sacraments, the unity of the Testaments, and the partnership of Word and sacrament are all undermined. The unity of the body is not recognized, and the relationship between mystery, understanding and human development is not properly honored. Hielema expresses hopefulness in recognising anew the power and wonder of worship and the consequent recovery of awe and adoration. Additionally, a moment must come in which we recognize how we have fallen prey to the dark spirit of generationalism.

5.2.14.6. An orthodox Reformed plea against

In the fall of 2005, Cornelis Venema starts a series opposing paedocommunion in *Outlook* that continues until 2007¹⁹²⁹. Venema’s articles are published as a book in 2009¹⁹³⁰. The question Venema intends to answer is: “Does membership in the covenant, which is sealed to the children of believing

¹⁹²⁸ Syd Hielema, “A Precious Feast, a Tangled Web: A Case for Welcoming Children at the Table,” *Reformed Worship* (June 2005). If we can consider Cook’s 1989 *Reformed Worship* article an RCA article, and Hielema’s article the first CRCNA article on the issue, then the conclusion that the magazine enters this debate on a core worship issue quite late, seems justified.

¹⁹²⁹ I registered sixteen articles by Venema in *Outlook* as listed in my bibliography. Venema served as a Christian Reformed pastor, but has joined the United Reformed Churches in North America. Considering his CRC past and the fact that his articles are included in the CRC periodical index I have chosen to include him in this overview.

¹⁹³⁰ Cornelis P. Venema, *Children at the Lord’s Table: Assessing the Case for Paedocommunion* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 2009).

parents through their baptism, constitute a sufficient basis for admitting them to the Table of the Lord?¹⁹³¹ Venema addresses four main arguments used by those in favour of paedocommunion: 1) the historical argument, 2) the covenant argument, 3) the analogy with Passover argument and 4) the 1 Corinthians 11 argument¹⁹³².

He considers the arguments from history for paedocommunion inconclusive at best¹⁹³³. He suggests that children did not participate before the third century¹⁹³⁴. After the third century this innovation became prevalent in the West, but not as widespread as it was in the East, and on the basis of dubious sacramental views. Venema downplays the role of transubstantiation in the decline of the practice¹⁹³⁵ and considers “the longstanding insistence of the church fathers, Augustine included, on a believing and informed reception” and important factor that tends to be overlooked¹⁹³⁶. The Reformed confessions teach how the sacraments are appendices to the Word; faith being produced through the Word, and only confirmed by the sacraments¹⁹³⁷. The sacraments as signs should be distinguished from the signified reality¹⁹³⁸. The sacraments work, not *ex opere operato*, but only as the Spirit is working through them, confirming faith that they require of the proper recipients¹⁹³⁹.

Regarding the Old Testament Venema rejects the appeal to children’s participation in the wilderness meals and manna¹⁹⁴⁰, because even strangers and animals were nourished by this food and drink¹⁹⁴¹. Venema suggests Exodus 24 may be the most important precedent to the Lord’s Supper, which provides no ground for the participation of children¹⁹⁴². Regarding the Passover Venema distinguishes the first household celebration of Passover in

¹⁹³¹ Venema (2009), 4.

¹⁹³² Venema (2009), 5-9.

¹⁹³³ Venema (2009), 26.

¹⁹³⁴ Venema’s interpretation of the writings of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Origen resembles that of Beckwith (1976) and Winzer (2007). Venema’s reference to Joachim Jeremias regarding this conclusion is questionable. Venema refers to Jeremias (1963), 7. Joachim Jeremias, *The Origins of Infant Baptism: A Further Study in reply of Kurt Aland*, 1962 (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 39? ; Venema (2009), 14.

¹⁹³⁵ Cp. Cornelis P. Venema, “A Further Reply to Tim Gallant on Paedocommunion,” *Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 248.

¹⁹³⁶ Venema (2009), 25. Cp. Cornelis P. Venema, “A Further Reply to Tim Gallant on Paedocommunion,” *Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 248

¹⁹³⁷ Venema (2009), 30,fn.5.; Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 65.

¹⁹³⁸ Venema (2009), 32f.

¹⁹³⁹ Venema (2009), 33f., 43f. Cf. Belgic Confession, art. 35; Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 81; Westminster Larger Catechism, Q&A 177.

¹⁹⁴⁰ Cf. Ex. 16:13-20, 1 Cor. 10: 1-5.

¹⁹⁴¹ Venema (2009), 54f., 62.

¹⁹⁴² Venema (2009), 64f.

Egypt and later celebration regulated by Deuteronomy 16¹⁹⁴³. He acknowledges that “women and children were not explicitly denied permission to celebrate the Passover” but also speaks about “the stipulation of Deuteronomy 16 that only men go up annually to Jerusalem.”¹⁹⁴⁴ He further argues that infants and younger children could not have digested some of the ingredients of the Passover, the cup of blessing – “an intoxicant (...) not suited to consumption by infants and very young children” – adding a further obstacle¹⁹⁴⁵. Venema suggests that the traditions of Judaism stipulated twenty as the age of discretion for Passover participation, a practice which changed from age twenty to thirteen as reflected in the New Testament¹⁹⁴⁶.

Regarding the New Testament text of John 6, Venema rejects the sacramentalist reading of the Eastern Orthodox tradition¹⁹⁴⁷ and concludes that it supports the requirement of Communion with Christ by faith¹⁹⁴⁸. Regarding 1 Corinthians 11, Venema supports the traditional Reformed understanding of this text, which also underlies the requirement of public profession of faith prior to admission to the Lord’s Table, expressed in the Reformed Confessions¹⁹⁴⁹. Though Paul addresses a specific problem, he moves on to give more general instruction¹⁹⁵⁰. Paul stipulates that self examination and discernment of the body of Christ are required for proper celebration of the Supper, and thus “provides sufficient warrant for upholding the historic view and practice of the Reformed churches.”¹⁹⁵¹

5.2.15. Regarding the third round at synod

5.2.15.1. In anticipation of round three at synod

In 2006, Robert J. Keeley¹⁹⁵² writes on the occasion of Classis Holland overturning synod. Keeley is concerned that the former ruling of synod created a confusing membership system. The distinction between baptized

¹⁹⁴³ Venema (2009), 67f.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Venema (2009), 71.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Venema (2009), 68f.

¹⁹⁴⁶ Venema (2009), 72f.

¹⁹⁴⁷ Venema (2009), 92.

¹⁹⁴⁸ Venema (2009), 98f.

¹⁹⁴⁹ Venema (2009), 104.

¹⁹⁵⁰ Venema (2009), 123.

¹⁹⁵¹ Venema (2009), 124.

¹⁹⁵² Robert J. Keeley, “In My Humble Opinion: Children at the Lord’s Table,” *Banner* (June 2006). Keeley is professor of education at Calvin College, and together with his wife played a significant role in introducing children at the Lord’s Supper in 14th Street CRC, Holland Michigan, and in writing the overture to Synod 2006.

and confessing members is neither theologically nor biblically sound. He states that a new discussion of 1 Corinthians 11 is needed: "It is ironic that we have used Paul's concern for unity of the body at Communion to exclude baptized children. Paul actually suggests the opposite." Keeley wants to return to the practice of the first thousand years in which baptized babies were welcomed to the table. The historic reasons for discontinuing that practice do not apply to us, though they have determined our practice of exclusion.

5.2.15.2. Seminary input

In spring 2007, *Calvin Theological Seminary Forum* is dedicated to the question of children at the Lord's Supper. The editorial¹⁹⁵³ from Calvin Seminary president Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. reminds us that at that moment the CRC had "graciously said Yes", and it was expected to be a matter of formality for Synod 2007 to affirm this decision.

a. Seminary input - Confessional

Lyle Bierma¹⁹⁵⁴ explains that the Heidelberg Catechism answers the question "Who are to come to the Lord's Table?" based on a particular interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 whereas other interpretations of this text are possible. Bierma argues that children are included in the covenant and, in the Old Testament, received the sacraments of initiation and of nurture. This supports their baptism and participation in Communion¹⁹⁵⁵. Both sacraments communicate the same gracious message – how God acts foremost. And though faith is implied in the requirements for both, communal faith may fulfil that requirement. Bierma challenges the denomination to be taught about these matters and to deal with the tension between the new practice and the confessions whose authors intended to forbid participation of young children.

b. Seminary input - Historical

David Rylaarsdam¹⁹⁵⁶ tells the story of baptism and Communion¹⁹⁵⁷. The ancient initiation rite included baptism, "confirmation" and Communion. This implies the Communion of children, an old and widespread practice as Church fathers prove. To preserve the power, the West restricted confirmation to

¹⁹⁵³ Cornelius Plantinga Jr., "From the President," *Forum* (Spring 2007).

¹⁹⁵⁴ Lyle D. Bierma, "Reflections: Children at the Lord's Supper and Reformed Theology," *Forum* (Spring 2007). Bierma is professor of Systematic Theology at Calvin Seminary.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Cp. 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.

¹⁹⁵⁶ David Rylaarsdam is professor of Historical Theology.

¹⁹⁵⁷ David Rylaarsdam, "United, Separated, Re-united: The Story of Baptism and the Lord's Supper," *Forum* (Spring 2007).

bishops, disconnecting baptism from Communion. Later, the cup was withheld from the laity because of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Adults received bread. Infants received nothing. Lord's Supper piety also became heavily penitential, and profession of sin was required. Meanwhile confirmation was a *practice looking for a theology* and slowly became sacramental, augmenting the grace of baptism. By the time of the Reformation a threshold for first Communion had been established at the *age of discretion*. This was not questioned but was grounded on 1 Corinthians 11. It was further supported by the assumption that Passover was only eaten by those old enough to inquire into its meaning. Rylaarsdam suggests there are biblical and theological reasons to reconnect what has been disconnected.

c. Seminary input – Exegetical

Jeffrey Weima¹⁹⁵⁸ discusses 1 Corinthians 11: 17-34¹⁹⁵⁹, and how discerning the body and self-examination have a very vertical emphasis in the Reformed tradition. Given the historical context of 1 Corinthians 11 (rich believers humiliating the poor), there are three reasons why discerning the body should have a more horizontal emphasis¹⁹⁶⁰. Hence, excluding children is the exact opposite of what it means to discern the body. Weima diplomatically suggests that this does not automatically mean that children should take part, but, as he concludes, it does provide biblical justification for the possibility of children's participation.

d. Seminary input – Liturgical

John Witvliet¹⁹⁶¹ answers practical questions¹⁹⁶², and among other things, suggests intensified teaching, realizing no one will fully understand Communion. But a practice of discerning the body and an element of discipline remain, no matter what interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11. Witvliet aims for a deepened participation. But children participating in preparing the table and cleaning may also help to welcome them as soon as they attend a full worship service. Reverence can be preserved considering the remarkable capacity of children for wonder and awe. Forms that tell God's story in vivid

¹⁹⁵⁸ Jeffrey A.D. Weima is professor of New Testament.

¹⁹⁵⁹ Jeffrey A.D. Weima, "Children at the Lord's Supper and the Key Text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34," *Forum* (Spring 2007).

¹⁹⁶⁰ 1- The historical context, 2- the differences between verse 27 and 29, and 3- body as a reference to the church occurs in the preceding and following chapter.

¹⁹⁶¹ John D. Witvliet is professor of Worship and Director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship; he would later chair the Faith Formation Committee.

¹⁹⁶² John D. Witvliet, "Children at the Table: Some Provisional Answers to Practical Questions," *Forum* (Spring 2007).

language are well suited for children. When young people become rebellious, or a sullen eighteen year old participates out of mere habit, the same pastoral wisdom is required as for a stubborn thirty nine year old. Witvliet hopes love for Christ and the warm invitation of the congregation will still encourage children to make profession of faith. Witvliet also recommends not celebrating the Lord's Supper early in the worship service for the sake of children, because the sacrament would then be reduced to a visual aid instead of a response to the proclamation of the gospel¹⁹⁶³.

5.2.15.3. *Reformed Worship in round three*

In 2009, Michael Abma¹⁹⁶⁴ suggests in *Reformed Worship*¹⁹⁶⁵ that reflection on Reformed theology of baptism often births a desire to welcome baptized children to the table. He pleads for clear patterns of faith nurture. In order to encourage children to participate, Abma advises including instruction about the meaning of the Lord's Supper and its liturgy in the educational program for the younger children. He also suggests the Lord's Supper liturgy should have certain predictability about it, without diluting its richness, because of children's ability to memorize. Meanwhile, he maintains the need for a robust and mature profession of faith¹⁹⁶⁶.

Later in 2009, Stanley Mast¹⁹⁶⁷ shares from his fifteen-year experience of welcoming children, often age eight or nine, after a *heartfelt declaration of faith in Christ*¹⁹⁶⁸. Mast provides a short liturgy for the occasion in which the children answer the following questions: "First, do you believe that you are a member of God's covenant family and that your baptism is a sign of your membership?" "Second, do you believe that Jesus Christ died for you and is your Saviour, and do you understand that the bread and wine of the Holy Supper are symbols of his body and blood?" "Third, do you promise to live your life for Jesus Christ as best as you can and to continue to learn more about him in church school and by reading the Bible and personal devotions?"

¹⁹⁶³ John D. Witvliet, "Q&A: The Lord's Supper and the Liturgy," *Reformed Worship* (December 2007).

¹⁹⁶⁴ Michael F. Abma is co-pastor of Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

¹⁹⁶⁵ Michael F. Abma, "A New Order of Christian Nurture," *Reformed Worship* (March 2009).

¹⁹⁶⁶ Abma refers to Keith Mathison's *Given for You, Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper* (Phillipsburg: R&R, 2002), John T. Hinant's *Children at the Lord's Table* (Indianapolis: Three Fountains, 2005), and Tim Gallant's *Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord's Table Should be Restored to Covenant Children* (Grand Prairie: Pactum Reformanda, 2002).

¹⁹⁶⁷ Stanley Mast is pastor of La Grave Avenue CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, since 1990.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Stanley Mast, "Table Fellowship: A Liturgy for Welcoming Children," *Reformed Worship* (June 2009).

5.2.15.4. Faith Formation Committee Contributions

a. Faith Formation Committee one

In 2010, Witvliet, now chair of the Faith Formation Committee, writes again in *Forum*¹⁹⁶⁹. He connects faith formation and discipleship with obedience by suggesting that both *rest, at least in part, on a profoundly countercultural conviction: the notion that God's commands are gifts*. Obedience to these commands flourishes best where they are heard but flourishes most of all where they are practiced. *Participation in obedient practices, says Witvliet, best begins at a young age*. Those practices of obedient participation grow with us throughout our lives. The joyful journey of obedience is open to persons with a wide range of capacities. Witvliet speaks of *age- and ability-appropriate practice, age- and ability-appropriate obedience*, to address the tension experienced between the conviction that baptized children are members of the church, and that participation in the Lord's Supper is a matter of active obedience.

b. Faith Formation Committee two plus

In 2011, Faith Formation Committee member Syd Hielema¹⁹⁷⁰ tells about a visit to a Greek Orthodox Church. The scene of a mother with a newborn infant both being served Communion – the infant with a drop of wine and a crumb of bread on the lips – drove him to study the link between baptism and Communion. He encourages discussion and study that unnerves the stereotyped suspicion that this is a matter of liberalism versus conservatism¹⁹⁷¹.

Peter Hoytema¹⁹⁷² is in favor of including children¹⁹⁷³, suggesting “the Lord's Supper is the pivotal feast that celebrates the victory of God, which he shares with each person in his kingdom, and active participation of children at the Lord's Supper provides the full body of Christ with an opportunity to catch a glimpse of God's Kingdom”. With John Calvin, Hoytema believes that the sacraments are given because of our chronic inability to apprehend even a simple presentation of the gospel, and concludes: “Spiritual ignorance is not a

¹⁹⁶⁹ John D. Witvliet, “The Joy of Age- and Ability Appropriate Obedience: Reflections on Faith Formation and Children at the Lord's Supper,” *Forum* (Winter, 2010).

¹⁹⁷⁰ Syd Hielema, “Deep-in-the-Bones Belonging,” *Banner* (January 2011).

¹⁹⁷¹ Hielema reminds his readers how some of the strongest cases for changing our Communion practice have been made by conservative Reformed theologians.

¹⁹⁷² Peter Hoytema is pastor of Midland Park (N. J.) Christian Reformed Church.

¹⁹⁷³ Peter Hoytema, “Where the Generation Gather: A Case for Including Children at the Lord's Supper,” *Reformed Worship* (March 2011).

barrier that prevents our participation in the sacrament; it is the very thing that necessitates it". Participation is a form of profession of faith.

c. Faith Formation Committee three

Asked how to welcome children, Witvliet¹⁹⁷⁴ suggests we learn from "best practices" such as assigning mentors, celebrating as family¹⁹⁷⁵, giving children a memento, or have older children welcome the younger ones. To sustain meaningful participation, Witvliet suggests intergenerational education sessions, sharing Lord's Supper testimonies, creating artwork, and using the week in advance for preparation. Witvliet mentions his own pastor's¹⁹⁷⁶ analogy of looking back, forward, up, around, and within, as a way to explain to children what we do at Communion.

d. Faith Formation Committee four

In the *Banner* of that same month, Syd Hielema answers similar questions regarding how to invite children to the table and how to strengthen the practice of profession of faith¹⁹⁷⁷.

e. Faith Formation Committee five

That same year, Witvliet once again diplomatically phrases common themes in the discussion as questions¹⁹⁷⁸. He emphasizes synod's purpose of deepening the participation of persons of all ages. Witvliet's new suggestion is to use social media to encourage this. His concept of celebrating multiple faith milestones in the life of each believer – at graduations, as participants in service projects, and at moments of ordination – is noteworthy. Witvliet tries to balance grace and obedience and resists both overly legalistic and overly casual approaches. Parents can be "worship participant coaches" and others may help by shaping a culture of encouragement and spiritual growth.

f. Faith Formation Committee six

The last article I registered before Synod 2013 is by Faith Formation Committee member Jill Friend¹⁹⁷⁹. Like Witvliet, she envisions profession of

¹⁹⁷⁴ John D. Witvliet, "Welcoming Children to the Table," *Reformed Worship* (March 2012).

¹⁹⁷⁵ With the congregation.

¹⁹⁷⁶ Jack Roeda, pastor of the Church of the Servant, Grand Rapids.

¹⁹⁷⁷ Syd Hielema, "FAQs," *Banner* (March 2012).

¹⁹⁷⁸ John D. Witvliet, "The Gift of God for the People of God: Deepening Table Practices for People of All Ages," *Banner* (June 2012).

¹⁹⁷⁹ Jill Friend, "Celebrating Faith Milestones: Profession of Faith," *Banner* (July 2012).

faith as one of many milestones on a journey of lifelong discipleship, celebrated in a memorable way, without conveying the idea of a graduation. She acknowledges its importance, and advises proactive encouragement to profess faith around age fifteen. She advises a continued tradition of learning combined with mentoring and involvement of family and, in the final stage, involving church leadership.

5.2.16. *From children to professors*

We note that the discussion started with questions by lay members and children, whereas the contributions in this last stage are by professors, members of the synodical committee, and pastor/theologians¹⁹⁸⁰.

5.3. *Denominational Discussion Synod CRCNA*

5.3.1. *Earlier attempts*

The broader question of who to allow at the Lord's Supper was raised at the Classical Assembly¹⁹⁸¹ of the denomination as early as 1859, two years after its foundation¹⁹⁸². It would take until 1950 before the specific question of allowing children at the Lord's Supper was raised in the CRC's periodicals and until 1958 for the first true discussion to occur¹⁹⁸³. It would take until 1984 before Classis Rocky Mountain put that question on the agenda of synod¹⁹⁸⁴. This started with New Life CRC, Houston, Texas, overturing this classis¹⁹⁸⁵. Classis Orange City had been overtured unsuccessfully in the early seventies¹⁹⁸⁶. There are examples of earlier support in one of the Eastern classes in the sixties or early seventies¹⁹⁸⁷ and of support among ministers

¹⁹⁸⁰ Resp. 78%, 24% and 19% in the articles I registered in the periodicals between 2000 and Synod 2013.

¹⁹⁸¹ At that moment the highest assembly, as there was only one classis.

¹⁹⁸² Art. 13, *Minutes*, Classical Assembly, Holland Reformed Church, February 2, 1859. The name Holland Reformed Church had only been adopted earlier that day.

¹⁹⁸³ According to the Periodical Index of the Hekman Library.

¹⁹⁸⁴ Overture 1 by Classis Rocky Mountain, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 419-424.

¹⁹⁸⁵ Classis Rocky Mountain, *Minutes*, September 14, 1982, art. 17. Classis Rocky Mountain, *Minutes*, September 13-14, 1983, art. 14. New Life CRC was led by pastors K.W. Tanis and J.A. Holleman.

¹⁹⁸⁶ Kuyvenhoven mentions pastor Arthur Stienstra of Hawarden CRC, Iowa, who tried to have his consistory adopt the rule "baptized children, at their own request, upon recommendation of the parents or guardians, and with approval of the consistory have permission to partake in the celebration of the Holy Communion," and who also tried to place the matter on the agenda of Classis Orange City, but in the words of Kuyvenhoven shelved the presentation when there was practically no support and much resistance. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Awakening Sleeping Dogs?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980): 6.

¹⁹⁸⁷ Ellens mentions a study for an Eastern classis by Edson T. Lewis that demonstrated conclusively that the New Testament does not warrant the connection of the Lord's Supper with either church membership or church discipline. Edson T. Lewis, Jr. in those years served New Hope, Monsey, New York (Classis Hudson?),

within Classis Toronto in the late seventies¹⁹⁸⁸. But until 1984 such classical support never materialized in an overture to synod. After the 1984 overture, twenty four other overtures¹⁹⁸⁹ and eighteen reports would follow in a synodical discussion which took place in three rounds and, after twenty nine years, would come to a conclusion in 2013¹⁹⁹⁰.

5.3.2. 1984 – Round 1, the overture, children at the table

In 1984 Classis Rocky Mountain overtures synod to study the issue of covenant children partaking of the Lord's Supper. It hopes for further clarification of sacramental understanding, application of covenantal theology¹⁹⁹¹ and development of theology of children¹⁹⁹². It anticipates emotional, defensive responses but does not reveal or express its own emotional motives. Scripture does not expressly deal with paedocommunion, it argues, but Scripture does say definite things about children and leans decidedly in favor of paedocommunion. The Old Testament shows that covenant children were sacramentally involved¹⁹⁹³. The New Testament suggests similar sacramental involvement by its silence¹⁹⁹⁴ and speaks clearly about the status of believing children and of children of believers¹⁹⁹⁵. Biblical warnings against ill treatment of children are more severe than the one contained in 1 Corinthians 11. Doctrinally the covenantal view as expressed in the Reformed doctrine of infant baptism is emphasized¹⁹⁹⁶. Consistent with infant baptism¹⁹⁹⁷, which signifies children's union with Christ, the Lord's Supper should feed their relationship with Christ, and strengthen their faith – not magically, but as a means of grace that proclaims, relives¹⁹⁹⁸ and remembers¹⁹⁹⁹. Supervision of children should be relinquished to the parents.

and Hoboken, New Jersey (Classis Hackensack?). J. Harold Ellens, "Commends Jan. 26 Banner," *Banner* (March 9, 1973): 20.

¹⁹⁸⁸ Kuyvenhoven (1980), 6.

¹⁹⁸⁹ And 4 communications.

¹⁹⁹⁰ See below for details on overtures, communications and reports.

¹⁹⁹¹ Ground three mentions "compelling theological arguments from our own framework of covenant theology for children being included in the Lord's Supper" deserving "further study."

¹⁹⁹² Especially the place of children within the covenant.

¹⁹⁹³ Cf. 1 Cor. 10, and Calvin's Commentary on 1 Corinthians.

¹⁹⁹⁴ Cf. Francis Schaeffer on the significance of 1 Corinthians 10: 1-5 and using the argument from silence.

Francis A. Schaeffer, *Baptism* (Lawrenceville: CE&P, 2004), 10-11.

¹⁹⁹⁵ Cf. Mark 9:36-37, 42, 10:13-16, Matt. 18: 1-10, and 1 Cor. 7:14, referencing Berkhof on 'holy', Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology: New Edition containing the full text of Systematic Theology and the original Introductory Volume to Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 73.

¹⁹⁹⁶ Referencing the American, Dutch Reformed and Presbyterian, theologians Louis Berkhof, Charles Hodge, and Paul Jewett.

¹⁹⁹⁷ Advocates of believer's baptism, such as Jewett, challenge the inconsistent sacramental practice.

¹⁹⁹⁸ Cf. Henri Nouwen, *The Living Reminder*.

¹⁹⁹⁹ As the Passover did.

The dignity of the Communion service will be safeguarded when elders and parents set the example for children to follow.

5.3.2.1. *Advisory report and the floor of synod*

The advisory committee of synod is divided. The majority advises not to accede to the overture because the study of Classis Rocky Mountain is incomplete, and the issue should be dealt with at a minor assembly²⁰⁰⁰. On the floor of synod advisory committee chairman John Hellinga adds the consideration that the churches have been burdened by large and extensive studies²⁰⁰¹. Rocky Mountain delegate John Hofman Jr. in response insists that the classis has done its homework. After the discussion, synod adopts the recommendation of the advisory committee minority to appoint a study committee²⁰⁰² on the grounds that there are compelling theological arguments from our framework of covenant theology for including children in the Lord's Supper, that the long discussion has raised questions within the CRC which deserve answers at the synodical level. In addition, similar discussions within other Reformed denominations deserve a contribution from the CRC²⁰⁰³.

5.3.3. *1986 – Round 1, the study reports*

The Prairie States' study committee report to Synod 1986 is divided into a majority²⁰⁰⁴ and two minority reports²⁰⁰⁵, with two reports and three sets of recommendations²⁰⁰⁶, to which the synodical advisory committee adds yet another one²⁰⁰⁷. The three reports agree that the issue is significant and deserves further study, and all three reports move in the direction of earlier participation²⁰⁰⁸.

²⁰⁰⁰ Art. 99. Minutes, CRCNA 1984 Synod, 650f.

²⁰⁰¹ Sandra Vander Zicht, "More Wisdom Needed: Children at Lord's Supper Subject to Scrutiny," *Banner* (July 2, 1984): 2.

²⁰⁰² Norman Shepherd, br. James Schaap, Dr. Carl Zylstra, Rev. Albert Helder, Dr. Russell Maatman, Rev. Mark D. Vander Hart and br. Marvin Van Essen. Vander Zicht (1984), 2.

²⁰⁰³ Art. 99. Minutes, CRCNA 1984 Synod, 651.

²⁰⁰⁴ Majority report and recommendations by Dr. Carl E. Zylstra, Norman Shepherd, Dr. James C. Schaap, Rev. Mark D. Vander Hart and br. Marvin Van Essen.

²⁰⁰⁵ Minority recommendations by committee chairman Rev. Albert Helder, and a minority report with recommendations by Dr. Russell Maatman.

²⁰⁰⁶ Respectively Report 34 I & II, III, and IV, *Agenda* CRCNA 1986 Synod, 346-366, 366-367, 367-370.

²⁰⁰⁷ Harvey Smit, "Children at the Lord's Table," *Banner* (November 3, 1986): 11.

²⁰⁰⁸ The advisory committee observes. Art. 35, Acts CRCNA 1986 Synod, 618.

5.3.3.1. The 1986 majority report

The majority report states that when a child is baptized into God's covenant, one more place is set at the table of the Lord²⁰⁰⁹. An unbreakable union between baptism, confession and the Lord's Supper is to be maintained²⁰¹⁰. Therefore the real question is how, and how soon covenant children can be brought to the table. Three historical answers are distinguished: the Eastern Orthodox²⁰¹¹, the Roman Catholic²⁰¹². The third answer, that of the Reformation, is through instruction²⁰¹³ and examination²⁰¹⁴, thus requiring orthodoxy in belief and blamelessness in living²⁰¹⁵. A more recent answer – practiced by many²⁰¹⁶, studied by others²⁰¹⁷ – is that children are brought to meaningful participation through nurture at the table from early years on. Though some arguments resulting in this new answer are superficial²⁰¹⁸, sentimental²⁰¹⁹, or weak²⁰²⁰, the arguments from the history of the church²⁰²¹, Passover²⁰²², baptism²⁰²³, the covenant²⁰²⁴, and from the lack of biblical

²⁰⁰⁹ Report 34 I, *Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod*, 347.

²⁰¹⁰ As 1904 Synod declared, art. 125, Acts CRC 1904 Synod, 38. (The report mistakenly mentions art. 12).

²⁰¹¹ From baptism through immediate confirmation. Note that the report suggests the Eastern Orthodox *initiated* infant Communion out of high sacramental regard for Christ's words in John 6:53.

²⁰¹² Only some time after baptism. Note that the report calls the link between postponement and the doctrine of transubstantiation speculation.

²⁰¹³ Cf. the Heidelberg Manual which placed the Heidelberg Catechism between the form for baptism and the form for the Lord's Supper.

²⁰¹⁴ Cf. Calvin's Institutes, IV, 19:13.

²⁰¹⁵ Cf. the decision of the denomination in 1859, article 13, *Minutes of Classis, February 2, 1859*.

²⁰¹⁶ Besides major North American Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran, and European churches the report specifically mentions the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN).

²⁰¹⁷ The report mentions the PCA, OPC, RCA and the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES).

²⁰¹⁸ E.g. the appeal to Matt. 19:14.

²⁰¹⁹ E.g. the supposed innocence of children.

²⁰²⁰ E.g. the high and low view of sacraments of respectively Eastern Orthodox and evangelicals.

²⁰²¹ Pro: 1- the practice of the early church until 1100/1200, 2- as continued in Eastern Orthodox church 3- and only discontinued in the West because of ecclesiastical and doctrinal abuse. Contra: 1- early evidence scarce and late compared to evidence for infant baptism, 2- Cyprian's quote in African context of story about heresy, Origen's quote against is earlier and from metropolitan context, and even Augustine's references are indirect.

²⁰²² Pro: 1- children participated in Passover, 2- entire households participated in worship (e.g. Deut. 12:5, 11-14). Contra: 1- Passover celebration lost family setting by Biblical command (Deut. 16) , as followed by Jesus, 2-Lord's Supper does not continue, but replace, 3- and the primary antecedent of Lord's Supper is Exodus 24.

²⁰²³ Pro: 1- Agreement with Baptists' charge of inconsistency with infant baptism (e.g. Servetus' charge against Calvin). Contra: 1- Charge made by those who did not understand or agree with Reformed arguments for infant baptism, 2- The sacraments differ as mark of birth and as mark of nurture for new life, as passive vs. active.

²⁰²⁴ Pro: 1- Children included in the covenant, are holy (1 Cor. 7:14) and have right to covenant nurture, 2- admittedly appropriate to their own limits and capacities (as do adults). Contra: 1- Covenant membership allows for variations in covenant responsibilities (e.g. Num. 32:11), taxability (e.g. Ex. 38:26), 2- Christ confirms the covenant with Abraham, but replaces the one made at Sinai: blood of Christ replaces blood to seal the book of the law (Heb. 9:15, 19), baptism tied to (Abraham's) circumcision (Col. 2:11-12).

prohibition²⁰²⁵ deserve consideration. The somewhat imbalanced presentation²⁰²⁶ leads to a remarkable, neutral, provisional conclusion that the case cannot be considered settled. The case is then settled by the biblical requirements of 1 Corinthians 11: Covenant children can partake as soon as they can do so in faith, discern the body, remember Christ, proclaim the Lord's death, and examine themselves²⁰²⁷. Before that, they should be present as witnesses so that they may ask: "What does this mean?"²⁰²⁸ The blessing of the sacraments lies in faith's apprehension of Christ²⁰²⁹. Baptism does not depend on that faith being present at the moment of administration²⁰³⁰, but the Lord's Supper does²⁰³¹; hence the Reformed tradition of preparation²⁰³². Regarding the covenant, a balance between its promises and responsibilities²⁰³³ is found when covenant blessings are received in covenant faith²⁰³⁴. A minority within the majority committee believes that the glimmers of faith and consciousness of God at age seven or eight suffice. The majority believes more mature, self-aware faith, and a credible profession can be expected around age twelve to thirteen²⁰³⁵. The report is negative about the practice of postponing this to late- or even post-adolescence²⁰³⁶, and about requiring social maturity²⁰³⁷. Voting rights can be postponed; education should be continued.

²⁰²⁵ Pro: 1- the Bible does not prohibit participation of children, 2- 1 Cor. 11 requires self-examination from disorderly adults, and the body of believers needs to be discerned. Contra: 1- The situation may be specific, but the apostle applies general rules, 2- elsewhere body explicitly refers to the body of Christ, 3- to show discerning love for the body of believers may be equally difficult for children as showing discerning love for Christ.

²⁰²⁶ Granting 24% of the words to summary of pro arguments, and 76% to the contra arguments.

²⁰²⁷ Cf. John 6:35, 1 Cor. 11:22 (faith), 1 Cor. 11:29 (discernment), Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24,25 (remembrance), 1 Cor. 11:26, quoting Calvin's commentary on that text "Therefore, in order that you may celebrate the Supper properly, you must bear in mind that you will have to make profession of faith," (proclamation), and 1 Cor. 11:28 (self examination).

²⁰²⁸ Cf. Ex. 13:14.

²⁰²⁹ Against a high view which deems sacraments necessary for salvation and a low view which considers them mere stimuli to faith.

²⁰³⁰ Baptism benefits us "not only when the water is on us and when we receive it but throughout our entire lives," Belgic Confession, art. 34.

²⁰³¹ Cf. Belgic Confession art. 35.

²⁰³² Which the report compares to the preparation to partake of the Passover, Num. 9:6-12 (!).

²⁰³³ Overemphasis of promises, the report warns, leads to admittance of infants, overemphasis of the responsibilities, or considering confirmation of professions as the completion of baptism may lead to denial of access to the table to those who believe.

²⁰³⁴ The stress on faith and the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11 is supported with references to the Confessions, e.g. articles 33 and 35 of the Belgic Confession and Q&A 65, 81 and 82 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

²⁰³⁵ Cf. Calvin (10), Dutch Reformed (13-14) and German Reformed (12-13) tradition.

²⁰³⁶ Postponement launches early adolescents "into a covenantal limbo." "Not to encourage profession and sacramental participation as soon as possible is to consign youth to the status of the unconverted."

²⁰³⁷ It is more than the Bible requires, deprives youth of covenant life, relieves them of covenantal responsibilities, and deprives them of a means to strengthen their faith, and may communicate that a

5.3.3.2. *The 1986 minority report I*

In Chairman Albert Helder's²⁰³⁸ minority report he agrees with the majority's argument but not with its conclusion. Children can meet the requirements around age seven²⁰³⁹ or as soon as the "mustard seed" of faith is expressed.

5.3.3.3. *The 1986 minority report II*

According to Russell Maatman's²⁰⁴⁰ minority report, the Bible recognizes three kinds of life: one of lifelong rebellion, a life marked by the fundamental conversion from rebellion to obedience, and that of a lifelong Christian born and raised in the covenant, growing in faith, but without experiencing a conversion²⁰⁴¹. The majority fails to relate this last concept with participation of children, whose covenant identity – and not ability – matters²⁰⁴². Children grow in understanding and discernment while participating. Profession of faith remains meaningful as long as it does not imply prior rebellion and conversion, or prior neutrality. Maatman acknowledges two other valid biblical arguments: the Old Testament Passover was eaten by each person of each household²⁰⁴³, by the entire community of Israel²⁰⁴⁴, including children and nursing infants²⁰⁴⁵; and the New Testament's emphasis on covenant community²⁰⁴⁶ and warnings against fracturing it.

5.3.3.4. *On the floor of synod*

When the reports, the additional advisory committee report, the overture and communication²⁰⁴⁷ are discussed at synod, William Vander Beek²⁰⁴⁸ rephrases the central issue asking if the biblical requirement for taking part in the Lord's

radical transition is still required or worse that a period of 'sowing wild oats' before settling down belongs to spiritual development.

²⁰³⁸ Albert Helder (1942-2011), at that moment pastor of Immanuel, Fort Collins, Colorado, had been involved as reporter of the classical study committee in the preparation of the overture from Classis Rocky Mountain. From 1996-2002 he would serve First CRC, New Westminster, British Columbia, one of the three local churches I researched.

²⁰³⁹ Cf. James W. Fowler's *Stages of Faith*.

²⁰⁴⁰ Dr. Russell Maatman (1923-2010), a research chemist, who taught chemistry at Dordt College.

²⁰⁴¹ The life of a covenant-breaker, which Maatman mentions later, would be a fourth kind of life.

²⁰⁴² Unless they break the covenant!

²⁰⁴³ Cf. Ex. 12: 3-4.

²⁰⁴⁴ Cf. Ex. 12:47.

²⁰⁴⁵ Cf. Joel 2:16. "Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast ..."

²⁰⁴⁶ In contrast with our emphasis on the individual.

²⁰⁴⁷ Overture 10 by Classis Minnesota South to Refer Report 34 to the Churches for Study for One Year, *Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod*, 478, and communication 1. Rachel TeGrootenhuis, "Classis Seeks Time to Study Juvenile Communion," *Banner* (April 28, 1986). Communication 1 is not included in the agenda or acts.

²⁰⁴⁸ William L. Vander Beek (1928-), at that moment pastor serving First CRC, Red Deer, Alberta, was pastor of First CRC, New Westminster, British Columbia from 1975-1983.

Supper is being in the covenant or possessing a faith that believes and repents²⁰⁴⁹. Steve Schlissel²⁰⁵⁰ supports Maatman's covenantal perspective based on his own Jewish youth²⁰⁵¹. Vice President Bastiaan Nederlof²⁰⁵² lists unresolved questions that need further study; a suggestion synod follows in its decision²⁰⁵³. Synod refers the report to the churches for study and instructs the augmented²⁰⁵⁴ committee to revise its report and recommendations in response to the reactions from the churches and to give particular attention to Passover, history, specific Bible texts²⁰⁵⁵, biblical requirements, covenant and profession of faith²⁰⁵⁶.

5.3.3.5. Responses

In the following period seven consistories respond to the request of Synod 1986, and several individuals and adult classes from twenty congregations where a study provided by the committee was used²⁰⁵⁷. In 1987 the chairman of the committee and others publish articles in the *Banner*²⁰⁵⁸ to which thirty readers respond²⁰⁵⁹.

5.3.4. 1988 Round 1, more study reports

The addition of two new members does not result in a unified report to Synod 1988. A shift in balance is revealed. The new majority report is supported by the old minority report writers²⁰⁶⁰, and the new minority report is supported by three supporters of the former majority report.

5.3.4.1. The 1988 majority report

The majority report rephrases the central question as, "Should we admit children to the Lord's Supper at an earlier age and, if so, at what age and

²⁰⁴⁹ Harvey Smit, "Children at the Lord's table," *Banner*, November 3, 1986.

²⁰⁵⁰ An elder delegate according to the *Banner*, but registered in the *Historical Directory of the Christian Reformed Church* as minister of the Messiah's Congregation Brooklyn, New York, from 1986-1992 (which also mentions how he served a Baptist church from 1980-1981).

²⁰⁵¹ Smit (1986).

²⁰⁵² Bastiaan Nederlof (1917-2010).

²⁰⁵³ Smit (1986). Art. 35, Acts CRCNA 1986 Synod, 617-620.

²⁰⁵⁴ J. Barry Koops and Raynard Vander Laan.

²⁰⁵⁵ Ex. 12-13, Deut. 16:1-5, 13-17, Matt. 18: 1-10; 26:17-30, 1 Cor. 7:14; 10: 1-5, 14-22; 11:17-34.

²⁰⁵⁶ Article 35, *Acts CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 620.

²⁰⁵⁷ Report 26, *Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 261.

²⁰⁵⁸ Helder (1987), 12-13. Duane K. Kelderman, "Why can't Johnny profess his faith?" *Banner* (March 9, 1987): 8-9. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Come, eat and drink," *Banner* (March 9, 1987): 6-7.

²⁰⁵⁹ David T. Koyzis, Linda Back and Cor Potstra in the *Banner* issues of April 6, 1987, pages 2,4, and April 20, 1987, page 4, the others to the Study Committee, *Agenda CRCNA Synod 1988*, 261.

²⁰⁶⁰ Helder and Maatman, and supported by Koops, Vander Laan as well as Shepherd and Van Essen.

under what conditions?”²⁰⁶¹ As instructed, the report pays more attention to six areas and has grown²⁰⁶². The historical section²⁰⁶³ is more accurate²⁰⁶⁴, provides more references and interprets these more positively²⁰⁶⁵. Among others, it suggests that the Reformers developed the subjective element already found by Thomas Aquinas²⁰⁶⁶. It mentions the early Scottish churches’ admission of children²⁰⁶⁷ but also the Westminster Larger Catechism’s rejection²⁰⁶⁸.

Passover provides the historical and theological background for the Supper and its requirements. Complete households participate²⁰⁶⁹. The requirements of faith, obedience and remembrance reside in the community in the absence of that capacity. Children²⁰⁷⁰ are brought along to Jerusalem²⁰⁷¹ and, upon return²⁰⁷², participate in the domestic ceremony²⁰⁷³ of removing leaven²⁰⁷⁴ and eating unleavened bread. Deuteronomy 16 centralizes the sacrifice, but not the eating²⁰⁷⁵. It requires adult males to present the sacrifice - traditionally²⁰⁷⁶ allowed from age twelve or thirteen²⁰⁷⁷ – but women and children are not excluded²⁰⁷⁸.

1 Corinthians 10:1-5 supports the participation of the entire community. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 has borne the weight of the case against admission of (small) children²⁰⁷⁹, but that argument is not conclusive or even valid. The

²⁰⁶¹ Report 26, *Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 261.

²⁰⁶² For example - counting words - the part on Passover grew 644%, history 809%, covenant 638%.

²⁰⁶³ The minority report notes that various paragraphs of the majority report were originally authored by various members of the committee who held opposing views on what the conclusions should be.

²⁰⁶⁴ E.g. the mistaken reference of the 1986 report to Origen’s opinion is not repeated.

²⁰⁶⁵ E.g. the 1986 considers the Cyprian reference late compared to infant baptism references. The 1988 report writes “the first clear references to infant baptism” ... “only predate Cyprian by about fifty years,” (261).

²⁰⁶⁶ Aquinas required an attitude of faith and discretion and used the analogy of children acquiring the right to an inheritance, but not the immediate possession.

²⁰⁶⁷ “When they showed a faith-knowledge of the three traditional elements of faith: the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostles’ Creed and the Ten Commandments,” (264).

²⁰⁶⁸ Q&A 177.

²⁰⁶⁹ Each household member old enough to eat solid food Cf. Ex. 12:3-4. The report also notes that the Passover sacrifice was the only one which could be made by every federal head whether priest or not.

²⁰⁷⁰ The First Fruits aspect of the festival also signifies that they, as fruit of the womb, belong to God.

²⁰⁷¹ Cf. Luke 2:41-51, and as attested by Josephus *Antiquities* 11:4:8 (describing the era of Darius, but reflecting first century practice) and the Mishnah, Pesachim 10, Pischa 3.

²⁰⁷² Cf. Josh. 5: 10-11, 2 Kings 23:21-23, Ezra 6:19-22, 2 Chron. 30: 1-27; 35:1-19 esp. vv. 4-5, 11-13).

²⁰⁷³ Cf. Deut. 16:7-8.

²⁰⁷⁴ Spiritually signifying the removal of sin, cp. 1 Cor. 5:7.

²⁰⁷⁵ Cf. Deut. 16:1-8.

²⁰⁷⁶ Cf. Pesachim 88. (In these Jewish references we may recognize the expertise of Ray Vander Laan).

²⁰⁷⁷ Cp. Jesus celebrating Passover at that age cf. Luke 2:41-51.

²⁰⁷⁸ Deut. 16:14, “Be joyful at your festival—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns,” is applied to the three feast seasons, cf. the rabbinical teaching of Pesachim 10. The report also argues that the instructions of Exodus 12-13, which include children, were not abrogated by Deuteronomy.

²⁰⁷⁹ E.g. Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A 177 has only 1 Corinthians 11:28-29 as proof text.

required discernment and understanding can be present at age twelve or fourteen, but according to most, also at age five. Some hold that these are not required from small children, analogue to their baptism.

Baptism is a covenant sign and seal of initiation and the Lord's Supper of continuity in that covenant relationship. Both sacraments reflect the promise and obligation side of the covenant²⁰⁸⁰. The only basis for exclusion is not youth or immaturity of faith but covenantal unfaithfulness, disloyalty, and rebellion. A formal profession of faith is not required by Scripture but could serve as a milestone of adulthood in the covenant. Supervision and discipline would remain the task of elders.

5.3.4.2. *The 1988 addendum to majority*

In an addendum to the majority report Koops, Maatman and Vander Laan agree with the biblical and theological content. They disagree with two of the recommendations, as they believe the Lord's Supper should be available as soon as children participate in worship. They do accept the recommendations because they would mean great improvement.

5.3.4.3. *The 1988 Minority report*

In an equally long report²⁰⁸¹ the minority considers the critical theological issue "whether youth are admitted to the Lord's Supper because of a demonstration of faith or simply because of their status in the covenant"²⁰⁸². The minority then answers that covenant membership is required²⁰⁸³ as well as faith²⁰⁸⁴ shaped by discernment, remembrance, and proclamation²⁰⁸⁵. The Reformed confessions²⁰⁸⁶ teach that sacraments require such faith²⁰⁸⁷; they don't produce, but confirm it²⁰⁸⁸. An informed profession, disconnected from

²⁰⁸⁰ Against the option of stressing only one side or connecting one with baptism and the other with the supper.

²⁰⁸¹ 27 pages, not counting the sections of the majority report it endorses.

²⁰⁸² It also phrases the question as: "What are the biblical standards for meaningful participation in the Lord's Supper which elders in the local churches can use as they admit covenant youth to the Lord's Supper?" 290.

²⁰⁸³ Cf. Gal. 3:29.

²⁰⁸⁴ Cf. John 6: 40, 54, 63-64.

²⁰⁸⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 11:29, Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24-25, and 1 Cor. 11:26. In the historical section we are warned to learn from history about the good intentions but harmful consequences of the Half-Way Covenant of the New England Puritans and Solomon Stoddard's view of the sacrament as "converting ordinance," creating faith rather than confirming faith. See also David Paul McDowell, *Beyond the Half-Way Covenant: Solomon Stoddard's Understanding of the Lord's Supper as a Converting Ordinance* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

²⁰⁸⁶ The suggestion that the reformers uncritically accepted the practice of the medieval church is rejected.

²⁰⁸⁷ Belgic Confession, art. 35. Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 81 lists criteria equal to true faith cf. Q&A 21.

²⁰⁸⁸ Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 65.

accepting adult responsibilities, can express such faith²⁰⁸⁹ around age ten to fourteen²⁰⁹⁰. Allowance is made for levels of understanding²⁰⁹¹. Baptism is administered to children because of a specific biblical command, which the Supper lacks²⁰⁹². Exodus 24 is the key Old Testament text for interpretation²⁰⁹³. This discredits any understanding primarily on the basis of any other Old Testament ceremony²⁰⁹⁴. Moreover the new covenant meal overshadows its antecedents and Old Testament observances do not determine New Testament practice²⁰⁹⁵. 1 Corinthians 10 and 11²⁰⁹⁶ determine practice by guidelines²⁰⁹⁷ and strong commands²⁰⁹⁸, excluding infants and young children.

5.3.4.4. *Advisory report and the floor of synod*

Synod's advisory committee is appreciative of both reports, convinced by neither, but yet ready to come to a conclusion²⁰⁹⁹. It notes that both reports regard faith as a necessary condition for participation, but both fail to adequately ground this theologically. At its proposal Synod 1988 declares: *The church is warranted in admitting to the Lord's Supper covenant children who give evidence of faith and are able to discern the body and remember and proclaim the death of Jesus in celebrating the Lord's Supper (...) The church is to assure itself of such faith through a public profession of faith on the part of covenant children, and Covenant children should be encouraged to make public profession of faith as soon as they exhibit faith and are able to discern*

²⁰⁸⁹ That is not intellectual, but heartfelt. Cf. Rom. 10:9.

²⁰⁹⁰ 10 cf. Calvin, 11-12 cf. Scottish Reformation, 34-14 cf. Genevan and later continental practice. Note that Abraham Kuyper is blamed for emphasizing the intellectual and the shift toward profession in late teenage years or even later, whereas I found Kuyper's plea in favor of lowering the age and against intellectualizing profession of faith. Kuyper (1890), 194.

²⁰⁹¹ "Allowance must be made for the diverse levels of understanding of the implications of a truly Christian confession on the part of those who may be deemed eligible," "each individual must be examined and dealt with specifically," Article 76, Acts CRCNA Synod 1959, 21-22, quoted to counter intellectualism, but also to allow leeway in the case of admission the mentally or socially handicapped.

²⁰⁹² Cf. Acts 2:39, 16:31. I note that in both chapters baptism takes place two verses later and the description of a meal follows in the following verse.

²⁰⁹³ Cf. Matt. 26:28, Luke 22:20.

²⁰⁹⁴ Passover is not the only Old Testament antecedent. According to the report, Paul not even mentions the Passover while giving instruction regarding observance of the Lord's Supper. (We wonder how the report views 1 Cor. 5.)

²⁰⁹⁵ First, because a fundamental interpretative principle is to recognize how God's relationship with his people develops throughout history. Second, because many different Old Testament observances are replaced by one single Lord's Supper.

²⁰⁹⁶ 10:1-5 cannot be treated as guideline, as it would imply admission of foreigners, infants and animals.

²⁰⁹⁷ Interesting is the remark that the agape meal does not belong to the essence of a Communion service, because eating and drinking can be done at home, Cf. 1 Cor. 11:22.

²⁰⁹⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 11:28.

²⁰⁹⁹ Synod does not accede to Overture 18 by Classis Hudson to Delay Decision on Children Partaking of the Lord's Supper, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1988, 371.

*the body and remember and proclaim the death of Jesus in celebrating the Lord's Supper*²¹⁰⁰. Such profession at a younger age does not include acceptance of adult responsibilities, nor does it mean discontinuation of catechetical instruction. The CRC Worship Committee²¹⁰¹ is requested to review the forms for public profession of faith²¹⁰².

5.3.5. 1989 – Review as stepping stone to round 2

In response to this mandate the Worship Committee presents a report for study with four recommendations for approval to Synod 1989²¹⁰³. The report distinguishes divergent meanings and functions of the ritual of profession of faith, which thus signifies different milestones and processes. These include the transition of covenant children who take personal responsibility for their faith and life as Christians, the welcome to the Lord's Supper²¹⁰⁴, welcome to new adult believers, a pledge of commitment to doctrines and government of the CRC, and entrance into adult responsibilities. In addition popular misconception perceives it as joining the church, graduation from church education, an additional sacrament, and a once in a lifetime ritual. The committee suggests that none of the approved forms capture these different meanings and functions. The Worship Committee further argues that four confessions²¹⁰⁵ constitute profession of faith²¹⁰⁶, though these four belong to different stages of faith²¹⁰⁷. The first two confessions are most relevant for the admittance to the table fellowship²¹⁰⁸. The committee recognizes some unsettled issues, such as the fact that one new form will not fit profession of age by children from primary school age to high school age. Another unsettled issue is the possible need for a second profession of faith at the moment of accepting adult responsibilities and the need for clearer distinction between the two.

²¹⁰⁰ Article 72, Acts CRCNA Synod 1988, 558 f.

²¹⁰¹ Formerly known as Liturgical Committee.

²¹⁰² Article 76, Acts CRCNA Synod 1988, 560.

²¹⁰³ Report 3, Appendix C "Public Profession of Faith for Children," Agenda CRCNA Synod 1989, 49, 63-68.

²¹⁰⁴ Cf. Church Order art. 59.

²¹⁰⁵ 1- Personal faith in Christ, 2- affirmation of baptism vows, 3-belief in Bible and loyalty to doctrine, and 4- commitment to church authority and ministries.

²¹⁰⁶ In the approved forms.

²¹⁰⁷ The report mentions theories of James Fowler and John Westerhoff II.

²¹⁰⁸ Overture 42 by First CRC of Sioux Center, Iowa, specifically rejects the implication that profession would not include professing faith as taught in the Bible and summarized in the confessions. Overture 42 "Reject Worship Committee Recommendations and Mandate a Study," Agenda CRCNA Synod 1989, 397.

5.3.5.1. Synod decides

Synod decides to recommend the report and its guidelines for study to the churches, including the concept of a public profession of faith as occurring on more than one occasion in the life of a Christian. Synod also recommends the proposed form for trial use and appoints three members of the previous study committee on children at the Lord's Supper to work with the Worship Committee in preparation of a final report in 1991²¹⁰⁹.

5.3.6. 1991 – Round 2 – The overture – Profession of Faith

In 1991 the committee reports that initial feedback from the churches was sparse. Solicited reactions suggest that only 20% of the churches in the U.S.A. and less than 2% of the Canadian churches had made use of the guidelines or trial forms²¹¹⁰. The committee recommends extending the time allotted for the churches to react and postpone the final report to 1992. Synod 1991 adopts this recommendation²¹¹¹.

5.3.6.1. Overture Classis Alberta North

But that same year Classis Alberta North overtures synod to clarify the requirement for public profession of faith by covenant children by declaring, *the church should provide ways for covenant children to profess their faith consistent with their individual stages of physical, intellectual, emotional, and faith development, and the church should distinguish these professions of faith from a late adolescent/adult reaffirmation of faith*²¹¹². Several grounds are mentioned: stages of faith development, the importance of on-going public professions of faith, the nurturing character of the sacrament of Communion, the ambiguity of the term, "public profession of faith", the exclusive use of forms as restrictive and the need to retain formal late adolescent/ adult reaffirmation of faith.

²¹⁰⁹ Article 49, Acts CRCNA 1989, 469f. Cf. Overture 37, by Immanuel CRC, Orange City, to Appoint Members of Study Committee on Children at the Lord's Supper to Work with Worship Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1989, 392.

²¹¹⁰ 183 Responses from U.S.A., 37 said yes. 55 Responses from Canada, 1 said yes. Report 3, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1991, 49-50. Note that another survey of worship practices by the same committee provides valuable insight in the occurrence of young profession of faith, the age and forms used, but also in the occurrence of children's messages, in parallel activities for children during worship service, and in the frequency of Lord's Supper celebration. Report 3, Appendix A, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1991, 57-62.

²¹¹¹ Article 30, Acts CRCNA Synod 1991, 702.

²¹¹² Overture 78, by Classis Alberta North, to Clarify the Requirement for Public Profession of Faith by Covenant Children, Agenda CRCNA 1991 Synod, 516-518

5.3.6.2. *Advisory committee and the floor of synod*

The advisory committee of synod first recommends not acceding to this overture²¹¹³. But after it is sent back to the advisory committee to provide better grounds, the committee recommends appointing a study committee to clarify the requirement of profession of faith for admission to the Lord's Supper on the part of younger covenant children²¹¹⁴. This way, the overture gives the impetus to a second round of study on the subject. This also means the Worship Committee will not come with its final report in 1992²¹¹⁵.

5.3.7. *1993 – Round 2 – the study report*

In 1993, the synodical study committee presents one report²¹¹⁶. After a historical overview of the synodical discussion within the CRC the committee focuses on two issues: first, the foundational, theological issue of the relationship between participation and expression of personal faith, and second, the practical issue of perceived difficulties that arise when young children wish to give personal expression to their faith in anticipation of participation²¹¹⁷. The committee touches on the foundational issue by presenting two positions, the first, parallel to infant baptism, bases participation on covenant membership as expressed through the faith of believing parents; the second argues that in the new covenant, regeneration and personal faith are prerequisites. After introducing what looks like a third position²¹¹⁸ emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between the faith of parents and the developing faith of children, and resisting the emphasis of the individual over the community, the committee changes its focus on the practical issues, the primary reason for their appointment. The committee is unanimous in its desire to encourage younger children to participate and in its agreement that expressions of personal faith can be given with integrity at an early age. The committee presents ten guidelines that arose from previous reports²¹¹⁹, as well as a six-step sample scenario of how children can

²¹¹³ Article 37, Acts CRCNA 1991 Synod, 707.

²¹¹⁴ Article 102, Acts CRCNA 1991 Synod, 785.

²¹¹⁵ Report 4, Agenda CRCNA 1992 Synod, 42.

²¹¹⁶ *Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children*, Agenda CRCNA 1993 Synod, 237-246.

Though there is no minority report, the report is not signed by the chairman, Henry Lunshof.

²¹¹⁷ Parallel to the two grounds attached to Synod 1991 decision.

²¹¹⁸ Characterized as a compromise in the *Banner*, Harvey Albert Smit, "Children at the Lord's Supper—again," *Banner* (March 15, 1993): 7.

²¹¹⁹ 1- Profession of faith and administration of sacraments should be contextualized, 2- profession of faith should be life-long and on multiple occasions, 3- membership records should proceed from and not dictate our view on faith formation. 4- By nature faith is expressed within the church. 5- Profession of faith should ordinarily be conducted in association with the Supper. 6- Young professions of faith should include commitment to further education, 7- should be followed by subsequent occasion for assuming adult

participate²¹²⁰. Special mention is made of the mentally challenged²¹²¹. The committee responds to four questions that were raised by Synod 1991. What evidence of faith must be present before a child should participate in the Lord's Supper? The simplest expression of faith should be adequate. In response to the request to establish an adequate procedure by which a child can give expression to his or her faith, an interview by an elder or pastor in a family or informal setting is suggested. The concern on maintaining and nurturing faith as a life-long process is addressed in suggestions such as the enhancement of continued education. Membership records, addressed in the fourth question, should reflect the three important times in the life of a covenant child²¹²². The committee recommends accordingly²¹²³.

5.3.7.1. Divided responses

In response to the unified report, continued differences of opinion are revealed by three overtures²¹²⁴, a communication²¹²⁵, and a majority²¹²⁶ and minority synodical advisory committee report²¹²⁷. The synodical advisory committee majority report resists a three-step membership, opposes redefining profession of faith as the simplest expression of faith by a younger child, and pleads to uphold article 59a of the church order. If such a profession of faith takes place at an earlier age it should be left to the local consistory to determine how privileges and responsibilities be assumed appropriate to age,

responsibilities, 8- and for commitment to creeds. 9- Lord's Supper should be conducted in accordance with spiritual and cognitive level of participants, 10- and should be celebrative.

²¹²⁰ Step 1: a child expresses interest in participation. Step 2: a parent or faith mentor discusses the meaning of the sacrament and assesses the child's motivation. Step 3: an elder hears the testimony regarding the child's desire and faith. Step 4: first Communion can be marked by a simple public question and answer moment, including step 5: a commitment to further education, and followed by step 6: agreement with the creeds and commitment to adult responsibilities at an agreed later age. The Worship Committee requests Synod to modify step 4 of the sample scenario to make clear that a public profession of faith is called for, *Unified Report of Agencies and Committees*, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1993, 69.

²¹²¹ Referring to a booklet, published by the CRC: *The Profession of Persons with Handicaps*.

²¹²² Baptism, admission to the Lord's Supper, and commitment to adult responsibilities in the institutional church. Membership categories would then be: baptized -, communicant -, and voting members.

²¹²³ Recommendation F, recommending annual renewal of permission for persons beyond the age of 18 not yet ready to make a commitment, is rejected by the Worship Committee, by those overtures that reject all recommendations, but also by Classis Alberta North, which expresses delight with all other recommendations. *Unified Report of Agencies and Committees*, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1993, 69; *Communication 2: Classis Alberta North*, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1993, 327.

²¹²⁴ Overture 7 to Reject Recommendations of Committee to Study Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children, by Classis Hudson, Overture 8 to Replace Public Profession of Faith with Public Affirmation of Baptism, by Classis Toronto, Overture 57 to Reject Recommendations of the Committee to Study Public Profession of Faith, by Classis Hamilton, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1993, 280-281, 423-424.

²¹²⁵ Communication 2 by Classis Alberta North expressing delight in all but one recommendation, Agenda CRCNA Synod 1993, 327.

²¹²⁶ Article 75, 103, Acts CRCNA Synod 1993, 550-553, 604.

²¹²⁷ Article 75, 103, Acts CRCNA Synod 1993, 553-557, 603.

ability and spiritual giftedness. The synodical advisory committee minority report distinguishes three options²¹²⁸ and recommends separating profession of faith into two: one required for admission to the Lord's Supper, and one required for admission to adult responsibilities and privileges²¹²⁹.

5.3.7.2. *On the floor of synod*

After a few recommendations of the minority report have been adopted by synod²¹³⁰, it adopts the motion to reconsider these same adopted recommendations and concludes by recommitting the matter of clarification of public profession of faith for covenant children to the study committee for another year²¹³¹. The *Banner* comments that several delegates were not ready to bring the discussion to a successful conclusion because they had spent all their energy on the long debate on women in office²¹³². Helen Emmelkamp voices her frustration in the *Banner* "No wonder, we have 184 fathers and not one mother to voice an opinion on when a child becomes aware of his or her need of salvation."²¹³³

5.3.8. *1995 – Round 2, more reports*

Before the 1995 Synod begins, *Banner* Editor John Suk encourages synod to welcome children at the Lord's Supper²¹³⁴. But it is not made easy for synod to come to a unified decision as, once again, the committee is divided – this time in two equal halves presenting *Report A*²¹³⁵ and *Report B*²¹³⁶.

²¹²⁸ 1- To require no ceremony for admission to the Lord's Supper, but a public profession for adult responsibilities, 2- to require public profession for admission to the Lord's Supper, but leave adult responsibilities for local consistories to decide, 3- to allow two kinds of profession, one for admission to the Lord's Supper, another for adult responsibilities. N.N. "Children-at-communion issue bumped back to committee," *Banner* (June 29, 1993): 23.

²¹²⁹ Procedurally intriguing, and adding to the confusion, is how the study committee is said to yield to the advisory-committee minority report in article 75 of the agenda and to yield to the advisory committee majority report in article 103, later in the discussion. Article 75, 103, Acts CRCNA Synod 1993, 556, 603.

²¹³⁰ Article 75, 103, Acts CRCNA Synod 1993, 557, 603.

²¹³¹ Article 103, Acts CRCNA Synod 1993, 604.

²¹³² N.N. "Children-at-communion issue bumped back to committee," *Banner* (June 29, 1993): 23.

²¹³³ Helen Emmelkamp, "Voices: The Matter of Children," *Banner* (August 23, 1993): 2.

²¹³⁴ John D. Suk, "Synod 1995: Let's welcome children to the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (June 5, 1995): 2. "CRC-pleidooi voor kind aan avondmaal," *Nederlands Dagblad* (?), June 9, 1995.

²¹³⁵ Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children, Report A, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 265-274. Signed by William D. Buursma, Dean Deppe (reporter), Robert C. De Vries, and George Hettinger.

²¹³⁶ Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children, Report B, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 275-303. Signed by Wayne A. Brouwer, Eldean Kamp, Henry Lunshof (reporter) and Bert Polman.

5.3.8.1. Report A

In line with the two grounds stated by Synod 1991, *Report A* distinguishes two parts in the committee's mandate: to clarify the requirement of profession of faith, and to resolve practical difficulties. In support of an expression of personal faith as a prerequisite for participation in the Lord's Supper, *Report A* mentions the differences between the sacraments²¹³⁷, and the need for both sacraments to be tied to profession of faith²¹³⁸. It suggests the Lord's Supper differs from the Passover as the universalized new covenant²¹³⁹ implies regeneration and the internalization of faith²¹⁴⁰, unlike the Jewish Passover. The general applicability of the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11 is supported by referring to two Dutch systematic theologians –Berkouwer²¹⁴¹ and Bavinck²¹⁴² – and by referencing John 6²¹⁴³. Profession of faith is in line with the New Testament²¹⁴⁴, and prerequisite to participation according our creeds²¹⁴⁵, church order²¹⁴⁶, and tradition²¹⁴⁷. In conclusion it recommends upholding the decision of 1988 that *the Bible makes clear that participation in the Lord's Supper is the result of status in the covenant and also entails an act of faith on the part of those participating.*

Report A categorizes practical difficulties in four areas. Regarding the evidence of faith in the life of a child, the report points to the simplicity and straight forwardness of professions in the Bible, and suggests children of elementary and junior high school age can fulfil the requirements of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 81. Regarding an adequate procedure, four steps are suggested for such children: 1) A child expresses interest in participation, 2) parents discuss the

²¹³⁷ Baptism is administered once, as initiatory rite, requires no physical activity, and is based upon corporate faith of the community. Lord's Supper administered frequently, requires physical activity implying the initiative of personal faith, nourishes not to faith, but to maturity of faith cf. Belgic Confession Article 35.

²¹³⁸ The report seems to consider it self-evident why baptism may be followed by such a profession, whereas it is prerequisite for the participation in the Lord's Supper.

²¹³⁹ Note that the report suggests the universalizing of the promises explains why in the Old Covenant only male were circumcised, whereas both male and female are baptized in the New Covenant.

²¹⁴⁰ The report refers to Jer. 31:31-34, mentioning the law which is written on the hearts of Gods people. (No explanation is given of the "least" in verse 34, PGS).

²¹⁴¹ Berkouwer, *Sacraments*, 255-256. (G.C. Berkouwer, *Dogmatische Studiën: De Sacramenten* (Kampen: Kok, 1954), 341).

²¹⁴² Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek IV* (Kampen: Kok, 1911), 641-642 (561 in my 4th edition). Note that this is the second quote from these same pages of Bavinck's *Dogmatiek* in this report.

²¹⁴³ John 6:35, 52-58.

²¹⁴⁴ Cf. Rom. 10:9-10, Matt. 10:32, 1 Tim. 6:12. The report states "confessional statements" ... "are also thought by biblical scholars originally to have been tied to baptismal events. In the case of infant baptism, profession would occur later in time as an appropriation of the promises which God made at baptism," 267.

²¹⁴⁵ E.g. Belgic Confession art. 35, Heidelberg Catechism Q77 A76, Our World Belongs to God (stanza 40), Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A 177.

²¹⁴⁶ Church Order art. 59a, Church Order of Dordt, art. 61.

²¹⁴⁷ Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* 4:16:30.

sacrament's meaning and assess the child's motivation, 3) an elder and/or pastor meets with the child and parents and provide/s a short process of preparation, 4) a simple and appropriate public profession is made during a regular worship service. Regarding nurturing and expressing a Reformed understanding of faith, continued catechism until grade 12 is suggested, followed by a commitment to adult responsibility. Regarding membership categories the report suggests to distinguish three categories: baptized, communicant or professing, and corporate or voting members.

5.3.8.2. Report B

Report B proposes to allow both views as expressed in *Report A* and *B* to be practiced. Clarifying the issues at stake may resolve the synodical discussion. The first issue is whether profession of personal faith or communal faith is the basis for participation. The nature of this profession only becomes an issue in the first case. Similarly, in circumcision, the Passover and baptism, some share blessings apart from personal profession of faith, whereas the Lord's Supper is treated as an exception. The report also clarifies how Synod 1988's decision encouraged younger participation. This raised the question whether three kinds of membership were needed. It also necessitated simpler forms for profession of faith. Participation on the basis of communal faith would require a smaller revision of this form. Synod created ambiguity by merging the position that requires individual faith with that which requires mere covenant membership. This ambiguity sustained by a theology of covenant membership for families and their children²¹⁴⁸ conflicts with the theology²¹⁴⁹ of admission and must be resolved by synod. From the Reformed perspective the efficacy of the Lord's Supper is not *ex opere operato*, and the benefits are contingent on the exercise of faith. But Reformed theology and historical practice also suggest this may be communal faith. Moreover, Jesus' presence at the Lord's Supper is the ultimate source of grace. Celebrating Communion is entering into Christ's holy sphere of life and power²¹⁵⁰. The Reformed interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 is challenged by a large part of the Christian church of the past and present, and therefore challenged in the report²¹⁵¹. The intended audience is not some individual, but the community. Their faith is required in

²¹⁴⁸ The report also mentions others connected with believers to who grace and blessings are mediated, and promises are given. E.g. the unbelieving partner of 1 Cor. 7:14 and the 318 male warriors in Abraham's household, cf. Gen. 14:14.

²¹⁴⁹ And practice of admission.

²¹⁵⁰ Cf. Herman Ridderbos, *Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 426 (476 in Dutch copy). Note that the references to theological literature reveal strong influence of Dutch theologians in Report B's theological considerations. Also referenced: Berkouwer, *The Sacraments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969); Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek IV* (Kampen: Kok, 1911).

²¹⁵¹ Quoting Bavinck's *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, but not New Testament scholars.

similar ways as in baptism, circumcision, and Passover²¹⁵². Proclamation, worthy participation, discernment and self-examination should be interpreted in light of the covenant. Historically, participation of children is supported by the tradition prior to the Fourth Lateran Council²¹⁵³. The Reformed tradition focused primarily on soteriology at the cost of ecclesiology, and on individual faith – in a sacramentalist context²¹⁵⁴ – at the cost of communal faith – needed in our rampant individualistic context. Personal profession of faith is important, but not as prerequisite for children’s participation, in whose case communal expression suffices.

5.3.8.3. *In response*

In response to these two reports, four overtures²¹⁵⁵ and one other communication²¹⁵⁶ the advisory committee of synod built consensus on the realization that the practical differences might be smaller than the underlying theological differences. The consensus meant that the advisory committee’s recommendations were in agreement with *Report A*, with an increased emphasis on commitment to the creeds and confessions, and with the changed recommendation to maintain two categories of membership. By adopting these recommendations Synod 1995 in essence reaffirmed the Synod 1988 approach²¹⁵⁷.

5.3.9. *1999 – In between*

In 1999, Classis Hamilton overtures synod to permit the variant procedure of Ancaster CRC for admitting children to the Lord’s Supper²¹⁵⁸. This procedure lessens the public character of the profession of the child and increases it for those who reach maturity. It also delegates the responsibility for oversight of

²¹⁵² The continuity between Old and New Testament lies in its covenantal nature.

²¹⁵³ And currently by changing patterns in some Presbyterian and Reformed churches.

²¹⁵⁴ Pagan mystery religions caused this sacramentalism, which lives on in some of the awe and reference for the Supper in Reformed tradition.

²¹⁵⁵ Overture 17, to reject both reports regarding children at the Lord’s Supper, by Classis Hudson; Overture 18, to reject Report B of the Committee to study clarification of public profession of faith for covenant children, by Classis Columbia; Overture 19, to reject the recommendations of Report A and Report B regarding clarification of public profession of faith for covenant children, by Classis Heartland; Overture 84, to return Reports A and B on clarification of public profession of faith for covenant children to committee, by Classis Hamilton, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 371-373; 373-375; 375-376; 605-606.

²¹⁵⁶ Communication 12, by First Christian Reformed Church of Everett Washington, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 613.

²¹⁵⁷ Article 69, 109, Acts CRCNA 1995 Synod, 712-721, 762-763. See also N.N. “CRC Synod’s Decision on Children & Communion,” *Christian Renewal* (July 1995): 17, and Phyllis Ten Elshof, “Let the Children Come, But....,” *Banner* (July 3, 1995) (which mistakenly speaks of a majority and minority report).

²¹⁵⁸ Overture 28, *Permit a Variant Procedure for Admitting Children to the Lord’s Supper*, Agenda CRCNA 1999 Synod, 439-443.

communing children to the parents. Synod does not accede to the overture²¹⁵⁹.

5.3.10. 2006 – Round 3, the overture

In 2006, Classis Holland overtures synod to appoint a study committee to examine the admission of all baptized members to the Lord’s Supper and to consider the nature and practice of profession of faith both in the life of individuals and the church²¹⁶⁰. It mentions a renewed sense that ministry and worship ought to be intergenerational, cites the one membership of the covenant, and refers to the arguments of 1988 majority report and 1995 *Report B*. The overture also takes into account that “body of the Lord” refers to the church and argues the following: that there is a partnership between the preached Word and the sacramental Word; that historical reasons for separation of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in the medieval church have not been explored enough; that participation of children in the early church sets a precedent; and that the current understanding of profession of faith is confusing and inconsistent.

5.3.10.1. Advisory committee and the floor of synod

The advisory committee of synod is divided and presents a majority report²¹⁶¹ and a minority report²¹⁶². The majority report points out that synod did not accept the argumentation based on covenant membership of the 1988 majority report and the 1995 *Report B*, and how Synod 1995 strongly encouraged covenant children to express their faith by accepting the four-step procedure. The minority agrees with the majority that another study committee is not warranted but recommends that synod recognize “there is no basis in the theology of the covenant or the theology of the sacraments for denying to growing children the Lord’s Supper.”²¹⁶³ In line with the minority, synod accepts the majority recommendation not to accede to Overture 16’s request to appoint a study committee, but more importantly, synod allows for the admission of all baptized members to the Lord’s Supper on the basis of their full membership in the covenant community²¹⁶⁴. The Board of Trustees is

²¹⁵⁹ Article 27, Acts CRCNA 1999 Synod, 563. See also David Raakman, “Synod holds the line on children and the Lord’s supper,” *Banner* (July 5, 1999): 17.

²¹⁶⁰ Overture 16, Agenda CRCNA 2006 Synod, 526-530.

²¹⁶¹ Article 71, Acts CRCNA 2006 Synod, 727-729.

²¹⁶² Article 71, Acts CRCNA 2006 Synod, 729.

²¹⁶³ Cf. Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 283.

²¹⁶⁴ The Faith Formation Committee notices that this statement suggests broader admission than ground three which speaks of evidence of faith, and age-appropriate expression of faith or knowledge. Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2008, 235.

instructed to appoint a taskforce with the charge to bring church order into conformity with this 2006 decision, to evaluate the impact of the 1995 decision, and to come with proposals regarding the discipleship of communing children and appropriate ways to celebrate their entrance into full membership as adults²¹⁶⁵.

5.3.11. 2007 – Round 3, broader context of faith formation recommended

The Children at the Lord's Supper Task Force, as appointed by the denominational Board of Trustees²¹⁶⁶, presents its report in 2007²¹⁶⁷ as well as an additional survey summary²¹⁶⁸. The task force presents a number of church order revisions, has evaluated the 1995 decision with a survey revealing that the vast majority of congregations allows professions of faith at a younger age, though in most cases not at elementary but at high school age, and also reveals very different ways of implementing the second and more mature commitment. The 2006 decision is welcomed with gratitude and enthusiasm but once again raises concerns about honoring 1 Corinthians 11, the Reformed confessions, public profession of faith and about proper and prudent procedure. The task force recommends ecumenical learning from other Reformed denominations and the Reformed Ecumenical Council. The task force suggests dealing with the questions of participation of covenant children and the response of faith to the covenantal promises in the broader context of faith formation. Special attention is paid to those with developmental disabilities or cognitive impairments. The task force also suggests appointing a committee and assigning it with a shepherding role. In line with this shepherding role, a yearly report for the next five years is suggested in which a working draft of a statement will be emended as required.

5.3.11.1. Synod appoints Faith Formation Committee

Three overtures²¹⁶⁹, one additional communication²¹⁷⁰, and a long discussion ensue in response to the report. Synod appoints the suggested Faith Formation Committee with the mandate to "deepen the integration of biblical

²¹⁶⁵ Article 71, Acts CRCNA 2006 Synod, 730-731. Elizabeth González, "Church Moves to Allow Children at Communion," *Banner* (July 2006): 33.

²¹⁶⁶ Board of Trustees Report, Agenda CRCNA 2007 Synod, 26.

²¹⁶⁷ Board of Trustees Report, Appendix B: Children at the Lord's Supper Task Force, Agenda CRCNA 2007 Synod, 43-60.

²¹⁶⁸ Addendum: Survey Summary, Agenda CRCNA 2007 Synod, 61-63.

²¹⁶⁹ Overture 13 by Classis Columbia not to adopt the decision of Synod 2006 regarding Church Order article 59, Overture 14, by Classis Pella to revise Synod's decision to admit children to the Lord's Supper and Overture 15 by Classis Illiana not to adopt the changes to Church Order article 59, Agenda CRCNA 2007 Synod, 426-427, 427-433, and 433.

²¹⁷⁰ Communication 2 by Classis North Central Iowa, Acts CRCNA 2007 Synod, 539-540.

teaching; confessional norms; church polity; and liturgical, educational, and pastoral practices in the CRC with respect to (1) participation in the Lord's Supper and (2) public profession of faith." The recommendation to grant to congregations the freedom to admit all baptized members to the Lord's Table upon approval of the consistory, in line with Synod 2006 its decision is defeated²¹⁷¹. The decision causes disappointment with some congregations and confusion for others²¹⁷².

5.3.12. 2008 – 1st Faith Formation Report

In the fall 2007, the denominational Board of Trustees appoints the Faith Formation Committee²¹⁷³. With two months of deliberations, the committee presents Synod 2008 with a preliminary report²¹⁷⁴. It clarifies the status quo after Synod 2007 has not upheld the decision of Synod 2006. Four positions in the current discussion are distinguished: 1) those against admission of children before profession of faith, but also against age appropriate profession of younger children²¹⁷⁵, 2) those in favor of age appropriate profession of faith at a younger age, under supervision of council²¹⁷⁶, 3) those in favor of participation before formal profession of faith, after reaching an age of discretion and under supervision of parents or guardians, 4) those in favor of allowing all baptized members regardless of their level of understanding²¹⁷⁷. The committee aims to present an updated study of 1 Corinthians 11²¹⁷⁸ along with life-giving ways to obey its commands. A study of congregational practices has been initiated by reflection on the 2006 survey and by focus group conversations²¹⁷⁹. Special attention will be paid to the influence of the cultural context on the issue. As part of the shepherding process, the committee envisions providing information in the first stage, entering into conversations with councils, classes and synod in the second stage, and communicating even more interactively in a third stage²¹⁸⁰. The intention is to

²¹⁷¹ Article 67, Acts CRCNA 2007 Synod, 653-657. Bob De Moor, "Hamming for the Folks Back Home," "No Communion Without Profession," *Banner* (July 2007): 27, 32.

²¹⁷² Heather Wright, "Welcoming Children to the Table," *Banner* (April 2008): 11.

²¹⁷³ Dr. John D. Witvliet (chairperson), Dr. Howard Vanderwell (secretary), Irene C. Bakker (-2012), Andrew Chun (1970-2009), Jill Friend, Dr. Syd Hielema, Pat Nederveld, Dr. H. David Schuringa, Gerard L. Dykstra (ex officio). After Synod 2010 Peter Choi joined the committee. After Synod 2011 Joel R. Boot would replace Gerard L. Dykstra.

²¹⁷⁴ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2008, 231-242.

²¹⁷⁵ Thus opposing what Synod 1995 endorsed.

²¹⁷⁶ Not going beyond what Synod 1995 endorsed.

²¹⁷⁷ This would allow for infant Communion.

²¹⁷⁸ The committee notes over thirty new publications on this passage and the issue by Reformed writers since the 1995 decision.

²¹⁷⁹ Lunch time discussion of the committee members with all Synodical delegates is held on June 17 2008, Article 32, Acts CRCNA Synod 2008, 454.

²¹⁸⁰ E.g. through webinars.

create a network of fifty correspondents to implement this process²¹⁸¹. The committee considers its work part of denomination-wide efforts related to its mandate²¹⁸².

5.3.13. 2009 - 2nd Faith Formation Report

In 2009, the Faith Formation Committee reports on its progress²¹⁸³. As the committee progresses, the new shepherding model for committee work takes shape; a website provides information; conversations²¹⁸⁴ take place as planned²¹⁸⁵ with the help of a network of fifty eight correspondents and include discussion with ethnic representatives²¹⁸⁶. The committee observes a focus on six practices: 1) one-on-one mentoring of children, 2) celebration of baptism by remembering and reaffirming, 3) age-appropriate preparation, 4) liturgical tools for profession of faith, 5) instruction in theological issues, and 6) joyful celebration of the Lord's Supper²¹⁸⁷. The 2008 report distinguished four positions in the discussion. The 2009 report lists five models: 1) the traditional²¹⁸⁸, 2) modified traditional²¹⁸⁹, 3) 1995 CRCNA²¹⁹⁰, 4) first Communion²¹⁹¹, and 5) paedocommunion model²¹⁹². The committee seeks feedback on two draft documents: "Affirming Baptism and Forming Faith"²¹⁹³

²¹⁸¹ The correspondents are mentioned in the report, the number 50 by Dan Postma, "Synod Shorts: Faith Formation Committee Reports," *Banner* (July 2008): 44.

²¹⁸² Among others two publications are mentioned: Robert J. Keeley, *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith: how the Church Can Nurture the Spiritual Development of Kids* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), and Howard Vanderwell, ed., *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together* (Herndon: The Alban Institute: 2008).

²¹⁸³ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2009, 433-447.

²¹⁸⁴ Some common themes in these conversations were: the diversity of practices, support for younger participation, Supper as means of grace rather than judgment, reevaluation of the practice of profession of faith, a desire for intergenerational worship, a longing to realize the missional significance of the Supper, the supervising role of elders, and 1 Corinthians 11 and joyful, age-appropriate obedience of its requirements.

²¹⁸⁵ Including a discussion with synodical delegates over lunch on June 16, 2009, Article 31, Acts CRCNA Synod 2009, 584.

²¹⁸⁶ The report mentions representatives of Asian congregations, the Korean Council, Black and Reformed Conferees, and Hispanic representatives.

²¹⁸⁷ The report notes "Though the question about admitting children to the Lord's Supper was the initial question that spurred the current discussion in the church, many other questions about the Lord's Supper are also present among us, including the frequency of the sacrament, the manner of distribution, and especially the spirit and tone of the liturgy," Agenda CRCNA Synod 2009, 439.

²¹⁸⁸ Profession round age 18, immediate assumption of adult responsibilities, and admission to Supper.

²¹⁸⁹ Profession and admission in teenage years, often later assumption of adult responsibilities.

²¹⁹⁰ Profession or welcome to table fellowship ceremony in grade school or junior high, later assumption of adult responsibilities. The report registers lack of awareness about the 1995 decision within the denomination.

²¹⁹¹ Public welcome at the table for grade 1, 2 or 3 children, profession round junior high school age, assumption of adult responsibilities round age 18.

²¹⁹² Welcome of baptized children at the discretion of parents, profession at junior high or high school age, assumption of adult responsibilities at age 16 or 18.

²¹⁹³ Article 43, 44, Acts CRCNA Synod 2009, 594, 595, June 17, 2009.

and “Perspectives on 1 Corinthians 11.”²¹⁹⁴ In its exploration of developmental concepts, the paradigm of “faith milestones” as developed by the Lutheran Youth and Family Institute has captured the attention of the committee.

5.3.14. 2010 - 3rd Faith Formation Report

In its third report²¹⁹⁵, the Faith Formation Committee reports on its continued collaborative efforts²¹⁹⁶, repeats the list of key themes²¹⁹⁷ to which the concept of milestones of faith formation is added²¹⁹⁸, and provides three key documents: 1) a Bible study on 1 Corinthians 11 titled, *A Practice of Christian Unity*²¹⁹⁹, 2) *Children at the Table: Toward a Guiding Principle for Biblically Faithful Celebrations of the Lord’s Supper*²²⁰⁰, and 3) *Affirming Baptism and Forming Faith*²²⁰¹.

The groundwork for a guiding principle is laid in the second document. Some of its key ideas are the conviction that all baptized persons are members of the church; who are invited to the table out of grace as covenant members; who should participate in age-and-ability-appropriate ways, which prevents two opposing errors of overemphasizing or minimizing the importance of understanding and learning; a prior public profession of faith is not a biblical requirement, but might be wise. After a thorough study of 1 Corinthians 11 by the committee²²⁰², the report states that the central theme of the chapter is to confront the lack of hospitality and to promote unity²²⁰³. Discerning the body is interpreted as referring to Christ as well as the church²²⁰⁴.

²¹⁹⁴ The acts do not mention a discussion or decision on this document.

²¹⁹⁵ Faith Formation Committee, Appendix A, and Appendix B, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2010, 586-591, 592-626, 626-646.

²¹⁹⁶ Among others with Faith Alive, providing materials such as the forthcoming book edited by Robert J. Keeley, *Shaped by God: Twelve Essentials for Nurturing Faith in Children, Youth, and Adults* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2010).

²¹⁹⁷ The missional significance of the Supper and intergenerational worship have been dropped off the list of key themes.

²¹⁹⁸ By now CRC material on the subject has been developed: Laura and Robert J. Keeley, *Celebrating the Milestones of Faith: a Guide for Churches* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2009).

²¹⁹⁹ http://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/Faith%20Formation_bible%20study.pdf (accessed January 5, 2015)

²²⁰⁰ Appendix A of the report, available online in Korean and Spanish translations.

²²⁰¹ Appendix B of the report, also available online in Korean and Spanish translations

²²⁰² The thoroughness of the Faith Formation Committee’s study of 1 Corinthians is reflected in the unpublished reader prepared by the committee, 718 pages in total, containing relevant passages on 1 Corinthians 11 from 109 different books, 105 different theologians, ranging from Chrysostom to Anthony Thiselton’s 2006 commentary.

²²⁰³ Cf. Jeffrey A.D. Weima, “Children at the Lord’s Supper and the Key text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34,” *Calvin Theological Forum*, Spring 2007, 7-8.

²²⁰⁴ As attested throughout church history, cf. for example Thomas J. Davis, *This is My Body: The Presence of Christ in Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

Discernment and other imperatives, including waiting for each other, should be obeyed in age- and ability-appropriate ways. Judgment in 1 Corinthians 11 should be perceived as divine discipline. In order to understand this chapter, three errors should be avoided: the tendency to ignore the communal dimension²²⁰⁵, employing legalistic interpretations in which the imperatives overshadow the welcome to the table, and cheap grace that disregards the demands and words of judgment.

5.3.14.1. Guiding principle

The committee then distinguishes two basic positions: one in favor of welcoming before public profession of faith²²⁰⁶, and the other against. The first argues from the Bible's silence, membership of the covenant, the Passover, and early church history. The second also argues from the Bible's silence, lack of proof regarding the Passover, the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11, and the difference between the two sacraments. The Reformed Confessions tie membership to baptism²²⁰⁷, convey that proper participation arises out of faith²²⁰⁸, involves self-examination and belief²²⁰⁹, and only explicitly exclude hypocrites, the unrepentant, and the wicked²²¹⁰, though elsewhere, the authors reject infant participation²²¹¹. The committee cautions against the use of inconclusive arguments, such as Bible texts that lack sufficient detail, the analogy with Passover, the communal agent approach, and the historical argument. This leaves two substantive arguments: those based on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and those based on covenant theology. The committee recommends that synod endorse the following guiding principle²²¹²:

²²⁰⁵ Regarding discernment of the body and self-examination. Cp. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 569.

²²⁰⁶ The committee leaves the wisdom of requiring public profession of faith to local discernment. As good reasons it mentions Biblical illiteracy, and superstition, as in the days of the Reformation, cf. Robert M. Kingdon, "Catechesis in Calvin's Geneva," in *Educating People of Faith*, ed. John Van Engen (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2004), 294-313 (The report refers to pp. 150-178).

²²⁰⁷ Cf. Belgic Confession art. 34.

²²⁰⁸ Cf. Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 81, Belgic Confession art. 35.

²²⁰⁹ Cf. Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 76, Belgic Confession art. 35.

²²¹⁰ Cf. Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 81, Belgic Confession art. 35.

²²¹¹ Reference is made to Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Willard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 366-67, 425, 429.

²²¹² When the recommended guiding principle is accepted, the next step is to discern what practices best enact this principle, by identifying common criteria for such discernment (7 criteria formulated on p. 615-616), by describing or commending practices that should be common (four practices commended on p. 616), and by describing complementary practices of welcome to the table which fit in different circumstances (welcome: 1- offered in worship, 2- through public profession of faith, 3- through a welcome to the table process).

All baptized members are welcome to the Lord's Supper for age- and ability-appropriate obedience to biblical commands about participation, under the supervision of the elders. The elders have responsibility to nurture grateful and obedient participation by providing encouragement, instruction, and accountability in the congregation. Although requiring a formal public profession of faith prior to participation in the Lord's Supper is one pastoral approach to consider, but is not required by Scripture or the confessions.

5.3.14.2. Unanimous support

In response to the report and three overtures²²¹³ synod adopts the guiding principle²²¹⁴ and all other recommendations²²¹⁵ with nearly unanimous support. One could argue that, with the adoption of the guiding principle, the core questions in the synodical debate about children at the Lord's Supper have been answered. However, the following years are important for completing the shepherding process, fulfilling other mandates, and embedding the guiding principle in church order.

5.3.15. 2011 – 4th Faith Formation Report

In its fourth report²²¹⁶, the Faith Formation Committee recommends the document "Affirming Baptism and Forming Faith"²²¹⁷ for endorsement. The committee also recommends changes to church order in the spirit of the adopted guiding principle regarding participation in the Lord's Supper²²¹⁸. The document, "Children at the Table: Toward a Guiding Principle for Biblically Faithful Celebrations of the Lord's Supper", is a slightly revised edition in response to Synod 2010's encouragement to include a more detailed study on the command to "examine oneself"²²¹⁹ and to include a comparison of the

²²¹³ Overture 9, by Classis Zeeland to Withhold Action on Recommendations from the Faith Formation Committee re Children at the Lord's Supper, Overture 10 from Classis Columbia to Withhold Action on the Recommendations of the Faith Formation Committee, Overture 11 by Classis Illiana to Reject the Guiding Principle Proposed by the Faith Formation Committee; Reaffirm the Decisions of Synods 1988 and 1995 Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 664-668; 668-679; 680-681.

²²¹⁴ A slightly edited text

²²¹⁵ Article 27, 28, Acts CRCNA Synod 2010, 810-812. Gayla R. Postma, "Baptized Children at the Lord's Supper, Take Two," *Banner* (June 2010): 12. Peter Sinia, "Nieuwe wegen in het gesprek rond kinderen aan het Avondmaal," *Opbouw* (September 17, 2010): 12-14.

²²¹⁶ Faith Formation Committee, Appendix A, B, C, D, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2011, 541-549, 550-569, 569-577, 577-612, 612-621.

²²¹⁷ The document is the same as the one presented in 2010, with some minor editorial changes.

²²¹⁸ Though public profession of faith is no longer required for admission to the Lord's Supper, it is encouraged.

²²¹⁹ The committee does not choose between an interpretation following the context of the chapter, or a more general one.

“confirmation” process of other Christian traditions. With two short sections on Old Testament texts anticipating the Lord’s Supper and the multiple images given in the New Testament, the report aims to place 1 Corinthians 11 within a larger biblical context. The committee adds a section expressing its enthusiasm for public profession of faith²²²⁰. This document is also presented for approval; the document on Infant Dedication and the Christian Reformed Church has a more preliminary nature.

In response to the report, including the appendices and the four overtures,²²²¹ the document, “Affirming Baptism and Forming Faith”, is endorsed; the recommended changes to church order are adopted with some minor editorial changes; the revised version of “Children at the Table” is accepted; and the term of the committee is extended for one year²²²².

5.3.16. 2012 – 5th Faith Formation Report

In its fifth report to synod,²²²³ the faith formation committee recommends restoring a phrase in the church order stating that profession of faith includes a commitment to the creeds and confessions. The committee presents the document, “Infant Dedication and the Christian Reformed Church”,²²²⁴ for approval. It endorses the document, “Forms for Baptism and Profession of Faith”,²²²⁵ for the churches, and offers the principle regarding infant dedication (already affirmed by Synod 2011²²²⁶) for final approval. Without formulating recommendations the committee affirms its desire to strengthen the profession of faith as a significant milestone, and mentions practices²²²⁷ and resources that can be used for that purpose. Some early considerations to

²²²⁰ With a long quote of a section from the document “Affirming Baptism and Forming Faith.” I note that the added sections on multiple images and on confirmation are also nearly identical to those in this document.

²²²¹ Overture 24, by Classis Holland to Alter Wording for Church Order Articles Proposed by the Faith Formation Committee, Overture 25, by Owen Sound CRC, Do Not Adopt the Proposed Church Order Supplement, Article 59-c within the Faith Formation Committee Report, Overture 26, by Classis Columbia, to Withhold Action on Church Order Changes by Faith Formation Committee, Overture 27, by Hope CRC, Brantford, to Provide Churches with Another Year to Consider Church Order Changes Proposed by the Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2011, 688-692.

²²²² Article 36, 57, Acts CRCNA Synod 2011, 829-832, 857.

²²²³ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2012, 412-424.

²²²⁴ Appendix A, Infant Dedication and the Christian Reformed Church, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2012, 425 - 434.

²²²⁵ Appendix B, Forms for Baptism and Profession of Faith, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2012, 434-447. These forms were newly developed by the Reformed Church in America.

²²²⁶ Article 36, Acts CRCNA Synod 2011, 831-832.

²²²⁷ 1- proactive encouragement of profession, 2- a new timeframe encouraging profession two years before finishing high school, 3- rigorous and relevant study of the Bible, the history, creeds and confessions of the church, 4- renewed family involvement, 5- mentoring, 6- meeting with the elders prior to profession, 7- meaningful liturgical celebration of profession, and 8- ongoing discipleship after profession of faith.

embed faith formation in the denominational structure are shared. Synod adopts all recommendations²²²⁸.

5.3.17. 2013 – Final Report Faith Formation Committee

In its sixth and final report,²²²⁹ the Faith Formation Committee affirms the wisdom of appointing shepherding committees rather than study committees; presents three articles: first, “A Primer for Welcoming Children to the Lord’s Supper and the Role of Public Profession of Faith”²²³⁰ and second, “Strengthening Profession of Faith: A Guide for Councils”²²³¹ for recommendation to the churches, and third, a slightly edited version of “Forms for Baptism and Profession of Faith”²²³² for approval. Synod adopts all recommendations²²³³, the committee’s work ends, the synodical debate on children at the Lord’s Supper has come to a conclusion, but the work of faith formation continues²²³⁴.

5.4. Denominational discussion RCL DRC in Periodicals and Books

5.4.1. First round of discussion about church of Rijsbergen

The denominational discussion within the Reformed Churches liberated (RCL) starts with, and initially focuses on, the first Dutch case of paedocommunion. The church of Rijsbergen has been allowing children at the Lord’s Supper since early 1962. Yet it takes a year and a half before even a congenial national magazine takes notice of the novelty and writes about it.²²³⁵ It takes another nine months and a small conference to raise national attention for the practice of the church of Rijsbergen.²²³⁶ In the most prominent national

²²²⁸ Articles 62, 67, Acts CRCNA Synod 2012, 771-772, 774-775.

²²²⁹ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2013, 318-328.

²²³⁰ Appendix A, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2013, 329-331.

²²³¹ Appendix B, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2013, 331-333.

²²³² Appendix C, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2013, 333-347.

²²³³ Article 20, Acts CRCNA Synod 2013, 552-553.

²²³⁴ Gayla R. Postma, “Faith Formation Committee Ends, Work Continues,” *Banner* (July 2013): 34.

²²³⁵ W. van Rheenen and P. Aalbersberg, “Rijsbergen een Oase!” *Contact* (October 26, 1963): 11-12.

²²³⁶ The small conference of “free biblical Christians” in Rijsbergen on June 27 1964 is first mentioned in the national Reformed (RCL) newspaper *Gereformeerd Gezinsblad* of the following Tuesday July 7, “Berichten van hier en daar: Vrije bijbelse christenen te Rijsbergen bijeen,” *Gereformeerd Gezinsblad*, Tuesday July 7, 1964. This article is based on a preview of an article by Reverend de Boer in the local church bulletin *De Fakkelt* of the independent Free Reformed Church of the Frisian town Wolvega, in the northern part of the country, D. de Boer, “Landelijke contact-samenkomst van vrije bijbelse christenen, gehouden te Rijsbergen,” *De Fakkelt* 7, no. 2, July 10, 1964: 1-6. The protestant Frisian newspaper *Friesch Dagblad* publishes an article on July 15, 1964, “De kerk vandaag: Jeugd in Geref. Kerken (vrijg.): Organisatie beheerst het kerkelijk leven te strak,” *Friesch Dagblad*, July 15, 1964. These articles get the attention of a journalist and a subsequent article is published in four Christian newspapers (known as “kwartetbladen”) in the

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magazines of the Reformed Church liberated, *Opbouw* and *De Reformatie*, this causes a flurry of more than twenty articles,²²³⁷ not counting the articles in the likeminded magazine *Contact*,²²³⁸ as well as some positive articles in national Christian newspapers. All of these add fuel to the discussion,²²³⁹ and cause a similar flurry of articles in local and regional church bulletins.²²⁴⁰ This flurry lasts for almost a year.

western part of the Netherlands: "Terug naar de oergestalte van de christelijke gemeente," *De Rotterdammer, Nieuwe Haagsche Courant, Nieuwe Leidsche Courant, Dordts Dagblad*, July 18, 1964. Further articles appear in the national newspaper *Gereformeerd Gezinsblad*: "Van Binnenlands Gebeuren: Ook nu weer," *Gereformeerd Gezinsblad*, July 20, 1964. "Persschouw: Een Vrij-Evangelisch kerktype," *Gereformeerd Gezinsblad*, August 12, 1964. "Persschouw: Tweemaal?" *Gereformeerd Gezinsblad*, October 19, 1964.

²²³⁷ I registered the following articles in order of publication: J.R. Wiskerke, "Einde van het gereformeerde leven in schending van de liefde I," *De Reformatie* 39, no. 44 (August 22, 1964): 344; G. Visee, "Kerkelijk Leven: Vrije bijbelse christenen," *Opbouw* 8, no. 20 (August 28, 1964): 157-158; J.R. Wiskerke, "Einde van het gereformeerde leven in schending van de liefde II," *De Reformatie* 39, no. 45 (August 29, 1964): 352. J. Kamphuis, "Kerkelijk leven: Kandeeler Kerkverband," *De Reformatie* 39, no. 47 (12 September, 1964): 366. F. de Vries, "Persschouw: Rijsbergen," *De Reformatie* 40, no. 1 (October 3, 1964); F. de Vries, "Persschouw: De wijze, waarop de laatste classis Noord-Brabant-Limburg zich heeft geconstitueerd," *De Reformatie* 40, no. 4 (October 24, 1964): 30. G. Visee, "Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren I," *Opbouw* 8, no. 46 (March 5, 1965): 368-369; G. Visee, "Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren II," *Opbouw* 8, no. 47 (March 12, 1965): 375-376; G. Visee, "Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren III," *Opbouw* 8, no. 48 (March 19, 1965): 384-385; G. Visee, "Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren IV," *Opbouw* 8, no. 49 (March 26, 1965): 392-393; G. Visee, "Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren V," *Opbouw* 9, no. 1 (April 2, 1965): 400-401; G. Visee, "Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren VI," *Opbouw* 9, no. 2 (April 9, 1965): 12-13; G. Visee, "Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren VII," *Opbouw* 9, no. 3 (April 16, 1965): 20-21; J. Kamphuis, "Kindercommunie en open avondmaalstafel?" *De Reformatie* 40, no. 36 (June 12, 1965): 286-287; J. Kamphuis, "Documentatie: Jeugdconferentie in Rijsbergen," *De Reformatie* 40, no. 37 (June 19, 1965): 296; J. Kamphuis, "Kerkelijk leven: Het oude ideaal," *De Reformatie* 40, no. 38 (June 26, 1965): 303-304. Note that none of these articles are written by or interviewing Jan van Katwijk, who pastors the church of Rijsbergen.

