The Unity of the Church According to Calvin
and
Its Meaning for the Churches in Indonesia

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THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO CALVIN AND ITS MEANING FOR THE CHURCHES IN INDONESIA

Agustinus Marthinus Luther BATLAJERY
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LAUS DEO
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAMA</td>
<td>Christian Missionary Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCI</td>
<td>Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGK</td>
<td>Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td><em>Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia</em>, ed. G. Baum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss, 59 vols. (Brunswick/Berlin, 1863-1900; this edition forms part of the <em>Corpus Reformatorum</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSV</td>
<td>Christen Studenten Vereniging</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCU</td>
<td>Documents on Church Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGI</td>
<td>Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (Council of Churches in Indonesia or ICC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGW</td>
<td>Regional Councils of Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>DKG</td>
<td>Dokumen Keesaan Gereja (Documents on Church Unity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPG</td>
<td>Dewan Permusyawaratan Gereja-gereja (Regional Church Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPI</td>
<td>Dewan Pentakosta Indonesia (Indonesia Pentecostal Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DZV</td>
<td>Doopsgezinde Zendings Vereniging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDU</td>
<td>Five Documents on Unity (see DCU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKI</td>
<td>Gereja Kristen Indonesia (Indonesia Christian Church)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKJ</td>
<td>Gereja Kristen Jawa (Javanese Christian Churches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GITJ</td>
<td>Gereja Injili di Tanah Java (Evangelical Church in Java)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIUZ</td>
<td>Genootschap voor In- en Uitwendige Zending te Batavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKJTU</td>
<td>Gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah Utara (The Christian Church of North Central Java)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKYE</td>
<td>Gereja Kristen Yang Esa di Indonesia (United Christian Church in Indonesia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GKN</td>
<td>Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMIM</td>
<td>Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (The Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMIT</td>
<td>Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (The Evangelical Christian Church in Timor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPI</td>
<td>Gereja Protestan Indonesia (The Protestant Church in Indonesia)</td>
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GPIB, Gereja Protestan di Indonesia Bagian Barat (The Protestant Church in the Western Parts of Indonesia)

GPM, Gereja Protestan Maluku (The Protestant Church of the Moluccas)

GRII, Gerakan Reformed Injili Indonesia (Evangelical Reformed Movement in Indonesia)

GZB, Gereformeerde Zendingsbond (Reformed Mission League)

HKBP, Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (Batak Christian Church)

ICC, Council of Churches in Indonesia

ICS, Indonesian Calvin Society

IMC, International Missionary Council


Inst. (b), Institutes 1539 Edition

Inst. (c), Institutes 1543 Edition

KWI, Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia (Indonesian Bishops’ Conference)

LDKG, Lima Dokumen Keesaan Gereja (Five Documents of Church Unity)

MOBGK, Madjelis Oesaha Bersama Gereja-gereja Kristen (The Board for Mutual Efforts of the Christian Churches)

NGZV, Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendings Vereniging

NLGIUZ, Nederlandsch Luthersch Genootschap voor In-en Uitwendige Zending

NZG, Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap

NZV, Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging

OG, Oikumene Gerejawi (Ecclesiastical Ecumenism)

OS, Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta (ed. P. Barth), Vols. 1-5, Munich, 1926-1974

PBIK, Pemahaman Bersama Iman Kristen (Statement on Mutual Understanding of the Christian Faith in Indonesia)

PGI, Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia (Communion of Churches in Indonesia, CCI)

PII, Persekutuan Injili Indonesia (Evangelical Community in Indonesia)

PSMSM, Piagam Saling Mengakui dan Saling Menerima (Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance)

RMG, Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SINOGI</td>
<td>Sinode Oikumene Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (Ecumenical Synod of the Churches in Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STOVIA</td>
<td>School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen (School for the Training of Indigenous Physicians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDPGI</td>
<td>Tata Dasar Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (Constitution of the PGI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UZV</td>
<td>Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging</td>
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<tr>
<td>VEG</td>
<td>Vrije Evangelische Gemeenten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOC</td>
<td>Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARC</td>
<td>World Alliance of Reformed Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZGKN</td>
<td>Zending der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Understanding the subject under discussion

My first acquaintance with Calvin was when I was already teaching systematic theology and had to deal with the ecclesiology of the reformers. It was then that I read the small book by Christiaan de Jonge and Jan S. Aritonang, *Apa dan Bagaimana Gereja*, 1993 (*What and How is the Church*), which attracted my attention to Calvin. For that book says that, according to Calvin, it is not absolutely necessary to have a unity of the visible church in terms of a structural unity. The organizational structures of churches can differ from city to city and country to country, but as far as the churches acknowledge each other to have the Word of God and the Sacraments, the unity of the church is manifest. Having read this book I grew more and more interested in Calvin’s life and work, which were dedicated to building the church and restoring its unity. Calvin made a heroic endeavour to unite all Protestants scattered in many countries. In a famous and often quoted statement, known to everybody who ever focused on Calvin’s ecumenical outlook, the reformer expressed his serious concern for the unity of the church: “So much does this concern me, that, could I be of any service, I would not grudge to cross even ten seas, if need there were, on account of it”.  

Besides, it became clear to me that research into Calvin’s theological and ecclesiological inheritance was also of great importance for the situation of the churches in Indonesia. If we pay close attention to the views within the churches in Indonesia on their unity, it can be concluded that there are two streams of thinking. The first stream stresses the structure: the so called structural unity. This idea had initially appeared during the sixth General Assembly of The Council of Churches in Indonesia (ICC or DGI) in 1967, but was only reluctantly accepted by the participants until it eventually disappeared. After quite a long time, this idea was re-exposed before the twelfth General Assembly of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (CCI or PGI) in 1994, by proposing to the Churches a new and more concrete structure.

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2 Since 1984 the name Dewan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia (Council of Churches in Indonesia) has been changed to become Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia (Communion of Churches in Indonesia).

Meanwhile in the consultation of The Association of Theological Schools in Indonesia (PERSETIA) in October 1999, which had to evaluate the current performance of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, the same idea came up again. It was said that primordial influences are still present among the churches in Indonesia rather than its national identity. The way to solve this problem is by presenting a national dimension to church life, both structurally and theoretically. Therefore, it was recommended to amend the structure of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia into a more contextual structure in order to respond to the ideology and the state structure of integrated Indonesia. Here we are confronted with the problem of mixing up the unity of the church with the unity of the state. We will discuss this problem of the catholicity of the church and nationality in our final chapter.

The second stream emphasizes the unity in togetherness by witnessing and serving, which is called the functional unity. This unity has been initially manifested in the Five Documents on Unity (FDU) which were formulated in the tenth General Assembly of the CCI in 1984. The FDU were later called Documents on Church Unity (DCU), according to the decision of the thirteenth CCI General Assembly. This kind of unity has been developed in the fourteenth CCI General Assembly in 2004 by stressing unity in action: the unity of the church must be expressed in unity in action.

These developments indicated that apparently the churches in Indonesia are still struggling with the content and form of unity. In other words, the churches in Indonesia are still searching to find a certain model of unity. In the fourteenth General Assembly of the CCI in 2004 the churches in Indonesia tried to come to an agreement on unity in action as the solution of the two streams mentioned above, but the efforts are not finished yet. Although in general we could say that, on a certain level, the churches in Indonesia feel satisfied with the FDU (now called the Documents on Church Unity) because they can lead us to the next effort: to ‘socialize’ and to ‘congregationalize’ the document within the churches, nevertheless we have to admit that there is a certain amount of dissatisfaction, particularly among theologians.

In this situation, it may be useful for the churches in Indonesia to learn and to study the teachings of Calvin, because Calvin (together with Luther of course) is the reformer who settled the basic doctrines of Protestantism including ecclesiology. Calvin in his ecclesiology gave unity of the church as the primary accent. He discussed ecclesiology not only in terms of doctrine but also in terms of practices. The churches in Indonesia have a strong need to look to their traditional roots which were formed by the reformers, particularly Calvin. It is necessary to explore more deeply the ideas Calvin has reflected, and in doing so we must obviously be provided with awareness that our context is different from Calvin’s. With respect to sixteenth-century ecumenism we speak of bi-confessionality or tri-confessionality (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, sometimes also Anglican), but today there is multi-confessionality and multi-religiosity.

In studying Calvin’s ecumenical aspects, scholars gave several titles to him. In 1958, Willem Nijenhuis wrote a dissertation in which he observed and analyzed Calvin’s letters dealing with the unity of the church, and he came to the conclusion

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that Calvin was a great ecumenical figure. Based on this conclusion he entitled his dissertation *Calvinus Oecumenicus*.\(^5\) In one of his writings, “John Calvin and Ecumenicity”, John Bratt stated: “Calvin was no mere theorist with respect to the ecumenical challenge. He matched word with action and geared his idealism to the realistic situation. Not only did he urge the other leaders to temper their differences and cultivate unity, he took the time amid an incredibly busy program to engage in ecumenical conversation and discussion”.\(^6\)

Because of his total and committed struggle to defend the unity of the church, Gottfried Locher named Calvin an Ecumenical Defender.\(^7\) Calvin is an Ecumenical Churchman according to John T. McNeil.\(^8\) Meanwhile, Richard Stauffer called him an Advocate of Evangelical Catholicity.\(^9\)

It is obvious to us that Calvin had his own vision about the unity of the church. He did not only propose his vision theoretically, but he also spelt it out clearly in concrete actions. In other words we could say that he possessed an idealism about a united church and tried vigorously to achieve its implementation.

What this writing will do is to try to reveal the theological-ecclesiastical thought of Calvin about the unity of the church and to see its benefit to the churches in Indonesia that are now in the middle of their searching for unity as their main goal.

It means two points that need to be explored more deeply here: the depth of Calvin’s thought about the unity of the church on the one hand, and on the other hand, how far such unity has been endeavored and achieved by the churches in Indonesia. Furthermore, we will clarify what, during the implementation of unity, the churches in Indonesia could learn from Calvin. Consequently, the main question of my research is here: what is Calvin’s opinion concerning the unity of the church and will such a view be useful to the churches in Indonesia as they seek unity?

The main assumptions upon which these efforts are based are:

1. That the unity of the church is fundamental for Calvin’s ecclesiology. When he was speaking about church, at the same time he was also speaking about its unity. Willem Balke stated: “Surprisingly, the primary accent in Calvin’s ecclesiology falls on unity. The church is the body of Christ, of the Christ who cannot have two or three bodies. He is the Head of the one body. And for the elect the point is that they are united and conjoined in Christ, are dependent on one Head and grow together into one body.”\(^10\)

2. Most large churches in Indonesia were influenced by a Calvinist background, although they are not purely Calvinist anymore; yet, if we observe more clearly, especially their church order, liturgy and practices, we still find strong Calvinist

influences in them. Calvinist legacy is found everywhere.\(^{11}\) Together with other churches, like Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Methodists, and Mennonites, etc., they joined the CCI to stand together in their common struggle for unity. Recently there has arisen also an idea to broaden the ecumenical movement in Indonesia with the participation of the Catholic Church in Indonesia.\(^{12}\)

This raised the question: what can Calvinist churches contribute to a mutual ecumenical life? If Calvin’s legacy tradition is already filled with ecumenical ideas, is it then possible, that Indonesian churches in the midst of their ecumenical struggle, contribute to the implementation of a more concrete unity, which relies on the idea of Calvin himself?

### 1.2. Hypothesis

Calvin had a clear thought about the unity of the church and also of the way to achieve it. His ideas were implied in all his works and writings. To him, the way towards the unity of the church was not at first an issue of building up new structures or a bureaucratic organization. For Calvin the unity of the church can have many differences in the structure and institutional forms of the church according to the different times and situations. The most important is that it had to start with the basic issue of faith in Jesus Christ as the Head of the church which is Christ’s body. Calvin’s view of unity is based on his vision of true catholicity. That is not a geographical, horizontal structure, but a spiritual communion in obedience to Christ’s commandments, and the true preaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments. Calvin’s first ecumenical deed was to write his Institutes. This is not a work of vague undefined compromises but a firm outline of what a church has to be according to the Scripture and of what the church members have to confess about their heavenly Father and his unique Son, Jesus Christ. Calvin did not produce a schoolbook in dogmatic and systematic theology, but he included the full preaching of the reformation faith. The scattered Protestants and refugees had to listen only to the Word of God on their way to the future. They had to confess their faith and thus the confession is basic for Calvin’s ecumenism, in other words the unity of the church according to Calvin is fundamentally a spiritual issue and on that basis it had to come to a structural unity. He had not just theorized about unity. He really fought for this unity itself. Such reflection could be very useful to the churches in Indonesia in establishing their unity, providing that the unity movement of churches in Indonesia is equally similar to Calvin’s idea. Therefore the Calvinist churches in the CCI should play a proactive and significant role to make it a reality.