²²³⁸ Sollie, A.F. "Rijsbergen," *Contact* 14, no. 19 (October 3, 1964): 6-7; By the time that a third article titled "Rijsbergen in het nieuws," (Rijsbergen in the news) appears in *Contact*, the media attention has diminished. P. Aalbersberg, "Rijsbergen in het nieuws," *Contact* 15, no. 16 (August 21, 1965): 11; J. Jansen. "Ingezonden: Rijsbergen," *Contact* 16, no. 17 (September 17, 1966): 9-10; P. Van Loo "Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren?" *Contact* 17, no. 16 (September 9, 1967): 2-3.

²²³⁹ "t is een doodgewone christelijke gemeente: In Rijsbergen gaan kleuters naar het heilig avondmaal en is er geen catechisatie," *Trouw*, September 5, 1964. 10. "Gereformeerde Kerk? Neen!" *Trouw*, September 15, 1964. 10. "Jeugdconferentie in Rijsbergen: Terug naar eerste christengemeente," *De Rotterdammer, Nieuwe Haagsche Courant, Nieuwe Leidsche Courant Dordts Dagblad*, June 6, 1965.

²²⁴⁰ In national magazines some of those are mentioned: I. de Wolff, "Het lichaam onderscheiden," *Gereformeerd Kerkblad voor Overijssel en Gelderland*, October 3, 1964, M.J.C. Blok "Rijsbergen, waarheen?" *Ons Kerkblad* (Utrecht); Tj. Boersma "Een Vrij-Evangelisch kerktype," in *Pro Ecclesia*, church bulletin of Urk (date after July 11 before August 12, 1967); P. Deddens (from Creil) *Kerkpost* (title and date unknown); D. Van Dijk an article with unknown title in *Gereformeerde Kerkbode voor Groningen, Friesland, Drente*, July 1, 1967; M. Vreugdenhil in *Waarheid en Eenheid* (title and date unknown), D.K. Wielenga "Belijdenis van de gereformeerde religie doen," *De Schaapskooi*, March 20, 1965, and I. De Wolff "Vreemde gang van zaken," (name of bulletin and date of publication unknown).

5.4.1.1. Strong words

The church of Rijsbergen introduces several changes and organizes conferences with likeminded Christians. Together, they propose even more radical changes.²²⁴¹ The discussion during that first year of the debate often addresses the issue of children at the Lord's Supper as an integral part of that cluster of changes.²²⁴² Strong words may express strong emotions that are not explicitly named by the opponents of paedocommunion, but which the proponents identify as fear. Opponents view paedocommunion as an offense against church order, as unfaithfulness to the confessions, and as disloyalty to the denomination. In line with a rather exclusivist vision of the true church, allowing Christians from other denominations at the Lord's Supper is seen as an even more dangerous consequence of the already dangerous practice of paedocommunion.²²⁴³ Allowing either, means profaning the Lord's Supper. Allowing participation without proper understanding equals magic or witchcraft. The decision to have only one worship service per Sunday is seen as a sad consequence of the more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper. This, combined with the emphasis on the sacrament, is taken as proof of a lack of hunger for God's Word, or in other words, as carnal laziness.

5.4.1.2. Visee's extensive contribution

In this stage of the debate, G. Visee provides an exceptional extensive discussion of paedocommunion.²²⁴⁴ The practice of Lord's Supper at Rijsbergen and the Reformed grounds for infant baptism both justify his study.

²²⁴¹ Among others Congregationalist ideas as proposed by W.C. van Zwieten and inspired by North American independent and Congregationalist churches as discussed in the book *Lebendige Gemeinde - aber wie?* by Franz von Hammerstein (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1960).

²²⁴² It is claimed that this includes: lack of recognition of the denomination, lack of recognition of church order, lack of afternoon services, lack of Catechism preaching, and Catechism teaching, loss of profession of faith, no compliance with standards for admission to Lord's Supper (open Communion and paedocommunion), preaching and administration of sacraments by non office-bearers, singing of hymns other than those approved by Synod, etc.

²²⁴³ Wiskerke for example speaks of a Lord's Supper accessible to members of the church and the anti-church and the unwillingness to strengthen the walls of Zion, Wiskerke (August 8). A random illustration of the newspaper article in the *kwartetbladen* suggested (to the horror of Wiskerke) that Roman Catholic nuns attend Rijsbergen's Lord's Supper celebrations, which at that time had not happened yet, but would later, Jan Hendriks, ed., *Kijken met andere ogen: Een rondreis langs open en gastvrije kerken* (Kampen: Kok, 2004), 92.

²²⁴⁴ G. Visee, former pastor of the German Evangelische Altreformierte Kirche, then serving within the Reformed Church liberated, initially writes an article in *Opbouw* addressing the whole cluster of changes. Visee (August 28, 1964). His seven articles about paedocommunion are republished in *Onderwezen in het Konrijk der Hemelen: keuze uit de persarbeid van ds. G. Visee* (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1979). His articles are also republished in English in a series of four under the title "May – and Must – Our Children Partake of the Lord's Supper?" in *Christian Renewal* in the year 1986. As such it is part of the material of the Report of the Ad-Interim Committee to Study the Question of Paedocommunion presented at the 16th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America in 1988.

He presents the historic example from the Palatinate²²⁴⁵ as a plea for including younger children²²⁴⁶ and lowering the requirements for admission.²²⁴⁷ He suggests that the simplicity of the Palatinate Church Order is a better format for admission by profession of faith than the more current church order.²²⁴⁸ He believes that minimal knowledge, or understanding according to age and ability, should be required.²²⁴⁹ In 1 Corinthians 11, the celebration of the Lord's Supper is a commandment. How to celebrate is the real question. Self-examination cannot be a spiritual, individualistic exercise, but should be moral and congregational. The question of self-examination by children should be answered in light of God's covenant promises.²²⁵⁰ While on one side there is the danger of the sin of magic,²²⁵¹ on the other side there is the danger of rationalism and subjectivism.²²⁵² 1 Corinthians 5:7 connects the Lord's Supper with the Passover, also a feast of remembrance at which children were present, partaking and asking questions,²²⁵³ as they would do in later Jewish tradition. Likewise, sacraments are dumb (nonverbal) signs that precede and provoke questions and thus lead to teaching.²²⁵⁴ Children should be allowed to receive the sign of a reality that they already have and enjoy as heirs²²⁵⁵.

²²⁴⁵ The example of the historical practice of the Palatinate is strategically chosen as it makes aware of the changes within the Reformed tradition, but also provides the historical context for the Heidelberg Catechism and by quoting from a church order of 1563 – the same year of publication of the Heidelberg Catechism – Visee shows a credible Reformed alternative to the current church order. Visee's source is: W. Niesel, *Bekennnisschriften und Kirchen Ordnungen der nach Gottes Wort reformierten Kirche*. 2nd ed. (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, A.G. Zollikon, 1938).

²²⁴⁶ Later Visee describes how his prior bias against paedocommunion gradually changed while studying scripture. Visee (1979), 263. In his initial article he expresses his willingness to discuss paedocommunion, but also emphasizes the need for understanding and the danger of magic or witchcraft. Visee (August 28, 1964). The following series of articles reflects this development as it now presents a strong plea for soft paedocommunion, but already suggests that even strict paedocommunion might be biblical.

²²⁴⁷ The 1563 Palatinate church order requires reciting the Apostolic Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the (Heidelberg) Catechism on the Lord's Supper. If the children were not able to do that the pastor had to remind them of the content. And in this way profession of faith was made, and children (presumably teenagers) were admitted to the Lord's Supper. The Palatinate example is also presented as plea for more frequent celebration and greater parental involvement.

²²⁴⁸ In comparison with the then current church order article 61 and the forms for profession of faith that go back to the Utrecht Synod of 1923. In response to D.K. Wielenga, Visee argues that church order articles should be understood in their historical setting, were not intended to deal with children, can be changed, and should be changed if overruled by Scripture (This response to Wielenga is only found as a postscript in the 1979 republication of these articles in *Onderwezen in het Koninkrijk der Hemelen*).

²²⁴⁹ "In accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you" (Romans 12:3). "In accordance with the measure of their faith," Canons of Dordt, chapter V, article 9.

²²⁵⁰ Visee refers to Gen. 17, Acts 2:39, and 1 Cor. 7:14.

²²⁵¹ Visee mentions the Eastern Orthodox Churches as example of such magic.

²²⁵² Visee refers to the Canons of Dordt, chapters III and IV, paragraph 13, and the Belgic Confession art. 35.

²²⁵³ Cf. Exodus 12:26.

²²⁵⁴ Visee refers to the confessions which treat the sacraments as educational tools to nourish and sustain faith. Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer 66 and 75. Belgic Confession, article 33.

²²⁵⁵ In response to I. de Wolff who defends different treatment of children based on Galatians 4: 1-5 which speaks as heirs who in their childhood are like slaves.

5.4.1.3. *The end of debate and unity*

Visee encourages further conversation at both congregational and council levels. The conversation certainly doesn't take place on a national level. Less than a year after it started, the discussion comes to an end. This is probably because priority is given to other debates and tensions that lead to a denominational split around 1967.

5.4.2. *Two new rounds of debate in the seventies*

A full decade after the discussion comes to an end, two new rounds of debate are published in *Opbouw*²²⁵⁶. Both are dominated by DRC pastor and opinion leader, Henk de Jong.²²⁵⁷

5.4.2.1. *The first round in the seventies*

Henk de Jong opens the first round with a strong plea for profession of faith, which he believes to be in line with the Bible and a prerequisite for participation in the Lord's Supper. Challenged by C.P. Kleingeld,²²⁵⁸ de Jong replies with a series of articles. Paedocommunion practice is now spoken of as typical of the mainline Netherlands Reformed Church,²²⁵⁹ and is unconsciously influenced by socialism with its levelling tendency. Refusing to follow this example will help the church to stand strong against the accusation by the charismatic movement of Reformed covenantal automatism. Kleingeld argues from the metaphor of citizenship by birth, sonship by acknowledgment of the father alone, and admission to family dinners by invitation of the parent without intervention of the siblings. De Jong uses metaphors of the family home and the marital bed to support the distinction between what is fit for children and what is not. De Jong makes a strong distinction between baptism and Lord's Supper, and pleads for acknowledging two sides in our relationship with God: the promise of being inside *and* the call to enter; the sign on the doorpost *and* the sign on the forehead;²²⁶⁰ covenantal *and* personal faith; the family *and* the individual.

²²⁵⁶ K. Deddens writes "Rev. K.C. Smouter and Rev. M.R. van den Berg wrote about this topic in *Opbouw*," *Clarion*, September 5, 1986. I am not sure which articles Deddens is referring to, but as K.C. Smouter died in 1974 and as M.R. van den Berg's 1978 book on the subject refers to earlier articles, these articles may have been published in this period. M.R. van den Berg, *Voor wie is het Avondmaal?: Sacrament voor ingewijden of verbondsmaaltijd?* (Kampen: Kok, 1978).

²²⁵⁷ De Jong dominates the discussions in the sense that he participates in both and in the sense that his contribution counts 4,5 times more words than Kleingeld's and Cornelisse's together.

²²⁵⁸ C.P. (Kees) Kleingeld had known Jan van Katwijk since the late fifties. Later Kleingeld would also be connected to Rijsbergen through family ties. In 1999, at the age of 57 Dr. Kleingeld is ordained as pastor of the Free Reformed Church of Wolvega.

²²⁵⁹ The church of Rijsbergen, part of De Jong's own denomination, is not mentioned.

²²⁶⁰ Exodus 12:7, Ezekiel 9:4.

5.4.2.2. *The second round in the seventies*

In 1965 the Reformed Church liberated of Dordrecht – a congregation with strong ties to Rijsbergen – follows the example of Rijsbergen in allowing children at the Lord’s Supper. Twelve years later, Dordrecht’s pastor, N. Cornelisse²²⁶¹ (now part of the Dutch Reformed Churches), opens the second round of discussions with De Jong.²²⁶² For Cornelisse, paedocommunion is in line with the Reformed theology of baptism as expressed in the confessions,²²⁶³ but De Jong continues to emphasize the difference between baptism and Communion.²²⁶⁴ Therefore, current practice is a wise compromise in De Jong’s eyes,²²⁶⁵ but it’s the result of objectionable theology of the Middle Ages²²⁶⁶ in the eyes of Cornelisse. Early Reformed tradition²²⁶⁷ sets the direction for Cornelisse; later Reformed tradition²²⁶⁸ sets the direction for De Jong. De Jong’s emphasis on the necessity of discipline is remarkable in light of the denomination’s history and culture.²²⁶⁹ Just as remarkable is De Jong’s elevation of the Lord’s Supper as the climax of all liturgies, of which he speaks in metaphors of sexual intercourse.

Both see Anabaptism as the ultimate consequence of the other side’s position and practice. De Jong points out that Jesus did not institute the Lord’s Supper in the context of feeding the multitudes that included women and children, but in the intimate group of the twelve, when only faithful believers had remained. He fears that with paedocommunion, the witnessing character of the Lord’s Supper will be lost, and that only the social aspect will remain. Even

²²⁶¹ N. Cornelisse, at that moment, pastors the churches of both Dordrecht and Zwijndrecht. The first welcomes children at the table; the second does not. Later Cornelisse returns to North America to become pastor in the CRC.

²²⁶² Cornelisse initiates the discussion in response to a short report in *Opbouw* about a critical letter regarding paedocommunion sent by the church of Leerdam to the church of Dordrecht. “Kerknieuws: De verhouding tot de kerk te Dordrecht,” *Opbouw* 21, no. 35 (September 30, 1977): 284.

²²⁶³ Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer 74.

²²⁶⁴ De Jong distinguishes incorporation vs. nurture and nourishment; emphasis on God’s initiative vs. emphasis on the reciprocity of the covenant. De Jong also points to the difference between Heidelberg Catechism Question 69 on Baptism and 75 on the Lord’s Supper. The first speaks of the sacrifice of Christ being of “real advantage to thee,” the second says of the Lord’s Supper “thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ.”

²²⁶⁵ As no explicit Scripture text guides us in this matter, common threads in Scripture and wisdom should according to de Jong.

²²⁶⁶ Fourth Lateran Council 1215, Council of Bordeaux 1255, and Council of Trent 1545-48.

²²⁶⁷ Cornelisse seems to be thinking of Calvin who mentions an age of ten and of the practice in the Palatinate as described in the 1563 Palatinate church order.

²²⁶⁸ De Jong mentions the church order of Dordt (1618/1619), article 61 “The consistory shall admit to the Lord’s Supper only those who have made public profession of the Reformed faith and lead a godly life. Members of sister-Churches shall be admitted on the ground of a good attestation concerning their doctrine and conduct.”

²²⁶⁹ See for example G. Van den Brink and H.J. van der Kwast, *Een kerk ging stuk* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1992), 220f.

though the stakes seem high, neither is willing to divide the church over the issue.

5.4.3. *A Dutch Reformed book in the seventies*

The year 1978, the same year the second round of debate in *Opbouw* takes place, Meint van den Berg publishes his book on children at the Lord's Supper. The book is based on earlier articles and papers, and does not interact with the most recent discussion in *Opbouw*²²⁷⁰. Van den Berg is in favor of welcoming covenantal children at the Lord's Table. Instead of seeking support for paedocommunion in history, Van den Berg blames the influence of pagan mystery religions and the connotations inherited with the use of the term sacrament for the early rise of unbiblical misconceptions concerning the Lord's Table²²⁷¹. Even the Reformed tradition inherited some of this pagan magical thinking by continuing use of the term sacrament²²⁷². Before addressing the specific issue of children at the Lord's Supper, Van den Berg treats two topics that had been central in the split with the Reformed Church liberated, a decade before: a critic of the contemporary church discipline practice as connected with the Lord's Supper²²⁷³, and an ecumenical plea in favor of open Communion²²⁷⁴. By the time Van den Berg addresses the issue of paedocommunion, he approaches this from the perspective of a biblical defence of infant baptism²²⁷⁵. In the spirit of his tradition he puts strong emphasis on the covenant²²⁷⁶ and considers the individualistic and subjective application of 1 Corinthians 11 the reasons why the covenantal meals aspect of the Supper was lost²²⁷⁷. The Hellenistic context of 1 Corinthians 11 is important for his conclusion that this chapter does not apply to children²²⁷⁸. Van den Berg sees a strong connection between Passover and the Supper and defends how children continued to partake, even after there may have been a shift from family to community as the people entered Canaan²²⁷⁹. The general pattern of Van den Berg's argument resembles that of other paedocommunion advocates, the details of his book are often quite original. One of those original perspectives is that Van den Berg, as a former

²²⁷⁰ Van den Berg (1978), 5.

²²⁷¹ Van den Berg (1978), 11f.

²²⁷² Van den Berg (1978), 15, 22.

²²⁷³ Van den Berg (1978), 28f.

²²⁷⁴ Van den Berg (1978), 35f.

²²⁷⁵ Van den Berg (1978), 43f.

²²⁷⁶ Van den Berg (1978), 50f.

²²⁷⁷ Van den Berg (1978), 54.

²²⁷⁸ Van den Berg (1978), 55f.

²²⁷⁹ Van den Berg (1978), 64f.

missionary to South Africa, introduces the image of apartheid in the discussion of paedocommunion²²⁸⁰.

5.4.4. Reformed liberated discussion in the early eighties

Meanwhile, in the Reformed Church liberated, the discussion comes to an end as the churches of Rijsbergen and Dordrecht are no longer part of the denomination.²²⁸¹ In 1974, no one is of the opinion that children belong at the Lord's Supper,²²⁸² but that changes in the early eighties.²²⁸³ In a series of three articles,²²⁸⁴ Barend Kamphuis suggests that the seemingly opposite movements against infant baptism and in favor of children at the Lord's Supper, in the end, are one in their Anabaptist spiritualistic rationale²²⁸⁵. He argues that classifying baptism and Communion as sacraments is important as this pair reflects the structure of the covenant.²²⁸⁶ Kamphuis emphasizes the historic nature of God's relationship with His people, and history as a succession of events governed by God.²²⁸⁷ Kamphuis points out that "it has been God's own wise decision to give man a history, from infancy to adulthood." "And He revealed Himself as One who wants to join man in that history." "There is an economy in God's grace." Kamphuis who positions himself over against Karl Barth – who has questioned infant baptism – writes that for Barth "there is no covenant history with a gradual development." Though the introduction of time considerations in the analysis of paedocommunion by Kamphuis seems significant²²⁸⁸, the conclusion of

²²⁸⁰ Van den Berg (1978), 38, 99.

²²⁸¹ It is interesting how B. Kamphuis writes in 1982 about churches like Rijsbergen and Dordrecht: "You know that in the circles of what is now the Dutch Reformed Church children have been admitted to the Lord's Supper here and there for a long time," as if this is not part of the history of his own denomination. Kamphuis, B. "Kinderdoop en kinderkommunie I," *De Reformatie* (February 6, 1982): 285.

²²⁸² According to R.H. Bremmer. "Kinderen aan het avondmaal? (1)," *De Poortwake* (August 30, 1974): 120.

²²⁸³ According to Barend Kamphuis (Barend Kamphuis is not to be mistaken for his father J. Kamphuis who we met earlier in this section).

²²⁸⁴ B.Kamphuis, "Kinderdoop en kinderkommunie I," *De Reformatie* (February 6, 1982): 284-287; "Kinderdoop en kinderkommunie II," *De Reformatie* (February 13, 1982): 299-302; "Kinderdoop en kinderkommunie III (slot)," *De Reformatie* (February 27, 1982): 329-332. These articles were republished in English with a slightly altered text in: Kamphuis, B. "Infant Baptism and Infant Communion," *Lux Mundi* 11, no. 3 (September, 1992): 2-10.

²²⁸⁵ Kamphuis does not seem to consider the possibility that these two opposite trends reveal tension created by the inconsistency of Reformed theology and practice regarding the place of children in God's church; a tension that can be released in two opposite directions.

²²⁸⁶ Unilateral in its initiative, bilateral in its existence.

²²⁸⁷ In line with Berkouwer Kamphuis sees dualism as Karl Barth's pitfall. Kamphuis suggests that it is because of this dualism that Barth fails to recognize the historical aspect of God's covenantal relationship with His people. Kamphuis (1982a), 300. Cf. G.C. Berkouwer, *Karl Barth en De Kinderdoop*. (Kampen: Kok, 1947), 123f.

²²⁸⁸ Cf. the introduction of time consideration into economic analysis by Von Böhm-Bawerk. Robert B. Ekelund, Jr. *A History of Economic Theory and Method*, 3rd. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990): 345.

Kamphuis' argument is not much different from H. de Jong's regarding the distinction between baptism and Communion. Kamphuis does point to the multiple professions of faith²²⁸⁹ in Reformed practice, but this does not alter the sense of only two stages in the life of a covenant child²²⁹⁰. Kamphuis²²⁹¹ also emphasizes that the Old Testament feasts do not have one systematic or dogmatic origin, but a redemptive historical one.²²⁹² This means that feasts and sacrificial rituals may, in fact, overlap in meaning. Kamphuis concludes that, only on this basis, can lowering the age of admission, other forms of involvement of children in the Lord's Supper and participation of mentally handicapped be discussed. Twenty five years after Kamphuis' concluding words, participation of mentally handicapped is the incentive for a new round of debate.

5.4.5. A Reformed liberated book in the eighties

In the meantime, in 1986, Reformed liberated Pastor Aryjan Hendriks publishes his book on children at the Lord's Supper²²⁹³. Approximately half the book is dedicated to a historical overview²²⁹⁴. The focus of this overview is more on the history of the profession of faith and on catechizing than on paedocommunion²²⁹⁵. References to crucial paedocommunion documents are remarkably indirect²²⁹⁶. Hendriks does acknowledge that baptism opened the gate to participation for children and sucklings in the Eucharist, and that infant

Kamphuis' attention for history is typical of both the RCL and the DRC. See for example the analysis by H. De Jong and J. Kamphuis in Roel Kuiper and Roel Sikkema, "Discussie-Interview H. de Jong en J. Kamphuis," in *Vuur en Vlam: Kinderen van de vrijmaking; Deel 3*, ed. R. Kuiper and W. Bouwman (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn Motief, 2004), 343.

²²⁸⁹ Kamphuis mentions profession of faith before the admission to the Lord's Supper, at Baptism, at the installation of office bearers, and as part of the wedding ceremony.

²²⁹⁰ Kamphuis further recognizes a need for profession of faith in the catechetical atmosphere of Passover (Cf. Exodus 12: 26-27), the need for ceremonial cleanliness for Passover (Cf. Number 9: 6-12) and in the later requirement of pilgrimage to Jerusalem at Passover (Cf. Deuteronomy 16:16).

²²⁹¹ In a book review of Coppes' *Daddy; May I take Communion? Paedocommunion vs. the Bible* in "Daddy, May I Take Communion?" *Lux Mundi* 14, no. 3 (September, 1995): 9-11.

²²⁹² This difference between Coppes and Kamphuis, a difference in emphasis on systematic theology or Biblical theology, may reflect one of the differences between continental (Neo-Calvinist) Reformed theology and Anglo-Saxon (Puritan) Reformed theology.

²²⁹³ A.N. Hendriks, *Kinderen aan de tafel van Christus? 2nd* ed. (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1990)

²²⁹⁴ 60 of 121 pages text.

²²⁹⁵ Interestingly enough Hendriks does quote Dankbaar, who challenges Calvin's assumption that children in the ancient Church were examined – after being properly catechized – and then professed their faith before the bishop. Hendriks (1990), 5, fn. 105; W.F. Dankbaar, *De Sacramentsleer van Calvijn* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1941), 217; Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. IV, 19:4, 13.

²²⁹⁶ E.g. Cyprian's *De Lapsis* is mentioned with in the footnotes a reference to M.H. Bolkestein, "Confessio en admissio," *Kerk & Theologie* 15 (1964): 34-35. The only extra information Bolkestein provides is the number of the chapters in *De Lapsis*. Hendriks (1990), 24, fn.25.

and children's Communion was practiced until the Fourth Lateran Council²²⁹⁷. A shorter chapter on Scripture focuses on the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11, and shortly defends how the apostolic church required profession of faith²²⁹⁸, self evidently baptized its children²²⁹⁹, and catechized children in families, but probably also in church²³⁰⁰. The Communion of infants and very young children in the apostolic church must be considered impossible²³⁰¹. Then, in a short chapter Hendriks discusses the five major arguments of paedocommunion advocates. 1) Participation of children in Passover is no argument for their participation in the Supper in light of the novelty of the Supper²³⁰². 2) Baptism does grant the right to participate in the Supper, but baptism also obligates to do so in faithful response to God's call, in faithful acceptance of His gifts, actively believing²³⁰³. 3) Children can believe, but their faith only opens the Table to them if they are able to fulfil the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11²³⁰⁴. 4) The Lord's Supper is a means to educate children, but Hendriks suggests that witnessing the Supper suffices to learn²³⁰⁵. 5) Arguing in favour of paedocommunion by emphasizing the family character of the Supper fails to do justice to the difference with the Passover and the New Testament requirements of 1 Corinthians 11. In one of his final remarks Hendriks mentions developmental psychology in support of the contemporary practice of professing faith round age eighteen²³⁰⁶.

5.4.6. Dutch Reformed introduce paedocommunion without discussion

I wrote that twenty five years after Kamphuis' concluding words, participation of mentally handicapped is the incentive for a new round of debate. But before going there, it's important to note that the national discussion within the Dutch Reformed Churches has almost ceased.²³⁰⁷ At the same time, it is in

²²⁹⁷ Hendriks (1990), 24f.

²²⁹⁸ Hendriks (1990), 88f.

²²⁹⁹ Hendriks (1990), 94.

²³⁰⁰ Hendriks (1990), 94f.

²³⁰¹ Hendriks (1990), 95f.

²³⁰² Hendriks (1990), 101. Regarding children's participation in the Passover Hendriks also emphasizes texts such as Deut. 16.

²³⁰³ Hendriks (1990), 104-107.

²³⁰⁴ Hendriks (1990), 107f.

²³⁰⁵ Hendriks (1990), 110f.

²³⁰⁶ Hendriks (1990), 121.

²³⁰⁷ A few relevant articles are published in *Opbouw*, of which only one deals with the question directly. J.J. van Es, "Kinderen en avondmaalsonderwijs (1)," *Opbouw* (November 4, 1994), "Kinderen en avondmaalsonderwijs (2)," *Opbouw* (November 18, 1994), "Kinderen en avondmaalsonderwijs (3)," *Opbouw* (December 2, 1994); J. Mudde, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" *Opbouw* (Januari 13, 1995): 4-6, "Recht doen, ook aan het ongedoopte kind," *Opbouw* (January 2, 2009).

this period without national debate that a number of local Dutch Reformed Churches open the table to children.²³⁰⁸

5.4.7. Participation of handicapped incentive for new liberated debate

In December 2006, the denominational committee Depin sends a brochure to all Reformed Churches liberated dealing with the question whether severely mentally handicapped people may participate in the Lord's Supper²³⁰⁹. Robert Roth²³¹⁰ responds with three articles²³¹¹ and gives the incentive for a new round of discussion within the Reformed Churches liberated. Roth questions whether 1 Corinthians 11 sets cognitive criteria for anybody.²³¹²

He interprets proclamation (11:26) as verbal and descriptive, and therefore not as requirement, but as second ground for the accusation that the Corinthians misbehave though they should know better. Roth points to the remarkable fact that the report depends on Bible texts and examples in which

²³⁰⁸ DRC "Tehuisgemeente" Groningen (1996), "Tehuisgemeente: avondmaal ook voor jongeren," *Nederlands Dagblad*, March 12, 1996. DRC Oegstgeest (1997), "Basisschoolkinderen naar het Avondmaal," *Nederlands Dagblad*, December 23, 1997. DRC Utrecht (1999/2000), "Kerk in Utrecht: jonger aan avondmaal," *Nederlands Dagblad*, November 9, 1999. DRC Wageningen (2000), Unpublished letter from Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk Wageningen to Zusterkerken in de Regio Arhem, September 20, 2000. DRC Culemborg (2001), "Kinderen aan avondmaal," *Nederlands Dagblad*, August 9, 2001. DRC Schiedam (2006), M. de Rooij, "Op Locatie: Schiedamse kinderen mogen aan avondmaal," *Opbouw* (April 14, 2006). DRC Maassluis (2009/2010), "Notitie Kind en Avondmaal,"

<http://www.DRCmaassluis.nl/upload/base1Toerusting%20kinderen%20en%20tieners.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2012). DRC Breukelen (2010), Unpublished report "werkgroep 'kind en avondmaal,'" November 3, 2010, Nijmegen (2011), Unpublished memorandum "kinderen aan het avondmaal," September 13, 2011.

²³⁰⁹ RCL, Acta van de Generale Synode Amersfoort-Centrum 2005 van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland: Bijlage VI – III Rapport deputaten Integratie (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, 2005). Robert Roth distils seven arguments in favor of participation of mentally handicapped from this report: 1) Neither the sin to which 1 Corinthians responds, nor the ethical and cognitive criteria apply to mentally handicapped, and 2) neither does Church Order article 60. 3) Proclamation is not prescribed, but described, though the mentally handicapped do proclaim analog to the children of Psalm 8. 4) Likewise, the Lord's Supper communicates the gospel in nonverbal languages that mentally handicapped may better understand. 5) Through Baptism the mentally handicapped are full members of the body. 6) The congregation exercises its responsibility for mentally handicapped when allowing them to participate. 7) The Lord's Supper is a foretaste of wholeness for the broken, especially the mentally handicapped.

²³¹⁰ As pastor of the Reformed Church (RCL) of Breda, Robert R. Roth was part of ecumenical conversations with the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of Rijsbergen and its pastor. An already existing interest in youth and its catechism and the anticipation of ecumenical conversations on Rijsbergen's paedocommunion practice are the beginning of long personal study of children at the Lord's Supper.

²³¹¹ Roth, Robert R. "Onmondigen aan het Heilig Avondmaal? (1)," *De Reformatie* (December 1, 2007): 168-170; "Onmondigen aan het Heilig Avondmaal? (2)," *De Reformatie* (December 15, 2007): 184-185; "Onmondigen aan het Heilig Avondmaal? (3)," *De Reformatie* (December 17, 2007): 202-205.

²³¹² Roth points to Paul's ironic use of the word wise or sensible (1 Cor. 10:15) to the inclusion of children in Old Testament rituals of remembrance, and to the phenomenon of learning by doing. In support of learning by doing at the Lord's Supper he cites RCL New Testament scholar J. van Bruggen's commentary on Mark 14:22: "While their hearts still reject it, Jesus already teaches their mouths eating of it to satiety," J. van Bruggen, *Marcus: Het evangelie volgens Petrus*, 3^e serie CNT (Kampen: Kok, 1988), 338.

children are central, yet draws opposite conclusions regarding the participation of mentally handicapped and the participation of children. He also challenges the suggestion that mentally handicapped should be allowed at the Lord's Supper only at an age where they normally would have been able to profess their faith.²³¹³

A year later Roth continues to challenge his denomination's theology and practice. In a short, meditative article on Matthew 16:21-22, he suggests that grace precedes and teaches faith and therefore allows disciples time to learn even at the Lord's Supper.²³¹⁴ In a subsequent meditative article on 1 Corinthians 10: 16-17, he points to an inconsistency. In our baptism practice, grace precedes faith, and therefore children are considered to be one with Christ and His church; yet in our Lord's Supper practice, they are not allowed to eat and drink from the bread and wine that signify that unity.²³¹⁵

5.4.8. Dutch Reformed periodicals respond to CRCNA

Meanwhile, some attention is given to paedocommunion in the DRC as *Opbouw* reports on the developments in the CRCNA.²³¹⁶ New in the *Opbouw* articles is the explicit inclusion of baptized babies²³¹⁷ in a plea for paedocommunion, positive reference to the uninterrupted historical paedocommunion practice of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and exposure to the practice of the church of Rijnsbergen.²³¹⁸ The position of Calvin is central in Harry Bruins' response and a reply by myself. In Bruins' vision sacraments are not only sign and seal of God's promise but also of our promise of faithfulness in response, and therefore, require understanding. In reply to Bruins, Calvin's awareness of the pedagogical nature of the Lord's Supper is mentioned, as well as his argument that participating in the signified reality supports participating in the sign. In my reply to Bruins I further warn not to apply

²³¹³ And suggests that based on their own arguments DEPIN should have proposed allowing mentally handicapped children as well.

²³¹⁴ Robert R. Roth, "Avondmaal: genade voorop," *De Reformatie* (October 4, 2008): 4.

²³¹⁵ Robert R. Roth, "Avondmaal: eten en drinken is gemeenschap met Christus," *De Reformatie* (October 25, 2008): 57.

²³¹⁶ The first article by myself: Peter G. Sinia, "Nieuwe wegen in het gesprek rond kinderen aan het avondmaal," *Opbouw* (September 17, 2010): 12-14. Harry Bruins, biologist and theologian, responds with a short article "Avondmaal vraagt om belijdenis," *Opbouw* (November 26, 2010): 22-23. In the same issue I was allowed to respond: Peter G. Sinia, "Kindercommunie en Calvijn," *Opbouw* (November 26, 2010): 23.

²³¹⁷ And even covenant children in their mother's womb.

²³¹⁸ Other arguments in favor mentioned are: 1 Corinthians 11 as argument in favor instead of obstacle for paedocommunion, the inclusion of children in the New Covenant, in the Kingdom and in Old Testament ritual meals such as Passover. Partakers of the signified reality and should take part in the sign. The question should be dealt with in communal terms, rather than individual. Many arguments in favor of infant baptism support infant Communion. And lack of arguments convincing arguments to the contrary.

words addressing adults to children indiscriminately. It is argued that the Bible uses sign and seal in the context of [infant] circumcision. It is argued that celebration of the Lord's Supper equals the profession of faith, something Bruins stipulates as a requirement.

5.4.9. Open discussion among Reformed liberated

In 2011, in the Reformed Church liberated, Roth's plea results in a true open discussion on children at the Lord's Supper – the first in the existence of the magazine *De Reformatie*, and the first of this nature within this denomination since the church split in the sixties. In his first contribution,²³¹⁹ Roth argues from the ambiguous liturgical position of children as reflected in Reformed baptism and Communion liturgical practice. Roth underlines previously used arguments about the similarity of the two sacraments by emphasizing how both deal with Christ's body and Christ's blood. He considers how both sacraments reflect the unilateral and bilateral nature of the covenant, and tries to overcome the dilemma between the unilateral and bilateral by highlighting Christ's role as mediator. Just like Visee, Roth emphasizes how remembrance was already part of the Passover in which children participated.²³²⁰ Church history as an argument in favor for paedocommunion is mentioned in a footnote.²³²¹ Most remarkable in Bas Luiten's response to Roth²³²² might be the irenic tone and a surprising plea to consider lowering the age of admission to thirteen or fourteen. With the analogy of children participating in a birthday party without drinking wine, Luiten speaks of different ways of being part of the celebrating community. The tension of the unilateral and bilateral nature of God's covenant, as reflected in the different celebration of the sacraments, is a God given tension that we should not resolve. The content of what was remembered with Passover and with the Lord's Supper is so different that it justifies faith as (new) prerequisite.

²³¹⁹ Robert R. Roth, "Neem, eet en gedenk: De liturgische positie van de kinderen van de kerk," *De Reformatie* (April 8, 2011): 296-299.

²³²⁰ Roth refers to a Dutch dissertation on this aspect of the Lord's Supper: G.N. Lammens, *Tot zijn gedachtenis: Het commemoratieve aspect van de avondmaalsviering*. (Kampen: Kok, 1968). Roth also refers to two North American sources: Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord's Table Should be Restored to Covenant Children*. 2nd ed. (Grande Prairie: Pactum Reformanda, 2003) and David M. Rylaarsdam, "Reconnecting Baptism and the Lord's Supper: Sacraments of the Covenant Community," an unpublished document from 2004-2005 now put online for the readers of *De Reformatie* http://www.dereformatie.nl/content/files/Files/Bijlagen/86/86-14_Robert_Roth.pdf (accessed July 5 2011).

²³²¹ Roth refers to Anna W. Zegwaard's dissertation, *Als kinderen meevieren: Een onderzoek naar de discussie over kindercommunie binnen de kerken*. (Gorinchem: Narratio, 2006).

²³²² Bas Luiten, "Gelovig proeven," *De Reformatie* (April 8, 2011): 300-302.

5.4.9.1. *Response by blog*

In response, Pastor Van der Schee stresses in his blog²³²³ that the acting agent in the Lord's Supper is not the individual believer, but the community as body of Christ. The Reformation, reacting to Roman Catholic ecclesiology and taking shape in the age of the discovery of the individual and the subject, has failed to understand this. God may be the subject of the remembrance. Against the analogy of a child as dating Christ and considering whether to marry Him, Van der Schee suggests the analogy of Christian children as married to Christ with the option to remain faithful or to get divorced. Van der Schee also argues that sacraments are "irreversibly established rites"²³²⁴ and are part of the "enduring structure" of liturgy,²³²⁵ and that, therefore, the Lord's Supper should be celebrated weekly, which would almost automatically expose all extra biblical traditions.

5.4.9.2. *First female contribution*

The article by church musician and liturgist Anje de Heer provides the first female contribution to the discussion in this context.²³²⁶ It is also the first article in this context that explicitly deals with church history prior to the Reformation and the councils of the thirteenth century. Without overtly taking a position, De Heer shows the development from infant Communion and baptism as the only requisite to the thirteenth century requirements of confession and confirmation, and the growing Reformed emphasis on sanctification and self examination. She raises the question whether ability matters in a liturgical reality that transcends our abilities anyhow, and whether liturgical reality by its eschatological nature might allow taking into account what is not yet, but certainly will be.

²³²³ Wim van der Schee, "Dit is mijn lichaam," Theoblog, entry posted May 13, 2011, <http://www.wimvanderschee.nl/?p=1787> (accessed august 13, 2012).

²³²⁴ Van der Schee derives the term "irreversibly established rites" from Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology: Volume I; The Triune God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 34f. There Jenson gives the following definition: *Irreversibly established rites are rules of the church's discourse in three ways. First, they must themselves be done as instituted. Second, no other rite can be proper that does not bond dramatically with them into one encompassing, continuing communal action. Third, no teaching can be true whose consequences would pervert the practice or darken the understanding of irreversibly instituted liturgy.*

²³²⁵ Van der Schee derives the term "enduring structure" from Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Reformed Liturgy," in *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Donald K. McKim, 2nd ed. (Eugene, Wipf & Stock 1998) 273-304.

²³²⁶ Anje de Heer, "Kinderen en avondmaal: Een historische en liturgische invalshoek," *De Reformatie* (September 9, 2011): 512-513.

5.4.9.3. *Initiators respond*

In May 2012, Roth and Luiten respond in two articles.²³²⁷ Roth references the Heidelberg Catechism by which we teach our children that they share in all Christ's treasures and gifts,²³²⁸ that both sacraments were instituted to make us understand God's promise more clearly and to seal that promise. Roth mentions pastoral motives to welcome children. Luiten states he has experienced how current the issue is by the response to his article. He also states that if 1 Corinthians 11 would be the only ground, then children should be allowed to participate. Church history seems to support paedocommunion, but history also reflects debatable theology. This needs further research, and church history should not be decisive in this discussion. Luiten considers both the unilateral or bilateral nature of sacraments and the question, to what extent parents can represent children, to be core issues in the discussion.²³²⁹

5.4.10. *A continuing discussion*

Of the three denominational discussions that I research, the discussion in the Reformed Churches liberated and the Dutch Reformed Churches is the most active. It is impossible and maybe not necessary to include an analysis of the most recent articles in this dissertation, but I will shortly mention them. In June 2016 Pastor Ulbe van der Meer²³³⁰ writes an article in the national Christian newspaper *Nederlands Dagblad* in favour of paedocommunion²³³¹. January 1, 2015 the periodical *De Reformatie* and *Opbouw* merge into a new periodical by the name *Onderweg*. December 10, 2016, *Onderweg* dedicates a whole issue to the subject of children at the Lord's Supper²³³². Sermons of Ulbe van der Meer are among the reasons that the issue is discussed in a number of Reformed Churches liberated. The national Christian newspaper

²³²⁷ Bas Luiten, "Kinderen en avondmaal: Verschil in sacramenten: Reacties op reacties – 1," *De Reformatie* (May 18, 2012): 388-389. Robert R. Roth, "Kinderen en avondmaal: Samen één lichaam: Reacties op reacties – 2," *De Reformatie* (May 18, 2012): 390-391.

²³²⁸ Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21.

²³²⁹ According to Luiten parents can say yes to God's promises on behalf of their child with Baptism, but they cannot make the choice of faith on behalf of their child, such as needed at the Lord's Supper celebration.

²³³⁰ Van der Meer is pastor of the Reformed Church liberated of Tiel at that moment, but has already accepted the call to the church of Ede South.

²³³¹ Ulbe van der Meer, "Kinderen hebben avondmaal nodig," *Nederlands Dagblad*, June 18, 2016.

²³³² This issue contains the following articles: Peter Hommes, "Maaltijd van het verbond," *Onderweg* (December 10, 2016): 3; Peter Sinia, "Kinderen aan de tafel van de Heer," 8-11; Embert Messelink, "Robert Roth en Kees de Groot in Discussie: 'Kan een kind het avondmaal wel echt beleven?'," 12-15; Jordi Kooiman, "Het avondmaal met kinderen: hoe doe je dat?" 16-18; Luite-Harm Kooij, "Avondmaal in de vroege kerk: Natuurlijk vierden kinderen mee," 20-21.

Nederlands Dagblad reports these developments²³³³, and a few readers respond²³³⁴.

5.5. Denominational Discussion National Assembly DRC

5.5.1. No overtures

The issue of paedocommunion has been discussed within the Reformed Churches liberated and the Dutch Reformed Churches at the classical and regional levels²³³⁵. Though I have not searched classical and regional minutes, I know that the admission of children to the Lord's Supper in Rijsbergen has been discussed at the Reformed liberated Classis of the South in the sixties²³³⁶. After the split within the Reformed Churches liberated gave birth to the Dutch Reformed Churches, there are indications that some Dutch Reformed regional meetings engaged discussion on the issue²³³⁷. But neither the Reformed liberated synods nor the Dutch Reformed national assemblies were ever overtured regarding children at the Lord's Supper.

5.5.2. Questions raised in ecumenical partners

The issue does play a role in the interdenominational relations of the Dutch Reformed Churches and is repeatedly mentioned in that context in the reports of the denominational ecumenical committee CCS²³³⁸. Foreign denominations in ecclesiastical relationship with the Dutch Reformed Churches, and those considering such relationships, will often inquire about the practice²³³⁹. Likewise, they often question it²³⁴⁰. In later years reports indicate that some

²³³³ Eline Kuijper, "'Zoals het brood plakt, zo echt is Gods liefde,'" *Nederlands Dagblad*, April 14, 2017.

²³³⁴ Bas Luiten, "Ingezonden: Kind en avondmaal," *Nederlands Dagblad*, April 15, 2017; Jan Bosman, "Ingezonden: Kinderen," *Nederlands Dagblad*, April 20, 2017.

²³³⁵ The RCL uses the term *classis*. After the split, the DRC uses the term *regional meeting*.

²³³⁶ I have an undated testimony in concept by Jan van Katwijk (concept getuigenis), which was probably read at a 1966 classis meeting.

²³³⁷ See for example "Discussie kindercommunie onder buitenverbanders: Nota-Oegstgeest onderwerp van gesprek," *Reformatisch Dagblad*, June 17, 1978, 2. And the report of CCS to the National Assembly of 2004, "Regionale bezinning," code LV2004.22.2.4. Page 9 of 35.

²³³⁸ The denominational ecumenical committee is called *Commissie Contact en Samenspreking (CCS)*.

²³³⁹ For example the Reformed Churches of Australia in 1988, *Akta van de Landelijke Vergadering van de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken te Dronten*, 1988, 71.

²³⁴⁰ For example the Reformed Church of South Africa (GKSA), *Akta DRC* (1988), 74. *Akta van de Landelijke Vergadering van de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken te Ede*, 1991, 61-67; and the Reformed Churches of New Zealand *Akta van de Landelijke Vergadering van de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken te Doorn*, 1998, 103.

change positions within their own denominations²³⁴¹. In light of the questions raised by foreign denominations about the practice of paedocommunion in some local churches, it is remarkable that the national assembly is hesitant when the military chaplaincy²³⁴² proposes to enter into a relationship with the church of Zeven/Seedorf in Germany. One of the concerns of the national assembly is that this church may have children at the Lord's Supper²³⁴³.

In attempts to establish ecumenical relationships with the Dutch denomination of Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and later to restore unity with the Reformed Churches liberated, the issue of children at the Lord's Supper has proven to be a stumbling block²³⁴⁴. The concerns of the Reformed Churches liberated are even considered a stumbling block in maintaining ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Churches of South Africa, which have no paedocommunion praxis, but which are in ecclesiastical relationship with the Dutch Reformed Churches²³⁴⁵.

5.5.3. *No arguments for or against*

Whenever paedocommunion is mentioned in the acts of the national assembly, no arguments are mentioned either for or against it; instead the existence of paedocommunion praxis serves as one of the grounds for concerns regarding the faithfulness of the Dutch Reformed to the confessional standards and the Reformed nature of its church order, especially when it comes to mutual accountability within the denomination²³⁴⁶.

²³⁴¹ For example the Christian Reformed Churches in North America, *Akta DRC* (1998), 104; and the Reformed Churches of Australia, *Akta van de Landelijke Vergadering van de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken te Amersfoort*, 2001, 113f.

²³⁴² *Contact Orgaan Gereformeerde Militairen en Alleenstaanden* (COGMA) and *the Commissie geestelijke verzorging van militairen*.

²³⁴³ *Akta DRC* (1991), 7.

²³⁴⁴ Regarding the Christian Reformed Churches (CGK) see for example: *Akta van de Landelijke Vergadering van de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken te Apeldoorn*, 1994 1995, 178; and regarding the Reformed Churches (RCL) see for example: *Akta DRC* (1998), 119.

²³⁴⁵ *Akta DRC* (1988), 76f.

²³⁴⁶ The Dutch Reformed are accused of congregationalism (independentisme), see for example: *Akta van de Landelijke Vergadering van de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken te Doorn*, 1998, 103.

5.6. Denominational Discussion RCN/PKN in Periodicals and Books

5.6.1. Questions as early as 1898, discussion since nineteen sixties

Within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands I found the question of children at the Lord's Supper raised as early as 1898²³⁴⁷. In 1949 J.L. Koole suggests that paedocommunion praxis in the apostolic church is not completely unthinkable²³⁴⁸. But the denominational discussion within the RCN only starts in response to similar discussions within in the Netherlands Reformed Church²³⁴⁹. In late 1961, the discussion within the NRC begins with suggestions to include children by the pastors Kaastra, Mooi, Post, and Spilt at synod²³⁵⁰ and a similar plea by Professor Jonker around the same time²³⁵¹.

5.6.2. Children and lay-members ask, theologians discuss

Children are among the first to raise the question and, as the examples from similar Dutch Reformed denominations suggest, other lay members²³⁵². When theologians of the Netherlands Reformed Church write their first articles²³⁵³ in the early sixties, theologians²³⁵⁴ of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands enter into the discussion²³⁵⁵. Many of them are editors of the periodicals and faculty staff²³⁵⁶. Children do not participate in this discussion²³⁵⁷. Lay members when mentioned remain anonymous. I will follow the discussion by listening

²³⁴⁷ Hoogenbirk, "Voor kinderen," *De Heraut* (December 11, 1898): 4.

²³⁴⁸ "We zullen de gedachte van een kindercommunie [in de apostolische kerk PGS] niet geheel van ons kunnen afzetten," J.L. Koole, *Liturgie en ambt in de apostolische kerk* (Kampen: Kok, 1949), 46.

²³⁴⁹ And to a lesser extent by discussion and changes within the Reformed Churches liberated and the Lutheran Church.

²³⁵⁰ Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 320-330. "Oecumenische viering mogelijk? Stemmen op synode: ook kinderen aan Avondmaal," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, November 1, 1961.

²³⁵¹ H. Jonker, *Liturgische Oriëntatie: Gesprekken over de eredienst* (Wageningen: Zomer & Keuning, N.d.), 133.

²³⁵² "Vragenbus," *De Saambinder* (August 27, 1953): 3-4. Miskotte (1982), 165f.

²³⁵³ For example D.J. Karres, "Open- en oecumenisch Avondmaal," *Woord en Dienst*, July 7, 1962; M.H. Bolkestein (1964); J. Van der Werf, "Overwegingen ten aanzien van de kindercommunie," *Kerk & Theologie* 16 (1965).

²³⁵⁴ All theologians, with the possible exception of J.A. Voogt in 1982.

²³⁵⁵ In my search for articles in periodicals, Anna Zegwaard's dissertation, *Als kinderen meevieren*, and her personal advice have been a great resource. Anna W. Zegwaard, *Als kinderen meevieren: Een onderzoek naar de discussie over kindercommunie binnen de kerken* (Gorinchem: Narratio, 2006).

²³⁵⁶ Indication of the topicality of the discussion is that G.P. Hartvelt opens his chapter on question and answer 81 and 82 with a discussion of paedocommunion in his 1966 commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism G.P. Hartvelt, *Tastbaar evangelie: de sacramenten; Nieuwe Commentaar Heidelbergse Catechismus Deel III, Zondag 25-31*. (Aalten: De Graafschap, 1966), 88-104.

²³⁵⁷ Based on publication date, the youngest writer I came across was 28; the average writer was approximately 52.

to the arguments of each theologian in the chronological order of his²³⁵⁸ first contribution.

5.6.3. Youth asks, theologians reject in the sixties

In 1968 the title, *Child molesters in a consumptive church*²³⁵⁹, sets the tone for Van Minnen's²³⁶⁰ article in *Gemeentetoerusting*. In response to proposals at the NRC Synod, he rejects paedocommunion as abuse of children's innocence and denial of their freedom to choose, expressing Barthian sentiment saying, "as if baptism is not already the ultimate limit which one can go to with a child, if that is already allowed."²³⁶¹

In 1969, youth offers a report, *Samen op Weg*²³⁶² to the synods of the Netherlands Reformed Church and Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. The report deals with profession of faith and admission to the Lord's Supper, and includes the results of a survey held among church councils and youth. In response²³⁶³ Van der Woude²³⁶⁴ argues that these issues were already raised and adequately answered within the Reformed tradition²³⁶⁵. 1 Corinthians 11 requires discerning faith and self-examination. The story of the Ethiopian²³⁶⁶ models how such discerning faith can be tested and publicly professed before the sacrament is received²³⁶⁷. Such testing can be ability appropriate because "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded."²³⁶⁸ Two readers²³⁶⁹ respond. One argues that neither be administered. The other argues that both sacraments should be administered to children. Against the latter's argument that children were circumcised and participated in the Passover, Van der Woude follows Calvin's argument. He rejects both the Eastern Orthodox praxis of communing babies as part of their baptism and the Roman Catholic praxis – to commune children at the age of seven – because of the underlying *ex opere operato* theology. Assuming Calvin admitted

²³⁵⁸ All RCN theologians in this discussion as registered by us are male!

²³⁵⁹ J.M. van Minnen, "Kinderlokkers in een konsumptieve kerk," *Gemeentetoerusting* (August 10, 1968).

²³⁶⁰ Dr. Johan M. Van Minnen (1913-1997).

²³⁶¹ 1968 is the year after publication of Barth's, Church Dogmatics IV, 4 in 1967.

²³⁶² Deputaten Kerk en Jeugd and Raad voor het Jeugdwerk, *Samen op Weg* ('s Gravenhage: n.p., 1969).

²³⁶³ C. van der Woude, "Nieuwe en oude vragen in ons kerkelijk leven," *Ouderlingenblad* (December 1969); "Kindercommunie en openbare belijdenis," *Ouderlingenblad* (1970).

²³⁶⁴ C. van der Woude (1896-1983), professor of church history and church polity at the Theological University of Kampen (1961-1966) and co-editor of *Ouderlingenblad*.

²³⁶⁵ Van der Woude refers to Voetius' *Politica Ecclesiastica*, F.L. Rutgers' *Kerkelijke Adviezen*, Van der Woude (1969), Calvin's *Institutes*, and Plomp's study on Calvin and discipline, Van der Woude (1970).

²³⁶⁶ Acts 8.

²³⁶⁷ Van der Woude (1969), 58.

²³⁶⁸ Luke 12:48^b.

²³⁶⁹ Who remain anonymous!

children at the age of fifteen, he allows some leeway regarding the specific age and conditions. Yet Van der Woude prefers a more solid profession of faith after the *Sturm-und-Drang* stage of life.

5.6.4. Hartvelt and the change of tone in the seventies

We can conclude that the few Reformed contributions to the discussion in the sixties rejected the idea of communing children. In the seventies, this changes dramatically²³⁷⁰. Hartvelt²³⁷¹, a major contributor to the discussion within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands²³⁷², reflects this change. He rejects the idea in 1966, but is more and more open to the idea in the seventies²³⁷³. Later, in retrospect, Hartvelt concludes that ecclesiology – vision on the nature of the church – was most decisive in the introduction of paedocommunion²³⁷⁴. His articles emphasize sacramental vision and church history. His historical argument against exclusion of children states: *it was not this way from the beginning*²³⁷⁵. Though it is self-evident to him that the earliest Christian church did not administer the sacraments to infants, the practice of paedocommunion followed soon after the early church started to baptize its infants²³⁷⁶. The theology that receiving the sacraments is necessary for salvation²³⁷⁷, led to the practice of communing the children²³⁷⁸, and even babies. In later centuries the church of the West could no longer accept Communion of infants²³⁷⁹. Although the age of admission increased, and infants were excluded²³⁸⁰, relatively young children still participated. The Reformation did not fully break with that practice²³⁸¹. Luther admitted

²³⁷⁰ Gerben Heitink, *Een kerk met karakter: Tijd voor heroriëntatie*, 2nd ed. (Kampen: Kok, 2008), 247.

²³⁷¹ Gerrit Pieter Hartvelt (1921), professor of Systematic Theology at the Theological University in Kampen (RCN) (1966-1986), member of the synodical study committee on paedocommunion.

²³⁷² I found the following seven contributions: G.P. Hartvelt, *Tastbaar evangelie: de sacramenten; Nieuwe Commentaar Heidelbergse Catechismus Deel III, Zondag 25-31* (Aalten: De Graafschap, 1966); "Kindercommunie," *Centraal Weekblad* (Januari 30, 1971); "Kindercommunie," *Centraal Weekblad* (May 1, 1971); "Het avondmaal en de kindercommunie," *Centraal Weekblad* (May 15, 1971); "Kindercommunie?" *Praktische Theologie* (1974); "Gezinscommunie," *Centraal Weekblad* (May 7, 1977); "Communie binnen het gezin," *Centraal Weekblad* (May 14, 1977).

²³⁷³ W. Nijenhuis, "Kindercommunie en confirmatie in de Reformatie, bepaaldelijk in het Calvinisme," *Kerk & Theologie* (1974): 298. Aalbers (1971), 43, Hartvelt (January, 1971), 2.

²³⁷⁴ Hartvelt in a personal telephone conversation with the author in 2011.

²³⁷⁵ Cf. Jesus' words in Matthew 19:8. See Hartvelt (January, 1971), 1; Hartvelt (1974), 119.

²³⁷⁶ Hartvelt (January, 1971), 1.

²³⁷⁷ Based on texts such as John 6:53.

²³⁷⁸ Hartvelt (January, 1971), 1; Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1. It is interesting to note that Hartvelt, who seems to suggest that theology preceded paedocommunion practice in the early church, suggests that the reintroduction of the paedocommunion fails a prior theological reflection and is therefore in need of *theologia in loco*, Hartvelt (1974), 114.

²³⁷⁹ Hartvelt considers it clear that nobody would want to return to this practice. Hartvelt (1966), 94.

²³⁸⁰ By the 1255 Council of Bordeaux. Hartvelt (1966), 89.

²³⁸¹ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1.

children at age seven to ten, Calvin at age ten, and ‘Heidelberg’ at age fourteen or fifteen²³⁸². Interestingly, Hartvelt easily imagines why some would say that the fourteen and fifteen year old youth of Calvin’s days equal the twenty or twenty two year old youth of our days²³⁸³. The confessions reassure us that the children of believers whom God calls to himself in infancy participate in the Wedding Supper of the Lamb²³⁸⁴. Those same confessions may have contributed to the rise of the age of admission with their requirement of understanding misery, redemption and gratitude²³⁸⁵. In more recent history, Hartvelt registers a shift from a solemn to a festive celebration of the Lord’s Supper with a new emphasis on gratitude or thanksgiving²³⁸⁶. In 1977, he shows how the concept of childhood and the position of children in society have changed in the last two hundred years²³⁸⁷, but also notes that another shift has occurred in the last twenty years²³⁸⁸. This period is marked by a new appreciation of ourselves – in which the child shares –, a loss of parental authority to provide answers²³⁸⁹, but a new relation with parents which allows for a joint search for answers. Hartvelt also emphasizes the importance of our sacramental vision²³⁹⁰. Generally, the Reformed tradition lacks three things concerning the Lord’s Supper: a positive definition, a central place for it, and sensitivity to its symbols²³⁹¹. Where it is not absent, it has been distorted since the context of the agape meal was lost, when the meal became a table, and the table became the altar²³⁹². With the dramatic individualization in the West, two more aspects of the Lord’s Supper were lost: the awareness that the Supper is both Communion with God and with the congregation, and that the body is

²³⁸² Hartvelt (January, 1971), 1; (May 7, 1977), 2.

²³⁸³ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1

²³⁸⁴ As Hartvelt rephrases Canons of Dort I, art. 17. Hartvelt (January, 1971), 1.

²³⁸⁵ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1.

²³⁸⁶ Discussing the case of NRC of Purmerend, Hartvelt (1974), 113. See also Hartvelt (May 7, 1977), 2. Theologically this is a shift in emphasis from misery to gratitude, but one wonders whether this is not also symptom of a broader cultural change in the Netherlands from high context to low context. Compare Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Book, 1981).

²³⁸⁷ Hartvelt echoes some of the arguments of Van den Berg and Ariès, such as the lower average age, the apparent early ripeness of famous theologians and the children as miniature adults in art in the past. He notices the birth of a children’s world, and of the century of the child, with sickness, sexuality and death as taboo for children, Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1; (May 15, 1977), 8.

²³⁸⁸ Hartvelt (May 7, 1977), 2; (May 14, 1977), 8. Note how this period of twenty years would coincide with the first reintroduction of children at the Lord’s Supper in protestant churches in the Netherlands and other Western countries. Note how a similar change is also registered by Neil Postman in his 1982 *The Disappearance of Childhood*, who suggest 1950 and the introduction of the television as the beginning of a new era, Postman (1994), 67f.

²³⁸⁹ Postman speaks of the collapse of the information hierarchy, Postman (1994), 77.

²³⁹⁰ See especially Hartvelt (May 1, 1971) (May 15, 1971) and (1974).

²³⁹¹ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1; (May 15, 1971), 3; (1974), 119f.

²³⁹² Hartvelt (1974), 115f..

both *corpus crucifixum* as well as *corpus mysticum*²³⁹³. In 1966, Hartvelt suggests that the required recognition of our mutual connectedness excludes infants²³⁹⁴. In 1974, he suggests that in order to restore Communion the Reformed should look into the participation of children²³⁹⁵. Hartvelt observes a growing appreciation of the community of family and congregation as it is expressed in the new practice of the whole family gathering on the platform for baptisms²³⁹⁶. Reflection on baptism as incorporation in the body of Christ²³⁹⁷ changes Hartvelt into a proponent of paedocommunion²³⁹⁸. Yet he doesn't emphasize this argument, possibly because he fears the consequence of Communion of babies, and the risk of such an argument backfiring against infant baptism²³⁹⁹.

In 1966, Hartvelt argues that participation requires profession of Jesus Christ as Lord²⁴⁰⁰. Celebration of the Lord's Supper is also an act of profession²⁴⁰¹ or proclamation²⁴⁰², as Zwingli emphasized²⁴⁰³. Regarding the preparation for such profession and participation, Hartvelt raises the question whether catechism classes should teach or convert, and answers that teaching alone would be too minimal²⁴⁰⁴. Historically, catechism teaching was followed by a more casual introduction to the Lord's Supper where protestant churches were state churches. A more formal public profession of faith was introduced in Roman Catholic areas where membership of protestant churches was a conscious choice²⁴⁰⁵. Parents have prime responsibility in teaching children

²³⁹³ 1 Corinthians 10: 16-17. Hartvelt (1974), 115f. Communion with each other is grounded in our communion with God. But Hartvelt also notices that God communicates His salvation through the other, Hartvelt (May 15, 1971), 3.

²³⁹⁴ *Zuigelingen*, Hartvelt (1966), 103.

²³⁹⁵ In a similar way the Roman Catholic Church should look into greater participation of the congregation, Hartvelt (1974), 117.

²³⁹⁶ Hartvelt (January, 1971), 2.

²³⁹⁷ Aalbers (1971), 43.

²³⁹⁸ Hartvelt (January, 1971), 2. Aalbers (1971), 43.

²³⁹⁹ E.g. Hartvelt (1974), 113.

²⁴⁰⁰ Hartvelt (1966), 103. A requirement which excludes at least the smallest children. Christ commits Himself to us, but only reaches those who respond in faith, Hartvelt (May 15, 1971), 3.

²⁴⁰¹ Hartvelt (1966), 65.

²⁴⁰² 1 Corinthians 11:26.

²⁴⁰³ Hartvelt (May 15, 1971), 3.

²⁴⁰⁴ Hartvelt (1966), 96. In 1971 Hartvelt suggests that Profession of faith preferably takes place after the possible crisis in faith of the adolescent. Hartvelt (January, 1971), 2.

²⁴⁰⁵ Hartvelt (1966), 96. It is interesting to compare this to the observation of Holeton that "Whenever the church has come to see itself as a small, gathered, Eucharistic community, the Communion of all the baptized quickly becomes a real question. This can be seen in the Eucharistic practice of both the Nonjurors and the Catholic Apostolic Church. Similarly, when the church sees itself as established, encompassing the whole of society, there is little question of communicating all the baptized," David R. Holeton, "Communion of All the Baptized and Anglican Tradition," in *Children at the Table: A Collection of Essays on Children and the Eucharist*, ed. Ruth A. Meyers (New York: Church hymnal Corporation, 1995), 35.

about the Lord's Supper, preparing them for participation in - congregational life²⁴⁰⁶.

Hartvelt recognizes the stress on cleanliness in preparation for the Lord's Supper²⁴⁰⁷, yet salvation as purification of sinners should prevent the exclusion of the imperfect²⁴⁰⁸. Hartvelt compares sacrament and sermon. Both require faith and lead to faith, and both condemn us in the absence of a faithful response²⁴⁰⁹.

5.6.5. Aalbers and the first book within the denomination

In his 1971 book, Aalbers²⁴¹⁰ deals with the question of children at the Supper²⁴¹¹. This question will always be asked by children²⁴¹² and is currently raised by youth from both Netherlands Reformed and Reformed churches (RCN)²⁴¹³. It is put on the agenda, quite literally, of 1962 Netherlands Reformed Synod²⁴¹⁴ as a result of ecumenical contacts with the Roman Catholic²⁴¹⁵, Lutheran²⁴¹⁶, and East-German churches²⁴¹⁷. The praxis of pioneer churches, such as Rijsbergen, also raises the question²⁴¹⁸. In Aalbers' historical overview, he suggests infant Communion came into existence with the rise of infant baptism²⁴¹⁹. He also suggests a growing resistance against communing babies explains the introduction of the term "years of discretion" in 1215, the definition of this age as approximately seven²⁴²⁰, and the prohibition of

²⁴⁰⁶ Hartvelt (1974), 119. Alluding to Psalm 122 in the Psalter Hymnal, he writes that only those parents who believe can say to others "come, join us, and do like we do," Hartvelt (May 14, 1977), 8.

²⁴⁰⁷ A practical example of this emphasis is the story that the Reformed would pay their grocery in cash the week before Lord's Supper celebration, Hartvelt (May 15, 1975), 3.

²⁴⁰⁸ Hartvelt (1974), 118).

²⁴⁰⁹ Hartvelt (May 14, 1977), 3

²⁴¹⁰ B.J. Aalbers (1929), at that time pastor of the RCN/NRC of Geldrop. In 1970 the local church of Geldrop was the first in which the RCN and NRC federated.

²⁴¹¹ B.J. Aalbers, *Kinderen aan het avondmaal?*, Gemeentetoerusting (Kampen: Kok, 1971).

²⁴¹² Aalbers (1971), 9f. Cf. Ex. 12:26.

²⁴¹³ Aalbers mentions the 1966 NRC report *Kerk 66-2000*, the 1969 RCN report *Daadwerkelijke mondigheid*, and the 1969 joint RCN NRC report *Samen op Weg*. "Kerk 66-2000" in *Handelingen van de vergadering van de generale synode der Nederlandse hervormde Kerk op 20, 21, en 22 november 1967*, 181-190; Jan Hakkoer et.al., *Daadwerkelijke Mondigheid* (Rotterdam: Werkgroep Denken en Doen, 1969); Deputaten Kerk en Jeugd and Raad voor het Jeugdwerk, *Samen op Weg* ('s Gravenhage: n.p., 1969).

²⁴¹⁴ With the report *Open en Oecumenisch Avondmaal*.

²⁴¹⁵ E.g. youth of the RCN of Utrecht-Oost sends a letter to Synod. Aalbers (1971), 12.

²⁴¹⁶ Aalbers refers to C.Pel, *Avondmaalsgast en Kerklid: Over kindercommunie en confirmatie* (Weesp: Synodale Commissie van de Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 1968).

²⁴¹⁷ Aalbers suggests in competition with *Jugendweihe* of the Communist Party, Aalbers (1971), 13.

²⁴¹⁸ Aalbers (1971), 16.

²⁴¹⁹ Aalbers (1971), 18.

²⁴²⁰ By Pope Pius X. Compare Canon 88 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law. Charles Augustine, *A Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law, Volume II*, 3rd ed. (St. Louis: B. Herder: 1919), 10f.

communing infants²⁴²¹. The Reformers rejected the idea of confirmation as perfection of baptism, and stressed catechism as a means of strengthening faith²⁴²². Netherlands Reformed church order reflects the outcome of this historical development. Netherlands Reformed church order even specifies the minimum age as eighteen²⁴²³. Aalbers also provides a comprehensive overview revealing how only a dozen theologians have entered the discussion in this early stage²⁴²⁴. It is interesting to note how he is aware of the articles of Visee and the Bible study of Smouter²⁴²⁵, both of whom were from the Reformed Churches liberated and later have become Dutch Reformed pastors.

Aalbers presents his own opinion in his last chapter. The church of all ages and places puts the perceived newness of paedocommunion in perspective²⁴²⁶. Restoring the relationship between catechism teaching and the worship service²⁴²⁷, and improving the churches' understanding and practice of the Lord's Supper²⁴²⁸ will open the table for children. Doing justice to the Passover, liberation background, and to the eschatological aspect would restore the gladness and simplicity of Acts 2:46²⁴²⁹. Celebrating the Lord's Supper in the context of an agape meal would do justice to the original more informal setting²⁴³⁰. Reading 1 Corinthians 11 in context will prevent wrong notions of self-examination and judgment²⁴³¹. Restoring a frequent celebration prevents setting the Lord's Supper more apart than intended²⁴³². Aalbers argues in favor of family-wise participation of children parallel to the Passover, and of parents who teach their children in response to their questions in the spirit of Psalm 78 and later Jewish tradition²⁴³³. Children's

²⁴²¹ Canon 854 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law. Charles Augustine, *A Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law, Book III, Volume IV, 2nd ed.* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1921), 225f. Aalbers (1971), 19.

²⁴²² Aalbers (1971), 21. One wonders whether Aalbers implies that catechism teaching has taken the place of the Lord's Supper as means of strengthening the young in their faith (Belgic Conf., Art. 33).

²⁴²³ Ordinantie 9, art. 4, lid 1 "The preparation for public profession of faith normally does not start before the age of approximately eighteen years," (my translation PGS). Aalbers (1971), 26. Part of church order since 1962, Heitink (2008), 249.

²⁴²⁴ Aalbers mentions as opponents Bolkestein (NRC), Van Ruler (NRC), Groenenberg (NRC), Van Minnen (RCN), Hartvelt's early contribution (RCN), and Van der Woude (RCN), and as proponents Hartvelt's later contributions (RCN), Smouter (RCL), Visee (RCL), Deurloo (NRC) and Van der Werf (NRC).

²⁴²⁵ K.C. Smouter (1928-1974), pastor of RCL/DRC Breda from 1962 till 1972, the mother church of RCL/DRC Rijsbergen. K.C. Smouter's Bible study booklet on the Lord's Supper received nationwide attention, and was reprinted twice (1968, 1969, 1970). K.C. Smouter, *De Maaltijd des Heren* (Breda: K.C. Smouter, 1968). "Ds. Smouter overleden," *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, January 28, 1974.

²⁴²⁶ Aalbers (1971), 57f. And further study should be an ecumenical endeavor. Aalbers (1971), 80.

²⁴²⁷ Aalbers (1971), 62f.

²⁴²⁸ Aalbers (1971), 58f.

²⁴²⁹ Aalbers (1971), 59.

²⁴³⁰ Aalbers (1971), 65.

²⁴³¹ Aalbers (1971), 59.

²⁴³² Aalbers (1971), 58f.

²⁴³³ Aalbers (1971), 60f.

participation is grounded in their place within the people of God and the body of Christ²⁴³⁴. Profession of faith should be the goal rather than the starting point of a child's faith journey.²⁴³⁵ It is not so much a step forward as remaining where God had brought us²⁴³⁶. Especially in mainline churches it would be good to still mark the step towards participation²⁴³⁷. While admitting children, justice can still be done both to God's promise, to God's act through the sacrament, and to the need for our faithful response²⁴³⁸. Aalbers concludes by observing how changes in views of children and childhood – such as described by Van den Berg's *Metabletica*²⁴³⁹ - can be used both in favor of raising, or lowering the age of admission²⁴⁴⁰. Nauta²⁴⁴¹ wonders whether Aalbers has taken the difference of underlying sacramental theologies into account and whether the required faith does not imply more knowledge²⁴⁴².

Three years later Aalbers recognizes three major problems²⁴⁴³. First, participation of children challenges the faith of parents and challenges the traditional way of being church. Second, there are conflicting developments regarding participation of children in the church²⁴⁴⁴. Third, the problem of a healthy relationship between participation in the Lord's Supper and profession of faith, in light of the foreign youth – in related German churches – who leave the church "auskonfirmiert". In 1976 Aalbers looks back on the now fourteen year old conversation²⁴⁴⁵. The conversation on a lower age of participation has taken place in the context of two movements in the opposite direction: a concern about the tendency to postpone profession of faith

²⁴³⁴ In light of what the Bible teaches us on the covenant and baptism. Aalbers (1971), 64, 73.

²⁴³⁵ Aalbers (1971), 67.

²⁴³⁶ Aalbers (1971), 73.

²⁴³⁷ Smouter and Telder argue in a context of churches with a high degree of participation, whereas Van der Werf argues from the different context of a mainline church. Aalbers (1971), 75.

²⁴³⁸ Aalbers (1971), 77f.

²⁴³⁹ J.H. van den Berg, *Metabletica: of leer der veranderingen; beginselen van een historische psychologie*, 7th ed. (1956; Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1958).

²⁴⁴⁰ Aalbers (1971), 81.

²⁴⁴¹ Dr. Doede Nauta (1898-1994), was professor of church history and church polity at the Free University of Amsterdam (1935-1968), and co-editor of *Ouderlingenblad*.

²⁴⁴² D. Nauta, "Kinderen aan het Avondmaal?" *Ouderlingenblad* (September 1972).

²⁴⁴³ B.J. Aalbers, "Kindercommunie in ontwikkeling IV: verkenningen in de evangelische kerkgemeenschap te Geldrop," *Praktische Theologie* (1974).

²⁴⁴⁴ The introduction of Sunday school parallel to worship services (*kindernevendiensten*) makes children disappear where greater participation is wanted. Aalbers (1974), 82. Note that Sunday school is an older phenomenon in the Netherlands, but *kindernevendiensten* were introduced round 1959. "Amsterdams gereformeerd initiatief geslaagd, "Kindernevendiensten" voldoen heel goed, Gezamenlijke kerkgang met aparte preek voor de kinderen," *Zeeuwisch Dagblad*, January 27, 1960.

²⁴⁴⁵ B.J. Aalbers, "De Weg van doop naar avondmaal," in *Kerk en jongeren: Werkboek ten dienste van het jeugd- en jongerenpastoraat*, Gemeentetoerusting 12, ed. G. Heitink and H. Hogenhuis. (Kampen: Kok, 1976) 86-98.

beyond the age of eighteen²⁴⁴⁶; and a loss of the self-evidence of infant baptism²⁴⁴⁷. Though paedocommunion should not be a mere means towards other ends, Aalbers believes the conversation may lead to a spiritual revival in family and church. It has been an impetus for the reflection on infant baptism and on the position of the baptized child. Renewed appreciation of infant baptism is already expressed in liturgy²⁴⁴⁸. The movement toward restoration of the unity between Word and sacrament, and the movements towards participation of children in the Supper mutually reinforce each other. Renewed insight in the Jewish roots of the worship service and of the Lord's Supper has enriched and deepened the experience of the latter²⁴⁴⁹. The church will also gain liturgically now that a renewed interest digs up the liturgical treasures of church history²⁴⁵⁰. Aalbers realizes that paedocommunion may change the practice of catechism teaching followed by profession of faith, but is hopeful that explanation of Scripture will always lead to faith which is professed in words and deeds²⁴⁵¹.

5.6.6. *The warnings of Herman Ridderbos in 1973*

When the synodical committee on paedocommunion publishes the interim report in *Kerkinformatie* of November, 1973²⁴⁵², Herman Ridderbos²⁴⁵³ responds in *Gereformeerd Weekblad*²⁴⁵⁴. He considers current practice to have grown out of responsible and prudent tradition, but is yet open for debate. The Reformed tradition has always acknowledged that children, in their own way and with their own faith, share in God's grace. Nevertheless, there are overriding reasons in psychological and pedagogical factors such as children's lack of readiness to raise the age of admission. According to Ridderbos, the synodical committee fails to determine whether the Reformed were right or not. We should be warned by those foreign churches that practice confirmation between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, and who neglect ongoing catechetical teaching and who subsequently lose control of their youth. Ridderbos also warns against introducing two professions of faith, because the first would undermine the second, and warns against making

²⁴⁴⁶ At the NRC Synod. Aalbers (1976) 86. Compare Bolkestein (1964), 28f.

²⁴⁴⁷ Aalbers (1976), 89.

²⁴⁴⁸ Aalbers (1976), 87-90.

²⁴⁴⁹ Aalbers (1976), 91f.

²⁴⁵⁰ Aalbers (1976), 93f.

²⁴⁵¹ Aalbers (1976), 94f.

²⁴⁵² "Kinderen aan het avondmaal," *Kerkinformatie* 30 (1973): 13-14.

²⁴⁵³ Herman Nicolaas Ridderbos (1909-2007), was professor of New Testament in Kampen (1943-1975).

²⁴⁵⁴ Herman N. Ridderbos, "Van week tot week: Kindercommunie," *Gereformeerd Weekblad* (December 14, 1973). The article would be republished in the Frisian newspaper, "Deputaten adviseren synode Geref. Kerken: Kinderen ook aan avondmaal; Kritische kanttekeningen van prof. dr. H. Ridderbos," *Friesch Dagblad*, January 5, 1974.

decisions on admission of children before finishing the discussion on profession of faith.

5.6.7. Matter's hesitance towards infant baptism in 1974

In a later *Gereformeerd Weekblad* article, Matter²⁴⁵⁵ suggests he is adding more substantial considerations to Ridderbos' practical arguments²⁴⁵⁶. The New Testament reflects the practice of the church in the seventies and eighties of the first century – a church which did not practice paedocommunion. Matter seems to express a similar hesitance towards infant baptism as Van Minnen²⁴⁵⁷. Salvation is lying at Abraham's side like Lazarus²⁴⁵⁸, but the parable in which a guest is removed from the royal wedding dinner²⁴⁵⁹ reminds the early church that salvation by grace does not equal cheap grace without self-criticism or self-examination. The story of the disciples on their way to Emmaus reflects how believers in the early church recognized Jesus at the Lord's Supper, but only after extensive catechism did they experience burning hearts and make a deliberate choice to invite Jesus²⁴⁶⁰. The Lord's Supper is like the celebration of the return of the prodigal son²⁴⁶¹, but celebration implies gratitude that is expressed in a profession of faith and a conscious response to God. A nineteen year old should be able to make such a conscious choice, and some children might be able to do the same at age fifteen, fourteen or even thirteen.

5.6.8. Heitink, from remembrance to celebrative eschatology in 1975

In 1975, I come across the first of a number of contributions by Heitink²⁴⁶². In an article on the experience of the Lord's Supper²⁴⁶³, he mentions a decline in Lord's Supper attendance since 1964²⁴⁶⁴, office bearers participating out of obligation instead of need, and failure to implement the synodical

²⁴⁵⁵ Dr. H.M. Matter (1906-1984) was a RCN pastor and taught for some years at the protestant theological faculty of Aix-en-Provence.

²⁴⁵⁶ H.M. Matter, "Communie of Avondmaal?" *Gereformeerd Weekblad*, (December 29 (?), 1974).

²⁴⁵⁷ Though unlike Van Minnen, Matter does not mention Barth's name.

²⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Luke 16, a setting which reminds Matter of John and Jesus at the Last Supper.

²⁴⁵⁹ Matthew 22:11-13.

²⁴⁶⁰ Catechism: Luke 24:13, 27, 32. Burning hearts Luke 24:32 and invitation: Luke 24: 29.

²⁴⁶¹ Cf. Luke 15.

²⁴⁶² Gerben Heitink (1938) taught Practical Theology in Kampen since 1970 and was Professor of Practical Theology at the Free University in Amsterdam (1988-2003).

²⁴⁶³ G. Heitink, "De beleving van het avondmaal," *Ouderlingenblad* (October 1975).

²⁴⁶⁴ Following the downward trend in church attendance with a five year delay. Heitink does not specify the source for the decline in Lord's Supper attendance since 1964, but mentions the 1959 report "Stand van het geestelijk leven" regarding the decline in church attendance. In 1980 Heitink reports a decline in profession of faith in previous years which seemed to stabilize in 1980, Gerben Heitink, "Belijdenis doen: ja of nee?" *Ouderlingenblad* (January 1980): 7/115.

recommendation that more frequent celebration may bring great blessing²⁴⁶⁵. In response to questions of anonymized congregation members, Heitink argues his case. With the loss of the congregation as table community, we have lost the heart of the congregation. With the loss of the meal we have made it easier to experience that community while drinking coffee after church. We fail to experience the communication of salvation in the sacraments as we do in the preaching. We experience the Lord's Supper too much as a remembrance suitable for Good Friday²⁴⁶⁶, and fail to experience its eschatological nature. The reading of long forms, and warnings when thanksgiving should be expressed further damage the experience. In a culture of Lord's Supper abstention, many have failed to understand condemnation in its context, to distinguish it from eternal condemnation, and to understand how self-examination should lead to participation. Heitink draws the paradoxical conclusion that a church with such a poor Lord's Supper practice is not ready to welcome children, but also needs children to regain a celebrative Lord's Supper practice.

5.6.8.1. Heitink and stalemate in 1976

Heitink's paradoxical conclusion and the *Trouw* headline, *No new arguments for or against children's Communion*²⁴⁶⁷, suggest that a discussion based on arguments alone will end in a stalemate. After Heitink has experienced Communion with his eight and ten year old children²⁴⁶⁸, he claims one can only be convinced by such an experience. He also states that parents, and not synod, should have prime responsibility. The article in *Trouw* receives a similar response by pastor Harms²⁴⁶⁹ about the practice in Eindhoven North²⁴⁷⁰. He explains how all the following events – ecumenical conversations, questions of parents and children, questions in catechism classes to do justice to the relationship between Lord's Supper and baptism, more frequent celebrations, a different experience of these celebrations, and a different perspective on the relationship between Word and Sacrament – brought about the change.

²⁴⁶⁵ Acts RCN 1963-1964 Synod, 342.

²⁴⁶⁶ Which for the disciples in Emmaus was an Easter experience, in line with the Church Order of Dort, article 63: "The Lord's Supper shall be administered once every two months, as much as possible. It is also edifying, wherever the circumstances of the churches allow, that the same be done on Easter, Pentecost and Christmas. But in places where as yet there is no organized congregation, elders and deacons shall first be provisionally installed."

²⁴⁶⁷ "Geen nieuw argument pro- of contra kindercommunie," *Trouw*, October 6, 1976. As quoted in G. Heitink, "Gezinscommunie een impressie," *Ouderlingenblad* (November 1976): 9.

²⁴⁶⁸ In the NRC Thomaskerk of Amsterdam South.

²⁴⁶⁹ Harms (1929-).

²⁴⁷⁰ G.H. Harms, "Een vrolijk verhaal uit het veld," *Trouw*, October 13, 1976.

5.6.8.2. *Heitink's celebration of liberation in the eighties*

In 1980²⁴⁷¹, Heitink suggests that the original order – catechism, profession, baptism, Communion – changed with the introduction of infant baptism. Now parents and the church profess faith on behalf of their baptized and communing children. But the postponed individual profession remains meaningful. In 1984, Heitink argues that the nature of Lord's Supper celebration – liberation, community, sacrifice and expectation – requires participation of the young²⁴⁷². Children know how to celebrate liberation. The Passover and seder tradition model how to include them by asking questions²⁴⁷³. Baptized children belong to the community which Communion constitutes. Paul taught this²⁴⁷⁴; the Corinthian and our self-centred praxis have neglected this at risk of condemnation²⁴⁷⁵. In their trust and submission, children exemplify the offering of ourselves as living sacrifices²⁴⁷⁶. This is the appropriate response to the sacrificial nature of the Supper. Youth who are often dedicated to social justice, need the encouragement of the Supper as a foretaste of the messianic feast²⁴⁷⁷ – the conspiracy meal – in anticipation of the Kingdom.

5.6.8.3. *Heitink and the pedagogical shift in retrospect*

Twenty four years later, Heitink looks back and writes: *I too have insisted on admission of children in articles in the past and was an advocate for open Communion. Impressed by cultural developments and by an often miserable practice I have come to think somewhat differently on this. Admission to the Supper requires reconsideration in a post Christian era*²⁴⁷⁸. He doesn't oppose the decisions taken in the seventies, but opposes the practice without age limits and proper catechism that resulted. He still envisions admission between ages seven and ten²⁴⁷⁹, preceded by age-appropriate catechetical preparation²⁴⁸⁰. Heitink observes that the pedagogical shift towards the child²⁴⁸¹ motivated this change in the seventies, but that it was expressed in

²⁴⁷¹ Gerben Heitink, "Belijdenis doen: ja of nee?" *Ouderlingenblad* (January 1980).

²⁴⁷² Gerben Heitink, "Wat is avondmaal vieren?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

²⁴⁷³ Taught by mothers and answered by fathers, Heitink writes.

²⁴⁷⁴ Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:17.

²⁴⁷⁵ Cf. 1 Corinthians 11.

²⁴⁷⁶ Romans 12:1.

²⁴⁷⁷ Isaiah 25:6-8.

²⁴⁷⁸ Heitink (2008), 253f. (My translation PGS).

²⁴⁷⁹ Heitink (2008), 253. Not much different than the age of six or ten which the advocates and synods of the seventies had in mind according to Heitink (2008), 250f.

²⁴⁸⁰ Heitink (2008), 253. Again not much different than envisioned by the synodical decisions, according to Heitink (2008), 250f.

²⁴⁸¹ Heitink refers to the theories of Van den Berg, Ariès, Koops, Dasberg, and Postman. Heitink (2008), 85f.

theological language in the debate²⁴⁸². Heitink's renewed appreciation of Christian initiation²⁴⁸³ and 'discipline of the mystery'²⁴⁸⁴ also lie behind his plea to reconsider the admission of children.

5.6.9. Schippers' response to synodical publication

I followed a string of articles by Heitink starting in 1975. In December 1976, a month after Heitink's second article, the General Synod of the RCN publishes a special issue of the magazine *Kerkinformatie*²⁴⁸⁵. The special issue contains the reports of the deputies, of the synodical committee and a summary of the synodical discussion in the hope that the churches will answer two questions: 1) What is your opinion on the admission of children and/or youth at the celebration of the Lord's Supper?²⁴⁸⁶ 2) Do you consider it desirable that this admission – no matter your own conclusion – should be left to the freedom of the local churches?²⁴⁸⁷ Schippers²⁴⁸⁸ responds critically suggesting that from a theological perspective the congregation cannot really contribute to the answer of the first doctrinal question, and warning that a positive answer to the second question would introduce a new way of interaction within the denomination²⁴⁸⁹. Schippers believes that in response to their own unhappiness about the status quo, adults started to emphasize the celebrative and communal aspect of the Lord's Supper. And this new practice raised the question of the participation of children. Schippers believes that therefore the right question would be regarding the state of our Lord's Supper celebration and the place of children in that context.

In May 1984, a special issue of *Ouderlingenblad* deals with the question of children's participation. In his contribution²⁴⁹⁰ Schippers suggests that parents

²⁴⁸² Heitink (2008), 250.

²⁴⁸³ Heitink (2008), 82.

²⁴⁸⁴ *Disciplina arcana*, Heitink (2008), 251f. Heitink refers to Bonhoeffer's *Widerstand und Ergebung* (translated into English as *Letters and Papers from Prison*).

²⁴⁸⁵ Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976).

²⁴⁸⁶ "Hoe luidt uw oordeel over toelating van kinderen en/of jongeren tot de viering van het heilig avondmaal?"

²⁴⁸⁷ "Acht u het wenselijk, dat deze toelating – afgedacht van uw eigen oordeel – aan de vrijheid van de plaatselijke kerk overgelaten dient te worden?"

²⁴⁸⁸ K.A. Schippers (1925-1997), co-editor of *Ouderlingenblad* and at that moment lector Practical Theology at the Theological University in Kampen will become Professor at that same university in 1980-1989. Schippers received an honorary doctorate by the Theological Faculty of Brussels in 1996.

²⁴⁸⁹ K.A. Schippers, "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?: De synode vraagt ...," *Ouderlingenblad* (March 1977).

²⁴⁹⁰ K.A. Schippers, "Waarom vragen ouders er om?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

will often ask the question and that councils should not fear conflict but welcome discussion as a means to revitalize the Lord's Supper celebration. Such discussion will reveal the awkwardness which believers experience with the current practice. In contemporary culture, parents experience a greater sense of unity with their children and shape their children's faith more by sharing than by teaching. Children are more sensitive and experience a breach of the bond with their parents and the congregation when they are left out of the celebration. They may perceive a conflict between Jesus who blesses children and the church that hinders them. But the congregation as a whole also desires a communal experience of the Lord's Supper, and that should include the children. Schippers notices how Luther and Calvin welcomed children and claims that the child was welcome at the table in the days of the Old and New Testament. In another article that same year²⁴⁹¹, Schippers calls attention to the recurring complaint of youth, now voiced in a survey, that the Lord's Supper practice lacks celebrative character. The whole liturgy should be more relaxed. In yet another article that same year²⁴⁹², Schippers argues for a more communal preparation and celebration of baptism and Lord's Supper in order to create a climate in which faith formation can flourish. The church as community, the institution of infant baptism, and covenantal thinking are grounds for children to participate in the celebration, but also in the preparation of the Lord's Supper.

5.6.10. Schravendeel follows up on minority report

After the RCN Synod published a special issue of *Kerkinformatie* in December 1976, Schravendeel²⁴⁹³, one of the two writers of the minority report, writes an article in *Credo*²⁴⁹⁴. Regarding the biblical aspects, Schravendeel points to the difference in meaning and context²⁴⁹⁵ of Passover and the Lord's Supper. The New Testament church did not practice magic, but required faith. It met after the bedtime of the little children. Therefore it differed from contemporary religions that welcomed children at their tables. 1 Corinthians 11 requires accountability, whether the context is a doctrinal problem or an

²⁴⁹¹ K.A. Schippers, "Onze kerkdiensten en de jongeren," *Ouderlingenblad* (April 1984).

²⁴⁹² K.A. Schippers, "Geloofsgroei en het klimaat in de gemeente," *Ouderlingenblad* (June 1984).

²⁴⁹³ Pieter Schravendeel (1928-2013), at that moment pastor of the RCN of Middelharnis.

²⁴⁹⁴ P. Schravendeel, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" *Credo* (May 1977). *Credo* is the monthly periodical of the *Vereniging Confessioneel Gereformeerd Beraad* (CGB - Association of Confessional Reformed Consultation PGS). The CGB, viewed as representing a more conservative view within the RCN, did not officially take position on paedocommunion, but certainly provided a platform in its periodical for the opponents. See "Voorstanders gezinscommunie uit (syn.) geref. Kerkeraad Wierden: Conflict door openzetten deur door synode," *Nederlands Dagblad* (?), February 17, 1988.

²⁴⁹⁵ Passover is celebrated in the context of a nation and of families, the Lord's Supper in the context of the congregation.

ethical one. Doctrinally, the Lord's Supper is a meal of reconciliation, congregation and anticipation, and as such requires faith. Children have faith. But as children lack faith for which they can be held accountable, we should be careful not to embrace magical views of the sacrament. In spite of the individualism the church is responsible for administration to the faithful. Regarding the psychological and pedagogical considerations, Schravendeel notices that they come up in the context of a culture that has been called cofigurative²⁴⁹⁶, but as culture will change, the question may disappear. He also suggests that young children are "amorphous", conforming to what their parents deem right and proper, and that therefore the question in all likelihood is the question of parents and not of children²⁴⁹⁷. Children of four are sensitive to celebrations in groups, but the consciousness of their faith should be questioned. Children of eight are more conscious, but their faith is more a matter of obedience to parents than to God. Children of thirteen or fourteen often break with tradition, proving that they were not ready to be admitted before. Children are also sensitive to peer pressure, which makes their motives to participate questionable. Schravendeel further suggests that church order is based on faith and confessions, and that changing one cannot easily be done without changing the other. Does admission without prior profession of faith mean that we will also baptize without requiring faith of the parents? Youth already resist the idea of being baptized without their consent. Schravendeel wonders if their resistance will grow when they were also taken to Communion without their consent.

5.6.11. Van Oeveren's twelve reasons against

In that same issue of *Credo*, Van Oeveren²⁴⁹⁸ gives twelve short reasons against participation of children²⁴⁹⁹: 1) New Testament²⁵⁰⁰ and the Reformed tradition connect the Lord's Supper with profession of faith. 2) Passover is not identical to the Lord's Supper, 3) but it teaches the duty to catechize²⁵⁰¹. 4)

²⁴⁹⁶ A term from Margaret Mead, *Culture and commitment: A Study of the Generation Gap* (London: Bodley Head, 1970). Mead distinguishes three different kinds of culture: "postfigurative, in which children learn primarily from their forebears, cofigurative, in which both children and adults learn from their peers, and prefigurative, in which adults learn also from their children," Mead (1970), 3.

²⁴⁹⁷ This is also the point J.A. Voogt, who bases it on his experience of teaching catechism to 13 and 14 year olds and profession of faith classes. J.A. Voogt, "Catechisanten over het avondmaal," *Centraal Weekblad* (December 15, 1982).

²⁴⁹⁸ Dr. Benjamin van Oeveren (1925-2011), at that moment pastor of the RCN of Rijnsburg.

²⁴⁹⁹ B. van Oeveren, "Argumenten tegen avondmaalsviering door kinderen," *Credo*, May 1977. The twelve arguments were republished in the national Christian newspaper *Nederlands Dagblad*, June 8, 1977, but also in *Credo* of June 1982 and October, 1987.

²⁵⁰⁰ 1 Corinthians 11:29.

²⁵⁰¹ Exodus 12:24,27.

The New Testament never mentions participation of children in the Lord's Supper. 5) Youth may hold it against parents who made them participate too early, considering their stage of psychological development. 6) Pedagogically speaking, parents should allow their children time and space to grow towards a conscious choice for Christ. 7) Local churches should not be allowed freedom of choice in what may hurt the denomination. 8) The praxis of other churches is a warning against admission. 9) Teaching about baptism is more needed than answering the question about children's Communion. 10) Admission without prior profession will increase the resistance of youth against profession of faith. 11) As baptism communicates the same salvation, children miss nothing when they do not participate in the supper. 12) Parents have the duty to raise their children with baptism as their starting point and independent, individual choice for profession as their goal.

5.6.12. Denominational pastor for the youth speaks out

After the 1976 Synod allows local churches to welcome children at the table, Hogenhuis²⁵⁰², denominational pastor for the youth, tries to answer the question whether profession of faith has become superfluous²⁵⁰³. Hogenhuis explains how in the New Testament baptism and laying on of hands were combined²⁵⁰⁴, and how the latter became a separate rite of confirmation at an older age, while the content changed from blessing with the Holy Spirit to a moment of confession. "Jesus is Lord" is the basic confession of the New Testament church²⁵⁰⁵, but the Enlightenment added the requirement of rational knowledge, Pietism the requirement of inner knowledge, and the denomination the requirement of confessional loyalty²⁵⁰⁶. Children who celebrate the Lord's Supper and youth who reach the traditional age of professing their faith often do not struggle with professing that Jesus is Lord, but with all the non biblical additions. Changing Profession of Faith according to its original meaning of "saying together"²⁵⁰⁷ might open ways for children to profess with their parents and with the congregation and for this profession to grow in age and ability appropriate ways as children learn and mature. But it will also challenge the older generation to inspire the young by a truly confessional life.

²⁵⁰² H. Hogenhuis (1923-1994) was denominational pastor for pastoral care for the youth and advisor for the synodical committee.

²⁵⁰³ H. Hogenhuis, "Belijdenis doen – moet dat nog wel?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1978).

²⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Acts 8:16,17, 19:5-6, Matt. 3:11, Acts 1:5.

²⁵⁰⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 12:3.

²⁵⁰⁶ In order to distinguish itself from the NRC.

²⁵⁰⁷ homologeïn.

Hogenhuis continues to take part in the conversation on the relation between admission of children and profession of faith²⁵⁰⁸ because people fear decline of profession of faith, and the consequent loss of sanctity of the Lord's Supper, thus eating and drinking condemnation unto oneself. Hogenhuis suggests profession is about faith, baptism, the Lord's Supper and the relationship to the local congregation. But tension arises and contributes to the hesitance of youth as God has already established the relationship to the church in a covenantal way, as signified in baptism. Profession of faith as an answer to God's initiative – a repeated and lifelong expressed answer – would deal with the problem that now threatens profession of faith.

In an article in 1980²⁵⁰⁹, Hogenhuis summarizes what he perceives as the main arguments of opponents and proponents. Opponents experience the Lord's Supper as exceptional, holy, transcending the ministry of the word. A low frequency of celebration supports this perception. 1 Corinthians 11 gives extra weight to the requirement of discernment and self-examination with the threat of condemnation. Children cannot fulfil the requirement and should not be exposed to the danger of condemnation. Participating without discernment introduces an *ex opere operato* theology. Participating without proclamation would damage the professing character of the church.

Proponents aim to restore the character of the meal, to do justice to the connection with Passover, and to highlight the dimension of anticipation in messianic joy. Baptized children are members who have been welcomed into the covenant and may participate in this covenantal supper. By nature, children are more communal beings, believing, praying and worshiping with their family. Children exemplify trust and are often more sensitive to symbols. Children need to be taught, but in age and ability appropriate ways. They need the sacrament as a teaching tool and to strengthen their faith. After his summary of the pro and contra arguments, Hogenhuis suggests that not arguments, but emotions may be decisive. He also suggest that the conversation might be more fruitful if it started in the realization that God chooses a people, a community in which the individual finds a place and not the other way around. In the context of an individualistic society, such a community, carried by messianic joy, is highly needed.

²⁵⁰⁸ H. Hogenhuis, "En de openbare geloofsbelijdenis dan?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

²⁵⁰⁹ H. Hogenhuis, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal; ja of nee?" *Ouderlingenblad* (January 1980).

In 1984, Hogenhuis gives children a voice in this discussion with a selection of fragments of letters by eight of them²⁵¹⁰. All eight children express their feelings: loneliness when left out, a sense of belonging when included, an experience of connected with God, an awareness of God's presence and existence, or a feeling of being strengthened and comforted. They write that God does not only create adults; they, too, are children of God welcomed by Jesus. They, too, are the ones for whom Jesus died. They understand and believe and want to participate.

5.6.13. Van Oeveren listening to the whole of Scripture

In 1982, a special issue of *Credo* dealing with the question of children at the Supper is published. In his introduction to this special issue²⁵¹¹, Van Oeveren perceives the introduction of paedocommunion as a progressive desire to break with tradition and confessions, and represents a failure to listen to the 250 church councils who advised against it²⁵¹². He also suggests it represents a failure to listen to the whole of Scripture. He then gives as sole example the apostolic requirement of 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, which he believes children cannot fulfil.

5.6.14. Van de Velde from pro to con

In a long article²⁵¹³, Van de Velde²⁵¹⁴ argues why we cannot give a positive answer to the question of children at the supper. Van de Velde became in favor of paedocommunion in 1972, but over time grew to oppose it²⁵¹⁵.

Van de Velde explains that in the Old Testament, children asked their Passover question not as participants in the meal, but in the context of the non-communal act of striking blood on the doorposts²⁵¹⁶. Jesus and the disciples did not celebrate the Lord's Supper as a Passover with their natural family, but

²⁵¹⁰ Six children, four girls and two boys, are mentioned by their first name, two remain completely anonymous. Of seven children the age is mentioned: 8,9,13,13,15,16, and 17. H. Hogenhuis, "Zo hoor je het ook eens van kinderen," *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

²⁵¹¹ B. van Oeveren, "Introductie," *Credo* (June 1984).

²⁵¹² Two thirds of those who responded to Synod, Van Oeveren points out. Note that these numbers do not correspond with those of both majority and minority reports, which mention 163 against, 114 in favor and 64 in between, Supplements 44, 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 209, 228.

²⁵¹³ C. van de Velde, "kinderen aan het avondmaal?: Een vraag waar we geen "ja" op kunnen zeggen," *Credo* (June 1982).

²⁵¹⁴ C. van de Velde (1936-1997), at that moment pastor of RCN Haarlem-Zuid

²⁵¹⁵ While preparing a catechism sermon on the Lord's Supper. Van de Velde (1982), 8.