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1.3. Restriction of research

The major focus of this dissertation is thus Calvin’s vision about the unity of the church and its meaning for the churches in Indonesia. In accordance with this, several subjects should be limited and explained:

1. The subject of writing is Calvin’s vision, not later Calvinism’s. It should be stressed that Calvin is different from later Calvinism although they are still related to each other. The following facts are the main reasons for our limitation.

First of all, as well as Luther, Calvin did not want to split up the Christian church. Instead, as Jean Cadier said, “He wished to restore to the church its apostolic character, to recover the ancient state of which the Fathers speak, to raise up the ruins, to restore to their primitive splendour things which have been depraved and dissipated in the church. Calvin wanted the reformation of the church, her renewal, and not a deep division. He wanted a purified church, not a new church”.\(^{13}\)

Secondly, since the nineteenth century there have occurred various deviations in tension with what Calvin had taught before. Such deviations were also influenced by the different periods of time compared to Calvin’s. While relying on Calvin’s theory, at the same time theologians were confronted by the changes within the church and also the surrounding society, which forced them to reformulate the doctrine and their theological vision as the ultimate answer\(^\text{14}\). It is necessary to speak about Neo-Calvinism as an endeavor to create a new and up-to-date style of Calvinism which fitted that age.\(^\text{15}\) Therefore we cannot solely speak about Calvinism as one type only. When we speak about Calvinism, we have also to be aware of the existence of International Calvinism. In Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Scotland, Hungary, England, Ireland and America, Calvinism has a specific character, which makes it impossible for us to treat them all as equal, although they draw on the same root.\(^\text{16}\) Therefore, in this study we will limit ourselves to the ecclesiology of Calvin himself, instead of providing an overview of later Calvinistic ecclesiology. It is our aim to find the meaning of Calvin’s view for a specific context, i.e., the unification process of the Indonesian churches in our present time.

2. It is necessary to determine what we mean by the churches in Indonesia in this writing. The churches in Indonesia referred to are the member churches of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. Calvinist churches with their numerous congregations are significant members of this Community of Churches. They cover a

\(^{13}\) Cadier, “Calvin and the Union of the Churches”, p. 119.


large number of the total Protestant Christian communities in Indonesia. These churches are sailing with their “ecumenical ship” in the Indonesian ocean heading for a port of unity. Beside these churches, there are also some churches that are still standing outside of the CCI. Some of them have Pentecostal, Evangelical and Charismatic backgrounds. Even more, the Roman Catholic Church in Indonesia is a reality that we cannot neglect if we talk about the churches in Indonesia. Consequently, Calvin’s theory about the unity of the church will be implemented with respect to all those churches.

1.4. Bibliographic orientation and method of study

As mentioned earlier, it is Calvin’s own vision about the unity of the church that will be explored here. According to David Steinmetz,

(i)t is now common for Calvin scholars to assert that Calvin cannot be understood from the Institutes alone. All of his writings – his letters, treatises, and commentaries, as well as successive editions of his Institutes – contribute to a right understanding of the man and his thought and none can be omitted without real loss. 17

We agree that Calvin cannot be understood simply by reading the Institutes. In order to obtain an integral comprehension about Calvin, his thought, life and work, it is necessary for us to observe his other writings. This means that we have to look into all Calvin’s works, but it is impossible to examine and investigate them all. We shall pay most of our attention to the Institutes and by way of sample bring forward important passages out of Calvin’s other writings. Therefore, we will start by analyzing the Institutes from the first edition in 1536 until the final edition in 1559. Through a chronological observation of the Institutes, we will have a clear picture of the development of Calvin’s thought. Furthermore, we will look up and examine his commentaries on both the Old and the New Testaments.

Definitely his letters are no less important and necessary. It is required to check and to observe Calvin’s correspondence in so far as there is a connection with his vision of the unity of the church. Once the observation of his letters has been completed, we move forward to his other writings, like catechism, treatises and sermons. Thus we can obtain a comprehensive understanding of the unity of the church according to Calvin. Such a method of study will require us to put many quotations in this writing.

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1.5 Outline of our research

Our research begins with the introduction in chapter 1, which covers understanding the subject under discussion, hypothesis, restriction of research, bibliographic orientation, and an outline of our research. Then we will go forward to chapter 2. This chapter will focus more on the background and context in which Calvin was struggling and which influenced him. In fact, Calvin was confronted with numerous theological issues against Catholics and the radical Anabaptists.

Meanwhile, there had emerged from the Anabaptist Radical movement a kind of theological reflection which, in certain cases, not only was contradictory to the reformation movement, but even tended to be sectarian. At the same time, Christian Humanism had also developed within society which gave a particular character and influence to theology during that period. All these factors influenced Calvin in formulating his ecclesiology, which stressed in particular the unity of the church, though not by disregarding patristic theology and other reformists before him.

Chapter 3 forms the basis of this writing. In this chapter, we will explore more intensively the original writings produced by Calvin, in order to reveal what is the meaning of the unity of the church. Questions like, how the Institutes, from the first to the last editions, expressed the unity of the church. How such a context appeared in his commentaries and his other writings will also be significant and need to be answered. The result of this research will conclude all questions of how and where Calvin focused and directed his vision of the unity of the church.

Calvin was not simply a conceptor. He was not just theorizing about the unity of church but, in fact, he also fought for it. He was not just a formulator of the ideas but he was the executor as well. We will try to prove this in chapter 4 where we will expose his ecumenical activities. By relating a number of events which threatened to ruin the unity of the church, and seeing Calvin’s measures to prevent such division, we will be incredibly impressed with his love and passion for an integrated and a peaceful Christian church.

The main question for us is whether in all his thought and vision which will be applicable to the ecumenical movement of the churches in Indonesia, in this case the Communion of Churches in Indonesia in which the Calvinistic churches play a big part. There are important points of Calvin’s idea concerning this unity which could be learnt by the churches in Indonesia? The answers will be presented in chapter 5.

Finally, we come to a conclusion and recommendations in chapter 6. Here we hope to answer the questions raised in the introduction. And we will try to recommend some contributions for the implementation of a more concrete unity than the one we currently have.
CHAPTER 2

CALVIN AND THE INFLUENCING CONTEXT OF HIS ECCLESIOLOGY

Calvin’s ecclesiology is not an ecclesiology in empty space. His is a contextual one. This means that Calvin has developed his ecclesiology in a particular context, which at the same time appeared as a reaction towards the context itself. That is why Calvin’s theology is called praxis-contextual theology. Consequently, if we want to analyze Calvin’s ecclesiology, it is necessary for us firstly to know the context, which influenced his ecclesiastical thoughts.

Observing the situation of church and society during Calvin’s time, the development of thoughts inside them and major issues which subsequently incurred as well, we can record two particular contexts which have significantly given impact to Calvin’s ecclesiology:

1. The traditional church with its papalist ecclesiology: Rome as it was before and more recently through the Council of Trent.
2. There were the Anabaptists within the emerging radical movements, groups not always easy to define whom Calvin calls sometimes “Anabaptists”, sometimes “fanatics”, sometimes “enthusiasts”, sometimes “libertines.” All these groups were anti-Catholic and anti-Establishment but propagated differing, often opposed views.

These contexts had become two fronts that Calvin opposed. Therefore in this chapter we will sketch out the traditional church with its papalist ecclesiology and the ecclesiology of the Anabaptists.

Beside these two particular contexts we must also record that in formulating his ecclesiology Calvin has been influenced by many other thinkers and theologians. Calvin became, in his student time, strongly attached to the typical French Renaissance humanism. This meant for him not only a new approach to the Greek and Latin classical texts, but also to the main source: the text of the Bible itself. So Calvin had a broad knowledge of the classical authors and this training was a great help for him in his understanding of the Scriptures. Although Calvin was rooted in this biblical humanism he maintained a distance from the humanistic “free-thinkers”.

At the same time Calvin revealed a deep interest in patristic thought and for all he found in the biblical exegesis of the church fathers. Here we may in some sense include also Bernard of Clairvaux. Calvin had an open eye for some weaknesses and aberrations but held “these holy men” in high esteem. Most frequently he quoted Augustine, most of the time with approval. Further, for example he relied on Hilary of Poitiers for his Christology and on Augustine or Cyprian for his concept of the church.

Calvin’s relation with medieval theology is not simple to sketch. A common allegiance to the institution of the Papacy and to general tenets bonded together the disparate movements of Thomists, Augustinians, Occamists, Scotists, and Jesuits. Calvin’s polemic does not always cover them all at the same time. His customary terms are “papists” (generally contemporary Romanists), “Scholastics” and “Sophists”,

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the first of which refers to medieval theologians, the latter to both medieval and contemporary figures. “Sorbonists” denotes the obscurantist Paris Faculty.²

Finally, Calvin stood on the shoulders of the Reformers of the first hour: Luther, Oecolampadius, Zwingli, Melanchthon, and Bucer. So, carefully formulating Calvin goes his own way, always trying to unite, to combine, to bring together, views that, if they should go their own way, could split the church.

The following analysis will discuss the above two main contexts: Rome and the Anabaptist Radicals, which will lead us to see how far they impacted on the ecclesiastical thoughts of Calvin, which focused on the unity of the church, as will be explained in the following chapter.

2.1. **Calvin and the traditional church with its papalist ecclesiology**

When Calvin appeared, he was confronted with the same situation as Luther faced, in terms of theology and the practice of the church. Because of this, we have to touch on the ecclesiological thinking of the traditional church when we want to understand Calvin’s ecclesiology, since Calvin’s was a reaction to papalism. We will also see at once how such ecclesiology was implemented in religious practice.³

Since the ecclesiology of the traditional church was the result of a long historical process, the question raised is about the limitation of the period to be taken. This will not be easy to determine, since, as generally understood, ecclesiology always developed according to its context. However, the appropriate period to reveal the ecclesiology of the traditional church should be from the fifth century up to the period before the Reformation era.

In order to liberate the church from the papalist usurpation, Calvin wished to found his ecclesiology on the Scriptures alone. Calvin started to criticize the abuses in the church and the degeneration of the offices in the church. Consequently he attacked the whole ecclesiological system.

There were two prominent ecclesiastical thoughts merged within the traditional church: the special position of the bishop of Rome which generated the development of the papalist concept, and the identifying of the church and its hierarchical structure with the kingdom of God.

2.1.1. **Supremacy of Rome and the development of papalism**

During the fourth and the fifth centuries, there was a development of the tradition that Christ had chosen Peter as the head of the apostles and also, at the same time, as the first bishop in Rome. Consequently, Peter’s position should have been regarded as higher than that of the other apostles. Such tradition also believed that Peter’s successors in Rome should also be equally treated with him, who possessed more

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³ We have to keep in mind that the ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church has experienced a kind of development during the Second Vatican Council in 1962. Therefore it is necessary to emphasize that the ecclesiology we want to particularly cover here is the ecclesiology of the traditional church before that council, even long before it, that is to say before the Reformation era.
respect, either in the eastern or western church. Supported by the fact that the bishop of Rome was the bishop in the capital city of the empire of Rome, who had the duty to maintain the tombs of the main Christian apostles, Peter and Paul, such tradition had developed extensively.\(^4\)

As a matter of fact that support for the supremacy of the bishop and the church in Rome also came from some Western and Eastern church fathers. The church fathers in the East, like Didymus, Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria had played a great role to strengthen the opinion about Peter as the head of the Roman Church and that the authority attached him has been mystically transferred to his successors.\(^5\) At the same time the church fathers in the West like Hillary, Ambrose, and also Augustine emphasized in their commentaries on the Bible the supremacy of Peter and Rome. As an example, Kelly has noted Augustine’s opinion as follows:

Following Cyprian, he regarded St. Peter as the representative or symbol of the unity of the Church and of the apostolic college, and also as the apostle upon whom the primacy was bestowed (even so, he was a type of the church as a whole). Thus the Roman church, the seat of St. Peter, to whom the Lord after His resurrection entrusted the feeding of His sheep, was for him the church in which the primacy of the apostolic chair has ever flourished.\(^6\)

In this argument based on successio apostolica Peter is considered to be the first pope. But Leo I was the first one who acted and claimed a position that can be considered as typical for papacy. He summarized all doctrines of papalism into a compact and assertive statement:

First, the famous Gospel texts to St. Peter should be taken to imply that supreme authority was conferred by our Lord upon the apostle. Secondly, St. Peter was actually bishop of Rome, and his magisterium was perpetuated in his successor in that see. Thirdly, St. Peter being in this way, as it were, mystically present in the Roman see, the authority of other bishops throughout Christendom does not derive immediately from Christ, but (as in the case of the apostles) is mediated to them through St. Peter, i.e. through the Roman pontiff who in this way represents him, or, to be more precise, is a kind of Petrus redivivus. Fourthly, while their mandate is of course limited to their own dioceses, St. Peter’s magisterium, and with it that of his successors, the popes of Rome, is a plenitudo potestatis extending over the entire Church, so that its government rests ultimately with them, and they are its divinely appointed mouthpiece.\(^7\)

This commenced the development of the concept that the Pope of Rome was the representative of Peter (Vicar of St. Peter) and the representative of Christ (Vicar of Christ) and also of the demand of the Pope that he should be entitled to supremacy

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\(^6\) Idem, p. 419.