²⁵¹⁶ As the order of words of Exodus 12 suggests, Van de Velde (1982), 19.

as a new family²⁵¹⁷. The New Testament church came together for word and sacrament, but they did so privately without nonbelievers and in the evening while little children probably stayed home with their mothers²⁵¹⁸. The story of Mark 10:13-16 is no ground for administering sacraments to children, because it is about the Kingdom and adults becoming like children as specified in John 1:12-13²⁵¹⁹. Children first need to reach the stage where they say, *We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world*²⁵²⁰. The feeding of the 5000 in John 6 reveals three stages: John 6:1-15: Meet Jesus and experience a meal; John 6: 29-47: Hear how Jesus requires faith²⁵²¹; John 6:48-59: Eat the bread from heaven²⁵²². In 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, Paul addresses the sanctified²⁵²³: those who have already believed²⁵²⁴ those whose proclamation is a heartfelt profession of faith, and those who are sensible people²⁵²⁵ who are able to meet the requirements of self examination and discernment²⁵²⁶.

Van de Velde suggests that all who had not professed their faith, baptized or not, were sent away with the catechumen when the early church celebrated the Lord's Supper²⁵²⁷. He assumes that with the growth of infant baptism, infants received the rights of adults such as participation in Communion²⁵²⁸. Augustine's defence of infant Communion as necessary for salvation²⁵²⁹ might prove that the post Nicene era broke with many good practices²⁵³⁰. Van de Velde also believes that the Reformers broke deliberately with their Roman Catholic background when they required a profession of faith prior to first Communion²⁵³¹. Van de Velde leaves open whether Calvin admitted children

²⁵¹⁷ Van de Velde (1982), 17.

²⁵¹⁸ Hence the address "brothers" and not "brothers and sisters," Van de Velde (1982), 22.

²⁵¹⁹ Van de Velde (1982), 10f.

²⁵²⁰ Cf. John 4:42. Van de Velde (1982), 14.

²⁵²¹ The word believing is used 6 times as Van de Velde points out.

²⁵²² Van de Velde (1982), 14f.

²⁵²³ Cf. 1 Cor. 1:2. Van de Velde earlier notices that children may be sanctified in their believing parent(s) cf. 1 Cor. 7:14, but so is the unbelieving husband through his wife. Van de Velde (1982), 13.

²⁵²⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 1:2.

²⁵²⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 10:15.

²⁵²⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 11:29. Van de Velde claims "everyone" (ανθρωπος) allows for no exceptions to the rule. Van de Velde (1982), 19f.

²⁵²⁷ Van de Velde (1982), 5.

²⁵²⁸ Van de Velde (1982), 5.

²⁵²⁹ John 6:53.

²⁵³⁰ Van de Velde (1982), 23.

²⁵³¹ Van de Velde (1982), 32f.

at age ten or at age fifteen as Plomp claims²⁵³². One has to take into account that a child of 1982 cannot be compared with a child from ancient history²⁵³³.

The Reformed Confessions mention believers and their faith when speaking of the sacraments²⁵³⁴. Whoever treats baptized members as full members lacks discernment²⁵³⁵. Baptism is the promise; Lord's Supper is our faithful response²⁵³⁶. Professing such faith requires more than mere knowledge, something a seven year old could master. It requires- acceptance of doctrine and appropriation of God's promises²⁵³⁷ for which the higher Zwinglian age limit of fifteen was appropriate. Pedagogically, the image of God starts to fade after age eight, and alienation from faith often comes around age twelve. At age sixteen or seventeen restoration can be started. Until that time, children and youth need a waiting-room²⁵³⁸. As an afterthought, Van de Velde suggests that children had a different position in the Old Testament because one of them would be the Messiah²⁵³⁹.

5.6.15. *The youngest author in the discussion*

In the same issue of *Credo*, Scheltens²⁵⁴⁰ writes for the youth²⁵⁴¹, presenting them the *status quo* as option one: Doing justice to baptism as God's promise and do justice to the Lord's Supper as our faithful response without children being tricked into participation without their full consent. Option two still entails the requirement of professed faith but allows for faith at a younger age. It also sanctions faith as expressed in song and communally sung creeds. The lack in knowledge is dealt with in continued catechism classes²⁵⁴². Scheltens challenges youth to decide what appeals most to them.

²⁵³² Van de Velde (1982), 6.

²⁵³³ Van de Velde (1982), 25.

²⁵³⁴ Van de Velde mentions the examples of Belgic Confession art. 35, Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 30 and to begin with Lord's Day 28 the opening phrase: "Christ has commanded me and all believers". Van de Velde (1982), 26,31. Van de Velde does not specify how old the "me" is in "me and all believers".

²⁵³⁵ Van de Velde (1982), 7.

²⁵³⁶ Van de Velde (1982), 9.

²⁵³⁷ Van de Velde (1982), 8f, 24.

²⁵³⁸ Van de Velde (1982), 13.

²⁵³⁹ Van de Velde (1982), 33.

²⁵⁴⁰ In June 1982 Wim Scheltens (1953) is a young pastor, who has served his first church in Haren (Gn) for eight months. He wrote this article at age 28, which makes him the youngest RCN writer in this discussion I came across.

²⁵⁴¹ Wim Scheltens, "Thuis in de kerkdienst," *Credo* (June 1982).

²⁵⁴² Scheltens (1982), 30.

5.6.16. Nooteboom writing from experience

In 1984, in a special issue of *Ouderlingenblad*, Nooteboom²⁵⁴³ describes the process that took place in his church in Nieuwkoop between the first council discussion in May 1975 and the first time children participated in the Lord's Supper in March 1979²⁵⁴⁴. Awareness of the non-biblical influences which have shaped the character and form of the Lord's Supper, recognition of the connection of Lord's Supper and the Easter gospel of resurrection, a new understanding of meals such as Passover as means of remembrance by celebration in the present and the liberation of the past, the significance of the institution of the Lord's Supper in the context of Passover, and an appreciation of the meaning of all God's people participating in this celebration – all contributed to a gradual acceptance of children at the Lord's Supper. The practices of inviting children to the Table to explain its meaning, and then giving the children grapes instead of bread and wine, served as stepping stones toward full participation. The actual participation of children took away some of the last fears.

5.6.17. Minnema on family Communion and catechism

In the same issue, Minnema²⁵⁴⁵ writes on the consequences of communing children for catechism teaching²⁵⁴⁶. He points out that Synod 1977/1979 has given councils two responsibilities, to teach and to check whether children have appropriated the knowledge²⁵⁴⁷. Minnema underscores these age and ability appropriate requirements. He suggests age seven or eight as most appropriate to start participating. Parents who often raise the question should be involved in teaching their children. Therefore Minnema prefers to speak of family Communion rather than children's Communion.

5.6.18. Laurens Zwaan and teenage resistance

In 1986, Minnema and four other pastors discuss paedocommunion from the perspective of liturgy and praxis in *Eredienstvaardig*. L. Zwaan²⁵⁴⁸ claims teenage resistance has not been taken into consideration enough²⁵⁴⁹. There

²⁵⁴³ G.P. Nooteboom (1926-2008), at that moment pastor of the RCN of Nieuwkoop.

²⁵⁴⁴ G.P. Nooteboom, "Uit de praktijk," *Ouderlingenblad* (May, 1984): 20-24

²⁵⁴⁵ P.J. Minnema (1952), at that moment pastor of the RCN of Bakkeveen. Minnema wrote his master's thesis on the catechism teaching and Communion of children, P.J. Minnema, *Gezinskatechese rond het Avondmaal: een onderzoek naar de voorwaarden waaraan de begeleiding van ouders en kinderen naar het Avondmaal moet voldoen* (1983).

²⁵⁴⁶ P.J. Minnema, "Gezinskatechese rond het avondmaal," *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

²⁵⁴⁷ Decision 2, Supplements to the Acts of RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 216.

²⁵⁴⁸ Laurens Zwaan (1932), at that moment pastor of RCN Ermelo. From 1979 till 1984 Zwaan also taught religion at a high school.

²⁵⁴⁹ L. Zwaan, "Opgroeijende jongeren: Wat weerhoudt hen? Wat trekt hen aan?" *Eredienstvaardig* (1986).

should be room for teenagers to resist celebration as a family, and even, to abstain. But Zwaan sees mostly opportunities. Youth are sensitive to symbols. Youth need the sense of acceptance and security that can be communicated by the Supper. Youth, who often fail to meet their own high expectations, realize their need for forgiveness. Youth become aware of the brokenness of the world and will appreciate learning about the ethical implications of celebrating the Lord's Supper. Youth live in a world with bombs that can destroy all life, and they need the awareness of the coming of God's Kingdom. Youth, who might not be ready to commit to the church as institution, might appreciate the Supper as a way of committing to God. In 1985, Laurens Zwaan wrote on the specific place for adolescents at the Lord's Supper²⁵⁵⁰. Zwaan summarizes: Youth resist an abundance of words, are sensitive to symbol, need support in the battle against guilt and shame, are eager to learn and to commit as followers to a higher ideal, search for identity in the midst of community, need more than natural growth and maturation to understand and appropriate the mystery of the cross²⁵⁵¹, seek ways to use their gifts and long for happiness and celebration²⁵⁵², long for a safe future need the familiar and the surprise of the Supper, and in their loneliness need community and a table which marks their home²⁵⁵³. The ground structure of the Lord's Supper is so strong it fits almost any youthful adventure and experiment with church. The tangibility and visibility of the Supper helps to mark the way of life for youth²⁵⁵⁴. Zwaan bases his principle choice on Jesus' commandment to *go and make disciples ... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*²⁵⁵⁵ with emphasis on the learning mode of disciples²⁵⁵⁶ and with emphasis on obedience²⁵⁵⁷. In line with this principle choice and Jesus first asking his disciples to follow Him before asking them to profess their faith in Him²⁵⁵⁸, Zwaan suggests a rite of passage, a renewed initiation as disciples between ages eleven and thirteen, and a public profession of faith between ages seventeen and twenty one²⁵⁵⁹.

²⁵⁵⁰ Laurens Zwaan, *Jonge mensen – brood en wijn: een weg voor jongeren tot de Maaltijd van de Heer* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1985).

²⁵⁵¹ Just like the senior, Zwaan states.

²⁵⁵² To them we may say "enter into the joy of your Lord," Zwaan writes. Cf. Matt. 25:12 & 23.

²⁵⁵³ Zwaan (1985), 89f.

²⁵⁵⁴ Zwaan (1985), 90.

²⁵⁵⁵ Matt. 28:19-20.

²⁵⁵⁶ Zwaan uses the not uncommon Dutch translation *leerlingen* (students) for disciples.

²⁵⁵⁷ Zwaan (1985), 68.

²⁵⁵⁸ Cf. Matt. 4: 19 and Matt. 16:15.

²⁵⁵⁹ Zwaan (1985), 92-96.

5.6.19. *Sjoerd Zwaan, faith formation through liturgical catechism*

S.P. Zwaan²⁵⁶⁰ summarizes his arguments in favor of paedocommunion with the following points: New Testament data suggests that all who belonged to the congregation were invited to the table; children are incorporated into the body with their baptism; it has been sufficiently demonstrated that 1 Corinthians 11 does not support a distinction between the baptized and the communicating congregation; the worldwide church rediscovers the Supper as an essential element of the service in which communion with our Lord and each other takes shape; finally, it is no longer accepted to consider children less than full members or, in line with Colossians 3:11, to discriminate on the basis of intellectual or spiritual abilities²⁵⁶¹. Zwaan's main point, however, is that faith formation happens best through *liturgical* catechism in which liturgy is both the source and the goal of catechism. The liturgy is also the source in the sense that one learns by doing. The goal of liturgical catechism regarding the Supper would be appropriation of God's promises and intensifying obedience in age and ability appropriate ways. Later, Zwaan places the issue of paedocommunion in the context of a twentieth century search for a place for the child within the liturgy in general²⁵⁶².

5.6.20. *Loosman and the case of Oud-Beijerland*

Loosman²⁵⁶³ describes how in the church of Oud-Beijerland children have participated since 1977²⁵⁶⁴. Until 1984, children of six to twelve years were prepared in four yearly sessions, after which they participated with adults in a house of learning. This approach supports a process of growth that favors recognizing, discovering, experiencing and familiarization rather than accumulating information.

5.6.21. *Wattel, Den Heeten and the case of Hoofddorp*

Wattel and Den Heeten²⁵⁶⁵ write how their church in Hoofddorp tried to approach the issue as a learning process instead of a debate²⁵⁶⁶. It started with

²⁵⁶⁰ Sjoerd Pieter Zwaan (1948), at that moment pastor of the RCN Zwijndrecht- Groote Lindt, wrote his master's thesis on resistance against participation of children at the Lord's Supper.

²⁵⁶¹ S.P. Zwaan, "Liturgische Catechese: Waar kinderen en jongeren de maaltijd van de Heer mee viëren," *Eredienstvaardig* (1986).

²⁵⁶² The genesis of *Kindernevendiensten* is then example of the same search. Sjoerd P. Zwaan, "Kind en liturgie," in *De weg van de liturgie: Tradities, achtergronden, praktijk*, ed. M. Barnard et al. 4th ed. (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2008), 388.

²⁵⁶³ Jelle Loosman (1947), former pastor of the Thomas church of Oud-Beijerland, at that moment serving as hospital chaplain in Breda.

²⁵⁶⁴ Jelle Loosman, "Een kinderleerhuis in de Thomaskerk te Oud-Beijerland," *Eredienstvaardig* (1986).

²⁵⁶⁵ M.J. Wattel (1947) and G. den Heeten (1932) at that moment both pastors of RCN Hoofddorp.

²⁵⁶⁶ M.J. Wattel and G. den Heeten, "Wat valt er nog veel te leren!" *Eredienstvaardig* (1986).

the questions most often asked by members from new suburbs. A different kind of question was given for children than for teenage youth²⁵⁶⁷. The following learning process brought surprise over new discoveries such as the relevance of Isaiah 25. It also highlighted the Supper from the liturgical and ethical perspectives of the table prayer, solidarity and accountability besides more common perspectives of reconciliation. The decision to introduce the practice of paedocommunion in this way was remarkable. It recognized that too much discussion would set the Lord's Supper unduly apart, and it acknowledged that learning is both preparation and participation. An age limit of five to seven is suggested but is left to the discernment of the parents. The result of this approach was that the atmosphere of the Lord's Supper became simpler, more spontaneous, and more joyful. Although the learning process started in the church, the church encouraged catechetical preparation of the children for the Lord's Supper at home. The church in Hoofddorp extends the learning process approach regarding the question about the place of children within the church in general.

5.6.22. Continued discussion after synod's final decision

Although it is debatable when this discussion comes to a conclusion, for the purposes of this dissertation, I choose November 30, 1993. This is the day that synod removed the last barrier for the admission of baptized children and youth with the change of church order article 75²⁵⁶⁸. It is actually the formalization of an existing practice. By this time, approximately one third of the 800 local RCN congregations are admitting children at the Lord's Supper²⁵⁶⁹. It is quite remarkable that it was hard to find any new contributions to the discussion from within the RCN in the five years prior to this conclusion. It may be just as surprising that the discussion within the NRC, which preceded that of the RCN, continues in those years. Several articles, for example, are written in the more conservative periodical *Kontekstueel*²⁵⁷⁰. The

²⁵⁶⁷ However, the authors also mention that many children and youth had not experienced Lord's Supper because Sunday school kept them away or because parents allowed them to stay at home.

²⁵⁶⁸ Art. 49, Acts RCN 1993-1995 Synod, 84-85.

²⁵⁶⁹ "Kerkorde laat kinderen aan het avondmaal toe: Lunteren formaliseert bestaande situatie," *Nederlands Dagblad*, December 2, 1993.

²⁵⁷⁰ I found the following *Kontekstueel* articles: L.M. Vreugdenhil, "Vernieuwing gevraagd rondom de doop," *Kontekstueel* (October 1988) (an article on baptism with one remark on baptism in relation to Lord's Supper abstention (non participation) which led to a number of articles on participation in the Lord's Supper); H.C. Marchand, "Maar ieder beproeve zichzelf ...: Preekschets naar aanleiding van 1 Cor. 11:28," *Kontekstueel* (December 1988); T. Poot, "Avondmaal – de kleine met de groten?" *Kontekstueel* (December 1988); W. Verboom, "Doop – Belijdenis – Avondmaal: Enkele reformatorische notities," *Kontekstueel* (December 1988); A. van de Beek, "De toegang tot het Heilig Avondmaal," *Kontekstueel* (December 1988); G.W. Marchal, "Samen verder," *Kontekstueel* (February 1989); M. Veldhuis, "Versterking tot wat ...?" *Kontekstueel* (February 1989); M. Verduin, "Gesprek rond Doop-Belijdenis-Avondmaal," *Kontekstueel*

news of August 2007, that Noordegraaf²⁵⁷¹ could imagine children participating at the Lord's Supper²⁵⁷² is an indication of this continued discussion and reflection on the issue among the more conservative NRC theologians.

5.6.23. Runia in retrospect

Two more contributions after 1993 deserve our attention because they are from RCN theologians who participated in the discussion prior to 1993. I found a small article by Runia²⁵⁷³ in the *Frisian* newspaper²⁵⁷⁴. Runia responds to a reader²⁵⁷⁵ who wonders why the churches of the Secession of 1834 and the *Doleantie* in 1886 have not embraced Luther and Calvin's practice of admitting children. Runia first gives a short summary of the historical developments, citing the common opinion that a participant in Communion had to understand to some extent what he or she was doing. This understanding marks the difference between passive baptism and active participation in the Supper. Runia considers it self-evident that no one argues in favor of communing babies or toddlers, but he seems open to participation of young children from whom nothing more and nothing less than childlike faith is required.

5.6.24. Wentzel's change of mind

The other contribution is by Wentzel²⁵⁷⁶ in his *Dogmatiek*²⁵⁷⁷. In a counterproposal at the RCN 1974 Synod, Wentzel and two deacons list nine arguments against the admission of children: 1) the Passover family meal

(February 1989); W. Verboom, "Kinderen op weg naar het avondmaal: Een reactie n.a.v. de thematiek Doop – Belijdenis – Avondmaal," *Kontekstueel* (April 1989); E.R. Jonker, "Het gesprek in de gemeente over de deelname van kinderen aan de Maaltijd des Heren," *Kontekstueel* (February 1990); R. Van Essen, "De revolutie van breken en delen," *Kontekstueel* (Augustus 1990). *Kontekstueel* originated as theological periodical of the *Ph. J. Hoedemaker* Association and presents itself as contemporary, Reformed and confessional.

²⁵⁷¹ Dr. Albert Noordegraaf (1933-2011), then professor emeritus Practical Theology of the University of Utrecht (1985-1998).

²⁵⁷² "Dr. Noordegraaf: Kind aan avondmaal denkbaar," *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, August 24, 2007. An edited version of the lecture of Noordegraaf was published as "Kinderen aan het avondmaal? Een omstrede onderwerp," *Theologia Reformata* (March 2008).

²⁵⁷³ Dr. Klaas Runia (1926-2006), professor of Practical Theology at the Theological University of Kampen (1971-1992). Runia participates, for example, in the 1974 Synodical debate, Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 193.

²⁵⁷⁴ K. Runia, "Kinderen aan avondmaal," *Friesch Dagblad*, September 29, 1995.

²⁵⁷⁵ Anonymous.

²⁵⁷⁶ Dr. B. Wentzel (1929), teacher at the Reformed Bible College Wittenberg in Zeist (1976-1997), participates, for example, in the 1974 Synodical debate, Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 192.

²⁵⁷⁷ B. Wentzel, *De Heilige Geest, De kerk en de laatste dingen: De genademiddelen, het gemenebest en het eschaton*, Volume 4c of *Dogmatiek* (Kampen: Kok, 1998), 225-235.

cannot be identified with the Supper for believers; 2) God gives grace, but requires discernment; 3) it is not good for the church and its education to disconnect participation and profession of faith; 4) also, it is not good to let the denomination suffer by leaving the issue in the freedom of local churches; 5) the church and its office bearers have to guard against profaning the Supper and devaluating grace; 6) both church and parents have to raise the children leading them from baptism to an individual choice to profess the God of the covenant; 7) the practice and experience of other churches do not encourage the admittance of children; 8) it is pedagogically important to allow children freedom to choose for Christ; and 9) it is ethically important not to take children to the Supper before they are psychologically ready to give their full consent²⁵⁷⁸. Twenty-four years later, Wentsel presents arguments on both sides – contra and pro admission. Taking sides against admission, it could be argued that the New Testament is silent on the participation of children. Also, by lack of readiness and inability to discern, the professing nature of the church would be undermined. Wentsel's final argument against paedocommunion claims that the celebration of the Supper requires preparation and sanctification, and that individualism and the desire for autonomy have damaged family bonds in the West making family-wise Communion unfeasible²⁵⁷⁹. Switching sides, Wentsel argues that children of believing parents share in the benefits of salvation. The two-sided nature of the covenant requires parents to raise their children in the fear of the Lord, and the family²⁵⁸⁰ is considered a spiritual unity within the covenant. The child is an example to adults in simplicity, trust, dependence and receptivity. Children, just like adults, should obey the commandments of love in which some of the Corinthians failed. The Supper is foremost the sign and seal of God's love, faithfulness and salvation, and this is more significant than the required faith and self-examination. Finally, the tradition of the church supports participation of children²⁵⁸¹. Wentsel concludes that the arguments in favor carry more weight, and that admission of children should be allowed under the conditions that the parents believe and guarantee (borg staan voor) faith formation within the family, and that the church oversees responsible participation of parents and children²⁵⁸².

²⁵⁷⁸ Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 192-193, listed in a different order.

²⁵⁷⁹ Wentsel (1998), 228.

²⁵⁸⁰ Including children and slaves, as Wentsel states.

²⁵⁸¹ Wentsel (1998), 229-233.

²⁵⁸² Wentsel (1998), 233.

5.7. Denominational Discussion Synod RCN

5.7.1. 1960 – The Netherlands Reformed and abstention

The discussion on children at the Lord's Supper within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) is, among other things, a response to similar discussion at Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC). In 1960, the first NRC synodical report on participation in the Supper in reality deals with the problem of abstention from the Lord's Supper by church members and even office bearers²⁵⁸³.

5.7.2. 1961 – The Netherlands Reformed raise the question

One year later, the NRC 1961 Synod deals with a concept memorandum on ecumenical Lord's Supper celebration²⁵⁸⁴. The memorandum mentions the general practice of Dutch protestant churches to admit youth at the age of approximately eighteen. It expresses both the question whether this age could be lowered as well as the concern about the tendency to postpone public profession of faith. This deprives youth of the blessing of the Lord's Supper for many years, and youth get accustomed to church life without participation. The question has been raised whether those in preparation of profession of faith and even children of parents belonging to the congregation²⁵⁸⁵ should be admitted²⁵⁸⁶. The memorandum counts with the exceptional, but not impossible situation that a non-baptized person longs to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Baptism and Supper may not be separated, but it might please the Holy Spirit to lead a person from Supper to baptism, the report suggests²⁵⁸⁷. At the synod floor, several delegates plead in favor of paedocommunion and insist on taking a decision on the matter²⁵⁸⁸. Christian newspapers make the broader Reformed community aware of this discussion²⁵⁸⁹.

²⁵⁸³ Generale Synode der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, *De deelname aan het avondmaal: Overwegingen van de generale synode der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk ten aanzien van de avondmaalsmijding* ('s Gravenhage: n.p., 1960). For the original report, see *Concept geschrift over de viering van het Heilig Avondmaal*, Supplement IX, Supplements to Acts NRC 1960 Synod, 457-483. For Synod's deliberations on the report, see Acts NRC 1960 Synod, 283-292. The report only mentions children in a metaphorical or spiritualized way.

²⁵⁸⁴ Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 320-326. October 31, 1961.

²⁵⁸⁵ Preferably with their parents, the final report adds. Generale Synode der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, *Open en Oecumenisch Avondmaal* ('s Gravenhage: n.p., 1962).

²⁵⁸⁶ Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 324.

²⁵⁸⁷ Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 325.

²⁵⁸⁸ Though later Acts of Synod make clear he is not in favor of paedocommunion, Elder Baauw wonders, without mentioning age, whether baptized members of the NRC should not be admitted if baptized members of other churches are also admitted. Pastor Kaastra more explicitly asks the question why children should not be admitted to the Supper. Pastor Mooi asks whether catechism students can be admitted. Pastor Post states it is incorrect that the Lord's Supper should be received in faith just like

5.7.3. 1962 – *Paedocommunion discussed at NRC Synod*

A decision is not taken, and the discussion is continued at the NRC 1962 Synod²⁵⁹⁰. In an edited memorandum, the synodical committee has not dealt with the issue of admission of children more specifically, neither has the committee responded to the desire for postponing or advancing profession of faith²⁵⁹¹. Several delegates voice opinions both pro and contra²⁵⁹². In response synod still does not take a decision on paedocommunion but in its report, *Open en Oecumenisch Avondmaal*, now recommends that local churches reflect on this matter²⁵⁹³.

5.7.4. 1963-1964 – *RCN Synod asked for feedback on paedocommunion*

This report is also sent to the RCN Synod for feedback, which means that the issue of paedocommunion has reached the RCN Synod, or at least reached its officers before it meets in 1963-1964²⁵⁹⁴.

5.7.5. 1965-1966 – *The issue still not on agenda of Synod*

The officers refer the report to a synodical committee²⁵⁹⁵, which reports to the RCN 1965-1966 Synod²⁵⁹⁶, but as this report includes no response to the NRC report and does not mention paedocommunion, the issue is still not on the

baptism. Pastor Spilt asks for a decision regarding children's Communion. He emphasizes the specific context of Paul's words on self-examination. He considers it important not to withhold the Supper from adolescents. Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 326-330.

²⁵⁸⁹ "Oecumenische viering mogelijk? Stemmen op synode: ook kinderen aan Avondmaal," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, November 1, 1961 (11-12).

²⁵⁹⁰ Acts NRC 1962 Synod, 67-83. February 13, 1962.

²⁵⁹¹ The committee believes it is incorrect to disconnect profession of faith and admission. The committee also refers to problems in the German churches, and to church order. Acts NRC 1962 Synod, 76.

²⁵⁹² Post wonders whether baptism and Communion cannot be disconnected, so that non baptized members of other churches can be welcomed at the table. The commandment to baptize was given after the commandment to commune. He suggests the age limit of 12 by analogy of Jewish custom. Prof. Jonker disagrees with the suggestion to admit non-confessing or non-baptized members of other churches. This is neither in line with the early church nor with the church of the Reformation. Prof. Rasker suggests that when German youth is allowed in the NRC, Dutch youth should be allowed at a younger age as well. Abelsma wants Synod to express concern over lowering the age of profession of faith. Deacon Lewin wants profession and admission disconnected if the age of the first remains high. Acts NRC 1962 Synod, 78, 79, 82. February 13, 1962.

²⁵⁹³ *Open en oecumenisch avondmaal*, 9. The report does state that in no case children's Communion, without any understanding or faith, should be promoted, as that would be impermissible 'sacramentalism'.

²⁵⁹⁴ It is reported on by the officers of Synod 1961-1962, without any mention of paedocommunion.

Supplement XLI, *Verkort Rapport van het moderamen van de synode van Apeldoorn 1961/62*, Suppl. Acts RCN 1963-1964 Synod, 125f. esp. 137.

²⁵⁹⁵ *Deputaten voor onderzoek van de vraag in hoeverre tot het houden van gemeenschappelijke avondmaalsvieringen kan worden overgegaan*. Supplement II a, Suppl. Acts RCN 1965-1966 Synod, 11.

²⁵⁹⁶ It reports on the issues of intercommunion, admission of guests, and student Communion. Supplement LXXIIIa, LXXIIIb, Suppl. Acts RCN 1965-1966 Synod, 300-322.

agenda of synod²⁵⁹⁷. And though the RCN Synod had hoped to make a decision on intercommunion at its meeting in March 1966²⁵⁹⁸, even that issue is referred back to a new synodical committee²⁵⁹⁹. As part of another synodical discussion²⁶⁰⁰ earlier that year, the question was asked whether it is good that children tend to leave the church when the Lord's Supper is celebrated, and whether it would not be better for them to be present²⁶⁰¹. The synodical committee²⁶⁰² did not answer this question in its response.

5.7.6. 1967 – Young people put issue before NRC Synod

Meanwhile, a new initiative will put paedocommunion on the agenda of the NRC Synod again. More than 10,000 young people between the ages of eighteen and thirty have participated in over 850 discussion groups of the project, *Kerk 66-2000*. The project results in a report and thirty three theses offered to the NRC 1967 Synod²⁶⁰³. Thesis 9 states *the group has rejected public profession of faith in its current form as admission to the Holy Supper*²⁶⁰⁴. Regarding the Holy Supper, thesis 14 pleads for a less exceptional status, for weekly celebration, and admission of all believers. Thesis 14.2 states: *The children will be invited to the Supper as well*. Motives for the participation of children are: *a) children belong to the household of the church and as such should be able to participate in the meal of the Lord, b) in the perception of children the sacrament speaks more clearly than verbal proclamation, c) in this manner children learn to celebrate and observe the Supper, and finally d) by letting children participate in the Supper the tense atmosphere, which often dominates the Supper, can be loosened*²⁶⁰⁵. In the discussion on the report several delegates respond pro and contra theses 9 and 14.2²⁶⁰⁶. The NRC Synod unanimously decides to continue reflection on

²⁵⁹⁷ The report does reiterate baptism and profession of faith as requirements for participation or gateways to the Table. Suppl. Acts RCN 1965-1966 Synod, 302, 304, 307. The NRC, which has received feedback from 44 NRC classes, 5 NRC church councils, Union Baptists, Salvation Army, Old-Catholic Church, Mennonites, Moravian Church, Remonstrant Brotherhood, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Acts DRC 1966 Synod, 65-73), expresses its sadness that the RCN failed to respond (p. 65, 72, 92).

²⁵⁹⁸ Acts RCN 1965-1966 Synod, 94.

²⁵⁹⁹ Art. 392, 396, 457, 459, 460, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 492, Acts RCN 1965-1966 Synod. January 19, March 16, 17, 18, 1966.

²⁶⁰⁰ On the order of worship.

²⁶⁰¹ Art. 361, Acts of RCN 1965-1966 Synod, 348. January 14, 1966.

²⁶⁰² G.N. Lammens speaks on behalf of "deputaten voor de eredienst."

²⁶⁰³ "Kerk 66-2000," Supplement 14, 15, Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 181-190. November 20, 21, 22, 1967.

²⁶⁰⁴ Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 181.

²⁶⁰⁵ Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 182.

²⁶⁰⁶ Elders Baauw and Van Kleunen would regret disconnecting profession and admission; Elder Baauw questions the necessity of family Communion; Elder Van der Heijden questions children's ability to attend consciously; Elder Van Kleunen asks for a Biblical foundation of paedocommunion prior to its introduction; Pastor Brink distinguishes family Communion from children's Communion and speaks in favor of the first; Dr. Bijlsma suggests an incorporation in the congregation at age 12, opening the way for family

the report in a synodical committee. This will lead to the joint NRC RCN report, *Samen op Weg* in 1969.

5.7.7. 1968 – Issue indirectly on RCN Synod

The following RCN Synod the issue of paedocommunion is mentioned in an overture asking for recognition of adult baptism. The authors write in their argument, “In light of the confession, Heidelberg Catechism Lord’s Day 30, question 81, and the Belgic Confession, article 35, on the Lord’s Supper, it is not clear to us why advocates of infant baptism are not also advocates of children’s Communion.”²⁶⁰⁷ “After all, in the Heidelberg Catechism Lord’s Day 27, question 74, the same is pledged to children as to adults.”²⁶⁰⁸ Synod does not specifically address this argument but refrains to the general consideration that the brothers have presented no new arguments either in favor of adult baptism or against infant baptism²⁶⁰⁹.

5.7.8. 1969-1970 – Issue in report, but not on agenda

In 1969, a Rotterdam youth group by the name *Denken en doen*²⁶¹⁰ sends a report (*Daadwerkelijke mondigheid*²⁶¹¹) to synod. The tone of the report is critical, radical, left wing, and politically engaged²⁶¹². They call their ideology *inclusive thinking*²⁶¹³. The report contains mostly proposals regarding social justice. Yet the Lord’s Supper – and meals in general – are of great symbolical significance. The front cover of the report tells a story of a meal, of sharing food and hypocrisy, and the opening words to synod lament apartheid at the Supper in South Africa²⁶¹⁴. The proposed church service of the future resembles the meeting of social activists but includes liturgy, prayer and an agape meal²⁶¹⁵. Profession of faith and the Lord’s Supper should be

Communion; Youth representative De Kok speaks in favor of family Communion. Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 18/38-23/43. November 21, 1967.

²⁶⁰⁷ A rare term “kinderavondmaal” is used.

²⁶⁰⁸ Supplement 80, Suppl. Acts RCN 1967-1968 Synod, 531.

²⁶⁰⁹ Art. 329, Acts RCN 1967-1968 Synod, 260. January 25, 1968.

²⁶¹⁰ Thinking and doing.

²⁶¹¹ Actual empowerment. The Dutch word *mondigheid* means maturity, but also (the right to be) recognized as adult, empowered to have a vote or voice, and able to decide act and judge, cf. *Van Dale* 13th ed.

²⁶¹² Propaganda for specific political parties is encouraged, *Denken en Doen* Rotterdam propagates the political party PPR (Politieke Partij Radikalen = Political Party Radicals), which was founded a year before in 1968 and which would merge into *Groen Links* (Green Left) in 1989. *Denken en doen* (1969), 16.

²⁶¹³ Cf. Feitse Boerwinkel, *Inclusief denken: Een andere tijd vraagt een ander denken*, 1966 (Bussum: Unieboek, 1975).

²⁶¹⁴ *Denken en doen* (1969), 0-1.

²⁶¹⁵ *Denken en doen* (1969), 14-15.

disconnected²⁶¹⁶; the current practice is labelled as discrimination. The ethical implications of the Supper are emphasized²⁶¹⁷. Two synodical committees²⁶¹⁸ take notice of the report's plea for social justice, but the proposals regarding the Lord's Supper are not put on the agenda of synod²⁶¹⁹.

In September 1969, the RCN and NRC synodical committees related to youth²⁶²⁰ publish the report, *Samen op Weg*²⁶²¹. In all, 571 youth²⁶²² and fifty two moderators from thirty eight congregations²⁶²³ held conversations about the denominations' future²⁶²⁴. The report voices a strong desire to disconnect public profession of faith from admission to the Supper²⁶²⁵. Under the same heading, conversations about admission of children to the Supper are reported. Family is perceived as a small church within the church, catechism teaching as part of family life, and the Supper as celebrated by families²⁶²⁶. The report further pleads for more frequent Supper celebration and for intercommunion²⁶²⁷. On November 25, 1969, the report is discussed in a "hearing" of delegates, committee members and fourteen youth representatives²⁶²⁸. As paedocommunion is only one of many subjects in the report, only a few remarks are made about it. One delegate²⁶²⁹ expresses the hope that synod will seriously deal with youth Communion²⁶³⁰. A youth representative explains youth Communion as celebrating the Supper as family. This is based on the significant place of families within the church. Whether a child participates should be the responsibility of the parent. The youth representative realizes that this is a matter for a study committee²⁶³¹. The

²⁶¹⁶ In a local survey 36% considers this very important, 22% important, 16% is neutral, 18% disagrees and 6% strongly disagrees. *Denken en doen* (1969), 23.

²⁶¹⁷ *Denken en doen* (1969), 22.

²⁶¹⁸ *Deputaten voor Kerk en Jeugd*, and *Commissie VII inzake ontwikkelingsamenwerking*.

²⁶¹⁹ Supplement 71a & 72, Suppl. Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 440, 447.

²⁶²⁰ RCN *Deputaten kerk en jeugd* and NRC *Raad voor het Jeugdwerk*.

²⁶²¹ *Deputaten Kerk en Jeugd* and *Raad voor het Jeugdwerk*, *Samen op Weg*, 's Gravenhage: n.p., 1969. The follow-up of *Kerk 66-2000*.

²⁶²² Between age 18 and 35.

²⁶²³ Chosen by sociologists as representative for the NRC and RCN.

²⁶²⁴ *Samen op Weg*, 3f.

²⁶²⁵ *Samen op Weg*, 9.

²⁶²⁶ *Samen op Weg*, 9. The report adds that in those churches where the issue was discussed youth and church councils agreed on this matter.

²⁶²⁷ *Samen op Weg*, 9f.

²⁶²⁸ Art. 169, Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 145f. November 25, 1969.

²⁶²⁹ The conversation is anonymized in the acts of synod and only distinguishes between synodical delegates ("s") and youth ("j").

²⁶³⁰ The novelty of the subject may be revealed by the use of an uncommon term "jeugdavondmaal" (youth Supper) by two delegates, instead of the term "kindercommunie" (children's Communion or infant Communion). When speaking of the praxis of the early church or the Eastern Orthodox Church the term "zuigelingscommunie" (infant Communion, or Communion of 'sucklings', unweaned children) is often used.

²⁶³¹ Art. 169, Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 149. November 25, 1969.

president concludes the “hearing” and promises that the relevant committees²⁶³² will take everything into consideration. However, six weeks later, with the report on ecumenical Supper celebration, the reporter indicates it was not possible to incorporate the suggestions of *Samen op Weg*²⁶³³. The proposals and the decision regarding joint Supper celebrations both include the condition that the churches agree on who should be invited and admitted to the Lord’s Supper²⁶³⁴.

On November 27, 1969, two days after the “hearing” on *Samen op Weg*, the synodical committee for the worship service²⁶³⁵ reports on liturgical developments in local churches, for example, experiments with agape meals²⁶³⁶. Such practices are also considered and initiated from a missionary perspective. The committee further reports on voices from other denominations and from within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands calling for the introduction of paedocommunion. The committee diplomatically suggests that these matters are not irrelevant to the liturgical structure of the worship service and request to be instructed to get involved in this matter and, if necessary, in consultation with the synodical missionary committee²⁶³⁷. After discussion of the report, the synodical committee for the worship service receives, among others, the instruction to research the liturgical aspect of possible new forms of being congregation in contact and consultation with the synodical missionary committees and the committee for congregational structure²⁶³⁸, as well as the vaguely worded instruction²⁶³⁹ to give guidance in the question of a potential study on paedocommunion, if possible, with other churches²⁶³⁹.

In January 1970, this same synod deals with the issue of baptism and Lord’s Supper celebration of those with mental and psychological challenges²⁶⁴⁰.

²⁶³² Committee IV and V.

²⁶³³ Art. 210, Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 188. January 6, 1970. Though the committee has edited her report. See Supplement 51b, Supplements to Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 358.

²⁶³⁴ Art. 210, art. 218, art. 239, art 246, art 267, Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 186, 196, 210f., 228. January 6, 7, 8, 9, February 3. Supplement 51a, 51b, Supplements to Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 340f.

²⁶³⁵ Deputaten voor de eredienst.

²⁶³⁶ Supplement 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod: 304.

²⁶³⁷ Deputaten voor de evangelisatie.

²⁶³⁸ Commissie gemeentestructuur.

²⁶³⁹ “c- in contact en overleg met generale deputaten voor de evangelisatie en de commissie gemeentestructuur het liturgische aspect van eventueel nieuwe vormen van gemeente-zijn onderzoeken; d- het vraagstuk van een eventuele studie over kindercommunie, zo mogelijk met andere kerken, te begeleiden;” Art. 189, Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 167. November 27, 1969.

²⁶⁴⁰ The Dutch words “debiel,” “imbeciel” and “zwakzinnige” used in 1969 are now considered derogatory and politically incorrect, just like the English words “retard,” “imbecile” and “moron.” Rapport van de deputaten voor de bestudering van de vragen in verband met doopbedieing aan en avondmaalsviering van debielen en zwakzinnigen. Supplement 58a, Suppl. Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 371-381.

Though this issue is not explicitly connected with paedocommunion, it is important to see how the synodical committee proposes to open the table for the intellectually disabled who are characterized as *adult children* of whom a *childish understanding* of truths of faith may be required²⁶⁴¹. Synod decides accordingly including the specification that the required knowledge and understanding are at their level²⁶⁴².

Looking back on this decade, Zegwaard might be right in concluding that paedocommunion was not a matter of synodical debate within the denomination²⁶⁴³. But analysis of the synod in the sixties with its exposure to the Netherlands Reformed Church and emerging ecumenical contacts with that same denomination, with a next generation which makes itself increasingly heard, a renewed debate on infant baptism²⁶⁴⁴, liturgical renewal and missionary experiments by local churches, and emancipation and inclusion of the childlike intellectually disabled reveals the building of momentum. This explains why a synodical debate on paedocommunion will be unavoidable in the seventies.

5.7.9. 1971-1972 – Overtures regarding paedocommunion

The 1971-1972 Synod receives overtures from classes Haarlem²⁶⁴⁵ and Groningen²⁶⁴⁶ requesting to study the issue of paedocommunion²⁶⁴⁷. A similar overture is received from the council of the Reformed Church, Zwolle E²⁶⁴⁸ to allow paedocommunion in view of the ecumenical services with the local Netherlands Reformed and Roman Catholic Church²⁶⁴⁹. The first two overtures explicitly, and the third²⁶⁵⁰ assumingly, result in the decision to form a committee to study the question whether children of the congregation can be allowed to the Lord's Supper, including all principal and practical issues related to this, and to do this in consultation with the Netherlands Reformed

²⁶⁴¹ Supplement 58a, Suppl. Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 378-379.

²⁶⁴² Art. 230, Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 202. January 8, 1970.

²⁶⁴³ Anna Zegwaard, *Als kinderen meevieren: Een onderzoek naa de discussie over kindercommunie binnen de kerken* (Gorinchem: Narratio, 2006), 56. Zegwaard also refers to the dissertation K.W. de Jong, *Ordering van dienst: Achtergronden van en ontwikkelingen in de eredienst van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1996), 300.

²⁶⁴⁴ Almost coinciding with the publication of Barth's Church Dogmatics, IV.4

²⁶⁴⁵ Classis Haarlem supporting an overture of the RCN of Castricum.

²⁶⁴⁶ I considered it beyond the scope of this study to retrieve these letters from the archives.

²⁶⁴⁷ Supplement 51, Suppl. Acts RCN 1971-1972 Synod, 97f.

²⁶⁴⁸ Wijkkerkeraad E.

²⁶⁴⁹ Supplement 81, Suppl. Acts RCN 1971-1972 Synod, 162. Meanwhile concerned congregations members have also sent a letter of complaint to Synod.

²⁶⁵⁰ Schravendeel mentions 6 letters, but that number does not correspond with the acts. P. Schravendeel, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" Credo (May 1977).

Church and possibly other churches²⁶⁵¹. During the procedure, it becomes clear that the synodical committee for the worship service has already started a study on paedocommunion in consultation with the Netherlands Reformed Church in line with its interpretation of the synodical instruction of November 27, 1969. There is some debate whether the vaguely worded instruction constitutes an instruction to begin the study or merely to assist in the event of a study on paedocommunion²⁶⁵². A solution is found by including members of this synodical committee in the new study committee. The acts do not register either a discussion or arguments pro or contra paedocommunion.

5.7.10. 1973-1975 – Interim report on paedocommunion

In 1973, the new synodical committee publishes an interim report²⁶⁵³. The Lord's Supper, in light of Scripture and especially 1 Corinthians 11, is a means in which God offers Himself and through which believers receive Him in faith. Participation therefore requires faith. The requirement of such faith distinguishes it from infant baptism or the requirements for Passover celebration. There is room for younger believers at the table, as an age for participation has never been determined by the denomination, and a child may participate with a childlike faith. However, prior teaching is needed, which means that teaching within families should be revived, and teaching within churches needs to start earlier. Then, without forcing children, but waiting for children to express a desire to participate of their own accord, councils could welcome those children after a good conversation. Profession of faith then should be a basic expression of faith in Jesus Christ and may need to take place in two stages.

The advisory committee is critical of the interim report²⁶⁵⁴. The interim report seems to reduce the issue to a matter of minimum age, which the denomination never determined. The interim report neglects to demonstrate how many are convinced that a rediscovery of biblical teaching opens the table to children, but also how a renewed liturgy, ecumenical contacts at home and abroad, and less tangible aspects – like culture²⁶⁵⁵ and church climate – continue to raise the question of paedocommunion. The advisory committee is also criticises how the interim report treats children as

²⁶⁵¹ Art. 129, 136, 172, 294, Acts RCN 1971-1972 Synod, 122f., 125f., 148f., 255f. October 6,7,13, 1971 February 28, 1972. The official response to the overture of Zwolle is dealt with separately in art. 236, Acts RCN 1971-1972 Synod, 215f. November 25, 1971.

²⁶⁵² Acts RCN 1971-1972 Synod, 256. February 28, 1972.

²⁶⁵³ Supplement 18, Suppl. Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 64-66. The interim report is also published in as "Kinderen aan het avondmaal," *Kerkinformatie* 30 (1973): 13-14.

²⁶⁵⁴ Supplement 19, Suppl. Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 66-67.

²⁶⁵⁵ The advisory committee speaks of *levensgevoel*.

individuals instead of as family members. It also advises against the idea of dividing profession of faith in two.

By the time synod discusses the question, it is in response to nine overtures²⁶⁵⁶. A counterproposal by Dr. Wentzel and two deacons is considered out of order, as synod decides that the interim report provides insufficient grounds to decide on paedocommunion. To come to a final report, preferably before the end of synod, new members are added to the synodical committee. Synod also adds the instruction to include the reports of the Netherlands Reformed Church in its study²⁶⁵⁷.

5.7.11. 1975-1976 – Final report on paedocommunion

The final report was not finished before the end of the 1973/1975 Synod, but is ready for the 1975/1976 Synod²⁶⁵⁸. Officially, there is a majority²⁶⁵⁹ and a minority²⁶⁶⁰ report, but the minority only adds one small section explaining that the disagreement is not about the presented material, but about what conclusions this material justifies²⁶⁶¹. The report approaches paedocommunion from the perspective of history, New Testament, dogmatics, psychology and pedagogy, pastorate, and church order²⁶⁶². The most historically relevant perspective - is care within the Reformed tradition for the confessional nature of the church and a growing emphasis on personal faith publicly professed²⁶⁶³. The New Testament is silent on paedocommunion. But, considering Jewish, Greek and Roman religion, it would be incomprehensible if children did not participate²⁶⁶⁴. If mature faith is required,

²⁶⁵⁶ Overtures from the churches of Antwerp, Haarlem-South, Pijnacker-Nootdorp, Utrecht-East, Eindhoven and Zoetermeer, and from the classes Hoofddorp, Groningen, and Breukelen. Art. 213, Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 191-192. March 30, 1974. Not counting the earlier overture of the church of Zwolle-E and the overture to this synod by the churches of Haarlem-North regarding paedocommunion in ecumenical services, Art. 241, Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 212-213, June 7, 1974.

²⁶⁵⁷²⁶⁵⁷ The president of synod mentions a NRC report of December 28, 1973. The final instruction is less specific. Art. 213 & Suppl. 2 (*Breed Moderamen*) Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 192, 423. In all likelihood this is the concept version of the report the NRC Synod has recommended for reflection in the local congregations, at its meeting of February 19, 1974. *De deelneming aan het avondmaal: de plaats van jongeren in een luisterende en vierende gemeente* ('s Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1974).

²⁶⁵⁸ The report was published in "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976).

²⁶⁵⁹ W. Bakker, B. Berends, C. van den Brink, M. Harry van Loon, C.J. den Heyer, R. Van Reenen, P.T. de Ruiters-Feenstra, J. Voerman, H. Hogenhuis (advisor).

²⁶⁶⁰ Y. Feenstra, P. Schravendeel.

²⁶⁶¹ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 16.

²⁶⁶² The six perspectives in percentages of the total word count: history 15%, New Testament 19%, dogmatics 15%, psychology and pedagogy 30%, pastorate 7%, and church order 14%. At synod the writers of the minority report will indicate that these psychological data were very significant for their opposition. Art. 306, Acts RCN 1975-1976 Synod, 197.

²⁶⁶³ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 4.

²⁶⁶⁴ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 6.

would the disciples have participated in the original Supper? Do we withhold salvation from children?²⁶⁶⁵ Dogmatically, God's gift of grace, which needs to be appropriated in faith, is core to the Supper. Baptism is passive, the Supper requires action. Communion of babies is therefore rejected. Confessions describe mature faith. This raises the question, What is required from those whose faith is still being formed? Why does Jesus set children as an example? Do we underestimate the work of the Holy Spirit? At least some ripening and some fruit should be found. That is the task of the church and its office bearers²⁶⁶⁶. Not the invention of childhood round 1750, but the end of it round 1950²⁶⁶⁷ when culture became cofigurative, raised the question²⁶⁶⁸. Psychological and pedagogical insights offer no grounds to reject family Communion²⁶⁶⁹. Pastoral care should prevent sacramentalism, social pressure, loss of confessional character, and unrealistic standards of faith²⁶⁷⁰. Church order requires prior profession of faith²⁶⁷¹ and deals with admonition and discipline for all²⁶⁷². It does not specify age²⁶⁷³ but allows for differentiation between youth and adults²⁶⁷⁴. In conclusion, the majority report suggests leaving the decision to the freedom of the churches under the conditions mentioned by the report.

The minority report is against paedocommunion and gives more weight to the required faith, ethical discernment, the confessional character of church and Supper, and especially to the pedagogical insight that children do not fathom reconciliation and are sensitive to social pressure. Baptized children under God's Word lack no salvation when barred from the table²⁶⁷⁵.

A variety of opinions are expressed²⁶⁷⁶ on the floor of synod. Briefly, here are some of the remarks that are put forward:

- The need for paedocommunion can only be measured if experimental experiences are permitted.

²⁶⁶⁵ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 7.

²⁶⁶⁶ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 7-9.

²⁶⁶⁷ Without mentioning their names the description reminds us of Van den Berg's *Metabletica* and Philippe Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood* and Neil Postman's later book, *The Disappearance of Childhood*.

²⁶⁶⁸ Young and old now operate more as equals. See Margaret Mead's, *Culture and Commitment*.

²⁶⁶⁹ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 9-13.

²⁶⁷⁰ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 13-14.

²⁶⁷¹ Art. 75.

²⁶⁷² Art. 105.

²⁶⁷³ Like NRC ordinance 9-4-1.

²⁶⁷⁴ Art. 110.

²⁶⁷⁵ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 17-18. Art. 302, Acts RCN 1975-1976 Synod, 192f. October 5, 1976.

²⁶⁷⁶ The acts mention discussion, but mostly reports opinion on procedure. Art. 302-307, 330, Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 190-198, 215f. October 5, 7, 1976. In *Kerkinformatie* the discussion is summarized under 21 bullets, apparently reflecting a similar number of (mostly anonymized) speakers.

Paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed Tradition

- It is unfair to require churches to wait. In response, another delegate advises to at least wait until church order is changed.
- It is discrimination to let churches decide differently.
- Do not forbid paedocommunion, but discourage it, someone suggests.
- We should neither alienate ourselves from Reformed churches of the past and around the world, nor follow the bad example of German churches.
- The question should be answered together with the NRC.
- Christ's command means children should or should not attend; incidental celebration should be avoided.
- The atmosphere of the Supper is too tense and lacks joy. Possibly different spheres of celebration shape different opinions on paedocommunion.
- In the Netherlands Reformed Church, a survey of forty churches that practice paedocommunion reveals that more frequent celebration often raises the question.
- Supper celebration teaches and also should be taught.
- Sending children to Sunday school at one moment, while inviting them to participate at another is contradictory.
- Teenagers are afraid to participate; children are overburdened by participation.
- The two sacraments do not differ that much; paedocommunion is the consequence of paedobaptism; both will remain controversial.
- Another suggests the key question is whether children share in salvation.

Several delegates suggest to consult or even to leave the decision to the churches. Hence, the final decision is that the churches will be consulted on two issues: 1) their opinion on paedocommunion, and 2) their position on leaving the ultimate decision to the local churches²⁶⁷⁷.

5.7.12. 1977-1979 – *A handful of reports, hundreds of letters*

As a result, the following synod receives a majority report²⁶⁷⁸, two minority reports with an addendum²⁶⁷⁹, a report by the synodical committee on church order²⁶⁸⁰, and a report of the advisory committee II²⁶⁸¹. In response to the two questions, 313 letters were received from regional synods, classes, church councils, district councils, congregation members, youth elder committees,

²⁶⁷⁷ Art. 330, Acts RCN 1975-1976 Synod, 215f. October 7, 1976. "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 2. This is also Synods response to two new overtures by the church of Voorburg and Maarssen.

²⁶⁷⁸ Supplement 44, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 208-216.

²⁶⁷⁹ Supplement, 45, 46, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 216-233, 233-234.

²⁶⁸⁰ Supplement, 60, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 292-298.

²⁶⁸¹ Supplement, 61, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 298-300.

and ministry teams. Some contained more responses, but not all responded to both questions²⁶⁸². Though the majority report emphasizes it is not a vote where numbers count, but a consultation where arguments count, both reports mention that of all the responses, 163 are against paedocommunion, 114 are in favor, and 64 somewhere in between; 175 are against leaving it in the freedom of the churches, 75 are in favor, and 9 state explicitly that they are undecided²⁶⁸³.

Proponents point to the covenant of grace. The grounds for infant baptism, sign and seal of that covenant, also support paedocommunion. Jesus' invitation to children²⁶⁸⁴ is often mentioned, as well as participation of children in the Passover. Proponents have either experienced paedocommunion or anticipate that participation of children will be positive for both the children and the rest of the congregation.

Opponents point out that participation in the Supper requires a certain readiness, self-examination, discernment, understanding of the necessity of reconciliation and sanctification. Introducing paedocommunion undermines profession of faith and the confessional character of the church. Opponents fear either going back to Roman Catholic sacramentalism, or following the negative example of the German churches.

Those who are undecided wonder whether children really desire to participate, whether churches are ready, and if the issue will not lead to further polarization within the denomination. Some churches take no position in their response as their congregation is divided over the issue²⁶⁸⁵.

The majority report²⁶⁸⁶ suggests the Bible does not provide a decisive ground either for or against. Regarding the biblical data, the majority suggests 1 Corinthians 11 should be read in context. Both sacraments are sign and seal of God's grace – grace which is fundamental for young and old. This similarity between the sacraments is more fundamental for the issue than any of the differences. God's grace and love require faithful response, and no sacrament should be administered without faith. But with the baptism of infants, the faith of the parents counts, and the same could be done at the Supper. The Supper was instituted in the context of Passover, but is also foreshadowed in

²⁶⁸² Suppl. 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 228.

²⁶⁸³ Suppl. 44, 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 209, 228.

²⁶⁸⁴ Cf. Mar. 10:14.

²⁶⁸⁵ Summaries given both by the majority and minority report, Suppl. 45, 46.

²⁶⁸⁶ Suppl. 44.

other Old Testament ceremonies. Even though none of these equals the Supper, the Old and New Covenant are in essence one, and the position of children is certainly not essentially different in the New Covenant. The majority report further recognizes a new attention to the unity of the congregation. United celebration of the Supper has often led to the discovery of the Supper as feast²⁶⁸⁷. Regarding profession of faith, the majority report predicts it will not be undermined, but it may lose its *once for all* character²⁶⁸⁸. The majority sees room for innovative churches and therefore proposes to allow the introduction of paedocommunion under the condition that good information is provided to congregations, age- and ability-appropriate teaching is provided for children, parents and councils uphold proper admonition and discipline, and classes are consulted. Churches should further report and reflect on their experiences with paedocommunion. For now church order need not be adapted²⁶⁸⁹.

The minority report argues how 1 Corinthians 11 does not explicitly exclude children, but discernment, though more than an intellectual activity, does include reason. Self-examination, in its context, has ethical implications, but also reveals the critical nature of the Lord's Supper²⁶⁹⁰. Are children capable of such self-examination?²⁶⁹¹ Supper celebration in obedience to Christ's command allows no temporary participation²⁶⁹². The minority report also wonders whether Jesus makes all children examples, or just the one, and whether their faith is exemplary or another of their character traits. Against the argument that children should not be hindered to come to Jesus, the report suggests that there are other ways to come to Jesus. Regarding the relation between Passover and Supper the minority report again refers to Ridderbos who emphasizes that Jesus' words about the blood of the covenant invite us to see the Supper in a broader perspective²⁶⁹³. Regarding the relation between baptism and Supper, the report points out that the parents' promise to teach their children and to let their children be taught provides space which the celebration does not allow. The minority further argues that youth are not expressing a desire to participate; that children are not able to understand sin and redemption; that youth are vulnerable to social pressure; and finally, that

²⁶⁸⁷ Cf. Is. 25:6 and Rev. 19:9, Acts 2:46.

²⁶⁸⁸ Compare the report "Onderweg zorgen voor elkaar," *Kerkinformatie* (September 1974).

²⁶⁸⁹ Art. 220. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 151f.

²⁶⁹⁰ Cf. H. N. Ridderbos, *Paulus* (Kampen: Kok, 1966), 474-478.

²⁶⁹¹ The minority report mentions how, according to the feedback of one church, 82% of the responses consider children able to discern, but only 30% consider them able to examine themselves, Suppl. 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 219.

²⁶⁹² "Temporary" because children who have participated may drop out during their teenage years.

²⁶⁹³ Cf. H.N. Ridderbos, *De Komst van het Koninkrijk: Jezus prediking volgens de synoptische evangeliën* (Kampen: Kok, 1950), 361-362.

the exclusion of other non-baptized children would even be more difficult. The minority report also wonders how paedocommunion can be introduced when certain churches still experience Supper abstention, when ecumenical consequences cannot be overseen, when volunteers to catechize the children are scarce, and when many adults have poor spiritual lives. Regarding the question whether the decision can be left to local churches, the argument of the autonomy of the local church is rejected, as local churches have autonomously committed to be part of the denomination. Regarding the possible undermining of profession of faith, it is not the early, positive reports of churches which recently introduced paedocommunion, but the negative example of the German *Evangelische-altreformierte Kirche of Niedersachsen* that predicts the future of the RCN. With the introduction of two professions of faith, the first would undermine the second. The minority report is convinced that the real choice is generally made around the age of eighteen or even later. The minority proposes to strongly dissuade churches to admit children or youth without prior profession of faith, and to remind churches that have already introduced paedocommunion of church order art. 75.

In the discussion on the floor of synod²⁶⁹⁴, the question is asked whether allowing infant baptism and paedocommunion is like double mortgaging children. One delegate reminds synod of its 1969/1970 decision on the admission of intellectually disabled persons who were perceived as older “children”²⁶⁹⁵. Some delegates feel that the reports have neglected the confessions, church order, and age of admission²⁶⁹⁶. Lammens believes the psychological and pedagogical arguments carry too much weight in the minority report. Schravendeel responds that the majority report fails to convince. When the discussion is concluded, the majority proposal is supported with forty eight against twenty two²⁶⁹⁷. Church order article 75 is not changed, but synod unanimously decides that article 137 provides a loophole for deviating practices. The decision also instructs the synodical youth pastorate committee and the training centre to develop catechetical material²⁶⁹⁸. These actions reveal that the decision has some omissions regarding for example liturgical forms, profession of faith, and the required classical approval. Half a year later, after the same synod has been confronted with some of the omissions and the church order tensions of its earlier

²⁶⁹⁴ Art. 220-223, 225-227, 229, 242, 276-279, 281-283, Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 151-159, 167, 193-197, 199-200. April 5, 6, October 11, 1978.

²⁶⁹⁵ Art. 221. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 154.

²⁶⁹⁶ Art. 225. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 156.

²⁶⁹⁷ Art. 229. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 157. April 5, 1978.

²⁶⁹⁸ E.g. H. Hogenhuis, *De tafel van de Heer ook voor de kleine gelovigen* (Leusden: Dienstencentrum RCN, 1980).

decision, synod instructs churches to adapt liturgical forms and orders of worship, and to follow the procedures to adapt church order to the new situation²⁶⁹⁹.

5.7.13. 1979-1980 – Requests for revision and support

The next synod receives requests for revision and complaints from several churches²⁷⁰⁰, a classis²⁷⁰¹ and synodical committee²⁷⁰². Other churches²⁷⁰³ express their support of a critical open letter by the Confessional Reformed Association²⁷⁰⁴ of January 25, 1979. Synod acknowledges that the decision of the previous synod deviated from church order, but also states that revision of the decision at this stage would be undesirable. However, concerning problems that might arise when members move from a church that admits children to one that does not admit children to the Table, synod assures these issues will be further studied²⁷⁰⁵.

This same synod deals with the report of the synodical committee which dealt with the former synod's instructions regarding liturgical forms, church order, etc.²⁷⁰⁶. This committee advises that little children do not profess their faith but participate under responsibility of their believing parents. In light of this responsibility, parents are also the first to teach their children. Council only indirectly oversees and supports this role of parents. Regarding age of admission, they advise that the age at which a child regularly attends and participates in the worship services would be the appropriate age. In the teenage years, it is important that both parents and the pastor provide guidance for those who want to participate, but also to warn against participation out of habit or superstition. Regarding profession of faith, the committee expresses some first considerations, but suggests further study is needed. The report does not follow up on the instruction to create new forms, or orders of worship. The advisory committee is critical of the report, especially because the proposals regarding church order do not follow the advice of the church order specialists, because some of the instructions of

²⁶⁹⁹ Art. 282. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 199f. October 11, 1978.

²⁷⁰⁰ The churches of Nij Beets, Berlikum, Oudehorne, Niezijl, Siddeburen, Exmorra/Allingawier. Supplement 61, Suppl. Acts RCN 1979-1980 Synod, 260f.

²⁷⁰¹ Classis Almkerk. Suppl. 61 Suppl. Acts RCN 1979-1980 Synod, 263.

²⁷⁰² The synodical committee for denominational ministry among crew of inland shipping (*deputaten voor de kerkelijke arbeid onder de Opvarenden bij de Binnenvaart*) in cooperation with the council of Nassau church of Amsterdam-Oud-West. Suppl. 61 Suppl. Acts RCN 1979-1980 Synod, 264.

²⁷⁰³ The churches of Ouddorp, Grijskerk, Kampen I.

²⁷⁰⁴ *Confessioneel Gereformeerd Beraad*.

²⁷⁰⁵ Art. 251, 253. Acts RCN 1979-1980 Synod, 202-206. October 7, 1980.

²⁷⁰⁶ Suppl. 62, Suppl. Acts RCN 1979-1980 Synod, 265-273.

Synod 1977/1979 have not been followed, and because of the lack of explicit proposals regarding profession of faith²⁷⁰⁷. There is a minority report from one member of the advisory committee who is critical of the suggestion that not personal faith, according to age and ability, but the faith of the parents is now the ground for participation.

The discussion at the floor of synod²⁷⁰⁸ leads to the decision to add a clause to article 75 of the church order²⁷⁰⁹, to instruct the synodical committee for the worship service to study the need for change in liturgical forms. Synod also asks local churches that admit children or youth to give feedback that will be evaluated by a new synodical committee.

5.7.14. 1981-1982 – No two thirds majority

Feedback is only received from eight churches and one other²⁷¹⁰. The feedback is positive. The synodical committee further advises not to create special liturgies, as they are concerned with infantilizing the Supper celebration. The issue of church order turns out to be more complex²⁷¹¹. The proposed changes do not receive the two third majority necessary for a change in church order. A month later, synod unanimously decides to install a synodical committee that will study the place of profession of faith in light of the former synodical decisions, and then will determine what consequences this has for church order. Synod again asks churches who admit children to give their feedback²⁷¹².

5.7.15. 1991-1993 – The conclusion of the denominational discussion

It takes until 1992 for synod to decide that the admission of children and youth is in accordance with church order²⁷¹³. I will treat this as the conclusion of the denominational discussion within the RCN. I realize this is a debatable choice. The process of the reunification means that simultaneously RCN and NRC must produce a joint study on admission of youth to the Lord's

²⁷⁰⁷ Suppl. 63, Suppl. Acts RCN 1979-1980 Synod, 273-276.

²⁷⁰⁸ Art. 255, 256, 300, Acts RCN 1979-1980 Synod, 206-213, 243-244. October 7, 10, 1980.

²⁷⁰⁹ Which needs the approval of local churches before it will be officially changed, cf. art 62.2 of the church order.

²⁷¹⁰ Suppl. 40. Suppl. Acts RCN 1981 Synod, 131-132. Art. 137-139, 141. Acts RCN 1981 Synod, 101-104. March 2, 1982.

²⁷¹¹ Suppl. 37, 38, 39, 54, Suppl. Acts RCN 1981 Synod, 124-131, 189-190. Art 130, 131, 134, 135, 136, 139,141. Acts RCN 1981 Synod, 95-101. March 2, 1982

²⁷¹² Art. 148, 202. Acts RCN 1981 Synod, 106, 161-163. March 3, April 21, 1982.

²⁷¹³ Suppl. 30, Suppl. Acts RCN 1991-1993 Synod, 237-243. Art. 131, 170, 177. Acts RCN 1991-1993 Synod, 178-179, 219-225, 243, 244. April 29, November 24, 1992. Art. 34 Acts RCN 1991-1993 Synod (Breed Moderamen), 343-345. February 25, 1992.

Supper²⁷¹⁴. As the two denominations prepare for reunification, a new church order needs to address the issue once again. But for now, fifteen years after RCN Synod 1977 opened the Table for children and youth, church order upholds that decision.

5.8. Summary

The next chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the material of this and other preceding chapters. It may be helpful to draw some preliminary conclusions here. The chronological presentation of the discussion on paedocommunion in the denominational periodicals helps us recognize how each started in the fifties or sixties. That was also a significant era for the re-introduction of paedocommunion by several of the paedocommunion pioneers, as we have seen in chapter 4. That raises the question: what set the stage for this discussion and for such a liturgical innovation? I hope to answer that question in the next chapter.

In the next chapter I hope to explain why the environmental dimension is crucial in understanding the timing of the introduction of paedocommunion. Awareness of the environmental dimension helps us understand the influence of culture, of the changing position of children in society and church as well as the ecumenical context, on the discussion on and introduction of paedocommunion.

At this point it is safe to conclude that only few participants in the discussion acknowledge a possible influence of culture on the opinions on paedocommunion, and even less so when it comes to one's own point of view. Most frequent and specific are the remarks within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands about how the issue of paedocommunion is raised in the context of culture that has become cofigurative.

Speaking of a culture which changes from postfigurative to cofigurative also relates to the changing position of children in society. Only few acknowledge a possible relationship between this changing position of children in society and their changing position at the Supper Table. More participants mention the influence of pedagogical or developmental psychological insights as shaping their views.

²⁷¹⁴ "Draagt elkanders vieringen: Rapport van de "Gezamenlijke Studiecommissie Toelating Jongeren tot het Heilig Avondmaal," (Leidschendam: Generale Synoden van de Nederlands Hervormde Kerk en de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, 1992).

The third environmental aspect I want to highlight is that of exposure to other denominations or Christian traditions, especially through ecumenical contacts. The influence of other denominations and ecumenical relationships is mentioned more than the influence of culture or the changing position of children in society. Many participants consider such influence legitimate or desirable. On the other hand, I conclude that the further removed the other Christian tradition is perceived, the more the positive remarks are counterbalanced by negative remarks. The influence of similar Reformed denominations and Lutheran churches is almost always positively viewed, the practice and theology of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church, and a possible influence of those, is viewed both positive and negative.

I conclude that these three elements within the environmental aspect of the discussion first and foremost play a role by setting the stage for the discussion and possible introduction of paedocommunion. In the next chapter I will elaborate on this observation.

Considering how important emotions often are in shaping people's opinions, it is striking how few emotions are explicitly expressed in the periodical articles, popular theological books, the synodical reports and acts. It is remarkable on the other hand how many of the children who have a voice in this discussion express their opinions in terms of feelings. Several times we heard stories about children expressing their desire to participate. Desire certainly involves emotion. Children speak about feeling loneliness when left out, a sense of belonging when included, an experience of connected with God, an awareness of God's presence and existence, or a feeling of being strengthened and comforted. I suggested that the strong words used, especially in the periodicals of the sixties, may suggest strong emotions. If that assumption is true, then many adults also express emotions, especially in the early days of the Dutch discussion. Several authors speak about fears, or accuse others of fear. Once we hear about finding "harmony that eludes us when we theorize about it". I hope to say more about desire, the sense of belonging, fear, harmony and their role in the process in the next chapter.

Another dimension is that of obligations or ethics. Of all the arguments belonging to this dimension of obligation or ethics, arguments based on church order are mentioned most often. I observe that these arguments are mostly used by those opposing paedocommunion. In the overall discussion those arguments seem to be of secondary importance.

Other ethical arguments are brought forward, but I conclude that they play a relatively minor role in the discussion. I think of the fear for peer pressure or social pressure, the objection to taking children to the Supper before they are psychologically mature enough to fully consent, and the moral objections to serve children wine, alcoholic or “intoxicant” in nature. There are clearly ethical issues involved in 1 Corinthians 11, but keeping Browning’s dimensions in mind I classify arguments based on 1 Corinthians 11 primarily as visional.

In this chapter we have focused on the roles of many individuals. Significantly more individuals participate in periodical discussion within the CRC than within both Dutch denominations. Relatively more authors contribute only one article in the CRC periodicals, less so in the RCN discussion, and least so in the discussion within the RCL and DRC. I conclude that more individuals had a relatively equal voice in the CRC periodical discussion.

I also conclude that many pastors and ministry leaders whose names are connected with stories of the three local congregations in this research also played a role in the periodical debates or in synod’s deliberations. From New West most notably Pastor Al Helder and from Fourteenth Street most notably Educator Robert Keeley. This makes the fact that Jan Van Katwijk of Rijsbergen is not given a voice in his denominational discussion stand out even more.

More children and other lay members participate in the CRC periodical discussion than in the other two periodical discussions I researched. The periodical discussion within the RCN is most strictly reserved for theologians. In the next chapter I hope to come to more general conclusions about groups of individuals.

Most of the arguments which the participants in the discussion perceive as the major arguments can be considered part of the visional level or dimension. A short summary:

- A major biblical argument for paedocommunion advocates is the participation of children in Passover.
- A major biblical argument for those who oppose paedocommunion is found in 1 Corinthians 11, and the requirements of remembrance, proclamation, worthiness, self-examination, discernment of the body, and the warning of eating and drinking judgment on oneself.
- Great attention is paid to the history of paedocommunion and related issues, by both sides in the debate. Though many participants in the discussion would not call historical arguments conclusive, it seems

worthwhile to evaluate in the next chapter whether historical arguments do not play a more significant role.

- Arguments related to the confessions play a somewhat secondary role in the discussion. Confessional arguments do reflect some of the major biblical theological themes.
- Arguments related to the covenant are quite dominant in the paedocommunion debate. A first impression is that such arguments are mostly used by paedocommunion advocates. But covenantal theology is clearly common ground for all parties in the Dutch Reformed tradition, and covenantal arguments are treated with respect by the opponents.
- The theology and practice of infant baptism is also a significant argument for paedocommunion advocates.
- An often heard counter argument of opponents is that the covenant has two sides, and the sacraments reflect these two sides, a passive and active element in the relationship with God.
- Liturgical or sacramental arguments seem to be used relatively little for such a liturgical or sacramental phenomenon.
- The practice of profession of faith, in more than one way, plays an important role in the paedocommunion debate. Many arguments relate to profession of faith. Various suggestions are made about what profession of faith should be like, about whether multiple professions should be distinguished, and whether such profession is required of children.
- Arguments of quite a different nature are pedagogical arguments, or arguments related to the psychological development of children. Pedagogical arguments are used by all sides in the debate.

All these arguments deserve a more detailed evaluation, which I will provide in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 Interpretative Explanation

6.0. Introduction

The first part of my dissertation has provided the necessary historical background for my subject with the chapter on paedocommunion in history and the historical overview in the chapter on children and childhood in society and church. The second part of my dissertation provides a comprehensive overview of the most relevant dimensions of the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition. In the first chapter of this second part I have described the introduction of paedocommunion in three congregations within that tradition²⁷¹⁵. In an introductory section I have paid special attention to pioneers in the introduction of paedocommunion. In the next chapter I have given chronological overviews of the discussion within denominational periodicals and at the level of synods or national assemblies of three denominations within the Dutch Reformed tradition²⁷¹⁶. The first part of this dissertation thus provides the necessary historical background and the second part provides the chronologically organized material or data necessary for the third and final part of this dissertation.

In this final chapter I will systematically reflect on the major aspects related to the introduction of the paedocommunion praxis and the major themes within the paedocommunion discussion and their cohesion. For the sake of academic discourse I will refer especially to the works Eberhard Kenntner's dissertation *Abendmahl mit Kindern*²⁷¹⁷, Jo Hermans' dissertation *Eucharistie vieren met kinderen*²⁷¹⁸, and Anna Zegwaard's dissertation *Als kinderen meevieren*²⁷¹⁹, in formulating my own position.

²⁷¹⁵ The Reformed Church liberated of Rijsbergen in the Netherlands, the Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, in the United States, and the First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster, British Columbia, in Canada

²⁷¹⁶ The Reformed Churches liberated (Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt) and its offshoot the Dutch Reformed Churches (Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland) with special attention for the Netherlands Reformed Church (Nederlands Hervormde Kerk), and the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

²⁷¹⁷ Eberhard Kenntner, *Abendmahl mit Kindern: Versuch einer Grundlegung unter Berücksichtigung der geschichtlichen Wurzeln der gegenwärtigen Diskussion in Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1980).

²⁷¹⁸ J. Hermans, *Eucharistie vieren met kinderen: Een liturgie-wetenschappelijke studie over de deelname van het kind aan de eucharistie in het verleden en volgens de huidige kerkelijke richtlijnen* (Brugge, Tabor, 1987). Translated into German as Jo Hermans, *Eucharistie Feiern mit Kindern: Eine liturgie-wissenschaftliche Studie* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1991).

²⁷¹⁹ Anna Zegwaard, *Als kinderen meevieren: Een onderzoek naar de discussie over kindercommunie binnen de kerken* (Gorinchem: Narratio, 2006).

In organizing the content for this final chapter I have chosen to start with dealing with information which helps to explain what made the issue of paedocommunion topical and how the stage was set for its introduction. First, I hope to come to a more nuanced understanding of the role that the changing place of children and childhood in Western society played in this regard. With the help of the sociology of science I will argue that a socially induced focus of attention on children in the twentieth century set the stage. After arguing how such focus of attention may be related to paedocommunion, I will explain how different aspects of that focus benefitted children's participation in the Supper. Second, I will argue how a spirit of emancipation in culture, an awakened sense of justice, or a change in social consciousness, set the stage for a more equal treatment of children at the Supper. And third, I will argue that exposure to other Christian traditions set the stage for the introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition. With the help of the theory of diffusion of innovations I will explain how the innovation of paedocommunion spread to the Dutch Reformed traditions and accelerated within that tradition.

I have used five dimensions, derived from the work of practical theologian Don S. Browning²⁷²⁰, as a framework to analyze the different aspects that played a role in the discussion on - and the introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition. The changing place of children in society, a spirit of emancipation that permeates culture, and an environment of ecumenical exposure to other Christian traditions, could be considered part of the dimension which Browning calls environmental. With the treatment of the dimension of emotions and feelings, which Browning refers to as the tendency-need dimension, we enter the second part of this final chapter.

In the second part of this final chapter I will focus on the discussion and the introduction itself. I will analyze the dimensions of obligations or ethics, of roles²⁷²¹ and the visional dimension.

²⁷²⁰ Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 71, 106. Cp. Don S. Browning, "Empirical Considerations in Religious Praxis and Reflection (2005)," in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies*, ed. Ed. Don S. Browning (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 31-50.

²⁷²¹ Called "rule-role" by Browning.

6.1. What set the stage?

When I scanned the literature for paedocommunion pioneers worldwide²⁷²² I noticed how paedocommunion was introduced in many different countries in approximately the same era, while at least some of those pioneers did so unaware of each other and in that sense independently²⁷²³. I claimed that this indicates how causalities transcending the local particularities and factors beyond the motives as expressed by those involved may have played an important role in this introduction. Economic theory and the sociology of science may help shed light on this as they provide explanations for respectively similar clustering of innovations²⁷²⁴ underlying for example the Kondratieff wave in economic growth²⁷²⁵ and similar multiple discoveries in science²⁷²⁶, or scientific revolutions, also known as paradigm shifts²⁷²⁷.

Merton explains the phenomenon of multiple discoveries in science by formulating that science “advances through the uneven accumulation of knowledge and through immanently or socially induced foci of attention to particular problems by many scientists at about the same time.”²⁷²⁸

6.2. Children and childhood in society and church

Merton’s formula or definition may help us to understand and explain the role that the changing position of children and childhood in Western society played in the reintroduction of children at the Lord’s Supper. I am not the first to notice such a role, but I hope to come to a more nuanced understanding of this role, drawing conclusions from my research on the history of children and childhood in society and church, from my empirical research on three local churches, and from my research on the three denominational discussions at the floors of national assemblies and synods and in the denominational periodicals.

²⁷²² See paragraph 4.2.2.

²⁷²³ See paragraph 4.2.2. footnote 1461

²⁷²⁴ I would like to express my gratitude and indebtedness to Anton van Veen for providing me with this perspective from the economic theory of innovations.

²⁷²⁵ Alfred Kleinknecht and Gerben van der Panne, “Technology and long waves in economic growth,” in *The Elgar Companion to Social Economics*, edited by J.B. Davis and W. Dolfsma (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2008), 597-606.

²⁷²⁶ Robert K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, ed. Norman W. Storer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1973).

²⁷²⁷ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition; With an Introductory Essay by Ian Hacking*, 4th ed. 1962 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). On paradigm shifts in practical theology see for example Johannes A. van der Ven and Hans-Georg Ziebert, eds., *Paradigmenentwicklung in der Praktischen Theologie* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1993).

²⁷²⁸ Merton (1973), 355.

6.2.1. Focus on children and paedocommunion

Merton speaks of socially induced foci of attention. Hermans seems to describe such a socially induced focus of attention on children in the twentieth century, starting with Ellen Key's *The Century of the Child*²⁷²⁹. Hermans even speaks of 'paedocentrism' and mentions the emergence of youth movements as an example. Zegwaard also seems to describe such a socially induced focus of attention when she mentions changing opinions on the place of children in church and society, especially in the sixties and seventies, as one of the three reasons why paedocommunion became topical in the second half of the twentieth century²⁷³⁰.

6.2.2. Focus on children through history

It is good to realize that Hermans' dissertation focuses on the Roman Catholic tradition which lowered the age of first Communion with the papal decree *Quam Singulari* of 1910. The high hopes that the twentieth century might become the century of the child certainly provide interesting context to the papal decree. But it is important to realize that the nineteenth century has also been called the century of the child²⁷³¹, with nineteenth century writer Victor Hugo claiming the discovery of the child²⁷³². I have quoted Ariès claiming that childhood was an invention of the eighteenth century bequeathed by the nineteenth century²⁷³³. But Ariès' thesis seems to attribute similar importance to the seventeenth and sixteenth century. We heard Adam Phillips say, in his introduction to Ariès book, that the seventeenth century brought the new concept of the child²⁷³⁴. And Paula Fass speaks of Ariès' suggestion that the changes of the sixteenth century marked the radical revolution²⁷³⁵. Sommerville's bold claim that childhood was discovered in Puritan England also implies that this discovery can be traced to the late

²⁷²⁹ Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909), English translation of *Barnets Århundra* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers, 1900). Hermans (1987), 233f.

²⁷³⁰ She mentions: 1- growing interest in liturgy in Protestant churches, 2- changing opinions on the place of children in church and society, and 3- ecumenism. Zegwaard (2006), 39.

²⁷³¹ A.L. Van Hulzen, *Bijbel en Kind* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1929), 7. Cp. Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005).

²⁷³² Quoted in Claude Salleron "La Littérature au XIX^e Siècle et la Famille," in *Renouveau des Idées sur la Famille*, ed. Robert Prigent, 60-80 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), 67

²⁷³³ Philippe Ariès, "Le XIX^e Siècle et la Révolution des Moeurs Familiales," in Prigent (1954), 116.

²⁷³⁴ Adam Phillips, "Introduction to the Pimlico Edition," in Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: With a New Introduction by Adam Phillips*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Pimlico/Random House, 1996), 8. See also Ariès (1996), 44.

²⁷³⁵ Paula S. Fass, "Introduction: Is There a Story in the History of Childhood?" in *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, ed. Paula S. Fass, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 4. See also Ariès (1996), 45.

sixteenth and seventeenth century²⁷³⁶. Trexler mentions those who claim that the Renaissance discovered children and youth and refers among others to the angelic *putto* of quattrocento art, which was also noticed by Ariès²⁷³⁷. And to add to the confusion Ariès also stated: “No doubt the discovery of childhood began in the thirteenth century”²⁷³⁸. Several authors have proven Ariès wrong about the Middle Ages, and have even shown how the later discovery of the child, to paraphrase Ariès, had been bequeathed by the Middle Ages. Shahr, for example, pointed out how the Romantic Era derived its concept of childhood innocence from medieval Christian commentaries on Scripture²⁷³⁹. We heard how Richard Schröder compares the significance of the ancient church for children and childhood with the significance of Romanticism²⁷⁴⁰ and how many others have highlighted the changes that took place since Emperor Constantine’s conversion and the 313 Edict of Milan. And Overbeck, aware of the importance of the nineteenth century, speaks of the discovery of the child in the first century A.D.²⁷⁴¹. These multiple discoveries of childhood and multiple centuries of the child make clear that a simple reference to either cannot explain the return of children to the Lord’s Supper.

6.2.3. Same focus, changing outcomes

This becomes even clearer when we take into consideration that the age of first participation in the Lord’s Supper increased significantly - from seven to fourteen or fifteen in the Lutheran tradition, and from Calvin’s age ten to eighteen plus in the Reformed tradition – from the early sixteenth century until the early twentieth century. In other words, during centuries, in which many experts recognize one continuous development or evolution in the place of children and childhood in society, the age of first participation moves in two opposite directions; first up, then down.

²⁷³⁶ C. John Sommerville, *The Discovery of Childhood in Puritan England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

²⁷³⁷ Richard C. Trexler, *The Children of Renaissance Florence: Power and Dependence in Renaissance Florence, Volume 1*. 2nd ed. (Asheville: Pegasus, 1998), 1.

²⁷³⁸ Ariès (1996), 45.

²⁷³⁹ Shulamith Shahr, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*. 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

²⁷⁴⁰ As quoted in Hubertus Lutterbach, *Kinder und Christentum: Kulturgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf Schutz, Bildung und Partizipation von Kindern zwischen Antike und Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), 15-16.

²⁷⁴¹ Johannes Overbeck. “Die Entdeckung des Kindes im I. Jahrhundert n. Chr.,” in *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur und für Pädagogik Vol. 54* (Leipzig Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1924) 1-8.

6.2.4. *Changing focus, same outcome*

Both Hermans and Zegwaard describe a socially induced focus of attention on children in the twentieth century. But Hermans studies the Roman Catholic Church and describes the early twentieth century. Zegwaard's dissertation on the other hand focuses on the mainline Protestant churches in the Netherlands in which early pleas for paedocommunion were heard in the sixties, and in which the discussion reached its peak in the seventies and eighties. We have seen how several authors distinguish the first half and the second half of the century as two very different stages in the history of childhood²⁷⁴². The first half still experiences the discovery of childhood; the second half, according to some, already experiences its disappearance²⁷⁴³. Others register significant changes approximately at the end of the third quarter of the century, such as a sudden jump in the uncontrollable access to information through mass media²⁷⁴⁴, secularization and individualization giving birth to the postmodern family round 1970²⁷⁴⁵, a focus on the family changing into a focus on the child round 1970²⁷⁴⁶, or the change in culture from postfigurative, in which children learn primarily from their forebears, to cofigurative, in which children and adults learn from their peers, that cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead speaks about in 1969²⁷⁴⁷. But even though two or maybe three stages in the history of childhood can be distinguished within the twentieth century, a rather constant element is that children, one way or another, are a socially induced focus of attention.

6.2.5. *Denominational awareness of focus*

Participants in the discussion in the denominational periodicals are not very eager to acknowledge any social or cultural influence, except when acknowledging the influence of new insights in academic disciplines such as developmental psychology and pedagogy. Schippers' positive reference to the greater sense of unity between children and parents²⁷⁴⁸ in contemporary

²⁷⁴² E.g. Cunningham (2005), 203.

²⁷⁴³ Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*. 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

²⁷⁴⁴ Willem Koops, "Het kind als spiegel van de beschaving," in *Het kind als spiegel van de beschaving: Een moderne antropologie van het kind*, ed. Koops, Levering and De Winter (Amsterdam: SWP, 2007), 21.

²⁷⁴⁵ The second demographic transition, Nelleke Bakker, Jan Noordam and Marjoke Rietveld-van Wingerden, *Vijf eeuwen opvoeden in Nederland: Idee en praktijk 1500-2000*. 2nd ed. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2010), 266, 289.

²⁷⁴⁶ A change which coincided with North American and English influence replacing the dominant position of German psychology in the Netherlands. Janneke Wubs, *Luisteren naar deskundigen: Opvoedingsadvies aan Nederlandse ouders 1945-1999* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2004). A position challenged by Hugo Röling, "Boekbespreking: Janneke Wubs, etc.," *Pedagogiek* 2 (2005), 141-144.

²⁷⁴⁷ Margaret Mead, *Culture & Commitment: A Study of the Generation Gap* (London: Bodley Head, 1970), 3.

²⁷⁴⁸ Parents who share faith rather than to teach it.

culture is exceptional, true as it may be²⁷⁴⁹. Henk de Jong recognizes a similar influence, but frames it more negatively when suggesting paedocommunion practice is unconsciously influenced by socialism with its leveling tendency²⁷⁵⁰. I hope to show how De Jong is right about noticing a leveling tendency, but may be wrong in his analysis that socialism is the source of this tendency. With a reference to the work of cultural anthropologist Mead, Schravendeel acknowledges how the question of paedocommunion arises in the context of a culture which has been called cofigurative, but judges that such a contemporary question may prove to be nothing but a temporary question²⁷⁵¹.

6.2.6. Local awareness of focus

Of the three local churches being researched, hardly any of the interviewees or documents express an awareness of a socially induced focus of attention on children playing a role in the introduction of children at the Lord's Supper. Many of the interviewees and documents recognize how each of the three local churches in a unique and often more than one way focused their attention on children, in all three cases from their foundation. In Rijsbergen the unavoidable existential theological questions that its charter members had to study and discuss because of their extremely different backgrounds in on the one hand experiential Dutch Pietism and on the other hand more covenantal neo-reformed circles, focused the attention on children²⁷⁵². In Fourteenth Street CRC children were the focus of attention starting with the question "What must we do to keep our young people in the Christian Reformed Church?", which led to its foundation, and continued as tenderness for children as expressed in its more recent involvement in tutoring programs and in the *Children and Worship* program. In New West Church children were the focus of attention from the decision of its charter members to give priority to Christian education by building a Christian School before building a sanctuary, to the current involvement in a range of programs targeting children and youth²⁷⁵³. The unique ways in which each of these three congregations have focused their attention on children may have been above average, they certainly also had immanent causes and were perceived in harmony with the covenant theology and infant baptism praxis of the Dutch Reformed tradition, yet nevertheless this focus of attention seems to reflect

²⁷⁴⁹ K.A. Schippers, "Waarom vragen ouders er om?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

²⁷⁵⁰ Henk de Jong, "Over geloofsbelijdenis en avondmaal vieren (3)," *Opbouw* (May 21, 1976), 163.

²⁷⁵¹ P. Schravendeel, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" *Credo* (May 1977). Mead (1970).

²⁷⁵² Paragraph 4.3.18.

²⁷⁵³ Paragraph 4.5.1.; 4.5.11.

and to be related to the focus of attention on children in contemporary Western society and culture.

6.2.7. How increased focus benefits children

A socially induced focus of attention on children may in itself be enough to create greater awareness and to put the question of paedocommunion on the agenda. But as Sommerville notices in his study on the Puritans: "Children do not necessarily benefit from increased attention."²⁷⁵⁴ The question then would be how children benefitted from this increased attention or how the specific nature of this increased attention helped to open the Lord's Table for children. When Zegwaard mentions changing opinions about the place of children in society and church as one of the three major reasons for the introduction of paedocommunion in the second half of the twentieth century²⁷⁵⁵, she answers the question by providing more specific details. She explains how with the wars and crises of the twentieth century the ideal of parents to create a safe world for children segregated from the dangers and threats of the adult world had crumbled²⁷⁵⁶. In the sixties and seventies youth revolted against the establishment and the authority of adults²⁷⁵⁷, while claiming individual freedom, responsibility²⁷⁵⁸ and independence, demanding that children would be viewed as human beings in full dignity²⁷⁵⁹. The position of children in society changed in terms of economic and legal power under national and international law²⁷⁶⁰. Cunningham adds that children gained emotional power over their parents²⁷⁶¹. Zegwaard seems to refer to a similar shift in the power balance between parents and children when she writes how raising children started to resemble negotiation²⁷⁶². With Postman Zegwaard recognizes how the modern means of communication provided children and youth with new access to the world of adults²⁷⁶³. Decreasing segregation between the world of children and adults, and increasing participation of children in the world of adults at home and in society led to pleas for increased participation in church²⁷⁶⁴.

²⁷⁵⁴ Sommerville (1992), 78.

²⁷⁵⁵ Zegwaard (2006), 39.

²⁷⁵⁶ Zegwaard (2006), 41.

²⁷⁵⁷ Zegwaard refers to the historian L. Dasberg, *Grootbrengen door kleinhouden: Als historische verschijnsel*, 16th ed. (1975; Meppel: Boom, 2001), whose theory resembles Ariès'.

²⁷⁵⁸ Zegwaard refers to R.G. van Roon, *Visie op kind en jongere vanuit een vooroordeel* (Kampen: Kok, 1977).

²⁷⁵⁹ Zegwaard (2006), 41.

²⁷⁶⁰ Idem.

²⁷⁶¹ Cunningham (2005), 203.

²⁷⁶² Zegwaard (2006), 41. Cunningham (2005), 191.

²⁷⁶³ Zegwaard (2006), 41. Postman (1994).

²⁷⁶⁴ Zegwaard mentions the pleas of the Roman Catholic J. Nieuwenhuis, *Terwijl de boer slaapt: Opvoeding van kleine gelovigen* (Bilthoven: Ambo, 1973), 241; the Remonstrant J.L. Klink, *Geloven met kinderen*:

Earlier I expressed the hope to come to a more nuanced understanding of the role that the changing position of children and childhood in Western society played in the reintroduction of children at the Lord's Supper. I aim to do so by first commenting on the different aspects mentioned by Zegwaard.

6.2.8. Economic Aspect

Zegwaard seems to mention the increasing economic power of children merely to illustrate their changing position. In my research on the history of paedocommunion I did find the influence of economic realities on the age of first participation at the Lord's Supper. Families depending on the seasonal labour of children for their economic survival seem to have lowered the age of confirmation and hence participation in the Lord's Supper in the seventeenth and eighteenth century German countryside²⁷⁶⁵. But similar economic circumstances may have increased the duration of catechism and hence the age of participation in the Dutch Reformed Church of nineteenth century²⁷⁶⁶. I agree with Zegwaard and others that children gained economic power as consumers²⁷⁶⁷. But with the significant increase in secondary education in the first half of the twentieth century²⁷⁶⁸ and dramatic increase in enrolment in colleges and universities in the second half of that century²⁷⁶⁹ full economic independency was reached at a higher average age²⁷⁷⁰. And to the extent that full economic independency is an indicator of social maturity and to the extent that profession of faith and first participation is considered to mark the transition into adulthood these economic circumstances are more likely to have been a push towards later rather than towards earlier participation.

verkorte uitgave van de drielidige kleine theologie voor ouders en opvoeders: etc. (Bilthoven: Ambo, 1976), 70; the Netherlands Reformed R.G. van Roon, *Het Kind dat we waren en het kind dat we zijn* (Kampen: Kok, 1980), 45. Van Roon does speak about the child asking questions at the seder meal, but at the page Zegwaard refers to we do not find an explicit plea for paedocommunion. Earlier Van Roon had questioned infant baptism. Van Roon (1977), 412f.

²⁷⁶⁵ Paragraph 2.4.7.2. Philipp J. Spener, *Philipp Jakob Spener's deutsche und lateinische theologische Bedenken: In einer zeitgemäßen Auswahl herausgegeben von F. A. E. Hennische* (Halle: Gebauersche Buchhandlung, 1838), 276f.. Claus Harms, *Pastoraltheologie: In Reden an Theologiestudierende; Zweijtes Buch: der Priester*. 2nd ed. (Kiel: Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1837), 236. Carl Immanuel Nitzsch, *Praktische Theologie: Dritter Band; Zweite Abtheilung: Die evangelische Kirchenordnung* (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1867), 142.

²⁷⁶⁶ *Handelingen van de Algemeene Christelijke Synode der Hervormde Kerk in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in den jare 1830* ('s Gravenhage: Lands Drukkerij, 1831), 69-79. See also Kuiper, F. H. "kindercommunie in protestantse kring: een stap terug?" *Praktische Theologie* 1, no. 2 (1974): 107.

²⁷⁶⁷ See also *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, s.v. "Consumer Culture."

²⁷⁶⁸ Bakker (2010), 266; Judith Sealander, *The Failed Century of the Child: Governing America's Young in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 187.

²⁷⁶⁹ Bakker (2010), 381.

²⁷⁷⁰ Cunningham speaks of this in terms of economic productivity, in earlier centuries round age fourteen, but now not earlier than age 16, but often at age 21 or older. Cunningham (2009), 194.

6.2.9. Legal Aspect

The increasing legal power of children is probably also mentioned by Zegwaard merely to illustrate their changing position. Both national and international laws were significant for the improvement of the position of children. I already pointed out how the 1989 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* encourages participation of children in their communities²⁷⁷¹. Lutterbach points out that in the articles of the *Convention* potential conflicts regarding religion lay hidden, such as article 14 regarding the freedom of religion for children²⁷⁷². Freedom was an important theme in the Student Protests of the sixties and the seventies mentioned by Zegwaard²⁷⁷³. And my research confirms how students gave an important incentive to the discussion on paedocommunion in the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands which Zegwaard researched²⁷⁷⁴. Their claim to freedom came with a plea to admit children at the Lord's Supper²⁷⁷⁵. But that same freedom is mentioned by those who oppose paedocommunion²⁷⁷⁶, and those who even hesitate to baptize infants²⁷⁷⁷. Freedom and democracy and the right to vote are closely connected. In explaining how the century of the child failed and often biased to supporting the elderly, Sealander suggests that children's lack of electoral power has been quite significant²⁷⁷⁸. In that light it is worthwhile to note that in spite of the increased legal power of children, they never gained voting rights in church. Nevertheless I conclude that in general legal rights and principles have not played a significant role in the paedocommunion debate, except for matters of church order.

6.2.10. Segregation in society

Regarding children's segregated position I first need to nuance the close relation between the position of children in society or culture and in church. I do recognize with Postman how television and other modern media provided

²⁷⁷¹ Lutterbach (2010), 28f. Participation by children in their communities was also emphasized in Roger Hart, *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship; Innocenti Essays No. 4* (Florence: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1992).

²⁷⁷² Lutterbach (2010), 30. See also Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight: Childhood and Children in the Bible* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1996), 42f.

²⁷⁷³ Possibly under the influence of Van Roon (1977), 144-234.

²⁷⁷⁴ Paragraph 5.7.6., 5.7.8.

²⁷⁷⁵ "Kerk 66-2000," Supplement 14, 15, Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 181-190, November 20, 21, 22, 1967; Denken en doen (1969); Deputaten Kerk en Jeugd and Raad voor het Jeugdwerk, *Samen op Weg* ('s Gravenhage: n.p., 1969).

²⁷⁷⁶ E.g. B. Wentsel at Synod, Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 192-193.

²⁷⁷⁷ E.g. J.M. van Minnen, "Kinderlokkers in een konsumptieve kerk," *Gemeentetoerusting* (August 10, 1968).

²⁷⁷⁸ Sealander (2003), 4.

children with new access to the world of adults²⁷⁷⁹, and with Koops how newer media even caused a sudden jump in uncontrollable access to information²⁷⁸⁰, though I am aware of the danger of technological determinism²⁷⁸¹. Although media does not provide access to the Lord's Supper, it does provide access to the world of adults and phenomena such as sexuality, death, and economic consumption. As such it is part of the decrease in the segregation between the world of adults and children that many have noticed. Though segregation and marginalization are not synonymous, they can be closely related. Therefore it is relevant to remember how in for example the Roman Empire a marginalized role in society coexisted with high esteem and a significant role for children in cult²⁷⁸². The position of children in church does not necessarily reflect their position in society. This is underscored by the fact that Communion of children at a lower age was first reintroduced by the Roman Catholic Church in 1910, well before the two World Wars and the economic crisis could crumble the ideal of a safe and segregated world for children, and well before modern media gave children access to the world of adults.

The suggestion that the segregation between the worlds of children and adults decreased needs to be nuanced as well. The more widely accepted part of Ariès' thesis is that school removed children from adult society, possibly contributing most significantly to the segregation between the world of children and of adults²⁷⁸³. And in that sense the segregation even increased with the increase in secondary education in the first half of the twentieth century²⁷⁸⁴ and dramatic increase in enrolment in colleges and universities in the second half of that century²⁷⁸⁵ that I mentioned above. Sunday school and similar new initiatives in the second half of the twentieth century - such as the Dutch *Kindernevendienst*²⁷⁸⁶ and North American *Children and Worship*²⁷⁸⁷ in a sense continued or created segregation between children and adults on

²⁷⁷⁹ Postman (1994).

²⁷⁸⁰ Koops (2007), 21.

²⁷⁸¹ Cunningham (2005), 188.

²⁷⁸² Paragraph 3.2.4.

²⁷⁸³ Ariès (1996), 397.

²⁷⁸⁴ Bakker (2010), 266; Sealander (2003), 187.

²⁷⁸⁵ Bakker (2010), 381.

²⁷⁸⁶ Introduced since the early sixties in the Reformed Church in the Netherlands and later in more conservative denominations such as the Dutch Reformed Churches and the Reformed Churches liberated. "Amsterdams gereformeerd initiatief geslaagd: "Kindernevendiensten" voldoen heel goed: Gezamenlijke kerkgang met aparte preek voor de kinderen," *Zeeuws Dagblad*, Wednesday January 27, 1960. T. Hoekstra, "Ingezonden: Ik zou wel eens willen weten ...," *Opbouw* (January 26, 1979):39.

²⁷⁸⁷ As used by 14th Street CRC.

Sunday, keeping youth away from full participation in the church services²⁷⁸⁸. There is truth to Van Roon's statement that youth services and children's ceremonies created apartheid of ages and alienated generations from each other²⁷⁸⁹, as worship services targeting the young also continued or created segregation.