\(^7\) Idem, p. 420-421.
over religious and political life, and in its future development also over all aspects of life. There was common agreement among the western churches that the pope possessed all the authority from Peter. The following understanding was then raised that Peter still worked in the tomb, but his persona on the earth was entrusted to the pope. Therefore, though men came to Rome in the first place to visit the Apostle, they prostrated themselves before the pope. The hands might be those of Gregory or Leo, but the voice was that of St. Peter. Disobedience to the pope in temporal affairs was synonymous with disobedience to Peter.8

The demand to include governmental affairs within the pope’s authority, which from the very beginning became the causal dispute of the emperors and kings with the popes, reached a climax during the reign of Pope Innocent III (1198-1215). According to him, the pope was less than God, but more than man9:

Ye see, he said, what manner of servant it is whom the Lord hath set over his people, no other than the vicegerent of Christ, the successor of Peter. He stands in the midst between God and man. He judges all and is judged by none. But he, whom the pre-eminence of dignity exalts, is humbled by his vocation as a servant, that so humility may be exalted and pride be cast down; for God is against the high-minded, and to the lowly He shows mercy; and who so exalteth himself shall be abased.10

The mediaeval theologians were also involved in developing a theology which supported the supremacy of the papacy. Thomas Aquinas taught that obedience to the papacy in Rome should have been the ultimate behavior of anybody. He said that under the law of the New Testament the king must be subject to the priest to the extent that, if kings proved to be heretics or schismatics, the Bishop of Rome was entitled to deprive them of all kingly authority by releasing subjects from their ordinary obedience.11

This teaching had been fortified and obtained legitimacy during the reign of Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303). He issued a bull entitled Unam Sanctam in 1302. He claimed universal supremacy as the Vicar of Christ, covering all spiritual and political issues. However, the political issues had been surrendered to the kings who had the authority to govern as long as they remained willingly under obedience to the pope.12

To express this kind of ecclesiology, Mardiatmadja used the expression of “church as the empire” to describe the ecclesiology of the traditional church in the

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8 R.W. Southern, Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages, New York, 1986, p. 95.
9 Berkhof & Enklaar, Sejarah Gereja, p. 87; see F.D. Wellem, Riwayat Hidup Singkat Tokoh-tokoh Dalam Sejarah Gereja, Jakarta, 1987, p. 143-144. Innocent regarded himself as “Vicar of Christ”. To him Christ has surrendered not only the authority over church to Peter, but also the entire authority on earth. For the dispute between pope and emperor, see Chr. de Jonge, Gereja Mencari Jawab, Jakarta, 1993, p. 11-21.
11 There is another famous statement from him: “We are the successor of the Prince of the Apostles, but we are not his Vicar, nor the vicar of any man or Apostles, but the vicar of Jesus Christ himself”. See Southern, Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages, p. 105.
12 Before him, Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254) had issued the so-called Commentary on the Decretals, even popes after him, like Pius II, Leo X, and Alexander VI. See Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, p. 4-5.
Middles Ages. The church in the Roman Empire after Constantine, under whom the church became established, performed the duty to take care of religious and governmental issues. Church leaders gained respect and position like state leaders. The world entered the church and vice versa. Then, the church took on the identity of the Imperium Romanum. The theory of “two swords” was used to support these facts. The present world came to be viewed as a manifestation of the kingdom of God.  

We will immediately take the impression that the popes with the bishops on the one hand and the laity on the other hand were the elements of church structure at that time. What they called church officers were the clergymen; they were the bishops and the pope as the head. There was no other official. Each of them had a different kind of authority. The pope’s authority was superior, while the bishops accepted their authority from the pope. The papacy was the center of the official structure within the church, and was strictly hierarchical. The church was described as a congregation with leadership.  

Therefore, the emphasis was mostly given to the concept of the church as a hierarchical institution. The concept of communio sanctorum which had been taught by the church fathers has been moved far behind. It was true as Hendrikus Berkhof asserted that the Roman church in The Middle Ages had disregarded the aspect of community in its ecclesiology. For certain, in this kind of situation, the question about what the true church is, and the desire to find the answer, will be very important and significant.  

So far we can see that the visible nature of the church is strongly emphasized. Christ Himself provided for the organization of the church by appointing the apostles and by placing one of them (Peter) as the head of the apostles. The popes are the successors of Peter, and the bishops of the apostles in general. The former possess direct and absolute authority, while the latter have only a limited authority derived from the popes.  

In the church Christ distributes the fullness of those graces and blessings which He merited for sinners. He does this exclusively through the agency of the clergy, that is, through the legitimate officers of the church. Consequently, the institution of the church logically precedes the organism; the visible church precedes the invisible. The church is a mater fidelium before she is a coetus fidelium. The Church is exclusively an institute of salvation, a saving ark. As such she has three functions: 1) to propagate the true faith by means of the ministry of the Word; 2) to effect sanctification by means of the sacraments; and 3) to govern believers according to ecclesiastical law. She is (under Christ) the only Mediator of salvation, the depository and distributor of grace for all people, and the only ark of safety for the entire human race. The order in the work of salvation is, not that God by means of His Word leads men to the church, but just the reverse, that the church leads men to the Word and to Christ.

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14 Idem, p. 112.
In the condition of the church like this, the question is raised; how and where is the unity of the church? According to Southern, there was one popular formula of the thirteenth century which said “Papa qui et ecclesia dici potest”, which means the pope who at the same time can be called the church. In other words, the pope could be regarded as identical with the church. The church was the pope.\(^\text{17}\)

Meanwhile, Hans Küng noted that the ecclesiology of the mediaeval church was an ecclesiology from above, which was the pope. Particularly during the reign of Gregory VII, based on the Pseudo-Isidore Document, the pope was considered to be the head, base, root and source of all kinds of power and authority in the church.\(^\text{18}\)

This kind of concept would definitely have caused the authority of the church and the leader to be very expansive. The pope was named as the author and interpreter of truth.\(^\text{19}\) The role of the pope was questioned throughout the earlier centuries and especially in the conciliarist movements which had many supporters in the Gallican church. In this anti-papalist movement the pope was even identified with the Antichrist. It was a mediaeval question: “an papa sit antichristus?” John Hus for example stood on this line and Luther in his ardent eschatological interpretation poses this question with a new emphasis. In his view the pope is the soul of the body of the anti-Christ.\(^\text{20}\) In the conciliarist line it was impossible that the pope has absolute authority over the church. Was there not one true church; the church of Jesus Christ where Christ has the authority over it?\(^\text{21}\)

In the papalist line as such, it could be automatically concluded that the unity of the church is the unity in the pope. The pope was the symbol of unity. The unity of the church would only come into existence when the unity was exercised in the structure of the papacy. It means that the unity of the church was only applied in the church which was centered in Rome. Other than that, there was no church and consequently there was no unity of the church. This was the essence of the content of the bull *Unam Sanctam* which stated that “by the requirement of the faith we are obliged to believe and hold one, holy, catholic, and indeed apostolic church.” What is called the one and holy catholic church is the church in Rome which is headed by pope.\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^{17}\) Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, p. 91.

\(^{18}\) Küng, *The Church*, p. 10.

\(^{19}\) J. Brevicoxa, “A Treatise on Faith, the Church, the Roman Pontiff and the General Council”, in: H.A. Oberman (ed.), *Forerunners of the Reformation. The Shape of Late Medieval Thought*, New York, 1996, p. 77-80; it is said: “the pope as the author of truth” and “the pope as the interpreter of truth”.


\(^{21}\) G.C. Berkhouwer mentioned that if we ask ourselves against what specifically was Calvin’s polemics directed, we find that it was first of all against the question of the authority of the church. See his article “Calvin and Rome”, in J.T. Hoogstra (ed.), *John Calvin Contemporary Prophet*, Grand Rapids, 1959, p. 185-196.

The concept and phenomenon of an ecclesiology like this endured until the Reformation. Thus, we could understand why in his ecclesiology, Calvin highlighted the invisible aspect or dimension of the church and also asserted the catholicity and universality of the church and its holiness. The catholicity and universality was strongly related to the unity of the church. And in relation with office, he developed a new concept.

2.1.2. The identification of the church with the kingdom of God on earth

In the Middle Ages, a particular idea had also developed that the visible church which is dominated by the pope is a manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth and the holy Roman empire was its implementation. Actually, the development of this idea was not simply based on a theological understanding, but mostly for the interest of the supremacy of the papacy. Several false documents which consisted of letters and decrees had been published and distributed to legitimate such opinion.

The two influential documents of curious forgery were: the Donation of Constantine and the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals. The intention in publishing these documents was to assert that what the popes claimed then was actually a reaffirmation of what the fourth-century popes had been given. In charter form, and with an expression of the creed, and a fabulous account of his conversion and baptism, Constantine ordered all ecclesiastics to be subject to Pope Sylvester and successive occupants of the Roman see, and transferred to them the city of Rome and all the provinces and cities of Italy or of the Western Region. The Donation was generally believed until its falsity was demonstrated by Nicholas of Cusa in 1433 and Lorenzo Valla in 1440. The so-called Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, one of the most remarkable of forgeries, purporting to have been collected by a certain Isidore Mercator, consisted of decisions of popes and councils from Clement of Rome in the first century to Gregory IV in the eight, part genuine and part forged. The early popes therein claim for themselves supreme jurisdiction, and that they are not subject to secular control.

The earlier church fathers used the term ‘Kingdom of God’ to describe the result and goal of the church’s development, that is, as the designation of the eschatological Kingdom. But Augustine says that the church is an intermediary through and within which the Kingdom becomes visible now and then. By this he means primarily that the saints constitute the Kingdom of God, though he also applies the term to the leaders of the church collectively. While the Kingdom is essentially identical with the pious and holy, it is also the episcopally organized church.

Through his book entitled De Civitate Dei, Augustine made the difference between the city of God (civitas dei) and the city of the world (civitas mundi). Since the first rebellion against God two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. These had their representatives in Cain and Abel. Of the City of God, all have been members who have confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the

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earth. The earthly city, with its God-defying spirit, has as it highest representatives pagan Babylon and Rome, but all other civil states are to some extent its embodiment. Yet it is a relative good. To it peace and civil law are due. In a world of sin, though having love of self as its principle, it represses disorder and secures to each his own. But it must pass away as the City of God grows. Those who make up the City of God are the elect whom God has chosen to salvation. These are now in the visible church, though not all in that church are elect. Therefore the church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now his saints reign with him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter; and yet, though the tares grow in the church along with the wheat, they do not reign with him. It is, therefore, the visible, hierarchically organized church, that is the City of God and must more and more rule the world. This it does, in Augustine’s view, by its close relation with the Christian state. The latter exists not only to preserve peace but also to act as a “pious father” toward its citizens. Hence it must promote the true worship of God; and between the church and the ideal state there will exist relations of mutual dependence and reciprocal obligation. Here is foreshadowed the medieval idea of the theocratic state.

It is evident that, clear as was the system of Augustine in many respects, it contained profound contradictions, due to the intermingling of deep religious and Neo-Platonic thoughts and popular ecclesiastical traditionalism. Thus, while he thought of a predestination in which God sends grace to whom he will, yet he sometimes tended to confine salvation to the visible church endowed with a sacramental ecclesiasticism. He approached the distinction made at the Reformation between the visible and the invisible church, without clearly reaching it. His heart piety, also, saw the Christian life as one of personal relation to God in faith and love, yet he thought no less positively of a legalistic and monastic asceticism. The Middle Ages did not advance in these respects beyond Augustine. It did not reconcile his contradictions. It is by reason of them that most varied later movements could draw inspiration from him.

The identification of the visible church and its organization with the kingdom of God has brought several consequences. If the Church alone is the Kingdom of God, then all Christian duties and activities must take the form of services rendered to the church, for Christ speaks of the Kingdom as the highest good and as the goal of all Christian endeavor. Natural and social life thus assumed a one-sided churchly character. All that did not come under the control of the church was considered as purely secular, and its renunciation became a work of special piety. The life of hermits and monks stood out as a grand ideal. Another result was that an undue significance was ascribed to the outward ordinances of the church. The Kingdom of God is represented in the New Testament, not only as the aim of Christian life, but also as the sum-total of Christian blessedness. Consequently, all the blessings of salvation were thought of as coming to humanity through the ordinances of the church. Without their use salvation was considered to be impossible. And finally, the identification of the church and the Kingdom led to the practical secularization of the church. Worldliness took the place of non-worldliness. It was but natural that the Roman Pontiffs, in view of the superior character of the Kingdom of God and of its all comprehensive destiny, should seek to realize the ideal of the Kingdom by demanding of the emperor
subjection to the rule of the church. This was the consuming ambition of such great popes as Gregory VII (Hildebrand), Innocent III, and Boniface VIII.