6.2.11. Participation in church

Zegwaard supports her claim that the decreased segregation and increased participation in society led to pleas for increased participation of children in church and the Lord's Supper with references to several authors, as we have seen. Yet her claim does not do justice to the fact that simultaneously opposite trends can be noticed and opposite pleas can be heard. Karl Barth may have been the most prominent twentieth century voice against infant baptism²⁷⁹⁰. I registered how similar sentiments were expressed in the paedocommunion discussion by for example Miskotte, Van Minnen and Matter²⁷⁹¹. With regard to profession of faith, in the Netherlands after the Second World War until today, a tendency to postpone profession of faith beyond the age of eighteen can be noticed²⁷⁹². In the Dutch paedocommunion discussion Hartvelt makes notice of those who seem to suggest confirmation as well as participation in the Lord's Supper at a slightly higher age than eighteen, arguing that the fourteen and fifteen year olds of Calvin's days equal the twenty or twenty-two year olds of today²⁷⁹³.

²⁷⁸⁸ Rudolf Boon, "Child and Church, Communion and Culture," in *Omnes Circumstantes: Contributions toward a history of the role of the people in the liturgy*; Presented to Herman Wegma, Ed. Charles Caspers and Marc Schneiders (Kampen: Kok, 1990), 231-232.

²⁷⁸⁹ Van Roon (1980), 41.

²⁷⁹⁰ Karl Barth publicly questioned infant baptism before the Second World War, in his brochure *Die Kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe*, published in 1943, and most extensively in *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik IV: Die Lehre von der Versöhnung 4*, published in 1967. G.C. Berkouwer, *Karl Barth en de Kinderdoop* (Kampen:Kok, 1947), 6; Karl Barth, *Die kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe, Theologische Studien Heft 14* (Zollikon, Evangelischer Verlag, 1943); Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV.4: The Doctrine of Reconciliation; Study Edition*, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

²⁷⁹¹ K.H. Miskotte, *In de waagschaal: Verzameld werk 1*, ed. J.T. Bakker, A. Geense and G.G. de Kruijff (Kampen: Kok, 1982), 166; Van Minnen (1968); H.M. Matter, "Communie of Avondmaal?" *Gereformeerd Weekblad* (December 29 (?), 1974). See also Van Roon (1977), 412f.

²⁷⁹² Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 320-326. October 31, 1961; M.H. Bolkestein, "Confessio et admissio," *Kerk & Theologie* 15, no. 1 (1964), 28f.; B.J. Aalbers, "De Weg van doop naar avondmaal," in *Kerk en jongeren: Werkboek ten dienste van het jeugd- en jongerenpastoraat*. Gemeentetoerusting 12, ed. G. Heitink and H. Hogenhuis (Kampen: Kok, 1976), 86.

⁸⁶. Compare Bolkestein (1964), 28f.

²⁷⁹³ G.P. Hartvelt, "Kindercommunie," *Centraal Weekblad* (May 1, 1971): 1.

6.2.12. Problems and tensions

In conclusion I can say that the development in society and culture, especially regarding increasing or decreasing segregation of the world of children and adults, may not have been as monolinear as suggested by Zegwaard and others, nor were the pleas in the ecclesiastical world as univocal. I rather agree with Aalbers who notices that the paedocommunion debate has taken place in the context of two movements in the opposite direction²⁷⁹⁴. In quoting Merton's formula I deliberately left out the word "problem", until now. Merton speaks of "socially induced foci of attention to particular problems". I might add that in this case not only the focus of attention is at least partly socially induced, but so is the problem. Speaking in terms of a problem, or in terms of tension created by movements in two opposite directions, better explains how the paedocommunion discussion tried to resolve conflicting views, why a change in praxis was thought to be beneficial, and how the outcome of the debate could be a choice for holding the tension²⁷⁹⁵, or the choice to release the tension in one of at least two very different ways. In other words, when Zegwaard writes "during the sixties and seventies the role of children in society, family and parish became an issue and so the demand for paedocommunion followed naturally"²⁷⁹⁶, I can agree as long as is clear that almost opposite demands followed just as naturally, and as long as is clear that there was not only one natural outcome of the debate that followed.

Kenntner's dissertation on the paedocommunion discussion in Germany confirms my impression by showing how a movement in one direction was surprisingly followed by a somewhat unexpected movement in the opposite direction, or how tension built by pleas for raising the age was finally released by lowering the age²⁷⁹⁷. Kenntner does that when he points out how the German paedocommunion discussion started as confirmation discussion round 1845²⁷⁹⁸. For over a century this confirmation discussion seemed to push in the other direction with pleas for a higher age of confirmation²⁷⁹⁹, for confirmation at the same age but a higher age for admission in full and active 'civil' right of the congregation²⁸⁰⁰, and for confirmation at the same age but a

²⁷⁹⁴ Aalbers (1976), 89.

²⁷⁹⁵ Just like one of the interviewees of 14th Street CRC said: "If we open the table you always have the risk of it being cheap grace, but the table should be open. It is one of those holding tensions."

²⁷⁹⁶ Zegwaard (2006), 174.

²⁷⁹⁷ Kenntner (1980).

²⁷⁹⁸ Kenntner (1980), 76f.

²⁷⁹⁹ E.g. Johann von Hofman in 1845, Kenntner (1980), 76.

²⁸⁰⁰ E.g. "aktive Gemeindebürgerrecht" Johann Höfling in 1848, Gerhard von Zezschwitz in 1876, Kenntner (1980), 76.

higher age for admission to the Lord's Supper²⁸⁰¹. But then after the Second World War, especially in the fifties and sixties the discussion surprisingly changed direction with pleas to lower the age of admission to the Lord's Supper, leading to the actual admission of children to the Lord's Supper²⁸⁰².

6.2.13. *Shift in power*

There is one aspect of the changing role of children in society, mentioned by Zegwaard, that I have not commented on yet. Zegwaard writes how raising children started to resemble negotiation²⁸⁰³ and I compared it with the similar shift in power balance between parents and children that Cunningham speaks of in terms of children gaining emotional power over their parents²⁸⁰⁴. One interviewee noted how the introduction of children to the Lord's Supper in church also happens under the influence of society or culture in which parents allow children more and more to make decisions which really are parents' decisions. I already commented how the amount of authority that parents have in a certain culture has also been related to the distinction between high context and low context cultures, the first which is characterized by centralized authority and responsibility at the top²⁸⁰⁵. Schravendeel used Mead's terminology of cofigurative to describe the nature of the relationship between parents and children in contemporary culture²⁸⁰⁶. Schippers speaks of greater sense of unity between parents and children²⁸⁰⁷. And Henk de Jong speaks of a leveling tendency²⁸⁰⁸.

6.2.14. *Moral panic as counterbalance*

Once again I need to nuance the impression of a simple monolinear development. After the Second World War experts register a moral panic in response to the threats and perceived threats to children and childhood, such as the erosion of the family and the moral decay of youth²⁸⁰⁹. Jay Mechling considers the history of formal organizations, such as scouting, largely a history of moral panics²⁸¹⁰. This implies that such moral panics were already a significant force in shaping the world of children and childhood at the

²⁸⁰¹ E.g. Johann Wichern in 1869 (?), Adolf Stoecker/Stöcker in 1900 (?), Kenntner (1980), 77, 215.

²⁸⁰² Kenntner (1980), 78f.

²⁸⁰³ Zegwaard (2006), 41.

²⁸⁰⁴ Cunningham (2005), 191, 193, 203.

²⁸⁰⁵ Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Book, 1981).

²⁸⁰⁶ Schravendeel (1977); Mead (1970).

²⁸⁰⁷ Schippers (1984).

²⁸⁰⁸ De Jong (1976), 163.

²⁸⁰⁹ Bakker (2010), 282f.

²⁸¹⁰ Jay Mechling, "Children in Scouting," in *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, ed. Paula S. Fass, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 420.

beginning of the twentieth century. Mechling mentions the moral panic about the evil effects of comic books in Cold War America, the moral panic about child abduction in the 1980s and 1990s, and the more recent moral panic about the effects of violent video games on young players, as well as other examples of such moral panics²⁸¹¹. Mechling mentions how historians assume that a moral panic reflects the projection of adult anxieties onto children²⁸¹². Cunningham explains how such anxieties of parents, more and more anxious to do the best for their children, and more and more anxious by the perceived loss of safety for children, counterbalanced this shift of emotional power towards children, with a shift towards greater protection of children²⁸¹³.

Children gaining emotional power over their parents and parents losing authority over their children do not automatically decrease the segregation between their worlds nor automatically create a greater sense of unity. The greater sense of unity and the leveling tendency are registered in a culture that is also described as cfigurative. It is good to remember that this term originates from Mead's study of the generation gap²⁸¹⁴.

When I speak of this shift of power in the relationship of children and parents in terms of a high context culture becoming a low context culture it is good to remember that in both types of cultures paedocommunion could be perceived as appropriate. My chapter on the history of children at the Lord's Supper shows how paedocommunion was common in the context of the high context cultures of the early centuries. Certain arguments in favor of paedocommunion, such as the identity of children being rooted in their believing families or in the covenant, are more characteristic of high context cultures. Children who decide for themselves that they want to participate in the Lord's Supper, and parents who allow that, are more reflective of a low context culture.

²⁸¹¹ Idem.

²⁸¹² Idem.

²⁸¹³ Cunningham (2005), 193f.

²⁸¹⁴ Mead (1970).

6.3. Emancipation

6.3.1. An awakened sense of justice not easily contained

Henk de Jong speaks of a leveling tendency among proponents of paedocommunion who are unconsciously influenced by socialism²⁸¹⁵. We should ask the question, paraphrasing De Jong, whether the emancipation of the child in church was influenced by the emancipation of the working class in society. Could it be true that the changes for children and childhood in society and culture, which led to their more equal treatment in terms of admission to the Lord's Supper, were somehow caused or influenced by similar movements and changes towards equality in other parts of culture and society? In his book *Bury the Chains*, Adam Hochschild writes about the impact of the abolition movement: "once awakened, a sense of justice is something not easily contained. It often crosses the boundaries of race, class and gender", and "Reverberations (...) also spread down through the generations"²⁸¹⁶. The antislavery movement and its tactics became model for new emancipation movements. Slavery itself served as a powerful metaphor in other causes. But when Hochschild says that a sense of justice, once awakened, is not easily contained, he seems to speak about a less tangible, but not less real impact within the inner world of humans' feelings, emotions, moral fabric and conscience. In such ways the emancipation of slaves influenced the emancipation of women, the emancipation of the British factory workers or working class, and inspired social legislation regarding child labor²⁸¹⁷. We found similar examples of slavery as metaphor and a sense of justice inspired by the anti-slavery movement in the first Dutch charges against child labor²⁸¹⁸.

6.3.2. A changed social consciousness

People have seen a relationship between the treatment of animals and children, but also adults for that matter, over the course of the history that I have researched. I mentioned how taming animals was a metaphor for

²⁸¹⁵ De Jong (1976), 163.

²⁸¹⁶ Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 352, 353.

²⁸¹⁷ Hochschild quotes a critical ballad about a child worked to death in a factory: "Their tender hearts were sighing as negro wrongs were told, but the white slave lay there dying who earned their father's gold," Hochschild (2005), 352.

²⁸¹⁸ Lalleman, "Slavernij in Nederland," *De Economist* (1855), included in J.C. Vleggeert *Kinderarbeid in de negentiende eeuw* (Bussum: Fibula – Van Dishoeck, 1967), 30-42. Compare J.J. Cremer in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* of March 11, 1863, "How often are saddened by the fate of Negroes and Javanese. Let us not forget that in our own factory cities, day in day out, children of our people are literally murdered ...," "drops of blood stick to your and my clothing...," (my translation), quoted in Vleggeert (1967), 56f.

educating and tutoring children in the Ancient World²⁸¹⁹, but the same metaphor is found in paintings from the Dutch Golden Age in which puppies symbolize Christian aptitude or eagerness to learn and little kittens unteachability²⁸²⁰. The same metaphor is also found in Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*²⁸²¹. The twentieth century academic qualification of the child as 'animal educandum' by Langeveld²⁸²², and modern evolutionary theories on children and childhood in new ways recognize parallels between children and animals. The story of how the cruelty against defenseless animals first caught the attention at the end of the nineteenth century and the story of how the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals founded the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and thus launched the national, American, and international child protective movement is an intriguing example illustrating this relationship between the treatment of animals and children²⁸²³. An awakened sense of justice not easily contained, with the words of Hochschild. Sealander, who shares the story, speaks of the idea that the defenseless should be protected²⁸²⁴ and of "a change in social consciousness" in which the interest in the fate of one unprotected creature helped rouse interest in the protection of other creatures²⁸²⁵.

6.3.3. Children and animals

I realize that we come across several examples in the Bible where the treatment of animals is used in an argument about the proper treatment of humans. The treatment of sheep justifies doing acts of mercy to a person on Sabbath²⁸²⁶. The treatment of treading ox justifies that apostles are supported

²⁸¹⁹ W.A. Strange, *Children in the Early Church: Children in the Ancient World, the New Testament and the Early Church* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 5,6,37. Plato for example writes "Children must not be left without teachers, nor slaves without masters, any more than flocks and herds must be allowed to live without attendants. Of all wild things, the child is the most unmanageable: an unusually powerful spring of reason, whose waters are not yet canalized in the right direction, makes hum sharp and sly, the most unruly animal there is. That's why he has to be curbed by a great many 'bridles', so to speak..." Plato, *The Laws: Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Trevor J. Saunders* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 252 (Book VII, 808D). We also pointed out that similar metaphors were used regarding training and educating adults, with a quote of Cicero as example.

²⁸²⁰ Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Fontana/Harper Collins, 1987) 547. Schama mentions how lambs symbolized simplicity in the Golden Age paintings of children.

²⁸²¹ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education, and Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, ed. Ruth W. Grant and Nathan Tarcov (1693/1709; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996), 26 or §35.

²⁸²² Bakker (2010), 89.

²⁸²³ Sealander (2003), 55f., 75, see also 53, fn.1. <http://www.mspcc.org/about/history/mspcc-and-child-welfare-milestones/> (accessed August 31, 2015).

²⁸²⁴ Sealander (2003), 55.

²⁸²⁵ Sealander (2003), 56-57. And once again children are compared to dogs, as lists of saved children joined those kept for redeemed dogs.

²⁸²⁶ Matt. 12:11-12.

by the congregations²⁸²⁷. The treatment of dogs justifies the healing of the demon possessed daughter of the Syrophenician²⁸²⁸. These Bible texts can be treated analytically or linguistically and in terms of rabbinic logic, Greek rhetoric or Aristotelian logic²⁸²⁹. When Hochschild speaks of an awakened sense of justice and when Sealander speaks of a changed social consciousness, they make us aware of how humans make decisions and act based on senses and a consciousness which are not merely rational, but at least also psychological or emotional in nature. This awakened sense not easily contained, or this changed social consciousness which takes an interest in the fate of all kinds of defenseless creatures, explains how emancipation movements in history can be causally related to each other as a chain-reaction, or how such emancipation movements may develop simultaneously, as it were in clusters. And this in spite of the fact that rationally or theologically the different issues or questions raised, might be easily distinguished and considered very different in nature.

6.3.4. Children and prostitutes

The historical example of the Hussites provides us with a beautiful example in which, what originates as a ministry to prostitutes evolves not only in the emancipation of these former prostitutes once they are converted, but also in a more general emancipation of the laity, of the poor and of the children. Participation of these groups in the Lord's Supper was a crucial issue for the Hussites, but at the same time only one of many ways in which their emancipation became tangible²⁸³⁰.

6.3.5. Children and the mentally disabled

In the context of the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition the admission of mentally disabled is most explicitly related to the admission of children, and an illustration of what Hochschild and Sealander describe. The Synod of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands treated the question of the admission of intellectually disabled members in the same era it dealt with the question of paedocommunion²⁸³¹.

²⁸²⁷ 1 Cor. 9: 7-12.

²⁸²⁸ Matt. 15:21-28, Marc 7: 24-30.

²⁸²⁹ In these cases the argument can be classified as *qal wahomer* or *a fortiori*, Hyam Maccoby, *Early Rabbinic Writings*, Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish & Christian World 200 BC to AD 200 Volume 3, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 172f.

²⁸³⁰ Paragraph 2.4.2.4.

²⁸³¹ *Rapport van de deputaten voor de bestudering van de vragen in verband met doopbedieing aan en avondmaalsviering van debielen en zwakzinnigen*. Supplement 58a, Suppl. Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 371-381.

The connection is explicitly made in the discussion at the floor of synod²⁸³². In the Christian Reformed Church the mentally disabled are mentioned for example in the 1993 Report *Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children*²⁸³³, and in RCA pastor Timothy J. Mulder's contribution to the discussion in *Reformed Worship*²⁸³⁴, and more recently in the 2007 Board of Trustees Report regarding children at the Lord's Supper²⁸³⁵. In my case study of Fourteenth Street CRC several interviewees mentioned how the disabled Dalton as well as Owen, a member with Alzheimer's disease, played a significant role in their choice to welcome children to the table²⁸³⁶. In the Reformed Church liberated Barend Kamphuis treats the admission of children and of mentally disabled as similar categories²⁸³⁷. We saw how his words almost became prophetic when the issue of participation of mentally handicapped turned out to be the incentive for a new round in the paedocommunion debate within this denomination twenty five years later. The question whether mentally handicapped people may participate in the Lord's Supper was posed by the denominational committee Depin²⁸³⁸. In response Pastor Robert Roth²⁸³⁹ connects the question with that of the admission of children in three articles²⁸⁴⁰.

²⁸³² Art. 221. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 154.

²⁸³³ *Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children*, Agenda CRCNA 1993 Synod, 243.

²⁸³⁴ Timothy J. Mulder, "Adding a Leaf to the Table: In Defense of Inviting Children to the Lord's Supper," *Reformed Worship* (June 1998).

²⁸³⁵ Board of Trustees Report, Appendix B: Children at the Lord's Supper Task Force, Agenda CRCNA 2007 Synod, 56-57.

²⁸³⁶ E.g. Marv Hofman, "14th Street's Pathway," March 2015.

<http://www.crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits/welcoming-children-lords-supper/14th-street%E2%80%99s-pathway> (accessed January 18, 2016).

²⁸³⁷ B. Kamphuis, "Kinderdoop en kinderkommunie I," *De Reformatie* (February 6, 1982): 284-287; "Kinderdoop en kinderkommunie II," *De Reformatie* (February 13, 1982): 299-302; "Kinderdoop en kinderkommunie III (slot)," *De Reformatie* (February 27, 1982): 329-332. These articles were republished in English with a slightly altered text in: Kamphuis, B. "Infant Baptism and Infant Communion," *Lux Mundi* 11, no. 3 (September, 1992): 2-10.

²⁸³⁸ RCL, Acta van de Generale Synode Amersfoort-Centrum 2005 van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland: Bijlage VI – III Rapport deputaten Integratie (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, 2005). Robert Roth distills seven arguments in favor for participation of mentally handicapped from this report: 1- Neither the sin to which 1 Corinthians responds, nor the ethical and cognitive criteria which it sets apply to mentally handicapped, 2- and neither does church order article 60; 3- Proclamation is not prescribed, but described, though mentally handicapped do proclaim analog to the children of Psalm 8; 4- Likewise, the Lord's Supper communicates the gospel in nonverbal languages that mentally handicapped may better understand; 5- Through Baptism the mentally handicapped are full members of the body; 6- The congregation exercises its responsibility for mentally handicapped when allowing them to participate; 7- The Lord's Supper is a foretaste of wholeness for the broken, especially the mentally handicapped.

²⁸³⁹ As pastor of the Reformed Church (RCL) of Breda, Robert R. Roth was part of ecumenical conversations with the Reformed Church (DRC) of Rijsbergen and its pastor. An already existing interest in youth and its catechism and the anticipation of ecumenical conversations on Rijsbergen's paedocommunion practice are the beginning of long personal study of children at the Lord's Supper.

²⁸⁴⁰ Robert R. Roth, "Onmondigen aan het Heilig Avondmaal? (1)," *De Reformatie* (December 1, 2007): 168-170; "Onmondigen aan het Heilig Avondmaal? (2)," *De Reformatie* (December 15, 2007): 184-185; "Onmondigen aan het Heilig Avondmaal? (3)," *De Reformatie* (December 17, 2007): 202-205.

6.3.6. Children and Apartheid

More in general Van Roon speaks of apartheid of ages when children and youth are segregated from the older generations in the church²⁸⁴¹. When the Rotterdam youth group *Denken en doen* presents her report *Daadwerkelijke mondigheid*, which includes a plea to disconnect Profession of faith and the Lord's Supper, their opening words to synod lament apartheid at the Supper in South Africa²⁸⁴². South Africa's apartheid is even more explicitly related to a plea for welcoming covenant children at the Lord's Table by Meint van den Berg. In his plea Van den Berg refers to the negative example of the 1961 Synod of the Reformed Churches in South Africa stating that the Lord's Supper should not be misused as a demonstration of unity between white and black Christians²⁸⁴³.

6.3.7. Children and the outsider

The admission of Christians from other denominations at the Lord's Supper is a development that especially within the Reformed Church liberated was considered to be closely connected or clustered with the introduction of paedocommunion by opponents and proponents²⁸⁴⁴. If we could speak of the emancipation of the outsiders, gaining rights that at first only the insiders had, this clustering can also be seen as an example of what Hochschild and Sealander describe. Hendriks describes this "increase of external intergration" as characteristic for the fourth phase in the emancipation of the Reformed in the Netherlands²⁸⁴⁵.

6.3.8. Children and women and homosexuals

The question of the position of women in the church is less explicitly connected to the question of the place of children at the Lord's Supper²⁸⁴⁶, but

²⁸⁴¹ Van Roon (1980), 41.

²⁸⁴² *Denken en doen* (1969), 0-1.

²⁸⁴³ The Reformed Church of South Africa is in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Dutch Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Van den Berg worked in South Africa as missionary and served the Dutch Reformed Churches as pastor. Van den Berg refers to "Uit een bloed..." 'n Rapport aan en 'n Besluit van Die Algemene Sinode van die Geref. Kerk in Suid-Afrika oor Rasseverhoudinge (Potchefstroom: n.p., 1961), 75; M.R. van den Berg, *Voor wie is het avondmaal?: Sacrament voor ingewijden of verbondsmaaltijd?* (Kampen: Kok, 1978), 38, 99.

²⁸⁴⁴ J.R. Wiskerke, J.R. "Goede Gastvrijheid?" *De Reformatie*, August 8, 1964, 337. Jan Hendriks, ed., *Kijken met andere ogen: Een rondreis langs open en gastvrije kerken* (Kampen: Kok, 2004), 92.

²⁸⁴⁵ J. Hendriks, *De emancipatie van de gereformeerden: Sociologische bijdrage tot de verklaring van enige kenmerken van het huidige gereformeerde volksdeel* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Samson, 1971), 254.

²⁸⁴⁶ Except when *The Banner* comments that several delegates were not in shape to bring the children at the Lord's Supper discussion to a successful conclusion because they had spent all their energy on the long debate on women in office, N.N. "Children-at-communion issue bumped back to committee," *Banner* (June

is raised in the same era²⁸⁴⁷. The same is true for the question of the position of sexually active homosexuals in the church and at the Lord's Supper²⁸⁴⁸. Though these questions and the question of children at the Lord's Supper might be significantly different from a theological perspective, I conclude that the fact that these questions are raised in the same era is not coincidental, but rather an indication that these separate emancipation movements support one another and to a certain extent flow forth from the same source: a sense of justice not easily contained and a changed social consciousness.

6.3.9. Children and the working class

The treatment of animals was only mentioned once in my sources²⁸⁴⁹ and the emancipation of the working class was only mentioned in the 1969 report

29, 1993): 23. And newspapers take notice when the first woman serves the Lord's Supper in the Dutch Reformed Churches, "Eerste vrouw in NGK bedient avondmaal," *Nederlands Dagblad*, August 22, 2003.

²⁸⁴⁷ Regarding opening the offices for women in the Netherlands, the smaller liberal denominations formed the first wave, coinciding with the first feminist wave. Two mainline Reformed denominations created the second wave, coinciding with the second wave of feminism: in 1957 the Netherlands Reformed Church allowed women ministers and in 1969 the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. The Dutch Reformed Churches are part of a third wave, allowing women deacons since 1995 and women ministers since 2004. Mirjam de Baar et al. eds., *100 jaar vrouwen op de kansel: 1911-2011* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2011), 7f. The Christian Reformed Churches started their discussion in 1970 and allowed women in office in 1995. <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/women-ecclesiastical-office> (accessed January 19, 2016).

²⁸⁴⁸ The first openly gay minister within the Netherlands Reformed Church was installed in 1972. In 1972 the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands accepted the report *Over mensen die homofiel zijn*, in 1979 Synod accepted homosexuals in all offices and at the Lord's Supper. The 1989 General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Churches decided likewise. <https://queertheologen.wordpress.com/geschiedenis/> (accessed January 19, 2016). The Dutch Reformed Churches spoke about opening the table to homosexuals in 2005 and again in the context of a discussion on homosexuals in office in 2015-2016. The matter of homosexuality has been dealt with by the CRC Synod repeatedly between 1973 and 2016. <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/homosexuality> (accessed January 19, 2016). See also "Kerk mag homoseksueel van avondmaal afhouden: Generale commissie opzicht Herv. Kerk," *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, May 25, 1987. "Dr. Blei neemt afstand van uitspraak generale commissie: Over weren homoseksuelen van avondmaal," *Nederlands Dagblad* (?), May 27, 1987.

²⁸⁴⁹ With the exception of the CRC 1988 minority report. It explains that extracting regulations for Lord's Supper participation from 1 Corinthians 10 is problematic as even un-believers and animals were nourished by eating manna and drinking water from the rock, yet surely they would not be invited to the Lord's Supper today!. Report 26, *Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 300. The one argument I remember from the discussion in the church of my youth was that children had asked the pastor why the ducks of the local *Park Sonsbeek* were fed with the leftover bread of the Lord's Supper, while the children were not allowed to eat that bread. I did come across the metaphor of the bread crumbs and the dogs, as used by the Syrophenician to convince Jesus, in an article on homosexuals and divorced receiving the Eucharist from Father van Kilsdonk, "Het heilig brood en de kruimels," *Trouw*, March 20, 2007. The story goes in Rijsbergen that later Jan van Katwijk saw two classifieds in the news paper, one selling baby rabbits, the other searching foster parents for foster children. The shock that foster children and baby rabbits were 'offered' on the same page, encouraged Jan and Sofie van Katwijk and several other members of the congregation following their example to become foster parents.

*Daadwerkelijke mondigheid*²⁸⁵⁰, and hinted at in Henk de Jong's remark about the unconscious influence of socialism²⁸⁵¹. Connecting my findings on the history of children and childhood in society and church with what I have found on the introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition I can safely claim that improvement in the treatment of animals, liberation of slaves and emancipation of the working class are part of the complex chain reaction which led to paedocommunion, although these phenomena were not directly linked shackles in that chain. And wherever this link was less direct the influence may have remained mostly unconsciously.

6.3.10. Children and emancipation in society

The introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed Churches could be seen as an expression of the emancipation of children within the church. This emancipation movement followed a chain reaction of emancipation movements in culture and society. Even in the case where an individual link is recognized, as in the case of the emancipation of mentally handicapped, the influence may seem marginal. In other cases, as in the case of the emancipation of women or homosexuals, the relationship may seem one of mere coincidence. But all taken into consideration I come to the conclusion that there was a spirit of emancipation in the air, a leveling tendency in society, an awakened sense of justice among and within people not easily contained and spreading down through the generations, a changed social consciousness concerned with all defenseless creatures. In that sense the emancipation of slaves, of the working class, of the poor, of prostitutes, of mentally handicapped, of elderly with Alzheimer, of women, of homosexuals, of black and colored South Africans suffering from apartheid, and even of cruelly treated animals, are all significantly related to the introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition.

²⁸⁵⁰ This report by the Rotterdam youth group *Denken en doen* includes pleas to end the discrimination of immigrant workers (*gastarbeiders*), to provide education in the factories, to cooperate with Marxists, to make propaganda for progressive parties such as the P.P.R., but also included the plea to disconnect profession of faith and admission to the Lord's Supper.

²⁸⁵¹ De Jong (1976), 163. Maybe we should add Aalbers and Lindeboom. Aalbers mentions how in East Germany confirmation had to compete with the "Jugendweihe" of the Communist Party, and how this led to a new reflection on confirmation and admission to the Supper. Aalbers (1971), 13. Lindeboom recognizes the influence of neo-Marxism in which the emphasis is put on being human with and for each other, in the emphasis on the communal celebration of the Lord's Supper. A.M. Lindeboom, *De theologen gingen voorop: Eenvoudig verhaal van de ontmanteling van de Gereformeerde Kerken* (Kampen: Kok, 1987), 327.

6.3.11. *Children and emancipation in church*

When we recognize the role of all these different emancipation movements in society, and the role of the underlying spirit of emancipation in culture, it's good to notice that emancipation was not only an external, but also an internal force working from within the church. We saw in my overview of the history of children and childhood in society and church that to a certain extent children were emancipated within the church before they were so in society. I quoted Bakke on early Christianity, saying "Christianity seems not to have altered children's position in the hierarchical structures of family and society; nevertheless they were perceived as adults' equals in their relationship to God."²⁸⁵² It is also important to realize that the Dutch Reformed tradition, especially its neo-reformed Kuyperian branch, could be characterized as emancipation movement²⁸⁵³, with its youth groups as an important instrument in this emancipation²⁸⁵⁴.

6.4. *Ecumenism and Exposure*

As I continue explaining what made the issue of paedocommunion topical and how the stage was set for its introduction, it is time for the third factor mentioned by Zegwaard, ecumenism²⁸⁵⁵. She summarizes "Through contacts with churches in which paedocommunion was common, people started to wonder what the position was of their own children and youth in ecumenical services."²⁸⁵⁶

6.4.1. *Autonomous Roman Catholic innovation*

To put the role of ecumenism in perspective it is good to realize that the age of participation was first lowered by Pope Pius X in the Roman Catholic Church with his papal decree *Quam Singulari* of 1910. It is conceivable that ecumenical contacts with the Eastern Orthodox tradition, which had continued the paedocommunion praxis of the early church, would have inspired Pope Pius X. But in his extensive study on the Roman Catholic paedocommunion praxis Hermans does not mention any such ecumenical

²⁸⁵² O.M. Bakke, *When Children Became People: The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 257.

²⁸⁵³ Hendriks (1971); H. Verwey-Jonker, *Emancipatiebewegingen in Nederland* (Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1983), 81f.

²⁸⁵⁴ J.C. Sturm, J.C. *Een goede gereformeerde opvoeding: Over neo-calvinistische moraalpedagogiek (1880-1950) met speciale aandacht voor de nieuw-gereformeerde jeugdorganisaties* (Kampen: Kok, 1988), 62f. & 162f.

²⁸⁵⁵ Zegwaard (2006), 39.

²⁸⁵⁶ Idem. (my translation)

influence²⁸⁵⁷, and rather underscores that *Quam Singulari* only refers to authoritative sources from within the Roman Catholic Church's own history²⁸⁵⁸. Hermans also shows how several elements of the Communion practice decreed by *Quam Singulari*, including the practice of communing at a younger age, already existed in parts of the Roman Catholic Church, such as in Tirol, or in my own words how *Quam Singulari* did not introduce a new practice, but rather canonized or universalized one of the many existing Roman Catholic practices²⁸⁵⁹. The external influences which Hermans registers are only those of the flourishing sciences such as psychology and pedagogy and of emerging youth movements such as the scouts²⁸⁶⁰.

6.4.2. Potential Autonomous Protestant innovation

It is also important to realize that Protestant churches, including those within the Dutch Reformed tradition that I researched, could have gone through the same development and change independently, autonomously recognizing a similar need, drawing from their own history and theology since the Reformation with the option of returning to the praxis advocated by Luther or Calvin, or drawing from the earlier shared history and theology with the option of returning to the praxis of the early church, and undergoing the influence of the changed position of children and childhood in culture and society without the mediation of the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant pleas for paedocommunion prior to *Quam Singulari*, such as the 1901 book *The Confirmation and Communion of Infants and Young Children* by the Anglican Henry Holloway²⁸⁶¹, and the plea for a well considered restoration of the traditional practice by the Anglican Darwell Stone in 1899²⁸⁶² and 1904²⁸⁶³, may proof my point. Similar pleas, though less outspoken, can be found in the Dutch Reformed tradition; for example in Da Costa's desire to include the question of the youngest child in the Lord's Supper²⁸⁶⁴ and in Abraham

²⁸⁵⁷ Hermans (1987).

²⁸⁵⁸ Hermans (1987), 240f.

²⁸⁵⁹ Hermans (1987), 137.

²⁸⁶⁰ Hermans (1987), 234. It is interesting to note that Pius X is known for his condemnation of Modernism and that youth movements such as scouting have also been perceived as an expression of moral panic in reaction to modernization. J. Derek Holmes and Bernard W. Bickers, *A Short History of the Catholic Church*, 4th ed. (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1987), 254f. Mechling (2015), 420.

²⁸⁶¹ Henry Holloway, *The Confirmation and Communion of Infants and Young Children* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1901). Though Holloway speaks negatively about Popish influences, he speaks with appreciation of the Russian Church, Holloway (1901), 88-96.

²⁸⁶² Darwell Stone, *Holy Baptism* (London: Longmans, Green, 1899), 186.

²⁸⁶³ Darwell Stone, *Holy Communion* (London: Longmans, Green, 1904), 188-200.

²⁸⁶⁴ Mentioned without specific reference in D.J. Karres, "Open- en oecumenisch Avondmaal," *Woord en Dienst* (July 7, 1962).

Kuyper's plea in 1890 to invite children at an earlier age²⁸⁶⁵. The important role Reformed history and theology as well as the changes in culture and society would play within the later discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition also supports my claim.

6.4.3. *Ecumenism and diffusion of innovations*

The theory on the diffusion of innovations may help us understand what role ecumenism could play and has played in diffusing paedocommunion from the Roman Catholic Church to churches within the Dutch Reformed tradition. In his book *The Diffusion of Innovations* Rogers distinguishes homophily and heterophily, that is the degree in which those connected in interpersonal relations or in networks are respectively similar or different in certain aspects²⁸⁶⁶. Heterophily does not make diffusion easy, but is crucial for the spread of an innovation. Homophily makes diffusion easier, may even accelerate the diffusion process, but limits its spread. From this perspective ecumenism creates heterophilous ecclesiastical networks or ties; crucial for an innovation such as paedocommunion to diffuse from the Roman Catholic Church to the Dutch Reformed tradition. But once the innovation of paedocommunion has been adopted by some within the Dutch Reformed tradition, the diffusion will in theory occur more easily and even accelerate through homophilous, read Reformed, networks and ties. From that perspective the heterophilous relation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Dutch Reformed tradition helps explain why diffusion of paedocommunion did not occur overnight. From that perspective it would also be expected that ecumenism only plays a more significant role in the initial diffusion of paedocommunion to the Dutch Reformed tradition. Of course this changes in the case that ecumenism is so successful that the ecumenical relationship or network has become homophilous²⁸⁶⁷.

6.4.4. *Heterophily spreads paedocommunion*

We found examples of such diffusion through ecumenical contacts with Roman Catholics among a number of the first Dutch Reformed churches (NRC

²⁸⁶⁵ A. Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek van Dr. A. Kuyper: Locus de Salute, Ecclesia, Sacramentis; College-dictaat van een der studenten*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: n.p., 1890), 192, 194.

²⁸⁶⁶ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995), 286f.

²⁸⁶⁷ One or more of the ecumenical partners may change, for example through emancipation such as Hendriks describes, or society may change so dramatically, for example through secularization, that the ecumenical partners become more, or relatively more, similar. Compare Hendriks (1971).

and RCN) introducing paedocommunion²⁸⁶⁸. We saw how the issue was put on the agenda of the 1962 Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church, as a result of ecumenical contacts among others with the Roman Catholic²⁸⁶⁹. A decade later the overture from the council of RCN Zwolle E to the 1971-1972 Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands requests to allow paedocommunion in view of the ecumenical services with the local NRC and Roman Catholic Church²⁸⁷⁰. The European Ecumenical Youth Assembly in Lausanne in 1960 and the New Delhi meeting of the World Council of Churches had acted as catalysts to celebrate such ecumenical Communion services²⁸⁷¹. In the stories of the Dutch paedocommunion pioneers not only Roman Catholics, but also ecumenical relations with Lutherans and or German churches are mentioned²⁸⁷².

6.4.5. *Heterophily hinders paedocommunion*

But my research also confirms how diffusion through heterophilous networks is more difficult than through homophilous networks. The perceived Roman Catholic origin of paedocommunion often hinders its adoption²⁸⁷³. In study reports Roman Catholic theology and praxis is clearly negatively distinguished from Reformed theology and praxis and at the floor of synod delegates warn for Roman Catholic sacramentalism²⁸⁷⁴. In the periodicals we also find warnings about the *ex opere operato* theology underlying Roman Catholic

²⁸⁶⁸ E.g. Reformed Church (RCN) Utrecht Oost, Dutch Reformed Church / Reformed Church (NRC/RCN) Geldrop, Aalbers (1971), 12 and "Kindercommunie in ontwikkeling IV: verkenningen in de evangelische kerkgemeenschap te Geldrop," *Praktische Theologie*, no.2 (1974): 80.

²⁸⁶⁹ With the report *Open en Oecumenisch Avondmaal*.

²⁸⁷⁰ Supplement 81, Suppl. Acts RCN 1971-1972 Synod, 162. Meanwhile concerned congregations members have also sent a letter of complaint to Synod.

²⁸⁷¹ Zegwaard (2006), 42. J.G. Davies, "Intercommunion: An Attempt to Distinguish Current Issues," *The Ecumenical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1963): 410. In New Delhi the section Unity had reported: "Breaking the one bread. 13. Nowhere are the divisions of our churches more clearly evident and painful than at the Lord's Table. But the Lord's Table is one, not many. In humility the churches must seek that one Table. We would urge the Commission on Faith and Order to continue study and consultation us to help us identify and remove those barriers which now keep us from partaking together of the one bread and sharing the one cup." https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/1961-new-delhi/new-delhi-statement-on-unity/@_@download/file/Unity_report_ND1961.pdf (accessed January 25, 2016).

²⁸⁷² E.g. NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort mentioned in Paul Oskamp, *Liturgische Broedplaatsen* (Kampen: Kok, 1973), 46. See also Aalbers (1971), 12f., who refers to the study by the Dutch Lutheran C. Pel, *Avondmaalsgast en Kerklid: Over kindercommunie en confirmatie* (Weesp: Synodale Commissie van de Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 1968).

²⁸⁷³ In another context Michael S. Horton even writes: "Another cause of the devaluation of the Reformed sacramental doctrine was the fear of Romanism," Michael S. Horton, "At Least Weekly: The Reformed Doctrine of the Lord's Supper and of its Frequent Celebration," *Mid America Journal of Theology* 11 (2000), 160.

²⁸⁷⁴ E.g. Supplement 45, Acts of RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 230.

praxis²⁸⁷⁵. We also found a number of local and denominational examples of former members of the Roman Catholic Church who express hesitations based on their personal experience with its practice²⁸⁷⁶. Lutheran churches in the Netherlands may have known a practice of confirmation at a similar age as that within the Calvinist tradition²⁸⁷⁷. Hesitation towards the Lutheran practice, expressed by both opponents as well as proponents, is therefore especially related to the German experience that first Communion is often also the last Communion²⁸⁷⁸.

6.4.6. *Heterophily and Second World War*

Kenntner suggests in his dissertation that controversial theology, this need to distance oneself from the practice and theology which was perceived as typical Roman Catholic, may have played an implicit role in the rejection of paedocommunion by German theologians before the Second World War²⁸⁷⁹. Kenntner does not provide explicit examples, but some of the references from Dutch Reformed theologians from the first half of the twentieth century seem to reveal a similar phenomenon²⁸⁸⁰. Until the Second World War Dutch society was rather strictly divided in religious subcultures. This seems to explain how lack of ecumenism hindered the adoption of paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition before the Second World War. But this strict division came to an end as new alliances were formed within the resistance during the Second World War. This resulted in a post Second World War elite pleading for new cooperation in society and ecumenical relations among churches, ideas which would come to fruition in the sixties²⁸⁸¹. That explains how ecumenism could play such a significant role in the introduction of and discussion on paedocommunion in the sixties and seventies.

6.4.7. *Homophily and accelerating spread of paedocommunion*

But as paedocommunion had spread through heterophilous networks, its diffusion would accelerate through homophilous networks. The Roman

²⁸⁷⁵ E.g. C. van der Woude, "Nieuwe en oude vragen in ons kerkelijk leven," *Ouderlingenblad* (December 1969): 58. For the same reason Van der Woude rejects Eastern Orthodox praxis, "Kindercommunie en openbare belijdenis," *Ouderlingenblad* (1970): 86. See also H. Hogenhuis' summary of arguments of proponents and opponents, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal; ja of nee?" *Ouderlingenblad* (January 1980).

²⁸⁷⁶ E.g. Diane Marie Patterson, "Voices: Children at the table?" *Banner* (January 5, 1981): 24.

²⁸⁷⁷ Pel speaks of age 17-18, Pel (1968), 10.

²⁸⁷⁸ The Germans speak of "hinausconfirmieren," Pel (1968), 13; Proponent e.g. Aalbers (1971), 13; Opponents e.g. Supplement 45, Acts of RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 230.

²⁸⁷⁹ Kenntner (1980).

²⁸⁸⁰ E.g. A.G. Honig, *Handboek van de Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Kampen: Kok, 1938), 677. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, vierde deel*, 1911, 4th ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1930), 560.

²⁸⁸¹ James C. Kennedy, *Babylon in aanbouw: Nederland in de jaren zestig* (Amsterdam: Boom, 1995), 23f.

Catholic Carolina Wijngaards and her daughter brought paedocommunion to the Reformed Church liberated of Rijsbergen, but then the practice spread to likeminded congregations such as in Dordrecht and Wolvega. Roman Catholic Youth introduced the issue in the Reformed Church of Geldrop, and then its Pastor Aalbers became instrumental in further spreading the idea within the denomination. The story of paedocommunion within the Reformed Church liberated, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands start to unfold in the stage where ecumenical or heterophilous contacts and ties were crucial for its introduction. The story of the introduction of paedocommunion within the Christian Reformed Churches unfolds in a stage in which the influence through homophilous networks has gained in significance. The unbroken tradition of the Eastern Orthodox is mentioned in the Christian Reformed discussion²⁸⁸². The wisdom of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran practice is acknowledged²⁸⁸³. But “one of our professors of theology”²⁸⁸⁴, other Reformed theologians²⁸⁸⁵, and other Reformed denominations truly make the issue topical within this denomination²⁸⁸⁶. In all three local churches I researched, exposure to other church traditions did play a role in the introduction of paedocommunion. But in line with what I said about heterophilous networks and in line with what could be expected of the earliest Dutch, Reformed adopter of a Roman Catholic practice, the specific role of the Roman Catholic Carolina Wijngaards and her daughter and the more general influence of operating in a Roman Catholic context were crucial in the case of the church of Rijsbergen.

6.4.8. Other forms of exposure

Zegwaard mentions ecumenism, contacts with other churches and more specifically ecumenical services, as one of the three factors which made paedocommunion topical in the second half of the twentieth century. But my research reveals how exposure to other traditions and practices in a much broader variety of ways played a role in the diffusion of paedocommunion: Exposure such as the Protestant minority churches of Rijsbergen,

²⁸⁸² E.g. Stanley Vermeer, “Should Children Participate in the Lord’s Supper?” *Stromata* (February 1968).

²⁸⁸³ E.g. James A. De Jong, “Should children participate in the Lord’s Supper?” *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

²⁸⁸⁴ Rolf L. Veenstra, “Participation,” *Banner* (August 22, 1969).

²⁸⁸⁵ E.g. Christian L. Keidel, “Is the Lord’s Supper for Children?” *Westminster Theological Journal* (Spring 1975): 301-341. Roger T. Beckwith, “The Age of Admission to the Lord’s Supper,” *Westminster Theological Journal* (Winter, 1976): 123-151.

²⁸⁸⁶ E.g. Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord’s Table Should Be Restored to Covenant Children*, 2nd. ed. (Grand Prairie: Pactum Reformanda, 2003), 17-18; Andrew Kuyvenhoven, “Awaking sleeping dogs?” *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

Ginneken²⁸⁸⁷, Woensel²⁸⁸⁸ and Geldrop²⁸⁸⁹ experience in the predominantly Roman Catholic south of the Netherlands; Exposure by membership transfer of for example Roman Catholics²⁸⁹⁰, Lutherans²⁸⁹¹, Episcopalians²⁸⁹², RCA-members²⁸⁹³, or Presbyterians²⁸⁹⁴; Exposure in settings that are more missionary than ecumenical in nature²⁸⁹⁵; Exposure to for example the Greek Orthodox practice through work²⁸⁹⁶ or study²⁸⁹⁷. Exposure to or influence from other traditions is sometimes very indirect, yet significant enough to be noticed. The role the program *Children and Worship* played in Fourteenth Street CRC and the sacramental nature which this program inherited from the Roman Catholic method *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* provides a beautiful example of such indirect influence²⁸⁹⁸.

Regarding such exposure to other church traditions, it is good to notice that the end result is not necessarily a compromise between the two or more traditions involved, nor necessarily the adoption of the foreign practice in its original shape, nor automatically limited to the options within the bandwidth created by the traditions involved. The participation of the twelve or thirteen year old Maria Wijngaards in Rijsbergen opened the Lord's Table to much younger children. And in spite of the small bandwidth between the Dutch Calvinist and German Lutheran tradition, the ecumenical contacts with Lutherans contributed to a paedocommunion discussion in which admission of younger children was advocated.

²⁸⁸⁷ The Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC) of Ginneken, approximately 10 km from Rijsbergen. Kroniekschrijver (pseudonym of A. Vroegindewey), "Kleine Kroniek," *Gereformeerde Weekblad* (September 6, 1969): 276-277.

²⁸⁸⁸ Aalbers (1974): 81; G. H. Harms, "Een (vrolijk) verhaal uit het veld," *Trouw*, October 13, 1976.

²⁸⁸⁹ Dutch Reformed / Reformed Church in the Netherlands (NRC/RCN) Geldrop, D.B. Heere, "Enkele sociologische kanttekeningen bij de kinderkommunie," *Praktische Theologie*, no. 2 (1974): 86-90.

²⁸⁹⁰ All three local churches researched by me provide examples. Paragraph 4.3.5., 4.4.20., 4.5.5.

²⁸⁹¹ E.g. The Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC) Bergkerk, Amersfoort as well as 14th St. CRC, Oskamp, 1973), 46. Paragraph 4.4.20.

²⁸⁹² E.g. 14th St. CRC. Paragraph 4.4.20.

²⁸⁹³ E.g. 14th St. CRC. Paragraph 4.4.20.

²⁸⁹⁴ E.g. 1st CRC New Westminster. Paragraph 4.5.5.

²⁸⁹⁵ E.g. Rijsbergen in which the contacts with Roman Catholics were first more missionary, but later also knew an ecumenical component (for example in Bible study groups together with local Roman Catholic nuns). Hendriks (2004), 92.

²⁸⁹⁶ E.g. 14th St. CRC. Paragraph 4.4.20.

²⁸⁹⁷ Syd Hielema, "Deep-in-the-Bones Belonging," *Banner* (January 2011).

²⁸⁹⁸ E.g. 14th St. CRC. Paragraph 4.4.20.

6.5. Emotions and feelings

In 1980 H. Hogenhuis concludes his summary of the pro and contra arguments in the paedocommunion debate with the suggestion that not arguments, but emotions may be decisive²⁸⁹⁹. It certainly seems broadly accepted that “emotions guide people’s judgments, choices, and actions to a great extent” and therefore it may be assumed that emotional factors also influence the adoption of innovation²⁹⁰⁰. In that light it is striking how few emotions are explicitly expressed in all the written documents, articles, study reports and books I researched. In the earliest flurry of articles within the Reformed Church liberated the use of strong words suggests strong emotions, though such vocabulary may also have been more common in the debates of the sixties²⁹⁰¹. Proponents identified these emotions of the opponents as fear²⁹⁰² or hysteria in response to a perceived threat²⁹⁰³. The overture of the Christian Reformed Classis Rocky Mountain anticipated emotional and defensive responses²⁹⁰⁴. But hardly any of the authors in the written documents express their own emotions. Intriguingly enough, when Hogenhuis gives eight children a voice in the Dutch debate they all express their feelings²⁹⁰⁵. Fortunately my interviewees did express their emotions and further report on a range of emotions as expressed in for example the Town Hall meetings of one of the congregations.

6.5.1. Discontent

First I want to reflect on those emotions which set the process in motion, which led to opening the Table for children. In the story of the Church of Rijsbergen we heard how there was already a feeling of discontent among the brothers in law and their siblings with the church in Sliedrecht and its spiritual climate before they came to Brabant. It is hard to proof but not hard to

²⁸⁹⁹ “Er is al heel veel gewonnen, wanneer we beseffen dat deze dingen emotioneel erg gevoelig liggen. Dan geven niet de argumenten, hoe goed ook gefundeerd, de doorslag. Men zal elkaar behoedzaam moeten benaderen op het vlak van de beleving; elkaar invoelen tot in de diepste motieven, waardoor men wordt geleid,” Hogenhuis (January 1980).

²⁹⁰⁰ Martin Dietrich et. al., “Instrumental and Non-instrumental Factors of Social Innovation Adoption,” *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, September 2015: (1-29).

²⁹⁰¹ Ab van Langevelde quotes Kossmann (*De Lage Landen: 1780-1980 II*, p. 310) “People in general had a preference for the use of strong words (...) Opposition and differences of opinion, according to the new style of discussion, should not be reconciled but sharpened” and Righthart (*De eindeloze jaren zestig: Geschiedenis van een generatieconflict*, p.256) “Hardening and polarization were tangible all over the world” (my translation), Ab van Langevelde, *In het klimaat van het absolute: C. Veenhof (1902-1983) Leven en werk* (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 2015), 490, 506.

²⁹⁰² P. van Loo, “Mogen en moeten onze kinderen deelnemen aan het avondmaal des Heren?” *Contact* (September 9, 1967): 3.

²⁹⁰³ P. Aalbersberg, “Rijsbergen in het nieuws,” *Contact* (August 21, 1965): 11.

²⁹⁰⁴ Overture 1 by Classis Rocky Mountain, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 419.

²⁹⁰⁵ H. Hogenhuis, “Zo hoor je het ook eens van kinderen,” *Ouderlingenblad*, May, 1984.

imagine how not only business opportunity but also this feeling of discontent motivated the brothers in law to move their business to the village of Rijsbergen. At least in retrospect it seems to have been this discontent with their spiritual background in Dutch Pietism that made them experience both their physical move to Rijsbergen as well as their spiritual move into the more covenantal Reformed Church as liberating. The emotion of discontent set a process in motion which was not directed at opening the Table for children from the outset, but the discontent seems to have helped the brothers to cross even that bridge when the process led them to it.

6.5.2. *Desire*

Several interviewees remember feeling unfortunate when they were considered still too young to profess their faith and attend the Lord's Supper. Feeling unfortunate may result in nothing more than resignation in one's fate²⁹⁰⁶. But my research shows several cases where children expressing emotions such as feeling left out, the desire to belong, the desire to respond to Jesus' command or invitation, and the desire to express love for Jesus in participation helped set the process in motion. Though it is not always possible to distinguish desire from mere curiosity, I mention the questions raised by the anonymous girls in 1898²⁹⁰⁷, little Margie²⁹⁰⁸ in 1958, Linda Overduin²⁹⁰⁹ in the early sixties, anonymous children who set the question on the agenda of trailblazer Aalbers in 1971²⁹¹⁰, Tena Feenstra Venema's eight year old son round 1973²⁹¹¹, Albert Helder's eight year son round 1978²⁹¹², twelve year old Jozina Vander Klok in 1996²⁹¹³, five year old Rebecca Stillwell telling her parents during Lord's Supper celebration "I want to take Communion" in 2009, a young teenage girl expressing the desire to belong and to profess her faith and a young teenage boy expressing the desire to participate round that same time in New West Church. I note how such

²⁹⁰⁶ Or may result in the bitterness that some of the adults in 14th Street CRC felt for being left out in their youth.

²⁹⁰⁷ Hoogenbirk, "Voor kinderen," *De Heraut* (December 11, 1898): 4. Though their question was answered, it did not set a process in motion.

²⁹⁰⁸ Clarence J. Vos, "Suffer the Little Children; Thoughts on Children and Their Relation to Communion," *Banner* (February 28, 1958). Vos interpreted the question as an expression of desire. The question of Margie ignites the first discussion of paedocommunion in the *Banner*.

²⁹⁰⁹ Overduin, "Uit de kindermond," in N.N. *Samen: Herdenkingsboekje n.a.v. het 25 jarig bestaan van de ned. geref. kerk diakonia te rijsbergen* (Rijsbergen: 1984), 23. See also Van Katwijk (1966), 4. Linda phrased her question in terms of obedience. Her question contributed to the change in Rijsbergen.

²⁹¹⁰ Aalbers (1971), 9f.

²⁹¹¹ Tena Feenstra Venema, "Please Tell Me – What Should I Have Said?" *Banner* (January 26, 1973). The son also expressed his love for Jesus.

²⁹¹² Al Helder, "Should My Child be There With Me?" *Banner* (March 9, 1987): 12.

²⁹¹³ Jozina Vander Klok, "Let the Little Children Come," *Banner* (April 22, 1996). Expressing feeling left out, and expressing love for Jesus.

questions of children and the feelings they express played a role in the stories of all three local churches I researched, and how they were significant in the discussion in the periodicals of at least two of the three denominations I researched. In New West where first children expressed the desire to belong, they now report their strengthened sense of belonging. In Rijsbergen children experienced a sense of security.

6.5.3. Awkwardness

While sharing the story of Fourteenth Street CRC, interviewees often used the word “awkward”. After the 1988 Synod of the CRC had encouraged younger profession of faith, those teenagers who had not yet professed their faith felt particularly awkward. Parents and elders sympathized with this awkwardness. To a certain degree such awkwardness belongs to early adolescence which is often referred to as the awkward age²⁹¹⁴. The desire to overcome this awkwardness, or to resolve the tension of this awkwardness, seems to have played a significant role in thrusting Fourteenth Street to the forefront of change within the denomination. In that sense awkwardness did not set the process in motion, did not cause the first wave, but was significant part of a process that led to Fourteenth Street CRC’s overture to synod, the beginning of a third wave in synod’s dealings with children at the Lord’s Supper.

6.5.4. Fear

Emotions such as discontent and desire may set a process of innovation and change in motion. An emotion such as awkwardness may be the incentive to continue that process until all significant tension is resolved. Other emotions such as fear may prevent the adoption of innovations, or may slow down the process. It is quite easy to scan the documents for words such as ‘fear’, ‘threat’ and ‘danger’, but it is almost impossible to establish whether the use of these words express the emotions of the authors or whether it is nothing but common parlance while speaking about potential negative consequences. The nature of the interviews I conducted made it somewhat easier to recognize the expression of emotions and allows me to make at least some cautious remarks about the role fear played in the local congregations. In the story of New West Church, fears and concerns, expressed among others by the elders, certainly contributed to slowing down the pace of change. In Fourteenth Street one of the fears expressed by adults is that the participation

²⁹¹⁴ Ronelle Sonnenberg, researching youth and the Lord’s Supper, used the same English word “awkward” (in a Dutch conversation) to describe the experience of teenagers participating in the Lord’s Supper in a Protestant Church in the Netherlands. Ronelle Sonnenberg, conversation with author, January 20, 2016.

of children will distract them in such ways that the Lord's Supper celebration might lose some of its significance for them. Fear, for example to be in the spotlights when professing faith at a young age, or fear to drop the cup during the actual celebration²⁹¹⁵, may also withhold children from participating, even when they are allowed. As not all feared threats and dangers may become real, it is possible that the actual participation of children takes away some of the last fears, as Nootboom reports on the process in his congregation²⁹¹⁶. But interviewees also report fears after children have been welcomed to the Table: Elders report the fear to interview children for the first time in the initial stage in New West CRC, some interviewees in Rijsbergen speak about their fear as children that Van Katwijk would ask them questions while seated at the Lord's Supper Table.

6.5.5. Harmony

With Hogenhuis I recognize how emotions may be decisive in the debate on paedocommunion and in the adoption of the practice. In the stories of interviewees emotions are further perceived as indicators of God's involvement in the process as well as indicators of the spiritual significance inclusion and exclusion has for children. The harmony and positive feelings which set the tone for the congregational meeting of Rijsbergen were perceived as blessing of the Holy Spirit and indication of His guidance. Gratitude, expressed in retrospect that children may now participate may in part also acknowledge the change as blessing from God.

John Vriend also mentions harmony, when he concludes "We have found the harmony that eludes us when we theorize about it."²⁹¹⁷ One wonders whether harmony here refers to a certain emotional state of the congregation as end result – "we have found" – or whether it (also) refers to the process to that end – as alternative to theorizing.

6.5.6. Tears

Tears seem better indicators of feelings than words, though the precise nature of the feelings expressed by these tears may not always be clear. In the stories of both New West CRC and Fourteenth Street CRC tears, shed by children who were not allowed to participate, while in one case they were before, and in another case other children already were, were perceived by the parents as an indication of the significance of exclusion and inclusion. In the second case

²⁹¹⁵ E.g. Jonker shares how this withheld his youngest child for a while, E.R. Jonker, "Het gesprek in de gemeente over de deelname van kinderen aan de Maaltijd des Heren," *Kontekstueel* (February 1990): 15.

²⁹¹⁶ G.P. Nootboom, "Uit de praktijk," *Ouderlingenblad* (May, 1984): 20-24.

²⁹¹⁷ John Vriend, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

the shedding of tears became a decisive moment for the parents. Other feelings reflective of the significance of the Lord's Supper for children which children report are a sense of awe in response to the emphasis on reconciliation, an awareness of the presence and existence of God, the experience of being connected with God, and a feeling of being strengthened and comforted²⁹¹⁸.

The children who shed the tears also speak about grumbling because of the unfairness. In that sense the tears may also reflect what Jelle Tuininga repeatedly mentioned as one of those dangers which outweigh the blessing of children's participation: that participation of some of the children will cause jealousy, rivalry or hassles for the other²⁹¹⁹. In the stage of transition hurt or anger, in response to perceived unfairness or disrespect, is expressed by those older teenagers and adolescents in Fourteenth Street CRC who had to wait until their profession of faith before they could participate.

Children grumbling and shedding tears because of perceived unfairness bring us from Don S. Browning's dimension of feelings and emotions to his dimension of obligations and ethics. It is good to realize that the sense of justice and the changed social consciousness that I discussed above could be located where these two dimensions intersect.

6.6. Obligations and ethics

6.6.1. A sense of justice

I have come to the conclusion that there was a spirit of emancipation in the air, a leveling tendency in society, an awakened sense of justice among and within people not easily contained and spreading down through the generations, a changed social consciousness concerned with any defenseless creature. I have also suggested that Jan van Katwijk probably stressed that the changes regarding the Lord's Supper in the church of Rijsbergen were a matter of continued reformation and did not originate in a revolutionary spirit, as the spirit of especially the French revolution has been detested in the Dutch Reformed tradition. If I am right, the spirit of Rijsbergen's reformation may have been more akin to the spirit of the French revolution as epitomized in the slogan *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, and to the spirit of socialism, that other

²⁹¹⁸ Hogenhuis (1984).

²⁹¹⁹ Jelle Tuininga, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980); "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook* (October 1984).

revolutionary movement with its leveling tendency, as Henk de Jong suggested.

I agree with Henk de Jong that most proponents of paedocommunion were hardly aware of the influence of this sense of justice. Overall the participants in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion debate and the interviewees who experienced its introduction in congregations within the Dutch Reformed tradition don't emphasize the dimension of ethics or social justice. Examples of the relative minor ethical issues are on the one hand the fear for inequality, peer pressure and serving alcohol to children, and on the other hand the appreciation of hospitality. Showing growing commitment and fulfilling other ethical responsibilities, which belong to the privileges of participation, are mentioned both as requirement of - as well as consequence of paedocommunion.

In general the value of equal treatment works in favor of participation of children, but some fear that when some children participate and others don't, this will create new forms of unfair inequality. The fear for participation under parental or peer pressure is mentioned quiet a number of times²⁹²⁰. At the RCN 1974 Synod Wentsel and two deacons state that it is ethically important not to take children to the Supper before they are psychologically ready to give their full consent²⁹²¹. But James A. de Jong speaks more lighthearted about peer identity working for the Lord²⁹²². I note how Cyprian describes force-feeding the Supper²⁹²³ and how Augustine even advices the use of compulsion²⁹²⁴. L. Zwaan reminds us that teenagers are not only sensitive to pressure, but are also characterized by their resistance, for which room must be allowed²⁹²⁵. A related dilemma is whether it is possible to leave the choice to participate in the freedom of the parents or even of their children and at the same time to do full justice to the aspect of participating in the Lord's Supper in obedience to Christ's command. The ethical dilemma of serving alcohol to children is only significant to some, and is avoided where grape juice is being serving²⁹²⁶. Several interviewees and articles on visits to the

²⁹²⁰ E.g. "sociale dwang," *Kerkinformatie* (1976), 18f.; Schravendeel (1977), 18; C. Den Boer, "Waarom zouden ook de kinderen niet komen? (II)," *Reformatieisch Dagblad*, December 2, 1978, 12.

²⁹²¹ Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 192-193, listed in a different order.

²⁹²² James De Jong (November 24, 1980).

²⁹²³ Cyprian, *Treatises, On the Lapsed*, chap. 25, ANF 5:444.

²⁹²⁴ Augustine, *Sermon LXII.8*, NPNF1 6:449.

²⁹²⁵ L. Zwaan, "Opgroeijende jongeren: Wat weerhoudt hen? Wat trekt hen aan?" *Eredienstvaardig* (1986).

²⁹²⁶ In our broader research we did come across the ethical argument that the use of wine implies the exclusion of children from the Lord's Supper. E.g. Beckwith (1976), 127f. Cornelis P. Venema, "Reviews & Responses: Review: A Response to the Coppes-Gallant Exchange Regarding Paedocommunion," *Confessional Presbyterian* (2007): 237.

church of Rijsbergen describe the welcoming of children and visitors to the Supper as part of the whole atmosphere of hospitality²⁹²⁷.

6.6.2. Foreign ethics

It is my impression that outside the Dutch Reformed tradition the ethical aspect of the Lord's Supper may have played a more important role in the paedocommunion debate. In my small sample of German literature, for example, emphasis is put on the Lord's Supper as sign of compassion, as expression of hope and as gesture of solidarity²⁹²⁸. Battle and contemplation, engagement with this world and Eucharistic piety belong together, states another German author²⁹²⁹. The social or social-eschatological character of the Lord's Supper has been rediscovered as well as its relationship with our responsibility to the creation and the environment²⁹³⁰. But my sample may be too small to be considered reflective for the German paedocommunion discussion. Some Dutch Reformed authors, especially from the Netherlands Reformed denominations in the Netherlands, distinguish an ethical aspect of the Lord's Supper and consider it relevant to the paedocommunion discussion. L. Zwaan, for example, argues that youth become aware of the brokenness of the world and will appreciate to learn about the ethical implications of celebrating the Lord's Supper²⁹³¹. His other ethical argument could be considered an expression of moral panic. Zwaan suggests that youth live in a world with bombs which can destroy all life, and they need the awareness of the coming of God's Kingdom²⁹³². Wattel and Den Heeten describe how the ethical perspective of the table prayer, and solidarity and accountability as elements of the Lord's Supper were discovered in the learning process their congregation experienced in discussing paedocommunion²⁹³³. The report *Denken en Doen* is the prime example of a document charged with a radical political focus on social justice and a strong emphasis on the ethical implications of the Supper²⁹³⁴. But in spite of these

²⁹²⁷ E.g. J. Jansen, "Ingezonden Rijsbergen," *Contact* 18, no. 17 (September 17, 1966).

²⁹²⁸ Otto Streckeisen, "Das Dornacher Modell: Ein Gemeindefest," in *Mit Kindern Abendmahl feiern: Modelle Reflexionen Materialien*, ed. Martin Lienhard (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1978), 32.

²⁹²⁹ Georg Kugler and Herbert Lindner, eds., *Neue Familien Gottes Dienste: Kinder und Abendmahl; etc.* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus Gerd Mohn, 1979), 11.

²⁹³⁰ Kugler (1979), 13.

²⁹³¹ Zwaan (1986), 18f. See also Laurens Zwaan, *Jonge mensen – brood en wijn: Een weg voor jongeren tot de Maaltijd van de Heer* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1985), 52-53, 78, where Zwaan refers to the Dutch translation of Jürgen Moltmann, *Kirche in der Kraft des Geistes: Ein Beitrag zur messianischen Ekklesiologie* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1975), 278f.

²⁹³² Zwaan (1986).

²⁹³³ M.J. Wattel and G. den Heeten, "Wat valt er nog veel te leren!" *Eredienstvaardig* (1986): 223-227.

²⁹³⁴ *Denken en doen* (1969), 22.

examples I conclude that the arguments regarding ethics or social justice do not play a significant role in the debate²⁹³⁵.

6.6.3. Ethics and Corinthians

Of course that conclusion is only true as long as I treat the discussion on 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 as part of the dimension of vision and theology and not as part of the dimension of obligation and ethics. Because a major issue in the paedocommunion debate is, as one synodical report phrased it, the question whether Paul's interest while writing 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 is more dogmatic or more ethical, and what consequences the context of 1 Corinthians has for the required discernment²⁹³⁶.

6.6.4. Church order

6.6.4.1. Local attitudes

I have chosen to treat matters of church order as part of the dimension of obligations and ethics, though others choose to consider church order part of ecclesiology²⁹³⁷. The local congregations I researched represent very different attitudes towards church order. The congregation of Rijsbergen did not seem to consider itself bound by church order, repeatedly refused church visitation, did not attend classis²⁹³⁸ between May 1963 and the autumn of 1964²⁹³⁹, did not initiate any procedure for revision of article 61, but in the end was willing to give account to classis of its decisions²⁹⁴⁰. Fourteenth Street CRC obeys church order and does follow proper procedure by writing its overture. Only when Synod 2007 failed to ratify Synod 2006's decision, the elders decided to move ahead, disobeying synod, but with the intention to do so in good faith

²⁹³⁵ Somewhat to my surprise, as the atmosphere I remember from my own local church during my teenage years was very similar to that expressed in the report *Denken en Doen*.

²⁹³⁶ Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" *Kerkinformatie Special* (December 1976): 3, 17, 19.

²⁹³⁷ A. Kuyper, among others, locates canonical law within the field of ecclesiology, as the church is its object of study. Zegwaard also classifies arguments regarding church order as ecclesiological arguments. W. van 't Spijker and L.C. van Drimmelen, eds., *Inleiding tot de studie van het kerkrecht*, 2nd ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1992), 16. Zegwaard (2006), 86f.

²⁹³⁸ E.g. F. de Vries, "Persschouw: Rijsbergen," *De Reformatie* 40, no. 1 (October 3, 1964): 7. J. Kamphuis, "Kerkelijk leven: Rijsbergen retour," *De Reformatie* 40, no. 2 (October 10, 1964).

²⁹³⁹ In protest against decisions regarding the congregation of Dordrecht and Breda's Pastor Telder.

²⁹⁴⁰ Jan Van Katwijk, *Concept Getuigenis* (A concept testimony to classis). Rijsbergen: 1966.

with the denomination²⁹⁴¹. New West CRC stayed well within the boundaries of church order, and introduces changes at a pace set at synod, almost synchronized with what happens in the heartland of the denomination.

6.6.4.2. Paedocommunion Pioneers

The disregard for church order of Rijsbergen seems typical for those pioneer congregations which can be considered the innovators in this respect. I found examples of pioneer churches and pastors welcoming children to the Table before church order provided that possibility in all the denominations that my research focused on: the Reformed Churches liberated²⁹⁴², the Netherlands Reformed Church²⁹⁴³, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands²⁹⁴⁴, the Dutch Reformed Churches²⁹⁴⁵, and the Christian Reformed Churches in North America²⁹⁴⁶. I found that the same is true for other innovations or changes such as ecumenical celebrations of the Lord's Supper. I need to make some relevant distinctions between these pioneers. Some pioneers never seek denominational approval or revision of church order²⁹⁴⁷, but others do²⁹⁴⁸. In several denominations synods officially approved of²⁹⁴⁹ or even initiated²⁹⁵⁰ practices deviating from church order. In some denominations the preamble of- or specific articles within the church order create room for such deviation of church order²⁹⁵¹. I found examples of congregations which sought the classical approval²⁹⁵², and one single example of a congregation²⁹⁵³ serving the

²⁹⁴¹ *Bringing Children to the Lord's Table: a response to Synod's 2007 decision*, a proposal by Robert and Laura Keeley and Marv Hofman, October 2007. *Bringing Children to the Lord's Table: a response to Synod's 2007 decision*, a communication by Fourteenth Street council, March 3, 2008.

²⁹⁴² E.g. the churches of Rijsbergen and Dordrecht. Paragraph 4.2.3.

²⁹⁴³ E.g. the churches of Rozendaal, Purmerend, *Thomaskerk* in Amsterdam, *Bergkerk* in Amersfoort, and *Domkerk* in Utrecht. Paragraph 4.2.3.

²⁹⁴⁴ E.g. the churches of Eindhoven-Noord or Woensel, Geldrop. Paragraph 4.2.3.

²⁹⁴⁵ E.g. the churches of Groningen, Oegstgeest, Utrecht etc. Paragraph 4.2.3.

²⁹⁴⁶ E.g. the Church of the Servant in Grand Rapids. John Vriend, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

²⁹⁴⁷ E.g. Jan van Katwijk and the church of Rijsbergen, and Willem Barnard and the church of Rozendaal.

²⁹⁴⁸ Aalbers, pastor of Geldrop and trailblazer within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, became very involved at synodical level.

²⁹⁴⁹ E.g. Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1974, Zegwaard (2006), 64. The Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in 1977-1979. Paragraph 5.7.12.

²⁹⁵⁰ E.g. the 1985 General Synod of the Church of England, Donald Gray, "Pushing at the Door: (i) The Church of England," in Ruth A. Meyers *Children at the Table: A Collection on Children and the Eucharist: The Communion of all the Baptized in Anglicanism Today*, 99-111. (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1995), 102.

²⁹⁵¹ E.g. the preamble of the *Akkoord van Kerkelijk Samenleven* of the Dutch Reformed Churches. At the 1977-1979 Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands it is unanimously decided that art. 137 provides a loophole, even when art. 75 is not yet changed. Paragraph 5.7.12.

²⁹⁵² E.g. the Dutch Reformed Church of Oegstgeest, "Basisschoolkinderen naar het Avondmaal," *Nederlands Dagblad*, December 23, 1997.

Lord's Supper to children with the permission of a presbytery, until the decision was reversed by a general assembly. One could argue that the paedocommunion praxis of Rijsbergen and Dordrecht preceded the creation of the church order of the Netherlands Reformed Churches and that the right to deviate in this matter should be perceived in terms of common law or legal precedent.

6.6.4.3. *The argument of opponents*

Zegwaard rightly notices how matters of church order are primarily introduced in the paedocommunion discussion by opponents²⁹⁵⁴. Remarkable exceptions are Jan van Katwijk who finds support in the historical church order of the Dutch Refugee Church in London²⁹⁵⁵ and Pastor G. Visee who uses the 1563 Church Order of the Palatinate in support of his plea for including younger children and for lowering the requirements for their admission, and considers the Palatinate Church Order's simplicity a better format for admission by profession of faith²⁹⁵⁶.

6.6.4.4. *For the sake of churches and their order*

How is church order mentioned in the paedocommunion debate by the opponents? Jaap Kamphuis recognizes Popma's view of the church order as the "worst enemy of the congregation" in the paedocommunion "experiment" of Rijsbergen, and accuses Popma of failing to distinguish between hierarchical and biblical-Reformed church order²⁹⁵⁷. Wiskerke seems to equal breach of the Church Order of Dordt with sinful individualism and lack of acknowledging sister churches²⁹⁵⁸. Without mentioning paedocommunion C. Veenhof writes in *Opbouw*: "What the churches rightly have rejected, yes loathed, that is the intentional and arbitrary changing or relinquishing of what the churches in full freedom established as canonical regulations. In these

²⁹⁵³ The Orthodox Presbyterian Kidane-Hiwot Chapel in Washington D.C., J. Geertsema, "More decisions of the OPC General Assembly," *Clarion* (August 23, 1985): 375-376.

²⁹⁵⁴ Zegwaard (2006), 86.

²⁹⁵⁵ Marten Micron, *De Christlike ordinancien der Nederlantscher Ghemeinten te London 1554: Opnieuw uitgegeven en van een inleiding voorzien door W.F.Dankbaar*. Vol. VII of *Kerkhistorische Studië*, ed. J. Lindeboom, M. van Rhijn, J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink ('s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956). Paragraph 4.3.12.

²⁹⁵⁶ Kirchenordnung der Kurpfalz 1563, in Wilhelm Niesel, *Bekenntnisschriften und Kirchenordnungen der nach Gottes Wort reformierten Kirche*, 2nd ed. (Zürich, Evangelischer Verlag A.G. Zollikon, 1938). G. Visee's articles were originally published in Dutch in *Opbouw*, translated in English for *Christian Renewal*, and collected in G. Visee, *Onderwezen in het Koninkrijk der hemelen: keuze uit de persarbeid van ds. G. Visee* (Kampen: Van den Berg 1979), 226-263.

²⁹⁵⁷ J. Kamphuis, "Kerkelijk leven: Het oude ideaal," *De Reformatie* 40, no. 38 (June 26, 1965): 303-304.

²⁹⁵⁸ Wiskerke (August 8, 1964), 337.

things they have tasted a lack of Christian humility, a lack of piety in practical affairs, an offense of good faith, an absence of true love, a handing over of churches to confusion, and a disturbance of peace.”²⁹⁵⁹ Pastor Veldman and *Reformatie* editor De Vries apply these words explicitly to the paedocommunion experiments of Rijsbergen²⁹⁶⁰. In the Netherlands Reformed Church Van Itterzon uses the introductions of paedocommunion as example of the destruction of canonical law, in which openness to experiments, without prior deliberation about what should and what should not happen, leads to chaos²⁹⁶¹.

For some this is above all a matter of order. That church order plays an important role is appropriate for a presbyterian-synodical church such as the Netherlands Reformed Church which rejects congregationalism, argues Groenenberg²⁹⁶². According to him that leaves the options of obeying the rules, of first seeking revision of the rules, or of requesting to be granted an exception to those rules before introducing new practices²⁹⁶³. Similar sentiment is expressed in the Christian Reformed Churches which are warned by Peter De Jong in the conservative magazine *Outlook* against “running ahead in anticipation of future changes.”²⁹⁶⁴

6.6.4.5. Room for deviation

In his commentary on the church order of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Nauta cautiously allows for deviation of church order in cases when first of all there are clear grounds for such deviation, and when these grounds consider primarily the well being of the church instead of more individual considerations. In the second place when the interests of sister churches or the denomination are not harmed, and thirdly when at the first possible occasion account is given to the denomination, in order that at least in retrospect approval of the deviation may be acquired²⁹⁶⁵. Nauta’s comparison of Scripture with the constitution and church order with derivative subordinated laws raises the question whether renewed understanding of what Scripture requires, regarding for example the

²⁹⁵⁹ C. Veenhof, “Om der wille van de liefde,” *Opbouw* 8, no. 25 (October 2, 1964) (my translation).

²⁹⁶⁰ De Vries (October 24, 1964), 31, who quotes A. Veldman’s article in *’t Geref. Kerkblad voor Zuid-Holland, Zeeland, Noord-Brabant en Limburg*.

²⁹⁶¹ G.P. van Itterzon, “De verwoesting van het kerkrecht,” *Hervormd Weekblad* 80 (1969).

²⁹⁶² M. Groenenberg, “Vragen rondom de kindercommunie,” *Woord en Dienst* 19 (1970): 377.

²⁹⁶³ Groenenberg (1970), 377.

²⁹⁶⁴ Peter De Jong, “Children at the Lord’s Table,” *Outlook* (February 1983).

²⁹⁶⁵ D. Nauta, *Verklaring van de kerkorde van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (Kampen: Kok, 1971), 19. In his explanation of article 137, Nauta seems even more cautious about such deviation.

admission of children, would be considered sufficient ground²⁹⁶⁶. In the case of paedocommunion there seems to have been a clear difference of opinion on what could be dealt with locally or regionally²⁹⁶⁷, or what harms the interest of sister churches. Groenenberg argues that local differences in admission of children cause harm to children, parents and councils when families relocate²⁹⁶⁸. Nauta's possibility to give account of deviation of church order afterwards is defended even more wholeheartedly by Bartels. Bartels refers to the apostle Peter who first crossed the boundary between Jew and gentile in Acts 10 only to be held accountable afterwards in Acts 11²⁹⁶⁹. It is only normal, no matter how inconvenient, that church order lags behind reality²⁹⁷⁰. Groenenberg wonders what happens if a local church decides to deviate from church order and one of its members brings the issue to the committee of appeal and adjudication, with an appeal to church order²⁹⁷¹. I note that this dilemma disappears when the church council giving account of its decision, as Nauta and Bartels suggest, and the church member appealing it, from Groenenberg's example, meet each other before the same ecclesiastical body.

6.6.4.6. Obedience to God

For some the Canonical Law seems more than just a matter of order. C. den Boer who first seems to acknowledge that "praxis, the experiment, precedes church order"²⁹⁷² argues a day later that church order "is proper to maintain harmony and unity and to keep all in obedience to God."²⁹⁷³ I note how by failing to quote the complete sentence "So we accept only what is proper to maintain harmony and unity and to keep all in obedience to God", or by failing to quote the complete article 32 of the Belgic Confession²⁹⁷⁴, Den Boer risks

²⁹⁶⁶ Nauta (1971), 16.

²⁹⁶⁷ Comp. P. Van den Heuvel, *De Hervormde Kerkorde: Een praktische toelichting; Onder verwerking van etc.* 2nd ed. (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2001), 34.

²⁹⁶⁸ Groenenberg (1970), 377.

²⁹⁶⁹ H. Bartels, "Nog eens: De kinderdcommunie," *Woord en Dienst* 20 (1971), 28-29.

²⁹⁷⁰ "Het gehalte gaat aan de gestalte vooraf, niet omgekeerd," Bartels (1971), 29.

²⁹⁷¹ Groenenberg (1970), 377.

²⁹⁷² C. den Boer, "Waarom zouden ook de kinderen niet komen? (I)," *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, December 1, 1978.

²⁹⁷³ "of om het met de woorden van artikel 32 van de Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis te zeggen: "door de kerk aangenomen regels, die dienstig zijn om eendrachtigheid en enigheid te voeden en te bewaren en alles te onderhouden, in de gehoorzaamheid Gods?," Den Boer (December 2, 1978).

²⁹⁷⁴ "We also believe that although it is useful and good for those who govern the churches to establish and set up a certain order among themselves for maintaining the body of the church, they ought always to guard against deviating from what Christ, our only Master, has ordained for us. Therefore we reject all human innovations and all laws imposed on us, in our worship of God, which bind and force our consciences in any way. So we accept only what is proper to maintain harmony and unity and to keep all in obedience to God. To that end excommunication, with all it involves, according to the Word of God, is required," Belgic Confession, Article 32.

blurring the difference between current law and ideal law, or between manmade law and divine law²⁹⁷⁵. Earlier Schravendeel²⁹⁷⁶ suggested that church order is based on faith and confessions, and that changing church order essentially means changing the doctrine of the church²⁹⁷⁷. At the floor of Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Van Oeveren states that the core question is whether we still support the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11, as stipulated in the church order and the confession²⁹⁷⁸. The words of Den Boer, Schravendeel and Van Oeveren might suggest that church order carries equal weight to confessions and Scripture, and that abiding by canonical law equals obedience to God. That at least is the idea that the congregation of Rijsbergen explicitly resisted in the early days²⁹⁷⁹.

6.6.4.7. *The speed of adapting church order*

I have provided overviews which show when the question of paedocommunion was raised within the different denominations and when, if at all, church order was changed in those same denominations in order to allow paedocommunion. When we trace individual cases we see how a child may mature between the time its question is publicly posed and the time that the question reaches the agenda of a synod. Other children retire without the question ever reaching the national assembly or synod. A whole generation, or in some denominations more than half a century, can easily pass between the moment the question is raised for the first time and the time church order is adapted. Even between the moment synod officially allows deviation of church order and the moment church order is changed accordingly, another fifteen years can easily have passed. This reality proves, as Hartvelt rightly notes, that it is very difficult to undo something once it is incorporated in church order²⁹⁸⁰. Part of the reason may be that a majority at the floor of synod is enough to embrace a new theological insight, but that ratification by the following synod is needed in several denominations to change church order accordingly²⁹⁸¹. We saw how the 2007 CRCNA Synod did not ratify the 2006 decision. In some denominations a two third majority is needed to change church order, which turned out problematic at the 1981-1982 RCN

²⁹⁷⁵ Comp. Leo J. Koffeman, *Het goed recht van de kerk: Een theologische inleiding op het kerkrecht* (Kampen: Kok, 2009), 88f.

²⁹⁷⁶ One of the two writers of the minority report for the RCN 1976 Synod.

²⁹⁷⁷ Schravendeel (May 1977).

²⁹⁷⁸ "Kernvraag is of wij nog achter de exegese van 1 Kor. 11 staan, zoals die in de kerkorde en confessie is vastgelegd," "Synode van Lunteren wijst belijdenis doen in fasen af," *Nederlands Dagblad*, October 10, 1984.

²⁹⁷⁹ "Gereformeerde Kerk? Neen!" *Trouw*, September 15, 1964.

²⁹⁸⁰ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1.

²⁹⁸¹ Sometimes explicitly in order that the local churches may be consulted about the change.

Synod²⁹⁸². This raises the question whether church order is able to do justice to the questions of individuals or even to the questions of a generation, as it seems to fail to deliver justice timely. This also raises the question whether church order is the dynamic living law, *lebendiges Recht* in the terminology of Barth²⁹⁸³, which many aspire it to be. In light of Rogers' theory on the diffusion of innovations, and the percentages needed for revisions of church order one wonders whether church order can ever do justice to approximate 2.5% of *Innovators*, the 13.5% of *Early Adopters* or even to the 34% of the *Early Majority*, and whether current procedures provide enough protection against abuse of church order by the 34% *Late Majority* and the 16% *Laggards*²⁹⁸⁴.

6.7. Roles

6.7.1. No rules

Before I describe who played what role in the discussion on – and the introduction of paedocommunion, it is important to explain how my terminology is derived from the practical theologian Don S. Browning, but used differently. Browning speaks of the dimension of rules and roles when describing the concrete practices of which action is made up²⁹⁸⁵. When I deal with the question of roles my main focus has been to find out who have been the participants in the paedocommunion discussion and who have been the change agents, in the sense of causing a change in opinions and beliefs regarding the participation of children in the Lord's Supper, or causing the introduction of paedocommunion.

6.7.2. Groups of people

In my report on the three denominational discussions and on the three local congregations I researched, I mentioned many individuals. Here I want to consider whether I can come to more general conclusions regarding the role of specific groups of people. For that reason I distinguished theologians from non-theologians, and theologians from pedagogues and educators. Among the

²⁹⁸² Article 62.2 of the RCN Church Order at that time read: "De generale synode zal ten aanzien van deze zaken geen definitieve beslissingen nemen, zonder de mindere vergaderingen in de gelegenheid te hebben gesteld van haar gevoelen blijk te geven. Voorts zal een dergelijke beslissing een meerderheid van twee derden der uitgebrachte stemmen behoeven," Nauta (1971), 225.

²⁹⁸³ Barth (1955), 805-815.

²⁹⁸⁴ Rogers (1995), 262.

²⁹⁸⁵ Browning writes for example: "Action is (1) made up of concrete practices (rules, roles, communication patterns); (2) motivated by needs and tendencies; (3) limited and channeled by social-systemic and ecological constraints; (4) further ordered by principles of obligation; and (5) given meaning by visions, narratives, and metaphors," Browning (1996), 111.

theologians I distinguished pastors, professors and editors of denominational periodicals. I noticed an interesting quantitative difference in the contribution of men and women. I was keen to find out what role children and youth of different ages and life-stages had played. Was there a role for the childlike mentally challenged? I intentionally included those who had been children at the moment of introduction in my interviews. I acknowledged those in leadership roles and tried to be sensitive to hierarchy and other dynamics of power. In my empirical research I included office bearers and non-office bearers.

6.7.3. Theologians

In his book *De theologen gingen voorop* A.M. Lindeboom claims the theologians led their churches in the introduction of children at the Lord's Supper²⁹⁸⁶. Lindeboom speaks of a proposal which rose not from the bosom of the churches, but from the brains of theologians²⁹⁸⁷. He claims that not the children asked to participate, but the adults and especially the theologians²⁹⁸⁸. In his dissertation²⁹⁸⁹ Hittjo Kruyswijk supports Lindeboom's claim regarding the leading role of theologians in other theological discussions in the Netherlands²⁹⁹⁰. But regarding the introduction of paedocommunion I have to disagree with Lindeboom. Based on my research I conclude that theologians only played a leading role in parts of the discussion and process, and even then more so in one denomination than in the other, more so in one country than in the other.

²⁹⁸⁶ Lindeboom (1987), 301-329.

²⁹⁸⁷ "een voorstel, dat niet is opgekomen uit de boezem der kerken, maar uit het brein van theologen," Lindeboom (1987), 315.

²⁹⁸⁸ "om te beginnen moet men niet uit het oog verliezen, dat het niet de kinderen zijn geweest, die om deelneming aan het Avondmaal hebben gevraagd. Dat hebben volwassenen gedaan" ... "k Hoop de theologen geen onrecht aan te doen, als ik verklaar dat zij de hoofdoorzaak zijn geweest van al de narigheden, welke van hun drijven het gevolg zijn..." "Zo kan men tot ons aller leedwezen dus aan alle kanten zien hoezeer door de nieuwe theologische denkbeelden, die van boven af over onze kerken werden uitgestort, beide de praktijk en de beschouwing van het Avondmaal in een ernstige, levensgevaarlijke crisis zijn geraakt," Lindeboom (1987), 316, 329.

²⁹⁸⁹ On the evolution theory and the authority of Scripture within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

²⁹⁹⁰ Hittjo Hendrik Kruyswijk, *Baas in eigen Boek? Evolutietheorie en Schriftgezag bij de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (1881-1981)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2011). Kruyswijk specifically refers to Lindeboom's book and adopts the title of his book for a chapter of his dissertation, Kruyswijk (2011), 237.

6.7.4. Roles in Periodicals

6.7.4.1. Periodicals - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands

Lindeboom seems right regarding the role of theologians in the discussion within the periodicals of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Almost all participants are theologians, many of them editors of the periodicals and /or faculty staff. Children do not participate in the discussion within these periodicals, though the first time we come across the question, more than half a century before a true discussion starts, it is raised by children²⁹⁹¹. The youngest contributor in the discussion I found was age twenty eight at the time²⁹⁹²; the average age of the authors, I registered, fifty two²⁹⁹³. Hogenhuis gives children an indirect voice in the periodicals with a selection of fragments of letters by eight of them²⁹⁹⁴. Some of the theologians who participate in the discussion, such as Aalbers²⁹⁹⁵ and Heitink²⁹⁹⁶, do credit children or youth for raising the question. Adult lay members of the denomination don't either participate in the discussion within the periodicals, and when they are mentioned by the theologians they remain anonymous.

It is relevant to notice that even when only theologians participate in the discussion within the periodicals, this can still be viewed as part of a process of democratization which empowers the lay members. I was surprised to find no proof of significant academic debate among the theologians on paedocommunion. Discussion in academic theological journals remains relatively limited; most dissertations deal with the discussion in retrospect, though paedocommunion does receive support from the academic world in the form of theorems in dissertations in support of the practice²⁹⁹⁷. Many contributions of theologians target an audience of lay members. Kruyswijk registers a similar phenomenon among some of the leading theologians in other discussions within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and

²⁹⁹¹ Hoogenbirk (December 11, 1898), 4.

²⁹⁹² W. Scheltens, "Thuis in de kerkdienst," *Credo* (June 1982): 27-30. Wim Scheltens was born August 2, 1953.

²⁹⁹³ Paragraph 5.6.2., footnote 2356.

²⁹⁹⁴ Hogenhuis (May, 1984).

²⁹⁹⁵ Aalbers (1974), 80.

²⁹⁹⁶ Gerben Heitink, "Gezinscommunie een impressie," *Ouderlingenblad* (November 1976): 9.

²⁹⁹⁷ G. Puchinger for example stated: "Kinderen moeten, indien zij en hun ouders dat wensen, kunnen deelnemen aan de viering van het Heilig Avondmaal"; Fr. T. Ros stated: "Het is een bedroevende inconsequentie dat vele kerken wel kinderdoop maar geen kindercommunie aanvaarden." In the CRCNA discussion we registered something similar, quoting Veenstra "The doctoral thesis of one of our professors of theology states that Scripture does not forbid children's participation in the Lord's Supper," "Ook kinderen mee aan het Avondmaal," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, June 27, 1969; "Promotie Drs. Ros op "Determinatio" van Luther," *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, December 12, 1974. Veenstra (August 22, 1969).

speaks about a ‘popularization offensive which led to a democratization of the discussion about all kinds of theological issues’²⁹⁹⁸.

6.7.4.2. Periodicals – Christian Reformed Churches

In the discussion within the periodicals of the Christian Reformed Church the theologians do not play the same leading role²⁹⁹⁹. More emphatically than in the Dutch periodicals lay-members³⁰⁰⁰ and children³⁰⁰¹ are the first to raise the question and start the discussion in the fifties³⁰⁰². Lay members continue to contribute to the discussion often through the special sections in the *Banner* such as *The Reader asks*³⁰⁰³ and *Voices*³⁰⁰⁴, but also in regular articles³⁰⁰⁵ and news reports on synod³⁰⁰⁶. Individual children also continue to raise the question³⁰⁰⁷, and children are polled by the hundreds³⁰⁰⁸ in 1980³⁰⁰⁹. Related to the contribution of lay-members and children is the participation of women

²⁹⁹⁸ Kruyswijk (2011), 238.

²⁹⁹⁹ Unlike the discussion in the periodicals of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands it was impossible to identify all the participants in the discussion and thus to determine their occupation, and to calculate their individual and average ages.

³⁰⁰⁰ Nicholas J. Monsma, “Should children partake of the Lord’s supper?” *Banner* (January 6, 1950): 5.

³⁰⁰¹ Vos (February 28, 1958).

³⁰⁰² The first time the CRC Periodical Index registers the issue of children at the Lord’s Supper.

³⁰⁰³ John H. Bratt, “The Reader Asks; At What Age Should We Admit to the Lord’s Supper?” *Banner* (January 25, 1963).

³⁰⁰⁴ I have counted the authors of the following contributions to the section *Voices* as lay members, as they are not registered as minister in the *Historical Directory of the Christian Reformed Church*: G. Henneveld “Voices: Children at the Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (May 1, 1970). Kristine Ellestad, “Voices: Children at the table?” *Banner* (December 8, 1980); Norman De Jong, “Voices: Children and Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (December 15, 1980); Harry Van Gurp, “Voices: Children at the table?” *Banner* (December 29, 1980); George Prins, “Voices: Children at the table?” *Banner* (December 29, 1980); Richard N. Ostling, “Voices: Worthy Partakers,” *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Jacob Vandervate, “Voices: Worthy Partakers,” *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Harry Buis, “Voices: Children at the table?” *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Patterson (January 5, 1981); Christine Wiersma, “Voices: Children at the table?” *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Jack Geschiere, “Voices: Children at the table?” *Banner* (January 5, 1981); Lauri Brower, “Voices: Polling and Partaking,” *Banner* (February 2, 1981); Tracey Shannon Kooy, “Voices: Jesus Loves Us Too,” *Banner* (February 2, 1981). Richard H. Harms, *Historical Directory of the Christian Reformed Church* (Grand Rapids: Historical Committee of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, 2004).

³⁰⁰⁵ E.g. Feenstra Venema (January 26, 1973); Linda K. Male, “In Memory Of Anne Butler: Reflections On Children At The Lord’s Supper,” *Stromata* (May 1988); Jill Friend, “Celebrating Faith Milestones: Profession of Faith,” *Banner* (July 2012).

³⁰⁰⁶ E.g. Sandra Vander Zicht, “More Wisdom Needed: Children at Lord’s Supper Subject to Scrutiny,” *Banner* (July 2, 1984): 2; Rachel TeGrootenhuis, “Classis Seeks Time to Study Juvenile Communion,” *Banner* (April 28, 1986); Phyllis Ten Elshof, “Permit the children at the supper too?” *Banner* (July 31, 1989): 22, “Let the Children Come, But....,” *Banner* (July 3, 1995); Ruth Donker, “News Feature: What Our Churches Are Doing About Children at the Lord’s Supper,” *Banner* (August 26, 1996); Gayla R. Postma, “Baptized Children at the Lord’s Supper, Take Two,” *Banner* (June 2010): 12, “Faith Formation Committee Ends, Work Continues,” *Banner* (July 2013): 34.

³⁰⁰⁷ Feenstra Venema (1973); Kuyvenhoven (November 24, 1980). Vander Klok (April 22, 1996).

³⁰⁰⁸ Paragraph 5.2.7.7. (Of the six teachers, mentioned in the article, who polled children, three mention the exact number of children, 467 children in total).

³⁰⁰⁹ Cecilia Mereness, “Do Children Care?” *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

in the discussion³⁰¹⁰. Women start participating as early as 1973, whereas for example the first female contribution I registered in the periodical discussion in the Reformed Churches liberated and the Dutch Reformed Churches was published in 2011³⁰¹¹. Women contribute approximately 16% of the periodical articles and constitute approximately 22% of the authors I registered, whereas I registered no female author in the periodical discussion within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (for the period I researched). This is remarkable because the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands allowed women in office since 1969 and the Christian Reformed Churches only since 1995. So children and lay members started the discussion by raising the question, and continue to contribute in significant ways as the discussion unfolds, whereas the contributions in the last stage are by theologians, both professors and pastors, and members of the synodical committee, both theologians and educators³⁰¹².

6.7.4.3. *Periodicals – Reformed Churches liberated & Dutch Reformed Churches*

With regard to drawing conclusions on the role of specific groups of people within the discussion in the periodicals of the Reformed Church liberated and the Dutch Reformed Churches, I need to tread carefully. All contributions in the major periodicals³⁰¹³ of these denominations are by theologians, both pastors and professors, with the exception of the contribution of C.P. Kleingeld³⁰¹⁴ and Anje de Heer³⁰¹⁵. I did not come across other contributions of children. And in this periodical discussion, which started in 1963, the first contribution by a woman that I came across was in 2011 by the same Anje de Heer³⁰¹⁶. But in these two denominations the introduction of children at the Lord's Supper in the local church of Rijsbergen preceded the discussion on the

³⁰¹⁰ We registered the contributions of Tena Feenstra Venema (1973); Cecilia Mereness (1980); Kristine Ellestad (1980); Diane Marie Patterson (1981); Christine Wiersma (1981); Lauri Brower (1981); Tracey Shannon Kooy (1981); Cecilia Mereness (1980); Sandra VanderZicht (1984); Rachel TeGrootenhuis (1986); Linda K. Male (1988); Phyllis Ten Elshof (1989 & 1995); Joanne E. De Jonge (1996); Ruth Donker (1996); Jozina Vander Klok (1996) with a drawing by Jennifer Nanninga; Gayla R. Postma (2010 & 2013); Jill Friend (2012).

³⁰¹¹ Anje de Heer, "Kinderen en avondmaal: Een historische en liturgische invalshoek," *De Reformatie* (September 9, 2011): 512-513.

³⁰¹² We registered contributions by the pastors/theologians Tim Gallant, Ryan Faber, Wayne Brouwer, Michael F. Abma, Stanley Mast and Peter Hoytema, professors Dr. Syd Hielema (Youth Ministries), Dr. Cornelius P. Venema (Doctrinal Studies), Dr. Robert J. Keeley (Education), Dr. Lye D. Bierma (Systematic Theology), Dr. David M. Rylaarsdam (Historical Theology), Dr. Jeffrey A.D. Weima (New Testament), Dr. John D. Witvliet (Worship & Theology), Synodical Committee members Hielema, Witvliet and educator Jill Friend.

³⁰¹³ The smaller periodical *Contact* has contributions of non theologians.

³⁰¹⁴ Later, in 1999, at the age of 57, Dr. Kleingeld is ordained as pastor of the Free Reformed Church of Wolvega, and independent church associated with the Dutch Reformed Churches.

³⁰¹⁵ De Heer studied at the Utrecht Conservatoire, and advises the denomination in the field of liturgy and church music. <http://www.damon.nl/authors/31070-anje-de-heer> (accessed May 23, 2016).

³⁰¹⁶ De Heer (September 9, 2011), 512-513.

issue in the periodicals. And thus the dominant role of theologians in the periodical discussion does not equal the role of change agents leading their churches in the introduction of paedocommunion³⁰¹⁷. In the initial stage the role of journalists and their articles in national newspapers seems to have been crucial for raising awareness of the existence of the praxis. I also noticed that most other local Dutch Reformed Churches started welcoming children at their Lord's Suppers in a period when the periodical discussion had long ceased. In the new round of discussion within the Reformed Churches liberated which is started by Robert R. Roth in 2007, I notice once again a connection with the church Rijsbergen and a new significant, be it passive, role for the mentally challenged. At a denominational level neither of those two denominations has officially approved paedocommunion at the level of her synod or national assembly.

6.7.5. Roles at synod and national assemblies

With regard to conclusions about the roles of different groups in the discussions at the floor synods and national assemblies I face several limitations. First, the issue of paedocommunion has not been put on the agenda of the national assembly of the Dutch Reformed Churches, nor on that of synod of the Reformed Churches liberated. Second, both the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Christian Reformed Churches delegate only office-bearers to their synods³⁰¹⁸. Third, study committees and advisory committees are by nature mixed groups. Fourth, my sources do not provide the level of detail necessary for the analysis of all the individual contributions to the discussion on the floor of synod. Because of these limitations it is impossible to test the validity of Lindeboom's claim regarding the leading role of theologians with regard to the synodical discussions. It seems true though, that among the very first to raise the issue were a number of pastors at the 1961 Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church³⁰¹⁹.

³⁰¹⁷ Compare Lindeboom (1987), 301-329.

³⁰¹⁸ Resp. church order art. 44 & 59. Nauta (1971), 176f., 217f. Church Order art. 45, Martin Monsma, *The New Revised Church Order Commentary: A Brief Explanation of the Church order of the Christian Reformed Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 180f.; William P. Brink & Richard R. De Ridder, *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government: 1987 Revision* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1987), 221f. With the introduction of deacon delegates in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in the early seventies, 40% of the delegates are pastors. In the Christian Reformed Church the ratio pastors and elder delegates is fifty-fifty.

³⁰¹⁹ Pastors Kaastra, Mooi, Post, and Spilt, Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 320-330; "Oecumenische viering mogelijk? Stemmen op synode: ook kinderen aan Avondmaal," *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant*, November 1, 1961 (11-12). But these first pleas were made in the context of the discussion on ecumenical celebration of the Lord's Supper, a discussion in which among others the European Ecumenical Youth Assembly in Lausanne in 1960 had acted as catalyst, Zegwaard (2006), 42. Davies (1963), 410.

Noteworthy are the contributions of the Rotterdam youth group *Denken en doen* with her report *Daadwerkelijke mondigheid*, and Students' plea to admit children at the Lord's Supper that came before synod in other reports³⁰²⁰. It should be noted that not only delegates contribute to the discussion at the synodical level. Grass roots contributions find their way to the synod through numerous overtures, communications, (open) letters, requests for revision, and official complaints. Besides these more ordinary means synods actively sought grass roots contribution, Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands through a "hearing" in 1969³⁰²¹ and a consultation in 1976³⁰²², Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches in the shepherding process as followed by the Faith Formation Committee³⁰²³. But only in rare cases do these contributions come from the specific groups I have distinguished³⁰²⁴.

6.7.6. Roles in Local Congregations

The beauty of researching the introduction of paedocommunion in specific congregations is that almost all groups I have distinguished are part of the local church community³⁰²⁵.

6.7.6.1. Local roles - Pastors, theologians and educators

I could start with testing Lindeboom's claim and ask: did theologians lead the local churches I researched in the introduction of children at the Lord's Supper? In all three cases I studied reality is far more complex. The role of teaching elder Jan van Katwijk in several ways resembled that of a pastor, but he was not a theologian. And in light of his charisma it may be considered quite surprising that other individuals played roles of similar importance and that in the end the communal nature of the decision of Rijsbergen was so evident. In the case of Fourteenth Street Pastor Marvin Hofman is a theologian, who has played a central role in the process, and who is compared to the Reformers, to an elder statesman, and described as a leader with a pastoral heart. And more than in the other churches the lay members mention the influence of other theologians and their speeches at conferences or in

³⁰²⁰ "Kerk 66-2000," Supplement 14, 15, Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 181-190, November 20, 21, 22, 1967; *Denken en doen* (1969); Deputaten Kerk en Jeugd and Raad voor het Jeugdwerk, *Samen op Weg*, 's Gravenhage: n.p., 1969.

³⁰²¹ Art. 169, Acts RCN 1969-1970 Synod, 145f. November 25, 1969.

³⁰²² Art. 330, Acts RCN 1975-1976 Synod, 215f. October 7, 1976. Suppl. 44, 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 209, 228.

³⁰²³ Paragraph 5.3.11.

³⁰²⁴ E.g. youth of the RCN of Utrecht-Oost sends a letter to Synod. Aalbers (1971), 12.

³⁰²⁵ I.e. men and women, young and old, theologians and non-theologians, and office bearers and others in positions of leadership or power.

articles. But Hofman shares this central role with the directors of Children's Ministries, Bob and Laura Keeley, who are not theologians, but educators. Though I have no indications that a leading role for educators in the introduction of paedocommunion has been a pattern, the role of the Keeley's does reflect the development over the last century that educators and not theologians determined how believers viewed and treated their children. In the case of New West Church Pastor Beunk may have been instrumental in the final approval of children at the Lord's Supper, and Professor Goheen may have been influential in his role as part time minister of preaching and advisor to council. But in contemplating the possible leading role of theologians and pastors in the introduction of paedocommunion in local congregations, it is remarkable that New West Church has always had paedocommunion proponents as pastor since 1979 when Brouwer started his tenure. Paedocommunion proponent Pastor Nederlof would become a member after his retirement. Later Pastor Helder, coming from Classis Rocky Mountains, chairman of a synodical study committee and writer of a minority report, served the church. I also served the church, after having served the Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen. In light of that fact New West has moved rather slowly and cautiously, never running ahead of the denomination, or running faster than the pace set by synod³⁰²⁶.

6.7.6.2. Local roles - Men and women

I can repeat what I noticed in my description of the process in the church of Rijsbergen. It is remarkable how in the church of Rijsbergen at that time women were not allowed to be office bearers and had no voting rights; how the congregational meeting is referred to as male members' meeting³⁰²⁷. Yet Carolina, and Maria Wijngaards, a mother and her daughter, put the issue on the agenda and in important ways contributed to this historical change³⁰²⁸. None of the three churches had female pastors while introducing children at the Lord's Supper³⁰²⁹, but in most other respects men and women equally contributed to the process. Girls and boys asked questions. Fathers and mothers put the questions before council. Men and women studied the issue, took part in the conversations, and reshaped the liturgy.

³⁰²⁶ Interviewees indicate the increasingly noticed passion of these pastors and theologians plays a role. The trust they receive in their role as pastors and the authority as professor, but even more the trust they gain as Christ followers, makes members willing to consider the legitimacy of their views.

³⁰²⁷ "manslidmaten vergadering."

³⁰²⁸ Van Katwijk speaks about "when our sister led us," ("toen onze zuster ons voorging,") Van Katwijk (1966), 6.

³⁰²⁹ Though Laura Keeley held a staff position at 14th Street CRC.

6.7.6.3. Local roles - Children

Lindeboom did not only claim that theologians led their churches in the introduction of paedocommunion, he also claimed that children did not ask to participate³⁰³⁰. We already saw that this is not true for the periodical and synodical discussions within his denomination³⁰³¹. It is also not true for the local congregations I researched. As the Bible anticipated, children have always asked questions about the rituals, ceremonies and services³⁰³² and about the stipulations, decrees and laws which God commanded His people³⁰³³. In the story of Rijsbergen the role of thirteen year old Maria Wijngaards may have been one of silent obedience to her mother. But other children, such as Linda Overduin at age seven or younger and possibly Arie Ruis at the same age, did ask the question. Teenagers, such as seventeen year old Dick Vermeulen, engaged in conversations with the adults of the congregation. We saw how, at least in retrospect, father Overduin understood Linda's question in light of Psalm 8, where the mouth of children is instrument in God's victorious work³⁰³⁴. The one child whose passive role in the story of Fourteenth Street CRC is perceived as one of a crucial catalyst by almost all interviewees is the disabled Dalton. In common perception the mentally disabled and seniors suffering from Alzheimer's disease are often categorized with the children. From that perspective I should also mention Owen, the senior member of Fourteenth Street CRC, who caused many to reconsider the Lord's Supper practice³⁰³⁵. Families, whose children had participated prior to joining this congregation, also were an incentive to deal with the issue. Young children asking questions are especially mentioned in the stories of individual families, and less so in the story of the congregation as a whole. In the story of New West CRC we have seen how the children of several families asking their parents similar questions played a crucial role in putting the issue once more on the agenda. Although we have also seen that not all parents automatically allow their children's desire to be fulfilled. Catechism students asked the question well before any changes were initiated³⁰³⁶. That young children can challenge and shape the theological convictions of (adult) theologians is shown by the example of Michael Goheen's daughter asking at age three: "Daddy is the Lords supper for the Lords sheep?", "Am I one of the Lord's sheep?" and in response to her father's positive reply: "Why can't I have the

³⁰³⁰ Lindeboom (1987), 316, 329.

³⁰³¹ Hoogenbirk (December 11, 1898), 4; Vos (February 28, 1958).

³⁰³² Cf. Exodus 12:26, 13:14.

³⁰³³ Cf. Deuteronomy 6:20.

³⁰³⁴ Overduin (1984), 23; Van Katwijk (1966), 4.

³⁰³⁵ Hofman (2015).

³⁰³⁶ Henry Van Andel, "The Privileges of Full Communion," in *Thy Way is My Way*, ed. Michael De Vries, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Credo, 1972), 10.

“Lords supper?” The three case studies reveal how children and youth ask such questions in the setting of families³⁰³⁷, catechism³⁰³⁸, and worship services³⁰³⁹, especially as they witness the Lord’s Supper celebration. I gathered from other stories of local churches how questions³⁰⁴⁰ and actions³⁰⁴¹ of the youth can put the question on agendas. In the strict sense that did not happen in the three churches I researched³⁰⁴². But in the whole process of these congregations the question of children is perceived as important by many members. In retrospect at least some feel convinced or even led by their child³⁰⁴³, or led by God through their child³⁰⁴⁴.

6.7.6.4. Local roles - Parents

In all three churches I found children who raised the question with their parents, and parents who brought their children’s question before council³⁰⁴⁵. Once the decision to admit children is taken, parents in all three congregations can choose to not let their children participate in the Lord’s Supper. In the church of Rijsbergen none of the long term members has chosen that option. The interviews with parents of Fourteenth Street CRC reveals how parents made different choices whether or not to allow their children, and if so under what conditions. I noticed that in New West possibly even a majority of parents have chosen not to let their children participate, and that they have done so for already more than a decade³⁰⁴⁶. Several of the interviewed parents indicate that the decision to welcome children to the Table forces parents to take their responsibility to teach and instruct their children regarding the Lord’s Supper, and to nurture faith at home. Of the three churches New West CRC most specifically has tried to equip the parents through parenting classes³⁰⁴⁷ and by sermons, for example on *parenting in the pews*³⁰⁴⁸.

³⁰³⁷ E.g. Linda Overduin in Rijsbergen, Mike Goheen’s daughter in New Westminster, Rebecca Stilwell, 14th Street CRC, Paragraph 4.4.21.

³⁰³⁸ E.g. Dick Vermeulen in Rijsbergen, Paragraph 4.3.8., Van Aniel (1972), 10, for New West CRC.

³⁰³⁹ E.g. Linda Overduin in Rijsbergen, Rebecca Stilwell in 14th Street CRC,

³⁰⁴⁰ E.g. NRC Utrecht Oost, Aalbers (1971), 12.

³⁰⁴¹ E.g. the spontaneous participation of Roman Catholic youth in the NRC/RCN of Geldrop, Aalbers (1974), 80, or the somewhat provocative participation of youth in the RCL of Dordrecht, Jansen-Cramer (1997), 15.

³⁰⁴² In Rijsbergen mother Carolina Wijngaards did, in New West CRC and 14th Street CRC synod initially did.

³⁰⁴³ Quoting “A child shall lead them,” Isaiah 11: 6.

³⁰⁴⁴ Quoting Psalm 8, Overduin (1984), 23.

³⁰⁴⁵ Lindeboom and others can make it sound as if it is a bad thing that not children (as they wrongly claim), but adults and especially theologians have advocated paedocommunion. Lindeboom (1987), 316.

³⁰⁴⁶ John VanderWoude for example notices that “very few parents have their children participate in the lords supper.”

³⁰⁴⁷ Led by Mike and Marnie Goheen.

³⁰⁴⁸ A sermon by Mike Goheen on September 11, 2011.

6.7.6.5. Local roles - Office-bearers and leaders

It is interesting to compare the different roles the denomination's synod or national assembly played in each of the three local congregations. My research clearly shows three different scenarios of congregational dependence, or lack thereof, on denominational policy. This outcome has little statistical relevance as it is so clearly related to my selection of different local congregations. The fact that the earliest pioneers can be found before the issue was put on the synodical agendas, let alone before any synodical decision was taken, may prove that at least the initiative of the innovation has not been a top down matter. In the Dutch Reformed tradition with its presbyterial organization one could expect a leading role of council in the local process. The stories of the three congregations certainly reveal several moments of such leadership. But in none of the stories the image of a top down decision emerges. In the case of Rijsbergen there are no minutes mentioning a council decision, and the real decision seems to have been taken at a congregational meeting³⁰⁴⁹. The leadership involved in the process in Fourteenth Street and New West is broader than just council. Council members, but also hired staff, worship planning teams, and informal key opinion leaders such as older well respected members of the congregation, each play their role. And what seems to be true for Rijsbergen to a large extent is also true for Fourteenth Street and New West, that so many people have played key-roles that speaking of a communal process seems to do more justice to the story than speaking about individual key roles.

6.8. Visional

As may be expected my research has provided lots of data about the visional dimension of the debate on- and the introduction of paedocommunion. I will have to confine myself to an analysis and discussion of those aspects of the visional dimension which seem to have carried the greatest weight. I will start with the Old Testament theme of the Passover and then proceed with the New Testament text of 1 Corinthians 11. From Scripture I move to history and tradition, and then to the Reformed confessions. I continue with the treatment of the theological themes of covenant, baptism, liturgy, sacrament and public profession of faith. After these theological aspects of the visional dimension I hope to conclude with the aspect of pedagogics or developmental psychology.

³⁰⁴⁹ A 'male members meeting'.

6.9. Passover

6.9.1. Importance of argument

One of the major arguments in favor of paedocommunion is the participation of children in the Passover celebration and the Jewish seder tradition. It is remarkable that the Passover is mentioned the first time I found the paedocommunion question being raised in Dutch Reformed periodicals on both sides of the ocean³⁰⁵⁰. The Passover is mentioned by pastors³⁰⁵¹, and other interviewed members of all three researched congregations, and it is found in some of their documents³⁰⁵². The first Lord's Supper sermon after Rijsbergen officially welcomes children is titled "It is the Lord's Passover."³⁰⁵³ The Worship Planning Team of New West CRC at the time of my research was considering using the Passover/seder tradition as a format to encourage children's active participation³⁰⁵⁴. The relevance of the Passover is discussed in all Dutch Reformed denominations I researched, possibly most extensively and with most detail in the Christian Reformed Church³⁰⁵⁵. The Passover is one of the subjects in which Christian Reformed authors interact more with those from other Reformed denominations³⁰⁵⁶.

6.9.2. First issue

The first point of discussion is whether children did participate in the Passover. Reformers such as Calvin and Zwingli, and Belgic Confession author Guido de Brès assumed that only those children participated in the Passover who were of sufficient age to inquire into its meaning³⁰⁵⁷. Some participants in

³⁰⁵⁰ "All those born into a house had to eat the Passover, even the little children. The Holy Supper has replaced the Passover. Should not all children for that reasons make use of this as well, as they are baptized and counted as members of the congregation without profession of faith?" (my translation), Hoogenbirk (December 11, 1898), 4. Monsma (January 6, 1950), 5.

³⁰⁵¹ E.g. Van Katwijk (1966), 5. Paragraph 4.3.13.

³⁰⁵² E.g. Henry Hageman, *Who Participates at the Lord's Table* (Burnaby: July 1997).

³⁰⁵³ "Het is des Heeren Pascha," Diary Sofie van Katwijk, Sunday, April 29, 1962.

³⁰⁵⁴ Marnie Goheen, interview with author, June 2012.

³⁰⁵⁵ E.g. *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 349f, 369f. *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 265f., 298f.

³⁰⁵⁶ Especially Keidel (1975), 301-341; Beckwith (Winter), 1976, ...; Leonard J. Coppes, *Daddy, May I Take Communion?: Paedocommunion vs. The Bible* (Thornton: Leonard J. Coppes, 1988); Peter J. Leithart, *Daddy, Why Was I Excommunicated?: An Examination of Leonard J. Coppes, Daddy, May I Take Communion?*, 2nd ed. (Niceville: Transfiguration Press, 1998).

³⁰⁵⁷ i.e. Huldreich Zwingli, *Selected Works Of Huldreich Zwingli: 1484-1531; The Reformer Of German Switzerland*, edited by Macauley Jackson, reprint. 1522(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1901), 175; Calvin *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30; John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Four Last Books of Moses: Arranged in the Form of a Harmony; Volume First*. (Grand Rapids, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 450; Guido de Brès, *Oorsprong en weerlegging van de wederdopers*. Edited by R. Pieterman, 1595. (Barneveld: Stichting Heruitgave Werken Guido De Brès, 2011), 543.

the discussion of the last decades hold quite similar views, such as Van der Woude³⁰⁵⁸ and Van Oeveren³⁰⁵⁹. In the days of the Reformation the Reformer Wolfgang Musculus expressed a minority view, saying “that little children of the Jews did appertain to the Passover.”³⁰⁶⁰ Musculus’ minority view has gained significant support in the last half century.

6.9.3. Exodus 12

The discussion on whether children participated in the Passover starts in Exodus 12, and revolves around six or seven aspects and themes of that chapter. First, the celebration of Passover was an ordinance for you and your sons, or children³⁰⁶¹, forever, to be kept by all the congregation of Israel³⁰⁶², or all the children of Israel³⁰⁶³ as Gallant highlights³⁰⁶⁴. Second, a Passover lamb (or kid) was to be slaughtered for each household³⁰⁶⁵, and little children had their share. Paedocommunion opponent Coppes notes that later Jewish tradition stipulates that it takes ten persons to consume a lamb³⁰⁶⁶, and acknowledges that in this initial Passover small children who were able to chew meat and eat bread at the Passover did so³⁰⁶⁷. Third, the blood of the lamb³⁰⁶⁸ is put on the doorposts and lintel of the doors of the houses as a sign undergirded with a divine promise³⁰⁶⁹, and thus providing safety for the Israelites in general³⁰⁷⁰, household by household³⁰⁷¹, and specifically for the

³⁰⁵⁸ C. van der Woude, “Kindercommunie en openbare belijdenis,” *Ouderlingenblad*, 47 (1970): 83-86.

³⁰⁵⁹ B. van Oeveren, “Argumenten tegen avondmaalsviering door kinderen,” *Credo* (May 1977): 20-21; (June, 1982): 37-38; (October, 1987): 20-21.

³⁰⁶⁰ Wolfgang Musculus, *Loci communes in usus sacrae Theologiae candidatorum parati* (Basel: Johann. Herwagen, 1560), 469-173. English translation of these pages:

http://www.paedocommunion.com/articles/musculus_common_places.php (accessed July 6, 2016).

³⁰⁶¹ Cf. Ex. 12:24.

³⁰⁶² Cf. Ex. 12:47. Maatman notices that this included children and nursing infants, cf. Joel 2:16. “Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast ...,” *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 369.

³⁰⁶³ Cf. Jos. 5:10.

³⁰⁶⁴ Gallant (2003^A), 60, 62.

³⁰⁶⁵ Cf. Ex. 12:3-4. For two households if one could not consume the lamb that same night. Cf. Ex. 12:8-10.

³⁰⁶⁶ Cp. Van den Berg (1978), 66.

³⁰⁶⁷ Coppes (1988), 195. Richard Bacon argues that if strangers could be excluded (Ex. 12:43-45), so could children. And if elders (Ex.12:21) could represent the whole community (Ex. 12:6), then heads of households could act (and eat?) on behalf of their children. Richard Bacon, *What mean ye by this service?: Paedocommunion in light of the Passover* (Dallas: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1989).

http://www.fpcr.org/blue_banner_articles/meanye4.htm (accessed July 8, 2016).

³⁰⁶⁸ The importance of the blood is underlined by the attention it receives in Moses’ speech: Ex. 12:21-27a. Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 189.

³⁰⁶⁹ Cf. Ex. 12:13 “I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt,” J.A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2005), 134.

³⁰⁷⁰ Cf. Ex. 12:27.

³⁰⁷¹ Cf. Ex. 12:23.

firstborn in each house³⁰⁷². Fourth, the firstborn sons of each household held a special place in this first Passover, and they would hold a special place within the Lord's salvation of Israel³⁰⁷³. The blood of the tenth plague recalls the blood of the first plague³⁰⁷⁴. With the water of the Nile turning into blood one is reminded of the innocent blood of the Israelite newborn baby boys³⁰⁷⁵. In the first plague the crime scene is revealed, by uncovering the blood; in the tenth plague the crime is punished by taking blood for blood³⁰⁷⁶. But the tenth plague was also a measure for a measure as the killing of the firstborn of the Egyptians is the punishment for what the Egyptians had done to the Israelite people, the firstborn of God, as Exodus 4: 22-23 explains. Fifth, children possibly participated in the '*domestic ceremony*' of removing the yeast from the houses. Children certainly must have eaten the unleavened bread. Even a paedocommunion opponent like Coppes considers it obvious, based on the instruction to remove all leaven or yeast, that every child who was able to eat bread ate unleavened bread during this week³⁰⁷⁷. Sixth, the lamb was selected and slaughtered per household, the blood marked the doorposts of houses, the yeast and leaven was removed from each house. "The prescribed unity is the family, which rules out individual celebration or arbitrary groupings", Childs summarizes³⁰⁷⁸. "Reflecting the principle of family inherent in the Lord's various covenant provisions", Motyer comments³⁰⁷⁹. Just like in the infant baptism discussion, the significance of the household is noticed by several participants in the paedocommunion discussion³⁰⁸⁰.

Seventh, in Ex. 12: 26-27 Moses gives instruction on how to answer future questions asked by children regarding the Passover. Calvin draws the conclusion regarding both Passover and Holy Supper "that none can be duly admitted to receive it, but those who are capable of being taught." In all likelihood that is an anachronism. Sociologist Meredith McGuire writes: "The emphasis on intellectual learning and formal; religious knowledge which characterizes religious socialization in many complex societies, is atypical. The idea of going to Sunday school to learn specialized religious knowledge is, for

³⁰⁷² Cf. Ex. 12:12, 29.

³⁰⁷³ Cf. Num. 8:17. Motyer (2005), 152.

³⁰⁷⁴ E.g. Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox, 1991), 115.

³⁰⁷⁵ Cf. Ex. 1:22. E.g. H. Jagersma, *Exodus 1: 1:1-18:27; Verklaring van de Hebreeuwse Bijbel; Commentaar voor bijbelstudie, onderwijs en prediking* (Kampen: Kok, 1999), 122.

³⁰⁷⁶ Fretheim (1991), 141.

³⁰⁷⁷ Coppes (1988), 196.

³⁰⁷⁸ Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical Theological Commentary*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 198.

³⁰⁷⁹ Motyer (2005), 135.

³⁰⁸⁰ E.g. Maatman in *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 369.

example, foreign to most religions because their emphasis is on learning by doing. What the child needs to know can be best learned by accompanying adults and imitating them. By contrast, Western religions have emphasized the importance of formal religious knowledge."³⁰⁸¹ Patrick Miller recognizes the same phenomenon in the Jewish religion: "In regard to virtually all the regular festive occasions, the text in one way or another, explicitly or implicitly, prescribes a family gathering across the generations."³⁰⁸² He notices that participation in rituals would evoke questions and thus create strategic moments for education³⁰⁸³.

6.9.3.1. Exodus 12 in the debate

In the current paedocommunion discussion, Bacon follows in the footsteps of Calvin and claims that the text itself supports this view. "The children are not told to ask, "What do we mean by the fact that we are eating." That would then indicate that they actually partook of the meal. Rather, they are to ask, "What do you mean by your eating in this service?"³⁰⁸⁴ A slightly different view is expressed by Van de Velde who believes the question refers primarily to the ritual of putting blood on the doorposts. But Van de Velde draws a similar conclusion that children cannot participate in the Supper until they ask their questions about the meaning of the blood, and appropriate the answers³⁰⁸⁵. In the context of the chapter, against the background of what we know about religious socialization, and also in light of the similar question about the laws in Deuteronomy 6 asked by children already under these laws, this interpretation seems incorrect³⁰⁸⁶. And Coppes for example acknowledges that³⁰⁸⁷.

Early in the discussion Bratt writes: "Exodus 12:26-27 does not expressly state that children partook of the Old Testament Passover. It intimates, but I wouldn't dare to make that assertion stronger."³⁰⁸⁸ More recently Venema writes "The presence of this catechetical exercise in the Passover rite does not argue conclusively for or against the participation of infant and younger

³⁰⁸¹ Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context*, 3rd ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1992), 54f.

³⁰⁸² Patrick D. Miller "That the Children May Know: Children in Deuteronomy," in *The Child in the Bible*, ed.

Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, 45-62 (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008).

³⁰⁸³ Miller (2008), 50-51.

³⁰⁸⁴ Bacon (1989).

³⁰⁸⁵ C. Van de Velde, *Kindereen aan het avondmaal?: Een vraag waar we geen "ja" op kunnen zeggen*. 3rd ed. (Haarlem: n.p., 1985), 19.

³⁰⁸⁶ E.g. Van den Berg (1978), 65; Gallant (2003^A), 45f. Cp. Josh 4:6-7.

³⁰⁸⁷ Coppes (1988), 196.

³⁰⁸⁸ John H. Bratt, "The Reader Asks; Why Bar Children from the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 5, 1965): 15.

children.”³⁰⁸⁹ In my opinion verses 26-27 at least raise the question of children’s participation. Other verses in that chapter provide more conclusive arguments for such participation. In light of that conclusion, verses 26-27 further illustrate how children did participate in an age and ability appropriate way while the tradition is passed down through the generations.

Most participants in the discussion are willing to acknowledge children’s participation in the initial Passover as portrayed in Exodus 12. But an important argument of paedocommunion opponents is that Deuteronomy 16 changed this initial participation of children. Herman Bavinck already used the argument in 1911: “Passover, though not forthwith at the institution, but later in Palestina, was celebrated at the temple in Jerusalem; very young children were automatically excluded.”³⁰⁹⁰ The same argument can be heard from the earliest contributions in the discussion in the fifties³⁰⁹¹, to some of the most recent ones³⁰⁹².

6.9.4. Passover after the Exodus

6.9.4.1. Law after Deuteronomy

What regulations does Scripture prescribe? Venema acknowledges that “women and children were not explicitly denied permission to celebrate the Passover”³⁰⁹³ and paedocommunion advocates can probably agree. But Venema goes further by writing about “the stipulation of Deuteronomy 16 that only men go up annually to Jerusalem.”³⁰⁹⁴ Beckwith more carefully states that “the command to observe the Passover is directed solely to men.”³⁰⁹⁵ But the 1988 majority report of the CRC states, regarding children, “The instructions which included them were clear in Exodus 12-13 and were not abrogated in Deuteronomy.”³⁰⁹⁶ Gallant refers to the Deuteronomy 12 where God provides the general rule for all the sacraments in anticipation of the centralized worship, instructing: “And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you

³⁰⁸⁹ Venema (2009), 70.

³⁰⁹⁰ (My translation). Bavinck (1930), 561.

³⁰⁹¹ Nicholas J. Monsma, “Should children partake of the Lord’s supper?” *Banner* (January 6, 1950): 5.

³⁰⁹² Cornelis P. Venema, *Children at the Lord’s Supper: Assessing the Case for Paedocommunion* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009), 71f.

³⁰⁹³ Venema (2009), 71.

³⁰⁹⁴ Venema (2009), 71.

³⁰⁹⁵ Beckwith (1976), 132. Beckwith refers to Ex. 23:17; 34:23; Dt. 16:2, 5-7, 16f.

³⁰⁹⁶ *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 269.

and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.”³⁰⁹⁷ In that same context Deuteronomy speaks of “you and your sons and your daughters, your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite who is within your gates.”³⁰⁹⁸ Deuteronomy 16:16, when summarizing the regulations, speaks of ‘men’: “Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose.” But that same chapter 16 explicitly includes women and children in at least two of the three pilgrim feasts. That fact supports the comment made by Labuschagne that we must assume that this was mandatory for men and that for women exceptions could be made, though they ought to be there as well³⁰⁹⁹. In the same vein we must assume that exceptions could be made for children, though they ought to be there as well, or for that matter for elderly men. Or as the 1988 majority report writes: “The changes affecting Passover, given by God in Deuteronomy, are substantial but are not evidence that children stopped participating in the sacrificial meal or that it became optional for them.”³¹⁰⁰ Paedocommunion advocate Van den Berg comes close to the view that it was optional by writing that for children it was not a matter of must, but may³¹⁰¹.

6.9.4.2. Practice after Deuteronomy

What practice does Scripture describe? We find biblical descriptions of Passover celebrations after the centralization of worship in the first year of King Hezekiah³¹⁰² and the eighteenth year of King Josiah³¹⁰³. Venema suggests that these two Passover celebrations may have been the exception to a practice that he assumes otherwise excluded women and younger children³¹⁰⁴. 2 Chronicles 30 only mentions the large numbers and large crowds in the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread of Hezekiah. 2 Chronicles 35 specifically mentions the families of the people³¹⁰⁵. It is

³⁰⁹⁷ Deu. 12:7. Gallant (2003^A), 63. Labuschagne comments that the expression “you and your house” refers to all who belong to the family and to the company and participate in the labor process. C.J. Labuschagne, *Deuteronomium deel II: De prediking van het Oude Testament* (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1990), 31.

³⁰⁹⁸ Deu. 12:12. Gallant (2003^A), 63. Labuschagne comments that the order of these six categories is from the strongest to the weakest and that “the order is not meant to discriminate, on the contrary, all participants are equal and have equal rights to the joy experienced in the worship” (my translation). Labuschagne (1990), 34.

³⁰⁹⁹ Labuschagne refers to Ex.23:17 and 34:23 just like Beckwith does. Labuschagne (1990), 104.

³¹⁰⁰ Report 26, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 269.

³¹⁰¹ “Geen moeten maar mogen,” Van den Berg (1978), 69, 70.

³¹⁰² 2 Chron. 30: 1-27.

³¹⁰³ 2 Kings 23:21-23, 2 Chron. 35: 1-19.

³¹⁰⁴ Venema (2009), 71. Beckwith suggests it is not unlikely, Beckwith (1978), 137.

³¹⁰⁵ *bēt āb* paternal house or extended family, is the equivalent of *bayit*, household. *b’nê hā’ām*, [descendants of] the people, or [sons of] the people, may be the designation for lay people or regular folk. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, Vol. 2, 1140; P.C. Beentjes, 2

noteworthy that the chronicler gives a description of Passover that according to commentators is rooted in Deuteronomy 16³¹⁰⁶. Important is that the chronicler emphasizes in both Passover stories that the celebration was according to what was written³¹⁰⁷. On the other hand all three biblical accounts of these Passover celebrations make clear that they are not reflective of a uniform faithful practice through the centuries³¹⁰⁸. Ezra 6: 19-22 describes the celebration of the Passover after the return from exile in the era of Darius. Besides these explicit descriptions of Passover celebrations, the story of 1 Samuel 1, which does not specify the occasion³¹⁰⁹, gives a beautiful example of the practice to go to the central sanctuary to sacrifice to the Lord as a family, husband and wife / wives, both sons and daughters³¹¹⁰. The story also beautifully illustrates how exceptions could be made for unweaned children and their mothers³¹¹¹.

6.9.4.3. Exodus, Deuteronomy and Jesus

Based on Deuteronomy 16 opponents distinguish two³¹¹² or even three distinct Passover rites: the initial Passover in Egypt, the permanent or pilgrim³¹¹³ Passover as commanded by Moses and observed throughout history and the Jewish Passover as observed in the days of Jesus³¹¹⁴. The Passover practice after the initial one and until Jesus' days is not well documented. A few extrabiblical sources are mentioned in the paedocommunion discussion. In his *Antiquities* Josephus describes the Passover celebration in the era of Darius³¹¹⁵, and writes: "all the people ran together out of the villages to the city, and celebrated the festival, having purified themselves, with their wives and children, according to the law of

Kronieken: Verklaring van de Hebreeuwse Bijbel; Commentaar voor bijbelstudie, onderwijs en prediking (Kampen: Kok, 2006), 459.

³¹⁰⁶ E.g. Beentjes (2006), 460.

³¹⁰⁷ 2 Chron. 30:5, 2 Chron. 35:12.

³¹⁰⁸ 2 Chron. 30:26, 35:18, 2 Kings 23:22.

³¹⁰⁹ Keidel leans towards regarding the occasion as a Passover sacrifice, Beckwith argues against any pilgrim festival for a type of peace offering, Bacon suggests the tithing celebration of Deu. 14:22-26, which is refuted by Gallant. Keidel (1975), 336 fn. 72; Beckwith (1976), 137; Bacon (1989), 2; Gallant (2003^A), 49 fn.44.

³¹¹⁰ Van den Berg (1978), 67; Gallant (2003^A), 49f.

³¹¹¹ Cf. 1 Sam. 1:21-22. We should realize that an unweaned child and its mother had to stay together in the long period of breastfeeding. The mother would not go to the temple without the unweaned child, and the unweaned child not without its mother. Cf. Jakob van Bruggen, *Lucas: Het evangelie als voorgeschiedenis* (Kampen: Kok, 1993), 88.

³¹¹² The distinction between two Passovers is also found in rabbinical discussion.

³¹¹³ Venema (2009), 71.

³¹¹⁴ Coppes (1988), 194.

³¹¹⁵ The era of the reign of the Persians.

their country.”³¹¹⁶ But it is debated whether Josephus had access to sources which could corroborate this claim³¹¹⁷.

6.9.4.4. *The Book of Jubilees*

The *Book of Jubilees*, written in the intertestamental period round 160-150 BC, becomes part of the North American paedocommunion discussion with Keidel and Beckwith discussing its relevance³¹¹⁸. *The Book of Jubilees* 49:17 states: “And every man who has come upon its day shall eat it in the sanctuary of your God before the Lord from twenty years old and upward; for thus is it written and ordained that they should eat it in the sanctuary of the Lord.” Venema follows Beckwith in suggesting that the text reflects the traditional practice of the post-exilic period until at least the end of the second century B.C. in which “certain laws, including the law of pilgrim festivals, bound only men. Consequently, those who were not bound by them, women and youth, under twenty, ceased altogether to observe them, so that they could concentrate their attention on the laws by which they were bound.”³¹¹⁹ Gallant follows Keidel, who speaks of twenty as the age of accountability³¹²⁰. Based on the text itself I can agree that only men were considered to be bound in the strictest sense to this law and that the text seems to consider twenty to be the age of accountability. But the chapter uses more collective and inclusive terms such as ‘*all Israel*’, ‘(all) *children of Israel*’, ‘*all the people of the congregation of Israel*’, and ‘*throughout all their generations*’, and does so more often than it uses the term ‘*man*’³¹²¹. So in that sense this pseudepigraphic book reflects the message of Deuteronomy 12 and 16 as I understand it: The celebration of Passover is “an eternal ordinance” “regarding all the children of Israel”³¹²², mandatory for “every man who is free from uncleanness”³¹²³ whereas for men under age twenty, women and children, who ought to participate as well, exceptions could be made. The age of twenty may be related to Numbers 1:3 where it is considered the age of those able to serve in the army. The *Book of Jubilees* was held in high regard in the Qumran community. Gallant further discusses some documents of the

³¹¹⁶ Josephus *Antiquities* 11.4.8

[http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0037-](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0037-0103,_Flavius_Josephus,_The_Antiquities_Of_The_Jews,_EN.pdf)

[0103,_Flavius_Josephus,_The_Antiquities_Of_The_Jews,_EN.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0037-0103,_Flavius_Josephus,_The_Antiquities_Of_The_Jews,_EN.pdf) (accessed July 14, 2016).

³¹¹⁷ Beckwith (1976), 137; Gallant (2003^A), 59; Venema (2009), 71.

³¹¹⁸ Keidel (1975), 315; Beckwith (1976), 138f.

³¹¹⁹ Beckwith (1976), 140; Venema (2009), 72 fn.15.

³¹²⁰ Keidel (1975), 315; Gallant (2003^A), 59 fn. 62.

³¹²¹ *The Book of Jubilees* 49, <http://www.pseudepigrapha.com/jubilees/49.htm> (accessed July 15, 2016).

³¹²² *The Book of Jubilees* 49:8.

³¹²³ *The Book of Jubilees* 49:9.

Qumran community³¹²⁴, but he indicates that this male dominated community, which was possibly comprised of celibate males, was unlikely to have women and children at its meals³¹²⁵.

6.9.4.5. In conclusion

I conclude first that after the centralization of the Passover sacrifice, as anticipated in Deuteronomy 12 and 16, all the men and women of Israel, and all their sons and daughters ought to be present at the Passover celebration. But 'ought implies can', and age and ability appropriate obedience to the Passover ordinances in Scripture allows that exceptions were made for, for example, pregnant women, unweaned children and their mothers, the sick and elderly men and women. That explains why the obligation of able men is especially stressed. Thought it is conceivable that at times some able men of twenty years and older had to stay at home to serve the disabled and to protect the new harvest³¹²⁶. And it is probable that proximity to the central sanctuary allowed some pregnant women, babies or small children and their mothers, as well as elderly men and women to be present³¹²⁷. I note that the laws on the consecration of firstborn males, and those on the purification after childbirth, brought Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus to the temple forty days after His birth³¹²⁸. Second, family heads were to slay the Passover lambs³¹²⁹. The 1988 CRC majority report highlights how covenant heads are (still) responsible for the sacrifice, and notices that "the Passover was the only sacrifice that could be made by every federal head whether priest or not."³¹³⁰ The option, offered by Deuteronomy 16:2, to sacrifice bovines instead of sheep or goat, may reflect changing farming realities, but also the option that at the central sanctuary several households could share a larger animal³¹³¹.

³¹²⁴ *Miscellaneous Rules, The Temple Scroll, Community Rule, and The Damascus Document.*

³¹²⁵ Gallant (2003^A), 57-59.

³¹²⁶ Protecting the harvest may have been the reason for Gideon to thresh wheat in a winepress, Judges 6:11, and for Boaz to sleep outside during the harvest, Ruth 3:7. The booths of the pilgrim Feast of Tabernacles, resembling the booths build during the harvest to protect the harvested crops, also raise the question who protected the harvest during such harvest celebrations. The promise of Ex. 34:24 that "no one will covet your land while you go up three times each year to appear before the Lord" could be understood as the promise that God would be the one protecting their households and harvests during the pilgrim feasts, but other chapters, such as Ex. 23 seem to indicate that protection against enemies is conditional on faithfulness to Jahweh.

³¹²⁷ Pregnant Mary in Luke 2:5, and old Hannah and the (possibly) older Simeon at the temple in Luke 2:36f. and 2:25f.

³¹²⁸ Cf. Ex. 13:2, Lev. 12, Luke 2: 22-40.

³¹²⁹ Levites could step in for those who could not meet ritual prescriptions. Jacob M. Myers, *The Anchor Bible: II Chronicles: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 178f.

³¹³⁰ *Report 26, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 268, 269.

³¹³¹ Hamilton (2011), 180.

The 1988 CRC majority³¹³² report suggests that the eating is not centralized, but Deuteronomy 16:7 seems to regulate that the sacrifice was eaten at or near the central sanctuary, and therefore only by those children who had been able to go there. Third, with the centralization of the sacrifice, the blood was probably not put on the doorposts anymore, but splashed against the altar as the chronicler describes³¹³³. Perhaps some of the blood may have been put on the doorposts by those who lived in proximity to the sanctuary. We may assume that either way it was considered blood which was shed for the sake of the household(s) present and represented. Fourth, the blood did not protect the lives of firstborns in the same way it had done during the initial Passover. But with the inclusion of the Festival of the Firstfruits as part of the Passover season, there was a permanent reminder that not just the first fruits of the field, but also the first fruit of the womb belonged to God³¹³⁴. Fifth, the eating of the sacrifice was centralized, but yeast was not to be “found in your possession in all your land”³¹³⁵, and therefore unleavened bread was not only eaten by those women and children who accompanied the men to the central sanctuary, but also by those who had to stay at home. At a certain moment the difference with the initial Passover would be that the unleavened bread was not eaten in haste anymore, but more leisurely, while reclining at the table³¹³⁶. Sixth, I acknowledge with Van den Berg that there was a shift in accent from family to community. But in Exodus 12 the community was already explicitly in view; Hamilton for example points out that Exodus 12 uses the term *‘ēdā* for the first time out of a hundred-plus times. He writes: “God’s people (...) are now for the first time identified as a ‘community,’ a ‘congregation’.”³¹³⁷ With the centralization of Deuteronomy 16 the focus shifts towards the community, but households remain in view in the representative role of the federal heads, with households, such as Elkanah’s, which could go to the central sanctuary, with the eating of sacrifices in houses³¹³⁸, the return to the tents, or homes, to join those who possibly had stayed home for the rest of the festivities, and as the continued primary setting for religious education. Seventh, the instruction to answer children’s questions was given in anticipation of the future, “When you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he promised”³¹³⁹, and the ritual would

³¹³² *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 268.

³¹³³ Cf. 2 Chron. 30:16, 35:11.

³¹³⁴ Cf. *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 267.

³¹³⁵ Cf. Deut. 16: 4.

³¹³⁶ Cf. Luke 22:14.

³¹³⁷ Hamilton (2011), 178.

³¹³⁸ Cp. Van den Berg (1978), 68.

³¹³⁹ Ex. 12:25. Cp. Ex. 13:14.

evoke such questions no matter where the children participated in the ceremony.

6.9.5. In Jesus' days

Regarding the Passover in Jesus' days I have found that children, and especially boys, began participating in religious practices at a very early age. Interesting is how, according to tradition, first century Jewish rabbi Hillel said that a boy who could take his father's hand and walk to the temple hill was obliged to keep the major feasts. First century rabbi Shammai said that the obligation began when a boy could ride on his father's shoulders³¹⁴⁰. Some paedocommunion opponents, such as Venema, recognize how "the age at which a member of the covenant community 'could keep the commandments' was determined to be thirteen."³¹⁴¹ But they fail to appreciate the existence of a gradual course of initiation³¹⁴² and how Jewish boys were probably obligated to follow specific individual commandments as soon as they were able to, and only obligated to follow all the commandments when the first signs of pubescence appeared³¹⁴³. Josephus' description in his *Antiquities* of whole families participating in the Passover is considered to be reflective of the first century³¹⁴⁴. The 1988 CRC majority report position is that children participated in the Passover, and thirteen year old males could sacrifice the Passover lamb. The report states: "If the Mishnah accurately reflects the conditions of the first-century celebrations, it certainly supports this position. Women and children did come to Jerusalem (Pesahim 10), and children did eat if they could eat as much as an "olive size" piece (Pisha 3; Pesahim 10:3,4). At thirteen a male was allowed to slaughter a lamb on behalf of others (Pesahim 88) and anyone who could eat even a small portion must do so (Pisha 3)."³¹⁴⁵ Jesus celebrating Passover at age twelve is better understood in that light³¹⁴⁶. It is recognized that in Jesus' days Passover could also be celebrated in groups, *haburot*, without family ties. Jesus and His disciples could be qualified as one of these *haburot*³¹⁴⁷. *The Book of Jubilees* mentions the drinking of wine, and

³¹⁴⁰ Strange (2004), 17. Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch: Zweiter Band*. 6th ed. 1974 (München: Oscar Beck, 1924), 141f., 146. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Talmud/hagiga1.html> (accessed July 25, 2016).

³¹⁴¹ Venema (2009), 72.

³¹⁴² As suggested by later sayings, reflective of first century Jewish sentiment. E.g. "A minor who knows how to shake a lulav (palm branch) is obliged to observe the laws of the lulav; a minor who knows how to wrap himself in the tallit (prayer shawl) is obliged to observe the law of the zizit (threads on the corners of the tallit)," *Tosephta, Hagigah* 1.2 quoted in Strange (2004), 17.

³¹⁴³ Strack and Billerbeck, *Zweiter Band* (1924), 146, 142.

³¹⁴⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.4.8.

³¹⁴⁵ *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 271.

³¹⁴⁶ Cf. Luke 2:41-51.

³¹⁴⁷ Van den Berg (1978), 68.

lauding, blessing and giving thanks³¹⁴⁸. The wine also found its way to the Passover that Jesus and His disciples celebrated, and Jesus gives it new significance. Venema considers the wine, “an intoxicant (...) not suited to consumption by infants and very young children”, a further obstacle to full participation by all children of the household³¹⁴⁹.

6.9.6. *Relevance*

6.9.6.1. *Participation and parallel*

A final point of discussion is the relevance of participation of children in the Passover for their possible participation in the Lord’s Supper. The Reformers Calvin and Musculus disagreed on the participation of small children in the Passover and the Lord’s Supper, but they both argued their case on the basis of the parallel between both sacraments³¹⁵⁰. Most paedocommunion opponents believe that children participated in the Passover and that the similarity with the Lord’s Supper is significant enough to legitimize paedocommunion. The Faith Formation Committee which paved the way for children at the Lord’s Supper in the CRC may be the exception to the rule suggesting that “biblical discussions of the Passover (...) do not offer conclusive evidence about when children first participated or under what conditions they did so.”³¹⁵¹ Paedocommunion opponents generally either believe that children did not participate in the Passover and therefore should not participate in the Lord’s Supper, or they believe that children may have participated in the Passover, at least in some stage, but that the dissimilarities between Passover and Lord’s Supper or the similarities between another Old Testament antecedent and the Lord’s Supper, are sufficient ground to bar children from the table.

6.9.6.2. *Historical and theological background*

Though it is debated by others to what extent the Lord’s Supper was a Passover celebration, in the paedocommunion discussion within the Dutch Reformed tradition there has been agreement that the Lord’s Supper was instituted in the setting of a Passover meal³¹⁵². The time and season is referred

³¹⁴⁸ *The Book of Jubilees* 49:6: “And all Israel was eating the flesh of the paschal lamb, and drinking the wine, and was lauding, and blessing, and giving thanks to the Lord God of their fathers.”

³¹⁴⁹ Venema (2009), 69. See also Beckwith (1976), 147f.

³¹⁵⁰ Calvin, *Institutes* IV:16.30; Musculus (1560).

³¹⁵¹ *Faith Formation Committee Report*, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 606.

³¹⁵² E.g. Venema (2009), 86.

to as Passover³¹⁵³. Jesus, His disciples and the gospel writers speak of preparations of the Passover³¹⁵⁴ and Jesus calls the Supper Passover, both before³¹⁵⁵ and during³¹⁵⁶ the celebration. Several elements in the story, from the choice of location, the timing, the reclining manner of celebration, the drinking of wine to the singing of the 'Hallel' support that it was a Passover celebration³¹⁵⁷. Visee indicates many Scripture passages could be mentioned to support the direct link between Passover and Supper, but believes that Paul's words "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" suffice to cease any debate³¹⁵⁸. John placing the feeding of the five thousand and the bread of life discourse in the context of Passover is a unique eye catching detail which links the Lord's Supper and Passover in a more subtle way³¹⁵⁹. I could say that there is agreement that the Passover provides the historical background of the Lord's Supper, but disagreement to what extent it provides the theological background for the Lord's Supper and its requirements³¹⁶⁰.

6.9.6.3. Similar or different

Roth, Vermeer, Schravendeel and Luiten, for example, agree that both Passover and Lord's Supper are meals of remembrance³¹⁶¹. "Both meals remember God's love in saving His people", Vermeer summarizes³¹⁶². But Schravendeel highlights the difference between celebrating the liberation from the house of bondage of Egypt and the liberation from the house of bondage from sin³¹⁶³. Though acknowledging the similarity of Passover celebrating the old exodus and the Lord's Supper the new exodus, John Stek suggests, as explained above, that only who participated in the new exodus, those who by faith in Christ can testify that they have passed from bondage to freedom, may participate in the Lord's Supper³¹⁶⁴. And Luiten compares remembering with buying; Children may buy new marbles, they don't buy a new car. The content of what is remembered with the Lord's Supper is so different that it justifies faith as a new prerequisite³¹⁶⁵.

³¹⁵³ Matt. 26: 2, Mark 14:1, Luke 22: 1, John 13:1.

³¹⁵⁴ Matt. 26:17-18, Mark 14:12, 16, Luke 22:8, 13.

³¹⁵⁵ Matt. 26:18, Mark 14:14, Luke 22:10.

³¹⁵⁶ Luke 22:15.

³¹⁵⁷ Cp. Herman Ridderbos, *De Komst van het Koninkrijk* (Kampen:Kok, 1950), 354-356.

³¹⁵⁸ Visee (1979), 232.

³¹⁵⁹ Cp. P.H.R. van Houwelingen, *Johannes: Het evangelie van het Woord* (Kampen: Kok, 1997), 145.

³¹⁶⁰ Cp. *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 265.

³¹⁶¹ Robert Roth, "Neem, eet en gedenk: De liturgische positie van de kinderen van de kerk," *De Reformatie* (April 8, 2011): 296-299, and Bas Luiten, "Gelovig proeven," *De Reformatie* (April 8, 2011): 300-302.

³¹⁶² Vermeer (1968), 10.

³¹⁶³ Schravendeel (1977), 13.

³¹⁶⁴ John H. Stek, "Children and Lord's Supper," *Banner* (December 15, 1980): 4.

³¹⁶⁵ Luiten (2011), 301. Cp. Venema (2009), 87.

What, according to some, further distinguishes the Lord's Supper from the Passover is that the Passover belongs to the setting of the family and the nation, whereas the Lord's Supper belongs to the church, or the assembly of God³¹⁶⁶.

6.10. Broader Old Testament background

Jesus' words about the blood of the covenant invite us to see the Supper in a broader perspective, according to the minority report of the RCN 1977-1979 Synod with a reference to Ridderbos³¹⁶⁷. Ridderbos writes that Jesus' words about the blood require us to speak of the fulfillment of the whole Old Testament sacrificial service. His words about the blood of the covenant are a clear allusion to Exodus 24³¹⁶⁸. Ridderbos recognizes Jeremiah 53 in Jesus' words about the blood being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. And the new covenant that Jesus speaks about was announced by Jeremiah and Ezekiel³¹⁶⁹. In the paedocommunion discussion special attention was given to the connection with Exodus 24 and to the implications of the new covenant.

6.10.1. Exodus 24

The CRC 1986 majority report states: "the primary Old Testament antecedent of the Lord's Supper is not the Passover but the mystical covenant-sealing meal recorded in Exodus 24."³¹⁷⁰ When the 1986 majority has become the 1988 minority they report about this '*key passage for understanding the Lord's Supper*' that it "does not answer specifically the question of whether or not children should participate in the Lord's Supper."³¹⁷¹ It does show however that covenant-sealing ceremonies such as fellowship offerings contribute most to our understanding of the Lord's Supper. And according to the minority report any simplistic notions that the Lord's Supper is just a new version of the Passover or any other Old Testament observance really ignores the weight of

³¹⁶⁶ E.g. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Children and the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (November 24, 1980). Jelle Tuininga, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980). Schravendeel (1977), 13.

³¹⁶⁷ Ridderbos (1950), 361-362. We note that Ridderbos does first highlight the Passover setting of the Lord's Supper.

³¹⁶⁸ Zech. 9:11 is the only other verse in the Old Testament with the phrase 'the blood of the covenant'. Hamilton (2011), 441.

³¹⁶⁹ Strictly speaking only Jeremiah 31 mentions the terminology 'new covenant'.

³¹⁷⁰ *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 350.

³¹⁷¹ *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 296, 298.

Jesus' own testimony³¹⁷². The minority report convinces Peter De Jong "that the elaborate effort to equate the Supper with the Passover is invalid."³¹⁷³

Venema agrees with the 1986 majority³¹⁷⁴, but goes further by stressing how that meal "was shared only by Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel."³¹⁷⁵ In response to similar arguments, Gallant argues that if the elders ate from the sacrifice³¹⁷⁶, the parallel would be that at the initiation of the covenant there was limited participation of the elders and the apostles, but all subsequent meals are covenant renewal meals. And just like the covenant renewal in Joshua 8 involved the whole congregation of Israel, the Lord's Supper as covenant renewal involves the whole congregation. More importantly, Gallant reminds us that "the echo of Christ in the institution of the Supper is not to the meal of the elders in Exodus 24:11, but to the act of sprinkling the blood in verse 8", and the blood was sprinkled on all the people or the whole congregation³¹⁷⁷. In support of Gallant's first remark I note that the seventy elders represent Israel, the twelve stones represent the twelve tribes³¹⁷⁸, and that the attention of Exodus 24 is focused on both parties in the covenant: JHWH and the people of Israel³¹⁷⁹. One could respond to the 1988 minority report that '*Jesus' own testimony*' links the meal to the Passover in which all people ought to participate and that '*Jesus' own testimony*' links the wine to the blood of the covenant that was sprinkled on all the people³¹⁸⁰.

6.10.2. New Covenant

Covenantal theology deserves separate attention as one of the major arguments in the paedocommunion discussion. But in this context I should mention that some see significant covenantal dissimilarities between Passover and Lord's Supper. Stek not only suggests that Passover belongs to the old Sinai covenant, and the Lord's Supper to the new covenant, he also adds how circumcision belongs to the Abrahamic covenant. Stek claims that (infant) Baptism, which has replaced circumcision, remains a sacrament of the Abrahamic covenant. Stek's complex covenantal reasoning seems ground for

³¹⁷² Report 26, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 298.

³¹⁷³ Peter De Jong, "Should covenant children take part in the Lord's Supper?" *Outlook* (March 1988): 15.

³¹⁷⁴ Venema (2009), 87.

³¹⁷⁵ Venema (2009), 87.

³¹⁷⁶ But Gallant questions that. Gallant (2003^A), 87.

³¹⁷⁷ Gallant (2003^A), 88.

³¹⁷⁸ Cf. Martin Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 195, 198.

³¹⁷⁹ C. Vonk, *De Voorzeide Leer: Deel I^a; De Heilige Schrift; Inleiding*, Genesis, Exodus (Barendrecht: Barendrecht, 1960), 338.

³¹⁸⁰ Hamilton assumes that Moses dashes the blood on the seventy, as it would be challenging to dash blood on several thousand or million people. But he does so after first mentioning the representative role of the seventy. Hamilton (2011), 440.

him not to allow infants to participate in the Supper, but only “those who can testify that by faith in Christ they have passed from bondage to freedom.”³¹⁸¹ In a less complex way the CRC’s 1995 *Report A* distinguishes the Lord’s Supper from the Passover as the universalized new covenant implies regeneration and the internalization of faith³¹⁸².

6.11. 1 Corinthians 11

6.11.1. *Locus classicus*

1 Corinthians 11: 17-34 could be called the *locus classicus* of the paedocommunion debate³¹⁸³. The text is the most referenced text by opponents of paedocommunion, and in response receives a lot of attention from paedocommunion advocates as well. Just like Passover, 1 Corinthians 11 is mentioned and alluded to in the periodicals from the very first beginning of the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion³¹⁸⁴. In shorter articles it often is the only Bible text referred to; apparently considered sufficient for the case against the admission of children. Van Oeveren, for example, perceives the introduction of children at the Supper as a failure to listen to Scripture, and supports that accusation with a mere reference to verses 27-29 of this chapter³¹⁸⁵. The Christian Reformed Faith Formation Committee speaks of two substantive arguments or primary considerations: those based on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and covenant theology³¹⁸⁶.

6.11.2. 1 Corinthians 11 in history

6.11.2.1. In the early church

In my historical overview we saw that in the early church 1 Corinthians 11 was not applied this way. We come across alternative interpretations, such as Clement applying them as instruction against gluttony and as a guideline on how to conduct ourselves in the Lord’s presence³¹⁸⁷. In exceptional cases

³¹⁸¹ Stek (December 15, 1980), 4.

³¹⁸² The report refers to Jer. 31:31-34, mentioning the law which is written on the hearts of Gods people.

(No explanation is given of the “least” in verse 34, PGS).

³¹⁸³ Cp. Mark D. Tranvik, “Should Infants Be Communed?: A Lutheran Perspective,” *Word & World* XV, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 84.

³¹⁸⁴ Hoogenbirk (1898), 4; Monsma (1950), 5.

³¹⁸⁵ B. van Oeveren, “Introductie,” *Credo* (June 1984).

³¹⁸⁶ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 607.

³¹⁸⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, bk. II, chap. II, ANF 2:246.

individuals may have chosen to shun the Eucharist³¹⁸⁸. Clement taught the necessity of faith for participation³¹⁸⁹, and seemed to apply worthiness and self-examination beyond the specific context of the Corinthian church, though I have good reasons to assume that this was not seen as reason to bar young children from the Supper. There is broad consensus that paedocommunion was a common practice in Augustine's days, supported by Augustine. This paedocommunion practice and theology coexists with Augustine acknowledging the key-verses from 1 Corinthians 11³¹⁹⁰, and, among other things, recognizing the spiritual nature of Communion³¹⁹¹. Except in the case of catechumens³¹⁹², Augustine does not use 1 Corinthians 11 with the intent to bar Christians from the table. His message encourages participation³¹⁹³.

In my historical overview I noted how the two first times children's participation is explicitly mentioned in Cyprian's treatise *on the Lapsed*³¹⁹⁴ have closer links with 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, than with chapter 11, in the sense that the choice is between participating in the Christian Eucharist or in the pagan meals, and not between participating as a Christian and abstaining or being barred as a Christian.

6.11.2.2. In the Middle Ages

Though I do not have a comprehensive oversight of the chapter's *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the impression is that 1 Corinthians 11 was not used to keep young children from the Eucharist in the Middle Ages either³¹⁹⁵.

6.11.2.3. Since the Reformation

When the Reformation inherited the sense of an age of discretion and transforms the Roman Catholic confirmation into the Reformed profession of

³¹⁸⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, bk. I, chap. I, ANF 2:300 n4.

³¹⁸⁹ "And the mixture of both — of the water and of the Word — is called Eucharist, renowned and glorious grace; and they who by faith partake of it are sanctified both in body and soul," Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, bk. II, chap. II, ANF 2:242.

³¹⁹⁰ Augustine, *Tractate LXII.1*, NPNF1 7:313. 1 Cor. 11:27; *Contra Adimantum*, bk I, chap. 17:3. 1 Cor. 11:28; *Sermon LXII.4*, NPNF1 6:448. 1 Cor. 11:29; *Sermon LXXXII.1*, NPNF1 6:504. 1 Cor. 11:29; *Tractate XXVI.11*, NPNF1 7:171. 1 Cor. 11:29. *Contra Adimantum* http://www.augustinus.it/latino/control_adimanto/ (accessed August 3, 2016).

³¹⁹¹ Augustine, *Sermon XLV*, NPNF1 6:406; *Sermon LXII.5 & 7*, NPNF1 6:448, 449; *Sermon LXXXI*, NPNF1 6:501.

³¹⁹² Augustine, *Faith and works*, chap. 6.9. FOTC 27, 231.

³¹⁹³ E.g. Augustine, *Sermon LXII.8*, NPNF1 6:449; Augustine, *Sermon LXXXII.1*, NPNF1 6:504; *Sermon LXXXII.2*, NPNF1 6:505.

³¹⁹⁴ Cyprian, *Treatises, On the Lapsed*, chap. 9, ANF 5:439; *Treatises, On the Lapsed*, chap. 25, ANF 5:444

³¹⁹⁵ Rylaarsdam "Reconnecting Baptism and the Lord's Supper: Sacraments of the Covenant Community [DRAFT]," *unpublished*, p. 15.

faith, support for these practices is found in 1 Corinthians 11 (and the wrong assumption that children did not participate in the Passover)³¹⁹⁶. Syd Hielema suggests that the Reformers reformed the transubstantiation theology, but held on to the anxiety and grounded it in a misinterpreted 1 Corinthians 11³¹⁹⁷. That chapter did not only function as biblical foundation for inherited Roman Catholic practice, but also as an argument in defense against the accusations of the Anabaptists. The Reformers were almost unanimous that children could not participate in the Supper in remembrance, they could not proclaim the death of Christ, nor could they examine themselves, and they are unable to distinguish the body of the Lord³¹⁹⁸. Among the Reformers Luther and Musculus may have been the only ones who did not apply 1 Corinthians 11 to children³¹⁹⁹. My own historical overview shows how the almost unanimous view of the other Reformers remained the dominant interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11, and the main ground for barring children from the Table until halfway the twentieth century.

6.11.3. Keywords

The paedocommunion discussion focuses on the key words remembrance, proclamation, worthiness, self examination, and discernment of the body. Historically the theme of judgment also played an important role in the Reformed perspective on participation in the Lord's Supper, although in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion this theme has lost some of its importance. I will treat each key-word and the judgment theme separately.

6.11.4. 1 Corinthians 11 - Remembrance

6.11.4.1. Not defined

In 1 Corinthians 11:24^b & 25^b, Paul cites Jesus' words, who said "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me" and "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." Remembrance has become one of the key-words in the discussion on the implications of 1 Corinthians 11 for the participation of children in the Lord's

³¹⁹⁶ David Rylaarsdam, "United, Separated, Re-united: The Story of Baptism and the Lords Supper," *Forum* (Spring 2007).

³¹⁹⁷ Syd Hielema, "A Precious Feast, a Tangled Web: A Case for Welcoming Children at the Table," *Reformed Worship* (June, 2005).

³¹⁹⁸ E.g. Calvin Institutes, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30, Anastasius Veluanus (1544/2012), 137, Zacharias Ursinus (1602/1852), 366-367, 425, 429,

De Brès (1595/2011), 543, art. 33 of Theodore Beza's Confession, the Scottish Confession (1560).

³¹⁹⁹ Musculus (1560).

Supper. But one of our challenges is that the meaning of remembrance is often not defined³²⁰⁰, so that it remains unclear what it means when reports speak about desire to remember, to be able or capable to remember³²⁰¹, or to have faith which remembers³²⁰². In the same vein Gallant writes “There is simply a supposition that we know what remembrance means, and little kids can’t do it.”³²⁰³

6.11.4.2. Cognitive

Paedocommunion opponents often interpret remembrance in terms of knowledge³²⁰⁴ and mature faith³²⁰⁵. Kistemaker’s commentary seems to support the cognitive connotation by using ‘to reflect’ and ‘to call to mind’ as synonyms for ‘to remember’³²⁰⁶. This cognitive notion is corrected by several other modern commentators. Remembrance is not mere mental recollection and remembrance does not denote the exclusively subjective mental or psychological process of recollection characteristic of Cartesian or modern thought, comments Thiselton³²⁰⁷. Remembrance should be understood, amongst others, against the background of the Old Testament, and there remembrance rarely carries the common English nuance of simply a mental activity, writes Fee³²⁰⁸. Sometimes the cognitive requirement is supported with reference to Paul addressing the Corinthians as ‘sensible people’³²⁰⁹. But then Paul’s irony is missed³²¹⁰. Of course opponents do not perceive remembrance as a mere cognitive act; the 1988 minority committee writes “Remembrance is more than not forgetting Jesus” and it “is more than jogging the memory.”³²¹¹

³²⁰⁰ Cp. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 552.

³²⁰¹ E.g. *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 286-287.

³²⁰² E.g. *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 313.

³²⁰³ Gallant (2003^A), 83.

³²⁰⁴ Venema speaks of ‘cognitive’, ‘informed’, vs. ‘witless’ and ‘uninformed’. Christine Wiersma is against children participation among others because she only fully understood what it means to “do this in remembrance of me” years after her public profession of faith at age seventeen. An interviewee mentions ‘understanding’ and ‘remembrance’ as synonyms. Venema (2009), 81, fn. 3, 114-116. Wiersma (January 5, 1981).

³²⁰⁵ Venema, for example, speaks of ‘remembering of Christ in the cognitive sense of an informed, believing reception of Christ’ and ‘believers whose remembrance (...) of Christ requires the ‘mouth of faith’’, Venema (2009), 81 fn. 3, 115.

³²⁰⁶ Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 395.

³²⁰⁷ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 882, 879.

³²⁰⁸ Fee (1987), 553.

³²⁰⁹ Cf. 1 Cor. 10:15. E.g. Van de Velde (1985), 22; Hendriks (1990), 88.

³²¹⁰ E.g. Roth (December 22, 2007), 202.

³²¹¹ *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 304

6.11.4.3. Memorial of the dead

Remembering is also more than remembrance of the dead, though we do remember Jesus' death on the cross³²¹². Jeremias refuted the opinion that the Lord's Supper was shaped on the analogy of Hellenistic memorial meals for the dead³²¹³. The notion that the Lord's Supper was not a memorial for the dead, struck a note by many in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands because of the grave and somber atmosphere of their Lord's Suppers. Heitink reflects the feeling of several paedocommunion advocates when he notices that the Lord's Supper is celebrated as a remembrance suitable for Good Friday, and that children could help to turn it into a celebration suitable for Easter in which the eschatological nature of the Supper can be experienced again³²¹⁴.

6.11.4.4. Old Testament background

Instead of interpreting remembrance on the basis of Hellenistic presuppositions, Jeremias believes it must be interpreted against a Palestinian background³²¹⁵. Gallant may have a point when he suggests that paedocommunion opponents rarely consider the Old Testament background of the term remembrance³²¹⁶. Advocates of paedocommunion regularly appeal to Old Testament and especially Passover usage of the term remembrance. The same seems common in commentaries³²¹⁷. Gallant mentions how the Sabbath was to be remembered by observing it, from which children were not exempted³²¹⁸. To remember God³²¹⁹ is to engage in worship, trust, and obedience, just as to forget God is to turn one's back on Him, is Thiselton's first point³²²⁰. Roth and several others recall how children participated in the remembrance of Passover and in the sacrificial meals at which the mighty acts of God were remembered³²²¹. Remembering, according to Van den Berg, is catching³²²² what Christ or God has done and letting it be a

³²¹² Cf. G.P. Hartvelt, "Het avondmaal en de kindercommunie," *Centraal Weekblad* (May 15, 1971): 3.

³²¹³ Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 238.

³²¹⁴ G. Heitink, "De beleving van het avondmaal," *Ouderlingenblad* (October 1975): 10-13.

³²¹⁵ Jeremias (1981), 254.

³²¹⁶ Gallant (2003^A), 83.

³²¹⁷ E.g. Fee (1987), 553; Thiselton (2000), 878f.; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary; The Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 440f.; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther: Historisch Theologische Auslegung*, 3rd ed. (Witten: SCM R. Brockhaus, 2014), 652. Cp. I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper & Lord's Supper* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1980), 89f.

³²¹⁸ Cf. Ex. 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day," Deut. 5:12 "Observe the Sabbath day." Gallant also mentions Leviticus 24:11 (LXX) and Numbers 10:10. Gallant (2003^A), 83f.

³²¹⁹ Cf. Deut. 8:18; Judg. 8:34; Ps. 22:7.

³²²⁰ Thiselton (2000), 879.

³²²¹ Roth (2007), 203.

³²²² *Naar je toehalen*.

living reality in your life now, in order that your life today is shaped and controlled by the acts of God in the past, just like the remembering of the Passover³²²³. Anamnesis or re-presentation is the making effective in the present of an event of the past, as each Passover celebration makes the Exodus present in the life of Israel, says Van der Schee³²²⁴. Nootboom notices how this new understanding of meals such as Passover as means of remembrance by celebration in the present the liberation of the past, was an incentive to welcome children at the Supper³²²⁵.

6.11.4.5. Purpose and process

Gallant takes this argument one step further, by concluding that the word memorial in the context of Exodus 12:14 is an indication of God's intention to keep God's historical actions before the eyes of His people throughout their generations. In other words it denotes a purpose rather than a prerequisite. The words 'until He comes' in 1 Corinthians 11:26 put the remembrance in the same perspective as the 'throughout your generations' of the Passover ordinance³²²⁶. Roth argues that the Old Testament remembrance is participating and learning what you remember in the act. He illustrates this with the example of Jesus' disciples who at the institution of the Lord's Supper are instructed to do so in remembrance, while they cannot and will not yet: "While their hearts still reject it, Jesus already teaches their mouths eating of it to satiety."³²²⁷ A memorial is intended to lead to a subjective remembrance³²²⁸. The weekly remembrance of Christ's sacrifice is experienced as important for remaining focused at the heart of the Gospel and internalizing its message, as an interviewee from Rijsbergen explains.

6.11.4.6. Proclamation

The 1988 minority committee defines remembrance as (active) proclamation "of the death of Jesus until he returns again as living Lord to raise up those who are his by a true faith" or "of the perfect and only atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who has in pure grace and mercy saved his people."³²²⁹ Fitzmyer

³²²³ Van den Berg (1978), 72.

³²²⁴ Wim van der Schee, "Dit is mijn lichaam," *Theobloog*, entry posted May 13, 2011, <http://www.wimvanderschee.nl/?p=1787> (accessed July 26, 2016), with a quote from Jenson (1999), 258.

³²²⁵ Nootboom (May, 1984): 20-24

³²²⁶ Gallant (2003[^]), 85.

³²²⁷ Roth quotes Van Bruggen (my translation), J. van Bruggen, *Marcus: Het evangelie volgens Petrus; 3e serie CNT* (Kampen: Kok, 1988), 338. Roth (December 22, 2007), 203.

³²²⁸ Cf. Deut. 16:3, Gallant (2003[^]), 86.

³²²⁹ Cf. I Cor. 11:24-26; John 6:35-40, 51, 53-58. *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 304.

dismisses that interpretation³²³⁰. But I can agree that by the ‘for’ of verse 26, proclamation is related to remembrance as its implication³²³¹. I will further discuss proclamation below.

6.11.4.7. Corporate

In 1966 paedocommunion pioneer Jan van Katwijk understood the Lord’s Table as “the table at which the congregation, and not a certain part of it, together remembers the death of Christ.”³²³² Two years later Lammens more explicitly draws the conclusion in his dissertation on remembrance, that in the Supper celebration the congregation acts as a corporative unity³²³³. In the Netherlands Van der Schee has stressed the corporate role of the community as acting agent, adding that the Reformation, reacting to Roman Catholic ecclesiology and taking shape in the age of the discovery of the individual and the subject, has failed to understand this³²³⁴. Within the CRC the 1988 majority committee embraced a similar approach, when it writes about Passover, but apparently also with the Lord’s Supper in mind: “Not all of the participants had the capacity to remember or to believe. For them the remembrance resided in the community’s act of faith.”³²³⁵

6.11.4.8. God as subject

Gallant, Leithart and Van der Schee play with the thought that God is the subject or acting agent in the remembering³²³⁶. This understanding of ‘*in remembrance of me*’ was earlier defended by Jeremias³²³⁷. Jeremias’ defense may be summarized with his statement that “By far the more frequent practice of Judaism at the time of Jesus, however, is to use εἰς ἀνάμνησιν and its equivalents of God’s remembrance.”³²³⁸ Van der Schee quotes Jenson who, inspired by Jeremias, writes “this in fact is the only exegetically possible reading.”³²³⁹ Though Van der Schee emphasizes the corporate role of the community as acting agent, he recognizes how the option of God doing the

³²³⁰ Fitzmyer (2008), 441.

³²³¹ Cp. Fee (1987), 553f.

³²³² “Maar dat wij positief uit de Heilige Schriften verstonden wat de tafel des Heren is, namelijk de tafel waaraan de gemeente, en niet een zeker deel daarvan, gezamenlijk de dood van Christus gedenkt,” Van Katwijk (1966), 6.

³²³³ G.N. Lammens, *Tot Zijn gedachtenis: Het commemoratieve aspect van de avondmaalsviering* (Kampen: Kok, 1968), 188.

³²³⁴ Van der Schee (2011).

³²³⁵ *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 267.

³²³⁶ Gallant (2003^A), 86f. Gallant refers to Leithart, *Blessed are the Hungry*, 29-33; Van der Schee (2011).

³²³⁷ Jeremias (1981), 237-255.

³²³⁸ Jeremias (1981), 247.

³²³⁹ Jenson (1999), 258.

remembering certainly creates room for the participation of even the youngest child participating; “Every baby who can cry can make God remember something.”³²⁴⁰ I tend to agree with Fee who based on verse 26 and the larger context, where the human failure at the Corinthians’ meal was precisely that the remembrance of Christ was missing³²⁴¹, claims that remembrance here is primarily manward. But with Thiselton I believe that at least in a derivative sense the remembering is also directed to God as pleading on the blood and body of Christ³²⁴².

6.11.5. 1 Corinthians 11 – Proclamation

6.11.5.1. Mentioned together, differently assessed

In 1 Corinthians 11:26 Paul continues “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” Proclamation is the second element in 1 Corinthians 11 that plays a central role in the discussion. Remembrance and proclamation are often mentioned together, and therefore it comes as no surprise that both terms receive approximately the same amount of attention in the discussion³²⁴³. But the issues regarding the interpretation of proclamation and its relevance for the paedocommunion discussion only partly overlap with those of remembrance. Their relative weight within the discussion is also assessed differently³²⁴⁴.

6.11.5.2. Ratio, emotion, spirituality, faith

Calvin writes “How can we require them [infants] ‘to show forth the Lord’s death,’ of the nature and benefit of which they have no idea?”³²⁴⁵ Calvin in a sense summarizes what would become the dominant view within the Reformed tradition for a long time: Showing forth or proclaiming the Lord’s death is a requirement for participation in the Lord’s Supper, and just like remembrance, proclamation is not within the capacity of small children. Sometimes the requirement is simply defined as being able to proclaim. The 1986 majority committee summarizes “Covenant children can partake as soon

³²⁴⁰ (My translation). Van der Schee (2011).

³²⁴¹ Fee (1987), 553.

³²⁴² Thiselton (2000), 881.

³²⁴³ According to a sample we took.

³²⁴⁴ Gallant assesses: “Here, however, their case is even weaker than with the previously discussed phrase,” Gallant (2003^A), 89.

³²⁴⁵ Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 16, 30.

as they can (...) proclaim the Lord's death."³²⁴⁶ Often the language reveals the historically grown emphasis on ratio and emotion or spirituality. Van der Borgh: "A child (...) cannot fully understand the meaning of proclamation, as symbolized by the Lord's Supper, until after he has been instructed in the Christian faith and desires to become a full member of the body of Christ."³²⁴⁷ The 1988 minority committee speaks of the requirement of "faith that (...) proclaims Jesus Christ."³²⁴⁸ 1995 *Report A* speaks of '*personal faith to proclaim the death of Jesus*'³²⁴⁹. Van de Velde writes "Proclamation of the death of the Lord demands a conscious faith which has accepted having died in Christ's death and, one with Him, having been raised into a new life", and speaks of proclamation from within, with words from the heart³²⁵⁰. The conviction that proclamation is a requirement may go hand in hand with encouraging profession at a younger age and recognizing early evidence of such faith in covenant children, as the CRC Synod 1988 proved with its decision³²⁵¹. With a reference to Psalm 8:3, "through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger"³²⁵², Roth challenges his readers to acknowledge the possibility of everyone in the congregation proclaiming, including the mentally challenged and infants³²⁵³.

6.11.5.3. Faith professed

A requirement of faith that proclaims easily becomes the requirement of faith that is professed. Hogenhuis mentions how in the Dutch paedocommunion discussion Paul's words are often linked with the confessional or professing character of the Lord's Supper; When the death of the Lord is proclaimed, that is such profound mystery and such a serious matter, that insight, knowledge, and a conscious choice is required³²⁵⁴. The 1988 minority speaks of "a confession that proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ his person and work"³²⁵⁵. In discussing proclamation, Hartvelt agrees with Zwingli that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is also an act of profession of faith, but we need to be

³²⁴⁶ Cf. John 6:35, 1 Cor. 11:22 (faith), 1 Cor. 11:29 (discernment), Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24,25 (remembrance), 1 Cor. 11:26, quoting Calvin's commentary on that text "Therefore, in order that you may celebrate the Supper properly, you must bear in mind that you will have to make profession of faith," (proclamation), and 1 Cor. 11:28 (self examination).

³²⁴⁷ R.J. Van der Borgh, "Voices: But Let a Man Prove Himself," *Banner* (April 1973): 20.

³²⁴⁸ *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 292.

³²⁴⁹ *Report A*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 267.

³²⁵⁰ (my translation), Van der Velde (1985), 21.

³²⁵¹ Article 72, Acts CRCNA Synod 1988, 558 f. Which is where we started our story of 14th St. CRC.

³²⁵² Verse 3 in the Dutch NBG translation Roth cites, verse 2 in the English NIV translation.

³²⁵³ Roth (December 3, 2007), 168.

³²⁵⁴ H. Hogenhuis, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal; ja of nee?" *Ouderlingenblad* (January 1980): 15/123f.

³²⁵⁵ *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 306.

accountable to everyone who asks us, especially to our families as the question and answers of the Passover tradition illustrate³²⁵⁶.

6.11.5.4. Individually or corporate

Just like in the case of remembrance, the question is raised whether proclamation is required of the individual or of the community. 1995 *Report B* speaks of a covenantal hearing of 1 Corinthians 11 and writes “The church or the community must proclaim the Lords death, but this does not mean that every individual must understand precisely what is involved in proclaiming in order to participate. Proclaim in this instance is to be understood no differently from repent in connection with baptism-absolutely necessary but required first of all of the community and then of the individuals within it. (...) the children will learn, through their participation and the instruction of the parents and/ or the community, what (...) [the Lord’s] death mean[s].”³²⁵⁷ Fitzmyer notes in his commentary that ‘eat’, ‘drink’ and ‘proclaim’ are all in the second person plural, “which stress the involvement of the entire community.”³²⁵⁸ In the context of a covenantal hearing of 1 Corinthians 11 1995 *Report B* also states that Baptism, no less than the Lords Supper, proclaims the Lords death³²⁵⁹. Van de Velde seems to recognize that point on the basis of Romans 6, but without mentioning further grounds states that the implied profession of faith may follow the baptism of an infant, but should precede participation in the Supper³²⁶⁰.

Without specifying the nature of the proclamation the 1984 overture states that both Passover and Supper are proclamations of God’s acts of salvation and as tools of teaching means of grace and not magical³²⁶¹.

6.11.5.5. Commentaries – with words

It may be useful at this point to discuss the question what Paul had in mind when he spoke of proclamation. In his commentary Schnabel chooses the option of verbal proclamation in the sermon during the Supper and in the prayers over bread and wine, based on the use of the word in the New Testament³²⁶². Fee seems to think more specifically of the words of institution

³²⁵⁶ Hartvelt (May 15, 1971), 3.

³²⁵⁷ *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 293.

³²⁵⁸ Fitzmyer (2008), 445.

³²⁵⁹ *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 293.

³²⁶⁰ Van de Velde (1985), 21.

³²⁶¹ *Overture 1 - Study the Issue of Covenant Children Partaking of the Lord's Supper*, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 423.

³²⁶² Cf. 1 Cor. 2:1; 9:14; Phil. 1:17-18; Col. 1:28. Schnabel (2014), 656f.

over the bread and cup³²⁶³. Does, in that case, one proclaim for all? Or do, in the Corinthian setting, two or three at most proclaim for all?³²⁶⁴ Or do the ministers of the Word proclaim it verbally, while the worshipers proclaim it silently, as Kistemaker suggests³²⁶⁵? Van de Velde writes that they who sit at the table also proclaim the death of the Lord, “They hold a sermon in silence”, “While passing the wine they preach: Jesus’ blood for you”. According to him such silent preaching requires prior profession of faith and thus excludes children³²⁶⁶.

6.11.5.6. Commentaries – Haggadah

Thiselton suggests that Paul likens the gospel proclamation to the recital of the Passover Haggadah. Thiselton points out how the Jewish understanding that “in every generation a man must regard himself as he came forth himself out of Egypt” implies the participant’s self appropriation of the cross both for redemption and lifestyle³²⁶⁷. Jeremias observes that in Symmachus the Greek word for proclaim³²⁶⁸ represents the Hebrew verb that is used for the recitation of the exodus credo, “My father was a wandering Aramean etc.”, at the Passover³²⁶⁹. And he suggests that the proclamation of the death of the Lord at the Eucharist happened in an analogous manner. Jeremias mentions John 6:51c-58 as a New Testament example of a Eucharistic quotation with a following interpretation³²⁷⁰. In light of the paedocommunion discussion it is good to realize that according to Jewish tradition the exodus credo “My father was a wandering Aramean” was told by the father in response to the questions of his son³²⁷¹. Just like Jesus exposition in John 6:53-58 is a response to the Jews’ question in John 6:52³²⁷².

6.11.5.7. Commentaries – In silence

Proclaiming in silence seems to be a matter of silent words and thoughts for Van de Velde. But Kistemaker speaks of “proclaiming it silently by partaking of the sacramental elements.”³²⁷³ Thiselton writes that “by eating this bread and

³²⁶³ Fee (1987), 557.

³²⁶⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 14: 27,29.

³²⁶⁵ Kistemaker (1993), 398.

³²⁶⁶ Van de Velde (1985), 21.

³²⁶⁷ Cf. *m. Pesahim* 10:5, Thiselton (2000), 887.

³²⁶⁸ Καταγγέλλειν.

³²⁶⁹ *Haggid* based on Deut. 26:3, the exodus credo of Deut. 26:5-9. Jeremias (1981), 106.

³²⁷⁰ Jeremias (1981), 107.

³²⁷¹ *Mishnah Pesahim* 10:4.

³²⁷² Cp. Wim Beuken et al. *Brood uit de hemel: Lijnen van Exodus 16 naar Johannes 6 tegen de achtergrond van de rabbijnse literatuur* (Kampen:Kok, 1985).

³²⁷³ Kistemaker (1993), 398

drinking the cup the whole assembled congregation stands in a witness box and pulpit to proclaim their part.”³²⁷⁴ Schnabel, who chooses the interpretation of verbal proclamation, acknowledges that the significance of the actions should not be nullified, because it is the actions during the meal that fail to proclaim the death of Jesus Christ³²⁷⁵. “By their abuse of one another they were negating the very point of that death – to create a new people for his name, in which the old distinctions based on human fallenness no longer obtain”, adds Fee³²⁷⁶. In 1967, the youth behind the project ‘*Kerk 66-2000*’ distinguished the proclamation of the Supper from verbal proclamation³²⁷⁷, and noticed children’s ability to understand this³²⁷⁸. The emphasis on non verbal proclamation is also found with paedocommunion advocate Gallant, who writes: “The proclamation is not done by any special act of individuals, apart from simple participation itself.”³²⁷⁹ The thought that proclamation may (for most of the congregation) consist of participation in acts as simple as eating and drinking opens possibilities for Communion of infants in the true sense of the word.

6.11.5.8. Imperative or indicative

So far I have approached proclamation as if it is a requirement. What in Schnabel’s commentary is a mere footnote is quite relevant in the paedocommunion discussion: ‘proclaim’ is to be understood as an indicative and not as an imperative³²⁸⁰, it is an observation rather than a command³²⁸¹. Roth suggests that Paul does not mention proclamation as a requirement, but as a second ground for the accusation that the Corinthians misbehave, while they should know better³²⁸².

6.11.6. 1 Corinthians 11 - Unworthy

³²⁷⁴ Thiselton (2000), 887.

³²⁷⁵ Schnabel (2014), 657.

³²⁷⁶ Fee (1987), 557.

³²⁷⁷ In their thesis 14 which pleads for the admission of all believers.

³²⁷⁸ “Kerk 66-2000,” Supplement 14, 15, Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 181-190. November 20, 21, 22, 1967.

³²⁷⁹ Gallant (2003^A), 89.

³²⁸⁰ Schnabel (2014), 656. fn144. More can be said about the relationship between indicative and imperative in Pauline ethics. E.g. Herman Ridderbos, *Paulus: Ontwerp van zijn theologie* (Kampen:Kok, 1966), 279f. William D. Dennison “Indicative and Imperative: The Basic Structure of Pauline Ethics,” *Calvin Theological Journal*, April 1979, 55-78.

³²⁸¹ Gallant (2003^A), 89.

³²⁸² First they should know better because of what Paul has passed on to them, second because of what they proclaim themselves. Roth (2007), 204.

6.11.6.1. *Preoccupation and little attention*

In verse 27 Paul writes: “So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.” Worthiness is the third term from 1 Corinthians 11 which plays a role in the paedocommunion discussion. In 1980 *Banner* Editor Andrew Kuyvenhoven writes: “For some time now, leaders in the church have been saying that our preoccupation with the question “How can we be worthy partakers?” has led us to overemphasize the awesomeness of the Lord’s Supper.”³²⁸³ Some feel that Paul’s stern warnings justify this emphasis on worthy participation³²⁸⁴. The terms ‘unworthy’ and ‘worthy’ are used to summarize a theology and practice in which profession of faith took place only at advanced age and the first participation in the Lord’s Supper celebration possibly even later or never: people feel unworthy of the Supper³²⁸⁵. “The word ‘unworthy’ has done much evil”, and with its focus on a worthy celebration of the Supper the Reformed “form kept people away from the Supper”, claims Netherlands Reformed Pastor Van den Akker³²⁸⁶. Bolkestein notices how the question of lowering the age of participation in the Lord’s Supper is raised by the Netherlands Reformed Synod at least in part to counter this tendency to postpone profession of faith³²⁸⁷. Though this praxis with its preoccupation with ‘worthiness’ may have been one of the incentives for the countermovement in which the age of participation in the Supper was lowered, the term ‘worthiness’ itself receives relatively little attention in the paedocommunion discussion, compared to the terms ‘remembrance’, ‘proclamation’, ‘examination’ and ‘discernment’³²⁸⁸.

6.11.6.2. *Adverb and adjective*

Van den Akker claimed that the word ‘unworthy’ had done much evil “because people turned an adverb into an adjective” shifting the emphasis from the manner of celebration as disapproved by the apostle Paul to the worthiness of the participants who ought to be certain of their own conversion and rebirth³²⁸⁹.

³²⁸³ Kuyvenhoven (November 24, 1980), 8.

³²⁸⁴ Ellestad (December 8, 1980).

³²⁸⁵ Bolkestein (1964), 28.

³²⁸⁶ N.K. van den Akker as quoted in “‘Formulier hield mensen van avondmaal’,” *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, July 4, 1994.

³²⁸⁷ Bolkestein (1964), 28.

³²⁸⁸ On the basis of a sample we took.

³²⁸⁹ “‘Formulier hield mensen van avondmaal’,” *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, July 4, 1994.

6.11.6.3. Faith and repentance

In defining 'worthy' the Reformers emphasized faith and repentance. In response to the question "Who then receives such Sacrament worthily?" Luther's Small Catechism answers: "(...) a person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, "Given ... and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unfit. For the words "for you" require hearts that truly believe."³²⁹⁰ Bullinger basically said the same: one comes worthily, when one comes with faith³²⁹¹. Calvin distinguishes how unworthily applies to the particular "corruption which had got such a hold in [the Corinthians'] midst", and how it applies to the general teaching that "to 'eat unworthily' is to ruin the pure and proper use by our own abuse."³²⁹² In his comment on verse 28 Calvin argues that we must bring faith and repentance: "But if you are serious in your intention to aspire to the righteousness of God, and if, humbled by the knowledge of your own wretchedness, you fall back on the grace of Christ, and rest upon it, be assured that you are worthy, I mean that the Lord does not keep you out, even if in other respects you are not all you ought to be. For faith, even if imperfect, makes the unworthy worthy."³²⁹³

6.11.6.4. Defined by other key terms

Defining 'worthy' in terms of faith and repentance or removal of sin is also quite common in the paedocommunion discussion³²⁹⁴. For paedocommunion opponents it is clear that children could not meet those requirements³²⁹⁵. Paedocommunion advocates who acknowledge such requirements recognize how children participated in Passover celebrations with similar requirements³²⁹⁶. But most often 'worthy' participation is defined in terms of remembering³²⁹⁷, proclaiming³²⁹⁸ (or professing³²⁹⁹), discerning the body of the

³²⁹⁰ Martin Luther, *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions; A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord*, 2nd ed. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2006), 343.

³²⁹¹ K. Exalto, "Heinrich Bullinger over de voorbereiding op het Heilig Avondmaal," *Waarheidsvriend* (March 12, 1987): 157-158.

³²⁹² John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Trans. John W. Frase. Vol. 9 of *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*. Ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. Repr. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), 251.

³²⁹³ Calvin (1989), 253. Note how the Prodigal Son says: *I am no longer worthy/fit to be called son* (Luke 12:48), Thiselton (2000), 889.

³²⁹⁴ E.g. (Majority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 356.

³²⁹⁵ E.g. Schravendeel (1977), 14.

³²⁹⁶ The 1988 majority report refers to the Old Testament commandment to remove leaven, in light of 1 Cor. 5:6 and the Passover celebrations 2 Chron. 35, Josh. 5 (after the rolling away of the reproach from Egypt) and Ezra 6, after the removal of unclean pagan wives. *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 269-270.

³²⁹⁷ E.g. (Majority) *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 275.

³²⁹⁸ E.g. (Majority) *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 275.

Lord³³⁰⁰, or a combination of these elements³³⁰¹. Sometimes at least the suggestion is created that self-examination is not only a measure to prevent unworthy Supper celebration, but a constitutive element of the Supper itself³³⁰². Some proponents understand ‘worthy’ as reverent or with dignity, something children are able to, advocates suggest³³⁰³. Some opponents paraphrase unworthy as impious and irreverent participation, “such as might occur with the participation of very young children who do not understand the spiritual significance of the elements”, opponents say³³⁰⁴. More explicit covenantal interpretations of ‘worthy’ can also be found with both opponents and proponents. Worthy participation is only possible if you really want to live in the covenant, writes opponent Kamphuis³³⁰⁵. 1995 *Report B* raises the question whether the eating and drinking of a covenant child is unworthy participation, comparable to greed, gluttony, and pride? The writers conclude that covenant children “may participate if they do so in such a way that Jesus and the members of the body are honored, served, and respected” and “children learn a “worthy manner” by participating in the communal rites.”³³⁰⁶ In the 1984 overture the question is raised how children of believers can be considered holy, but unqualified, unworthy (?), of the sacrament³³⁰⁷.

6.11.6.5. Defined by other theologians

In the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* Tiedtke explains that “in the epistles *axios* frequently has the meaning of fitting, in accord with”. “Paul”, according to Tiedtke, “is not requiring moral quality in the participants, but looking for a manner of life which accords with the gospels, i.e. mutual love (cf. the context, 1 Cor. 11:17-34).”³³⁰⁸ Thiselton confirms and specifies “attitude and conduct should fit message and solemnity of what is proclaimed. At Corinth these were too often not fitting or

³²⁹⁹ (Syn.) Gereformeerde synode besluit: Leden andere kerken mogen avondmaal meevieren,” *Nederlands Dagblad*, October 4, 1974.

³³⁰⁰ E.g. Schravendeel (1977), 14.

³³⁰¹ E.g. Kamphuis (February 27, 1982), 329; (Minority) *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 305.

³³⁰² E.g. (Majority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 356; Leonard J. Coppes, “Review: Tim Gallant, Feed My Lambs etc.,” *The Confessional Presbyterian 2* (2006): 193-199; Tim Gallant, “Response: “A Response to Leonard Coppes Regarding Feed My Lambs,” *The Confessional Presbyterian 2* (2006): 199-205.

³³⁰³ E.g. ‘eerbiedig’ in Dutch, “Ingezonden: Kinderen en avondmaal,” *Nederlands Dagblad*, 5 April, 2001.

Zegwaard (2006), *passim*.

³³⁰⁴ *Report A*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 267.

³³⁰⁵ “Dat kun je alleen waardig als je werkelijk wilt leven uit het verbond,” Kamphuis (1982), 329.

³³⁰⁶ *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 293f.

³³⁰⁷ *Overture 1 - Study the Issue of Covenant Children Partaking of the Lord's Supper*, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 420.

³³⁰⁸ *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology: Volume 3*, , 349.

(...) “in a way morally out of keeping with the nature (10:16) and design of the ordinance (11:24-25).”³³⁰⁹ Fee seems to emphasize the first of these two³³¹⁰. The question of how specific or general Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 11 are deserves separate attention. But I note that the issue is often discussed in relation to verse 27, because Paul shifts from a primary use of the second person plural to the third person singular³³¹¹. Schnabel for example comments that the adverb describes not the participants in the meal, but their behavior during the meal and adds in a footnote that *anaxios* should not be isolated from its contexts and randomly expanded as a requirement for participation in the meal³³¹². In the paedocommunion discussion opponents emphasize the general meaning and refer to Calvin³³¹³ and Berkouwer³³¹⁴ in support. The specific way in which the Corinthians ate unworthily was “breaking the community”, according to Berkouwer³³¹⁵, “refusing to commune with their poor brethren”, according to Charles Hodge³³¹⁶. Paul’s instructions for a worthy celebration of the Supper are found in verses 33 and 34, when they come together to eat, they should wait for each other, as Anderson notices³³¹⁷.

6.11.7. 1 Corinthians 11 – Self examination

6.11.7.1. Most conclusive

Paul continues in verse 28: “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup”. In the eyes of many opponents the argument of self-examination seems to be the most conclusive argument in the paedocommunion debate³³¹⁸. This impression is supported by the fact that

³³⁰⁹ Thiselton (2000), 889. Ridderbos uses the German word ‘*unangemessen*’ eating and drinking, Ridderbos (1966), 475.

³³¹⁰ Fee (1987), 559.

³³¹¹ E.g. Venema (2009), 117.

³³¹² Schnabel (2014), 660, fn.160.

³³¹³ Calvin (1989), 251. E.g. Venema (2009), 117f.

³³¹⁴ G.C. Berkouwer, *Dogmatische Studiën: De Sacramenten* (Kampen: Kok, 1954), 341. E.g. *Report A*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 267.

³³¹⁵ Berkouwer (1954), 341.

³³¹⁶ In addition to the fact “that they treated the Lord’s Table as though it were their own; making no distinction between the Lord’s Supper and an ordinary meal; coming to satisfy their hunger, and not to feed on the body and blood of Christ,” Charles Hodge, *A Commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1857 6th ed. (London: Banner of Truth, 1964), 231.

³³¹⁷ Dean Anderson, *1 Korintiërs: Orde op zaken in een jonge stadskerk* (Kampen: Kok, 2008), 166.

³³¹⁸ Cp. L.G. Compagnie, “Kinderen aan het avondmaal (slot),” *Kerkbode van Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken*, April 29, 1988, 2; G. Visee “May and Must Our Children Partake of the Lord’s Supper: The Second of Four Parts,” *Christian Renewal* (April 7, 1986): 13.

the key-words from 1 Corinthians 11 that we have come across most often are the terms (self) examination and discernment³³¹⁹. Zegwaard also recognizes the importance of these words in her dissertation³³²⁰. An interesting little statistic may explain why examination carries more weight than discernment. The 1977-1979 RCN minority report highlights how one of the churches, which had reported to synod about their congregational conversation, shared that 82% of the participants considered children able to discern, whereas only 30% considered children able to examine themselves³³²¹. In other words, children in all likelihood will not meet the different perceived requirements of 1 Corinthians 11 all at the same stage of their faith development. In common perception the age at which somebody is able to discern the body is reached earlier than the age in which somebody is able of self-examination. In light of that reality the requirement of self-examination sets the bar for children's participation³³²². In 1963 Bratt expresses this sentiment, speaking of truly believing and dedicated children, and of his sympathy to the argument that a thirteen or fourteen year old can meet (most of) the demands of 1 Corinthians. But the requirement of examination settles the issue in favor of the status quo, because "the word 'prove' in the original Greek is virile and strong (...) one should have quite some maturity and some record of Christian experience before he can make the test."³³²³

6.11.7.2. *Since the early church*

In my historical overview I concluded that in the praxis of Augustine's days and in the theology of Augustine paedocommunion coexisted with an awareness of the spiritual nature of participating in the sacrament and the need for self-examination³³²⁴. Rylaarsdam mentions the church father Chrysostom as example of a theologian of the early church who paid more attention to the historical and literal context of this text than for example

³³¹⁹ According to a sample we took.

³³²⁰ E.g. Zegwaard (2006), 47.

³³²¹ Suppl. 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 219.

³³²² Cp. Helder, (Minority recommendations) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 367f. *Report 3: Appendix C; Public Profession of Faith for Children*, Agenda CRCNA 1989 Synod, 65.

³³²³ *Banner* (January 25, 1963): 17.

³³²⁴ Re. Self-examination, Augustine, *Contra Adimantum*, bk I, chap. 17:3. Possibly seeing room for age and ability appropriate application of the requirements, Martha Ellen Stortz, "Where or when Was Your Servant Innocent?" in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Wim. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 83. Possibly allowing for parents, sponsors or the 'whole society of believers' to fulfill the requirements on behalf of the children. Cp. Augustine, *Letter XCVIII, 7, 10 (to Boniface)*, NPNF1 1:409-410; *Letter XCVIII, 5 & 7*, NPNF1 1: 408-409.

Calvin would do³³²⁵. In the Middle Ages these words from 1 Corinthians weren't either used to exclude children from Communion, Rylaarsdam summarizes³³²⁶. But in my historical overview I noticed how this was different in the days of the Reformation. "Examination, therefore, must precede, and this it were vain to expect from infants", states Calvin³³²⁷. And I found similar statements with for example Anastasius Veluanus³³²⁸, Ursinus³³²⁹, De Brès³³³⁰ and some of the Reformed Confessions³³³¹. I also noticed that the Reformation was not unanimous. Luther said: "When in 1 Corinthians Paul said that a man should examine himself, he spoke only of adults because he was speaking about those who were quarreling among themselves. However, he doesn't here forbid that the sacrament of the altar be given even to children."³³³² And Musculus wrote regarding this same verse: "that it is to be understood of them only, in whom it is dangerous, lest they should unworthily eat of the Lord's bread, and drink of the cup, and so becoming guilty of the Lord's body and blood, should eat and drink their own judgment: as the text itself doth evidently enough declare. But there is none of this to be feared in the little children of them that do believe."³³³³

6.11.7.3. In Pietism and the "Nadere Reformatie"

Self-examination would play a central role in the praxis and theology of that branch of the Reformed Tradition that developed within the pietistic movement of the Dutch *Nadere Reformatie* of the seventeenth and eighteenth century³³³⁴. Self examination, especially in preparation of the Lord's Supper, was a central theme in this movement; and a rich choice of devotional literature helped the believers in this inner preparation³³³⁵. The churches of the 1834 *Afscheiding* or Secession would be strongly influenced by

³³²⁵ Rylaarsdam (2007), 6. He might be referring to Chrysostom's *Homily XXVII & XXVIII*, NPNF1 157f., 163f. Chrysostom starts Homily XXVII saying "It is necessary in considering the present charge to state also first the occasion of it. For thus again will our discourse be more intelligible. What then is this occasion?"

³³²⁶ Rylaarsdam (2007), 6.

³³²⁷ Calvin Institutes, bk .4, chap. 16, 30

³³²⁸ Anastasius Veluanus (2012), 137.

³³²⁹ E.g. Ursinus (1602/1852), 429.

³³³⁰ De Brès (1595/2011), 543.

³³³¹ Theodore Beza's Confession, Art. 33, The Scottish Confession *Chap. XXIII*, The Westminster Larger Catechism, Q&A 177, James T. Dennison Jr., ed., "Theodore Beza's Confession (1560)," and "The Scottish Confession (1560)," in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: Volume 2 1552-1566* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 2010), 297-298; M. Te Velde. Ed. *Confessies: Gereformeerde geloofsverantwoording in zestiende-eeuws Europa* (Heerenveen: Groen, 2009), 210, 432; Johannes G. Vos *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary* edited by G.I. Williamson (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2002), 509f.

³³³² *Table Talk: Luther's Works, Volume 54* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 58.

³³³³ Musculus (1560).

³³³⁴ This 'Further Reformation' was very similar to Anglo-Saxon Puritanism and German Pietism.

³³³⁵ Rudolf Boon, "Kind Communie en Cultuur," *Eredienstvaardig* (July 1991): 143.

the pietism of the *Nadere Reformatie*³³³⁶. And all three researched Dutch Reformed denominations could be considered daughters of this Secession, and in part shaped by that same pietistic spirituality³³³⁷. The Three Forms of Unity provided fertile ground for this emphasis on self-examination, pointing to the spiritual fruits, noticeable within our selves, as assurance of our faith³³³⁸ and as assurance of our election³³³⁹. The Canons of Dordt refer to 2 Corinthians 13:5 as proof text³³⁴⁰. The classical liturgical forms put similar emphasis on self examination. *Form 1 for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper* of the CRC reads: "The true examination of ourselves consists of these three parts: First: Let every one consider by himself his sins and accursedness (...) Second: Let every one examine his heart whether he also believes the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven (...) Third: Let every one examine his conscience whether he is minded henceforth to show true thankfulness to God (...) whether he (...) earnestly resolves henceforth to live in true love and unity with his neighbor."³³⁴¹ Weima seems right in concluding that the emphasis on self examination such as found in the form (normally) leads to the exclusion of children³³⁴². In the paedocommunion discussion some opponents certainly find support in the (preparatory) form³³⁴³, although proponent Visee also considers self-examination beautifully described by the form³³⁴⁴.