It is clearly seen that there is a relation between the concepts of papal supremacy and the empirical church as the kingdom of God on earth. The consequence of this kind of view which made the position of the church became superior. The blessings of salvation will only be generated through the church. The church would not only manage spiritual matters but also politics so that kings should be obedient to the pope. The church’s orders should be applied in government administration. The popes were the representatives of Christ on earth where Christ is the head of kingdom of God. Then at the same time the pope was the head of the church and the head of the kingdom of God on earth.

The above concept was very influential, both in determining the teaching of the church and in managing practical church life. The impact was also seen in the authoritarian church administration. We could note the implementation of this view in practice. Various procedures have been established to protect the papal supremacy. For instance, during the election of a regional leader, a cathedral official or bishop, the local church is allowed to initiate but eventually should obtain confirmation from the pope. If he wanted to do so, the pope could annul the election. The bishops were to determine the policy for local government in conformity with what was done by the pope, which frequently incurred conflicts between the head of the church in Rome and the state leader. Such a system launched an opportunity for what we call papal nepotism as was the case with Pope Sixtus V, when he appointed his cousin Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere as the Cardinal in Hungary. 25

Another fact was that of the application of the system of reservation to the incoming charity. The Bishop of Rome had the right to determine himself how much charity he would receive, the reason being to prevent various crimes which might occur. During the reign of Pope John XXII (1316-1334), related regulations had been issued. He was the pope who created a money machine to collect money for the interest of the papacy. 26

The order of one-tenth which is called the tithe was an example. It was to organize the one-tenth of the income that was donated to the church, which allocated to the pope. As an addition, commencing from the twelfth century, a new official in the government field was obliged to donate part of his first year’s salary for the maintenance and renovation of the church buildings. Part of the visitation expenses of the bishops and archbishop in a diocese should be handed to the Pope who even asked for the whole amount. The popes also claimed that they had the right to receive a special subsidy from the provincial church through a generous donation from local congregations.

Unfortunately, during the next development, the effort to get money was always related to the right to bestow blessings. The popes claimed themselves that they could give mercy to release people from the kind of suffering by fire experienced in purgatory. Moreover, the pope could give remission of sins if a man would give a

25 Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, p. 9.
26 Idem, p. 11.
donation for the construction of The Great St. Peter’s Cathedral. The incident of the sales of suffering-remission letters by Tetzel became an impetus for reformation.

2.2. **Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals**

In the conflict of the spirits during the sixteenth century, the reformers had to take a stand on two fronts. On the one hand they opposed Rome, while on the other hand they faced what have usually been called the Radicals, even though several Anabaptist groups were not radical in themselves; e.g. the pacifist Hutterites and Mennonites.

It is commonly admitted that Calvin as one of reformers confronted these two challenges, although he further stepped forward as the second-generation reformer. What is meant by radical here is the groups in the Reformation often called “the left wing of reformation”. Under this category, there were the Anabaptists, the Spiritualists, the Fanatics, the Antitrinitarians, and the Libertines. So Anabaptism was one of radical groups at that time.

The Anabaptist movement itself was not of one kind. In this group there are several classifications. According to Balke, the following Anabaptist groups can be distinguished: Thomas Müntzer and the Prophets of Zwickau, the Swiss Brethren, Moravian communities (Hutterites), the Melchiorites, the Müinter Anabaptists, the Mennonites, and the groups surrounding David Joris. Each group had their own trend of teaching which characterized and differentiated them one from the others.

The origin of the Anabaptists could be traced in Germany and Switzerland particularly in German speaking cantons then to Italy and finally they grew in the Low Countries. So, this movement was not of French origin. What emerged in France were the sectarian groups which were called Libertine and Mystic. There were also other groups which were named “rebaptizers” in Orleans and Bourges, which were already known by Calvin when he was young.

The Radicals’ teaching entered France through Coppin, who came from Lille (Rijsse). It happened in 1530. He was the first person who taught the spiritualistic teaching in France. After him, there were several names like Quintin, Bertrand des Moulins, Claude Parceval, and Antoine Pocques to expand his teaching in Paris, Strasbourg, Geneva and Nerac. These people did not intend to establish a “congregation”. The most important aim for them was to win people for their teaching. Calvin’s short stay in Paris in 1534 gave him the opportunity to make the first contact with the Libertines. In 1545, he made a statement that he had met a Libertine

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28 Idem, p. 3; cf. Th. van den End, *Harta Dalam Bejana*, Jakarta, 1988, p. 177. According to Van den End, these groups did not actually just appear during the Reformation. The “sects”, that is how he named them, revived during the Reformation in addition to the new groups that mixed Luther’s idea with the thoughts of the medieval sects. They were not inclusive in the Protestant Reformation, but stood before the Reformation and the Church of Rome.
31 Idem, p. 2-4.
32 Idem, p. 21.
leader in his country of origin, Quintin Thieffry. They possibly could have discussed theological issues in the house of a person name Etienne de la Forge.\(^\text{33}\)

We should realize that Calvin refuted the Anabaptist teaching in several points, as for example about the church, the church attitude towards the state, the sacrament of baptism, discipline and also the oath. In an annex to his main theological treatise against the Anabaptists he refuted their teaching about the sleep of the soul after death. At that time this particular teaching was popular among some groups of Anabaptists and also among other groups. To confront these Radicals, Calvin prepared several writings. His first theological treatise was *Psychopannychia*.\(^\text{34}\) He composed it in 1534 and thought of publishing it in 1536. We have two prefaces, one of 1534 and one of 1536. For some reasons his friends advised against publication, but in the end he published it in 1542. Later on, he wrote two treatises to counter the Radicals, one against the Anabaptists and the other one to counter the Libertine Spirituals.\(^\text{35}\)

It is interesting if we have a chance to consider attentively the content of Calvin’s works. Many writers have reviewed them.\(^\text{36}\) Perhaps it will be enough if we just give our attention to the Institutes and its development to see Calvin’s interaction with the Anabaptists. It will be obvious to us that Calvin was much sharper against the fanatics. He honored the Anabaptists in their care for church discipline and their willingness to obey the authority of the Scripture. But in their understanding of the Scripture he had to correct them.

As such, we could say that on the one hand there were points which differentiate Calvin from the Anabaptist, which is clearly apparent from his criticisms of them, but on the other hand there were also particular teachings which linked Calvin with them.

Before observing the *Institutes* to see how the interaction between Calvin and the Anabaptists occurred, which will be described in the next chapter, it is necessary for us to examine the content of Anabaptist ecclesiology itself. There are three things that should be described briefly here, that is:

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\(^{33}\) Idem, p. 21-22.


\(^{36}\) See Balke, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, p. 5-9.
2.2.1. The nature of the church

In his description of the Anabaptist concept of the church, Erland Waltner stated that according to the Institutes, for Anabaptists, the church is the body of Christ and the fellowship of believers. The church in its vertical relationship is the body of Christ of which He is the real and living Head. Menno Simons stated that “for all who are in Christ are new creatures, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, and members of his body.”

Furthermore, the Anabaptists were not pleased with the reformers’ distinction between a visible church which is earthly and impure and an invisible church which is heavenly and pure. Their practical concern was the actualization of a visible and true body of Christ on earth, which would be in accord with the New Testament pattern. They did make a sharp distinction, however between the “true church” by which they meant themselves, and the “church of the antichrist”, by which they meant the Roman church. Their ecclesiastical ideal is to actualize themselves as the “true body” of Christ on earth. As to what they mean by the “true church”, Menno Simons listed six characteristics by which the “true church” of Christ was to be distinguished: 1) By an unadulterated pure doctrine; 2) By a Scriptural use of sacramental signs; 3) By obedience to the Word; 4) By unfeigned brotherly love; 5) By an unreserved confession of God and Christ; 6) By oppression and tribulation for the sake of the Lord’s word.

Viewed horizontally, the church was for the Anabaptists a voluntary fellowship of regenerated believers, a Christian brotherhood, a community of the redeemed. While Luther held that the church exists wherever the word of God is purely preached and the sacraments are administered in the proper way and thus could accept the concept of a Volkskirche or a Landeskirche (people church and national church), the Anabaptists held it to be completely un-biblical to define the boundaries of the church according to sacramentarian rites or geographical lines. For them the church was not a “society of the baptized,” nor was it primarily a “church of the elect” (Zwingli) but it was to be “a church of believers,” that is, of those who personally accepted Christ and whose lives show “fruits of repentance”.

It is clear that the Anabaptist ecclesiology conceived of the possibility of establishing a “true church” as a visible body of Christ, a fellowship of regenerated believers, living in obedience to the Word of Christ, and bound together voluntarily in Christian love. Regeneration, obedience, fellowship, brotherhood: these were the great words in this concept of the church.

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38 Idem, p. 8.
39 Idem, p. 9.
40 Idem.
41 Idem.
2.2.2. **The actualization of the church**

The church can be actualized in several ways. The initial step in the actualization of this church of believers is the preaching of the Word. The church comes into existence through the preaching of the Word, through the voluntary acceptance of the Word of Truth, and through the consequent conversion and renewal of life of individual believers. The next step is the necessity of regeneration. The response of faith to the Word of God, according to Anabaptists, results in the new birth, or regeneration. A genuine repentance from sin together with a “living heart faith” in Christ produces an inward change which manifests itself in outward conduct. Genuine faith must issue in obedience. True regeneration issues in a life of practical holiness.\(^\text{42}\)

Another actualization of the true church is in the believers’ baptism. The Anabaptists were convinced about and practiced only adult baptism. Baptism became for them an outward sign of an inward change and “a pledge of obedience to Christ and of the purpose to walk according to Christ”. Baptism has no sacramental quality but rather a symbolic significance.\(^\text{43}\)

Furthermore, the Lord’s Supper, church government and Christian brotherhood also became important in the actualization of the true church. The Lord’s Supper to them is purely a symbol of the fellowship of the brethren one with another and with Christ. It is also a pledge of brotherly love and faithful sanctified Christian living. Regarding church government, the Anabaptists recognized the need for organization and an accepted leadership in the church. Financial support to this organization and leadership must come from the voluntary contributions of the membership. Beside all that is mentioned above, Anabaptists regarded the practice of true brotherhood and love among the members of the church as the actualization of the true church.\(^\text{44}\)

2.2.3. **The maintenance of a “pure” church**

To establish a relatively “pure” church of believers is one thing; to maintain its purity is quite another. Anabaptists, however, believed that the church in as far as possible must be kept “without spot and wrinkle”. While they admitted that the church could not be perfect in the sense of being entirely free of unworthy members their earnest striving for a “pure” church called for the exercise of church discipline. Despite such difficulties Anabaptists sought earnestly to maintain a “holy” church. This involved a concern for the moral and ethical conduct of all its members. When members of the church were found to be guilty of gross deviation from the biblical standards of life, they were to be banned or excommunicated.\(^\text{45}\)

Maintenance of a “pure” church in the midst of a sinful society also implies some form of separatism from the world. Drawing their slogans from the New Testament, Anabaptists declared that the church is “in the world” but not “of the world”. Separation from the world also meant for them separation from the state which

\(^{42}\) Idem, p. 10.
\(^{43}\) Idem.
\(^{44}\) Idem, p. 11-13.
\(^{45}\) Idem, p. 13-14.
they considered a divinely ordained institution necessary to maintain order in an evil society, but operating on an entirely different plane from that of the church. The above description shows us the content of the Anabaptist conception of the church which for Calvin should be corrected and reviewed based on the testimony of the Holy Scripture. It is obvious that the Anabaptists were a quite significant challenge for Calvin. On the one hand he refuted them for all their separatism and perfectionism. On the other hand he was able to attract many Anabaptists into the church by his true preaching and application of discipline.

2.3 Conclusion

We could conclude this chapter by noting that on the one hand Calvin confronted Rome and on the other hand the Anabaptists. We identified these fronts as his opponents. It is true that Calvin stressed the unity of the church, and struggled for it because of his opponents. His struggle toward the unity of the church was a war in two battlefields. It was against these two fronts that Calvin directed his criticism, which particularly originated from his concept of the church. We could say that his ecclesiology is the ecclesiology of union since he emphasized the unity of the church. He also affirmed that the unity of the church was centered in Christ for the unity of the church is unity with Christ.

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CHAPTER 3
THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO CALVIN

As already indicated in the introductory section, in this chapter we will analyze Calvin’s thoughts on the unity of the church as these can be read in his works. Beside the Institutes, Calvin wrote a literature of pamphlets, commentaries, sermons, letters, and dogmatic treatises, which forms an essential part of his extraordinary influence on the life of his time. Such writing related to and fitted in with his other writing and because of his interaction with the context he revised, reshaped, and developed his thoughts. His theology is neither the sum total nor the common denominator of all his pronouncements between 1536 and 1564. Calvin was not a ‘theological system’ but a flesh and blood theologian who developed and fine tuned his theology and thoughts throughout his life.