6.11.7.4. Another self-examination discussion

In the first half of the twentieth century, decades before the start of the paedocommunion discussion, a discussion on self-examination had taken place in the Netherlands³³⁴⁵. Knowledge about this discussion helps to understand the split in the Reformed Church in the Netherlands in 1944 that gave birth to the Reformed Church liberated; a denomination which rejected

³³³⁶ Jan Veenhof, "Discussie over het zelfonderzoek – sluetel tot verstaan van het schisma van 1944: Terreinverkenning ten dienste van verder onderzoek," in *Vrij Gereformeerd* (Kampen: Kok, 2005), 183.

³³³⁷ Note how the Christian Reformed Church in her 2002 identity statement mentions the Pietist emphasis as one of the three emphases that shape her identity, Christian Reformed Church, *What it Means to be Reformed: An Identity Statement* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Resources, 2002), 11, 20f.

³³³⁸ Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 32, Q&A 86.

³³³⁹ Canons of Dordt, I: XII.

³³⁴⁰ "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?" T. Bos, *De Dordtsche Leerregelen: Toegelicht door Ds. T. Bos* (Kampen: Kok, 1915), 48. We note that the online version on the CRCNA website misses this reference, <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/confessions/canons-dort> (accessed, August 4, 2016).

³³⁴¹ (Blue) *Psalter Hymnal: Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy of the Christian Reformed Church* (Grand Rapids: Board of Publication of the Christian Reformed Church, 1976), 143.

³³⁴² Weima (2007), 7.

³³⁴³ E.g. Patterson (1981), 24.

³³⁴⁴ Visee (April 7, 1986), 16.

³³⁴⁵ Jan Veenhof (2005), 182-203.

all pietistic forms of self-examination, and which put great emphasis on believing the sure (covenant) promises of God. Headmaster Janse from Biggekerke played a prominent role in this discussion on self-examination³³⁴⁶, and in all likelihood had a significant influence on Jan van Katwijk. We have seen how the Reformed Church of Rijsbergen would not have existed if the two brothers in law, Overduin and Meijwaard, would not have moved their families and business across the river into Roman Catholic area, and if they would not have made the major spiritual shift by leaving their pietistic background to join the Reformed Church liberated. Self-examination must have been an important topic in the conversations and Bible-studies of Van Katwijk and the Overduin and Meywaard families. In that light it is no surprise that the first Dutch Protestant paedocommunion pioneer I could find, was found among the Reformed Churches liberated. The special make up of the Reformed Church liberated of Rijsbergen further explains why it was the first within this denomination.

The spiritual climate of the Reformed Church liberated and its history within the discussion on self-examination must have also prepared Visee to open up to the possibility of children's participation. Self-examination is often interpreted as seeing whether a person is justified in partaking of the Supper, notices Visee. And self-examination has connotations of doubt and uncertainty. Visee distinguishes four motives that provide subjective certainty, and one covenantal approach which assumingly provides objective certainty. First is the Anabaptist motive: certainty based on the knowledge that something happened to their souls. Second is the Arminian motive: certainty based on the free sovereign human decision for God. Third is the pietistic motive: certainty based on an inner experiential struggle of conversion, the search for evidences of saving faith. Fourth is the Methodist motive: certainty based on having consciously given one's heart to the Lord. But "we need to purge the Anabaptist, Arminian, pietistic and Methodist leaven"³³⁴⁷, Visee writes. His conviction is that the basis for partaking of the Lord's Supper lies in the steadfast and sure promises of God, as revealed in the gospel and given to the church. In other words, the basis is the covenantal relation between God and His people.

³³⁴⁶ Geert van Dijk, *Het concrete is het wezenlijke: Het denken van A. Janse van Biggekerke (1890-1960) over Gods verbond met mensen* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Academic, 2014).

³³⁴⁷ With an allusion to 1 Cor. 5:

6.11.7.5. *The outcome of self-examination*

The text of 1 Corinthians 11 does not (either) justify an interpretation of self-examination in which the outcome is uncertain. Grosheide comments on lexicological grounds that with this self-examination one can be certain of the good results beforehand, it implies the purpose of detecting the good³³⁴⁸. Self-examination is not considering whether one is entitled to the Supper. The result of this self-examination can only be participation in the Supper³³⁴⁹. Schnabel comments that Paul is silent on a potential negative outcome of this examination, but he suggests that the answer is self-evident, if one fails the examination, one should repent, change one's behavior, and accept the poorer fellow Christians. Paul's words about self-examination in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?", also allow only the positive outcome that Christ is in them. Only an interpretation of self-examination in that way does justice to the flow of Paul's argument. Their Christian faith proves Paul's point. And failing the test is therefore only a hypothetical option with an ironic undertone, as Van Spanje rightly comments³³⁵⁰. The pattern is: examine yourself, and so eat. There is an expectation that participation will indeed follow, Gallant notes³³⁵¹. In the words of Visee: The command of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of me," is not weakened, but confirmed by Paul.

6.11.7.6. *Historical and literary context*

In 1961, when for the first time the issue of paedocommunion is mentioned and a plea for Communion of children is heard on the floor of Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church, the specific context of Paul's words on self-examination is emphasized³³⁵². Rylaarsdam speaks of the historical and literary context³³⁵³. New (or renewed) awareness of this context is mentioned as a reason for the shift in thinking about the place of children at the Supper³³⁵⁴. Whatever the interpretation, it must be a solution to the immediate problem at hand, because that is what Paul is attempting to provide, writes Sutton³³⁵⁵. In that context the Apostle is primarily commanding that the Corinthians change their relationship to one another at the Supper, suggests Rylaarsdam.

³³⁴⁸ F.W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1953 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 274.

³³⁴⁹ F.W. Grosheide, *De eerste brief aan de kerk te Korinthe* (Kampen: Kok, 1957), 313.

³³⁵⁰ T.E. van Spanje, *2 Korintiërs: profiel van een evangeliedienaar* (Kampen: Kok, 2009), 319.

³³⁵¹ Gallant (2003^A), 95. See also Ridderbos (1966), 477.

³³⁵² Pastor Spilt (the assessor of Synod), Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 328.

³³⁵³ Rylaarsdam (2007), 6.

³³⁵⁴ E.g. Wayne Brouwer, "Children at the Table," *Banner* (February 2005): 34-36.

³³⁵⁵ Ray Sutton, "Presuppositions of Paedocommunion," *Geneva Papers* (1982): 3

The context is disharmony and inhospitality, and the set of commands to examine yourselves, to discern the body and to wait for one another, are Paul's antidote, summarizes Witvliet³³⁵⁶. Weima distinguishes self-examination that is primarily vertical in dimension – examining one's relationship with Christ- and self-examination that is primarily horizontal – examining one's relationship with fellow Christians³³⁵⁷. The call upon believers to examine their lives, their hearts and their consciences, as found in the CRC's *Form for Celebration of the Lord's Supper* is mentioned as an example of this vertical emphasis; only at the very end of the form are believers also called to examine their conduct toward other people³³⁵⁸; Whereas Paul is first and foremost calling for a horizontal self-examination of the relation to fellow believers, to the rest of the church³³⁵⁹. Weima diplomatically concludes that it does provide biblical justification for the possibility of children's participation. Wayne Brouwer writes: All Christians, particularly those who have the capability of asserting their social prestige, influence or wealth, must "examine" themselves to see whether they are fully invested in the life of all the other members of the body of Christ and are making certain that they share an equal place at the table³³⁶⁰.

6.11.7.7. Ethical implications

The RCN 1977-1979 minority report acknowledges that self-examination has ethical implications³³⁶¹. Even if the nature of self-examination was only ethical it would require accountable persons, argues Schravendeel³³⁶². But Paul's words about self-examination also reveal the critical nature of the Lord's Supper³³⁶³. Self-examination concerns the question of the appreciation and reverence for Christ's sacrifice and for Christ Himself. The RCN minority report asks whether children can already be confronted with the question: do I (still) belong to the Lord?³³⁶⁴

³³⁵⁶ John D. Witvliet, "The Joy of Age- and Ability- Appropriate Obedience: Reflections on Faith Formation and Children at the Lord's Supper," *Forum* (Winter 2010): 10-11.

³³⁵⁷ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "Children at the Lord's Supper and the Key Text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34," *Forum* (Spring 2007): 7-8.

³³⁵⁸ Weima (2007), 7.

³³⁵⁹ Weima (2007), 7.

³³⁶⁰ Wayne Brouwer (2005), 36.

³³⁶¹ Suppl. 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 218. We note that the question of ethical criteria also play a role in the discussion on the participation of mentally challenged people and children in the Reformed Church liberated, Roth (December 22, 2007), 202.

³³⁶² Schravendeel (1977), 14.

³³⁶³ Cf. Ridderbos (1966), 474-478.

³³⁶⁴ Suppl. 45, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 218, 219.

6.11.7.8. *A higher bar*

It is good to realize that the key word examination that leads some to raise the bar higher than any of the other key words would, is the same key word that others refer to when concluding that these instructions only apply to adults. We heard the quote from Luther, saying that Paul “spoke only of adults because he was speaking about those who were quarrelling among themselves.”³³⁶⁵ And only those adults who had celebrated the Lord’s Supper unworthily were in danger of falling in the same sin, seems to be the thought of the Reformer Musculus who understood the instruction to prove oneself “of them only, in whom it is dangerous.”³³⁶⁶ Those same arguments are repeated in the paedocommunion discussion³³⁶⁷. Vermeer, for example, argues that the adult believers were behaving shamefully in the sinful acts as described in verses 17-22. And he agrees that Paul has reference to adults³³⁶⁸. It seems fair to assume that the children were not actively part of divisions of more theological nature, and drunkenness is normally not the sin of children. But the children of rich families were probably also not among those who stayed hungry, they may have contributed to the humiliation of those who had nothing, and they may have had to learn to wait for each other. On the other hand Kistemaker comments that Paul understands man generically to exclude no one³³⁶⁹. This point is also made by paedocommunion opponents³³⁷⁰.

6.11.7.9. *Individual or corporate*

Once again the question could be asked to what extent examination is an individual requirement. With an allusion to the Dutch Reformed wedding form, Visee suggests that husbands and wives should help each other in such self examination, and in similar way parents could help their children to examine themselves. That's how it happened in the church of Ursinus and Olevian, suggests Visee³³⁷¹. Though Paul’s words about self examination may give the impression of a highly individual exercise, his earlier words in 1 Corinthians 5 assume a more communal form of self examination to remove the leaven³³⁷².

³³⁶⁵ *Luther’s Works, Volume 54* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 58.

³³⁶⁶ Musculus (1560).

³³⁶⁷ Self examination is required from disorderly adults, summarizes the (opponent) majority the argument of the proponents (Majority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 353.

³³⁶⁸ Vermeer (February 1968), 10.

³³⁶⁹ Kistemaker (1993), 401. Cp. Fitzmyer (2008), 446.

³³⁷⁰ Van de Velde (1982), 21.

³³⁷¹ Visee (April 7, 1986), 16.

³³⁷² Cp. Schnabel (2014), 124f.

6.11.7.10. Even in ancient Israel

Even if self-examination is a requirement, Gallant suggests the Old Testament teaches us how that requirement fits in the pattern of the sacraments of the old covenant, with reference to the removing of the leaven and Isaiah's words on worship³³⁷³ in which children were not excluded³³⁷⁴. Without entering the paedocommunion debate Kistemaker comments "even in ancient Israel the people had to prepare themselves before they entered the tabernacle or temple grounds. They had to submit themselves to self-examination before they entered the courts of the Lord for the three feasts of Passover, Firstfruits, and Booths."³³⁷⁵

6.11.8. 1 Corinthians 11 – Discernment of the body

6.11.8.1. Equally or more important

In verse 29 Paul writes: *For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.* Once again it is not hard to find those who grant this verse a central place in the discussion on paedocommunion³³⁷⁶, calling it a key phrase³³⁷⁷. I already mentioned that the key- words examination and discernment were approximately evenly represented in my resources³³⁷⁸. I already indicated that of these two- key words, self examination may have carried more weight in the argument of the paedocommunion opponents, as in common perception the ability to examine oneself is reached later than the ability to discern. In his research Kenntner comes to the conclusion that in the (historical) Reformed argument verse 29 played a secondary role in comparison to verse 28³³⁷⁹. Kenntner suggests that the interpretation in intellectual terms of verse 28 has had great impact and meaning³³⁸⁰. The secondary role of verse 29 compared to verse 28, however, underscores that subjective knowledge of one's sin was of far greater importance in the historical Reformed argument, than the objective knowledge of the Supper³³⁸¹.

³³⁷³ Cf. Isaiah 1:10-20.

³³⁷⁴ Galant (2003^A), 203.

³³⁷⁵ Kistemaker (1993), 403. Kistemaker refers to Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 148.

³³⁷⁶ E.g. Schravendeel (1977), 14.

³³⁷⁷ Weima (2007), 7.

³³⁷⁸ According to a sample we took.

³³⁷⁹ Kenntner (1980), 71f.

³³⁸⁰ Kenntner (1980), 71.

³³⁸¹ Kenntner (1980), 72.

In the more current debate, and especially in the arguments of paedocommunion advocates, the key phrase ‘discerning the body’ becomes equally or even more important than the key word self examination. Tranvik, for example, considers “a new understanding of what it means to discern the body in 1 Cor. 11:29” the first argument in support of the position of paedocommunion advocates³³⁸². The Faith Formation Committee rightly cautions against considering this interpretation as new³³⁸³, but also concludes that discerning the body has generated the most controversy and discussion³³⁸⁴. The extra weight that verse 29 has gained is also reflected in the fact that some consider ecclesiology or the concept of community decisive in the debate³³⁸⁵.

6.11.8.2. Three bodies

There seems consensus about the basic meaning of the Greek word translated with discerning³³⁸⁶. Gärtner speaks of the idea of distinguishing in the sense of making differentiating evaluation³³⁸⁷. There also seems to be consensus that the words ‘of our Lord’ are a gloss added to the words ‘the body’ in the Textus Receptus³³⁸⁸. But such consensus is lacking when it comes to the interpretation of the meaning of ‘discerning the body’. Basically three positions can be distinguished: 1- body refers to the Supper, or more specifically to the sacramental elements, 2- body refers to Christ and His sacrificed body, 3- body refers to the church community, the body of believers³³⁸⁹.

³³⁸² Tranvik (1995), 83f.

³³⁸³ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 598, with reference to Thomas J. Davis, *This is My Body: The Presence of Christ in Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Banner Academic, 2008), 149-168.

³³⁸⁴ In comparison to the discussion on the other ‘actions’ mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11, Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 598

³³⁸⁵ E.g. D.R. Holeton, “Das Säuglings- und Kinderabendmahl: Ein Sakrament der Gemeinschaft,” in *...und wehret ihnen nicht!: Ein ökumenisch Plädoyer für die Zulassung von Kindern zum Abendmahl*, ed. G. Müller-Fahrenholz (Frankfurt am Main: Otto Lembeck, 1981), 79-93; Zegwaard (2006), passim; Hartvelt, personal telephone conversation with the author in 2011.

³³⁸⁶ Διακρίνω.

³³⁸⁷ *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, s.v. Distinguish, Doubt, Διακρίνω.

³³⁸⁸ Fee (1987), 562; Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies: 1975), 562f.

³³⁸⁹ A fourth position is that the body refers to the body of the believer. In line with the self-examination of verse 28 and the discernment with regard to ourselves in verse 31, this discernment regarding one’s body would be an examination and judgment of one’s own hunger and thirst, so that the Supper is not abused for the satisfaction of one’s own desires. E.g. F.J. Pop, *De eerste brief van Paulus aan de Corinthiërs* (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1965), 259. This fourth position does not play a role in the paedocommunion discussion.

a. Supper as body

In the first option ‘discerning the body’ means distinguishing the Lord’s Table and the bread in the sacrament from an ordinary table and common food³³⁹⁰ or distinguishing the Supper from the Agape meal or love feast³³⁹¹, or estimating the bread aright, reverencing it as the appointed symbol of the body of the Lord³³⁹², holy as it is set apart for Communion³³⁹³, sanctified to represent the Christ³³⁹⁴. To discern is then to determine the value of the Communion, regarding it as it should be regarded³³⁹⁵, surround this bread and wine with the reverence due to His body³³⁹⁶. Both Grosheide and Kistemaker believe this interpretation does most justice to the context³³⁹⁷, whereas Fitzmyer considers this meaning foreign to the context³³⁹⁸. In all fairness to Grosheide and Kistemaker, Paul distinguishes the Lord’s Supper from the private suppers, and the eating together from the eating at home³³⁹⁹. But Fitzmyer seems right in the sense that the fundamental problem in this context is not lack of that distinction; humiliating the poor and drunkenness during regular meals would probably also not be condoned by Paul³⁴⁰⁰. This first option does not play a significant role in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion, but I note that the ability to distinguish between the Bread of the Eucharist and ordinary, material bread, is mentioned by the Roman Catholic Papal Decree *Quam Singulari* as requirement for the reception of first Communion³⁴⁰¹. Discernment in this sense – “that this meal is not just a Sunday morning snack” - is mentioned in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion, but only to stress what is minimally required and in combination with explanations about what more is needed³⁴⁰².

³³⁹⁰ Grosheide (1953/1984), 275; Hodge (1964), 233.

³³⁹¹ Kistemaker (1993), 402.

³³⁹² Hodge (1964), 233.

³³⁹³ Kistemaker (1993), 402.

³³⁹⁴ F. Godet, *Kommentaar op Paulus eersten brief aan de Corinthiërs*, trans. G. Keizer (Kampen: Kok, 1904), 547.

³³⁹⁵ Grosheide (1953/1984), 275. Cp. *Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, s.v. κρίνω, διακρίνω.

³³⁹⁶ Godet (1904), 547.

³³⁹⁷ Grosheide (1953/1984), 275; Kistemaker (1993), 402.

³³⁹⁸ Fitzmyer (2008), 446.

³³⁹⁹ Κυριακον δειπνον (20), ιδιον δειπνον (21), φαγειν αλληλους (33), εν οικω εσθιετω (34).

³⁴⁰⁰ Although it must not be underestimated to what extent the Corinthians followed the socially accepted convention of ‘private’ dinners in secular Corinth, Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 142f.

³⁴⁰¹ “3. The knowledge of religion which is required in a child in order to be properly prepared to receive First Communion is such that he will understand according to his capacity those Mysteries of faith which are necessary as a means of salvation (necessitate medii) and that he can distinguish between the Bread of the Eucharist and ordinary, material bread, and thus he may receive Holy Communion with a devotion becoming his years,” <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10quam.htm> (accessed August 10, 2016).

³⁴⁰² (Majority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 355; (Minority) *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 292f., 304f.; Venema (2009), 121.

b. Body of Christ

In the second option 'body' refers to the body of Christ, as sacrificed in Christ's death. Theoretically the three options could be distinguished as sacramental, Christological and ecclesiological. In reality it is not always possible to distinguish between option one and two³⁴⁰³. Thiselton chooses this second option in his commentary, and he interprets discerning the body as "recognizing what characterizes the body as different, i.e. to be mindful of the uniqueness of Christ", Supper celebration is "participation in, and identification with, the cruciform Christ."³⁴⁰⁴ In short this option is defended as the one preferable in this context, or in light of verses 24 and 27³⁴⁰⁵. In her 2010 report the Faith Formation Committee notes that in many Reformed congregations the understanding of "discerning the body" has been limited to this meaning only, but the committee considers that to be a reductionist account, which takes verses 23-25 out of their context and ignores Paul's main theme³⁴⁰⁶.

In the paedocommunion discussion this interpretation is reflected when North American authors speak of "Christological discernment"³⁴⁰⁷, of "believing discernment of Christ's body, which He gave as a sacrifice on behalf of His people"³⁴⁰⁸, and of personal discernment "of Christ's work for the life of his people and for the church's life together and in the world."³⁴⁰⁹ In the Netherlands similar interpretations of discernment as "to understand the sacrifice of Christ"³⁴¹⁰ or "the unique salvific significance of the body of the Lord"³⁴¹¹ can be found. In her 2010 report the Faith Formation Committee acknowledges "that 'body' can also refer to Jesus' literal body on the cross" and that "the bread we eat points us to and symbolizes our union with Jesus, whose ascended body is now in heaven."³⁴¹²

c. Body of believers

The third option in which body refers to believers as the body of Christ, and in which discerning the body means taking cognizance of their brothers and

³⁴⁰³ E.g. Fitzmyer writes "acknowledging the body would mean taking stock of oneself in order to eat the bread and drink of the cup worthily as 'the body and blood of the Lord,'" Fitzmyer (2008), 446.

³⁴⁰⁴ Thiselton (2000), 893.

³⁴⁰⁵ E.g. Fitzmyer (2008), 446.

³⁴⁰⁶ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 599.

³⁴⁰⁷ Venema (2009), 120.

³⁴⁰⁸ Venema (2009), 121.

³⁴⁰⁹ (Minority) Report 26, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 306.

³⁴¹⁰ Schravendeel (1977), 14.

³⁴¹¹ Hendriks (1990), 88.

³⁴¹² Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 599.

sisters is defended by evangelicals such as Witherington³⁴¹³, and more elaborately by Fee³⁴¹⁴. Thiselton's argument that this strains the meaning of διακρινειν, is not convincing³⁴¹⁵. Interpreting the body in verse 29 on the basis of Paul's own explanation of the meaning of the body, and the fact that 1 Corinthians 10:17 is the only verse in the New Testament that offers such an interpretation of the bread as such, are strong points in Fee's argument³⁴¹⁶. Thiselton might be right in his claim that το σωμα is used as pars pro toto for the body and blood³⁴¹⁷, but that begs the question why Paul does not use το σωμα pars pro toto more often in this text. I therefore lean towards Fee's position, who argues that Paul purposefully mentions both, when he means both, and that the absolute use, with absence of the qualifier 'of the Lord', seems just as purposeful³⁴¹⁸. Thiselton and Fee both seek to do justice to the context. Thiselton considers the directly preceding verses 24-27 the decisive context³⁴¹⁹. As appealing as that might look, Thiselton does not make a convincing argument when he judges the verse 10:16-17 too far from 11:29 for Paul to expect his readers to refer to it as the decisive frame for his meaning³⁴²⁰. Thiselton himself speaks about the Supper as participation in the cruciform Christ, picking up a theme from 1:18-25³⁴²¹. In that light Fee's point that the argument is anticipated in 10:16-17 is not that farfetched. Especially considering that 10:16-17 also anticipates what Paul is about to say in chapter 12³⁴²². According to Fee the whole point of the section, beginning with verse 17 and continuing through 33-34, is to correct a considerable abuse of the church as is visibly portrayed at the Lord's Supper³⁴²³. In support of Fee's interpretation it is good to point out that the meaning of body may be determined by Paul's words from a previous chapter and following chapter, but the church is also mentioned in the direct context, for example in verse 22.

³⁴¹³ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 251f.

³⁴¹⁴ Fee (1987), 563f.

³⁴¹⁵ With reference to Hofius. Thiselton acknowledges that this argument may not be decisive. Thiselton (2000), 893. Thiselton also suggests that the third view would require το σωμα to serve with a genitive. But the reason remains unclear to me.

³⁴¹⁶ Fee (1987), 564.

³⁴¹⁷ Thiselton (2000), 893.

³⁴¹⁸ Fee (1987), 563.

³⁴¹⁹ Thiselton (2000), 893.

³⁴²⁰ Thiselton (2000), 893.

³⁴²¹ Thiselton (2000), 893.

³⁴²² Cp. Syd Hielema, "Editorial: Being Church Together," *Banner*, October, 2004.

³⁴²³ Fee (1987), 564.

d. The CRC and the interpretation of Fee

Fee's point of view has had significant influence on the paedocommunion discussion within the Christian Reformed Churches and its final position. Even before Fee published his commentary, the interpretation of body as referring to the body of believers had apparently already become part of the discussion and was rejected in for example the 1986 majority report³⁴²⁴. I know that, nearing the conclusion of the discussion, the Faith Formation Committee included Fee's commentary on 1 Corinthians 11 in its own 716 pages long reader³⁴²⁵. In his 2007 article *Children at the Lord's Supper and the Key Text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34* in the Spring issue of *Forum Weima* considers it not likely that 'body' refers to the fleshly body of Christ nailed to the cross and remembered in the bread and wine. Instead Weima interprets 'body' as referring to the body of believers—the church, with arguments very similar to those of Fee³⁴²⁶. This interpretation receives significant support from other Calvin Seminary staff such as Rylaarsdam³⁴²⁷ and Bierma³⁴²⁸. Fee's interpretation seems to have had significant influence on the Faith Formation Committee, in the sense that its own position is influenced by Fee, and that it is acknowledged as one of the legitimate interpretations one could choose³⁴²⁹. I find the same argument on the other side of the ocean. When after approximately forty years the church of Rijsbergen re-examines and reaffirms its position on children at the Lord's Supper, council member Age Bakker writes a brochure on behalf of council, expressing a very similar view to that of Gordon Fee³⁴³⁰. Fee compares the way people mistreat each other, how that influences God's appreciation of people's worship, and how God's judgment needs to be feared with the situation in the days of Isaiah³⁴³¹. The brochure makes a similar comparison with the days of Hophni and Phinehas³⁴³².

³⁴²⁴ (Majority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 353.

³⁴²⁵ On pages 6, 503-510 of the unpublished reader.

³⁴²⁶ Weima (2007), 7.

³⁴²⁷ Rylaarsdam (2007), 5-6.

³⁴²⁸ Bierma writes regarding the word 'body' in verse 29 "its primary referent is certainly to the community gathered around the table," Lyle D. Bierma, "The Unity of the Church and the Pure Administration of the Sacraments," in *The Unity of the Church: A Theological State of the Art and Beyond*, ed. Eduardus Borgh, Vol. 18 of *Studies in Reformed Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 128

³⁴²⁹ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 600, 624.

³⁴³⁰ Age Bakker, *Bezinning op het avondmaal*. Rijsbergen (Rijsbergen: Kerkenraad Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk, 2001), 11. Not everyone in Rijsbergen's council shared Bakker's view that the body of verse 29 referred only to the body of believers.

³⁴³¹ Cf. Is. 1:14-17, Fee (1987), 564, fn. 30.

³⁴³² Cf. 1 Sam. 2:12-17. Bakker (2001), 11. Probably under influence of Van den Berg (1978), 78.

e. Benefits for the child

The question could be asked how this interpretation benefits the child? The 1986 Majority report writes “It is not really evident that children would be able to show discerning love for the body of believers in their participation at the table any more readily than they could show discerning love for their crucified Lord.”³⁴³³ The Lutheran Tranvik asks “In what sense might an infant be able to perceive or appreciate the communal dimension of the supper? Are not those holding to this interpretation still stuck with the fact that an infant is being asked to “do” something beyond his or her capacity?”³⁴³⁴ A possible pedagogical-psychological answer could be that children begin socializing their behavior and recognizing group and community, around their second year of age, and hence the advice of Kenntner to start participation round age three or four³⁴³⁵. More reflective of Dutch Reformed advocates of paedocommunion is the response of the Faith Formation Committee to such questions, explaining that “when we ‘discern the body’, part of what we discern is that children should be present because they belong to the covenant.”³⁴³⁶ Several participants in the discussion have pointed at the irony how Paul’s words have been used to do the exact opposite by excluding part of the body³⁴³⁷; “Ushering children out of church before Communion is 1 Corinthians 11 in action.”³⁴³⁸

f. Multiple interpretations in theology

I distinguished three or four basic options in the interpretation of the body that needs to be discerned. In reality a combination of the second option, that body refers to Christ, and the third option, that body refers to the church as body of believers, is often found. This combination is found in commentaries and other theological literature, and also in the theological debate on paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition. Schnabel seems to give both options equal credit in his commentary³⁴³⁹. Van Beelen comes to the same conclusion in his study on the Lord’s Supper³⁴⁴⁰. In *The Theology of Paul*

³⁴³³ (Majority) Report 34, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 353.

³⁴³⁴ Tranvik (1995), 86.

³⁴³⁵ Kenntner (1980), 181f.

³⁴³⁶ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 611.

³⁴³⁷ Hielema (October, 2004); Robert J. Keeley, “In My Humble Opinion: Children at the Lord’s Table,” *Banner* (June 2006).

³⁴³⁸ Mulder (June 1998).

³⁴³⁹ “Mit Leib (...) ist nicht nur der Leib Jesu Christi gemeint, der am kreuz starb und von den Elementen Brot und Wein im Herrenmahl repräsentiert wird, auch nicht nur die Gemeinde als ‚Leib Christi‘, sondern beides zusammen,” Schnabel (2014), 663.

³⁴⁴⁰ J. van Beelen, *Doet dit to Mijn gedachtenis: Een onderzoek naar de relatie tussen avondmaal en ambty; over avondmaalsmijding van ambtsdraggers en het probleem van de bediening* (Leiden: J.J. Groen, 1996), 165.

the Apostle James Dunn writes “In the light of these consistent emphases, the old dispute about the meaning of the last two body references (11.27, 29) becomes clearer. For almost certainly we should not allow ourselves to be caught once again into either-or exegesis. To require the commentator to make a choice (...) would assuredly run counter to Paul’s whole line of exhortation.”³⁴⁴¹

Some of the theologians I have mentioned as representatives of one of the three or four positions do acknowledge other positions. But where for example Schnabel, Van Beelen and Dunn give equal weight to both meanings, they make great distinction between the primary and secondary meaning. Thiselton, for example, speaks of social transformation as Paul’s second concern. The social is founded on the salvific, and that is very decisive for Thiselton’s choice³⁴⁴². I wonder whether Thiselton makes the mistake of confusing what theologically, or in terms of causality, comes first with what is Paul’s primary concern at the moment he is addressing a social problem. Maybe the discussion whether one meaning is secondary to the other is not so relevant as long as the relation between the salvific and the social is acknowledged. In his commentary, Winter highlights how Paul with changing the word order in the words of the institution, puts emphasis on what Christ has done on their behalf. This has consequences for how Christians treat each other at the Lord’s Supper, as they should imitate Christ in their relationships, conform 1 Corinthians 11:1³⁴⁴³. Paul’s solution to the other meal issue was to carefully treat the weak brother or sister as someone for whom Christ died³⁴⁴⁴.

g. Multiple interpretations in paedocommunion debate

In the Dutch Reformed discussion on paedocommunion several participants interpret discerning the body in this double sense. At the beginning of the Christian Reformed Synodical discussion the 1986 majority writes “It seems, then, that the most complete and natural reading of the critical verse (11:29) includes a double reference, what could be called a vertical and horizontal reference both to the Lord himself and to other believers.”³⁴⁴⁵ Near the end of the synodical discussion the Faith Formation Committee writes “we see no conclusive evidence that forces us to choose between these views.”³⁴⁴⁶ In the

³⁴⁴¹ James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 4th ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 617.

³⁴⁴² Thiselton (2000), 893.

³⁴⁴³ Winter (2001), 153f.

³⁴⁴⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 8: 9-13. Cp. David L. Percy, “Infant Communion Part II: Present Barriers to the Practice,” *Currents in Theology & Mission* (June 1980): 168.

³⁴⁴⁵ (Majority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 353.

³⁴⁴⁶ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 599.

Netherlands similar positions are taken by for example by Van der Schee³⁴⁴⁷ and Noordegraaf³⁴⁴⁸. In most cases this position is combined with a plea for allowing children at the Lord's Supper or at least lowering the age of admission.

6.11.8.3. *Discernment*

a. Discernment as judgment

I have focused primarily on how different interpretations of the body influenced the interpretation of the discernment Paul speaks about. But there are those who focus on the meaning of discernment itself. Grosheide comments that the word Paul uses expresses thorough judgment, discernment and appreciation of the value by distinguishing it from something else³⁴⁴⁹. Hendriks quotes this interpretation in his book on children at the Lord's Supper, and speaks of discernment as a strong word³⁴⁵⁰. And so does K. Deddens in his contribution to the discussion³⁴⁵¹. Gärtner explains how *diakrino* is a form of *krino*, meaning to arrange, strengthened by *dia*, now meaning to judge, to make a distinction³⁴⁵². I get the impression that Grosheide allows *dia* not only to strengthen the meaning of *krino*, but also the meaning of *diakrino*. Hendriks and Deddens seem to emphasize the use of a strong word for judgment to exclude children who might not be able to judge as thoroughly as adults do. But one wonders whether that misses the point of Paul's wordplay on the judgment theme with *krima*, *diakrinein*, *krinein* and *katakrineine* in these verses and the earlier use of *anakrinein* and *krinein* in chapter 4:3-5. The problem in the church of Corinth was not that judgment lacked or was not advanced enough, but that it caused divisions.

b. Cognitive and intellectual discernment

Closely related are the interpretations of discernment in cognitive, intellectual terms³⁴⁵³. Then discernment calls us to reflection and correct perception³⁴⁵⁴, and requires prior education in the meaning of the Lord's Supper³⁴⁵⁵, so that

³⁴⁴⁷ Wim van der Schee, unpublished speech for Classis Noord-Brabant, March 23, 2006.

³⁴⁴⁸ A. Noordegraaf "Kinderen aan het avondmaal? Een omstrede onderwerp," *Theologia Reformata* (March 2008): 56

³⁴⁴⁹ Grosheide (1932), 398.

³⁴⁵⁰ Hendriks (1990), 83.

³⁴⁵¹ K. Deddens, "May children partake of the Lord's Supper?" *Clarion* (October 3, 1986): 399.

³⁴⁵² *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, s.v. Distinguish, Doubt, Διακρίνω.

³⁴⁵³ Cp. Tranvik (1995), 86.

³⁴⁵⁴ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 598.

³⁴⁵⁵ Zegwaard (2006), 119.

each can come to the table with a ‘discerning mind’³⁴⁵⁶. Such discernment requires certain or sure knowledge, and spiritual maturity³⁴⁵⁷. Opponents conclude that such knowledge cannot be expected from children³⁴⁵⁸. Proponents often see room for children fulfilling this requirement in age and ability appropriate ways³⁴⁵⁹. The 1986 minority report already stated “Very small children can begin to discern the body; the degree of discernment should increase as the years pass.”³⁴⁶⁰

c. Ethical discernment

We saw that several participants in the discussion acknowledged in light of the context of 1 Corinthians 11 that discernment had an ethical aspect. Traditionally the age of discretion was not only related to the use of reason, but, as for example the Catechism of the Council of Trent makes clear, also to the ability to discern between good and evil, and the ability of the mind to do malice³⁴⁶¹.

Others interpret discernment also in terms of personal commitment³⁴⁶², gratitude³⁴⁶³ and necessary to prevent an *ex opere operato* theology³⁴⁶⁴.

6.11.9. 1 Corinthians 11 – Eating and drinking judgment on oneself

6.11.9.1. Harmless poison

In the verses 27-34 Paul uses several words and phrases related to guilt, sin, judgment, discipline and condemnation. In light of these words Calvin writes: “Why should we stretch out poison to our young children instead of vivifying food?”³⁴⁶⁵ De Brès uses very similar words³⁴⁶⁶. The use of that metaphor shows how serious the Reformers considered the risk of children eating and

³⁴⁵⁶ (Minority) *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 306.

³⁴⁵⁷ Peter Bergwerf, “Commentaar: Kindercommunie,” *Nederlands Dagblad*, October 7, 1976; “Totdat het tegendeel blijkt ...,” *Nederlands Dagblad*, October 11, 1984.

³⁴⁵⁸ E.g. Bergwerf (1976).

³⁴⁵⁹ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 612.

³⁴⁶⁰ (Minority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 368.

³⁴⁶¹ Richard L. DeMolen, “Erasmus on Childhood,” *Erasmus Society Yearbook 1982*, 31.

³⁴⁶² E.g. The Dutch Reformed report *Deelneming aan het avondmaal 1974*, 30, Zegwaard (2006), 63.

³⁴⁶³ E.g. (Minority) *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 305.

³⁴⁶⁴ Hogenhuis (January 1980).

³⁴⁶⁵ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4:16.30

³⁴⁶⁶ De Brès (1595/2011), 543.

drinking judgment on themselves. Once again the Reformer Musculus is the exception to the rule³⁴⁶⁷.

In the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion the notion of judgment and condemnation is not given the same significance as the other key words and themes from 1 Corinthians 11. But I do come across the notion at all levels.

6.11.9.2. Poison in Rijsbergen and New West

The notion of judgment and condemnation must have played a great role in the pietistic climate that the brothers in law, Overduin and Meywaard, came from³⁴⁶⁸. Together with Van Katwijk they come to a new understanding and distance themselves from the language of the classical Reformed Lord's Supper form³⁴⁶⁹. But, surprisingly enough, we come across the notion in even stronger words in the discussion within New West CRC. In his 1986 letter to council Art Boersma, later a proponent of paedocommunion, warned council against allowing children to the Lord's Supper, quoting Calvin's poison metaphor³⁴⁷⁰.

6.11.9.3. Poison and judgment in the periodicals

In the discussion within the denominational periodicals the issue of judgment is dealt with as well. Within the CRC Kristine Ellestad reminds her denomination of Paul's stern warning against unworthy participation³⁴⁷¹. In the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands opponents also argue how the threat of condemnation gives extra weight to the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11³⁴⁷². In Reformed liberated circles Calvin's poison metaphor is quoted with apparent approval³⁴⁷³. Several participants in the discussion take the theme of condemnation serious while seeing room for children participation. George Marsden, for example, seems to acknowledge the risk of children eating judgment on them, but notices that "every means of grace carries with it the potential of being a means of judgment to those who abuse it", but suggests reasonable interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 does not

³⁴⁶⁷ Musculus (1560).

³⁴⁶⁸ Where parents, according to one of the interviewed family members, would tell their children they were 'firewood for hell'. Arie Ruis, interview with author, October 10, 2012

³⁴⁶⁹ E.g. "We begrepen voorts dat het beroep in het z.g. Avondmaalsformulier op 1 Cor. 11 terzake van het zich 'ten oordeel eten en drinken' door en door onjuist was." "Hadden wij haar met een verkeerd beroep op 1 Corinthe 11 moeten zeggen dat haar dochtertje nog niet onderscheiden kon? Waarom wij in de Gereformeerde wereld spreken van 'tot onderscheid van jaren gekomen zijn?'" Van Katwijk (1966), 5,6.

³⁴⁷⁰ Art Boersma, *Letter to council*, December 18, 1986.

³⁴⁷¹ Ellestad (1980), 4.

³⁴⁷² Hogenhuis (January 1980).

³⁴⁷³ K. Deddens "May children partake of the Lord's Supper? 4," *Clarion* (October 17, 1986): 422.

support exclusion of children³⁴⁷⁴. Hartvelt compares two such means of grace, sacrament and sermon, and notices that both require faith and lead to faith, and both condemn us in absence of a faithful response³⁴⁷⁵. In the same vein Gallant argues that the prospect of judgment is no reason to bar children from the table, because as a means of grace it is primarily blessing³⁴⁷⁶. Others primarily refute the traditional ideas regarding judgment and condemnation. Aalbers suggests reading 1 Corinthians 11 in context will prevent wrong notions of judgment³⁴⁷⁷. Calvin could only speak of poison as he failed to do justice to the historical and literal context, Rylaarsdam suggests³⁴⁷⁸. Earlier Heitink suggested the same may be true for those Dutch Reformed believers coming from a culture of Lord's Supper abstention³⁴⁷⁹. Later Heitink even suggests in light of the context, that we have neglected the fact that baptized children belong to the community at risk of our condemnation³⁴⁸⁰.

6.11.9.4. A warning even more severe

It is interesting to see how in the synodical discussion the theme was mentioned in the first overture and in the reports of the final Faith Formation Committee. In her 1984 overture Classis Rocky Mountain notices that New Testament passages regarding our treatment of children³⁴⁸¹ contain a warning even more severe than the one contained in 1 Corinthians 11³⁴⁸². In 2009 the Faith Formation Committee mentions the Supper as means of grace rather than occasion for judgment as one of the common themes in her conversation with the churches³⁴⁸³. In 2010 the committee speaks about avoiding the error of cheap grace by ignoring the words of judgment. Warnings are also part of God's gracious provisions, writes the committee³⁴⁸⁴.

³⁴⁷⁴ Marsden, George M. "Children at the Lord's Table: a Reformed Dilemma," *Reformed Journal* (December 1977).

³⁴⁷⁵ Hartvelt (May 14, 1977), 3

³⁴⁷⁶ Gallant (2003^A), 100f.

³⁴⁷⁷ Aalbers (1971), 59.

³⁴⁷⁸ Rylaarsdam (2007), 6.

³⁴⁷⁹ Heitink (October, 1975).

³⁴⁸⁰ G. Heitink, "Belijdenis doen: ja of nee?" *Ouderlingenblad*, (January 1980): 7/115-10/118.

³⁴⁸¹ The overture mentions: Mark 9:36-37, 42; 10:13-16; Matt.18:1-10.

³⁴⁸² *Overture 1 - Study the Issue of Covenant Children Partaking of the Lord's Supper (Art. 99)*, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 420.

³⁴⁸³ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA 2009 Synod, 436.

³⁴⁸⁴ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 600.

6.12. History and tradition

6.12.1. Role History

6.12.1.1. An important role

In several different ways have history and tradition played an important role in the discussion on, and the introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition. Renewed historical interest and awareness have served as incentives to reconsider paedocommunion and as catalysts for changing the Lord's Supper practice. In her explanation of the renewed attention to paedocommunion in the twentieth century, Zegwaard registers how a new interest for liturgy emerged within the Dutch Protestant churches near the end of the nineteenth century³⁴⁸⁵. This renewed interest coincided with a renewed interest in the historical sciences and hence in the history of liturgy. This study of the history of liturgy included both the liturgies of the Reformers as well as those of the early church³⁴⁸⁶. Within the mainline Reformed churches of the Netherlands all of this was spearheaded by the Liturgical Movement. Kenntner also mentions the liturgical movement, but seems to consider its influence on the rise of paedocommunion - in Germany - of secondary nature³⁴⁸⁷.

6.12.1.2. A different role

When I look at the role of history and tradition in the stories of paedocommunion pioneers and advocates within the Reformed Churches liberated and Dutch Reformed Churches I recognize how history and tradition played a different role. In these stories renewed historical interest and awareness do not put paedocommunion on the agenda or start the process of change. But as soon as, for example, the church of Rijsbergen is confronted with the question whether to admit children to the Lord's Supper, the question "What does history say about it?" is one of the first questions asked³⁴⁸⁸. But Rijsbergen under the leadership of Van Katwijk, and later Visee in his articles, seek the answer to that historical question within the history of the Reformed tradition. And both study primarily the history of catechism

³⁴⁸⁵ Zegwaard (2006), 39; Cp. Aalbers (1976), 93f.

³⁴⁸⁶ Zegwaard (2006), 40.

³⁴⁸⁷ Kenntner (1980), 38.

³⁴⁸⁸ W. Van der Veer, "God Alleen de Eer!: Een interview met Ds. J. Van Katwijk," in N.N. *Samen: Herdenkingsboekje n.a.v. het 25 jarig bestaan van de ned. geref. kerk diakonia te rijsbergen* (Rijsbergen: 1984), 2.

teaching and profession of faith as reflected in the historical church orders of the Palatinate and the regulations of the Dutch Refugee Church of London, and not the history of liturgy³⁴⁸⁹.

6.12.1.3. Four things

Four things may be noticed about the role of historical interest and awareness in these stories. First, historical interest and awareness often deconstructs the false sense that the Lord's Supper theology and praxis that one grew up with represents a perpetual tradition³⁴⁹⁰. Second, historical awareness creates the sense that a bandwidth exists within the Reformed tradition legitimizing different opinions and different practices while staying loyal to that tradition³⁴⁹¹. For example, the proper age for first participation may in light of that tradition range from Luther's age seven, or Calvin's age ten, or London's age thirteen, to age eighteen and higher of the contemporary practice. The requirements for profession of faith and participation may range from simple knowledge of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, or examination of the catechism teaching with some help of the pastor, to full appropriation of faith as taught and confessed in the catechism. Third, that bandwidth can be perceived as a spectrum of equally valid options, but several advocates show a strong preference for the most original tradition³⁴⁹², whereas opponents perceive the change over time within the tradition as a development or even further reformation required by changing circumstances or even already intended by the Reformers themselves³⁴⁹³. Fourth, exposure to the history of one's own tradition may function in similar ways as exposure to other church traditions³⁴⁹⁴. The end result is not automatically limited to the options within the bandwidth, but may go beyond that, as historical awareness may serve as an incentive to a more fundamental recalibration of one's beliefs and practices.

³⁴⁸⁹ Van der Veer (1984), 3; Visee (1979), 228f.

³⁴⁹⁰ Gallant comments "Many simply have assumed a monolithic history in which children were never included, at least not until many centuries into the era of Roman superstition," Gallant (2003), 107.

³⁴⁹¹ E.g. "Variations of past church practice and ought to caution the church about being too rigid regarding anyone approach," *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 350.

³⁴⁹² E.g. Visee speaks about "that precious beginning in the church of the Palatinate" ("dat kostbare begin in de kerk van de Pals"), Visee (1979), 258.

³⁴⁹³ E.g. Henk de Jong considers baptizing children, but not communing them a wise compromise. He writes "It has indeed taken long for the church to reach this wise compromise, but now it has finally been reached, we should not meddle with it" ("Het heeft inderdaad lang geduurd voordat de kerk tot dit wijze compromis gekomen is, maar nu het er eenmaal is, moeten we er niet meer aan tornen"), De Jong (March 31, 1978), 98.

³⁴⁹⁴ Paragraph 6.4.8.

6.12.1.4. Deconstruct invented tradition

The initial idea that the Lord's Supper theology and praxis that one grew up with represents a perpetual tradition is most clearly expressed by several of the interviewees of New West Church. This may reflect the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, in other words, the way we have always done things shapes our convictions and beliefs about how things should be done. One could speak of 'invented tradition', but not in the way Hobsbawm defines this³⁴⁹⁵, but in the sense that the imagination invents a perpetual tradition for a tradition which in reality is quite recent. I mentioned how one role of historical interest and awareness is to deconstruct such initial ideas or such false sense of tradition. Within all three denominations³⁴⁹⁶, and within all three researched local congregations³⁴⁹⁷, I found evidence of this role. Hartvelt strategically deploys historical awareness for this purpose by repeatedly writing regarding the rules of admission to the Supper "it was not this way from the beginning."³⁴⁹⁸ At the same time this may reveal one of the reasons why Hartvelt himself changed from a opponent to an advocate of paedocommunion.

6.12.1.5. Incentive and catalyst

Historical interest and awareness functioned as incentives in the sense that they put paedocommunion on the agenda or started a process of change. Historical interest and awareness have often functioned as catalysts in the sense that, once paedocommunion was subject of discussion and its introduction was contemplated, they have moved that discussion forward and accelerated the introduction, through deconstruction of a false sense of tradition, by presenting alternative opinions and practices as legitimized by tradition, or by motivating a more fundamental recalibration of one's beliefs and practices³⁴⁹⁹. It is easy to register how history and tradition played a role starting the discussion and moving it forward, it is harder to measure to what extent they determined the conclusion of that discussion.

³⁴⁹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 25th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2016), 1.

³⁴⁹⁶ E.g. Visee (1979); G.P. Hartvelt, "Kindercommunie," *Centraal Weekblad*, January 30, 1971, 1;

"Kindercommunie?" *Praktische Theologie* (1974), 119; Brouwer (February, 2005).

³⁴⁹⁷ E.g. Van der Veer (1984); Interviewees of 14th Street refer to Rylaarsdam (2007); Interviewees explaining their initial reservations in New West Church.

³⁴⁹⁸ An allusion to Jesus' words in Matthew 19: 8. Hartvelt (January 30, 1971), 1; (1974), 119.

³⁴⁹⁹ Paedocommunion opponent Venema acknowledges that "The historical practice of the church encourages reconsideration of the usual Reformed practice of restricting the Lord's Table to those who are professing members of the church," Venema (2009), 11.

The question what history says about paedocommunion was not only asked within the Reformed Churches liberated and the Dutch Reformed Churches. The historical question was raised within all researched denominations. Almost all synodical reports of the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, for example, contain a historical overview³⁵⁰⁰. Early in the synodical discussion within the Christian Reformed Churches it is stated that arguments from the history of the church deserve to be heard with care³⁵⁰¹, and it is decided that the history of children's participation in the Lord's Supper should be given particular attention³⁵⁰². Of the three denominations, the history of paedocommunion is most elaborately discussed within the synodical reports³⁵⁰³ of-, and the periodicals³⁵⁰⁴ and other publications³⁵⁰⁵ associated with the Christian Reformed Church. Reports of other Reformed denominations in North America also pay attention to this history³⁵⁰⁶.

6.12.1.6. Consonant

But how do we measure to what extent history determined the conclusion of the discussion within the Dutch Reformed tradition which considers Scripture normative and not history or tradition? History may have motivated a recalibration of one's beliefs and practices, but in that image Scripture would set the standard for the recalibration. Opponents and advocates seem to agree, "The church's practice ought to be formed by the teaching of the Scriptures, which are the supreme standard for faith"³⁵⁰⁷, "It is, after all, not history but Scripture that remains normative for us"³⁵⁰⁸. "We have the right, the responsibility, and the precedents to differ with those who have gone before us", states the 1995 CRCNA *Report B*³⁵⁰⁹. In some cases the evidence seems to support that participants give priority to Scripture; in the case of Rijsbergen for example by the almost complete absence of positive references

³⁵⁰⁰ Zegwaard (2006), 84.

³⁵⁰¹ *Report 34* (Majority), Agenda 1986 Synod, 348f.

³⁵⁰² Article 35, *Acts CRCNA 1986 Synod*, 620. And, counting words, the historical part of the 1988 synodical report grew with 809% compared to 1986.

³⁵⁰³ E.g. Report 26, *Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 261f.

³⁵⁰⁴ E.g. Rylaarsdam (2007).

³⁵⁰⁵ E.g. Gallant (2003), Venema (2009).

³⁵⁰⁶ *Baptized Non-Communicants and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper* (1977), in James I. Cook, ed., *The Church Speaks: Papers of the Commission on Theology, Reformed Church in America, 1959-1984. (The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985). Marsden (December, 1977).

³⁵⁰⁷ Venema (2009), 11.

³⁵⁰⁸ Gallant (2003), 107.

³⁵⁰⁹ *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 295.

to history and tradition³⁵¹⁰. Gallant and Venema are among the few authors who try to explain what place historical arguments are given within their argument, considering Scripture is given priority. Gallant writes “All I need to show, therefore, is a historical background that is consonant with the belief that paedocommunion was rightly practiced in the apostolic age.”³⁵¹¹ After calling the teachings of the Scriptures the supreme standard for faith and practice Venema adds, “The Reformed churches read the Scriptures in the company of the whole church and may not ignore the lessons of history.”³⁵¹²

6.12.1.7. More significant than admitted

During the time of my research I met with one elder who, faced with the different opinions on paedocommunion, said that in case of doubt he gave the benefit of the doubt to tradition³⁵¹³. It may have been the only example of drawing a conclusion on the explicit basis of history or tradition³⁵¹⁴. I believe there are reasons to suspect that history and tradition play a significant role for more participants in the paedocommunion debate than just this one elder; a more significant role than the participants are willing to admit. To begin with, history itself provides exhibits of historical or traditional practice preceding the theological grounding in Scripture, “a practice looking for a theology”, as Rylaarsdam calls it³⁵¹⁵. Paedocommunion history reveals how even our Reformed forefathers in some respects have been shaped more by the tradition they grew up in than by their Scripture³⁵¹⁶. The amount of attention paid to history, especially in some of the denominational reports³⁵¹⁷ and books³⁵¹⁸, suggests its perceived relevance might be greater than expressed. A further indication of the importance of the historical argument is that it is mutually perceived as a major argument of the other side in the debate³⁵¹⁹. The fact that several participants in the debate overstate historical claims³⁵²⁰, make undocumented, anachronistic claims³⁵²¹, and - consciously or

³⁵¹⁰ Except when referring to the early days of the church, of the Reformation and of the denomination.

³⁵¹¹ Gallant (2003), 107.

³⁵¹² Venema (2009), 11.

³⁵¹³ In this case tradition meant the practice that this elder had grown up with.

³⁵¹⁴ I realize even the words of this elder could be explained as short hand for letting tradition only decide which of two or more rivaling interpretations of Scripture should be given the benefit of the doubt.

³⁵¹⁵ Rylaarsdam (2007).

³⁵¹⁶ E.g. the age for admission and the required knowledge for admission.

³⁵¹⁷ E.g. Report 26, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod.

³⁵¹⁸ E.g. Hendriks (1990).

³⁵¹⁹ Opponent Venema calls it “The first argument for the paedocommunion view,” Venema (2009), 5. In the Netherlands Reformed Church advocates argue that the practice as supported by opponents is based on a tradition and not on Scripture, Zegwaard (2006), 54, who refers to the acts of the Netherlands Reformed 1966 Synod, 90f. See also Zegwaard (2006), 84f.

³⁵²⁰ E.g. Cyprian’s words are reduced to the description of a single incident by one, or are presented as proof of church wide paedocommunion by another. See for example Matthew Winzer, “The True History of

unconsciously - adapt documented data³⁵²², also suggests that the support of history is considered rather crucial by these authors. The 1986 CRCNA synodical report speaks of “an argument that carries a degree of weight for Reformed churches”³⁵²³; an image which does more justice to the fact that historical arguments carry weight which can influence one’s conclusion regarding paedocommunion, even if biblical arguments carry more weight.

6.12.1.8. Inconclusive

At the same time it is equally clear that historical data is perceived as less relevant by other participants. The 1976 minority report of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, for example, states that “considering the changing social and cultural circumstances no arguments pro or contra can be derived from these [historical] data.”³⁵²⁴ The majority report of that same year provides an oversight of the history of paedocommunion, but does not mention history in its considerations or grounds for its proposals³⁵²⁵. The 2010 Christian Reformed Faith Formation Committee classifies the historical argument as inconclusive argument³⁵²⁶.

6.12.2. Chronological overview of historical arguments and conclusions

It is time to pay attention to some of the most significant historical arguments used in the paedocommunion debate in more detail. It seems best to discuss these within a chronological presentation of some of my own conclusions regarding the history of paedocommunion.

6.12.2.1. Early Church History

In trying to understand the history of paedocommunion in the early church and the different perspectives on that history within the Reformed paedocommunion debate it is helpful to recognize the importance of the aspects of authority and of historic proof and their mutual relation. The

Paedo-Communion,” *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3, no.3 (2007): 27-36, Tommy Lee, *The History of Paedocommunion: From the Early Church until 1500*, http://www.reformed.org/social/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/sacramentology/tl_paedo.html (accessed June 6, 2011).

³⁵²¹ E.g. Regarding catechism teaching for children in the early church.

³⁵²² E.g. by mentioning higher ages of admission for Calvin or the Dutch Refugee Church in London than the documents mention.

³⁵²³ “... who claim to follow authentic apostolic and biblical practice,” Report 34, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 349.

³⁵²⁴ “Kinderen mee naar het Avondmaal?” *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976): 17.

³⁵²⁵ *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976).

³⁵²⁶ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 592, 605f.

Reformed paedocommunion debate on this era reflects the dilemma that these two are almost inversely proportional; the historic practice of the original apostolic church is given the greatest authority, and loses authority the further removed in time the practice becomes from that original practice, whereas documented historical proof of a paedocommunion practice and theology is almost unavailable for that first apostolic era and only increases with regard to later periods.

a. The apostolic church

Almost all participants in the debate hold a position on paedocommunion that reflects their understanding of the practice of the apostolic church, and their interpretation of Scripture in this matter³⁵²⁷. The opinion of advocates of paedocommunion who hold that the apostolic church practiced infant or small child Communion³⁵²⁸ is classified as the apostolic hypothesis by Purcell³⁵²⁹. The interpretation of relevant Scripture passages providing insight in the practice of the apostolic church is further dealt with elsewhere in this dissertation. An argument from outside the Bible in support of children's participation in the apostolic church is the argument of children in cultic practices in the "Umwelt" of the New Testament³⁵³⁰. My chapter on children and childhood in society and church provides strong support for that argument³⁵³¹.

b. The 'undocumented' era

In terms of the availability of sources which deal explicitly with paedocommunion, the following period, which lacks such documents, stretches from the end of the first century to approximately halfway the third century³⁵³². Only a handful of documents from this period play a role in the

³⁵²⁷ Three remarks. 1) In other issues related to the Supper it is not a given that the position people hold reflects their understanding of the practice of the apostolic church. See for example the opinions about frequency of celebration or celebrating agap meals. 2) Some seem to allow for the possibility of time and situation specific choices in this matter, led by the Holy Spirit. E.g. Bert E. Van Soest, "Admitting Children to the Lord's Table upon Confession of Faith," *Reformed Review* 40, no. 3 (April 1987): 206. 3) Some may be using a hermeneutic approach which provides more explicit room for deviation from what seems supported by Biblical exegesis. E.g. Jan Mudde, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" *Opbouw* (January 13, 1995): 4-6.

³⁵²⁸ E.g. K.C. Smouter, "De maaltijd des Heren," (Breda: n.p., 1968), 5; Van den Berg (1978), 69; *Kerkinformatie* 65 (December 1976): 6; Overture 1 by Classis Rocky Mountain, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 422; Report 26, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 261; Tim Gallant, "'An Old Plank in a Program for Church Reformation': What the Hussites Wanted for the Lord's Supper- and Why," *Christian Renewal* (February 11, 2002); Other significant examples are Joseph Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1856), 2:797; Keidel (1975), 301f.; Van Beelen (1996), 199; W.A. Strange (2004), 103f.

³⁵²⁹ Blake Purcell, "The Testimony of the Ancient Church," in *The Case for Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Monroe: Athanasius, 2006), 143f.

³⁵³⁰ E.g. *Kerkinformatie* (December, 1976), 5f.; Wentsel (1998), 231, fn. 145.

³⁵³¹ Paragraph 3.2.4.

³⁵³² I consider Cyprian's *On the Lapsed* from c. 250 A.D. the first explicit reference to the paedocommunion practice of unchallenged date.

paedocommunion discussion³⁵³³. Most participants in the debate assume that the practice of the apostolic church was continued in this period.

Those who hold that the apostolic church communed infants or small children recognize a continuation of that practice in the documents of the next period³⁵³⁴. The documents of this era provide circumstantial evidence by revealing the close connection between baptism and Communion³⁵³⁵, and even integration of the two in the initiatory rite³⁵³⁶, by giving instructions regarding the seating of children³⁵³⁷, by speaking of the Eucharist being enjoined to be taken by all alike³⁵³⁸, by treating children as regenerated and sanctified³⁵³⁹, and by mentioning the custom of frequent Communion³⁵⁴⁰. Holding that the apostolic church communed infants or small children, and that this practice in all likelihood continued in this ‘undocumented’ era, does not exclude the possibility of some churches or church leaders neglecting children or barring them from participation, as such neglect of other groups is already registered in the New Testament³⁵⁴¹. But, as explained, Origen’s *Homilies on Judges* does not provide an example of such denial of access to the Lord’s Supper for children³⁵⁴².

Those who hold that the apostolic church did not Commune infants or small children are equally convinced that this practice continued during this ‘undocumented’ period. Those who combine this view with the conviction that infants or small children were baptized in this era, often argue that little children were further treated as catechumens for whom participation in Communion was deferred until adequate teaching was received³⁵⁴³. But mere

³⁵³³ *The Didache*, Justin Martyr’s *First Apology*, Irenaeus *Against Heresies*, Clement of Alexandria’s *The Instructor* and *The Stromata*, Tertullian’s *De Corona* and *Treatise on Baptism* and *To His Wife*, and Origen’s *Homilies on Judges*.

³⁵³⁴ E.g. Gallant (2002), 107f.

³⁵³⁵ E.g. *Didache*, chap. IX, 5, ANF 7:379f.

³⁵³⁶ E.g. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. LXV, ANF 1:185.

³⁵³⁷ E.g. *Didascalica Apostolorum*, chap. XII, Connolly (1929), 40.

³⁵³⁸ E.g. Tertullian, *The Chaplet* or *De Corona*, chap. III, ANF 3:94.

³⁵³⁹ E.g. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, bk. 2, chap. 22,4, ANF 1:391.

³⁵⁴⁰ E.g. *Didache*, chap. XIV, ANF 7:381.

³⁵⁴¹ Acts 6 mentions the neglect of the Greek widows, 1 Corinthians 11 mentions the shaming of the have-nots. Note that in both cases children of those Greek widows and those have-nots probably shared in the neglect and shaming.

³⁵⁴² Paragraph 2.2.8. Origen, *Homilies on Judges*. FOTC. But we noticed how the misinterpreted quote of Origen in Beckwith (1976), 125-126, is repeated in several historical overviews. E.g. *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 349; Venema (2009), 13f.; Marc Kolden, “Infant Communion In Light of Theological and Pastoral Perspectives,” *Lutheran Quarterly* (Autumn 1996), 250.

³⁵⁴³ Purcell speaks of the Catechizing the Baptized Hypothesis, Purcell (2006), 144. E.g. Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 4, chap. 19, 4; Venema (2009), 15; Beckwith (1976), 126; Roger T. Beckwith, and Andrew Dauntton-Fear, *The Water and the Wine: A Contribution to the Debate on Children and Holy Communion* (London: Latimer Trust, 2005), 55f.

hints in these documents to teaching - or more specifically to the teaching of catechumens - do not prove this hypothesis³⁵⁴⁴. Nor does the word order in some of these documents allow to be interpreted as a required historical sequence in which catechetical teaching preceded Communion³⁵⁴⁵. In his history of catechesis, Bijlsma explains that children in the ancient church who had been baptized received no catechism, as catechism was considered teaching for the unconverted and recently converted³⁵⁴⁶. The first challenge for those holding that the apostolic church did not Commune infants or small children is to explain the genesis of the paedocommunion practice, as it is documented in the next era. One explanation of this genesis is the early rise of sacramentalism³⁵⁴⁷. Venema, for example, warns advocates of paedocommunion not to ignore “the close connection between a growing sacramentalism, which viewed baptism as a means of granting new birth to its recipients, and the admission of children to the Lord's Table.”³⁵⁴⁸ The second challenge is to explain the fact that no historic documents have been found which record this genesis, although it would have meant a significant and large-scale change³⁵⁴⁹.

There are also those who do not hold that the apostolic church baptized infants or small children. They often claim or suggest that the rise of infant baptism led to the introduction of infant Communion³⁵⁵⁰. Some Reformed and Lutheran paedocommunion advocates make similar suggestions, possibly distinguishing the desirability of Communion of infants and the smallest children from that of young children³⁵⁵¹. Hartvelt even claims it is self-evident that the early church did not know paedocommunion, because that ‘problem’ only emerged with the rise of infant baptism³⁵⁵².

³⁵⁴⁴ Didache, chap. VII, 1, ANF 7:379; Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. LXI, LXV, LXVI, ANF 1: 183,185;

³⁵⁴⁵ Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chap. LXI, LXVI, ANF 1:185; *Didascalía Apostolorum*, chap. IX. Noteworthy is that this argument is even refuted by Nick Needham, “Children at the Lord’s Table in the Patristic Era,” in *Children and the Lord’s Supper*, ed. Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2011), 160. That is in the context of a book pleading against paedocommunion.

³⁵⁴⁶ R. Bijlsma, “Geschiedenis van de catechese,” in *Kleine Catechetiek*, 6th ed. (Nijkerk: Callenbach, n.d.), 51. Bijlsma does not provide references for this claim, but I have not come across historic documents from this era proving him wrong in this matter.

³⁵⁴⁷ Purcell speaks of the Early Sacramentalism Hypothesis and mentions Calvin, Schaff and Dabney as advocates of this hypothesis, Purcell (2006), 144. I am not sure whether Calvin speaks of sacramentalism this early. One may wonder at what moment in the process of forming his opinion on paedocommunion Calvin became aware of Cyprian’s and Augustine’s words as he mentions them in the 1543 edition of the *Institutes*, but not in the 1539. Cf. Cook (1985), 92f.

³⁵⁴⁸ E.g. Cornelis P. Venema, “A Further Reply to Tim Gallant on Paedocommunion,” *Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 248, Venema (2009), 25.

³⁵⁴⁹ Cp. Purcell (2006), 144.

³⁵⁵⁰ E.g. The Roman Catholic Baumgärtler (1929), 13f.; C. Van de Velde (1982), 5, Kuiper (1974), 112; M.H. Bolkestein (1964), 34.

³⁵⁵¹ E.g. Aalbers (1971), 18f.; Pel (1968), 27.

³⁵⁵² E.g. Hartvelt (January 30, 1971), 1.

Zegwaard for example acknowledges the lack of explicit documents regarding both infant baptism and infant Communion, but argues that the churches perceived themselves as communities, children included, and closely connected baptism and Lord's Supper, and therefore considers it plausible that children did participate³⁵⁵³.

c. From Cyprian to Gelasius I of Rome

The second half of the first five centuries provides us with sources which explicitly deal with paedocommunion; documents proving the existence of a paedocommunion practice; documents regulating, defending and, in the end, decreeing the practice. The most crucial of those sources can be dated quite accurately.

c.1. Proof of existence

The first document, which can be dated with certainty, proving the existence of a paedocommunion practice is Cyprian's *On the Lapsed*. Chapter 25³⁵⁵⁴ describes an incident of infant Communion. And the argument in chapter 9³⁵⁵⁵ in combination with Cyprian's traditional inclination in these matters³⁵⁵⁶, prove a paedocommunion practice as widespread and old as Cyprian was able to oversee³⁵⁵⁷. This also rules out the possibility that Cyprian's words mark the moment of introducing paedocommunion as new 'innovation'³⁵⁵⁸. An alternative candidate for probably earliest document mentioning paedocommunion is the *Apostolic Tradition or Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, parts of which may originate as early as the second century, parts of which may be as late as the middle of the fourth century³⁵⁵⁹. The first reference to Communion for a dying child is found on a Sicilian tombstone inscription, from before 337³⁵⁶⁰.

³⁵⁵³ Zegwaard (2006), 22, 123f.

³⁵⁵⁴ Cyprian, *On the Lapsed*, chap. 25, 26, ANF 5:444.

³⁵⁵⁵ Cyprian, *On the Lapsed*, chap. 9, ANF 5:439.

³⁵⁵⁶ As testified in Cyprian, *The Epistles of Cyprian*, Epistle LXII, ANF 5:358-364.

³⁵⁵⁷ Venema acknowledges these as testimony of a paedocommunion practice in the churches Cyprian was acquainted with, but does not take into consideration the historical practice of those churches Cyprian was acquainted with, Venema (2009), 15.

³⁵⁵⁸ Contra for example Cornelis P. Venema, "Review: A Response to the Coppes-Gallant Exchange Regarding Paedocommunion," *Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007), 236; Venema (2009), 24; Winzer (2007), 30.

³⁵⁵⁹ *The Apostolic Tradition, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, bk. VIII, chap. XI.10, XII.2, XIII.4, ANF 7:486, 490.

³⁵⁶⁰ Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion: The New Testament to the Reformation; Joint Liturgical Studies* 56 (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2003), 11.

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c.2. Regulations

The *Apostolic Tradition* or *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, certainly qualifies as first available document regulating the participation of children, with *Testamentum Domini* providing very similar regulations³⁵⁶¹.

c.3. Defense

Although the practice of paedocommunion functions primarily as common ground in Augustine's argument against the Pelagians, Augustine, along the way, also provides us with the first defense of the practice³⁵⁶². Five years later Pope Innocent I defends paedocommunion along similar lines³⁵⁶³. Based on further writings by Augustine I concluded that in the praxis of Augustine's days and in his theology paedocommunion coexisted with an awareness of the spiritual nature of participating in the sacrament and the need for self-examination³⁵⁶⁴.

c.4. Three kinds of paedocommunion

We can distinguish documents which prove the existence of-, which regulate, defend or decree the paedocommunion practice. It is also relevant to distinguish Communion of baptized children, of sick and dying children and of children in other situations. Besides the tombstone inscription from before the year 337³⁵⁶⁵, the first more explicit references to baptismal Communion of infants can be found in Augustine's works³⁵⁶⁶. And there is consensus that the practice of baptismal Communion was widespread since at least this fifth century. This practice is consonant with the close connection between baptism and the Eucharist in earlier documents such as the *Didache*³⁵⁶⁷ and Justin Martyr's *First Apology*³⁵⁶⁸. The 325 Council of Nicea already forbade depriving someone of the absolute necessary Viaticum³⁵⁶⁹ and the tombstone

³⁵⁶¹ I mentioned *Testamentum Domini* as another church order regulating the participation of children.

³⁵⁶² Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 26, 27, 34, 36 NPNF1 5:25,28,29. Written in 412. Augustine, *Sermon 174*, trans Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle, 11 vols. Part III sermons (New Rochelle, New York: New City Press, 1992) 5:261.

³⁵⁶³ *Letter 182*, Pope Innocent to the Council of Milevis, *Letters 165-203, Vol. IV*, trans. Wilfrid Parsons, FOTC Vol. 30, 3rd ed. (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1981), 130.

³⁵⁶⁴ Paragraph 2.2.15. E.g. Augustine, *Tractate XXVI.11,12, LXII.1* NPNF1 7:171f., 313; *Sermon XLV, LXII.4,5,7, LXXXI,LXXXII.1* NPNF1 6:406, 448f., 501, 504.

³⁵⁶⁵ Dalby (2003),11.

³⁵⁶⁶ Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 26,27,34,36 NPNF1 5:25, 28,29. Augustine, *Sermon, 174, 7*.

³⁵⁶⁷ By requiring the first for the participation in the second, Paragraph 2.2.2.

³⁵⁶⁸ A close connection between the two as part of the initiation rite, Paragraph 2.2.3.

³⁵⁶⁹ The Council of Nicea (325), can. 13: "Concerning those about to die, the ancient church and canonical law is to be kept even now, so that if someone is about to die he should not be deprived of the last and absolute necessary Viaticum," NPNF2 14:29.

inscription from before the year 337 provides an early example of a sick and dying infant receiving this Viaticum³⁵⁷⁰. The two texts by Cyprian³⁵⁷¹ provide evidence of regular participation of children in Communion. The *Apostolic Tradition*³⁵⁷² and *Testamentum Domini*³⁵⁷³ explicitly regulate the regular participation of children. And implicitly *Didascalia Apostolorum*³⁵⁷⁴ does the same.

6.12.2.2. Middle Ages

Regarding the Middle Ages one of the first objectives was to establish whether and for how long paedocommunion was practiced. Once again it is helpful to distinguish baptismal Communion, Communion of sick or dying children, and regular Communion participation during childhood. Another objective is to evaluate what changed and eventually even ended the paedocommunion practice.

a. Baptismal Communion

In the Middle Ages baptismal Communion remains the norm as a remarkably uniform and widespread practice in both the East and the West. Unlike confirmation baptismal Communion was not hindered by the requirement of the presence of a bishop. Baptismal Communion continues to be well attested until the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. Even after the Fourth Lateran Council baptismal Communion can be found in Rituals of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and even early sixteenth century³⁵⁷⁵. One explanation suggests that these Rituals reflect the practice of churches “no doubt jealous of their ancient traditions, and sufficiently eminent to be able to maintain them in spite of what was happening elsewhere.”³⁵⁷⁶ Another explanation suggests that “many rituals are only maintained in books as a memorial and in order to omit nothing known and practiced of old time.”³⁵⁷⁷ Considering the nature of historic changes in general, but also considering that besides Rituals there are councils forbidding the practice as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth century³⁵⁷⁸, it seems plausible to me that both explanations contain truth.

³⁵⁷⁰ Dalby (2003), 11.

³⁵⁷¹ *On the Lapsed*, chap. 9 & 25. ANF 5:439, 444. Paragraph 2.2.10.

³⁵⁷² *The Apostolic Tradition, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, bk. VIII, chap. XII, 2, chap. XIII, 4, ANF 7:486, 490. Paragraph 2.2.13.

³⁵⁷³ Paragraph 2.2.14.

³⁵⁷⁴ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, chap. IX. Paragraph 2.2.7.

³⁵⁷⁵ Paragraph 2.3.4.3.

³⁵⁷⁶ J.D.C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West; A study in the disintegration of the primitive rite of initiation*, 1965. Reprint. (Chicago: Hillebrand Books, 2004), 118f.

³⁵⁷⁷ Villien (1932/2010), 350.

³⁵⁷⁸ E.g. Council of Augsburg (1548), Council of Narbonne (1609), Fisher (2004), 118f.

b. Communion of sick and dying

Not only baptismal Communion, but also Communion of sick and dying children is well attested throughout the Middle Ages. Communion of sick and dying children continues to be well attested in the sources until at least Fourth Lateran Council. The perceived importance is underscored by the exceptions made to enable receiving this Viaticum. For example, Communion in case of sickness or approaching death could sometimes include rituals which otherwise required the presence of the bishop³⁵⁷⁹. And in the late Middle Ages Communion was served under the form of wine as an exception for children and the sick, while others only received Communion under the form of bread³⁵⁸⁰. Even after the practice of communing sick or dying children had come into disuse, exceptions were still made for such Communion, in the sense that a lower age was required for its reception³⁵⁸¹.

c. Other occasions – older children

The amount of evidence regarding infants and small children receiving Communion after their baptism, other than in those situations where their lives seemed at danger, is relatively small. In the sixth and seventh century I mentioned John Moschus *Spiritual Meadow*³⁵⁸² and the decree of the Council of Mâcon³⁵⁸³ and similar customs³⁵⁸⁴. The custom of distributing the remainders of the Eucharist continued until the eleventh century³⁵⁸⁵. In the eighth century Bede speaks of boys and girls regularly receiving Communion in Rome, throughout Italy, Gaul, Africa, Greece and the whole East³⁵⁸⁶ and Angilbert describes at what moment children received Communion at Easter and Christmas³⁵⁸⁷. In later centuries I mentioned evidence of children apprenticing the monastic life participating³⁵⁸⁸, miracle stories³⁵⁸⁹, and

³⁵⁷⁹ E.g. Council of Epaone (517): 16; Pseudo-Sylvester *Council of Rome*.

³⁵⁸⁰ E.g. Paschal II, "Letter" 535, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁵⁸¹ E.g. Anonymous in Bridgett (1881) Vol. II, 24f.; Petrus Paludanus in Browe (1930/2009), 103. See paragraph 2.3.4.9.

³⁵⁸² John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, chap. 196, 197, translated as *The Spiritual Meadows*, "The miracle which happened to the children of Apamia, when in play they repeated the words of the prayer of consecration," and "The story told by Ruffinus about the holy Athanasius and his childhood companions," <http://www.vitae-patrum.org.uk/page158.html> (accessed October 26, 2016).

³⁵⁸³ Council of Mâcon (585) 6, in Turner (2000), chap. 4, CD-ROM.

³⁵⁸⁴ Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. IV, chap. XXXVI, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/evagrius_4_book4.htm (accessed October 6, 2016); Cp. Browe (1938/2009), 386, fn. 35.

³⁵⁸⁵ Browe (1932/2009), 303. And much longer in the East, Browe (1938/2009), 386.

³⁵⁸⁶ Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, chap. 15, T.E. Bridgett, *History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain: Vol. I Britons, Picts, Scots and Anglo-Saxons* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881), 221.

³⁵⁸⁷ Angilbertus, *Statuta quaedam rubrica*, Hermans (1987), 93; Browe (1932/2009), 304

³⁵⁸⁸ *Monastic Customs*, "Holy Thursday" (990–1015), "Christmas," "Holy Thursday" (1100), Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

statements of theologians³⁵⁹⁰. I lean towards Browe's position that it is most likely that children were welcomed to the Eucharist without any regard of age³⁵⁹¹. But Hermans may be right suggesting that first half of the Middle Ages children may have participated more frequent than adults and less so in the second half³⁵⁹².

d. Conclusion

All in all I conclude that there is strong evidence for paedocommunion in the form of baptismal Communion as a universal practice which changed into a practice of the majority just before the Fourth Lateran Council. The practice of baptismal Communion seemed to have disappeared rapidly after the Fourth Lateran Council with a minority holding on to the ancient practice, possibly until as late as the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Communion for sick and dying children is also a well attested practice until the Fourth Lateran Council, rapidly disappearing since then. The fact that even after the Fourth Lateran Council lower ages of participation were allowed in case of Communion of the sick and dying shows the perceived importance of this practice. The specific risk of the elements being vomited, on the other hand, may have been considered greater than in the case of baptismal Communion or the participation of healthy young children. The amount of evidence for participation of children in other cases than of baptism, illness or approaching death, is relatively little. But the evidence is found for the whole period until the Fourth Lateran and even afterwards. Bede's remark suggests that the practice was widespread.

6.12.2.3. Changes

What changed and eventually even ended the paedocommunion practice?

a. Transubstantiation and growing scrupulosity

One of the most important factors causing the end of paedocommunion has been the emergence of the doctrine of transubstantiation within the realm of

³⁵⁸⁹ E.g. *Acts of the Saints*, "Ursuari" (11th century); Guibert of Nogent (c. 1055–1124), *The Commitments of the Saints* 1:2,1; Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogue of Miracles* 9:44, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁵⁹⁰ E.g. Lanfranc, *Lanfranc to Domnall, Letter 49*, Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson, eds., *The Letters of Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 155f.; William of Auxerre, *The Golden Compendium*, "The Sacrament of Confirmation"; Bernaldus of Constance, *The Sacraments of Dying Children* 2, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁵⁹¹ Browe (1922/2009), 454.

³⁵⁹² With the 3rd Synod of Tours (813) can. 50, marking the change, Hermans (1987), 94-95.

influence of Rome³⁵⁹³. To be more precise, doubts began to arise about the propriety of communicating infants and sick persons in the later eleventh century³⁵⁹⁴, closely following the second Eucharistic controversy³⁵⁹⁵. This change was marked and further influenced by the same Fourth Lateran Council at which the term transubstantiation received ‘ecclesiastical sanction’³⁵⁹⁶. Within the Reformed paedocommunion debate Henk de Jong, for example, mistakenly denies the role of transubstantiation³⁵⁹⁷, and somebody like Venema seems to downplay its role³⁵⁹⁸. There are a number of reasons, though, to believe that transubstantiation, or a growing scrupulosity regarding the consecrated elements³⁵⁹⁹, did play an important role. First there are those statements which link hesitance to commune infants and children to the fear of children spilling, spitting up, vomiting or not being able to swallow the elements³⁶⁰⁰. Second is the practice of serving infants or children Communion under the form of wine, which they were able to swallow, instead of bread, which they could not³⁶⁰¹. Third is the fact that children and the sick

³⁵⁹³ E.g. Zegwaard (2006), 27; Eberhard Kenntner, “Abendmahlszulassung in gemeindepädagogischer Perspektive,” in *Gemeindekulturpädagogik*, Vol. 11 of *Hermeneutica*, ed. Gotthard Fernor, Günter Ruddat, Harald Schroeter-Wittke (Rheinbach: CMZ-Verlag, 2001), 31; Rylaarsdam (2007), 5.

³⁵⁹⁴ Fisher (2004), 114.

³⁵⁹⁵ Paragraphs 2.3.3.5.

³⁵⁹⁶ Fourth Lateran Council (1215), can. 1, “... Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed (transsubstantiat) by divine power into the body, and the wine into the blood,” The term transubstantiation can be traced to the beginning of the twelfth century, H. J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1937), 238-239. The doctrine was confirmed and defined at the thirteenth session, October 11, 1551, of the Council of Trent, in canon II, *The Council of Trent: The Thirteenth Session; The canons and decrees of the sacred and oecumenical Council of Trent*, Ed. and trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 82.

³⁵⁹⁷ “Therefore, I cannot understand why Rev. Cornelisse connects an (alleged) Roman prohibition for children to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist on the one hand, with the doctrine of transubstantiation on the other hand. I would dare to argue the opposite proposition, that the doctrine of transubstantiation makes participation of children more possible than impossible. According to this doctrine, after all, the sacrament works almost independently from the user,” (my translation, PGS), Henk de Jong, “Kinderen aan het avondmaal? antwoord aan ds N. Cornelisse (3),” *Opbouw* (June 23, 1978): 194.

³⁵⁹⁸ Venema (2007), 248. Cp. *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 348, which speaks about the speculation that the doctrine of transubstantiation caused the change, and the explicit church pronouncements suggesting a concern for conscious understanding.

³⁵⁹⁹ Fisher (2004), 114.

³⁶⁰⁰ E.g. “But others say that the Eucharist should not be given to children because of the danger of their vomiting it and because there would not be any advantage to them unless they swallowed it,” early thirteenth century Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, Dalby refers to Broomfield (1968), 104f., Dalby (2003), 21. Cp. Pope Leo X in a letter to his legates in Bohemia (1513) “Regarding children not able to prove themselves and not having clear differences from the mentally impaired, it seems most serious that they are given Communion because of the danger of irreverence and spilling or spitting up or vomiting. Even the people of Basel wanting much to please the Bohemians did not dare to permit it. Therefore it does not seem safe to grant anything about this,” Leo X, *Letter to Legates*, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

³⁶⁰¹ Paragraph 2.3.3.6.

are treated in the same way in this regard³⁶⁰². Fourth is the practice of offering substitutes to children³⁶⁰³. Fifth, in light of the above the simultaneous development of transubstantiation and the growing hesitance to commune infants and little children is more than a mere coincidence.

b. Confession and Penance

Another important change causing the cessation of paedocommunion was the requirement to confess one's sins before receiving the Eucharist, and the requirement to do so after having reached the age of discretion³⁶⁰⁴. The roots of this practice may be traced to New Testament notions regarding self-examination³⁶⁰⁵, reconciliation³⁶⁰⁶ and sanctification³⁶⁰⁷ in relation to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In the early church awareness of these notions coexisted with a theology and a practice of paedocommunion³⁶⁰⁸. The connection between confession of sins and the reception of Communion (by clergy) can be found in the eighth century³⁶⁰⁹, the custom of confession emerged in the ninth³⁶¹⁰ along with a new emphasis on the requirement to set things right with one's neighbor³⁶¹¹. The general Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 made it into a requirement in the context of a heavily penitential Lord's Supper piety³⁶¹². In and of itself the text of canon 21 could have been interpreted in the sense that infants and young children did not have to receive the Eucharist, but were still allowed to, or even in the sense that receiving the Eucharist continued to be necessary for infants and children, but without the requirement of prior confession. Considering the concepts of the late Middle Ages regarding the ability and proclivity of children to sin before and after reaching the age of discretion such interpretation would have been plausible³⁶¹³. But in general the decree was interpreted as requiring discretion and therefore requiring having reached the age of discretion³⁶¹⁴.

³⁶⁰² E.g. "Thus we teach and we command that this custom should always be conserved in the holy Church, except in the case of infants and anyone sick at all, who cannot swallow bread," Paschal II, "Letter" 535; "Baptized children often take Communion in the sacrament of the cup alone, and the sick in the sacrament of the bread alone," Gilbert of Poitiers "Letter to Abbot Matthew," Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM.

³⁶⁰³ E.g. "The ignorance of presbyters, still keeping the form but not the reality, gives them wine in place of blood," Robert Pulleyn, *Ecclesiastical Offices* 1:20; Caesarius of Heisterbach Dialogue of Miracles 9:44, Turner (2000), chap. 7, CD-ROM. Compare the Parisian canon 39 (1198), Dalby (2003), 21.

³⁶⁰⁴ E.g. Rylaarsdam (2007), 6; Zegwaard (2006), 28f.

³⁶⁰⁵ 1 Cor. 11: 28.

³⁶⁰⁶ Matt. 5: 23-25, Marc. 11:25.

³⁶⁰⁷ 1 Cor. 5:6-8.

³⁶⁰⁸ E.g. Augustine, paragraph 2.2.15.

³⁶⁰⁹ *Rules of the Canons* by Chrodegang of Metz round 760, paragraph 2.3.2.8.

³⁶¹⁰ Ernest Bartels, *Take Eat, Take Drink: The Lord's Supper through the Centuries* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 114; Hendriks (1990), 27 fn. 37.

³⁶¹¹ Frank C. Senn, *The People's Work: A Social History of the Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 177.

³⁶¹² Fourth Lateran Council, can. 21.

³⁶¹³ Cp. Shahar (1990), 24; Browe (1930/2009), 101. E.g. "All sinners having the use of reason must confess after they have reached the years of discretion . . . and are capable of deceit . . . , and not only at age

c. Knowledge

A third development that contributed to the cessation of Communion of infants and young children was an increasing emphasis on knowledge as a requirement for participation. The development of reason and the ability to be schooled or trained, according to popular opinion coincided with the physical development and the ability to sin, in other words the age of discretion³⁶¹⁵. We have seen how knowledge of at least the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and later in history the additional Hail Mary, served as reminiscence of baptism and as liturgical formation for the participation in the Eucharist³⁶¹⁶. As early as the eighth century this knowledge by heart is mentioned as requirement for candidates for baptism and confirmation, though it seems the godparents could fulfill that requirement on behalf of infants and smaller children³⁶¹⁷. In the tenth century it is mentioned as requirement for the participation in Communion³⁶¹⁸. But under the influence of the Fourth Lateran – and I assume the emergence of transubstantiation theology - this emphasis increased both in ecclesiastical instructions³⁶¹⁹ as well as in practice, and in its turn would influence the age of first reception of Communion³⁶²⁰. Venema speaks of “the long-standing conviction of the church Fathers, Augustine included, that insisted upon a believing and informed reception of the sacrament of Communion”³⁶²¹, but formulated in that way it fails to explain why this conviction peacefully coexisted with paedocommunion in the days of the church fathers and now caused its decline.

d. Confirmation

Fourth, the decline and disappearance of Communion of infants and small children, was part of the process of the disintegration or dismembering of the

twelve, but at either side of twelve years . . . because malice makes up for age,” Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308), *Commentary on the Sentences* 4:17,5, Turner, chap. 8, CD-ROM.

³⁶¹⁴ Browe (1930/2009), 101.

³⁶¹⁵ Cp. Shahar (1990), 24.

³⁶¹⁶ E.g. Synod of Clovesho (747), canon 11. Hermans (1987), 68.

³⁶¹⁷ E.g. Theodulf of Orléans (c. 750/760- 821), Hermans (1987), 80 fn. 101. Hermans refers to MANSI, 13, 1000.

³⁶¹⁸ E.g. Regino of Prüm, who required this in his *Canones* of 906, Hermans (1987), 69.

³⁶¹⁹ E.g. Council of Tarragon (1329) 67, “Lest dangerous ignorance be alleged concerning those matters which are of necessity for salvation, we command rectors of churches and those holding their places that four times a year they discourse on divine matters for their parishioners that according to the statute of the general council those who have reached the years of discretion (namely fourteen for males but twelve for females), are bound at least once a year by it faithfully to confess their sins, and to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least on the feast of Easter, ... etc..”

³⁶²⁰ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM. Possibly influenced by the formation of a new educational environment and the emergence of scholastic culture from the eleventh century.

³⁶²¹ And mentions it as an example of a factor playing a role in the decline of paedocommunion that tends to be overlooked by paedocommunion advocates. Venema (2007), 248.

threefold rite of initiation³⁶²². Initially the Episcopal privilege or prerogative to confirm and practical reasons which delayed such confirmation disconnected baptism and baptismal Communion from this confirmation. In addition to the developments mentioned above, the reception of confirmation prior to first Communion began to be promoted, after the Fourth Lateran council³⁶²³. The 1281 Council of Lambeth under the leadership of John Peckham decreed that no person could be admitted to the Eucharist unless they had received confirmation³⁶²⁴. The impact of such regulations varied as the age for confirmation continued to vary³⁶²⁵. The 1280 Council of Cologne reversed the rule of confirmation "not later than seven" to confirmation "not before seven" years old, but only as opinion changed in the sixteenth century, did this become widespread³⁶²⁶. The reasons behind this process were "not entirely theological", as Fisher puts it³⁶²⁷. Rylaarsdam mentions the role in this process of the effort to preserve the power of the bishops³⁶²⁸. But Mitchell suggests that this process was also a matter of 'accumulated symbolism', meaning that a cluster of symbols will begin to split apart when people fail to understand its cohesiveness³⁶²⁹. With the change of the nature of confirmation through the centuries, it now required some maturation. Though this did not cause the end of infant Communion, it did support that development and prevented an easy return to the old tradition of infant baptism.

e. Withdrawal of the cup

A fifth development contributing to the cessation of Communion of infants and little children was the withdrawal of the cup from the laity³⁶³⁰. The laity's practice of intinction, found in the West as early as the seventh century, developed into the laity's custom to avoid the wine altogether³⁶³¹, starting in England in the twelfth century, which would become prevalent³⁶³² and

³⁶²² E.g. Fisher (2004).

³⁶²³ E.g. DeMolen (1975), 52; Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

³⁶²⁴ Percy (1980): 44f.

³⁶²⁵ Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM. Paragraph 2.3.4.10.

³⁶²⁶ Percy (1980): 44f.

³⁶²⁷ Fisher (2004), 135.

³⁶²⁸ Rylaarsdam (2007), 5.

³⁶²⁹ Nathan D. Mitchell, "Dissolution of the rite of Christian initiation," in *Made, Not Born: New Perspectives on Christian Initiation and the Catechumate* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame, 1976), 70f.

³⁶³⁰ Crawford, Charles. "Infant Communion: Past Tradition and Present Practice," *Theological Studies* 31, no.1 (1970), 530, fn. 31; Gallant (2003), 127; Rylaarsdam (2007), 5f.

³⁶³¹ Though one wonders whether such a custom of the laity would be possible without cooperation of at least local priests.

³⁶³² Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 274. Cp. Fisher (2004), 117. "provide in quibusdam ecclesiis observatur, ut populo sanguis sumendus non detur, sed solum a sacerdote sumatur," Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, III, Q. lxxx, a. 12.

supported by theologians³⁶³³ and councils³⁶³⁴ in the thirteenth and later centuries³⁶³⁵. All in all this was another development which meant that infants, who had previously received Communion under the form of wine, now received no Communion at all³⁶³⁶.

f. The offering of substitutes

Sixth, the initial offering of substitutes for the consecrated host and the consecrated wine since the twelfth century, and the later prohibition of this practice were part of the process of the cessation of paedocommunion³⁶³⁷. Whether or not offering substitutes equaled the end of paedocommunion can be debated. Sources speak of a required prior fast, of tithing³⁶³⁸, of the substitutes signifying children's unity with the church³⁶³⁹, of a certain reverence for the substitutes³⁶⁴⁰, and of 'superstitious' beliefs about the benefits of unconsecrated wine to infants³⁶⁴¹. Considering the strong beliefs about the nature of consecration of the elements, offering substitutes must have been perceived as a significant step away from children truly receiving Communion. But considering the later prohibitions of serving either consecrated or unconsecrated elements to children, the resemblance to truly receiving Communion must have been perceived as too big. This ambivalence makes clear how offering substitutes could serve as a stepping stone in the process of the cessation of paedocommunion.

Another kind of substitution of the elements took place in the shift from receiving the consecrated elements towards merely viewing the elements; a shift which took place during the thirteenth and fourteenth century³⁶⁴². An example how this replaced baptismal Communion is provided by Heinrich von Gorkum³⁶⁴³. This change was supported, among others by the thought that the

³⁶³³ E.g. John of Freiburg in his 1280-1298 *Summa confessorum, fol. CXXV* (q. CX). Thomas Izbicki, *The Eucharist in Medieval Canon Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 160, fn. 200.

³⁶³⁴ E.g. The Council of Lambeth (1281), *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Communion under Both Kinds."

³⁶³⁵ The Council of Constance, Session 13, June 15, 1415, condemned Communion under both species by the laity. Thomas Izbicki, *The Eucharist in Medieval Canon Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 160, fn. 202.

³⁶³⁶ Crawford (1970), 530, fn. 31; David Holeton, *Infant Communion: Then and Now, Grove Liturgical Study* 27 (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1981), Gallant (2003), 127; Rylaarsdam (2007), 5f.

³⁶³⁷ Paragraph 2.3.4.4. & 2.3.4.5.

³⁶³⁸ Council of Pavia (1320), can. 15 & 13, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

³⁶³⁹ *Speyer Ritual*, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

³⁶⁴⁰ Synod of Soissons (1404), can. 19, Browe (1935/2009), 423.

³⁶⁴¹ Synod of Passau (1470), can. 2, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

³⁶⁴² E.g. Gary Macy, "The Medieval Inheritance," in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*. edited by Lee Palmer Wandel (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 20.

³⁶⁴³ Heinrich von Gorkum, *Treatise on Certain Superstitious Cases*, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

desire to have Communion, while not directly obtaining it, sufficed, and by the emphasis on metaphorically sharing of the elements; a concept derived from Augustine, but not necessarily applied in Augustine's spirit³⁶⁴⁴.

g. Partial decline of paedocommunion

Seventh, some developments preceded and in all likelihood helped prepare the developments mentioned above. I mention them last, because these developments themselves meant a partial decline of paedocommunion and did not equal its cessation. First, at least in some areas, the frequency of Lord's Supper celebration may have declined since the sixth century³⁶⁴⁵. Earlier the frequency of Lord's Supper celebration by innocent children may have remained relatively high, whereas later under influence of growing scrupulosity regarding the elements the frequency for children may have dropped even faster than for adults. The school of Anselm recommended postponing Communion after having received baptismal Communion³⁶⁴⁶. Second, because of the sociofugal impact of the beginning of private Masses in the sixth century the sense of all people participating in the Lord's Supper celebration began to be lost³⁶⁴⁷. Third, later, the custom to pay tithes in the church where Communion was celebrated discouraged frequent Communion and delayed first Communion, at least for children of the poor³⁶⁴⁸. All of such developments also contributed to the loss of any sense among both religious and the laity that Communion was a normal part of the Mass³⁶⁴⁹.

6.12.2.4. Ages and stages

Childhood continued to be divided in three stages of seven years each³⁶⁵⁰. The range of ages interpreted as the age of discretion coincided with *pueritia*, the second stage of life³⁶⁵¹, from seven to twelve for girls and seven to fourteen for boys³⁶⁵². In summary of what I have written about concept and views of children and childhood in these different stages, it is important to repeat that there was both a sense of development over time, of body, of moral discretion, of reason, and simultaneously of sinful inclinations, as well as a

³⁶⁴⁴ E.g. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 4:73,3 and 4:80,9,3; Cp. Augustine, Tract on the Gospel of John XXVI, 11 & 15, Turner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM. CP. Baumgärtler (1929), 68

³⁶⁴⁵ Considering councils legislating minimal participation, Paragraph 2.3.1.7.

³⁶⁴⁶ Hermans (1987), 87; Fisher (2004), 115, 121, fn.10.

³⁶⁴⁷ Paragraph 2.3.1.7.

³⁶⁴⁸ Paragraph 2.3.4.6.

³⁶⁴⁹ Holeton (1981), 8.

³⁶⁵⁰ Paragraph 3.4.2.

³⁶⁵¹ Paragraph 2.3.4.8, 2.3.4.9.

³⁶⁵² Shahar (1992), 22.

sense of loss of innocence, especially in relation to lust and death³⁶⁵³. I noted how *adolescencia*, the third stage of childhood, met with strongest rejection and condemnation³⁶⁵⁴. Young innocent children were still given a spiritually significant prominent place in processions³⁶⁵⁵.

6.12.2.5. Middle Ages in Dutch Reformed paedocommunion debate

What role does the paedocommunion theology and practice of the Middle Ages play in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion debate? It is my impression that in general the Middle Ages receive less attention than the early church, and the time of the Reformation.

Some participants in the debate misunderstand or misrepresent the theology and practice of the Middle Ages or the changes that led to the cessation of paedocommunion. Schravendeel, for example, denies the existence of Communion of infants³⁶⁵⁶, Henk de Jong is mistaken about the role of transubstantiation theology in the cessation³⁶⁵⁷, Hartvelt suggest that the Communion of infants (or sucklings) itself raised resistance against the theology and practice³⁶⁵⁸.

Those who oppose paedocommunion often explain the medieval paedocommunion as the consequence of debatable theology. Luiten, for example, explains it as the consequence of the perceived necessity of the sacraments³⁶⁵⁹. Some Reformed participants in the paedocommunion debate, seem to disqualify this shared history as being Roman Catholic³⁶⁶⁰.

References to historical practice in support of participation of children at the Lord's Supper are often general in the sense that refer to the whole period from the earliest church until the end of the paedocommunion practice in the late Middle Ages³⁶⁶¹. Regarding the cessation of paedocommunion in the

³⁶⁵³ Paragraph 3.5.1.

³⁶⁵⁴ Shahaar (1992), 15.

³⁶⁵⁵ Shahaar (1992), 19.

³⁶⁵⁶ "Because of this part not one church, except the Eastern-Orthodox, has ever included infants (or sucklings) in the Supper celebration. Every church demands a certain insight," (my translation), Schravendeel (1977), 14.

³⁶⁵⁷ De Jong (June 23, 1978), 194.

³⁶⁵⁸ "One can approach the questions regarding paedocommunion from infant baptism. In the ancient church that has been done consequently for some time, and they ended up with the Communion of sucklings. But they simply felt overstretched (overvraagd) and moved to the age of discretion. Whatever that may be," (my translation), G.P. Hartvelt, "Kinderkommunie?" *Praktische Theologie* (1974): 112-113

³⁶⁵⁹ Bas Luiten, "Kinderen en avondmaal: Verschil in sacramenten: Reacties op reacties – 1," *De Reformatie* (May 18, 2012): 389.

³⁶⁶⁰ E.g. *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 347.

³⁶⁶¹ E.g. From the time of the Apostle Paul until the rise of rationalism, pietism and individualism, Wentsel (1998) 231 fn. 145, 233; History "prior to the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215," Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod,

Middle Ages paedocommunion advocates state that many of the underlying reasons “do not serve as a reasonable justification for barring covenant children from the Lord’s Table.”³⁶⁶² Paedocommunion was rejected in the same “ecclesiastical climate” which gave rise to transubstantiation theology³⁶⁶³. In the periodical discussion of the Christian Reformed Church Rylaarsdam’s summary of the story of the unity and separation of baptism and the Lord’s Supper³⁶⁶⁴ seems influential; taken notice of at synodical level by the Faith Formation Committee, trickling down and influencing local congregations such as Fourteenth Street³⁶⁶⁵, and influencing the debate in the Reformed Church liberated though the contributions of Robert Roth³⁶⁶⁶.