As the Institutes mainly support our research, we have to limit our investigation of Calvin’s other writings to those that seem to us of great importance. This chapter will be arranged as follows:

1. The unity of the church in the Institutes.
2. The unity of the church in some of his other writings, to wit, his commentaries and sermons on texts that are basic for biblical ecclesiology, the famous letter by which he tried to establish unity between his fellow believers, and finally some catechetical writings.

Before analyzing further Calvin’s thoughts, one should be aware of the fact that the unity of the church during Calvin’s time differed from what churches are searching after nowadays. The search for unity of the church during Calvin’s time was limited to Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and sometimes Anglican churches, while nowadays there are many confessionalities involved in the ecumenical movement. The unity which Calvin struggled for was not only the unity within the reformation camp. It was Calvin’s anxiety that there should come into existence certain factions which become a potential cause to threaten the integrity and the unity of the church, and which could be a trigger of disintegration. Therefore, the main question for Calvin was how the whole Christian church might retain its unity and avoid a serious separation. This situation and the aim of the unity were described by Nijenhuis as follows:

While the ecumenical movement of our day understands that it is responsible for unity and fellowship, witness and service amongst a great number of churches of the most diverse

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1 See Chapter 1.1.5.
3 See for example the relation between the Institutes 1536, the Catechism 1538, and the Institutes 1539, in: F.L. Battles, Analysis of the Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin, Grand Rapids, 1980, p. 16.
4 The Institutes, which initially consisted of 6 chapters and then further increased to 80 chapters, could be explained with such understanding. See J.D. Benoit, “The History and Development of the Institutes How Calvin Worked”, in: G.E. Duffield (ed.), John Calvin. A Collection of Essays, Grand Rapids, 1986, p. 102.
traditions, in the sixteenth century the aspiration towards unity was dominated first and foremost by the question of whether, how, and on what grounds the breach in the Western Church could be healed. […] Indeed, the main thrust of the Reformers’ efforts was not in the direction of the splintering of the Christendom through the establishment of separate churches of their own, but towards the reforming of the one Church in head and members, a goal that had been on the agenda for centuries.\(^5\)

The facts as described above could definitely give rise to a question concerning the relevance of this study. The question is whether the concept which developed during the sixteenth century is still relevant in the twenty-first century. Is not five centuries such a long period, reflecting changes and development which could even be new and different? The other question is whether Western Europe in the sixteenth century was similar to Indonesia in the twenty-first century?

The appearance of these questions is understandable; however they can not be answered here in this chapter. We will answer that further in chapter 5 when we try to implement the meaning of Calvin’s thoughts for the efforts for the unity of the churches in Indonesia. Now we will turn to observe the Institutes to see how Calvin’s view about the unity of the church appears in it. But before that, we will explore the nature of the Institutes.

As we understand, the Institutes had several editions which were written in Latin and French.\(^6\) All editions reflected the enrichment or extension of thoughts that had incurred to Calvin. The enrichment of texts was seen through the change of structure and the expansion of contents of the editions that followed the first one.\(^7\)

It is necessary to give a clear explanation about the book of the Institutes. It was not a systematic book in the sense of later dogmatic development. It was like a summary of the interpretation of the Bible concerning the basic Christian faith which was in course of construction and was meant as an apology and catechism, in which Calvin explained various teachings based on an intensive study of the Bible supported by the theology of the church fathers and the earlier reformers. So we have always to keep in mind that Calvin’s Institutes are a guide for the study of the Holy Scriptures. The consistency of Calvin’s thought is remarkable but for a right understanding of his Institutes it is useful also to study his commentaries.\(^8\)

The writing of the Institutes as the teaching book for Christian religion was generally and expansively admitted. Jean-Daniel Benoit, for instance, said:

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\(^7\) Concerning the change of structure and the expansion of content see the scheme made by F.L. Battles, Interpreting John Calvin, Grand Rapids, 1995, p. 156.

\(^8\) Chr. de Jonge, Apa itu Calvinisme?, Jakarta, 1998, p. 66; Pont also mentioned the same. According to him in assessing the content of the Institutes it does become clear that this is biblical theology, indeed an attempt to “pave the way” for the study of Scripture. Calvin’s teaching is the expounding of the message of the Bible, excepting all human speculation. See A.D. Pont, “The Message of the Institutes of the Christian Religion” in: J. Van der Walt (ed.), John Calvin’s Institute.s His Opus Magnum, Potchefstroom, 1986, p. 6.
As for the word Institutes, we must understand it in its Latin sense of instruction. It can be translated “Manual” or more exactly “Summary”, according to the publisher’s use: “totam fere pietatis Summam”. In brief, a book destined to teach the Christian religion.\(^9\)

It is also clear from its long title: *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Embracing almost the Whole Sum of Piety, and Whatever is Necessary to Know of the Doctrine of Salvation: A Work Worthy to be Read by All Persons Zealous for Piety*.\(^{10}\) In his paper entitled “Calvin’s Institutes as a Catechetical Work”, Nobuo Watanabe summarized as follows:

Calvin wrote his main work as a catechism. This fact suggests that this book might be read for catechetical edification in the church. The exegesis of Calvin’s *Institutio* would be done along this line. It is thankful in many countries *Institutio* has been read not only by theologians but also by laymen alike. In this time this book might be read by lay people more and more. Calvin’s teaching will vivify Christian people of this age.\(^{11}\)

Through this book, Calvin intended to present a teaching of Christian faith to improve those people who, according to him, had limited knowledge, thirst and hunger for Jesus Christ and did not have the proper knowledge about Him. Therefore, the Institutes should be read as the teaching book of Christian faith. It was practical, not philosophical.\(^{12}\)

The meaning and objective of this book was described quite clearly in the letter he sent to King Francis I, which can be read in the Introductory Section of the Institutes 1536 Edition as follows:

> When I first set my hand to this work, nothing was farther from my mind, most glorious King, than to write something that might be offered to Your Majesty. My purpose was solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true godliness. And I undertook this labor especially for our French countrymen, very many of whom I saw to be hungering and thirsting for Christ; very few who had been imbued with even a slight knowledge of him. The book itself witnesses that this was my intention, adapted as it is to a simple and, you may say, elementary form of teaching.\(^{13}\)

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\(^9\) Benoit, “The History and Development”, p. 103.

\(^{10}\) The original title is: *CHRISTIANAE RELIGIONIS INSTITUTIO, totam fere pietatis summam et quidquid est in doctrina salutis cognitum necessarium complectens, omnibus pietatis studiois lectu dignissimum opus ac recens adytum*”; Petrus Barth (ed.), Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta, *Scripta Calvini ab anno 1533 usque ad annum 1541 continens*, München, 1926, p. 19, further abbreviated *OS*.


\(^{13}\) F.L. Battles (transl. and annot.), *John Calvin, INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION 1536 EDITION*, Grand Rapids, 1995, p. 1; see *OS* I, 21; see also F. Wendel, *Calvin. The Origin and the Development of His Religious Thought*, London, 1963, p. 145: “At first, then, Calvin’s intention was to write an exposition as simple as possible, of Christian doctrine as a whole, a sort of Catechism, as he afterwards called it.”
Thus the main objective of writing the Institutes is catechetical. However, in further development, when he expanded and sharpened his teaching, he felt the necessity not only to explain the essence of biblical faith but also to defend the biblical faith. The pressure to defend the biblical faith emerged by way of the existence of the wrong accusation and assumption that the evangelicals were like other radical movements such as the Anabaptists, which were perceived to undermine the government. The evangelicals were accused as agitators. The consequence was the terrible oppression and torture of Christian believers in France in early 1535.

We can immediately feel the change in the meaning of the writing, from catechism to apologetic, when we try to compare the Institutes 1536 edition with the 1539 edition. The articles about Christian freedom, church and state, and about the earthly and spiritual governance were the articles that gave a particular character and theological tendency.

In accordance with it, we can justify what T.H.L. Parker has asserted. To view the titles and the whole content of Institutes, he concluded that the Institutes was written with a two-fold purpose. They were described as follows:

Here we see his two-fold purpose. On the one hand, the work was to serve as an apologia pro fide sua, a decisive statement of the doctrinal position of the Evangelicals. The current confusion gave abundant need for such an apologia, and the Reformers themselves were aware of their duty to clarify their position. ... The book was therefore on the one hand a confession of faith. But it was also institutio christianae religionis, instruction in the Christian religion; and that, not as a text book about an abstract body of truths, but as the teaching of ‘godliness’, of the Faith that is believed with mind and heart, upon which a man is bold to base the conduct of his life, to which he dares to commit himself in life and in death. Calvin intended it to be elementary.\textsuperscript{14}

We need to view the Institutes from these two aspects when we intend to understand it. The admonition given by Brian G. Armstrong needs to be understood in this way:

My reading of Calvin leads me to conclude that the attempt to make of him a professional theologian, who was writing formal theology, is entirely wrong. This presupposition has seriously hindered the development of the proper understanding of his thought.\textsuperscript{15}

Another thing needs to be revealed before undertaking further research. Calvin did not speak about church unity as a separate topic apart from his understanding of the church. When he was speaking about church then at the same time he was speaking about the unity of the church, or conversely, when he was speaking about the unity of the church he was also speaking about church.\textsuperscript{16} Therefore, we will start directly from the unity of the church in the Institutes.

3.1. The unity of the church in the Institutes

Since the Institutes have had various alterations and expansion, it is interesting if we follow such improvements from one edition to the others. The intention of this is to see the way of thinking of the writer which developed from time to time and at the same time showed its interactions with Rome on the one hand and with the Anabaptist Radicals on the other hand. From several published editions, we will only use the Latin editions of 1536, 1539, 1543, and 1559. These four editions were selected taking into account that the above-mentioned expansion and enrichment were clearly apparent in these editions.\(^\text{17}\)

3.1.1. The unity of the church in the Institutes 1536\(^\text{18}\)

Examining the structure of the Institutes 1536, it is clear that Calvin’s view of the unity of the church were put in article two which is entitled *Faith: Containing An Explanation of the Creed (called Apostolic).*\(^\text{19}\) The teaching of the unity of the church was integrated with the teaching of the church. Article two discussed three main subjects:

A. Faith and faith in one God.
B. Explanation of the Apostles’ Creed.
C. Faith, hope and love.

The understanding of the church and the unity of the church was put in the second subject, which explained the Apostles’ Creed. The second subject itself was divided into several sections as follows:

- First Section: I believe in God the Father Almighty.
- Second Section: And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
- Third section: I believe in Holy Spirit.
- Fourth Section: I believe the Holy Catholic Church.\(^\text{20}\)

We will give our attention to the fourth section since this section discussed the teaching of the unity of the church. About the unity of the church Calvin stressed several things as follows:

1. He emphasized the unity of the church when he commenced his description with: “First, we believe the holy Catholic Church.”\(^\text{21}\) It is interesting that Calvin uses ‘we’ here, while the creed has ‘I’. It is an indication of how very much Calvin thought in the perspective of community. This emphasis was apparent in his use of the word ‘catholic’ (*catholica*). The church was catholic (*ecclesia catholica*). It means that essentially the church was common, covered all aspects, not limited by space and time.

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\(^{18}\) In this case we followed the line put by Battles and Balke whose books were quoted earlier. See also another book of Battles, *An Analysis of the Institutes*, Grand Rapids, 1980, p. 15.

\(^{19}\) We use the newest edition of the *Institutes* 1536, which was issued by Battles in 1995 and also refer to *Calvini Opera Selecta* 1926, edited by Petrus Barth. For quotation from these scripts we use the abbreviation *Inst. 1536* and *OS*.

\(^{20}\) *Inst. 1536*, 42; “de fide ubi et symbolum quod apostolicum vocant explicatur”, *OS* I, 68.

\(^{21}\) *Inst. 1536*, 49-65.

Inst 1536, 58; “Primum credimus sanctam ecclesiam catholicam”, *OS* I, 86.
The church can be in any place at any time. In this sense, catholicity could be understood as a whole and a unity. Therefore, affirming that the church is catholic means the church is one. In other words, the church is essentially one because of its catholicity. Calvin comprehended catholicity as a unity. It is interesting to see that Calvin in commenting on the Apostles’ Creed did not use the word ‘una’ which meant one explicitly. In spite of that, what he meant by the church, which was catholic, was in fact only one. Accordingly, in understanding the church, we should not refer to the thought that there was only one church in one place which considered itself as the one church. The oneness of the church was not put on the limitation of space and time, but on its catholicity.

It is also necessary to consider that for Calvin the unity of the church was at first connected with its catholicity, not its sanctity or its apostolicity. The matter of this catholicity was again affirmed with the use of the word universalis in the following explanation.

2. If the church was catholic and universal, in this sense meaning one, then it is not possible to have or to divide or to make the church to be two or three. There was only one church in the universe, one Christ’s body where Christ is the Head. In him all the elect are united and grow together toward one body. In Him as the Head, all the elect people are united like the parts of one body. Calvin said:

Now this society is catholic, that is, universal because there could not be two or three churches, but all God’s elect are so united and conjoined in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:22-23) that, as they are dependent on one Head, they also grow together into one body, being joined and knit together (cf. Eph. 4:16) as are the limbs of one body (Rom.12:5; 1 Cor 10:17; 12: 12, 27).

It is important to pay attention here to the fact that Calvin frequently used the word ‘una’ (one). He did not desire disintegration or separation in the church. For him, there was only one church in the universe where Christ is the Head.

3. The oneness of the church according to Calvin was in Christ. It is in Christ being the center and the foundation of the church. Consequently, it is Christ who unites the church. It is said that way since it is Christ being the Head, who leads and rules the church all at once. He described it with the following statements:

…Of it, Christ, our Lord, is Leader and Ruler, and as it were head of the one body”…But all God’s elect are so united and conjoined in Christ,… are dependent on one Head…”

In other words, the oneness in Christ became very significant to Calvin. Therefore, when Christ is present, the church is also present. Then we can understand from here why Calvin emphasized two living signs from the church: Word and Sacrament. If we want to identify the existence of the church, according to Calvin we have to see these

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23 “Haec autem societas catholica est, id est, universalis”, OS I, 86.

24 Inst. 1536, 58; OS I, 86: “Haec autem societas catholica est, id est, universalis, quia non duas aut tres invenire liceat, verum electi Dei sic omnes in Christo uniuntur ac coaduntur, ut…”.

25 Inst. 1536, 58; OS I, 86.
two signs. He simply appointed these two signs, because according to him Christ is present in them. We can meet Christ in them.\textsuperscript{26}

It is obvious that for Calvin, the emphasis was put in Christ as the Head of the church which is His body. There is only one Head of the church for him; Christ. The Head of the church was not the pope who ruled in Rome. That is why there is a saying that, from the beginning, Calvin’s thought about the church is essentially Christ-centered.\textsuperscript{27}

4. Following his affirmation that the church is catholic, Calvin further explained the content and the scope of the catholic church. The content and scope is:

\[\text{… that is the whole number of the elect, whether angels or men (Eph.1:9-10; Col. 1:16), of men, whether dead or still living; of the living, in whatever lands they live, or wherever among the nations, they have been scattered…}\textsuperscript{28}

The church consists of God’s elect,\textsuperscript{29} both angels and men, the living and the dead, who live in different lands among the nations. They are united in one church, one community and one congregation of God. What Calvin wanted to emphasize here was the invisible dimension of church. The church is not only real and visible in man’s eyes, but also invisible. The visible church is not always the rightful church. That is why he referred to the elect, angels and the dead as covered in the sense of church.

The following matter emphasized by Calvin was that there was no limitation of space and time for those which are called the church. In every place and nation, the church can be found. The church is unlimited and not enclosed within the territory of the pope’s authority in Rome. The church could expand and penetrate the frontier of the empire of Rome’s territory. This expansion did not reflect the separation, but, on the contrary, it did reflect the unity. They remained called as a catholic church with Christ as the Head.

5. It is interesting to see what Calvin further explained: the election. For him, God’s elect to be church, were elected simply based on God’s grace and kindness and such election did not just happen, but has been done before He created the universe. The objective of the election was so that all God’s people could be gathered in his kingdom.

\[\text{… according as, through divine goodness, they have been chosen in him before the foundation of the world (Eph.1:4), in order that all might be gathered into God’s Kingdom.}\textsuperscript{30}

The emphasis was given to: 1) God’s freedom, meaning that the election which happened before the foundation of the world was simply done upon God’s blessings. God’s elect were not just determined, but far before their time. Therefore, the principle of the establishment of the church was God’s justification and there was the election


\textsuperscript{27} Balke, \textit{Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals}, p. 49; W. Niesel, \textit{The Theology of John Calvin}, p. 247: “The thought of Calvin in many other doctrinal matters is guided by the attempt to apprehend and describe the Person of Jesus Christ”.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Inst. 1536}, 58, \textit{OS} I, 86.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{OS} I, 86: “universum electorum numerum”.

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Inst. 1536}, 58; \textit{OS} I, 86.
behind it. By quoting Rome 8:30, he said: “Those whom he has chosen from men he calls; those whom he has called, he justifies; those whom he has justifies, he glorifies.”

This was the first time Calvin spoke about election and predestination.

2) The understanding of the church as the kingdom of God. However, the kingdom of God here covered the invisible church. The kingdom of God was not just manifested on earth simply in a visible church.

6. The unity of the church was also the unity in faith, hope and love. Besides, the unity of the church was also caused by the “same Spirit”. In the same Spirit, they were called to inherit eternal life. It was said that:

These are made truly one who live together in one faith, hope, and love, and in the same Spirit of God, called to inheritance of eternal life.

7. Indeed, the church is essentially one and only. Such oneness was clearly established in Christ as the principal and Head. Therefore, since the establishment of the church with Christ as the Head, the unity of the church already existed. In this case, we could say that the unity of the church is a gift from God. But Calvin definitely realized that in reality, the church tended to separate due to variety of place or location and due also to doctrinal issues. In this way, besides affirming unity as the essential feature of the church, he also asserted that it was our duty to exert ourselves to make it become more evident. It was described with the following statement:

They also grow together into one body, being joined and knit together as are the limbs of one body.

8. It was further explained that the church which is essentially one is holy. Holy because of it was well maintained by God, was adopted to be part of his body and was sanctified by himself. The holiness of the church has to do with God and his work, not with the people who rule the church:

It is also holy, because as many as have been chosen by God’s eternal providence to be adopted as members of the church, all these are made holy by the Lord.

9. To look further into Calvin’s thought concerning the unity of the church, it was evident to us that for Calvin, the manifestation of the unity of the church could be seen in the celebration of Holy Communion. According to him, to celebrate the sacraments meant that we whole-heartedly pray so we are filled with love, peace and unity. Since Christ only has one body in which we are called to partake, it is necessary for us all to be joined through participation in the Holy Communion. Its unity is symbolized by one bread with many kernels of grain, which expresses the mutual bond. Calvin reflected on it with the following words:

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31 Idem.
32 Idem.
33 Idem.
34 Idem.
… Because Christ has only one body, of which he makes us all partakers, it is necessary that all of us be made one body by such participation. … in this way we should be joined and bound together by such great agreement of hearts that no sort of disagreement or division may intrude.35

We got the impression that Calvin was opposed to the existence of schism and division. He had the understanding of the sacrament, particularly the Holy Communion, as a way to avoid these matters. We could understand from here why Calvin wanted the Holy Communion to be frequently celebrated.36

10. The issue of the unity of the church was not newly emphasized by Calvin when he explained about the church in the fourth section of the Apostles’ Creed. When he commenced the Institutes by a particular letter addressed to King Francis I, this issue had been under his attention. In that letter, he tried to respond to the accusations leveled by the Catholic faction upon the Lutherans, that they have destroyed the growing church unity. The following statements show this clearly:

Surely the church of Christ has lived and will live so long as Christ reigns at the right hand of his Father. It is sustained by his hand; armed by his protection; and is strengthened through his power. …Against this church we now have no quarrel. …But they stray very far from the truth when they do not recognize the church unless they see it with their very eyes and try to keep it within limits to which it cannot be confined”. …They contend that the form of the church is always apparent and observable. …We, on the contrary, affirm that the church can exist without any visible appearance…37

This view on the invisible church is Calvin’s opinion in the 1536 edition of the Institutes. Accordingly, from the very beginning, Calvin has asserted the unity of the church when he was writing the Institutes. His letter to King Francis I expressed it clearly. Then he started the explanation about the church by using catholicity to refer to the one church. We can say from here that he made the ecclesiastical issue the fundamental matter in his endeavor to renew the church. Our question is why he deliberately emphasized the unity of the church and made it the fundamental issue to be highlighted.

Firstly it was caused by the leveling of accusation against him by the opponents of the reformation. They accused Calvin of causing schism to the only church, which was ruled by pope. For the accusers the pope together with his institution and canonical law were the signs of one and catholic church. For them, the Roman church was the one and only church because of the pope and its institutions. To accuse the pope and his institution meant to destroy the church. However, it was the contrary for Calvin. For him, he and all the reformers were in a truthful confidence of the existence of one church. But the church was not the pope. On the contrary, for Calvin the pope was anti-Christ since he took over Christ and His position. He claimed the pope and his followers were not the church but a faction. The pope and his group could not be classified as church.

35 Balke, Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals, p. 56.
37 Inst. 1536, 9.
The understanding which claimed that the unity of the church had been put in the hands of the pope and his institution was definitely disagreeable to Calvin. For him, the issue of unity was not the matter of *successio apostolica*, but *successio doctrinae*. It means to be in one right faith and the confession of one Jesus Christ, the right confession of one Christ’s body where Christ is the Head; to believe that there is only one head of the Church, who is Jesus Christ, not the pope, bishop nor one of the hierarchy. The church is God’s congregation, Christ’s body that is headed by Christ himself. Such belief and confession is the belief and confession which is based on the Bible.

Therefore, the accusation that the evangelicals wanted to build their own church is not true. Calvin still confessed the existence of the true catholic church as the church, since they had Word and Sacrament. But the main issue was not on those facts but more on the claim that it was the pope who was the head of the church and even Christ’s representative on earth, so that all should obey him. This kind of ecclesiastical concept was not in accordance with the testimony of the Bible. The right ecclesiastical concept according to Calvin was the *ecclesiology of the people of God or the kingdom of God*, not the *ecclesiology of the Pope*.

It is obvious here that Calvin was anti-hierarchical. The unity of the church was not found in the pope and his church or in his hierarchy or in canonical law. The church and its form could be various, *but in spirit, there is only one body*. Additionally, the unity of the church was not based on the bishopric but was created through obedience to Jesus Christ, the Head. Christ’s body for Calvin was equal with the kingdom of Christ or the kingdom of God, which was God’s congregation. And Christ’s body or the kingdom of God was not *the visible head in Rome but the invisible head in heaven*. As such, the unity in Christ was a spiritual issue, not a structural matter or form of the church. In other words, the unity of the church is in a spiritual way.

3.1.2. *The unity of the church in the Institutes 1539*

As already mentioned, Calvin tried to be consistent in his opinion and thought. Such consistency was always maintained from one edition to another. In his teaching on the church, we can always see such consistency. If there are new things and issues which we did not find in the previous edition, it did not mean a change of reflection or thought but simply appears as a clarification. This is in fact what we find in the Institutes 1539 edition. From the structural aspect, there were quite significant changes. If the first edition of the Institutes only consisted of six articles, then the second edition consisted of seventeen articles. From the aspect of content, most parts were expanded and divided into particular discussions, while several subjects were newly discussed, for example the Old and New Testaments and the relation of both.

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38 The version of the Institutes that is used here is *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J.T. McNeill, transl. F.L Battles, Philadelphia, 1960. Since this Institutes already consisted of four books, the quotations will be taken by referring to these books. It is further abbreviated with *Inst. I. II. III. IV*, followed by chapter, point and code. The codes are: ‘b’ for the 1539 edition; ‘c’ for the 1543 edition. This version of McNeill will also be used in the following explanations, since the 1543 and later editions have been summarized in this version.
about predestination and providence and about Christian life. The subjects which were most expanded especially concerned the church, particularly the visible church and its office, about trinity, about baptism particularly infant baptism, about the covenant and its relation with predestination, about oath, sanctification and the millennium. Its feature as a catechism book was less evident in the 1539 edition. It has changed to become a biblical handbook in a new order of instruction.

The appearance of new subjects and the expansion of particular subjects with the affirmation as we have seen, were caused by intensive contacts between Calvin and the Anabaptists during his stay in Strasbourg. The discussion between them has opened his sight to enrich and expand the earlier thoughts which were in the 1536 edition of the Institutes.

Calvin’s opinion about the church and its unity were explained in an article of faith, as in the first edition. The objective of his attacks was still the same; on the one hand directed to Rome with the concept of their ecclesia deformata, on the other hand directed to the Anabaptists who dreamt of an ecclesia perfecta and so tended to separate from the church.