6.12.2.6. Middle Ages and Reformation

a. Medieval inheritance

Within the Protestant and certainly within the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion debate the Middle Ages are specifically important in relation to the question to what extent the Reformers inherited medieval theology and praxis (*without being fully aware of their roots*), or whether they scrutinized all the practices of the medieval church to determine whether they were consistent with the gospel³⁶⁶⁷. My conclusion is that in a number of very significant ways the Reformation inherited or continued Roman Catholic praxis and theology³⁶⁶⁸.

b. Medieval practice and theology

First, I note that regarding the age of admission the Reformers stayed in line with what was common in contemporary Roman Catholic practice and theology. The Reformers did not consciously break with tradition and did not consciously move the age of admission upwards, as some suggest³⁶⁶⁹. The fact that – certainly in the Netherlands – several authors mention ages higher than

301; Peter G. Sinia, “Nieuwe wegen in het gesprek rond kinderen aan het Avondmaal,” *Opbouw* (September 17, 2010): 14.

³⁶⁶² Overture 16, Agenda CRCNA 2006 Synod, 529. Cp. Brouwer (February, 2005).

³⁶⁶³ N. Cornelisse, “Kinderen aan de tafel van de Heer: Antwoord aan ds H. de Jong betreffende,” *Opbouw* (April 21, 1978): 122.

³⁶⁶⁴ Rylaarsdam (2007).

³⁶⁶⁵ Marvin Hofman, Meika Weiss, interviews with author.

³⁶⁶⁶ Roth (8 April 2011), 299, 314.

³⁶⁶⁷ Something suggested by Tranvik (1995), 87.

³⁶⁶⁸ E.g. Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1.

³⁶⁶⁹ Contra for example W. Verboom, “Kinderen op weg naar het avondmaal: Een reactie n.a.v. de thematiek Doop-Belijdenis-Avondmaal,” *Kontekstueel* (March 1989): 18.

the sources justify³⁶⁷⁰, may have inspired this hypothesis of an increasing age of admission³⁶⁷¹. I would conclude that the Reformers chose the same second stage of life for admission to the Lord's Supper that the Roman Catholics practiced and advocated³⁶⁷². This life stage that is associated with discretion and the beginning use of reason. And within that life stage Reformers specified the same variety of approximate ages found in Roman Catholic sources. Luther seems to have chosen age seven³⁶⁷³, like the Roman Catholic bishop Henry of Sisteron³⁶⁷⁴. Calvin specified the approximate age of ten³⁶⁷⁵, the average age of that stage of life³⁶⁷⁶, and the same age mentioned by Roman Catholics such as Petrus Paludanus and Thomas Aquinas³⁶⁷⁷. The Dutch Refugee Church of London started teaching catechism at age five, just before this second stage of life, and required profession of faith at age thirteen, just before the end of this stage of life³⁶⁷⁸.

c. Medieval sequence

Second, the Reformers basically adopted the sequence or 'rhythm' which had developed during the Middle Ages, in which confession and later confirmation were required prior to participation in Communion³⁶⁷⁹, though the emphasis shifted to professing faith rather than confessing sins³⁶⁸⁰, and the theological content of confirmation almost completely changed³⁶⁸¹, except for the fact that it continued to exclude children³⁶⁸². Rylaarsdam suggest *Calvin would*

³⁶⁷⁰ That is without referencing primary sources which prove this high age of admission, while neglecting some of the primary sources which are available regarding lower ages of admission.

³⁶⁷¹ E.g. Verboom mentions age 12 for Calvin, age 14 for Luther, Verboom (1989), 18. B. Kamphuis, M.B. van 't Veer, and C. van de Velde seem to follow J. Plomp who suggests age 15 as age of admission. Kamphuis (February 6, 1982), 284-287. J. Plomp, *De kerkelijke tucht bij Calvijn*. (Kampen: Kok, 1969), 68f. M.B. van 't Veer, *Catechese en catechetische stof bij Calvijn* (Kampen: Kok, 1942), 310f. Van de Velde (June 1982), 4.

³⁶⁷² Calvin speaks of children 'pueri' up to those almost reaching 'adolescence', Calvin *Institutes*, IV, chap. 19, 13. Paragraph 2.4.4. A. Sizoo gives the Dutch translation "de kinderen of de aankomende jongelieden," Johannes Calvijn, *Institutie: of onderwijzing in de chistelijke godsdienst; derde deel*, trans. into Dutch by A. Sizoo, 11th ed. ('s Gravenhage: Meinema, 1989), 528.

³⁶⁷³ Paragraph 2.4.4.

³⁶⁷⁴ Synod of Sisteron (?), can. 16, Bridgett (1881), 25.

³⁶⁷⁵ For age 10 see Calvin *Institutes*, IV, chap. 19, 13. For 'approximate' see Calvin's French translation 'environ dix ans'.

³⁶⁷⁶ From age 7 to 12 for girls, from age 7 to 14 for boys.

³⁶⁷⁷ Thomas of Aquinas, *Super Sententiis*, lib. 4 d. 9 q. 1 a. 5 q. 4 co, Browe (1930/2009), 103f.

³⁶⁷⁸ Micron (1956).

³⁶⁷⁹ Cp. Michael F. Abma, "A New Order of Christian Nurture," *Reformed Worship* 91; Eugene L. Brand, "Baptism and Communion of Infants: A Lutheran View," *Worship Jubilee*, Vol. 50, 38.

³⁶⁸⁰ Abma (2009). In the Lutheran tradition Confession and Absolution remained practice for the first two centuries after the Reformation. Cp. *Augsburg Confession*, art. XXV: "The body of the Lord is not usually given to those who have not been examined and absolved."

³⁶⁸¹ Cp. Pel (1968), 42, fn. 1; Aalbers (1971), 21.

³⁶⁸² Rylaarsdam speaks about confirmation as a practice looking for a theology. This seems to have been the case both before and after the Reformation. Rylaarsdam (2007), 6.

likely have been troubled to know that the late medieval legacy of separating baptism and the Lord's Supper was caused by the principle of conserving the power of bishops, by the doctrine of transubstantiation, by the ability to do penance, by withholding the cup from the laity, and by the punishment of parents who disrespected the sacrament of confirmation³⁶⁸³.

d. Medieval curriculum

Third, with the requirement of knowing the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed by heart, the Reformers required the same knowledge for profession of faith that their Roman Catholic ancestors had considered the minimal knowledge to be learned in Christian education for centuries³⁶⁸⁴; the same knowledge which had been part of children's liturgical formation, the preparation for participation in the Eucharist liturgy; the same knowledge which sometimes was considered as minimum requirement for such participation³⁶⁸⁵. Also in pre-Reformation Geneva religious education at home, containing these elements, was a well established practice³⁶⁸⁶. In requiring such knowledge the Reformers also reflected the medieval emphasis by theologians such as Thomas Aquinas on discernment in the sense of having the use of reason³⁶⁸⁷. The development of catechisms for this purpose may have been relatively new, but both Protestant and Catholic reformers turned to the catechism as primary instrument of teaching and persuasion³⁶⁸⁸.

e. Medieval subjective element

Fourth, the Reformers further reflected and developed the medieval emphasis on the subjective element of faith, or reverence and devotion, as Aquinas, among others, required³⁶⁸⁹.

f. Medieval awe and anxiety

Fifth, in medieval times the Eucharist was increasingly celebrated with awe and reverence, while fear and anxiety regarding the elements grew. Several

³⁶⁸³ Rylaarsdam (2007), 6.

³⁶⁸⁴ Hughes Oliphant Old,, *The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 185.

³⁶⁸⁵ Hermans (1987), 68f.

³⁶⁸⁶ Jeffrey R. Watt, "Calvinism, Childhood, and Education: The Evidence from the Genevan Consistory," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Summer 2002): 446.

³⁶⁸⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 4:80, art. 9.3.

³⁶⁸⁸ Richard DeMolen, "Childhood and the Sacraments in the Sixteenth Century," *Archive for Reformation History*, Vol. 66 (1975), 51. Hermans (1987), 123f.

³⁶⁸⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 4:80, art. 9.3, 12; *Essay on the Sentences*, 4:23,2,2,4,4. Cf. Report 26, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 262-263.

authors point out how this fear and anxiety had grown with transubstantiation theology and the popular perception of the real presence of Christ³⁶⁹⁰. Some authors trace the awe, reverence and fear further back to the influence of pagan mystery religions³⁶⁹¹. It seems clear that the Reformed tradition reflected this awe, reverence, and held on to this fear and anxiety³⁶⁹². Van den Berg suggests that the term ‘sacrament’ with its connotations was instrumental in passing on this inheritance, but to me this seems to be a simplification of these dynamics³⁶⁹³. The awe, fear and anxiety lived on, but as transubstantiation theology was rejected, it was now grounded in – a misinterpreted – 1 Corinthians 11³⁶⁹⁴.

g. Medieval infrequent practice

Sixth, the Reformers only minimally adjusted the infrequent Lord’s Supper celebration of the Middle Ages, because of the “frailty of the people”³⁶⁹⁵. Calvin pleaded for weekly Communion, but settled for “as frequently as the capacity of the people will allow”³⁶⁹⁶, which under the influence of Zwingli meant quarterly celebration³⁶⁹⁷. With “frailty” Calvin referred to the influence of the Roman Catholic medieval theology and practice of the Mass on people’s faith and understanding. Wolterstorff shows how regulating the frequency helped fencing the table³⁶⁹⁸.

6.12.2.7. Other observations regarding the Reformation

I quoted Rylaarsdam, who writes *Calvin would likely have been troubled to know (...)*. And I agree with the underlying assumption that Calvin was not aware of all historical developments. I conclude that Calvin was wrong in the assumption that the early church treated children of believers as catechumen. I also conclude that Calvin and others were wrong in the assumption that only those children participated in the Passover who were of sufficient age to

³⁶⁹⁰ E.g. Hielema (2005). C.M.A. Caspers “The Lord’s Supper and Holy Communion,” in *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition: Papers read at a NOSTER Conference in Soesterberg, January 4-6, 1999*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Anton Houtepen. (Assen: Royal van Gorcum, 2001), 263.

³⁶⁹¹ *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 297. Van den Berg (1978), 11f.

³⁶⁹² E.g. Van den Berg (1978), 22; *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 297; Caspers (2001), 263; Hielema (2005).

³⁶⁹³ Van den Berg (1978), 22.

³⁶⁹⁴ Cf. C.M.A. Caspers, “The Lord’s Supper and Holy Communion,” in *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition: Papers read at a NOSTER Conference in Soesterberg, January 4-6, 1999*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Anton Houtepen. Assen: Royal van Gorcum, 2001. , 263; Hielema (2005).

³⁶⁹⁵ J.K.S. Reid, *Calvin: Theological Treatises* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 50.

³⁶⁹⁶ Reid (1954), 153.

³⁶⁹⁷ Paragraph 2.4.4.5.

³⁶⁹⁸ Paragraph 2.4.4.5.

inquire into its meaning. It seems contradictory to me how several of the Reformed theologians deny children sacramental union, while granting them spiritual or mystical union, believing that children are spiritually fed with Jesus as the Bread of Life.

6.12.2.8. Post Reformation Developments

a. No development

After my overview of the Reformation, I focused on the further history of paedocommunion in the British, German and Dutch Reformed tradition. I concluded that theologians followed the Reformers in their almost unanimous rejection of paedocommunion, and in the theological rationale. 1 Corinthians 11 remains the key text, in spite of Luther's alternative interpretation of this chapter. In the German and the Dutch tradition there seems no significant development of the underlying theology during those centuries.

b. Ages

For over a century the age of admission may have remained around age seven in the German Lutheran tradition³⁶⁹⁹. In the earliest Dutch Reformed tradition – in the church of London - we find an age of admission of thirteen. A very similar age of fourteen or fifteen is supported unanimously by German theologians since the seventeenth century. It is remarkable that both in Germany and in the Netherlands the fathers of pietism seem to have supported this. In the Netherlands the age seems to have gone up during the 19th century, somewhat simultaneous with the increase of the age of confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church, but not so in Germany. The earliest indications of a higher age of admission and even of postponement for life, come from within the movement of the *Nadere Reformatie*.

c. Education, Work, Marriage, Politics

This age of admission in the German and Dutch Reformed tradition not only coincided with the conclusion of the second stage of life. In both traditions the age of admission is closely related to the conclusion of education, and hence influenced by changing school laws. The age of marriage was also related to the age of admission. Economical circumstances, or the age at which children

³⁶⁹⁹ Fr. Patrick S. Fodor, "Should Baptized Infants Be Communed?: A Case for Infant Communion in the Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)," <http://www.scribd.com/doc/18759332/A-Case-for-Infant-Communion-in-the-Lutheran-Church-Missouri-Synod> (accessed December 12, 2012), 7.

started to work seem to have moved the age of admission both up and down. The rise of rationalism or intellectualism is a likely cause of the increase of the age of admission in both the Lutheran and Reformed tradition³⁷⁰⁰. Examples of political realities that prevented the restoration of paedocommunion or contributed to the rising of the age of admission are the Restoration in England and the French occupation of the Low Countries.

d. Anabaptists and further debate

Originally, several of the Reformers formulated their position on paedocommunion in response to the Anabaptists. I found no evidence of a further development of this debate and its arguments within the German and Dutch Reformed tradition. Only the British Reformed have certainly continued and deepened this discussion, slowly shifting towards acceptance of paedocommunion. Awareness of the Eastern Orthodox practice only serves as an impulse for the internal paedocommunion debate within the British Reformed tradition.

f. Prior to Quam Singolari

It is significant that British Reformed pleas in favor of paedocommunion precede the Roman Catholic *Quam Singolari* of 1910. Within the Dutch Reformed Church the question is raised by children before *Quam Singolari*, but Dutch Reformed theologians only started to give the question serious consideration after the Second World War.

g. Reformed history in the debate

For most participants in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion debate the Reformation and the development of the Reformed tradition are more than mere historical aspects. This makes it hard to determine whether for example references to the opinions and practices of the Reformers should be considered primarily historical claims or authoritative theological claims. The same is often even harder to distinguish when participants speak of the Reformed tradition, because then the identity, opinion and practice of participants in the debate is blurred with those of history.

³⁷⁰⁰ Cf. Fodor (n.d.), Kuyper (1890), 192,194.

g.1. Original

The Reformers are quoted and referred to, and especially Calvin and – to a lesser degree – Luther are given great authority. Calvin’s arguments against participation of young children are quoted by opponents³⁷⁰¹, paedocommunion advocates often refer to the practice of allowing much younger children, and quote Calvin on infant baptism³⁷⁰². The early days of the Reformation also seem to carry the greatest weight amongst pro and con. As indicated elsewhere, there seems to be an assumption by many that the status quo equals the oldest tradition, that recent practice and theology is reflective of the practice and theology of the Reformation, and sets the standard for orthopraxy and orthodoxy. One of the examples is that several participants seem to adapt the historical data regarding the age of admission in the days of the Reformation to closer resemble current practice. Some paedocommunion opponents consciously use Reformed tradition to defend a practice with a considerable higher age of admission. The fourteen and fifteen year old youth of Calvin’s days equal the twenty or twenty two year old youth of our days, seems to be the thought³⁷⁰³. A similar aura of originality and authority also seems to be given by Rijsbergen’s Jan van Katwijk to the earliest history of the Dutch Reformed Refugee Church in London³⁷⁰⁴. And in the debate of the Reformed Church liberated and Dutch Reformed Churches³⁷⁰⁵ Visee gives similar significance to the historical Reformed practice as reflected in the 1563 Church Order from the Palatinate³⁷⁰⁶. As indicated an argument with confessional significance as it provides historical context to the Heidelberg Catechism. An argument picked up by some of the paedocommunion pioneers³⁷⁰⁷.

g.2. New England Puritans

One historical reference by the CRC 1988 minority report may be considered a singleton in the debate, but nevertheless interesting. The 1988 minority calls to learn from history about the good intentions but harmful consequences of the Half-Way Covenant of the New England Puritans and Solomon Stoddard’s view of the sacrament as “converting ordinance”, creating faith rather than confirming faith.

³⁷⁰¹ E.g. Art Boersma, letter to Consistory of New West CRC, December 18, 1986, quoting Calvin’s *Institutes*.

³⁷⁰² E.g. Gallant ...

³⁷⁰³ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1

³⁷⁰⁴ Van der Veer (1984), 3. I also mentioned how his copy of the book *De Hollandsche Vreemdelingen-Gemeente te Londen* shows the marks of intensive reading.

³⁷⁰⁵ And after translation into English and publication in *Christian Renewal* also part of the CRC’s periodical discussion.

³⁷⁰⁶ Visee (1979).

³⁷⁰⁷ E.g. Cornelisse (April 21, 1978), 122.

g.3. Pietism and Further Reformation

Several participants also observe explicitly or implicitly how Pietism or the so called Nadere Reformatie – Further Reformation – further restricted the participation in the Lord’s Supper and moved the age of admission upwards by adding the requirement of inner knowledge³⁷⁰⁸. In the unique makeup of the church of Rijsbergen overcoming “the evil and baneful teachings” of “spiritualistic and subjectivist denominations” was a crucial step in the story of welcoming children at the Table³⁷⁰⁹. The influence of those movements on the Lord’s Supper practice is not limited to the church of Rijsbergen but is observed in the breadth of the Dutch Reformed Churches³⁷¹⁰. The observation is made by those who reject postponement of profession of faith, or advocate lowering the age of admission.

g.4. Conflicting originals – Reformation, Secession, Doleantie

Why did the Secession of 1834 or the Doleantie of 1886 not embrace Luther’s and Calvin’s practice of admitting children? This question by one of the readers is answered by Runia in the *Friesch Dagblad*³⁷¹¹. The question may reveal the importance of historical periods that have an aura of originality within a certain tradition, and the tension when the practices of two or more of such periods conflict with each other. Runia’s answer in short is: being mature is the requirement, and the age at which a person is considered mature has gone up.

g.5. Kuyper and intellectualism

The leader of the Doleantie, Abraham Kuyper, is blamed in the 1988 minority report for raising the age of admission from early adolescence to the late teens. The report speaks of a Kuyperian shift toward emphasizing the intellectual content of profession³⁷¹². Interestingly enough I found that Kuyper himself stated in 1890 that raising the age of admission from fourteen to eighteen or twenty was unjustified and had happened because of the rise of intellectualism³⁷¹³. Both Kuyper and the minority report observe, what several participants have observed, that intellectualism or rationalism in the post

³⁷⁰⁸ E.g. Hogenhuis, H. “Belijdenis doen – moet dat nog wel?” *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1978): 21/249-26/254.

³⁷⁰⁹ Van Katwijk (1966), 4.

³⁷¹⁰ E.g. Hogenhuis (May, 1978); Visee (1979).

³⁷¹¹ K. Runia, “Kinderen aan avondmaal,” *Friesch Dagblad*, September 29, 1995.

³⁷¹² *Minority Report*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 309.

³⁷¹³ Kuyper (1890), 194. See also page 192.

enlightened west has caused the rise of the age of admission³⁷¹⁴. That observation is almost always made in the context of a plea to lower the age of admission.

h. The use of Scripture in paedocommunion history

The scope of my research did not allow a comprehensive *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the central texts used when speaking about the admission of children to the Supper. But it seems fair to conclude that two Bible texts are crucial in paedocommunion history: John 6:53-54 and 1 Corinthians 11. Other Bible texts play secondary roles at best. The earliest document dealing with admission to the Supper, the *Didache*, explains why only Baptized should be allowed to the Supper with the words: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."³⁷¹⁵ Cyprian's argument, the earliest explicit documentation of paedocommunion practice³⁷¹⁶, seems more in line with 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, than with chapter 11; the choice is between participating in the Christian Eucharist or in the pagan meals, and not between participating in the Eucharist or abstaining from it as a Christian. Augustine gives John 6:53-54 a prominent place when he defends the necessity of salvation and the necessity of receiving both sacraments³⁷¹⁷. And as the practice of paedocommunion is basically perceived in terms of necessity, these verses remain central until approximately the late Middle Ages. As I mentioned, for many theologians John 3:5 and John 6:53 seemed to put baptism and Communion on par in terms of necessity, though in cases of emergency baptism provided the benefits of both. I do find very early proof of 1 Corinthians 11 inspiring believers to shun the Eucharist. Clement seems to refer to an exceptional custom to do so on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11: 27-28³⁷¹⁸. Augustine, for example, did use 1 Corinthians 11, but never to bar children from the Table. Before the Reformation the 1433 Council of Basel condemned Communion of infants immediately after their baptism with reference to 1 Corinthians 11: 29³⁷¹⁹. But in the Reformed tradition 1 Corinthians 11 became the primary text and ground for rejecting the participation of infants and children in the Lord's Supper.

³⁷¹⁴ E.g. Hogenhuis (May, 1978); Visee (1979); Hielema (June, 2005); Michael Goheen, interview with author.

³⁷¹⁵ Matthew 7:6; *The Didache or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. IX, 5, ANF 7: 379-380.

³⁷¹⁶ Cyprian, *Treatises, On the Lapsed*, chap. 9, 25, ANF 5:439, 444.

³⁷¹⁷ E.g. Augustine, *On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism*, bk. I, chap. 26, 27, 34, NPNF1 5:25, 28.

³⁷¹⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, bk. I, chap. 1, ANF 2:300.

³⁷¹⁹ And 2 Corinthians 13:5 (!), Council of Basel (1433), Tuner (2000), chap. 8, CD-ROM.

6.13. The Reformed Confessions

6.13.1. Explicit or not

In my historical overview I have shown how several Reformed catechisms and confessions explicitly reject the participation of infants or young children in the Lord's Supper celebration³⁷²⁰. The Westminster Larger Catechism, which is upheld by Calvinists in the Anglo Saxon tradition, explicitly excludes young children in Q&A 177³⁷²¹. But the so-called Three Forms of Unity of the Dutch Reformed tradition, the Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dordt, and Belgic Confession, do not explicitly mention young children in this context. Though Heidelberg Catechism co-author Zacharias Ursinus does explicitly exclude (young) children in his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism³⁷²². And Belgic Confession author, Guido de Brès, does so in a book against the Anabaptists³⁷²³.

6.13.2. Subordinate role

Confessional considerations do play a role in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion. In line with their subordinate authority to Scripture the confessions clearly carry less weight in the paedocommunion discussion than the Bible in general and than specific Bible texts and themes³⁷²⁴. But in the discussion the confessions do seem to carry more weight than for example the theologies or opinions of Calvin and other Reformers³⁷²⁵. Confessional arguments are used in all researched denominations; slightly more in the Christian Reformed Church than in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, but most in the Reformed Church liberated and Dutch Reformed Churches³⁷²⁶. None of the interviewees from

³⁷²⁰ E.g. Theodore Beza's Confession (1560) and his Short Confession, art. 33; the Scottish Confession of Faith (1560) chap. XXIII; James T. Dennison Jr., ed., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: Volume 2 1552-1566* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 2010), 297-298, 204. M. Te Velde, ed., *Confessies: Gereformeerde geloofsverantwoording in zestiende-eeuws Europa* (Heerenveen: Groen, 2009), 210, 350, 432.

³⁷²¹ "177. Q. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ? A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once,, with water, to be assign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves," Vos (2002), 509f.

³⁷²² Ursinus (1852), 366-367, 425, 429.

³⁷²³ De Brès (1595/ 2011), 543.

³⁷²⁴ Such as 1 Corinthians 11, Exodus 12, the covenant and Passover

³⁷²⁵ Based on weighted word counts in my summary of the discussions.

³⁷²⁶ Based on weighted word counts in my summary of the discussions.

the local churches uses the confessions as argument³⁷²⁷, and only few of the documents from those churches explicitly refer to the confessions³⁷²⁸. In the denominational discussion the text of the confessions, the opinion of its authors, the original setting and the nature of catechetical confessions play a role.

6.13.3. Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 81

Lord's Day 30, question 81 of the Heidelberg Catechism seems most relevant as it asks: *Who should come to the Lord's Table?* Opponents of paedocommunion support their emphasis on faith and the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11 with references to Q&A 81³⁷²⁹. Among those who agree on these requirements, there is a difference of opinion on the age of participation. Some envision an age of participation beyond adolescence³⁷³⁰, some believe the required more mature, self-aware faith and credible profession can be expected round age twelve to thirteen, others suggest that children of elementary and junior high school age can fulfill the requirements of Q&A 81³⁷³¹ or that the glimmers of faith and consciousness of God at age seven or eight suffice³⁷³². Lyle Bierma points out how Q&A 81 rests heavily on a common Reformed interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11³⁷³³, and diplomatically suggests that there are other ways of understanding this text³⁷³⁴.

Another approach to Lord's Day 30 is taken by paedocommunion proponent Tim Gallant. He argues that Q&A 81 refers not to who may be allowed, but to who are required to come, and that only Q&A 82 says something about who is forbidden to come. Gallant further argues that Q&A 81 and 82 distinguish three categories of people: 1- Those who are believing and repentant, 2- those who are secretly unrepentant (hypocrites and insincere), and 3- those who are openly unrepentant. Gallant holds that those who deny that covenant

³⁷²⁷ Except for one interviewee of New West CRC with hesitations about paedocommunion who makes a general remark which could either refer to the confession or the form for profession of faith.

³⁷²⁸ E.g. Albert Helder, *Children at the Lord's Supper* (1987/1988), refers to Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 66, 75, 76, 81 and Belgic Confession, art. 35.

³⁷²⁹ E.g. Van de Velde (June 1982). See also the majority report of the 'prairie states' 1986 study committee, *Report 34 I & II*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 346-366.

³⁷³⁰ Van de Velde (1985), 24f.; Possibly also G.P. Hartvelt in *Tastbaar evangelie: de sacramenten; Nieuwe Commentaar Heidelbergse Catechismus Deel III, Zondag 25-31* (Aalten: De Graafschap, 1966), 88-104.

³⁷³¹ E.g. Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children, *Report A*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 265-274.

³⁷³² *Report 34 I & II*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 363.

³⁷³³ Lyle D. Bierma, "Reflections: Children at the Lord's Supper and Reformed Theology," *Forum* (Spring 2007): 3 & 4.

³⁷³⁴ Bierma refers to Jeffrey A.D. Weima, "Children at the Lord's Supper and the Key Text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34," *Forum* (Spring 2007): 7-8.

children belong to the first category have to deny more vehemently that they belong in the second or third³⁷³⁵.

6.13.4. *Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 75, 76*

Lord's Day 28, Q&A 75 and 76 are also referred to several times. In his treatment of this Lord's Day 28 Hoeksema suggests that the baptized should partake of the table of Communion as soon as they are able to discern the Lord's body. Hoeksema wonders "whether the practice of our churches not to administer the Lord's Supper to children before they have reached the age of adolescence is not an error."³⁷³⁶ Paedocommunion opponent Van de Velde emphasizes how answer 75 does not open the Supper to the baptized, but to believers: "Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat this broken bread and to drink this cup in remembrance of him."³⁷³⁷ Tuininga underscores with Q&A 76 that we "embrace with a believing heart."³⁷³⁸ Gallant objects that if our children are not counted among the believers, and neither as unbelievers, we have to introduce a third category which is foreign to Scripture³⁷³⁹. With Gallant I notice how Ursinus includes even infant children among the number of faithful³⁷⁴⁰ and speaks of infants having an inclination to faith³⁷⁴¹. Gallant also refers to the Canons of Dordt to show that Reformed theology has always granted that children of believers are genuine members of Christ and His Church³⁷⁴².

6.13.5. *Heidelberg Catechism on the lips of children*

Mindful of the catechetical nature Visee points out that we put the words of the Catechism on the lips of our children. Therefore it is only logical that children identify with "me and all believers", and we might be guilty if they don't³⁷⁴³.

³⁷³⁵ Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs: Companion Study Guide; 7 lessons on Paedocommunion; With a postscript on Paedocommunion and the Three Forms of Unity* (Grande Prairie: Pacta Reformandum, 2003), 26.

³⁷³⁶ Herman Hoeksema, *The Triple Knowledge: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*. Volume 2, 3rd ed. (1947-1952; Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1988), 559-561.

³⁷³⁷ Van de Velde (1985), 26.

³⁷³⁸ Tuininga (November 24, 1980), 9; (October, 1984). 21.

³⁷³⁹ Gallant (2003^b), 27.

³⁷⁴⁰ Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Williard, 3rd American ed. (Cincinnati: T.P. Bucher, 1851), 429.

³⁷⁴¹ Ursinus (1851), 370.

³⁷⁴² Canons of Dordt chap. I, art. 17. Gallant (2003^a), 33.

³⁷⁴³ Visee (1979), 238.

6.13.6. Belgic Confession Art. 35

It is interesting that even the Faith Formation Committee states that the Reformed Confessions “clearly convey that proper participation arises out of faith.”³⁷⁴⁴ But the Faith Formation Committee solves many of the potential dilemmas by stressing age- and ability appropriateness in all these matters, a notion not foreign to Ursinus³⁷⁴⁵ or the Canons of Dordt³⁷⁴⁶. Regarding the requirement of faith, the Faith Formation Committee and other also regularly refer to the Belgic Confession article 35.

6.13.7. Belgic Confession Art. 35 and Ursinus

Faith may be required, but the Faith Formation Committee also states in her 2010 report that “Requiring a formal public profession of faith prior to participation in the Lord’s Supper (...) is not required by Scripture or the confessions.”³⁷⁴⁷ Fifteen years earlier the writers of report A of the study committee Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children came close to claiming the opposite when writing: “Because of this consistent testimony of our creeds, Church Order Article 59-a reads, “Members by baptism shall be admitted to the Lords Supper upon a public profession of Christ according to the Reformed creeds.”³⁷⁴⁸ A certain ambiguity concerning the requirement of profession of faith can be found with Ursinus. His Heidelberg Catechism was a tool to prepare youth for their profession of faith prior to participation in the Supper. But Ursinus also writes about the requirement of a profession of faith for baptism, that “to be born in the church, is, to infants, the same thing as a profession of faith.”³⁷⁴⁹

6.13.8. Belgic Confession Art. 35 and baptism

Belgic Confession article 35 is also often compared to confessional statements on Baptism. In 1968 proponents of adult- or believers Baptism refer to the same articles to convince the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands of the inconsistency between her stance on infant baptism and paedocommunion³⁷⁵⁰. The CRC 1986 majority report claims, based on Belgic Confession articles 34 and 35, that Baptism does not require personal faith at

³⁷⁴⁴ Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 604

³⁷⁴⁵ Ursinus even speaks of infants believing after their manner, or according to the condition of their age. Ursinus (1851), 370.

³⁷⁴⁶ Visee refers to Romans 12:3 “In accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you,” and Canons of Dordt chap. V, art. 9: “In accordance with the measure of their faith,” Visee (1979), 241.

³⁷⁴⁷ Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 590.

³⁷⁴⁸ Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 268.

³⁷⁴⁹ Ursinus (1851), 370.

³⁷⁵⁰ Supplement 80, Suppl. Acts RCN 1967-1968 Synod, 531.

the moment of administration³⁷⁵¹, whereas the Lord's Supper does require the presence of faith at the moment of participation. Henk de Jong distinguishes the (from human perspective) passive, unilateral nature of Baptism and the active, bilateral nature of the Supper. De Jong finds support in Q&A 69 which speaks of benefits, which he believes are more passively enjoyed, whereas Q&A 75 speaks of benefits in which we share by active participation through eating and drinking³⁷⁵². Bierma suggests that similar to Baptism, communal faith of the parents and the rest of the community "stands in" for the child, while the child develops individual faith in the midst of the experience of full fellowship at the Communion Table³⁷⁵³.

6.13.9. *Nourishment*

In his plea to lower the age of admission Hoeksema also mentions the nourishment that the Lord's Supper provides³⁷⁵⁴. Referring to Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 66, 67, 69, and 75 and Belgic Confession article 33 and 34, proponent Visee speaks of Baptism and Supper as educational instruments or teaching tools and he questions the practice that children are only allowed the use of these teaching tools after they have completed their education³⁷⁵⁵. Aalbers seems to suggest that teaching the doctrines of the church through catechism has replaced the sacraments as primary means of strengthening faith³⁷⁵⁶. But others argue that according to the creeds the sacraments don't produce faith, but confirm it³⁷⁵⁷, or that the Supper does not nourish to faith, but to maturity of faith³⁷⁵⁸.

6.13.10. *In summary*

In summary, the confessional themes in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion are similar as some of the main biblical and theological themes in this discussion: the requirements of faith and profession of faith, the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11, the implications of infant baptism, the question whether our theological or confessional categories fit children, and the possible solution of the concept of age and ability

³⁷⁵¹ "After all, baptism benefits us as long as and whenever faith is present, "not only when the water is on us and when we receive it, but throughout our entire lives," Agenda CRCNA Synod 1986, 357.

³⁷⁵² Henk de Jong, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?: Antwoord aan ds N. Cornelisse (1)," *Opbouw* (June 9, 1978): 178.

³⁷⁵³ Bierma (2007), 4.

³⁷⁵⁴ Hoeksema (1988), 561.

³⁷⁵⁵ Visee (1979), 236-239.

³⁷⁵⁶ Aalbers (1971), 21.

³⁷⁵⁷ With reference to HC Q&A 65, 1988 CRCNA Study Committee minority report.

³⁷⁵⁸ With reference to BC art. 35, 1995 CRCNA Study Committee *Report A*.

appropriateness, the nourishing nature of the Supper, and the educational or pedagogical element in our sacraments. A question specifically related to the catechetical nature is the question whether our practice allows for appropriation of the catechized confessional truths.

6.13.11. *In context*

The original setting of especially the Heidelberg Catechism also plays a role in the discussion. Many authors discuss the age at which children were admitted to the Lord's Supper in the days of the Reformers and the writing of the Reformed creeds. Hartvelt for example mentions that Luther admitted children at age seven to ten, Calvin at age ten, and 'Heidelberg' at age fourteen or fifteen³⁷⁵⁹. Both those who aim to lower the requirements as well as those who aim to uphold the requirements for admission to the Supper refer to the Palatinate Church Order to highlight the setting and praxis from which the Heidelberg Catechism originated. In the majority report of the 1986 CRC Study Committee, the fact that the Heidelberg Catechism was placed in between the form for Baptism and the form for the Lord's Supper in the Heidelberg or Palatinate Church Order underscores that children in the Reformed tradition are brought to the table through instruction³⁷⁶⁰. Visee on the other hand describes in his series of articles³⁷⁶¹ how the Palatinate Church Order prescribed rather minimal requirements for the admission of children to the Lord's Supper. Children had to know the Apostolic Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer by heart, and to answer the Catechism's questions regarding the Lord's Supper³⁷⁶². The requirements are also minimal in light of the fact that the minister is encouraged to help those children who are too timid to recite these by heart³⁷⁶³. Visee interprets this timidity as an extra indication of their youthfulness³⁷⁶⁴. He further stresses how the Palatinate Church Order holds parents responsible for requesting admission to the Lord's Supper on behalf of their children, which he takes as a further indication of the immaturity of those children³⁷⁶⁵.

³⁷⁵⁹ E.g. Hartvelt (Januari 30, 1971), 1; "Gezinscommunie," *Centraal Weekblad* (May 7, 1977): 2.

³⁷⁶⁰ Report 34, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, p. 348

³⁷⁶¹ G. Visee, writes seven articles about paedocommunion in the periodical *Opbouw*, which are republished in *Onderwezen in het Koninkrijk der Hemelen: keuze uit de persarbeid van ds. G. Visee* (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1979). His articles are also republished in English in a series of four under the title "May--and must--our children partake of the Lord's Supper?" published in four parts, *Christian Renewal*, resp. March 17, April 7, 21, May 5, 1986.

³⁷⁶² Visee (1979), 230. For the Palatinate Church Order Visee refers to Niesel (1938).

³⁷⁶³ Visee (1979), 230. Niesel (1938), 70.

³⁷⁶⁴ "En als die kindertjes, omdat ze nog zo klein waren, en daarom nog zo blôo, zo verlegen,", "And when those little children, because they were still so little, and therefore so timid, so shy, ..." (my translation). Visee (1979), 230.

³⁷⁶⁵ Visee (1979), 231.

6.13.12. Same confessions, different practice

It is clear that the age of admission to the Supper in the Dutch Reformed tradition at the beginning of the paedocommunion debate was considerably higher than in the days of the Reformers and than in the days when the Three Forms of Unity were written. We have heard how some attribute this change to cultural changes, saying that the fourteen and fifteen year old of Calvin's days equal the twenty or twenty two years old of our days³⁷⁶⁶. But it seems fair to say that there are also theological reasons for a practice with a higher age of admission, as much as those who propose or practice admission at a lower age than in the days of the Reformers have theological motives. And it could be argued that the theological germs for these different positions and practices were already present in the Reformed Confessions. Lee Palmer Wandel for example traces the strict approach toward admission to the Lord's Supper in the Dutch Reformed tradition and in Dutch Pietism back to the Belgic Confession, which "approaches the Supper through the lens of the division between the elect and the damned"; As Wandel states that for "those who accepted The Belgic Confession, the Lord's Table was a site where that division was not, as Calvin had it, experienced, but enforced."³⁷⁶⁷ Hartvelt suggests, in a more general way, that the Reformed Confessions may have contributed to the rise of the age of admission with their requirement of knowledge of misery, redemption and gratitude³⁷⁶⁸. The germs for a more covenantal approach and even lower ages of admission than in the days of the Reformation are present in the confessional stance on infant baptism. Cornelisse, who is not in favor of Communion of babies, but who argues for participation of children round age four or as soon as they start to sing and pray, is convinced that his position is in line with the Confession, and refers to Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 74³⁷⁶⁹. Gallant is of similar conviction and aims to "dispel the notion that adherence to paedocommunion would subvert subscription to these confessions."³⁷⁷⁰

6.13.13. Bound to the authors' intent

As much as the theological germs for a practice with either higher or lower ages of admission were present in the Confessions, it is fair to say that in both

³⁷⁶⁶ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971): 1.

³⁷⁶⁷ Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 197, 200.

³⁷⁶⁸ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1.

³⁷⁶⁹ N. Cornelisse, "Kinderen aan de tafel van de Heer," *Opbouw* (March 24): 1978, 90.

³⁷⁷⁰ Gallant (2003^B), 25.

situations we might not uphold the Confessions as the authors intended. Defending a higher age of admission by stressing the faith that the Heidelberg Catechism requires, as Van de Velde does³⁷⁷¹, does no justice to Ursinus' position on infant faith. Defending approximately age four as age of admission on the basis of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 74, like Cornelisse³⁷⁷², does no justice to Ursinus' explicit rejection of Communion of little children³⁷⁷³. But Bierma rightly questions "how much are we bound to an author's intent on matters like this?"³⁷⁷⁴

6.13.14. Truthful and realistic

Different from those who subscribe to the Westminster Larger Catechism, those within the Dutch Reformed tradition have considerable leeway as the Three Forms of Unity do not explicitly address the issue of paedocommunion. Bierma wonders whether we could argue that the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism establish standards only for adult participation in the Supper³⁷⁷⁵. For individuals who are convinced that our confessions define admission to the table on the basis of a historically Reformed, but wrong, and therefore not truly Reformed understanding of 1 Corinthians 11, changing of the Reformed confessions or adding at least a footnote accordingly³⁷⁷⁶, might allow for the most truthful way to continue to uphold the confessions. But in light of my study it is not realistic to expect broad support for such changes or footnotes within any of the researched denominations. Mutual tolerance of different interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11 seems the most feasible option.

6.14. Covenant

6.14.1. Role of the covenantal argument

Covenantal theology has developed within the Reformed tradition from its earliest beginnings. In light of my study it is relevant to be aware that some evangelical theologians, such as Willem Ouweneel, suggest that covenantal theology is a paradigm developed solely to defend or legitimize infant Baptism

³⁷⁷¹ Van de Velde (1985), 26.

³⁷⁷² Cornelisse (1978), 90.

³⁷⁷³ Reference is made to Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Williard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 366-67, 425, 429.

³⁷⁷⁴ Bierma (2007), 4.

³⁷⁷⁵ Bierma (2007), 4.

³⁷⁷⁶ Bierma diplomatically phrases these options as questions, Bierma (2007), 4.

in the debate of the Reformers with the Anabaptists³⁷⁷⁷. One of the explanations for the comeback of the issue of paedocommunion is the renewed attention paid to the doctrine of the covenant, as exemplified in the debate between Klaas Schilder and the Kuyperians³⁷⁷⁸. Smilde suggests that this debate took place in the context of a century long battle over covenant and baptism that started with the Secession of 1834 and ended in 1944 with the split within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands that gave birth to the Reformed Churches liberated³⁷⁷⁹. Smilde describes the years of crises in the thirties as a time in which the doctrine of covenant was overcharged, or overloaded³⁷⁸⁰. This is the era in which A. Janse, who would be influential in the life of paedocommunion pioneer Van Katwijk, wrote his book on living in the covenant³⁷⁸¹. Reinforcement of the covenantal character of Reformed theology was offered by the discovery of parallels between biblical covenants and ancient Near Eastern treaties and by the publication and English translation of Walter Eichrodt's *Theology of the Old Testament*³⁷⁸². Persuasive arguments on the parallels with Near Eastern treaties appear in the fifties; the first edition of Eichrodt's book was published in those same thirties of the Dutch Reformed covenant overload, but English translations were published from 1961; and thus both coincide with the beginnings of the paedocommunion discussion in Reformed Churches³⁷⁸³. Similar to Smilde, Stek speaks about a covenant overload in Reformed theology, but Stek recognizes such covenant overload in publications from the earliest to the latest decades of the century³⁷⁸⁴.

³⁷⁷⁷ "The doctrine of infant baptism does not flow forth from the doctrine of the covenant, as many believe, but it is exactly the opposite, the doctrine of covenant flows forth from the doctrine of infant baptism," (my translation), Willem J. Ouweneel, *Het verbond en het koninkrijk van God: Ontwerp van een verbonds-, doop- en koninkrijksleer*, Vol. IX in *Evangelisch-Dogmatische Reeks* (Heerenveen: Medema, 2011), 93.

³⁷⁷⁸ Tim Gallant, "'An Old Plank in a Program for Church Reformation': What the Hussites Wanted for the Lord's Supper- and Why," *Christian Renewal* (February 11, 2002).

³⁷⁷⁹ E. Smilde, *Een eeuw van strijd over verbond en doop* (Kampen: Kok, 1946).

³⁷⁸⁰ Smilde (1946), 324f. Years of war and crises ended individualism and the glorification of personality. Collectivism replaced individualism, strength was found in community.

³⁷⁸¹ A. Janse, *Leven in het verbond* (Kampen: Kok, 1937). But, for example, also S.G. De Graaf, *Verbondsgeschiedenis: Schetsen voor de vertelling van de Bijbelsche geschiedenis*, part I and II, 2nd ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1935 and n.d.); G.Ch. Aalders, *Het verbond Gods* (Kampen: Kok, 1939).

³⁷⁸² John H. Stek, "'Covenant' Overload in Reformed Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (April 1994): 17f.

³⁷⁸³ Stek (1994), 17, fn. 18 and fn. 19.

³⁷⁸⁴ Stek refers to H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, Vol. 3* (Kampen: Kok, 1918), Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), and Gordon J. Spykman, *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1992).

6.14.2. Relative importance of covenantal arguments

My research shows how arguments related to the covenant belong to the most significant arguments in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion, in terms of quantity³⁷⁸⁵. I come across the term in the discussion of all three researched Dutch Reformed denominations, more often in the Dutch Reformed Churches than in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, but even more so in the Christian Reformed Churches³⁷⁸⁶. I know from Zegwaard's research in local congregations within the PCN that covenantal arguments are used, but it is impossible for me to quantify her information and compare it with that from my own research in local congregations³⁷⁸⁷. In quantitative terms the covenant seems to have been equally important in the Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen and Fourteenth Street CRC. To my surprise the covenant was mentioned even more in the interviews and documents of New West CRC.

Covenant is significant in Reformed theology; "covenant is the essence of true religion", and "true religion (...) cannot be anything but a covenant", wrote Bavinck³⁷⁸⁸. I already mentioned how covenant has been significant in the defense of infant baptism in the Reformed tradition³⁷⁸⁹. Against that background it comes as no surprise that arguments related to the covenant also belong to the most significant arguments in terms of the quality as perceived by both pro and con. Paedocommunion proponent Russel Maatman, for example, seems to acknowledge three valid arguments, at least two of which are covenantal in nature³⁷⁹⁰. But even paedocommunion opponents, such as the writers of the 1986 majority *Report 34* count covenantal arguments among those that must be heard with respect and responded to with integrity³⁷⁹¹. "Compelling theological arguments from our framework of covenant theology for children being included in the Lord's Supper" is the first ground that warrants the appointment of a synodical study committee within the CRC³⁷⁹². And twenty six years later the Faith Formation Committee qualifies arguments based on covenant as one of the two

³⁷⁸⁵ Based on samples from our resources.

³⁷⁸⁶ Based on samples from our resources.

³⁷⁸⁷ Zegwaard (2006), 105, 115, 119, 157, 169. But it is noteworthy that in Zegwaard's portraits, summarizing her interviews, the covenant is only mentioned in 2 out of 24 portraits.

³⁷⁸⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, Vol. 2, 4th ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1928), 530, 531. Cp. Spykman (1992), 263.

³⁷⁸⁹ In Calvin's *Institutes*, for example, the word covenant appears 44 times (out of a total of 203) in the 21 page long chapter on infant baptism (out of a total of 944 pages), that is 21,6% instead of 2,2%. <http://www.ntlslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/Calvin%20Institutes%20of%20Christian%20Religion.pdf> (accessed August 22, 2016).

³⁷⁹⁰ (Minority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 367f.

³⁷⁹¹ (Majority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 349, 352.

³⁷⁹² Art. 99, Acts CRCNA 1984 Synod, 651.

substantive arguments or primary considerations that are left at the end of the discussion³⁷⁹³.

6.14.3. Past, present & future

Especially within the Christian Reformed Churches theological developments of past present and future are framed in terms of covenant theology. In explaining the influence of historical developments, of cultural context and medieval anxieties on the traditional Reformed position on children at the Lord's Supper, Hielema speaks of a tangled web of history, cultural context and anxiety trumping or undermining covenant theology³⁷⁹⁴. An RCA committee describes further developments within the Reformed tradition in similar ways: "along with revivalism came the idea that the children of the church need to be converted in the same manner as those outside the church", "old covenant theology was jeopardized by a new conversionist, individualistic theology."³⁷⁹⁵ Paedocommunion opponent Peter De Jong who feels more comfortable with the traditional Reformed stance, is warned by the disastrous experience of the New England Puritans with their "Half Way Covenant"³⁷⁹⁶. According to the RCA report the historical developments that it describes have contributed to tensions between the church's (covenant) theology and practice³⁷⁹⁷. Hielema speaks about living a contradiction, the tension between a covenantal vision on community in the Reformed theology regarding infant baptism, as embodied in the Christian schools, and non covenantal practice of being church together, as exemplified in the Communion practice³⁷⁹⁸. The tension between covenant and other theological notions, and the tension between covenant theology and practice, is sometimes also experienced and expressed by congregation members³⁷⁹⁹. Others have recognized that tension and speak about it as incentive to further develop or apply covenantal theology. Alvin Hoksbergen pleads to let the covenant that shaped the educational approach of Christian schools now shape the position of children in worship and at the Lord's Supper³⁸⁰⁰. The overture of Classis Rocky Mountain of 1984 expresses the hope of further

³⁷⁹³ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 592, 607.

³⁷⁹⁴ Hielema (June, 2005).

³⁷⁹⁵ *Baptized Non-Communicants and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper* (1977). James I. Cook, ed., *The Church Speaks: Papers of the Commission on Theology, Reformed Church in America, 1959-1984. (The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 79.

³⁷⁹⁶ Peter De Jong (March, 1988).

³⁷⁹⁷ Cook (1985), 79.

³⁷⁹⁸ Hielema (October, 2004).

³⁷⁹⁹ See portrait 1 and 24 of interviewees in Zegwaard's research, Zegwaard (2006), 157, 169.

³⁸⁰⁰ Alvin L. Hoksbergen, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

“application of covenant theology, and the related theology of children's place in the covenant community.”³⁸⁰¹

6.14.4. *Covenant membership*

In 1958, very early in the paedocommunion discussion, children’s covenantal privileges are mentioned in an argument to lower the age of admission to the Supper³⁸⁰². There seems transatlantic unanimity within the Dutch Reformed tradition that children share in the covenant of grace and as such receive a place within the congregation³⁸⁰³. As the Christian Reformed debate evolves many will come to consider one of the central issues whether being in the covenant or whether possessing and demonstrating faith is required for partaking in the Supper³⁸⁰⁴. Advocates often emphasize covenant identity as a ground for participation. “Covenant children should be treated as brothers and sisters in the Lord because they are covenant children, not because of what they say or do”, writes Maatman³⁸⁰⁵. His opinion finds support on the floor of synod³⁸⁰⁶. Covenant children receive the sacrament of initiation in both covenants, the same should apply for the sacrament of nurture, argues Bierma³⁸⁰⁷. Don’t leave children in limbo, argues John Vriend³⁸⁰⁸. Opponents disagree. Peter De Jong disqualifies the proposals of proponents as speculations from covenant membership which overrule God’s Word and stated biblical requirements³⁸⁰⁹. The 1986 Majority report states: “When a child is baptized into God’s covenant, one more place is set at the table of the Lord. Indeed, at the time of entrance into the covenant a seat is reserved at the Lord’s Supper for that new covenant member” but the report goes on to argue that “faith that discerns, remembers, and proclaims the body of Christ” is the biblical requirement for participation³⁸¹⁰. The 1988 minority report states that covenant membership, but also faith is required by Scripture³⁸¹¹. It is a view which will continue to find supporters³⁸¹². Accepting the covenant as (sole) ground for admission would require an overhaul of the confessional

³⁸⁰¹ *Overture 1 - Study the Issue of Covenant Children Partaking of the Lord's Supper (Art. 99)*, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 419.

³⁸⁰² Vos (February 28, 1958), 7.

³⁸⁰³ E.g. Art. 220, 229, Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 152, 158.

³⁸⁰⁴ E.g. William Vander Beek at the floor of 1986 Synod, Harvey Smit, “Children at the Lord’s table,” *Banner* (November 3, 1986); Jelle Tuininga, “Children at the Lord’s Supper,” *Outlook* (March 1988).

³⁸⁰⁵ (Minority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 368. Cp. For similar views in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Zegwaard (2006), 85, 115.

³⁸⁰⁶ E.g. from Steve Schlissel, Smit (November 3, 1986), 11.

³⁸⁰⁷ Bierma (2007), 3f.

³⁸⁰⁸ Vriend (November 24, 1980).

³⁸⁰⁹ Peter De Jong (1988), 15.

³⁸¹⁰ (Majority) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 347, 365.

³⁸¹¹ Cf. I Cor. 11:24-26; John 6:35-40, 51, 53-58. (Minority) *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 291, 304.

³⁸¹² E.g. Ryan Faber, “Our Paedocommunion Discussion: Children and the Lord’s Supper in the Christian Reformed Church,” *Stromata* (Spring 2003).

standards, warns Tuininga³⁸¹³. Especially by using the key phrase ‘age and ability appropriate’ the Faith Formation Committee takes a position which seeks to honor the covenant status of all who are baptized, affirming their membership in the body of Christ, while remaining faithful to the instruction of 1 Corinthians 11³⁸¹⁴.

6.14.5. *Covenant – family, community and people*

Among the several covenantal arguments, that changed former paedocommunion opponent³⁸¹⁵ Wentsel into a proponent, there is one which highlights that the structure of the covenant is not individualistic, but communal. Children (as well as slaves) belong to the family as community of faith, and as members of such households they are considered members of the church and participants in the covenant³⁸¹⁶. When the 1995 *Report B* speaks about covenantal interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 it is this communal aspect of the covenant that influences the interpretation³⁸¹⁷. The 2006 overture of Classis Holland also argues in terms of covenant community³⁸¹⁸. And I find the same terminology in the decision of Synod 2006 to “allow for the admission of all baptized members to the Lord’s Supper on the basis of their full membership in the covenant community.”³⁸¹⁹ The Faith Formation Committee notes that this 2006 decision in itself would support the position that all baptized members receive the bread and cup, regardless of their level of understanding, thus allowing for infant Communion, though some of the grounds for the decision were formulated more restrictively³⁸²⁰.

6.14.6. *Covenant structure – unilateral bilateral*

Several participants refer to the nature or structure of the covenant. The covenant of grace is monopleuric, it proceeds from God (...) but it is destined to become dipleuric, in the words of Bavinck³⁸²¹. The covenant has two sides; it is unilateral in its establishment, but bilateral in its operation and manifestation³⁸²². There are basically no demands or conditions, because God gives what He demands, and yet the covenant takes a conditional shape,

³⁸¹³ Tuininga (1988), 11.

³⁸¹⁴ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 590-591.

³⁸¹⁵ Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 192-193.

³⁸¹⁶ B. Wentsel, *De Heilige Geest, De kerk en de laatste dingen: De genademiddelen, het gemenebest en het eschaton*, Volume 4c of *Dogmatiek* (Kampen: Kok, 1998), 231.

³⁸¹⁷ *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 275, 277, 291f.

³⁸¹⁸ *Overture 16: Appoint a Study Committee to Examine the Admission of All Baptized Members to the Lord’s Supper* etc., Agenda CRCNA 2006 Synod, 528,529.

³⁸¹⁹ Art. 71, Acts CRCNA 2006 Synod, 730.

³⁸²⁰ *Faith Formation Committee*, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2008, 235.

³⁸²¹ H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, Vol. III, 4th ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1929), 211.

³⁸²² Or as the Dutch saying goes: “Het verbond is eenzijdig in zijn ontstaan, tweezijdig in zijn bestaan.”

suggests Bavinck³⁸²³. The covenant is both conditional and unconditional, summarizes Louis Berkhof this paradox³⁸²⁴.

6.14.7. Human construction

Several paedocommunion opponents suggest that the two sacraments of Baptism and Communion reflect this paradoxical nature or this two sided structure of the covenant³⁸²⁵. Barend Kamphuis argues that God's Word calls for an answer; God's action expects our reaction. One sacrament, Baptism, reflects God's Word and action, the other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, requires our answer or reaction. From this perspective it is the Supper that reflects the confession that God does not treat us as if we were 'blocks and stones'³⁸²⁶. "Why else would God have given us two sacraments?", asks Kamphuis³⁸²⁷. An interesting contribution in this regard comes from Jan Mudde in an *Opbouw* article from 1995³⁸²⁸. Mudde acknowledges that the Bible texts about Baptism and the Supper give no ground for this division. He acknowledges that it is a later, human (theological) construction³⁸²⁹. Nevertheless Mudde chooses this construction and the 'system' of baptism-profession-Supper, because it does justice to some (other) elementary scriptural notions. Mudde writes: "If I limit myself to listening to Scripture, then I am of the opinion that allowing children at the Lord's Supper has the strongest, exegetical papers/credentials"³⁸³⁰, but also "As far as I am concerned the result of the exegesis does not coincide with the result of the deliberation."³⁸³¹ One wonders whether, according to Mudde, paedocommunion is an issue where hermeneutics trumps exegesis³⁸³². I agree

³⁸²³ Bavinck (1929), 211.

³⁸²⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 280.

³⁸²⁵ E.g. H. Hoksbergen "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" *Nederlands Dagblad*, Maart 1989; Luiten (April 21, 2011), 301. Cp. Henk de Jong who quotes Klaas Schilder for the need to join preaching of the covenant with personal faith, De Jong (1976), 155.

³⁸²⁶ "Stokken en blokken," *Canons of Dordt III/IV*, 16.

³⁸²⁷ Kamphuis (February 13, 1982), 299f.

³⁸²⁸ Jan Mudde, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" *Opbouw* (January 13, 1995), 4-6.

³⁸²⁹ "Een constructie achteraf," Mudde (1995), 5.

³⁸³⁰ "beperk ik me tot het luisteren naar de Schrift, dan meen ik dat het toelaten van de kinderen tot de Avondmaalstafel de sterkste, exegetische papieren heeft," Mudde (1995), 5.

³⁸³¹ "Het resultaat van de exegese valt wat mij betreft niet samen met het resultaat van de bezinning.

Het is mi. geoorloofd - niet uit eigenwijsheid of ongehoorzaamheid jegens de Schrift - je naast de exegese van de relevante passages af te vragen: zijn er nog andere argumenten die een rol mogen spelen bij de standpuntbepaling? Andere argumenten, die ook van hoog bijbels gehalte zijn?" Mudde (1995), 5.

³⁸³² Mudde will be known for his significant contribution to the denominational report on women in office, <http://kerkelijkheid.nl/download/297>, and his contribution to the report on homosexuals in office, Jan Mudde, *Van sjibbolet naar sjalom: Ruimte voor homoseksuelen in de gemeente van Christus* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn Motief, 2015). We note that in both reports Mudde's hermeneutics lead to a plea for inclusion, whereas in his paedocommunion article the apparently same principle leads to support for exclusion.

with Mudde in the sense that those who take this stance can find scriptural support for the bilateral aspect of both the covenant and the Supper, but fail to do justice to the scriptural data that highlights the bilateral aspect of Baptism and the unilateral aspect of the Supper.

Mudde is right in speaking about a human construction. The question Mudde fails to ask and answer is whether a construction is conceivable which does justice to the exegesis of the texts on Baptism and Supper as well as the other scriptural notions he refers to. My suggestion would be that this is possible when more attention is paid to the profitability of Baptism through our lives as the Belgic Confession highlights³⁸³³, or to the lifelong impact of baptism as highlighted in Romans 6. It would be possible if our theological models as well as our practice would do more justice to the dynamic nature of the sacraments over time, and to the dynamics of the lives, growth, and faith formation of the participants.

6.14.8. Covenant and dynamics of life and history

Interestingly it is Kamphuis who makes the following statements “What is the covenant? Surely, that God wants to accompany the human in history”; “Baptism is indeed senseless, unless you understand that God wants to enter history with this child”; “It is God’s good creation that He gives the human a history, from suckling to grown-up en that He wants to accompany the human in that whole history.”³⁸³⁴ But in Kamphuis’ proposal both sacraments only mark beginning and ‘end’ of that process. Kamphuis accuses Karl Barth of failing to appreciate covenantal history with a gradual development, but his own proposal recognizes only two stages in covenant life, and also lacks gradual development³⁸³⁵. Paedocommunion advocate Roth highlights the unilateral and bilateral aspects of both Baptism and Supper, and he sees room for faith which grows while participating³⁸³⁶. In other words, both sacraments are primarily about promise, but always imply and include demands³⁸³⁷. The Faith Formation Committee even more explicitly seeks “a practice that reflects both elements of covenantal engagement: God’s gracious invitation to all members of the body, and the importance of obedience to God’s commands”, as well as a healthy practices for sustaining and deepening table participation over time³⁸³⁸. The Faith Formation

³⁸³³ Cf. Belgic Confession, art. 34.

³⁸³⁴ Kamphuis (February 13, 1982), 299, 300.

³⁸³⁵ Kamphuis (February 13, 1982), 300f.

³⁸³⁶ Roth (April 8, 2011), 296-299.

³⁸³⁷ E.g. Gallant (2003^A), 138.

³⁸³⁸ *Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 608-609, 618.*

Committee's key phrase 'age and ability appropriate' also helps to do justice to both the unilateral and bilateral nature of the covenant.

Related to such acknowledgment of the dynamics of life is the covenantal notion in Maatman's 1986 minority report that the Bible recognizes three (or four) life stories: 1- a life of lifelong rebellion, 2- a life marked by the fundamental conversion from rebellion to obedience, 3-- the life of a lifelong Christian, born and raised in the covenant, growing in faith, but without experiencing a conversion, and 4- the life of a covenant breaker³⁸³⁹. Likewise, the 1988 majority report concludes that the only basis for denying covenant children the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not their youth or the immaturity of their faith but covenantal unfaithfulness, disloyalty, and rebellion³⁸⁴⁰.

6.14.9. *Old and New Covenant*

6.14.9.1. *New Covenant*

Morris Greidanus writes that "if we follow the beloved covenant theme we'll get an even stronger yes to infant Communion than we do to infant baptism."³⁸⁴¹ He must be thinking about the fact that Jesus' words "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you"³⁸⁴² explicitly connect the Supper to the New Covenant, whereas baptism is not connected with the covenant in such an explicit way. In the same vein Bierma explains that in the Old Testament children received the sacrament of initiation as well as the sacrament of nurture³⁸⁴³, that pattern did not suddenly change in the New Covenant³⁸⁴⁴.

6.14.9.2. *Born into one, reborn in the other*

The 1977-1979 majority report writes that Old Covenant and New Covenant are in essence one, (...) there is no reason to assume that the position of the child in this dispensation is principally different from that of the child in the old dispensation³⁸⁴⁵. This is written in response to those opponents who

³⁸³⁹ (Minority II) *Report 34*, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 367f.

³⁸⁴⁰ (Majority) *Report 26*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 283.

³⁸⁴¹ Morris N. Greidanus, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980):

12.

³⁸⁴² Luke 22:20.

³⁸⁴³ Bierma mentions Ex. 12:3-4, 21-26, Deut. 12:6-7, and 1 Cor. 10:1-4.

³⁸⁴⁴ Bierma (2007), 3-4.

³⁸⁴⁵ *Supplement 44*, Suppl. Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 212.

suggest that the newness of the covenant renders meaningless whether children participated in the Passover meals of the Old Covenant, and to those who suggest that birth incorporated a person in the Old Covenant, whereas rebirth or faith incorporates a person in the New Covenant. The writers point to the fact that young and old within the circle of God's people have been called to faith and repentance throughout the centuries.

6.14.9.3. Richer promises, higher demands

The same argument against paedocommunion is found in the different denominations I researched. So much richer as the promise is which enfolded in the New Covenant, so much more may God expect a conscious answer given in faith, claims B. Kamphuis³⁸⁴⁶. In the 1993 report *Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children* the position of opponents is described as follows: "In the new covenant, God's law is written on the hearts of his people (Jer. 31: 31-34), a metaphor which implies an internalization of faith. Therefore, this position argues, if the Lords Supper is a sacrament of the new covenant, regeneration and personal faith are the prerequisites."³⁸⁴⁷ With almost the exact same words and reference to Jeremiah 31: 31-34 the 1995 *Report A* reaches the conclusion: "Therefore, since the Lord's Supper is the sacrament of the new covenant (Luke 22:20), regeneration and a faith commitment of the heart are the necessary prerequisites."³⁸⁴⁸ In response Visee refers to Calvin's refutation of the Anabaptist who made the same claim³⁸⁴⁹. John Stek explains why baptism can be administered to infants like circumcision, whereas the Supper cannot be administered to children like Passover was, by understanding both circumcision and baptism as seals of the Abrahamic covenant, but Passover as belonging to the Old Covenant, and the Supper to the New Covenant³⁸⁵⁰.

6.14.9.4. From the youngest of them

Paedocommunion opponents seem to overlook the fact that the full prophecy reads "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest." Gallant humbly suggests the Hebrew word *qaton* translated as least in verse 34 can also be understood

³⁸⁴⁶ Kamphuis (February 13, 1982), 301.

³⁸⁴⁷ *Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children*, Agenda CRCNA 1993 Synod, 239.

³⁸⁴⁸ *Report A*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 267.

³⁸⁴⁹ Visee refers to the *Institutes* book II, chapter 10 and 11. Visee (May 5, 1986), 12.

³⁸⁵⁰ Stek (December 15, 1980), 4.

as youngest or younger³⁸⁵¹. Gallant is too humble. Commentaries support his suggestion that knowledge of God will extend to all ages and classes³⁸⁵². In Jeremiah 6: 11-13, the same Hebrew phrase translated ‘*from the least to the greatest of them*’ refers to variety of people from the children in the street, the young men gathered together, both husband and wife, to the old, those weighed down with years, and prophets and priests alike³⁸⁵³. And the same phrase describes the participants in the covenant renewal led by Josiah in 2 Kings 23: 2³⁸⁵⁴. Like Gallant Vonk refers to the prophecy of Joel 2:28-29 and its fulfillment in Acts 2:17-18, and hence Vonk speaks of young and old, servants and free, (...) smallest and greatest, the least and most respected³⁸⁵⁵. The *Word Biblical Commentary* further notes that according to Hosea 8: 1-2 the opposite of knowing the Lord is breaking the covenant and transgressing the law³⁸⁵⁶. Isaiah 54:13 prophesies “All your children will be taught by the Lord, and great will be their peace”, in relation to the covenant of peace and the everlasting covenant³⁸⁵⁷. Six times the prophets refer to the everlasting covenant, three times to a covenant of peace, and three times they speak of God’s promise to give people a new heart and spirit. According to Gentry and Wellum this is a just a variety of ways to speak of the new covenant, which itself is mentioned only once in the Old Testament³⁸⁵⁸.

6.14.10. Kuyper and Schilder

The debate between Schilder and Kuyper does not only reveal renewed interest in the covenant, but also reminds us that within the Dutch Reformed denominations of this research different views are represented on how the

³⁸⁵¹ Gallant writes: “Interestingly, the Hebrew word translated least in Jeremiah 31:34 (qaton) can also be understood as youngest or younger, although the pairing with greatest may lead us to suppose that the idea is probably not to the fore here. However, the Hebrew word translated greatest (gadol) also can carry the idea of age, thus, older or oldest (see e.g. Gen. 27:1; 29:16, where this term is used to indicate the older sibling in the family). The fact is, the least-greatest range in this verse is not exhausted by the notion of age relationship, but it is certainly inclusive of it (cf. Joel 2:28),” Gallant (2003^A), 27.

³⁸⁵² Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52: Word Biblical Commentary; Volume 27* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 135, referencing Holladay, 2:198-99. Hans Smidt comments “Schon die Kinder ,kennen‘ ihn, denn auch ihnen ist sein Wille ins Herz geschrieben,” *Die grossen Propheten und ihre Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915), 363, mentioned in Aalders (1939), 209. Aalders mentions other German commentaries that interpret these words as “der Niedrige und Vornehme” and as “gelehrt und ungelehrt.”

³⁸⁵³ Keown e.a. (1995), 135. Aalders (1939), 209, also mentions Jer. 7:18, 8:10.

³⁸⁵⁴ Keown e.a. (1995), 135. The same chapter that tells about the remarkable Passover celebration.

³⁸⁵⁵ C. Vonk, *Jeremia Ezechiël: De voorzeide leer, Part 1^{hb}* (Barendrecht: Liebeek & Hooimeijer, 1981), 415-417.

³⁸⁵⁶ Keown e.a. (1995), 135.

³⁸⁵⁷ Isaiah 54:10, 55: 3.

³⁸⁵⁸ Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 434. Aalders, who does not agree that all these texts refer to the new covenant, seems to agree on this text. Aalders (1939), 161.

position of children within the New Covenant should be theologically qualified, and to what extent and in what way the New Covenant may be ground for the administration of a sacrament. Gallant sides with Schilder on the issue of presumed regeneration³⁸⁵⁹. Visee's plea to partake in the Lord's Supper on the basis of the steadfast and sure promises of God revealed in the gospel and given to the church, as well as on the basis of the covenantal relation between God and His people, fits with a more Schilderian approach³⁸⁶⁰. Henk De Jong considers a self-evident-faith, what others have called covenantal automatism, a harmful element in his own Schilderian background, and rejects it as ground for admission of children³⁸⁶¹. The term presumed regeneration is not mentioned in the pleas for admission of children from within the (Kuyperian) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, but the 'outsider' W. van 't Spijker suspects that it may be the influence of this doctrine which led to the innovation³⁸⁶². But I notice that hardly any participants in the debate explicitly position themselves and their grounds in the context of this Schilder Kuyper debate.

6.15. Baptism

6.15.1. Importance in debate

The baptism of infants and children plays an important role in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion debate. It is one of the major arguments of paedocommunion advocates. Gallant, for example, states "paedocommunion gains great argumentative force through analogies to baptism."³⁸⁶³ Gallant presupposes infant Communion, Van den Berg starts his chapter on children and the Lord's Supper with the biblical foundation of infant baptism³⁸⁶⁴. Interviewee Mike Luce expresses the importance of baptism by saying that we are all welcome "essentially because of baptism."³⁸⁶⁵ Opponents recognize it as one of the principal arguments for paedocommunion; Hendriks mentions it as the second major argument for paedocommunion³⁸⁶⁶.

³⁸⁵⁹ Gallant (2003^A), 197 fn. 218.

³⁸⁶⁰ Visee (May 5, 1986), 15.

³⁸⁶¹ Henk De Jong, "Over geloofsbelijdenis en avondmaal vieren (1)," *Opbouw* (May 7, 1976): 147.

³⁸⁶² W. van 't Spijker, "Avondmaal ook voor kinderen? (V)," *De Wekker* (August 27, 1982): 400-401.

³⁸⁶³ Gallant (2002), 135.

³⁸⁶⁴ Gallant (2002), 13f.; Van den Berg (1978), 43f.

³⁸⁶⁵ Mike Luce, interview with author, June 6, 2011.

³⁸⁶⁶ Hendriks (1990), 102; Venema considers it part of the covenant argument, second in his overview of principal arguments for paedocommunion, Venema (2009), 4f.

6.15.2. *Renewed reflection*

Historically, the perceived inconsistency of baptizing infants without allowing them to participate in the Lord's Supper was first used in the debate between the Anabaptists and the Reformers as an argument by Anabaptists against the infant baptism practiced by the Reformers. In the more recent internal Reformed debate the Reformed practice³⁸⁶⁷ of infant baptism and Reformed theology³⁸⁶⁸ and confessions³⁸⁶⁹ on the baptism of infants are introduced by advocates of paedocommunion. Youth are also among those who raise questions about paedocommunion in light of the baptism of infants³⁸⁷⁰. Some advocates suggest that a return to-, a reflection on-, or a renewed appreciation of Reformed theology of baptism lead to reconsidering the theology of the Lord's Supper³⁸⁷¹. Such new appreciation of infant baptism is expressed, among others, in new baptismal practices³⁸⁷². The personal stories of some of the paedocommunion advocates clearly reveal this sequence of reflection on the one leading to reflection on the other³⁸⁷³. Others indicate how the historical relation between infant baptism and paedocommunion prior to the Reformation³⁸⁷⁴, or as continued in the Orthodox traditions³⁸⁷⁵, inspired them to rethink this relationship between the sacraments³⁸⁷⁶. In general opponents address the issue of infant baptism primarily in response to the arguments of advocates.

6.15.3. *Grounds to consider or to change*

The advocates of paedocommunion refer to the similarity between baptism and Lord's Supper, infant baptism and paedocommunion³⁸⁷⁷. And several interviewees from the researched congregations mention the inconsistency between the infant baptism practice and the traditional Reformed Lord's

³⁸⁶⁷ E.g. Robert Roth argues from the liturgical position of children, Roth (2011), 296f.

³⁸⁶⁸ E.g. Overture 1 by Classis Rocky Mountain, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 419-424. Referencing the American, Dutch Reformed and Presbyterian, theologians Louis Berkhof, Charles Hodge, and Paul Jewett.

³⁸⁶⁹ E.g. Cornelisse (March 24, 1978), 90. Referring to Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer 74.

³⁸⁷⁰ For example in catechism classes. Harms (October 13, 1976).

³⁸⁷¹ E.g. James I. Cook, "The Toughest Issue: Why the RCA Said Yes to Baptized Children at the Lord's Supper," *Reformed Worship*, Summer, 1989, 30; Abma (March, 2009).

³⁸⁷² Hartvelt (January, 1971), 2; Aalbers (1976), 90.

³⁸⁷³ E.g. Vermeer (1968), 12; Tim Gallant, <https://timgallant.com/about/> (accessed, June 19, 2017); Mike Goheen, conversations with author.

³⁸⁷⁴ E.g. Overture classis Holland 2006; David Rylaarsdam, "United, Separated, Re-united: The Story of Baptism and the Lords Supper," *Forum* (Spring 2007).

³⁸⁷⁵ E.g. the Greek Orthodox Church, Syd Hielema, "Deep-in-the-Bones Belonging," *Banner* (January 2011).

³⁸⁷⁶ Vice versa, the discussion on paedocommunion leads to a renewed reflection on infant baptism, e.g. Aalbers (1976), 87.

³⁸⁷⁷ E.g. Clarence J. Vos, "Suffer the Little Children; Thoughts on Children and Their Relation to Communion," *Banner* (February 28, 1958); In 1963 a question by one of the CRC's medical missionaries on the foreign field, John H. Bratt, "The Reader Asks; At What Age Should We Admit to the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (January 25, 1963).

Supper practice. One of the congregation members said: “it seems like in baptism we are Reformed and in our celebration of the Lord’s Supper we are more like Baptists.”³⁸⁷⁸

Paedocommunion advocates and opponents agree that the argument for baptism, and certainly the Reformed grounds for infant baptism, at least deserve consideration³⁸⁷⁹. But when several advocates plead in favor of paedocommunion on the same Reformed grounds as advanced for infant baptism³⁸⁸⁰, some opponents suggest they do not understand or do not really agree with those Reformed grounds for infant baptism³⁸⁸¹.

6.15.3.1. *Covenantal grounds*

Some don’t mention those specific grounds, but often reference is made to the covenantal argument made in the Reformed doctrine of infant baptism³⁸⁸². The covenant has already shaped our educational approach in Christian schools, and theology of infant baptism, but has failed to shape our Lord’s Supper theology, argues Alvin Hoksbergen³⁸⁸³. Both sacraments reflect how children are included in the covenant³⁸⁸⁴. Morris Greidanus suggests that the covenant theme does support infant Communion even more than infant baptism³⁸⁸⁵. Opponents for example argue that baptism and Communion as a pair reflect the structure of the covenant, unilateral in its initiative, bilateral in its existence³⁸⁸⁶. Stek distinguishes the sacraments based on the distinct covenants they are related to³⁸⁸⁷. See further my section on the covenantal argument.

³⁸⁷⁸ Interviewee Mary Koster quoting another member, interview with author.

³⁸⁷⁹ E.g. Visee (1979), 250; Majority Report, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 348, 351f.

³⁸⁸⁰ E.g. The ‘second questioner’, one of the colleagues of John H. Bratt, “The Reader Asks; Why Bar Children from the Lord’s Supper?” *Banner* (November 5, 1965); Stanley Vermeer, “Should Children Participate in the Lord’s Supper?” *Stromata* (February 1968); K.A. Schippers, “Onze kerkdiensten en de jongeren,” *Ouderlingenblad* (April 1984).

³⁸⁸¹ E.g. Majority Report, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod. When that 1986 majority has become the 1988 minority it remarkably enough claims that baptism is administered to children because of a specific biblical command, which the Supper lacks, *Minority Report*, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 293.

³⁸⁸² E.g. Second questioner in Bratt (1965), 15; Overture Classis Rocky Mountain, Agenda CRCNA 1984 Synod, 419f., referencing the American, Dutch Reformed and Presbyterian, theologians Louis Berkhof, Charles Hodge, and Paul Jewett.

³⁸⁸³ Alvin L. Hoksbergen, “Should children participate in the Lord’s Supper?” *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

³⁸⁸⁴ E.g. Lyle D. Bierma, “Reflections: Children at the Lord’s Supper and Reformed Theology,” *Forum* (Spring 2007).

³⁸⁸⁵ Morris N. Greidanus, “Should children participate in the Lord’s Supper?” *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

³⁸⁸⁶ Kamphuis (1992), 5.

³⁸⁸⁷ Stek (1980), 4.

6.15.3.2. Household ground

The household concept as ground for infant baptism is also referred to³⁸⁸⁸. On the Dutch side of the ocean the importance of the household concept for several participants may implicitly be revealed by the use of the word *gezinscommunie*, family-Communion³⁸⁸⁹. And on the North American side of the ocean we also find several examples of emphasis on family wise celebration of Communion³⁸⁹⁰. In most cases an explicit connection is made with the household celebration of the Passover meal, but some also emphasize the New Testament baptism and salvation of households³⁸⁹¹. With an unusual reference to the sign on the doorpost and the sign on the forehead³⁸⁹², paedocommunion opponent Henk de Jong distinguishes the promise of being inside *and* the call to enter, what belongs to the household or family and what to the individual, what requires covenantal faith and what requires personal faith. As far as the household concept is connected to the Passover, opponents emphasize the difference with the Lord's Supper³⁸⁹³. More in general any communal approach is countered by emphasizing the individual nature of biblical requirements.

6.15.3.3. Similar requirements

Paedocommunion advocates argue that the requirements for receiving both sacraments are not, or should not be, different³⁸⁹⁴. And they point out that certain requirements do not apply to babies and infants, analogue to infant baptism³⁸⁹⁵. Faith, for example, should be required in similar ways as in baptism, circumcision, and Passover; in all of these blessings are shared by some apart from profession of faith on their part³⁸⁹⁶. In response one paedocommunion opponents hold that in infant baptism the conditions are levied on the covenantal parents, but in the case of Communion on the prospective celebrant³⁸⁹⁷. With reference to the confession³⁸⁹⁸ others argue

³⁸⁸⁸ E.g. Bratt (1965), 15.

³⁸⁸⁹ E.g. Aalbers (1971), 60f.; Hartvelt (May7, 1977) (May 14, 1977)

³⁸⁹⁰ E.g. John D. Witvliet, "Welcoming Children to the Table," *Reformed Worship* (March 2012).

³⁸⁹¹ E.g. Gallant (200..), 14, 184f.

³⁸⁹² Exodus 12:7, Ezekiel 9:4.

³⁸⁹³ E.g. Schravendeel argues Passover is celebrated in the context of a nation and of families, the Lord's Supper in the context of the congregation, P. Schravendeel, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" *Credo* (May 1977): 13.

³⁸⁹⁴ E.g. G. Henneveld "Voices: Children at the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (May 1, 1970).

³⁸⁹⁵ Majority Report, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 276f. Among others because that would shift the ground of the argument from the ethical to the psychological.

³⁸⁹⁶ *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 280

³⁸⁹⁷ John H. Bratt, "The Reader Asks; Why Bar Children from the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 5, 1965).

³⁸⁹⁸ Belgic Confession, art. 34, 35.

that baptism does not depend on whether faith is being present at the moment of administration whereas the Lord's Supper does³⁸⁹⁹. Some argue that Communion by nature includes an element of confession and requires genuine faith³⁹⁰⁰. And therefore the unbreakable union between baptism, confession and the Lord's Supper needs to be maintained³⁹⁰¹.

6.15.4. *The time to nourish and nurture*

There is agreement that baptism signifies initiation, incorporation and regeneration, and the Lord's Supper signifies nurture. One important issue in the debate is whether one can be nurtured with the Supper as soon as the sacrament of regeneration is received, or as soon as life and profession give testimony of regeneration. This becomes clear in the different interpretations or applications of the Belgic Confession art. 35³⁹⁰². Another issue whether Communion signifies nurture or nourishment as needed for spiritual development, or whether, as Nicholas Monsma for example suggests, Communion signifies growth, requiring prior spiritual development³⁹⁰³. Tuininga, for example, argues that infants can be baptized without their knowledge, but not commune without their knowledge³⁹⁰⁴. Bierma on the other hand points out that in the Old Testament children received sacraments of both initiation and nurture or nourishment³⁹⁰⁵. Mulder, among others, points out that both sacraments involve a lifelong process of growing understanding³⁹⁰⁶.

6.15.5. *Belonging to the body of Christ*

Many advocates, as well as interviewees, emphasize how baptism is, or signifies, our membership of the church community. Several advocates describe this community in terms such as the body of Christ, or communion, thus alluding to the Lord's Supper³⁹⁰⁷. Heitink connects the two by arguing that baptized children belong to the community which Communion constitutes³⁹⁰⁸. Many speak in terms of belonging. Interviewee Mary Koster describes how in the former situation "we said in baptism you belong, you are

³⁸⁹⁹ Majority Report, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 357.

³⁹⁰⁰ E.g. Jelle Tuininga, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

³⁹⁰¹ Majority Report, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 347, quoting art. 125, Acts CRCNA 1904 Synod, 38.

³⁹⁰² Compare for example Gallant (2003^b), 27f. and Henk de Jong (June 9, 1978), 178.

³⁹⁰³ Nicholas J. Monsma, "Should children partake of the Lord's supper?" *Banner* (January 6, 1950): 5.

³⁹⁰⁴ Jelle Tuininga, "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook* (October 1984).

³⁹⁰⁵ Bierma (2007).

³⁹⁰⁶ Timothy J. Mulder, "Adding a Leaf to the Table: In Defense of Inviting Children to the Lord's Supper," *Reformed Worship* (June 1998).

³⁹⁰⁷ Hartvelt (January, 1971), 2. Aalbers (1971), 43.

³⁹⁰⁸ E.g. Gerben Heitink, "Belijdenis doen: ja of nee?" *Ouderlingenblad* (January 1980).

part of the church and then at the Lord's Supper (...) we were saying you only belong if you profess your faith."³⁹⁰⁹ Mike Goheen speaks of a sense that baptism is an entry into this environment called covenant³⁹¹⁰ as the air he breathes, as the very basis through which we raise our children³⁹¹¹. One possible response is given by Henk de Jong who speaks of infant baptism as separated in two moments, starting with God's word at the baptism of the infant and finishes at the profession of faith later in life³⁹¹². Others respond that when a child is baptized into God's covenant, one more place is set at the table of the Lord³⁹¹³. Henk de Jong speaks about baptism as incorporation, but considers the Lord's Supper a deeper level of covenantal intimacy, comparable to sexual intercourse³⁹¹⁴. Witvliet uses the phrase "age- and ability-appropriate obedience"³⁹¹⁵ to negotiate the tension experienced between the conviction that baptized children are members of the church, and that participation in the Lord's Supper is a matter of active obedience³⁹¹⁶.

6.15.6. Action and reaction

Many opponents, one way or another, emphasize the divine initiative in baptism, but stress the reciprocal nature of Communion³⁹¹⁷. Henk de Jong suggests that these two sides explain why there are two sacraments³⁹¹⁸. Many opponents make the distinction between passive baptism and active participation in the Lord's Supper³⁹¹⁹. They sometimes refer to the fact that being baptized is always spoken of in the passive voice, whereas celebration of the Lord's Supper is spoken of in the active voice³⁹²⁰. Van Katwijk responds to this argument that from that perspective prayer is also active, though our children are taught to pray from early on³⁹²¹. Harry der Nederlanden points to the simplicity of the basic human actions that underlie the two sacraments; even babies can be washed and fed³⁹²². Many opponents understand active in

³⁹⁰⁹ Mary Koster, interview with author, June 6, 2011.

³⁹¹⁰ Or a sense of entering into this community that is in covenant with God.

³⁹¹¹ Michael Goheen, interview with author, June 15, 2011.

³⁹¹² Henk de Jong, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal: Antwoord aan ds. N. Cornelisse (1)," *Opbouw* (June 9, 1978): 178.

³⁹¹³ Report 34, *Majority Report, Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod*, 347.

³⁹¹⁴ Henk de Jong (June 9, 1978), 178.

³⁹¹⁵ And "age- and ability-appropriate practice."

³⁹¹⁶ John D. Witvliet, "The Joy of Age- and Ability Appropriate Obedience: Reflections on Faith Formation and Children at the Lord's Supper," *Forum* (Winter 2010).

³⁹¹⁷ E.g. Jelle Tuininga, "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook* (October 1984); Henk de Jong (March 26, 1976), 97f.

³⁹¹⁸ Henk de Jong (June 9, 1978), 178.

³⁹¹⁹ E.g. Runia (1995).

³⁹²⁰ E.g. Van Katwijk (1966), 6

³⁹²¹ Van Katwijk (1966), 6

³⁹²² Harry der Nederlanden, "Soapbox: Feeding the Children," *Banner* (March 19, 1984).

terms of obedience to requirements such as those of 1 Corinthians 11³⁹²³. Tim Gallant argues that a passive-active distinction does not hold in light of the Old Testament³⁹²⁴. Henk de Jong defends the passive active distinction with reference to Heidelberg Catechism question 69 on baptism and 75 on the Lord's Supper; the first speaks of the sacrifice of Christ being of "real advantage to thee", the second says of the Lord's Supper "thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ". Trying to do justice to both God's action and the importance of faithful human reaction, leads Linda Male to favor earlier participation, but not infant Communion³⁹²⁵.

6.16. Liturgical

6.16.1. Importance

Near the end of the nineteenth century, a renewed interest for liturgy emerged within the Dutch Protestant churches, which would be spearheaded by the Liturgical Movement. This was especially true within the mainline Reformed churches of the Netherlands. It comes as no surprise that Zegwaard, who researched the paedocommunion debate within those denominations, considers the influence of the Liturgical Movement on the renewed attention to paedocommunion most significant³⁹²⁶. Within other denominations the influence seems to have been only of secondary nature³⁹²⁷.

Only few of the arguments used in the paedocommunion debate seem to be liturgical. Syd Hielema hopes for renewed recognition of the power and wonder of worship and the consequent recovery of awe and adoration³⁹²⁸. Along similar lines church musician and liturgist Anje de Heer raises the question whether ability matters in a liturgical reality that transcends our abilities anyway, and whether liturgical reality by its eschatological nature does not allow taking into account what is not yet, but will certainly be³⁹²⁹. Robert Roth argues from the ambiguous liturgical position of children as

³⁹²³ E.g. Runia (1995).

³⁹²⁴ Gallant (2003A), 137.

³⁹²⁵ Linda K. Male, "In Memory Of Anne Butler: Reflections On Children At The Lord's Supper," *Stromata* (May 1988).

³⁹²⁶ Zegwaard (2006), 39; Cp. Aalbers (1976), 93f.

³⁹²⁷ See for example Kenntners research on German churches, Kenntner (1980), 38.

³⁹²⁸ Syd Hielema, "A Precious Feast, a Tangled Web: A Case for Welcoming Children at the Table," *Reformed Worship* (June 2005).

³⁹²⁹ Anje de Heer, "Kinderen en avondmaal: Een historische en liturgische invalshoek," *De Reformatie* (September 9, 2011): 512-513.

reflected in Reformed Baptism and Communion liturgical practice³⁹³⁰. For the Worship Planning Team of Fourteenth Street that tension is also one of the incentives to discuss welcoming the children³⁹³¹. Twelve year old Jozina Vander Klok addresses a similar tension between the liturgy which speaks of “we all share the same loaf” and the fact that she is and feels left out³⁹³². Schippers suggests that children are more sensitive to this breach of the bond with their parents and the congregation, more perceptive to the conflict between Jesus who blesses children and the church which hinders them³⁹³³. S.P. Zwaan³⁹³⁴ argues that faith formation happens best through so-called liturgical catechism in which liturgy is both source and goal of catechism; source in the sense of learning by doing, goal in the sense of appropriating Gods promises and intensifying obedience³⁹³⁵. Later Zwaan places the issue of paedocommunion in the context of a twentieth century search for a place for the child within the liturgy in general³⁹³⁶.

When I compare the three researched local churches, liturgy played the most significant causal role in the process of Fourteenth Street CRC, less so in New West CRC and least within the church of Rijsbergen. In Fourteenth Street CRC, for example, the Worship Planning Team played a significant role, as several interviewees note³⁹³⁷. When I compare how the decision to welcome children shaped the worship service and people’s experience of the worship service it is interesting to compare Fourteenth Street CRC with Rijsbergen. The Lord’s Supper celebration of Fourteenth Street CRC is probably prepared most thoughtfully. But in its context – in the early days after the introduction of paedocommunion – the worship services of the church of Rijsbergen were experienced as most unique.

For some experiencing a Lord’s Supper service more or less determines their opinion about paedocommunion. After Heitink has communed with his eight and ten year old children, he even claims one can only be convinced by such

³⁹³⁰ Robert R. Roth, “Neem, eet en gedenk: De liturgische positie van de kinderen van de kerk,” *De Reformatie* (April 8, 2011), 296-299.

³⁹³¹ E.g. Mary Koster, interview with author.

³⁹³² Jozina Vander Klok, “Let the Little Children Come,” *Banner* (April 22, 1996).

³⁹³³ K.A. Schippers, “Waarom vragen ouders er om?” *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

³⁹³⁴ Sjoerd Pieter Zwaan (1948), at that moment pastor of the RCN Zwijndrecht- Groote Lindt, wrote his master’s thesis on resistance against participation of children at the Lord’s Supper.

³⁹³⁵ S.P. Zwaan, “Liturgische Catechese: Waar kinderen en jongeren de maaltijd van de Heer meeieren,” *Eredienstvaardig* (1986).

³⁹³⁶ Sjoerd P. Zwaan, “Kind en liturgie,” in *De weg van de liturgie: Tradities, achtergronden, praktijk*, ed. M. Barnard et al., 4th ed. (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2008), 388.

³⁹³⁷ E.g. Mary Koster, interview with author.

an experience³⁹³⁸. New West interviewee John seems strengthened in his opposition by the uneasy experience of children participating disrespectfully by “kind of grabbing” the bread³⁹³⁹.

6.16.2. Liturgical renewal

Innovations often tend to come in clusters. And it is no surprise that the introduction of children at the Lord’s Supper is often part of a larger cluster of liturgical changes. Such liturgical change within the mainline Reformed denominations of the Netherlands often happened under influence or as part of the Liturgical Movement. Several of the Dutch paedocommunion pioneers were at the forefront of liturgical renewal in general³⁹⁴⁰, and many were specifically influenced by the Liturgical Movement. Willem Barnard’s church in Rozendaal, the “Thomaskerk” in Amsterdam, the “Domkerk” in Utrecht are just a few of the many examples³⁹⁴¹. The Liturgical Movement was such an incentive for paedocommunion by creating greater awareness of sacramental tradition in the history of the church and of the long history of paedocommunion³⁹⁴². Paedocommunion pioneer Aalbers reflects this influence by speaking of gaining liturgically by digging up the liturgical treasures of church history³⁹⁴³.

But comparing the introduction of paedocommunion within the mainline Dutch Reformed denominations with that within the smaller Reformed Churches liberated and the Dutch Reformed Churches as well as the Christian Reformed Churches in North America, cautions me not to generalize these findings. The introduction of paedocommunion in the church of Rijsbergen, for example, was part of a cluster of changes. But of this cluster of changes only few were liturgical - both before and after children were welcomed³⁹⁴⁴. Rijsbergen’s liturgy even remained rather conservative and traditional.

Within the Christian Reformed Churches the introduction of paedocommunion certainly takes place in an era of liturgical changes. But these changes, overall, differ from the Liturgical Movement. One liturgical change which partly influenced³⁹⁴⁴ the introduction of children at the Lord’s

³⁹³⁸ “Geen nieuw argument pro- of contra kindercommunie,” *Trouw*, October 6, 1976. As quoted in Heitink, “Gezinscommunie een impressie,” *Ouderlingenblad* (November 1976): 9.

³⁹³⁹ John VanderWoude, interview with author.

³⁹⁴⁰ See for example, Paul Oskamp, *Liturgische Broedplaatsen* (Kampen: Kok, 1973).

³⁹⁴¹ Oskamp (1973).

³⁹⁴² E.g. NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort (Bergkerk, 2007), 74.

³⁹⁴³ Aalbers (1976), 93f.

³⁹⁴⁴ I noted as prior changes a relatively high frequency of monthly Supper celebrations and the decision to allow others than pastors administer the Lord’s Supper.

Supper in both Fourteenth Street CRC and New West CRC is the movement towards more intergenerational worship³⁹⁴⁵.

But even within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands more general liturgical renewal in the sixties and seventies builds up the momentum to make a synodical paedocommunion debate unavoidable³⁹⁴⁶.

6.16.3. Frequency of celebration

One of the most notable liturgical changes which often belongs to the cluster of liturgical changes related to the introduction of paedocommunion, is a more frequent Supper celebration. Each practice is mentioned as a consequence of the other. A survey of forty Netherlands Reformed Churches reveals that more frequent Supper celebration often raises the paedocommunion question³⁹⁴⁷. This causal relation is also found in other denominations³⁹⁴⁸. Rijsbergen makes the decision to celebrate the Supper each week at the same congregational meeting that officially welcomes children at the Table. Within the Reformed Church in the Netherlands synodical committees related to youth recommend weekly celebration³⁹⁴⁹, and synod itself recommends more frequent celebration³⁹⁵⁰, which many local churches fail to implement³⁹⁵¹.

The argument for Rijsbergen to celebrate the Lord's Supper was faithfulness to the pattern of the first church as portrayed in Acts³⁹⁵². Later theologian Van der Schee argues that sacraments are "irreversibly established rites"³⁹⁵³ and part of the "enduring structure" of liturgy³⁹⁵⁴ and that therefore the Lord's Supper should be celebrated weekly³⁹⁵⁵. One of the children of Rijsbergen

³⁹⁴⁵ In the story of 14th Street CRC Syd Hielema's speech at the "together all God's people" conference about intergenerational worship is specifically mentioned by several interviewees. E.g. Laura Keeley, interview with author.

³⁹⁴⁶ As for example registered by the synodical advisory committee, Supplement 19, Suppl. Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 66-67.

³⁹⁴⁷ In the NRC a survey of 40 churches which practice paedocommunion reveals that more frequent celebration often raises the question. *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976): 22.

³⁹⁴⁸ E.g. Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, G.H. Harms, "Een vrolijk verhaal uit het veld," *Trouw*, October 13, 1976.

³⁹⁴⁹ Deputaten Kerk en Jeugd and Raad voor het Jeugdwerk, *Samen op Weg* ('s Gravenhage: n.p., 1969), 9f.

³⁹⁵⁰ Acts RCN 1963 1964 Synod, 342.

³⁹⁵¹ G. Heitink, "De beleving van het avondmaal," *Ouderlingenblad* (October 1975).

³⁹⁵² Jansen-Cramer (1997), 15; Unpublished diary of Sophia van Katwijk, Wednesday March 28, 1962.

³⁹⁵³ Cf. Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology: Volume I; The Triune God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 34f.

³⁹⁵⁴ Cf. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Reformed Liturgy," in *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Donald K. McKim, 2nd ed. (Eugene, Wipf & Stock 1998) 273-304.

³⁹⁵⁵ Wim van der Schee, "Dit is mijn lichaam," *Theobloog*, entry posted May 13, 2011, <http://www.wimvanderschee.nl/?p=1787> (accessed august 13, 2012).

explains it in terms of our weekly if not daily need for grace: “In fact, you need it every day, so how arrogant to suggest celebrating it only once a month.”³⁹⁵⁶ Young people in the sixties seem to argue for weekly celebration among others to give the Supper a less exceptional status³⁹⁵⁷. Hogenhuis indicates the possible relationship with paedocommunion by suggesting that low frequency of Supper celebration may contribute to the practice in which children do not participate in the Supper, because it fosters the experience of Lord’s Supper as highly exceptional, holy and transcending the ministry of the Word³⁹⁵⁸, and sets the Supper more apart than intended³⁹⁵⁹. In the same vein Van der Schee argues that weekly celebration of the Supper will almost automatically expose all extra biblical traditions³⁹⁶⁰. Another explanation I would offer is that increased frequency of the Lord’s Supper celebration intensifies the perceived problem of non participation, and increases the perceived advantages of participation by children³⁹⁶¹.

To some extent the mere presence of children may help raise the paedocommunion question. Especially where children previously used to be in Sunday school. The question – from the floor of RCN Synod in the sixties – whether it is good that children tend to leave the church when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated and whether it would not be better for them to be present – reveals the common practice at that time³⁹⁶². The two CRC congregations in my research in general let the children stay in Sunday school or the *Children and Worship* program before, whereas now they come back for Communion³⁹⁶³.

6.16.4. Stepping stones

In the stories of several of the churches liturgical practices or changes are reported which turned out to be stepping stones toward the introduction of paedocommunion. Aalbers’ church in Geldrop first starts celebrating agape meals with children before welcoming children to the Lord’s Supper. In Fourteenth Street CRC changing from Supper celebration in the pews to

³⁹⁵⁶ Christa Merx-Ruis, interview with author.

³⁹⁵⁷ Thesis 14, “Kerk 66-2000,” Supplement 14, 15, Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 181-190. November 20, 21, 22, 1967. An exceptional status for example reflected in Henk de Jong’s metaphor for the Lord’s Supper as climax of liturgy, comparable to sexual intercourse, Henk de Jong, “Kinderen aan het avondmaal: antwoord aan ds. N. Cornelisse (1),” *Opbouw* (June 9, 1978): 178.

³⁹⁵⁸ H. Hogenhuis, “Kinderen aan het avondmaal; ja of nee?” *Ouderlingenblad* (January 1980).

³⁹⁵⁹ Aalbers (1971), 58f.

³⁹⁶⁰ Wim van der Schee, “Dit is mijn lichaam,” *Theobloog*, entry posted May 13, 2011, <http://www.wimvanderschee.nl/?p=1787> (accessed august 13, 2012).

³⁹⁶¹ E.g. NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort (Bergkerk, 2007), 62.

³⁹⁶² Art. 361, Acts of RCN 1965-1966 Synod, 348. January 14, 1966.

³⁹⁶³ E.g. Brenda Katerberg, Marnie Goheen, interviews with author.

walking up the aisles made the exclusion of children more visible and awkward. In a certain stage of the process in Fourteenth Street, the youngest children were given a blessing or a red ribbon³⁹⁶⁴. In similar ways participation of youth in other liturgical activities served as a stepping stone toward participation in the Lord's Supper celebration for several Dutch paedocommunion pioneers.

6.16.5. *The atmosphere*

Cultural context may support paedocommunion; cultural change may serve as an incentive to the introduction of paedocommunion. Though I would argue that both high context cultures and low context cultures may provide their own rationale for including children in the Supper celebration, the change from high to low was certainly reflected in liturgy and was conducive to welcoming children.

Several participants in the paedocommunion debate, especially from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands connect participation of children with the celebrative character of the Supper, or lack thereof, in contemporary practice. In a survey youth complains that the Lord's Supper practice lacks celebrative character³⁹⁶⁵. At the floor of synod a similar concern is voiced, *the atmosphere of the Supper is too tense and lacks joy*³⁹⁶⁶. Youth is said to long for happiness and celebration³⁹⁶⁷. But adults also start to emphasize the celebrative aspect of the Supper³⁹⁶⁸. Hartvelt registers a shift in emphasis on gratitude or thanksgiving³⁹⁶⁹, a change from a solemn to a festive celebration of the Lord's Supper³⁹⁷⁰. Several theologians aim to restore the celebrative nature of the Lord's Supper celebration; it is the celebration of liberation³⁹⁷¹, like the celebration after the homecoming of the prodigal son³⁹⁷², and children know how to celebrate liberation³⁹⁷³, and therefore the church needs children

³⁹⁶⁴ Raeanne Walters, interview with author.

³⁹⁶⁵ K.A. Schippers, "Onze kerkdiensten en de jongeren," *Ouderlingenblad* (April 1984).

³⁹⁶⁶ *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976): 22.

³⁹⁶⁷ Laurens Zwaan, *Jonge mensen – brood en wijn: een weg voor jongeren tot de Maaltijd van de Heer* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1985).

³⁹⁶⁸ K.A. Schippers, "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?: De synode vraagt ...," *Ouderlingenblad* (March 1977).

Compare title and content of G.H. Harms, "Een vrolijk verhaal uit het veld," *Trouw*, October 13, 1976.

³⁹⁶⁹ Discussing the case of NRC of Purmerend, Hartvelt (1974), 113.

³⁹⁷⁰ Hartvelt (May 7, 1977), 2. Theologically this is a shift in emphasis from misery to gratitude, but one wonders whether this is not also symptom of a broader cultural change in the Netherlands from high context to low context. Compare Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Book, 1981).