To survey this edition, then, we will note several highlights where Calvin asserted the unity of the church:

1. While in the first edition, we find his opinion about the church is more as the mystical body of Christ, in the second edition he prominently discussed the visible church, i.e., the visible dimension of the church. It was the first time for Calvin to use the terminology ecclesia visibilis. According to him, the church had two dimensions: the invisible and visible dimensions. The invisible church must be manifested within the visible church. So the unity he has discussed would be applied to the visible church. It meant that the unity should be apparent on the visible church. The visible church should manifest the unity of the church. We can not interpret this as a clear shift in Calvin’s ecclesiology. But this new stress on the visible church was caused by the danger of spiritualism of the Anabaptists. It is an addition and enrichment of his view.

2. The visible church was also called catholic and universal. This church consisted of God’s elect, headed by Christ, were called not only to inherit the eternal life but also to participate in one God and Christ.

3. Indeed, the church which was catholic and universal was the gathering of the elect who came from all kinds of nations and separate places. But they did agree on one true teaching and mutual bond by the same belief. It was the mutual truth and confidence which joined them. The unity of the church, as such, was established in the matter of mutual possessions and the agreement concerning one true teaching. In other words, the unity is in the fundamental belief. The following statement described it:

But that we may clearly grasp the sum of this matter, we must proceed by the following steps: the church universal is a multitude gathered from all nations; it is divided and dispersed in separate places, but agrees on the one truth of divine doctrine and is bound by the bond of the same religion. Under it are thus included individual churches, disposed in towns and villages.

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40 Balke, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, p. 97.
41 *Inst. IV. i. 2 (b).*
according to human need, so that each rightly has the name and authority of the church. Individual men, who, by their profession of religion, are reckoned within such churches, even though they may actually be stranger to the church, still in a sense belong to it until they have been rejected by public judgment.  

4. In accordance with Cyprian, Calvin justified the opinion that only through the church, could salvation be achieved. There is no salvation outside the church, he borrowed Cyprian’s words and applied them to the visible church. Calvin’s intention by this quotation is that he wanted to emphasize that separation from the church actually meant to leave the salvation which was blessed by God. Therefore, it is necessary to unite ourselves and remain in the Church. So, by quoting Cyprian and applied it to the visible church, he would like to affirm the necessity to maintain the unity of the church. “Calvin heavily underscores the necessity of maintaining the unity of the church. He takes over Cyprian’s adage ‘there is no salvation outside the church’ and applies this statement to the visible church” according to Balke.  

5. The intention as mentioned above was obvious in the description he used to describe the visible church which was the “mother of the believers”. As mother who conceives, gives birth, raises and takes care, it was not decent to extricate ourselves from her, since she is the one who gives salvation. But because it is now our intention to discuss the visible church, let us learn even from the simple title “mother”, how useful, indeed how necessary, it is that we should know her. For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels (Matt. 22:30). Furthermore, away from her bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation, as Isaiah (Isa. 37:37) and Joel (Joel 2:32) testify.  

6. The affirmation of the importance of maintaining the unity of the church will be explained further with the following statements:  

The basis on which we believe the church is that we are fully convinced we are members of it. In this way our salvation rests upon sure and firm supports, so that, even if the whole fabric of the world were overthrown, the church could neither totter nor fall. First, it stands by God’s election, and cannot waver or fail any more than his eternal providence can. Secondly, it has in a way been joined to the steadfastness of Christ, who will no more allow his believers to be estranged from him than that his members be rent and torn asunder. Besides, we are certain that, while we remain within the bosom of the Church, the truth will always abide with us. Finally, we feel that these promises apply to us: “there will be salvation in Zion” (Joel 2:32; Obad. 17, cf.Vg.).  

By this, he intended once again, to assert the importance for anybody to become a member of the church and not become estranged. According to him, the church is the mother of believers, mother of all of us and Christ’s bride.

42 Inst. IV. i. 9 (b).  
43 Balke, Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals, p. 112.  
44 Inst. IV. i. 4 (b).  
45 Inst. IV. i. 3 (b).
7. In accordance with this, by quoting Augustine, he clarified that there was a difference between *I believe in the Church* and *I believe the church*. Since, the church was not the subject of our faith, but only the object, so the correct expression was *I believe the church*.\(^{46}\) Church is the way of salvation which always places itself under God’s authority. The subject of our faith is God. Therefore, to God we should say *I believe in God*, not *in the church*. To believe the church means to be convinced that we are members and that our salvation is firm; it relates to Christ’s firmness which does not allow the believers to be taken away from Him, torn apart. He is convinced that the truth will stand firm for us as long as we stay in church’s womb. To believe the church means to partake in it. Consequently, church and its unity must be consistently maintained.\(^{47}\)

8. Calvin said:

> How we are to judge the church visible, which falls within our knowledge, is, I believe, already evident from the above discussion . . . Wherever we see the word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administrated according to Christ’s institutions, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists (cf. Eph. 2:20).\(^{48}\)

Just as in the first edition, in the second edition Calvin consistently considered the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ’s institution to be the signs which could identify and unite the church at the same time. Therefore, he further mentioned: “In this way we preserve for the universal church its unity, which devilish spirits have always tried to sunder”.\(^{49}\)

9. Since Calvin was remarkably serious and consistent with reference to the unity of the church, so all tendency to separatism is rejected. Because for him:

> For the Lord esteems the communion of his church so highly that he counts as a traitor and apostate from Christianity anyone who arrogantly leaves any Christian society, provided it cherishes the true ministry of Word and sacraments.\(^{50}\)

Separatism, according to him, is a satanic work. “For there is nothing that Satan plots more than to remove and do away with one or both of these. Sometimes he tries by heaping contempt upon them to drag us away from the church in open rebellion”,\(^{51}\) according to Calvin. Therefore, when the party of Guellermin in Geneva intended to separate from the Reformed church in Geneva after the exile of Calvin and Farel, Calvin’s reaction was:

> The pure ministry of the Word and pure mode of celebrating the sacraments are, as we say, sufficient pledge and guarantee that we may safely embrace as church any society in which

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\(^{46}\) *Inst.* IV. i. 2 (b).

\(^{47}\) *Inst.* IV. i. 3 (b).

\(^{48}\) *Inst.* IV. i. 7 (b); *Inst.* IV. i. 9 (b).

\(^{49}\) *Inst.* IV. i. 9 (b).

\(^{50}\) *Inst.* IV. i. 10 (b).

\(^{51}\) *Inst.* IV. i. 11 (b).
both these marks exist. The principle extends to the point that we must not reject it as long as it retains them, even if it otherwise swarms with many faults.\(^52\)

For him, any kind of misconduct could possibly happen, but as long as the basic principles, which are the ministry of the Word and sacraments, are still evidently pure, then such unity is the true church. As such, it is not decent to reject it or to separate from it. The guilty people receive discipline, like excommunication. But excommunication was not the expression of hatred and curse. Discipline could not be executed with violence since violence could end up with sectarianism. Violence could also cause people to be arrogant, people who tend to take over God’s position and hide the real truth. Therefore, for Calvin, we should be bent under the conviction that whenever Christ is proclaimed there the Holy Spirit works in the heart of every believer.\(^53\)

We note that the unity of the church he prominently highlighted in the 1536 edition was spiritual unity, but he still brought up this unity in the 1539 edition. But the unity should be apparent in the visible church. Its implementation is obedience to Christ as the Head, together to keep the right teaching, to perform the ministry of Word and sacrament, to remain in the church which is the mother of the believers. By referring to the importance of the unity of the church, he rejected any tendency of sectarianism which existed in the Anabaptist movement. The denial of the sectarian tendency was also triggered by the accusation by the Anabaptists that the evangelicals were also anti-Christ.\(^54\) Accordingly, the struggle against the opinion of the Anabaptists has dominantly colored this 1539 edition.

### 3.1.3. The unity of the church in the Institutes 1543

The structure of this edition has been expanded from seventeen articles to twenty-one. Additionally, the order of the articles has also changed.\(^55\) From the aspect of content, there was also a kind of expansion as the result of continuous interaction with the Anabaptists. The articles relating to the Anabaptists were re-written by concentrating on the practical issues so that it is more apparent that the material was further expanded. The issue of ecclesiology, which has been improved in the 1539 edition, has also been elaborated. The subjects like the nature of church, office, church order and discipline were also intensively and deeply discussed.

The most prominent was the more spacious place for the discussion about the visible church. It was obvious in the following words: that baptism was understood as an *insertion into the body of Christ* and as a *sign of initiation*, which was the real sign of acceptance into the visible church;\(^56\) these things he never touched on before.

The other issue which is also prominent in this edition is the expansive study about ecclesiastical office. Here he gave a deeper theological basis for such subjects. This basis he did not change any further in the last edition in 1559. In the ecclesiastical matter, the significant difference between Calvin and the Anabaptists was their opinions about the visible church. The Anabaptists demanded that the visible church

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\(^{52}\) *Inst. IV. i. 12 (b).*  
\(^{53}\) Balke, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, p. 115.  
\(^{55}\) See the diagram in Battles, *Interpreting John Calvin*, p. 156.  
\(^{56}\) Balke, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, p. 155.
should become a church purely according to the pattern of the New Testament church. This idealism had emerged as an ambition to establish a perfectionist church, which is holy and clean.\textsuperscript{57}

To these matters, Calvin affirmed that the pure and perfect church could not be found in the testimony of the New Testament. To demand the establishment of a pure and perfect church means to disregard the facts that the New Testament witnessed the church which consisted of sinners. What the Bible has witnessed was much different. Therefore, we need to hear the testimony of the Bible so that we can judge the visible church properly. He said:

For we have said, the Holy Scripture speaks of the church in two ways. Some times by the term “church” it means that which is actually in God’s presence, into which no persons are received but those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit... Often, however, the name “church” designates the whole multitude of men spread over the earth who profess to worship one God and Christ... In this church are mingled many hypocrites who have nothing of Christ but the name and outward appearance. There are very many ambitious, greedy, envious persons, evil speakers, and some of quite unclean life. Such are tolerated for a time either because they cannot be convicted by a competent tribunal or because a vigorous discipline does not always flourish as it ought.\textsuperscript{58}

The above quotation reflects that for Calvin sanctification of the church was only by the work of God through the Holy Spirit. The church does not consist of saints. God’s elect are mingled with sinners, hypocrites, and greedy, ambitious and envious people. Also the elect are sinners in themselves, but they were sanctified by God through the work of the Holy Spirit. It can be seen here that the Holy Spirit received a place in his ecclesiology.

This church is one church. Since although they were gathered from any place on earth, they are those:

… who profess to worship one God and Christ. By baptism we are initiated into faith in him; by partaking in the Lord’s Supper we attest our unity in true doctrine and love; in the word of the Lord we have agreement, and for the preaching of the Word the ministry instituted by Christ is preserved.\textsuperscript{59}

We note that to have faith in Christ, to accept the right teaching, to love and to confess the righteousness of God’s Word are the important unifying forces. These forces are in action where the Word is truly preached and the sacraments are purely administered.

Calvin moreover asserted that Christ as the Head is the absolute condition for unity. He calls upon Cyprian who in his famous book “On the Unity of the Catholic Church” said the famous words, “He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the church for his mother”. For Cyprian there is one God and Christ is one, and there is one church and one chair (episcopate) founded upon the rock by the word of the Lord. Calvin with his sharp view saw that for Cyprian the source of concord of the

\textsuperscript{57} Idem, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{58} Inst. IV. i. 7 (c).
\textsuperscript{59} Inst. IV. i. 7 (c).
entire church was Christ’s episcopate alone. Calvin is totally in agreement with Cyprian’s illustration to explain the unity of the church which based in Christ:

The church is one, which is spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun but one light, and many branches of a tree but one strong trunk grounded in its tenacious root, and since from one spring flow many streams, although a goodly number seem outpoured from their bounty and superabundance, still, at the source unity abides. Take a ray from the body of the sun; its unity undergoes no division. Break a branch from a tree; the severed branch cannot sprout. Cut off a stream from its source; cut off, it dries up. So also the church, bathed in the light of the Lord, extends over the whole earth; yet there is one light diffused everywhere.\(^{60}\)

Consequently, we cannot separate ourselves from the visible church. To keep the communion with the visible church is a command. It was asserted by Calvin with the following words:

Just as we must believe, therefore, that the former church, invisible to us, is visible to the eyes of God alone, so we are commended to reserve and keep communion with the latter, which is called ‘church’ in respect to men.\(^{61}\)

For Calvin, the invisible church is the church before the eyes of God, while the visible church is before the eyes of man. These churches are one and equal. We cannot estrange ourselves from one and bring our self closer to other. We are the members of both. By referring to Augustine, he was of a certain opinion that separatism is the incredibly largest violence. To guide the church toward unity is a command to those who perform the ministry of the Word. “Let them ponder how much more important both the ministry of the Word and participation in the sacred mysteries are for gathering of the church”,\(^{62}\) according to Calvin. The unity of the church should be persistently kept in spite of depravity which poisoned the church.