³⁹⁷¹ Gerben Heitink, "Wat is avondmaal vieren?" *Ouderlingenblad*, May 1984.

³⁹⁷² H.M. Matter, "Communie of Avondmaal?" *Gereformeerd Weekblad* (December 29 (?), 1974).

³⁹⁷³ Gerben Heitink, "Wat is avondmaal vieren?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

to regain a celebrative Lord's Supper practice³⁹⁷⁴. *By letting children participate in the Supper the tense atmosphere, which often dominates the Supper, can be loosened*, some claim³⁹⁷⁵. The Faith Formation Committee also observes a focus on joyful celebration of the Lord's Supper³⁹⁷⁶. Once children participate, this united celebration of the Supper – by adults and children – is reported to lead to the discovery of the Supper as feast³⁹⁷⁷. To experience the whole body of Christ, including young and old, celebrating the Lord's Supper to some interviewees is in itself joyful³⁹⁷⁸. Several theologians refer to Isaiah 25 and Revelation 19 in this regard. Some, like Aalbers, argue for a similar change in terms of restoring the gladness and simplicity of Acts 2:46, and doing justice to the original more informal setting by celebrating the Lord's Supper in the context of an agape meal³⁹⁷⁹.

6.16.6. *Shaping the liturgy*

Over the course of the discussion I come across many suggestions how to shape the Lord's Supper liturgy once the children are being welcomed. Schippers suggests including children not only in the celebration of the Supper, but also in the preparations³⁹⁸⁰. Abma suggests that the Lord's Supper liturgy should have a certain predictability about it, because of children's ability to memorize. And he warns not to water the Lord's Supper liturgy down³⁹⁸¹. The 1981-1982 RCN synodical committee advises not to create special liturgies; their concern is that the Supper celebration would infantilize. Witvliet recommends not celebrating the Lord's Supper early in the worship service for the sake of children, because the sacrament would then be reduced to a visual aid instead of a response to the proclamation of the gospel³⁹⁸². Offering grape juice instead of wine is often mentioned, though many churches introduced grape juice before paedocommunion, and some continue to serve only wine after welcoming children, as Rijsbergen has been doing for decades.

³⁹⁷⁴ G. Heitink, "De beleving van het avondmaal," *Ouderlingenblad* (October 1975).

³⁹⁷⁵ Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 182.

³⁹⁷⁶ The report notes "Though the question about admitting children to the Lord's Supper was the initial question that spurred the current discussion in the church, many other questions about the Lord's Supper are also present among us, including the frequency of the sacrament, the manner of distribution, and especially the spirit and tone of the liturgy," Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2009, 439.

³⁹⁷⁷ Cp. Suppl. 44, Supplements RCN 1977-1997 Synod, 209.

³⁹⁷⁸ E.g. Mary Koster, interview with author.

³⁹⁷⁹ Aalbers (1971), 65.

³⁹⁸⁰ K.A. Schippers, "Onze kerkdiensten en de jongeren," *Ouderlingenblad* (April 1984).

³⁹⁸¹ Michael F. Abma, "A New Order of Christian Nurture," *Reformed Worship* (March 2009).

³⁹⁸² John D. Witvliet, "Q&A: The Lord's Supper and the Liturgy," *Reformed Worship* (December 2007).

After the introduction of children at the Lord's Supper, liturgy was hardly adapted to accommodate the participation of children in Rijsbergen. The church of Rijsbergen does not use liturgical forms since the weekly celebration was introduced, but dedicates a sermon to teaching on the Supper once in a while. Van Katwijk would often teach by asking children questions during Supper celebration. In Fourteenth Street CRC most changes to include youth in meaningful ways were introduced in the process that led to welcoming the children. "I haven't noticed that there has been specific liturgy or songs that have been changed or tailored since children have come to the table" comments interviewee Mike Luce. At the moment of my interviews the Worship Planning Team of New West CRC has played with ideas using the Passover and seder format to include children. The team has also picked up material from Grand Rapids. But other than the presence of children during the Supper the liturgy has not changed yet. Logistically that creates some challenges. How to make sure children return in time from Sunday school? Can children celebrate with their Sunday school leaders, or should children celebrate with their families, and how to let the little children find their families³⁹⁸³. At the moment of introduction Rijsbergen does not have Sunday school and the related logistical challenges.

6.17. Sacramental

6.17.1. Importance

Zegwaard's research shows the significance of the Liturgical Movement on the introduction of paedocommunion in the mainline Reformed churches of the Netherlands³⁹⁸⁴. Among many of the Dutch paedocommunion pioneers the Liturgical Movement contributed to a greater awareness of sacramental tradition in the history of the church³⁹⁸⁵. A new or stronger emphasis on sacraments as strengthening faith and conducive to faith formation encouraged Dutch paedocommunion pioneers to supply children with this "waybread" or "manna in the desert of puberty"³⁹⁸⁶. In Fourteenth Street CRC the sacramental focus or nature of the program *Children and Worship* may have prepared not only the children, but also the mature members for the introduction of paedocommunion.

³⁹⁸³ Marnie Goheen, interview with author. Similar logistics are mentioned for 14th Street CRC. E.g. Kristen de Vries, Amy Luce, interviews with author.

³⁹⁸⁴ Zegwaard (2006), 39f.

³⁹⁸⁵ E.g. NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort (Bergkerk, 2007), 74.

³⁹⁸⁶ Rev. P.A. Elderenbosch of NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort (Oskamp, 1973), 117.

Several authors within the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion debate explain the exclusiveness of the Reformed Lord's Supper practice on the basis of conscious or subconscious held convictions regarding the sacrament. Van den Berg and CRC's 1995 *Report B* mentions the influence of the mystery religions on our sacramental practice and theology³⁹⁸⁷. In the eyes of Van den Berg the mere use of the term "sacrament" has helped these pagan mystery views on exclusivity to survive³⁹⁸⁸. Syd Hielema speaks of the Reformed tradition as holding on to the anxiety that had been connected to transubstantiation theology, even after the transubstantiation theology had been reformed³⁹⁸⁹. The Reformed practice of fencing the Table has been greatly influenced by Zwingli's step to disconnect the two highpoints of the enduring structure of word and sacrament, leading to a practice of quarterly celebration of the Lord's Supper; the most fundamental liturgical issue facing the Reformed churches today, according to Nicholas Wolterstorff³⁹⁹⁰. Their theories suggest that to change exclusivity into inclusivity, to relief inherited anxieties and to take down the fences, it is crucial that sacramental views or theology change correspondingly. And the stories of paedocommunion pioneers reveal such and other changes in sacramental theology³⁹⁹¹. When Pastor Hofman recalls how Communion seemed to be about holiness in the past instead of grace, it seems to reflect such a change, a shift in emphasis³⁹⁹².

Hartvelt, who emphasizes the importance of sacramental vision in the debate³⁹⁹³, suggests the Reformed tradition also lacks a positive definition of the Supper and sensitivity to its symbols³⁹⁹⁴. With the dramatic individualization in the West, two other aspects of the Lord's Supper were lost: the awareness that the Supper is both communion with God and with the congregation, and that the body is both *corpus crucifixum* as well as *corpus mysticum*³⁹⁹⁵. If Hartvelt is right in connecting these notions to paedocommunion or the lack thereof, then changes in sacramental vision seem quite crucial for the introduction of paedocommunion.

³⁹⁸⁷ Van den Berg (1978), 11f.; *Report B*, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 297.

³⁹⁸⁸ Van den Berg (1978), 11f.

³⁹⁸⁹ Syd Hielema, "A Precious Feast, a Tangled Web: A Case for Welcoming Children at the Table," *Reformed Worship* (June 2005).

³⁹⁹⁰ Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Reformed Liturgy," in *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Donal K. McKim, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 294.

³⁹⁹¹ E.g. (Oskamp, 1974), 77.

³⁹⁹² Marvin Hofman, interview with author. A high number of quotes reflect the importance of a people's sacramental vision for the discussion in 14th Street CRC.

³⁹⁹³ See especially Hartvelt (May 1m 1971) (May 15, 1971) and (1974).

³⁹⁹⁴ Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1; (May 15, 1971), 3; (1974), 119f.

³⁹⁹⁵ (May 15, 1971), 3; Hartvelt (1974), 115f.

But, as might be expected in light of the above, sacramental views and theologies play a similar important role for the opponents. They argue from their sacramental perspectives and challenge the underlying sacramental theologies of the paedocommunion advocates³⁹⁹⁶.

6.17.2. *Supper as sign and seal of grace*

Several statements about the nature of the Lord's Supper are made in the discussion. The Faith Formation Committee highlights the multiple scriptural images for the Lord's Supper in its 2011 report³⁹⁹⁷; others already introduced almost every image in the paedocommunion discussion. The Supper is a seal of God's covenant³⁹⁹⁸, a sign and seal of the grace of that covenant³⁹⁹⁹. And others complain that the covenant has already shaped our educational approach in Christian schools and our theology of infant baptism, but it has failed to shape our Lord's Supper theology⁴⁰⁰⁰. "There is no basis in the theology of the covenant or the theology of the sacraments for denying to growing children the Lord's Supper."⁴⁰⁰¹ The Supper is an image of grace which is as essential for life as food and drink, is the argument in Rijsbergen. As grace liberates, the Supper is also all about liberation, and celebration of liberation requires the participation of the young⁴⁰⁰². Oskamp observes a shift of accent from dogmatic certainty to thanksgiving, from funeral meal to feast of joy⁴⁰⁰³.

6.17.3. *Means of grace*

When it comes to grace, those in favor of paedocommunion often characterize the Supper as a means of grace. Sometimes this is done to emphasize its gracious character of the Supper which should be freely offered⁴⁰⁰⁴. This means of grace does not require "works" of right understanding and personal commitment⁴⁰⁰⁵. As a means of grace it rather forms faith⁴⁰⁰⁶. Some paedocommunion advocates connect this characteristic

³⁹⁹⁶ E.g. Nauta challenges Aalbers, D. Nauta, "Kinderen aan het Avondmaal?" *Ouderlingenblad* (September 1972).

³⁹⁹⁷ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2011 Synod, 565.

³⁹⁹⁸ E.g. Van Katwijk, conceptgetuigenis.

³⁹⁹⁹ E.g. Mary Koster, interview with author.

⁴⁰⁰⁰ Alvin L. Hoksbergen, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

⁴⁰⁰¹ Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 283.

⁴⁰⁰² Gerben Heitink, "Wat is avondmaal vieren?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

⁴⁰⁰³ Oskamp (1974), 77.

⁴⁰⁰⁴ Cp. 14th Street Ad Hoc Sub-committee first ground to open the Table: 1- We believe that the Lord's Supper – along with baptism and the preaching of the Word – is a 'means of grace' that should be freely offered to the Covenant Community.

⁴⁰⁰⁵ Syd Hielema, "A Precious Feast, a Tangled Web: A Case for Welcoming Children at the Table," *Reformed Worship* (June 2005).

⁴⁰⁰⁶ The Keeleys opened the eyes of the members of 14th Street CRC to this perspective. Cp. Robert Keeley, interview with author.

of the Supper with Calvin's thoughts on the pedagogical nature of the Lord's Supper⁴⁰⁰⁷. It is food for the journey⁴⁰⁰⁸. As a means of grace the Supper is more than just sign and seal of the promise of grace⁴⁰⁰⁹, but communicates grace⁴⁰¹⁰, which even benefits the mentally challenged⁴⁰¹¹. Often this language is used while making the point that maturing children⁴⁰¹² or at least teenagers⁴⁰¹³ need grace, and sometimes the accusation is that opponents of paedocommunion withhold that grace from them⁴⁰¹⁴. Paedocommunion advocate Hartvelt realizes that the conviction that receiving the sacraments is necessary for salvation, led to the practice of communing the children, and even babies⁴⁰¹⁵; the latter of which he opposes.

6.17.4. Sacramentalism

When it comes to the way grace is communicated, a word on the subjects of sacramentalism and *ex opere operato* theology is justified. It is often suggested that Communion of children without understanding or faith would be impermissible sacramentalism⁴⁰¹⁶. Those who favor very early participation hold to sacramentalist views⁴⁰¹⁷, and infant Communion is a sacramentalist practice⁴⁰¹⁸. Such sacramentalism is considered a return to Roman Catholicism. An identical accusation is that participation without discernment introduces an *ex opere operato* theology⁴⁰¹⁹. The underlying theology of the Eastern Orthodox praxis to commune babies and the Roman Catholic praxis of first Communion round age seven⁴⁰²⁰ are examples of such *ex opere operato* theology.

The 1995 *Report B* suggests that a medieval Roman Catholic sacramentalist context was the reason why the Reformed reacted with such a strong focus on

⁴⁰⁰⁷ Peter G. Sinia, "Kindercommunie en Calvin," *Opbouw* (November 26, 2010): 23.

⁴⁰⁰⁸ E.g. Marnie Goheen, interview with author.

⁴⁰⁰⁹ E.g. Mary Koster, interview with author

⁴⁰¹⁰ E.g. Meika Weiss, interview with author.

⁴⁰¹¹ Kristen De Vries, interview with author.

⁴⁰¹² Morris N. Greidanus, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

⁴⁰¹³ James A. De Jong, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

⁴⁰¹⁴ Marsden, George M. "Children at the Lord's Table: a Reformed Dilemma," *Reformed Journal* (December 1977).

⁴⁰¹⁵ Hartvelt (January, 1971), 1; Hartvelt (May 1, 1971), 1.

⁴⁰¹⁶ E.g. Acts NRC 1962 Synod, 67-83. February 13, 1962.

⁴⁰¹⁷ E.g. Linda K. Male, "In Memory Of Anne Butler: Reflections On Children At The Lord's Supper," *Stromata* (May 1988).

⁴⁰¹⁸ E.g. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Children and the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

⁴⁰¹⁹ Cp. H. Hogenhuis, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal; ja of nee?" *Ouderlingenblad* (January 1980). Hogenhuis just summarizes the most common arguments of opponents.

⁴⁰²⁰ C. van der Woude, "Nieuwe en oude vragen in ons kerkelijk leven," *Ouderlingenblad* (December 1969); "Kindercommunie en openbare belijdenis," *Ouderlingenblad* (1970).

individual faith, but they did so at the cost of doing justice communal faith. The same report suggests that if the efficacy and the benefits of the Supper are contingent on the exercise of faith, this faith might be communal faith, thus combining two elements of Reformed theology⁴⁰²¹. Moreover, the report points out, Jesus' presence at the Lord's Supper is the ultimate source of grace⁴⁰²². Tim Gallant argues that the *ex opere operato* accusation would also count for Old Testament rituals in which children participated⁴⁰²³.

6.17.5. *The sacrificial nature*

The nature of the Lord's Supper is also sacrificial, and the appropriate response to this sacrificial Supper is the trust and submission with which children exemplify offering ourselves as living sacrifices, suggests Heitink⁴⁰²⁴. Oskamp observes a shift in accent in sacramental theology and practice from Good Friday to Easter⁴⁰²⁵. With a different sacramental theology came a different celebration and perception of the Lord's Supper⁴⁰²⁶.

6.17.6. *The sacred and critical nature*

The sacrament is also sacred, and this sacredness needs to be appreciated suggests Van der Borgh⁴⁰²⁷. I already quoted Hofman signifying a shift in emphasis in this regard, *in the past Communion was not about grace, but about holiness*⁴⁰²⁸. This ties in to Hielema's argument of the Reformers who held on to the anxiety of the medieval Roman Catholic Church⁴⁰²⁹. The minority report speaks about the critical nature of the Lord's Supper⁴⁰³⁰, which is connected to the requirement of self-examination.

6.17.7. *The relational or reciprocal nature*

Eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood is about being connected to Christ, and for youth that is just as much a "very positive thing", "a great

⁴⁰²¹ Report B, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 284.

⁴⁰²² Report B, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 285f.

⁴⁰²³ Gallant (2003), 165; "An Old Plank in a Program for Church Reformation: What the Hussites Wanted for the Lord's Supper – and Why," "An Old Plank in a Program for Church Reformation- part 2: Scripture: Some Positive Arguments," *Christian Renewal*, resp. February 11, 25, 2002.

⁴⁰²⁴ Gerben Heitink, "Wat is avondmaal vieren?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

⁴⁰²⁵ Oskamp (1974), 77.

⁴⁰²⁶ Oskamp writes about the NRC Purmerend: "The main reason was a changed perception and celebration of the sacrament. The accent gradually shifted from dogmatic certainty to thanksgiving, from funeral meal to feast of joy, from Good Friday to Easter (Oskamp, 1974), 77.

⁴⁰²⁷ R.J. Van der Borgh, "Voices: But Let a Man Prove Himself," *Banner* (April 1973).

⁴⁰²⁸ Marvin Hofman, interview with author.

⁴⁰²⁹ Hielema (2005).

⁴⁰³⁰ Cf. H. N. Ridderbos, *Paulus* (Kampen: Kok, 1966), 474-478.

celebration"⁴⁰³¹. Some use the image of the Supper as meal or family dinner to highlight its place in the relation with God, who as a parent invites without intervention of the children⁴⁰³². A similar thought is expressed in Rijsbergen where it is emphasized that the Supper is the Lord's and not that of the church; those who guard the table should be careful not to hinder the Lord. Opponents speak of the reciprocal nature of Communion⁴⁰³³, or of both unilateral and bilateral nature of the sacraments⁴⁰³⁴. Bruins offers one view of this reciprocal nature of the sacrament, by arguing that sacraments are not only sign and seal of God's promise but also of our promise of faithfulness in response, and therefore, require understanding⁴⁰³⁵. The strongest image of reciprocal relationship and mutual consent comes from Henk de Jong who compares celebrating the Lord's Supper to sexual intercourse; and hence not appropriate for children⁴⁰³⁶. In another episode paedocommunion opponent Van der Schee uses a very similar metaphor of Christian children as married to Christ with the option to remain faithful or to get divorced⁴⁰³⁷.

6.17.8. *The corporate nature*

The relationship with the body of believers is emphasized in the observation that the nature of the Supper is corporate. Most often this is emphasized by those who favour paedocommunion⁴⁰³⁸. This is part of what has been distorted in our sacramental vision since the context of the agape meal was lost, when the meal became a table, and the table became the altar⁴⁰³⁹. It may be for this reason that celebrating the Lord's Supper in the context of an agape meal or a regular meal with a less ritualized setting more than once serves as a stepping stone to paedocommunion⁴⁰⁴⁰. The analogy of a family meal is used, and children are not excluded from family meals⁴⁰⁴¹. "When you have a child you don't withhold food from that child until they can say 'I love you' or 'thank you' for it."⁴⁰⁴² But Van der Borgh argues that children can

⁴⁰³¹ Len Noort, interview with author.

⁴⁰³² E.g. C.P. Kleingeld, "Ingezonden," *Opbouw* (April 9, 1976): 118.

⁴⁰³³ E.g. Jelle Tuininga, "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook* (October 1984).

⁴⁰³⁴ Bas Luiten, "Gelovig proeven," *De Reformatie* (April 8, 2011): 300-302.

⁴⁰³⁵ Harry Bruins, "Avondmaal vraagt om belijdenis," *Opbouw* (November 26): 2010, 22-23.

⁴⁰³⁶ Henk de Jong (June 9, 1978), 178.

⁴⁰³⁷ Wim van der Schee, "Dit is mijn lichaam," *Theobloog*, entry posted May 13, 2011,

<http://www.wimvanderschee.nl/?p=1787> (accessed august 13, 2012).

⁴⁰³⁸ Gerben Heitink, "Wat is avondmaal vieren?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

⁴⁰³⁹ Hartvelt (1974), 115f..

⁴⁰⁴⁰ E.g. Aalbers (1971), 65; Mike Goheen, interview with author.

⁴⁰⁴¹ E.g. Andrew Beunk, interview with author; but also W.G. Overbosch of NRC Thomaskerk, Amsterdam (Oskamp, 1973), 31

⁴⁰⁴² Marnie Goheen, interview with author.

participate in the Supper only after they appreciate its corporate nature⁴⁰⁴³. And Luiten uses the analogy of children participating in a birthday party without drinking wine, as illustration of different ways of being part of the celebrating community⁴⁰⁴⁴.

6.17.9. The eschatological nature

The nature of the Supper is eschatological. This element of expectation requires the participation of the young⁴⁰⁴⁵. Marnie Goheen says that the Supper “lightens the imagination for the hope that lies before us” and we are “to hold that hope before our children.”⁴⁰⁴⁶

6.17.10. The professing and missional nature

In Rijsbergen the professing nature of participation in the Supper celebration was often highlighted. The nature of the Supper is also missional, stresses especially Mike Goheen. The Supper orients us outward and children need to be pointed outward to the nations. Children are called to embody justice in the playground, kindness to their friends in the neighbourhood, and they need to be strengthened for that missional calling by the Supper⁴⁰⁴⁷. In Rijsbergen Sofie van Katwijk, many years after the introduction stresses the missionary significance of the Lord’s Supper in making non-believers hunger and thirst for grace⁴⁰⁴⁸.

6.18. Profession of Faith

6.18.1. Importance

The practice of public profession of faith, in more than one way, plays an important role in the paedocommunion debate. Historically, in Germany debate on confirmation lasting more than a century, preceded the debate on paedocommunion⁴⁰⁴⁹. The issue of paedocommunion in the Netherlands Reformed Church arose in the context of concerns about the tendency to

⁴⁰⁴³ R.J. Van der Borgh, “Voices: But Let a Man Prove Himself,” *Banner* (April 1973).

⁴⁰⁴⁴ Luiten (2011).

⁴⁰⁴⁵ Gerben Heitink, “Wat is avondmaal vieren?” *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

⁴⁰⁴⁶ Marnie Goheen, interview with author.

⁴⁰⁴⁷ Mike Goheen, interview with author.

⁴⁰⁴⁸ Sofie van Katwijk, personal conversation with author.

⁴⁰⁴⁹ Paragraph 2.4.7.3. Kennetner (1980), 74f.

postpone profession of faith beyond the age of eighteen⁴⁰⁵⁰. In the story of paedocommunion pioneer Rijsbergen the question about the origins of public profession of faith is the third question Van Katwijk mentions as being addressed⁴⁰⁵¹. And when Rijsbergen consults pastors and professors that even seems to have been the primary question⁴⁰⁵². Hendriks contributes to the paedocommunion debate within that same denomination with a book of which more than half the content provides a historical overview of profession of faith and catechism teaching⁴⁰⁵³.

In general the issue of profession of faith seems to receive less attention than for example Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians, the issue of baptism, and the covenantal theme. Although it receives relatively more attention in the interviews. Profession of faith certainly receives more attention than for example church order. Profession of faith is an important element in the argument of opponents, closely related to their understanding the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11. Based on the frequency it is being mentioned, I would conclude that profession of faith is most important in the debate within the Christian Reformed Churches, less within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and least within the Reformed Churches liberated and Dutch Reformed Churches⁴⁰⁵⁴. Of the three researched local churches, profession of faith was most relevant to the story of Fourteenth Street CRC, somewhat less in the story of New West CRC and least in the story of Rijsbergen⁴⁰⁵⁵. But as I have indicated above, even in the latter case it was still considered a major issue.

6.18.2. Several positions

In trying to distinguish the different positions regarding profession of faith in the paedocommunion debate, the most basic distinction seems to be between for and against welcoming children at the table before public profession of faith⁴⁰⁵⁶. Fundamental in this regard seems whether public profession of faith

⁴⁰⁵⁰ At the NRC Synod, Acts NRC 1961 Synod, 320-326. October 31, 1961. Aalbers (1976) 86; Bolkestein (1964), 28f.

⁴⁰⁵¹ After the questions "what does Scripture say about it?" and "what does history say about it?" Van der Veer (1984), 2.

⁴⁰⁵² G. Van den Brink and H.J. van der Kwast, *Een kerk ging stuk: Relas van de breuk die optrad binnen de Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt) in de jaren 1967-1974* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1992), 224.

⁴⁰⁵³ A.N. Hendriks, *Kinderen aan de tafel van Christus?*, 2nd ed. (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1990).

⁴⁰⁵⁴ Based on word counts.

⁴⁰⁵⁵ Based on word counts of documents and references in interviews.

⁴⁰⁵⁶ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 601f. Cp. The same basic distinction can be found in the four positions the 2008 report mentions. Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2008 Synod, 235.

is required by Scripture and by the confessions, and to a lesser degree whether it is required by church order. But the Faith Formation Committee adds nuances to this fundamental notion by observing that public profession of faith is not mandated by Scripture or the confessions, while suggesting that requiring it is one pastoral strategy to nurture grateful and obedient participation, a possible effective means of encouraging discipleship and resisting superstitious views, or a wise decision in situations of biblical illiteracy⁴⁰⁵⁷. Some seek support for their position in history and tradition, but for others historical awareness is the incentive to a renewed study of what Scripture requires. Whether or not one takes the position that a child can be welcomed at the table before its personal public profession of faith is also determined by the question whether a believing parent or the community of believers can fulfill this requirement on behalf of the child. It is also determined by the question whether a child can fulfill this requirement afterwards, as is done in baptism. The understanding of what establishes public profession of faith further determines the position one takes. A complicating matter is that divergent meanings and functions of profession of faith can be distinguished⁴⁰⁵⁸. As a consequence several options suggest dividing the rite of profession of faith in two or more rites, welcoming children at the table after an earlier profession of faith. Some perceive profession of faith as an ongoing process⁴⁰⁵⁹. The concept of age and ability appropriate profession of faith is characteristic for some of the positions taken, especially within the Christian Reformed debate. In addition to the above fears and hopes about future risks or possibilities seem to shape the positions on this matter.

The above explains what issues lay behind the different positions regarding profession of faith. A small sample will give an impression of the different positions found. In 1967 many young people in the Netherlands Reformed Church reject public profession of faith in its current form⁴⁰⁶⁰. In 1969 the current practice is labeled as discrimination by some youth⁴⁰⁶¹. Van der Woude opposes the disconnection between profession of faith and admission to the Supper these young people suggest. And even though he allows some leeway regarding specific age and conditions, he basically defends the contemporary Reformed practice of a more solid profession of faith after the

⁴⁰⁵⁷ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA 2010 Synod, 590, 610, 611, 616

⁴⁰⁵⁸ E.g. Report 3, Appendix C "Public Profession of Faith for Children," Agenda CRCNA 1989 Synod.

⁴⁰⁵⁹ Overture 78, by Classis Alberta North, to Clarify the Requirement for Public Profession of Faith by Covenant Children, Agenda CRCNA 1991 Synod, 516-518

⁴⁰⁶⁰ Acts NRC 1967 Synod, 181f.

⁴⁰⁶¹ Denken en doen, *Daadwerkelijke mondigheid*, 1969, 23.

Sturm-und-Drang stage of life⁴⁰⁶². Others also oppose such disconnection but encourage allowing profession of faith at an earlier age⁴⁰⁶³. Others suggest allowing children to participate at an earlier age, but maintain the need of a robust profession of faith at a more mature age⁴⁰⁶⁴.

6.18.3. *Bible, creeds and church order*

What do the Scriptures require according to the participants in the debate? The church of Rijsbergen comes to the conclusion that the Bible does not mention public profession of faith as means to be admitted to the table⁴⁰⁶⁵. Later, in the periodical discussion, Henk de Jong will suggest that biblicism in its search for proof texts will never be satisfied. But according to him, arguing from the general lines of covenant and personal faith in the Scriptures will lead to a faithful conclusion favoring both the practice of infant baptism as well as public profession of faith⁴⁰⁶⁶.

Contributions from within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands indicate that many opponents of paedocommunion find the biblical ground for requiring a profession of faith, or even specifically a heartfelt profession of faith, in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11⁴⁰⁶⁷. The requirement of faith itself is supported by Jesus words in John 6⁴⁰⁶⁸. Laurens Zwaan on the other hand points to the fact that Jesus first asked His disciples to follow Him, before asking them to profess their faith in Him⁴⁰⁶⁹.

Similar opinions are expressed in the debate within the Christian Reformed Churches. Those who suggest that the Bible is silent on young people making profession of faith, fall in the trap of Biblicism and neglect the biblical evidence of a training process⁴⁰⁷⁰, argues Tuininga⁴⁰⁷¹. The sacrament is to be received in faith, by those who are His by a true faith, states the 1988 minority

⁴⁰⁶² C. van der Woude, "Nieuwe en oude vragen in ons kerkelijk leven," *Ouderlingenblad* 47 (1969);

"Kindercommunie en openbare belijdenis," *Ouderlingenblad* 47 (1970).

⁴⁰⁶³ E.g. James A. De Jong, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

⁴⁰⁶⁴ Michael F. Abma, "A New Order of Christian Nurture," *Reformed Worship* (March 2009).

⁴⁰⁶⁵ Van Katwijk (1966), 5.

⁴⁰⁶⁶ Henk de Jong, "Over geloofsbelijdenis en avondmaal vieren (2)," *Opbouw* (May 14, 1976): 154.

⁴⁰⁶⁷ E.g. Benjamin van Oeveren, "Argumenten tegen avondmaalsviering door kinderen," *Credo* (May 1977);

C. van de Velde, "kinderen aan het avondmaal?: Een vraag waar we geen "ja" op kunnen zeggen," *Credo* (June 1982).

⁴⁰⁶⁸ E.g. Van de Velde (1982), 14f. Van de Velde mentions John 6:29-47 and points out that the word for believing is used 6 times.

⁴⁰⁶⁹ Cf. Matt. 4: 19 and Matt. 16:15, Laurens Zwaan, *Jonge mensen – brood en wijn: een weg voor jongeren tot de Maaltijd van de Heer* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1985), 92-96.

⁴⁰⁷⁰ Tuininga mentions Deut. 6:1, Joshua 4:1-7, 20-24, Ps. 78:1-8 and Eph. 6:1-4.

⁴⁰⁷¹ Jelle Tuininga, "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook* (March 1988).

report⁴⁰⁷². 1995 *Report A* claims that profession of faith is in line with the New Testament⁴⁰⁷³ and that confessional statements were originally tied to baptismal events, but that in the case of infant baptism, profession would occur later in time as an appropriation of the promises which God made at baptism⁴⁰⁷⁴. But the 1988 Majority Report argues that a formal profession of faith is not required by Scripture⁴⁰⁷⁵. The Faith Formation Committee affirms this position of the 1988 Majority Report and at its recommendation Synod 2010 adopts the statement “A formal public Profession of Faith prior to participation in the Lord’s Supper is not required by Scripture or the confessions.”⁴⁰⁷⁶

It seems fair to conclude that the adopted statement is right; there is no explicit requirement for a formal public profession of faith prior to participation in the Lord’s Supper. But it is also fair to acknowledge that faith and its profession seem fundamental to the church from a biblical perspective⁴⁰⁷⁷, and general biblical themes as well as the more specific texts of 1 Corinthians 11 and John 6 justify the question to what extent such faith, and its public profession, are required of children before they participate in the Supper.

The statement of Synod 2010 specifically adds the confessions. In the past at least some had suggested to the contrary that profession of faith is according to our creeds⁴⁰⁷⁸. Vissee advocates the inclusion, the low requirements and the simplicity of Palatinate Church Order as a better format for admission by profession of faith than the more current church order⁴⁰⁷⁹. Vissee’s example of the Palatinate Church Order also provides important historical context to at least one of the Reformed confessions. Opponents also point out that profession of faith is required by church order⁴⁰⁸⁰. And even those in favor, for example in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, register that church

⁴⁰⁷² Referencing (among others) John 35-40, 51, 53-58. Minority Report, Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod, 303f.

⁴⁰⁷³ Cf. Rom. 10:9-10, Matt. 10:32, 1 Tim. 6:12. The report also points out that the general nature of the requirements of 1 Corinthians 11 is supported by John 6: 35, 52-58. Report A, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 267.

⁴⁰⁷⁴ Report A, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 267.

⁴⁰⁷⁵ Report 26, *Agenda CRCNA 1988 Synod*, 261.

⁴⁰⁷⁶ Article 27 C1, Acts CRCNA 2010 Synod, 811.

⁴⁰⁷⁷ E.g. Matt. 16: 16-18.

⁴⁰⁷⁸ 1995 Report A refers to Belgic Confession art. 35, Heidelberg Catechism Q77 A76, Our World Belongs to God (stanza 40), and Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A 177.

⁴⁰⁷⁹ Vissee (1979); W. Niesel, *Bekennnisschriften und Kirchen Ordnungen der nach Gottes Wort reformierten Kirche*. 2nd ed. (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, A.G. Zollikon, 1938).

⁴⁰⁸⁰ 1995 Report A refers to Church Order art. 59a, Church Order of Dordt, art. 61.

order requires prior profession of faith, but they add that it does not specify age and allows differentiation between youth and adults⁴⁰⁸¹.

6.18.4. History and tradition

Historical awareness often made people reconsider practice and theology of profession of faith. On both sides of the ocean authors highlight how part of the threefold initiation rite evolved into the separate rite of confirmation, while the content changed from a blessing with the Holy Spirit to a moment of confession⁴⁰⁸². A large part of Hendriks' book, on the other hand, can be read as an expression of the conviction that profession of faith in one shape or another was required throughout history⁴⁰⁸³. It is clear that soon after the Reformation some kind of prior profession of faith was required, as many paedocommunion opponents emphasize⁴⁰⁸⁴. It is my impression that this was not so much a deliberate break with the Roman Catholic tradition⁴⁰⁸⁵, but rather the further development of one of the Roman Catholic practices regarding confirmation⁴⁰⁸⁶. When Rijsbergen consulted the pastors and professors with the question where profession of faith originated from, none of their answers were perceived as satisfactory⁴⁰⁸⁷. There may be some truth to Van Katwijk's suggestion that the requirement of public profession of faith gained significance in the Dutch Reformed tradition because of the specific context of the first Reformed Refugee Church in London⁴⁰⁸⁸. Hartvelt suggests that the more casual introduction to the Lord's Supper in the early days of the Reformation changed into a more formal public profession of faith where membership of a protestant church was a more conscious choice⁴⁰⁸⁹. My chapter on the history of paedocommunion shows the multiple influences changing the content and average age for profession of faith, since the Reformation. It provides enough evidence to critically review the extent to which contemporary practice and theology regarding profession of faith is also shaped by Scripture.

⁴⁰⁸¹ E.g. RCN 1975-1976, Majority Report, "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976), referring to art. 75 and 110.

⁴⁰⁸² E.g. H. Hogenhuis, "Belijdenis doen – moet dat nog wel?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1978). Rylaarsdam (2007).

⁴⁰⁸³ Hendriks (1990).

⁴⁰⁸⁴ E.g. Report A, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod. Referring to Calvin, *Institutes* 4:16:30.

⁴⁰⁸⁵ As for example Van de Velde claims, Van de Velde (1982), 32f.

⁴⁰⁸⁶ See Chapter 2.

⁴⁰⁸⁷ Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992) 224.

⁴⁰⁸⁸ Van der Veer (1984), 3.

⁴⁰⁸⁹ Hartvelt (1966), 96. Cp. David R. Holeton, "Communion of All the Baptized and Anglican Tradition," in *Children at the Table: A Collection of Essays on Children and the Eucharist*, ed. Ruth A. Meyers (New York: Church hymnal Corporation, 1995), 35.

6.18.5. Another person, another time

Can others fulfill the requirement profession of faith? Hogenhuis reminds his readers that the original meaning of the Greek word *homologeîn* is saying together⁴⁰⁹⁰, and challenges his readers to consider profession of faith by children who profess together with their parents and with the congregation⁴⁰⁹¹. The 1995 *Report B* acknowledges the importance of personal faith, but stresses a communal approach to the question and argues that in the case of children communal expression of faith, as in infant baptism, suffices⁴⁰⁹².

Can the requirement of profession of faith be fulfilled at a later time? It is interesting to read how, for example, the 1995 Report A stresses the importance of both sacraments being tied to profession of faith, but then considers it self-evident why baptism may be followed by it while the Lord's Supper should be preceded by it⁴⁰⁹³. But George Marsden supports the recommendation of the 1977 RCA commission, that "baptized children who have been participating in the sacrament of the supper, (...) be required to stand before the church and deliberately and publicly affirm in their own persons the reality of God's grace in their lives and to confirm he vows signified in baptism."⁴⁰⁹⁴ The majority report within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands hopes for a similar scenario⁴⁰⁹⁵.

6.18.6. Divergent meanings and functions

As indicated, the understanding of what establishes public profession of faith further determines the positions taken in the debate. In its 1989 report to synod the Worship Committee of the CRCNA distinguishes divergent meanings and functions of the ritual of profession of faith, which thus signifies different milestones and processes. Profession of faith marks the transition of covenant children who take personal responsibility for their faith and life as Christians. It marks the welcome to the Lord's Supper. It may mark the welcome to new adult believers. It contains a pledge of commitment to the doctrines and

⁴⁰⁹⁰ Hogenhuis writes "homo-logein. Dat betekent letterlijk: samen stemmen met anderen." The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology explains "*homologeō* means to say the same, i.e. agree in one's statements, and *homologia* means agreement, consent."

⁴⁰⁹¹ H. Hogenhuis, "Belijdenis doen – moet dat nog wel?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1978): 24/252.

⁴⁰⁹² Report B, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 283, see also 301.

⁴⁰⁹³ Report A, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 266.

⁴⁰⁹⁴ Marsden, George M. "Children at the Lord's Table: a Reformed Dilemma," *Reformed Journal* (December 1977): 21; "Baptized Non Communicants and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper (1977)," in *The Church Speaks: The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America, no. 15*, ed. James I. Cook (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 83.

⁴⁰⁹⁵ *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976): 16.

government of the CRC. It marks the entrance into adult rights and responsibilities⁴⁰⁹⁶. The Worship Committee also argues that four confessions – of personal faith in Christ, of the baptism vows, of belief in Bible and loyalty to doctrine, and of commitment to church authority and ministries - constitute profession of faith⁴⁰⁹⁷.

In his 1986 minority report Maatman warns that profession of faith might wrongly imply prior rebellion and conversion, or prior spiritual neutrality⁴⁰⁹⁸. The Worship Committee speaks of popular misconception perceiving profession of faith as joining the church, as graduation from church education, as additional sacrament, and as a once in a lifetime ritual⁴⁰⁹⁹. No wonder an overture by Classis Alberta speaks of the ambiguity of the term and requires clarification of the requirements for public profession of faith⁴¹⁰⁰.

6.18.7. Two or more professions of faith

All these divergent meanings of the rite may help profession of faith collapse into more rites⁴¹⁰¹. Of course, even before the paedocommunion debate, believers regularly professed their faith privately and liturgically with the congregation, and Dutch Reformed practice already included other public professions of faith when parents have their children baptized, at the ordination of office bearers, and as part of the wedding ceremony⁴¹⁰². But as part of the paedocommunion debate elements of what once belonged to the official or first profession of faith are now divided over more than one moment.

The majority report for the RCN 1977-1979 Synod foresees that profession of faith may lose its once for all character⁴¹⁰³. The concept of a public profession of faith as occurring at more than one occasion in the life of a Christian is recommended for consideration by CRCNA 1989 Synod⁴¹⁰⁴. Later in the discussion members of the Faith Formation Committee of the CRCNA

⁴⁰⁹⁶ Report 3, Appendix C "Public Profession of Faith for Children," Agenda CRCNA Synod 1989, 63-68.

⁴⁰⁹⁷ In the approved forms.

⁴⁰⁹⁸ Respectively Report 34 I & II, III, and IV, *Agenda* CRCNA 1986 Synod, 346-366, 366-367, 367-370.

⁴⁰⁹⁹ Report 3, Appendix C "Public Profession of Faith for Children," Agenda CRCNA Synod 1989, 49, 63-68.

⁴¹⁰⁰ Overture 78, by Classis Alberta North, to Clarify the Requirement for Public Profession of Faith by Covenant Children, Agenda CRCNA 1991 Synod, 516-518

⁴¹⁰¹ The 'law of accumulated symbolism'. Cp. Nathan D. Mitchell, "Dissolution of the rite of Christian initiation," in *Made, Not Born: New Perspectives on Christian Initiation and the Catechumate* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame, 1976), 72.

⁴¹⁰² E.g. B. Kamphuis (February 13, 1982), 300; (September 1992), 5.

⁴¹⁰³ See Suppl. 44, Supplements Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 214. Cp. "Onderweg zorgen voor elkaar," *Kerkinformatie* (September 1974).

⁴¹⁰⁴ Report 3, Agenda CRCNA 1989 Synod, 68

introduce the image of profession of faith as one of many milestones on a journey of lifelong discipleship⁴¹⁰⁵; an image which allows the option of more of the milestones to have the character of a profession of faith. Several participants make suggestions to distinguish two professions of faith, or one profession of faith divided in two stages⁴¹⁰⁶, one early, a rite of passage similar to the disciples' decision to follow Jesus⁴¹⁰⁷, or similar to bar mitzvah⁴¹⁰⁸, required for admission to the Lord's Supper, and another at a more mature age, reaffirming faith⁴¹⁰⁹, accepting adult responsibilities and privileges⁴¹¹⁰. Ridderbos explicitly warns against introducing two professions of faith, because the first would undermine the second⁴¹¹¹. Hogenhuis suggests understanding profession of faith as a repeated and lifelong expressed answer to God's initiative⁴¹¹². Alberta's 1991 overture stresses the importance of ongoing public professions of faith⁴¹¹³.

6.18.8. Age and ability

Paedocommunion comes in combination with either the disconnection of the Supper from public profession of faith, the lowering of the bar for such a profession, or an age and ability appropriate profession. Especially the CRCNA's Faith Formation Committee emphasizes the age and ability appropriate approach⁴¹¹⁴. The Worship Committee specifies in its 1989 report how the current approved forms suggest that four confessions constitute profession of faith⁴¹¹⁵, and how each of these four belongs to a different stage

⁴¹⁰⁵ E.g. Jill Friend, "Celebrating Faith Milestones: Profession of Faith," *Banner* (July 2012). Cp. Faith Formation Report, Agenda CRCNA 2012 Synod, 418.

⁴¹⁰⁶ E.g. the interim report published as Supplement 18, Suppl. Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 64-66; "Kinderen aan het avondmaal," *Kerkinformatie* 30 (1973): 13-14.

⁴¹⁰⁷ Laurens Zwaan, *Jonge mensen – brood en wijn: een weg voor jongeren tot de Maaltijd van de Heer* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1985).

⁴¹⁰⁸ Andrew Kuyvenhoven, "Children and the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (November 24, 1980), 8.

⁴¹⁰⁹ Overture 78, by Classis Alberta North, to Clarify the Requirement for Public Profession of Faith by Covenant Children, Agenda CRCNA 1991 Synod, 516-518

⁴¹¹⁰ E.g. Jacob Kuntz in "Should Children Participate in the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (November 24, 1980), 13; Agenda CRCNA 1989 Synod, 68, 469; N.N. "Children-at-communion issue bumped back to committee," *Banner* (June 29, 1993): 23.

⁴¹¹¹ Herman N. Ridderbos, "Van week tot week: Kindercommunie," *Gereformeerd Weekblad* (December 14, 1973). The article would be republished in the Frisian newspaper, "Deputaten adviseren synode Geref. Kerken: Kinderen ook aan avondmaal; Kritische kanttekeningen van prof. dr. H. Ridderbos," *Friesch Dagblad*, January 5, 1974.

⁴¹¹² H. Hogenhuis, "En de openbare geloofsbelijdenis dan?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

⁴¹¹³ Overture 78, by Classis Alberta North, to Clarify the Requirement for Public Profession of Faith by Covenant Children, Agenda CRCNA 1991 Synod, 516-518

⁴¹¹⁴ E.g. Hogenhuis (May 1978); Faber (2003).

⁴¹¹⁵ of personal faith in Christ, of the baptism vows, of belief in Bible and loyalty to doctrine, and of commitment to church authority and ministries

of faith⁴¹¹⁶. This helps to envision how age and ability appropriate profession of faith could differ. At the same time it challenges the thought that all elements of profession of faith can be adapted to every age, or stage of faith.

Participation equals profession of faith

To complicate matters, on both sides of the ocean some perceive participation in the Lord's Supper as one form of professing one's faith⁴¹¹⁷. Especially in the congregation of Rijsbergen the view that participation in the Lord's Supper equaled a weekly profession of faith, was shared by many in the early days, and still expressed by several interviewees⁴¹¹⁸.

6.18.9. Fears and hopes

Finally, I mentioned fears and hopes about future risks or possibilities which seem to shape the positions on this matter. Opponents, but also some advocates, express concerns⁴¹¹⁹, fear for increase of the already existing resistance among youth⁴¹²⁰ and for decline of the practice⁴¹²¹. They recognize the risk of abandoning the requirement⁴¹²², of undermining public profession of faith in particular⁴¹²³, and the confessional nature of the church in general⁴¹²⁴. Several Dutch authors refer to German youth, for example of the German *Evangelische-altreformierte Kirche of Niedersachsen*, who leave the church "auskonfirmiert"⁴¹²⁵. Schravendeel fears that a next step might be that we baptize without requiring faith of the parents⁴¹²⁶.

In response to some of those fears Aalbers, for example, remains hopeful that explanation of Scripture will always lead to faith which is professed in words and deeds⁴¹²⁷. Witvliet hopes that love for Christ and the invitation of the

⁴¹¹⁶ Report 3, Appendix C "Public Profession of Faith for Children," Agenda CRCNA Synod 1989, 65; referring to theories of James Fowler and John Westerhoff III

⁴¹¹⁷ E.g. Peter Hoytema, "Where the Generation Gather: A Case for Including Children at the Lord's Supper," *Reformed Worship* (March 2011); Peter Sinia, "Kindercommunie en Calvijn," *Opbouw* (November 26, 2010).

⁴¹¹⁸ A decision to discard the public profession of faith has never been made, but the practice did dwindle for years, Van den Brink and Van der Kwast (1992), 224.

⁴¹¹⁹ Faith Formation, Agenda CRCNA 2007 Synod, 50f.

⁴¹²⁰ Van Oeveren (1977), 21.

⁴¹²¹ H. Hogenhuis, "En de openbare geloofsbelijdenis dan?" *Ouderlingenblad* (May 1984).

⁴¹²² Marsden, George M. "Children at the Lord's Table: a Reformed Dilemma," *Reformed Journal* (December 1977).

⁴¹²³ Jelle Tuininga, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980), "Children at the Lord's Supper," *Outlook* (October 1984). Henk de Jong, "Antwoord," *Opbouw* (March 19, 1976): 90. Kerkinformatie (1976), 18.

⁴¹²⁴ Tuininga (1980) (1984). Kerkinformatie (1976), 18.

⁴¹²⁵ B.J. Aalbers, "Kindercommunie in ontwikkeling IV: verkenningen in de evangelische kerkgemeenschap te Geldrop," *Praktische Theologie* (1974). Kerkinformatie (1976), 22.

⁴¹²⁶ Schravendeel (1977), 19.

⁴¹²⁷ Aalbers (1976), 94f.

congregation will encourage children to still make profession of faith⁴¹²⁸. Hielema gives suggestions how to strengthen the practice of profession of faith⁴¹²⁹.

6.19. Pedagogic

6.19.1. Importance

I have argued that a socially induced focus of attention on children in the twentieth century set the stage for the debate on- and the introduction of paedocommunion. I have claimed that participants in the discussion in the denominational periodicals are not very eager to acknowledge any social or cultural influence, except when acknowledging the influence of new insights in academic disciplines such as developmental psychology and pedagogy. That academic discipline of pedagogy was relatively young; in the Netherlands the first academic pedagogue was inaugurated in 1900⁴¹³⁰, the first professor in this field in 1918⁴¹³¹.

In the story of the Reformed Church liberated of Rijsbergen pedagogical arguments are remarkably absent both in documents as in the recollection of the interviewees. But in other Dutch pioneer churches one of several causes that led to participation of children was an emphasis on the pedagogical nature of the sacrament as strengthening faith or conducive to faith formation and a correlated awareness provided by developmental psychology of children's ability to understand sacramental mystery. Explaining the change in the mainline Reformed churches of the Netherlands in the seventies, Heitink observes in retrospect that it was motivated by the pedagogical shift towards the child⁴¹³², but that it was expressed in theological language in the debate⁴¹³³.

James Cook mentions the insights in faith development provided by the behavioral sciences as one of the new reasons which led the 1988 General Synod of the RCA to encourage inclusion of baptized children at the Lord's

⁴¹²⁸ John D. Witvliet, "Children at the Table: Some Provisional Answers to Practical Questions," *Forum* (Spring 2007).

⁴¹²⁹ Syd Hielema, "FAQs," *Banner* (March 2012).

⁴¹³⁰ Gunning, Bakker (2010), 299.

⁴¹³¹ Casimir, Bakker (2010), 86.

⁴¹³² Heitink refers to the theories of Van den Berg, Ariès, Koops, Dasberg, and Postman. Heitink (2008), 85f.

⁴¹³³ Heitink (2008), 250.

Table⁴¹³⁴. In the same year Peter De Jong suggests that a mechanistic educational theory of development with an emphasis on learning by doing overrules biblical principles in the CRC study committee's majority report⁴¹³⁵. James Cook on the other hand writes about the RCA "we found the faith-development argument very convincing. But even to the almost-persuaded there remained the traditional biblical barrier of 1 Corinthians 11."⁴¹³⁶ The introduction of paedocommunion in Fourteenth Street CRC and its 2006 overture seems specifically influenced by pedagogical notions. A key role in both is played by Bob Keeley who has a doctoral degree in educational psychology and has written on spiritual development of children⁴¹³⁷. But the Fourteenth Street CRC interviewees also reveal great awareness of development of children and use pedagogical terminology of the authors of *Children and Worship*⁴¹³⁸, and the age-and-ability concept of the Faith Formation Committee. It is interesting how awkwardness of teenagers, typical of the "awkward age", and the sensitivity of the congregation to that awkwardness, play an important role in the introduction of paedocommunion in Fourteenth Street CRC.

Pedagogical arguments are not only significant for paedocommunion advocates. Several opponents use arguments regarding the psychological and spiritual development of children. At the floor of RCN 1975-1976 Synod the minority writers, who oppose paedocommunion, indicate that these psychological data were very significant for their opposition⁴¹³⁹. In the discussion on the floor of synod, Lammens complains that psychological and pedagogical arguments carry too much weight in the minority report of the opponents⁴¹⁴⁰.

6.19.2. Pedagogical against paedocommunion

Pedagogical and psychological considerations regarding the lack of maturity – or ripeness – of youth for public profession of faith were compelling reasons within the Reformed tradition to raise the age for admission to the Lord's

⁴¹³⁴ James I. Cook, "The Toughest Issue: Why the RCA Said Yes to Baptized Children at the Lord's Supper," *Reformed Worship* (Summer 1989).

⁴¹³⁵ Peter De Jong, "Should covenant children take part in the Lord's Supper?" *Outlook* (March 1988).

⁴¹³⁶ Cook (1989).

⁴¹³⁷ E.g. Robert J. Keeley, *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith: how the Church Can Nurture the Spiritual Development of Kids* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008).

⁴¹³⁸ One interviewee even refers to Maria Montessori. Note that the approach of Stewart and Berryman, who developed *Children and Worship*, stands in the tradition of Maria Montessori and is inspired by the work and material of Sofia Cavaletti.

⁴¹³⁹ Art. 306, Acts RCN 1975-1976 Synod, 197; Cp. *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976), 16,18; P. Schravendeel, "Kinderen aan het avondmaal?" *Credo* (May 1977): 16f.

⁴¹⁴⁰ Art.229, Acts RCN 1977-1979 Synod, 157. April 5, 1978.

Supper, according to Herman Ridderbos⁴¹⁴¹. The Reformed tradition also raised the age because of children's lack of sincerity, according to Martin Monsma. He argues that spiritual maturity and not age should determine admission⁴¹⁴². Ridderbos considers lack of maturity even the core reason⁴¹⁴³ to continue the current practice⁴¹⁴⁴. Van der Woude speaks of a more solid profession of faith after the *Sturm-und-Drang* stage of life⁴¹⁴⁵. In 1971 Hartvelt, who is slowly warming up to paedocommunion, nevertheless, suggests that profession of faith preferably takes place after the possible crisis in faith of the adolescent⁴¹⁴⁶. The virile and strongly worded requirement to "prove" in 1 Corinthians 11 requires quite some maturity⁴¹⁴⁷.

Some insight in what this lack of maturity means spiritually is, for example, provided by the 1975-1976 minority report. It gives much weight to the pedagogical insight that children do not fathom reconciliation and are sensitive to social pressure⁴¹⁴⁸. Van de Velde uses the pedagogical argument that after age eight the image of God starts to fade, that round age twelve alienation from faith often comes, and restoration of faith normally starts at age sixteen or seventeen; Until that time, children and youth need a waiting-room⁴¹⁴⁹. In the same vein Schravendeel holds that children of thirteen or fourteen often break with tradition, proving that they were not ready to be admitted before⁴¹⁵⁰.

At the floor of RCN Synod⁴¹⁵¹ and in articles⁴¹⁵² opponents argue that pedagogically speaking, parents should allow their children time and space to grow towards a conscious choice for Christ. Van de Velde describes this personal appropriation of faith with an allusion to the story of the Samaritan

⁴¹⁴¹ Herman N. Ridderbos, "Van week tot week: Kindercommunie," *Gereformeerd Weekblad* (December 14, 1973): 154. Republished as "Deputaten adviseren synode Geref. Kerken: Kinderen ook aan avondmaal; Kritische kanttekeningen van prof. dr. H. Ridderbos," *Friesch Dagblad*, January 5, 1974.

⁴¹⁴² Martin Monsma, "Children and the Lord's Supper," *Banner* (March 7, 1958).

⁴¹⁴³ "het eigenlijke punt in kwestie."

⁴¹⁴⁴ Ridderbos (1973), 154; Ridderbos (1974).

⁴¹⁴⁵ C. van der Woude, "Nieuwe en oude vragen in ons kerkelijk leven," *Ouderlingenblad* (December 1969); "Kindercommunie en openbare belijdenis," *Ouderlingenblad* (1970).

⁴¹⁴⁶ Hartvelt (January, 1971), 2.

⁴¹⁴⁷ John H. Bratt, "The Reader Asks; At What Age Should We Admit to the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (January 25, 1963): 17.

⁴¹⁴⁸ "Kinderen naar het avondmaal?" 17-18. Art. 302, Acts RCN 1975-1976 Synod, 192f. October 5, 1976. Cp. Schravendeel (1977), 17f.

⁴¹⁴⁹ C. van de Velde, "kinderen aan het avondmaal?: Een vraag waar we geen "ja" op kunnen zeggen," *Credo* (June 1982).

⁴¹⁵⁰ Schravendeel (1977), 18.

⁴¹⁵¹ Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 192-193, listed in a different order.

⁴¹⁵² B. van Oeveren, "Argumenten tegen avondmaalsviering door kinderen," *Credo*, May 1977. The twelve arguments were republished in the national Christian newspaper *Nederlands Dagblad*, June 8, 1977, but also in *Credo* of June 1982 and October, 1987.

woman saying that children first need to reach the stage where they say: *we no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world*⁴¹⁵³. And it is ethically important not to take children to the Supper before they are psychologically ready to give their full consent⁴¹⁵⁴. Youth may hold it against parents who made them participate too early, considering their stage of psychological development⁴¹⁵⁵.

From a pedagogical point of view it is interesting to note that the story of the introduction of paedocommunion at Fourteenth Street CRC makes mention of strong feelings of hurt and anger as expressed by those older teenagers and adolescents who had to wait until their profession of faith before they could participate.

6.19.3. Pedagogical in favour of paedocommunion

In my interviews with Fourteenth Street CRC members, references are made to Jerome Berryman's concept of Godly play and to Montessori. The majority report of the RCN mentions how well Montessori had understood how liturgical elements have a great appeal to children, especially when they can play an active role in it⁴¹⁵⁶.

Many paedocommunion advocates express children's need for the sacrament in terms of their development or the life stages they go through. As maturing members, children need this means of grace, states Morris Greidanus⁴¹⁵⁷. Dutch paedocommunion pioneers emphasize how children and youth in their journey through life and faith need to be nurtured with "waybread", "manna in the dessert of puberty"⁴¹⁵⁸. The CRC's 1986 majority report is negative about the practice of postponing profession of faith beyond the age of twelve or thirteen to late- or even post-adolescence, and about requiring social maturity, because it deprives children of a means to strengthen their faith⁴¹⁵⁹. But, opponents hold that the Lord's Supper nourishes not to faith, but to maturity of faith⁴¹⁶⁰.

⁴¹⁵³ Cf. John 4:42. Van de Velde (1982), 14.

⁴¹⁵⁴ Acts RCN 1973-1975 Synod, 192-193, listed in a different order.

⁴¹⁵⁵ Van Oeveren (1977).

⁴¹⁵⁶ *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976): 10.

⁴¹⁵⁷ Morris N. Greidanus, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

⁴¹⁵⁸ Rev. P.A. Elderenbosch of NRC Bergkerk, Amersfoort (Oskamp, 1973), 117.

⁴¹⁵⁹ Majority report and recommendations by Dr. Carl E. Zylstra, Norman Shepherd, Dr. James C. Schaap, Rev. Mark D. Vander Hart and br. Marvin Van Essen.

⁴¹⁶⁰ Cf. Belgian Confession Article 35. Report A, Agenda CRCNA 1995 Synod, 266, 268.

Arguments that focus on children's abilities, and when they develop these abilities could also be classified as pedagogical. Already in 1952 Hoeksema suggests that long before the age of adolescence children are able to discern the Lord's body⁴¹⁶¹. Developmental psychology makes Dutch paedocommunion pioneers aware of children's ability to understand sacramental mystery. On the other side of the ocean paedocommunion advocate, Syd Hielema, argues that currently the relationship between mystery and understanding and human development is not properly honored⁴¹⁶². Al Helder explicitly refers to the work of James Fowler on stages of faith, when he suggests that children around age seven can meet the requirements to participate in the Supper⁴¹⁶³.

When speaking in terms of children's abilities the focus is on how children are sufficiently "adapted" to participate in the sacrament. When the terminology of age-and-ability is used in the debate it often means that requirements are adapted in the sense that no one is required beyond her or his age and ability. Sometimes the terminology of age-and-ability is used when either the Supper or for example the required profession of faith is adapted to the level of the participant. In 1991 Classis Alberta North, for example, overtures synod among others that *the church should provide ways for covenant children to profess their faith consistent with their individual stages of physical, intellectual, emotional, and faith development*, on the ground of insights in the stages of faith⁴¹⁶⁴. Other expressions such as "taking into account different levels of maturity"⁴¹⁶⁵ or "sensitivity to children and their stages of development" convey the same though. "We wanted our kids owning it at three years old at a three year old level, and four year old at a four year old level and at five year old ..." share the Goheens in the interview. Though similar concepts can be found throughout history and earlier in the paedocommunion discussion⁴¹⁶⁶, the Faith Formation Committee made age-and-ability appropriateness a key idea within the paedocommunion discussion of the CRC⁴¹⁶⁷. It could be considered a hermeneutical principle, or an ethical

⁴¹⁶¹ Herman Hoeksema, *The Triple Knowledge: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*, Volume 2, 3rd ed. (1947-1952; Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1988), 561.

⁴¹⁶² Syd Hielema, "A Precious Feast, a Tangled Web: A Case for Welcoming Children at the Table," *Reformed Worship* (June 2005).

⁴¹⁶³ Agenda CRCNA 1986 Synod, 367.

⁴¹⁶⁴ Overture 78, by Classis Alberta North, to Clarify the Requirement for Public Profession of Faith by Covenant Children, Agenda CRCNA 1991 Synod, 516-518

⁴¹⁶⁵ Ryan Faber, "Our Paedocommunion Discussion: Children and the Lord's Supper in the Christian Reformed Church," *Stromata* (Spring 2003).

⁴¹⁶⁶ E.g. Van den Berg (1978), 81f.

⁴¹⁶⁷ E.g. Faith Formation Committee, *Children at the Table: Toward a Guiding Principle for Biblically Faithful Celebrations of the Lord's Supper* (2010), 1.

formula similar to “ought implies can”, but it certainly also functions as a principle that helps to speak and act regarding the Lord’s Supper while doing justice to the pedagogical aspect of a child’s psychological and spiritual development. And the terminology is often used by those in favour of paedocommunion or at least of lowering current age limits.

Some claims suggest that by its very nature the Lord’s Supper is adapted to the spiritual development of children. Calvin’s understanding of the Lord’s Supper as pedagogical is for example mentioned by advocates of paedocommunion⁴¹⁶⁸. The Lord’s Supper is a visual, tactile and tasting way to experience and learn, whereas learning by just listening is much more difficult for children⁴¹⁶⁹. The paradigm of faith “milestones”⁴¹⁷⁰, suggests how sacraments and rites fit in with developmental concepts of faith formation⁴¹⁷¹. Opponents mention how Communion signifies spiritual growth and sanctification, but conclude that it (therefore) requires a measure of mental and spiritual development⁴¹⁷². The Worship Committee makes the churches aware how profession of faith is not adapted to the spiritual development of children, as in its current form it is made up of four confessions⁴¹⁷³, each of which belongs to a different stage of faith⁴¹⁷⁴.

Interesting in terms of spiritual development is the fear expressed in the CRC’s 1986 majority report that a postponed profession of faith may communicate that a radical transition is still required or worse that a period of ‘sowing wild oats’ before settling down belongs to spiritual development⁴¹⁷⁵.

6.19.4. Pedagogical claims about children

Within some of the periodical articles, books and even interviews, but mostly in some of the study reports, pedagogical claims about children can be found. Sometimes authors and theories in the field of pedagogic or developmental psychology are mentioned⁴¹⁷⁶. Pedagogical concepts such as children “learning

⁴¹⁶⁸ Peter G. Sinia, “Kindercommunie en Calvin,” *Opbouw* (November 26, 2010): 23.

⁴¹⁶⁹ Brenda Katerberg, interview with author.

⁴¹⁷⁰ As developed by the Lutheran Youth and Family Institute, and used in Laura and Robert J. Keeley, *Celebrating the Milestones of Faith: a Guide for Churches* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2009).

⁴¹⁷¹ Faith Formation Committee, Agenda CRCNA Synod 2009, 433-447.

⁴¹⁷² Nicholas J. Monsma, “Should children partake of the Lord’s supper?” *Banner* (January 6, 1950): 5.

⁴¹⁷³ 1- Personal faith in Christ, 2- affirmation of baptism vows, 3-belief in Bible and loyalty to doctrine, and 4- commitment to church authority and ministries.

⁴¹⁷⁴ The report mentions theories of James Fowler and John Westerhof III.

⁴¹⁷⁵ Majority report and recommendations by Dr. Carl E. Zylstra, Norman Shepherd, Dr. James C. Schaap, Rev. Mark D. Vander Hart and br. Marvin Van Essen.

⁴¹⁷⁶ E.g. Maria Montessori, Jerome Berryman, James Fowler, and John Westerhof II.

by doing”⁴¹⁷⁷, “learning through exploring” and “learning through play”⁴¹⁷⁸ are mentioned. But often the expert opinions are summarized in short statements on children, as in the following sample.

James Cook, for example, writes “The behavioral sciences have taught us that Christian learning begins at birth. In the first year of a child's life loving care, freely received, elicits a response of trust and instills a sense of the reality of grace. Recipients of such nurture readily sense the ring of reality in the gospel, since it resonates with their deepest experiences and understandings.”⁴¹⁷⁹

James Cook further writes “At the age of four, children demonstrate remarkable understanding of the stories of Scripture and of symbols in worship and sacraments. The awareness of love for Jesus, the feeling of belonging to the Christian family, and the desire to participate in the Lord's Supper are likely to emerge at this time.” Interviewees illustrate that with their personal experiences⁴¹⁸⁰. James Cook concludes “So it makes sense that this is also the age at which we should introduce the Lord's Supper.”⁴¹⁸¹ But Schravendeel suggests that young children are “amorphous”, conforming to what their parents deem right and proper and that children of four are sensitive to celebrations in groups, but that the consciousness of their faith should be questioned⁴¹⁸². Preschoolers “experience Communion as part of their worship experience, mimicking their parent’s faith – just as they do when they fold their hands in prayer, raise their hands in praise, or turn the pages of a Bible storybook”, “5 and 6 year olds understand that the bread and the wine or juice remind us of Jesus’ body and blood and the celebration of Communion reminds us that Jesus died on a cross and forgives our sins” instruct the Faith Formation Ministries⁴¹⁸³.

Schravendeel writes that children of eight are more conscious, but that their faith is more a matter of obedience to parents than to God⁴¹⁸⁴. Faith Formation Ministries suggests “7 and 8 year olds experience Communion as a reminder of Jesus’ death and resurrection and understand that the celebration of Communion is something that God’s family does together as a way of remembering Jesus’ gift of forgiveness”, “9 and 10 year olds continue

⁴¹⁷⁷ E.g. Mike Goheen, interview with author.

⁴¹⁷⁸ Raeanne Walters, interview with author.

⁴¹⁷⁹ Cook (1989).

⁴¹⁸⁰ E.g. Mike & Marnie Goheen, interview with author.

⁴¹⁸¹ Cook (1989).

⁴¹⁸² Schravendeel (1977), 17.

⁴¹⁸³ Faith Formation Ministries, *Welcoming Children to the Lord's Supper Toolkit: A User's Guide* (Grand Rapids: Faith Formation Ministries, 2015).

⁴¹⁸⁴ Schravendeel (1977), 17.

to deepen their understanding that the bread and the wine are reminders of Jesus' body and blood given through his death on the cross. They're beginning to understand metaphors and symbols and can be more thoughtful in their experience of the sacrament."⁴¹⁸⁵

Without specifying age, Zwaan speaks of youth who search for identity in the midst of community⁴¹⁸⁶. Schravendeel warns that children are also sensitive to peer pressure, which makes their motives to participate questionable⁴¹⁸⁷; a fear expressed by several opponents. James De Jong, who is in favor of teenage participation, believes high school youth are able to understand the Lord's Supper sufficiently, are in need of this means of grace more than ever, and may in this way experience peer identity working for the Lord⁴¹⁸⁸. Young teens are "able to use metaphors and understand symbolism. Cognitively, many young teens have most of the same tools adults do to understand the richness of the sacrament. Most do not have the life experiences that adults do to help put this sacrament in the context of their lives or of the bigger salvation story", suggests Faith Formation Ministries. Zwaan may be thinking about teenagers when he suggests that youth need support in the battle against guilt and shame, and that they are eager to learn and to commit as followers to a higher ideal⁴¹⁸⁹.

Psychological and pedagogical insights offer no grounds to reject family Communion, concludes the majority report of the RCN rather minimalistic. It also states "overseeing the development psychological characteristics we conclude that in the development of the child there are clear options for connection⁴¹⁹⁰ with children's Communion to be found."⁴¹⁹¹

6.20. Conclusions

The time has come to draw some final conclusions. First I want to draw those conclusions which provide answers to the threefold research question I formulated in the introduction. I want to limit myself to those conclusions which are most necessary to answer this threefold research question and those conclusions which, in my perception, represent the most interesting

⁴¹⁸⁵ Faith Formation Ministries (2015).

⁴¹⁸⁶ Laurens Zwaan, *Jonge mensen – brood en wijn: een weg voor jongeren tot de Maaltijd van de Heer* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve, 1985).

⁴¹⁸⁷ Schravendeel (1977), 17.

⁴¹⁸⁸ James A. De Jong, "Should children participate in the Lord's Supper?" *Banner* (November 24, 1980).

⁴¹⁸⁹ L. Zwaan (1985).

⁴¹⁹⁰ *Aansluitingsmomenten*.

⁴¹⁹¹ *Kerkinformatie* (December 1976): 13.

discoveries I made. My threefold research question reflects the research process; hence the answers in response to the first part of that threefold question are in as sense more observations than conclusions. When answering the third question I may formulate some bold personal conclusions or answers, but I will mostly try to formulate constructive proposals, keeping in mind how these proposals should represent the strategic movement of fundamental practical theology. I also want to be mindful to the Apostle Paul's instruction to excel in what builds up the church⁴¹⁹².

6.20.1. Observations in answer to question 1

The first part of the threefold research question asked: What are the most relevant aspects of the discussion on –, and the introduction of paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition after the Second World War?

First four observations regarding the time.

1. The discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion took place in the twentieth century which has been called the century of the child.
2. The introduction of paedocommunion by the first pioneers within the Dutch Reformed tradition happened approximately in the same era other pioneers did the same in many different countries, often independently.
3. The discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion partly coincided with discussions on mentally disabled at the Supper, on women in office and on homosexuality.
4. The discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition took place in the same century as the publication of Roman Catholic papal decree *Quam Singulari* and coincided with the growth of ecumenical relationships.

Regarding the tendency-need dimension, or the psychological and emotional aspect, I make the following observations:

5. In the written documents of the paedocommunion discussion few emotions are explicitly expressed by the adult authors; relatively many children explicitly express their feelings and emotions.
6. In the interviews more significant emotions are identified as part of the process of introducing paedocommunion. The six words that capture the most significant of those emotions are: discontent, desire, awkwardness, fear, harmony and tears.

⁴¹⁹² 1 Cor. 14:12.

Paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed Tradition

As indicated above I have chosen to treat matters of church order as belonging to the obligational dimension or ethical aspect. Regarding this dimension I make the following observations:

7. Matters of church order are primarily introduced by opponents of paedocommunion.
8. There are some indications that the ethical aspect of the Lord's Supper played a more significant role in the paedocommunion discussion in the German language than within the Dutch Reformed debate.

Regarding the rule-role dimension I observe the following:

9. I registered many different people who played a role in the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion; people of different professions and social status, of both genders, and many ages.

Regarding the visional dimension I make the following observations:

10. The argument based on the participation of children in the Passover and Jewish seder tradition is one of the major arguments of paedocommunion advocates.
11. The baptism of infants and children is another major argument of paedocommunion advocates.
12. 1 Corinthians 11: 17-34 is the locus classicus in Reformed arguments against paedocommunion and the words remembrance, proclamation, unworthy, self-examination and discernment are key-words in the arguments against paedocommunion. The words remembrance and proclamation receive approximately the same amount attention. The word unworthy receives the least amount attention. The words self-examination and discernment are mentioned most often of the five key-words. Though the notion of eating and drinking judgment on oneself was important in the argument of Calvin, it is not given the same significance as the five key-words in the contemporary Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion.
13. Arguments related to the covenant belong to the most significant in terms of quantity and considered substantive by both sides.
14. Sacramental arguments are significant and used by both sides.
15. Pedagogical arguments related to the psychological development of children are significant for both sides of the debate.
16. History and tradition play an important role in the discussion for both sides, though almost no one would perceive them as conclusive for their own position.

17. Arguments related to profession of faith are secondary in importance to those related to 1 Corinthians 11, infant baptism, and the covenant. But such arguments are used more than those related to church order.
18. Confessional considerations play a subordinate role in the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion discussion. Key are Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 81, 75, and 76 and Belgic Confession article 35.
19. The argument suggesting that Exodus 24 is the primary antecedent for the Lord's Supper is of secondary importance for paedocommunion opponents.
20. Only few arguments are liturgical in nature.

Regarding the environmental-social dimension, and cultural aspect:

21. Hardly any participants in the paedocommunion discussion or interviewees of the three congregations express awareness of social or cultural influence on the discussion on or introduction of paedocommunion, except that of new insight from developmental psychology or pedagogy.

6.20.2. Conclusions in response to question 2

The second part of my threefold research question asked: How does a systematic, multidimensional, and multidisciplinary interpretation of these relevant aspects explain the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion within the Dutch Reformed tradition?

1. Childhood studies reveal multiple claims regarding the discovery of children and childhood and multiple centuries and eras classified as that of the child, and hence a simple reference to the twentieth century as century of the child cannot explain the return of children to the Lord's Supper.

I have argued that the simultaneous introduction of paedocommunion by pioneers resembles similar clustering of innovations, multiple discoveries and scientific revolutions known as paradigm shifts, and can be understood with the help of the sociology of science and Merton's 'formula'.

2. A socially induced focus of attention on children in the twentieth century set the stage for the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion. But I also conclude that the discussion on and introduction of paedocommunion was not the result of monolinear developments regarding the position of children in society and culture,

but rather occurred in the context of movements in opposite directions creating tensions or problems, in which the introduction of paedocommunion was one of at least three possible options to release those tensions or solve those problems.

3. A spirit of emancipation in culture, an awakened sense of justice, or a change in social consciousness, set the stage for a more equal treatment of children at the Supper. The introduction of paedocommunion in the Dutch Reformed tradition is influenced by the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of the working class, the poor, prostitutes, mentally handicapped, elderly with Alzheimer, women, homosexuals, black and colored South Africans suffering from apartheid, and even of cruelly treated animals. To some extent it is true that paedocommunion practice is unconsciously influenced by socialism with its leveling tendency.
4. Exposure to the Roman Catholic and other Christian traditions played a role in the diffusion of paedocommunion as innovation in the Dutch Reformed tradition.
 - a. The phenomena of homophily and heretophily as distinguished in the theory of diffusion of innovations help us understand how diffusion of the innovation of paedocommunion through the heterophile networks of the Roman Catholic Church to churches with the Dutch Reformed tradition was not easy, but crucial for its spread, whereas further diffusion through homophile networks within the Reformed tradition accelerated the process.
 - b. In addition to exposure through ecumenical relationships, significant exposure happened through mere location, membership transfer, missionary efforts, work or study, and more indirectly through resources used in ministry.
 - c. The end result of such exposure is not automatically limited to the options within the bandwidth created by the traditions involved.
 - d. Publications on paedocommunion from the English tradition, prior to *Quam Singulari*, as well as the autonomous Roman Catholic choice to lower the age of first Communion, suggest that paedocommunion could have been introduced in the Dutch Reformed tradition without exposure to other traditions.

Regarding the tendency-need dimension, or the psychological and emotional aspect:

5. The strong words used in the first decade of the periodical discussions on paedocommunion suggest that strong emotions guided the authors' judgments and choices, even though those emotions were not explicitly acknowledged.
6. The interviews reveal how the words discontent, awkwardness and desire capture important emotions that led to the introduction of paedocommunion in Rijsbergen, Fourteenth Street CRC, and New West CRC.
 - a. And harmony at the crucial congregational meeting in Rijsbergen was perceived as indication of the Holy Spirit resting on that meeting.

Regarding the obligational dimension or ethical aspect:

7. In none of the three denominations researched church order was adapted to allow paedocommunion within a generation after the question of paedocommunion was raised, which proves that it is very difficult to undo something once it is incorporated in church order.
8. The significant role of the 'awakened sense of justice' as well as the ethical aspect of 1 Corinthians 11 show how the Dutch Reformed paedocommunion does have a significant ethical dimension.

Regarding the rule-role dimension:

9. Regarding the congregational process:
 - a. In Rijsbergen, but also in Fourteenth Street CRC and New West CRC, so many people have played key-roles that speaking of a communal process seems to do more justice to the story than speaking about individual key roles.

Regarding the denominational process:

- b. Theologians did not lead the process of the introduction of paedocommunion; and I agree that even their dominant role in the RCN periodical discussion was part of a process of democratization, empowering lay members.
- c. Children and youth did raise the question of paedocommunion and did ask to participate, in all three denominations. They raised the question in local churches, denominational periodicals and at synods.
- d. Considering the moment that women were allowed in office in both denominations, it is remarkable that the contribution of women to the CRC periodical discussion was significantly earlier and bigger.

Regarding the visional dimension:

10. Scripture suggests that children were present and did participate in the Passover celebration, before and after the centralization as anticipated in Deuteronomy 12 and 16, as far as their age and ability allowed. Rabbinical tradition suggests that in Jesus' days children were considered to do so at a very young age.
11. Regarding arguments related to the theology and practice of infant baptism:
 - a. Many experience tension between the Reformed support for infant baptism and rejection of paedocommunion.
 - b. The debate often ends in stalemate about the question to what extent the two sacraments reflect the action and re-action in the relationship with God.
12. Regarding 1 Corinthians 11 several conclusions can be drawn:
 - a. Historically 1 Corinthians 11 has not been used to reject paedocommunion until just before the start of the Reformation.
 - b. Considering the development of children and people's perception of when someone is able to examine oneself, self-examination raises the bar higher than any of the four perceived requirements.
 - c. Legitimate alternatives for the understanding of 1 Corinthians 11 and the application of the perceived requirements have been offered. Among others an understanding against the Old Testament background, from a covenantal or communal perspective, in light of the literary and historical context, distinguishing imperative and indicative, and applying possible requirements in an age-and-ability appropriate way.
13. Regarding the covenant
 - a. I agree with the consensus within this debate that covenantal arguments should be substantive within the Dutch Reformed tradition, considering how covenantal arguments have been considered substantive regarding paedobaptism and considering how the Bible even more explicitly links the Lord's Supper with the (new) covenant than baptism.
 - b. Careful reading of Jeremiah on the New Covenant suggests that children were expected to be included.
 - c. The debate often ends in stalemate about the question to what extent the two sacraments reflect both sides of the covenantal relationship.
14. Proponents often emphasize the sacrament as means of grace. Opponents emphasize the critical nature of the sacrament stands or falls with the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11. The argument that paedocommunion

implies sacramentalism or an *ex opere operato* theology would also apply to children participating in Old Testament sacraments or infants being baptized.

15. Though both sides of the debate use pedagogical arguments, there is evidence that on both sides of the ocean pedagogical arguments have persuaded or almost persuaded former opponents of paedocommunion. I would suggest that the importance of explicit pedagogical arguments may be a tangible expression of the influence of the socially induced focus of attention on children.
16. Regarding history and historical arguments several conclusions can be drawn:
 - a. Historical awareness has served as incentive and catalyst of the paedocommunion debate. The amount of attention given to history and the adaptation of historical data also show that historical arguments have been more decisive than acknowledged by the participants in the debate.
 - b. There is evidence – both at a congregational as well as denomination level – of ‘invented tradition’ in the sense that one’s imagination invents a perpetual tradition for a tradition or practice which in reality is quite recent.
 - c. Careful research of the historical sources does make it possible to validate claims regarding that history. I consider some of the following important examples:
 - i. Origen does not address paedocommunion in his *Homilies on Judges*.
 - ii. Cyprian’s writings cannot be understood as the record of the introduction of paedocommunion, but rather reflect such a practice as old and as widespread as Cyprian could oversee.
 - iii. Claims that Calvin welcomed children at the Table at age fourteen or fifteen are neither substantiated by participants in the paedocommunion, nor by Plomp who is often referred to in the Netherlands. So until new evidence is brought forward I conclude that Calvin meant what he said when he wrote about profession of faith at the age of (approximately) ten.
 - d. Careful research of the historical sources does provide valuable insights in what shaped the (Dutch) Reformed Lord’s Supper practice. I consider some of the following important examples:
 - i. The Reformation inherited or continued Roman Catholic Communion praxis and theology in a number of significant

- ways, such as the age or life-stage of admission, the required curriculum, the subjective element, the awe and anxiety, and the infrequent celebration.
- ii. This Roman Catholic inheritance which the Reformation inherited had been significantly shaped by transubstantiation theology.
 - iii. The Roman Catholic age or life-stage of admission, and hence the Dutch Reformed age or life-stage of admission, is strongly influenced by the Hippocratic division of life in stages of seven years.
 - iv. The increasing age of admission in the (Dutch) Reformed tradition is to a large extent caused by non-theological, economical, political, social and cultural aspects.
 - v. The Dutch Reformed tradition, in which confirmation or public profession of faith is strongly connected to Lord's Supper participation, is shaped by a long history in which these rites were first separated as part of the historical dissolution or disintegration of the Christian rite of initiation.
17. On the one hand there is no explicit requirement for a formal public profession of faith prior to participation in the Lord's Supper, but on the other hand that faith and its profession are rightly perceived as fundamental to the church from a biblical perspective. Awareness of the history of profession of faith has helped many in the paedocommunion to acknowledge the first. The concept of multiple professions of faith as milestone along the journey of faith has helped churches with paedocommunion to secure the latter.
18. The argument that Jesus' own testimony links the Lord's Supper to Exodus 24 is valid, but Jesus' own words and scripture link the Lord's Supper to the Passover in so many ways that there is no validity to the claim that Exodus 24 provides the primary antecedent. Jesus' own testimony linking the wine to the blood which was sprinkled on all the people, also challenges the suggestion that Exodus 24 as primary antecedent would undermine participation of the children.
19. Unlike the Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A 177, the confessions of the Dutch Reformed tradition do not explicitly deal with the question of paedocommunion. It is fair to conclude that the authors of the confessions did reject Communion of infants and younger children. It is equally fair to conclude that authors of the Confessions did welcome children at a significantly younger age than many contemporary churches adhering to those confessions.

20. Liturgy played a more significant role than the minimal use of liturgical arguments suggests.
- a. Ending the 'enduring structure' of weekly celebration of Communion during the Reformation, and increasing the frequency of Lord's Supper celebration in the twentieth century both influenced the participation of children in the Dutch Reformed tradition.
 - b. The Liturgical Movement was significant in the introduction of paedocommunion in the RCN.
 - c. The Worship Planning Team played a significant role in the introduction of paedocommunion in Fourteenth Street CRC.
 - d. Several stories show the importance of inclusion of children in other liturgical practices as stepping stone in the process toward welcoming children at the Table.

6.20.3. Constructive proposals in response to question 3

How can the evaluation of these relevant aspects – in terms of coherence, validity of claims, and the accurate and consistent use of normative texts – contribute to the development of a Reformed paedocommunion doctrine and praxis?

1. I would argue that the changing position of children and childhood raises questions which require the further development of a Dutch Reformed theology of childhood, which benefits from the dialogue with culture and society.

I propose that:

2. Congregations and denominations acknowledge that the described influence of emancipation movements and of the underlying sense of justice on Christian practices is legitimate, and that they find constructive ways to explicate such influences and make them integral part of congregational and denominational deliberations.
3. Congregations and denominations search for constructive ways in which the expression and evaluation of emotions and feelings can be integral part of congregational and denominational deliberations, including those on paedocommunion.
4. Church orders and ecclesiastical procedures be adapted and applied in such ways that they can do justice to the questions of individuals or even of a generation by delivering justice timely.

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5. Church orders and ecclesiastical procedures be adapted and applied in such ways that they do more justice to the way innovations are adopted.
6. The church of Rijsbergen, the Christian Reformed periodicals, and the Faith Formation Committee with its Shepherding Process have modeled how all members of Christ' church can be given a voice in congregational and denominational deliberations on sensitive issues.
7. Greater awareness of the dimension of time, or the narrative of life, would help construct doctrines and shape practices which do more justice to the infant and senior members of the body of Christ.
8. The concept of age-and-ability appropriateness may be a fruitful concept in this respect.
9. Our children are often marginalized in our doctrine and practices because like Augustine we view childhood through the lens of conversion and believe that that "no one will be good who was not first of all wicked".
10. Congregations would benefit from restoring the enduring structure of weekly Lord's Supper celebrations, and even more so if they would do that in the context of an agape meals.
11. In our discussion on- and study of paedocommunion, a rejection of the historical unity between baptism and Communion and of age-and-ability appropriate participation of the youngest children in the Lord's Supper should not be treated as self-evident.

Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift betreft, zoals de ondertitel duidelijk maakt, een onderzoek naar kinderen aan het avondmaal in de Nederlandse, gereformeerde traditie. De titel zelf, *van de kleinste tot de grootste*, is ontleend aan Jeremia 31:34.

In het eerste, inleidende, hoofdstuk, wordt kort de relevantie en actualiteit van het onderwerp belicht; Het eeuwenoude fenomeen van kinderen aan het avondmaal wordt vanaf na de Tweede Wereldoorlog tot op de dag van vandaag in de Nederlandse, gereformeerde traditie besproken en op veel plaatsen geherintroduceerd. Vervolgens wordt een drievoudige onderzoeksvraag geformuleerd: 1- Wat zijn de meest relevante aspecten van de discussie over- en de introductie van kindercommunie binnen de Nederlandse, gereformeerde traditie na de Tweede Wereldoorlog? 2- Hoe verklaart een systematische, multidimensionale, en multidisciplinaire analyse van deze relevante aspecten de discussie over- en de introductie van kindercommunie binnen de Nederlandse, gereformeerde traditie? 3- Hoe kan de evaluatie van deze relevante aspecten – in termen van coherentie, de validiteit van claims en het accuraat en consistent gebruik van normatieve teksten – bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van een Gereformeerde kindercommunie leer en praktijk? Twee inleidende vragen luiden: 1- Wat is de geschiedenis van kindercommunie voorafgaand aan de jaren vijftig van de vorige eeuw? 2- Wat is de bredere geschiedenis van kinderen en de kindertijd in maatschappij en kerk, waarvan de geschiedenis van kindercommunie deel uitmaakt? Kindercommunie wordt daarbij als containerbegrip gebruikt voor een scala aan opvattingen en praktijken variërend van zuigelingencommunie tot deelname van oudere jongeren voor het bereiken van de volwassenheid. Het onderzoek wordt afgebakend door een focus op de discussie en praktijk binnen de Christian Reformed Church in North America, de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland en de - uit de Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt ontstane -Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken. Het onderzoek bouwt daarbij voort op eerder onderzoek naar kindercommunie van Eberhard Kenntner uit 1980, Jo Hermans uit 1987 en Anna Zegwaard uit 2006. Methodisch wordt gekozen voor de zogeheten *thick description* van Clifford Geertz, zoals uitgewerkt in de *Fundamental Practical Theology* van Don S. Browning. Aan Browning is de grondgedachte ontleend dat praktisch theologisch onderzoek een multidimensionale hermeneutische onderneming is waarin een beschrijvend, historisch, systematisch en strategisch moment te onderscheiden zijn. Waarbij Browning vrij vertaald de vijf dimensies onderscheidt van 1- visie, 2- emotie, 3- ethiek, 4- context en 5- rollen.

Het tweede hoofdstuk geeft antwoord op de eerste inleidende vraag door een overzicht te geven van de geschiedenis van kindercommunie van de vroege kerk tot halverwege de twintigste eeuw, waarbij gaandeweg de focus verschuift van de wereldwijde kerk naar de Nederlandse, gereformeerde traditie. De periode van de vroege kerk in de eerste vijf eeuwen valt uiteen in twee helften. Voor de eerste helft van deze periode, waarvan geen enkel met zekerheid te dateren document kindercommunie noemt, wordt geconcludeerd dat indirect bewijs toch het bestaan van een kindercommunie praktijk suggereert. Voor de tweede gedocumenteerde helft van deze periode wordt geconcludeerd dat in het begin kindercommunie in ieder geval een wijd verbreide al langer bestaande praktijk moet zijn geweest. Tegen de vijfde eeuw blijkt kindercommunie, bediend bij de doop, gedurende het leven en voor het sterven van kinderen, de (vrijwel) universele praktijk te zijn. Wat de periode van de middeleeuwen betreft is de belangrijkste conclusie dat kindercommunie eeuwenlang de universele praktijk blijft, om af te zwakken naar een praktijk van de meerderheid tot aan het Vierde Lateraans Concilie van 1215. Na dat concilie verdwijnt in korte tijd kindercommunie voor jonge kinderen, in alle drie de vormen, vrijwel geheel. Dat beperkt zich tot de Westerse Kerk, want in de Oosterse kerk blijft zuigelingencommunie de gangbare praktijk. Anders dan de Hussieten, die tijdens de Boheemse Reformatie kindercommunie opnieuw invoerden, sluiten de Reformatoren in meerdere opzichten aan bij de Rooms-Katholieke praktijk. Dat betekent dat zij kinderen ergens in de levensfase van zeven tot veertien jaar toe laten. Onder invloed van allerlei, ook niet theologische, factoren worden de voorwaarden voor deelname strenger en stijgt, met name gedurende de negentiende eeuw, de leeftijd van eerste avondmaalsdeelname tot achttien jaar en ouder. Dat is het algemene gebruik binnen de Nederlandse, gereformeerde traditie totdat na de Tweede Wereldoorlog kindercommunie opnieuw besproken en geïntroduceerd wordt.

Het derde hoofdstuk geeft antwoord op de tweede inleidende vraag door een overzicht te geven van de geschiedenis van kinderen en kindertijd in maatschappij en kerk van de afgelopen twintig eeuwen. Daarbij is zoveel als mogelijk onderscheiden welke concepten of theologische opvattingen er over kinderen bestonden, wat de betekenis was van bepaalde leeftijden en leeftijdsfasen, hoe kinderen behandeld werden en hoe zij deelnamen aan de maatschappij en in de kerk. Bij de beschrijving van deze geschiedenis is verdisconteerd dat de geschiedschrijving van kinderen en kindertijd een hegeliaanse ontwikkeling heeft doorlopen van een “zwarte legende”, via een “witte legende” naar een geschiedschrijving met meer tinten grijs. Het historisch overzicht begint bij de plaats van kinderen in het Romeinse Rijk en

het Jodendom. Voor zover die maatschappelijke en religieuze context van invloed zijn geweest op de apostolische kerk van de eerste eeuw lijkt deelname van kinderen aan het avondmaal zeer aannemelijk. Voor de periode tot rond het Vierde Lateraans Concilie is een van de belangrijke conclusies dat kindercommunie bestond in de context van zeer uiteenlopende concepten en theologische opvattingen over kinderen, met de relatief vooraanstaande plaats van kinderen in middeleeuwse religieuze processies als indicator van het netto resultaat daarvan. Belangrijk is ook de conclusie dat van de eerste tot en met de twintigste eeuw meer dan één tijdperk zich kenmerkt door een verhoogde aandacht voor- of 'ontdekking' van het kind. De terugkerende verdeling van het leven in fases van zeven jaar verheldert latere keuzes rondom kindercommunie. Achter de historische trend van een verlenging van de kindertijd worden minder monolineaire ontwikkelingen aangewezen die verhelderen waarom bijvoorbeeld een minimumleeftijd voor avondmaalsdeelname zich twee kanten op kan ontwikkelen. Ook de wijze waarop kinderen behandeld worden is niet uniform en ontwikkelt zich niet monolienair. Verder blijkt een marginale plaats van kinderen in de maatschappij historisch gezien niet automatisch samen te vallen met een marginale plaats binnen de kerk.

Het vierde en vijfde hoofdstuk vormen het hart van het onderzoek en beantwoorden het eerste deel van de drieledige onderzoeksvraag: Wat zijn de meest relevante aspecten van de discussie over – en de introductie van kindercommunie binnen de Nederlandse, gereformeerde traditie na de Tweede Wereldoorlog? Een overzicht levert de belangrijke constatering op dat de eerste protestantse pioniers in de Westerse wereld deels onafhankelijk van elkaar eind vijftiger en begin zestiger jaren kindercommunie introduceren. Het vierde hoofdstuk beschrijft volgens de methode van een *thick description* de introductie van kindercommunie in de Gereformeerde Kerk vrijgemaakt van Rijsbergen, Brabant, in de Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan en de First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster, British Columbia. Voor deze *thick description* is kwalitatief empirisch onderzoek in de vorm van open interviews verricht. Opvallende conclusies ten aanzien van de kerk van Rijsbergen zijn dat niet de vrijgemaakte achtergrond op zich, maar de interactie tussen de vrijgemaakte, bevindelijke gereformeerde en Room-Katholieke achtergrond van verschillende leden leidde tot de verandering. Opvallende conclusie is ook hoezeer het proces een gemeenschappelijk karakter had waarin niet één individu doorslaggevend lijkt te zijn geweest, maar ambtsdragers én gemeenteleden, mannen én vrouwen, volwassenen én kinderen, hoog én laag. Dezelfde onvrede die gemeenteleden naar Brabant deed verhuizen en de overstap deed maken naar de

Gereformeerde Kerk vrijgemaakt droeg mogelijk ook bij aan de openheid voor het verwelkomen van kinderen. Opvallend in de casus van Fourteenth Street CRC is de rol van het gevoel dat met het Engelse woord “awkard” wordt aangeduid. Opvallend is ook de rol van de gehandicapte Dalton en de Alzheimer patiënt Owen als katalysators in het proces. Geheel eigen aan het proces in deze gemeente is de rol van twee pedagogisch onderlegde stafleden en de invloed van het ‘kindernevendienst’ materiaal van *Children and Worship*. Opvallend in de casus van New West CRC is het feit dat verschillende van de voorgangers voorstanders en pioniers met betrekking tot kindercommunie waren, terwijl de gemeente in de introductie niet voorop loopt, maar de ontwikkelingen op de synode lijkt te volgen. Opvallend in de casus van New West CRC is ook dat na de invoering van kinderen aan het avondmaal een significante minderheid van ouders met grote gezinnen decennialang de meerderheid van kinderen van het avondmaal af lijkt te houden, terwijl er geen aanwijzingen zijn dat dit tot onderlinge verdeeldheid leidt. Alle drie de gemeenten kernmerken zich door een bijzondere aandacht voor kinderen. De theologische argumenten die een rol spelen binnen de gemeenten sluiten grotendeels aan bij die genoemd worden in de discussies in landelijke kerkbladen en op synodaal niveau.

Het vijfde hoofdstuk beantwoordt dezelfde vraag als het vierde hoofdstuk, maar dan met betrekking tot de discussie in de landelijke kerkbladen en op de synodes van de drie onderzochte kerkgenootschappen. Opvallend is dat in alle drie de kerkgenootschappen de discussie in dezelfde vijftiger en zestiger jaren start als waarin de eerste plaatselijke kerken kindercommunie introduceren. Kinderen en gemeenteleden behoren tot de eersten die de vraag naar kindercommunie stellen. Oecumenische contacten spelen ook een belangrijke rol in deze discussies. Emotionele argumenten blijven veelal ongenoemd, hoewel de toon van de discussie zeker in de jaren zestig sterke emoties doet vermoeden. Ethische argumenten spelen amper een rol in de discussie, behalve in de zin van kerkrechtelijke verplichtingen en in de morele connotaties die de sleuteltekst uit 1 Korintiërs 11 met zich meebrengt. Opvallend is dat in de discussie binnen de CRC relatief veel kinderen, gemeenteleden en daaronder ook vrouwen een stem krijgen. Binnen de GKN wordt de discussie in de landelijke kerkbladen vrijwel geheel gedomineerd door mannelijke theologen. De theologische argumenten hebben vooral betrekking op de deelname van kinderen aan het Pesach, de implicaties van 1 Korintiërs 11 en van de sleutelbegrippen van gedachtenis, verkondiging, onwaardigheid, zelf-onderzoek, onderscheid van het lichaam en zichzelf een oordeel eten of drinken. Belangrijk blijken verder argumenten met betrekking tot de historie van kindercommunie, de plaats van kinderen in het verbond, de

praktijk en theologie van de kinderdoop en van openbare geloofsbelijdenis, maar ook pedagogische argumenten. Secundair lijken de argumenten met betrekking tot de belijdenisgeschriften en de kerkorde. Liturgische argumenten worden opvallend weinig genoemd.

Het zesde hoofdstuk is grotendeels gewijd aan de beantwoording van het tweede deel van de drieledige onderzoeksvraag: Hoe verklaart een systematische, multidimensionale, en multidisciplinaire analyse van deze relevante aspecten de discussie over – en de introductie van kindercommunie binnen de Nederlandse, gereformeerde traditie? Allereerst wordt geanalyseerd wat maakte dat het onderwerp actueel werd en dat de tijd ‘rijp’ was voor de introductie van kindercommunie. Dat betreft een drietal factoren die onder de contextuele dimensie te scharen zijn. Aan de hand van Mertons *Sociology of Science* wordt beargumenteerd dat een sociaal veroorzaakte, bijzondere aandacht voor kinderen in de twintigste eeuw hier een belangrijke bijdrage aan leverde. Verder wordt beargumenteerd dat een geest van emancipatie in de cultuur, een ontwaakt gevoel van rechtvaardigheid of een verandering in het sociaal bewustzijn een gelijke behandeling van kinderen aan het avondmaal bevorderde. Met behulp van Rogers *Diffusion of Innovations* wordt beargumenteerd hoe verschillende soorten van blootstelling aan andere kerkelijke tradities een rol spelen bij de introductie van kindercommunie. Vervolgens wordt aannemelijk gemaakt dat en hoe veelal onbenoemd gebleven emoties een rol spelen in de discussie en bij de introductie. Gevoelens van harmonie worden bijvoorbeeld beleefd als indicator van Gods handelen in het proces van introductie. Onder de noemer van de ethische dimensie wordt met name de rol van de kerkorde in de discussie geanalyseerd, waarbij zichtbaar wordt dat diffusie en adoptie van liturgische innovatie zich moeilijk verhoudt met het proces van aanpassing van de kerkorde. Vanuit het perspectief van rollen wordt beargumenteerd dat, anders dan wel geopperd, de theologen lang niet in alles voorop gingen en de vraag naar kindercommunie niet alleen door volwassenen werd gesteld. In het kader van de dimensie van visie volgt de analyse en evaluatie van argumenten met betrekking tot Pesach, kernbegrippen uit 1 Korintiërs 11, historie, confessies, verbond, doop, liturgie, sacrament, openbare geloofsbelijdenis en pedagogie. Het zesde hoofdstuk sluit af met het benoemen van een aantal observaties, conclusies en constructieve suggesties in reactie op respectievelijk het eerste, tweede en derde deel van de onderzoeksvraag.

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Note:

Acts in footnotes as: Acts [Abbreviation of denomination] [Year] Synod.
Supplements to Acts as Suppl. Acts [Abbreviation of denomination] [Year] Synod.

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Curriculum Vitae

Pieter Gerrit Sinia was born on December 30, 1967 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, as son of Fokko Sinia and Dineke Hamoen. In 1987 he graduated high school (VWO) at the Christelijk Lyceum in Arnhem. In 1988 he attended the Evangelical College in Amersfoort. In 1989 he finished a preparatory course of Greek and Latin at the University of Utrecht. After finishing his propaedeutics of theology at the Theological University Apeldoorn he completed his theological studies at the University of Utrecht in 1997. That same year he was ordained as a pastor. Since then he has served the Dutch Reformed Church of Rijsbergen, the Netherlands (1997-2004), the First Christian Reformed Church of New Westminster, in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada (2004-2008), and the Dutch Reformed Church or Proosdijkerk of Ede, the Netherlands (since 2008). In 1996 he married Inez de Jager. They have five children: Wilrik, Thomas, Charlotte, Ruben and Anna-Sophia.



Among Protestants worldwide the issue of children at the Lord's Supper, paedocommunion in short, has been debated since World War II. The pioneers of the fifties and sixties mark the beginning of a growing movement of Protestants who embrace and practice paedocommunion. With a focus on the Dutch Reformed tradition, this study carefully explores the full theological breadth of the issue by providing a comprehensive overview and in depth analysis of the discussion on and the introduction of paedocommunion. The recent debate and changes in practice are placed in the context of the history of paedocommunion and that of children and childhood in society and church. Case studies of the introduction of paedocommunion in three local churches in the Netherlands, the United States and Canada are included. This comprehensive study provides an easy to navigate goldmine of information for anyone interested in paedocommunion.

Dr. Peter G. Sinia has served churches in the Netherlands and Canada and is currently pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church of Ede in the Netherlands.