Indeed, for the sake of the church and its unity, Calvin denied all kind of separatism. To respond to the accusation leveled by Rome that the reformers spread abroad schism and sects Calvin said:

Those who, by making dissension, break the communion of the church are called heretics and schismatic. Now this communion is held together by two bonds, agreement in sound of doctrine and brotherly love. …Let us therefore remember that whenever church unity is commended to us, this is required: that while our minds agree in Christ, our wills should also be joined with mutual benevolence in Christ. Paul, therefore, while urging us to it, takes it as his foundation that ‘there is … one God, one faith, and one baptism (Eph. 4:5)’. … He means that apart from the Lord’s Word there is not an agreement of believers but a faction of wicked men.\(^{63}\)

We may properly see that the expressions agreement in sound of doctrine and brotherly love and agree in Christ were used by Calvin to point to the church as the

\(^{60}\) *Inst.* IV. ii. 6 (c).

\(^{61}\) *Inst.* IV. i. 7 (c).

\(^{62}\) *Inst.* IV. i. 16 (c).

\(^{63}\) *Inst.* IV. ii. 5 (c).
communion, and also as the criteria in determining whether a group or church was schismatic or not. Such expressions bound and joined the people in the church, or among one church and the others. In other words, they were bound by such criteria.

We saw already that Calvin intended to give in the 1543 edition a further development of his doctrine of the offices in the church. Although he stated with Cyprian that Christ alone is the highest office in the church, he now, following Paul in Ephesians 4, gave full attention to the functions of the offices in the church as gifts of the exalted Christ after his resurrection and session in heaven. Strongly guided by his exegesis of the Pauline Epistles he gave a deeper understanding of the theology of the offices in the church. In this he predominantly referred to Bucer during the process of developing of his teaching. There were three parties, Rome, the Anabaptist and Spiritualist. Confrontation with these three groups has colored his teaching about the office in the church.  

It is interesting to observe that Calvin related the office with the service of reconciliation. Christ entrusted his service to the apostles and intended them to pass it on to the believers. To the presbyters and the bishops, He entrusted the ecclesiastical office. In this relation, Calvin affirmed three points:

First, however great the holiness in which God’s children excel, they still — so long as they dwell in mortal bodies — remain unable to stand before God without forgiveness of sins. Secondly, this benefit so belongs to the church that we cannot enjoy it unless we abide in communion with the church. Thirdly, it is dispensed to us through the ministers and pastors of the church, either by the preaching of the gospel or by the administration of the sacraments.  

When opposing the separatism of the Anabaptists, he advised them to seek forgiveness where the Lord has placed it. “Accordingly, let each one of us count it his own duty to seek forgiveness of sins only where the Lord has placed it”. Furthermore, Calvin said:

… For if anyone were sufficient to himself and needed no one else’s help (such is the pride of human nature), each man would despise the rest and be despised by them. The Lord has therefore bound his church together with a knot that he foresaw would be the strongest means of keeping unity, while he entrusted to men the teaching of salvation and everlasting life in order that through their hands it might be communicated to the rest.

It means that the teaching of salvation and eternal life are entrusted by God to men. Accordingly, such teaching could reach other people. The ultimate intention was to have a bond which keeps the unity of the church. The bond was the teaching of salvation itself, or more precisely God’s Word. So according to Calvin, the church’s officials were those who held particular office in the church, and who took an important role to keep the unity of the church as the body of Christ for they were

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65 Inst. IV. i. 22 (c).
66 Inst. IV. i. 22 (c).
67 Inst. IV. iii. 1 (c).
obliged to proclaim the Gospel as the binding and unifying forces. That was the reason for him to say:

And he gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the full adulthood; so that we may no longer be children …. Carried about by every wind of doctrine, … But seeking truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the Head, into Christ, in whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love (Eph. 4:8,10-16).  

Since ecclesiastical office held an important role, as mentioned above, it could not be abolished. To abolish the office means to disperse the church. Calvin affirmed this as follows:

Whoever, therefore, either is trying to abolish this order of which we speak and this kind of government, or discounts it as not necessary, it is striving for the undoing or rather the ruin and destruction of the church.  

It was not just the office that had an important role in the unification process. Ecclesiastical discipline was not less important. It was considered as the healthy support, basis or structure, and the binding of the unity of the church. Consequently, as he already described in the previous editions, it was necessary to apply the discipline in the church. In this edition, Calvin related the discipline to doctrine, by saying that discipline supported doctrine and caused the doctrine to be expressed in human deed. When discipline is decreased, then the unity of the church will be absolutely disturbed. The church would be torn apart when there was no discipline in it. The following quotation indicated this:

Discipline is like a spur to arouse those of little inclination; and also sometimes like a father’s rod to chastise mildly and with the gentleness of Christ’s spirit those who have more seriously lapsed.  

However, once again the application of ecclesiastical discipline could not be with violence. By applying discipline, someone could be brought to realize his mistake and get to know himself:

For such great severity is not to be used in lighter sins, but verbal chastisement is enough – and that mild and fatherly – which should not harden or confuse the sinner but bring them back to himself, that he may rejoice rather than be sad that he has been corrected.  

In accordance with Augustine, Calvin regarded schism as a punishable sin:

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68 Inst. IV. iii. 1 (c).
69 Inst. IV. iii. 1 (c).
70 Inst. IV. xii. 1 (c).
71 Inst. IV. xii. 6 (c).
All pious method and measure of ecclesiastical discipline ought ever to look to the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), which the apostle orders us to keep by forbearing one another (Eph. 4:2), and when it is not kept, the medicine of punishment begins to be not only superfluous but also harmful, and so ceases to be medicine.\textsuperscript{72}

All the above citations indicate that Calvin applied the unity of the church in various aspects of the visible church. Therefore, in his description concerning ecclesiastical office: the administration of the Word and sacrament and discipline, he related it to the unity of the church. It is also evident that for the sake of the unity of the church, all schismatic tendencies should be rejected.

\textbf{3.1.4. The unity of the church in the Institutes 1559}\textsuperscript{73}

From the material aspect, the last edition of the Institutes has had an expansion. There are new articles with new content as well. Structurally, there was an increment in the number of the articles from twenty-one in the 1543 edition to eighty articles. The prominent change of order in this edition is when Calvin classified some articles into one book, which made it then consist of four books. Calvin completed this last edition while in a weak physical condition because of his illness.

The subjects which have been extended are for instance about the church, about the human fall into sin and the loss of free will, and also civil government. Intensive discussions between Calvin and his opponents, like Westphal, Osiander, Servetus, Socinus, and Menno Simons, have also colored the extension of this edition. This extension signifies enrichment. Basically, the continuity and homogeneity of Calvin’s thoughts was consistently maintained.

The discussion of the church and its unity could be found in book four, particularly chapters one and two. Quite differently from the 1536 edition where the basis of this unity was placed within the explanation of the fourth section of the Apostles’ Creed, here Calvin gave a different title to the first article of book IV from that which can be read in the first edition.

The title given to the first article of book IV was: \textit{Concerning the true church, with which we must maintain unity because it is the mother of all the faithful.}\textsuperscript{74} This title has assertively reflected that Calvin held the unity of the church in the highest esteem. At the same time he indicates the danger that where the church has no true preaching of the Word and pure administration of the sacraments there the church assumes the appearance of the false church. Calvin said in his reply to Sadoleto:

\begin{quote}
You very well know Sadoleto … that we are not only much more consistent with antiquity than you are, but also that we tried nothing other than that the ancient face of the church should be restored, which at first is distorted and soiled by unlearned and not the best man, and afterwards ominously is lacerated and almost devastated by the roman pontiff and his faction.\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Inst. IV. xii. 11. (c).}
\textsuperscript{73} Since this edition has summarized all editions, in our description we cannot avoid some repetition of what has been described before. Calvin’s last edition constitutes an expanded synthesis of all his earlier editions.
\textsuperscript{74} See the \textit{Institutes} ed. McNeill, p. 1011.
\textsuperscript{75} OS I, 466, \textit{Responsio ad Sadoleti epistolam}.
In his final discussion in the 1559 edition, Calvin started with the ecclesiastical offices. What is God’s plan with the church? His intention is to make an instrument which could strengthen our faith so we could get to the final destination, sanctification. He said:

Since, however, in our ignorance and sloth (to which I add fickleness of disposition) we need outward helps to beget and increase faith within us, and advance it to its goal, God has also added these aids that he may provide for our weakness. And in order that the preaching of the gospel might flourish, he deposited this treasure in the church. He institutes “pastors and teachers” (Eph. 4:11) through whose lips he might teach his own; he furnished them with authority; finally, he omitted nothing that might make for holy agreement of faith and for right order. First of all he instituted sacraments, which we who have experienced them feel to be highly useful aids to foster and strengthen our faith.\(^{76}\)

Here we see how important the role and function of the officers in the church are for Calvin. The purpose of the church is for Calvin, to be an instrument to our vocation and to come to the aid of our sanctification. The preaching of the Gospel and the institution of the teaching ministry are intended to awaken the faith and promote the collective sanctification of the members of the ecclesiastical community by establishing between them what Calvin calls “the consensus of faith”; that is a unanimous agreement in faith and in outward order. As for the statements, their principal function is to maintain the faith of believers and thus contribute to their individual sanctification. The above purpose was further described by using the figure of the church as a mother. A mother gathers her children, raises them up and the most important aspect is that she guides them to the maturity of faith.\(^{77}\) Here Calvin started to touch the issue of the unity of the church. We note several points as follows:

1. The church as mother.

By taking the thought of Cyprian who described church as Mother of the believers and taught that the church is the one and only way to salvation,\(^ {78}\) Calvin actually has started to put forward the affirmation that the church is one. The opinion of Jean Cadier justified this matter:

At the beginning of this chapter, taking up Cyprian’s word (On Christian Unity, Ch. VI), he declares: “it is not lawful to separate these two things which God has joined together: namely that the church should be the mother of all those of whom he is the Father” (IV.i.1). We must understand a unity of the church of such a kind that we are persuaded of being truly grafted into it; for if we are not bound to all the other members under the common head, who is Jesus Christ, we can have no hope of the inheritance to come. This is why the church is called catholic or universal, since there could not be two or three churches without tearing Christ asunder, which cannot be (IV.i.2). Outside the bosom of this church there is no hope of remission of sins, nor of any salvation (IV.i.4). It is a dangerous and deadly thing to withdraw or separate from the church (IV.i.4).\(^ {79}\)

\(^{76}\) Inst. IV. i. 1.
\(^{77}\) Inst. IV. i. 1.
\(^{78}\) Wendel, Calvin, the Origin and the Development, p. 292.
\(^{79}\) Cadier, “Calvin and the Union of the Churches”, p. 120.
2. The catholicity of the church
Just as in the first edition, in this last edition Calvin also emphasized the catholicity and universality of the church. The interesting thing is that the issue of the catholicity and universality of the church was related to the impossibility to tear the church asunder, for Christ is one and cannot be divided, which did not appear in the first edition. It was evident when he said:

The church is called catholic or universal because there could not be two or three churches unless Christ be torn asunder (cf. 1 Cor. 1:13) which cannot happen.\textsuperscript{80}

In this way the catholicity and universality of the church which were emphasized in the first edition was still maintained. The church is only one which is catholic and universal. The church cannot be torn asunder into two or three since Christ is one and also cannot be torn asunder. Therefore, the unity of the church which is emphasized here was based on the universality and non-divisibility of the Christ.

Observing that kind of Calvin’s thoughts Nijenhuis commented:

From the very beginning, Calvin devoted considerable attention to the catholicity and the unity of the Church. The number of the elect is general (universus); the Church is “the one fellowship” and the one people of God, if Christ our Lord is the leader and head. Its Catholicity and universality signify that there cannot exist two or three churches but only one, in which God’s elect are gathered and united in Christ, that, just as they are dependent on one head, so they grow together as they if were into one body, by God’s Spirit: one in faith, hope and peace.\textsuperscript{81}

The same opinion was also conveyed by Stauffer. He added that the unity of the church according to Calvin was not the unity of the invisible church. When he mentioned catholicity, at the same time he was referring to the visible church. According to Stauffer:

This concern for unity, this need for catholicity, is manifested by Calvin in the clearest fashion in numerous texts. When he treats, in the Institutes of the Christian Religion, for example, the article of the Creed relative to the “holy catholic church”, he not only sees in her the invisible Church, but indeed the visible church. This visible church is the multitude spread over the world who worship God and Christ, who witness to their faith by baptizing, who affirm its unity in the celebration of the Eucharist, who are faithful to the bible and defend the ministry of preaching.\textsuperscript{82}

3. The marks of the church
The authority of the church was determined in such a manner that we could find the ministry of Gospel and Sacrament. Calvin adopted here the term notae ecclesiae.

Where the preaching of the Gospel is reverently heard and the sacrament are not neglected, there for the time being no deceitful or ambiguous form of the church is seen; and no one is

\textsuperscript{80} Inst. IV. i. 2.: see that the words “unless Christ be torn asunder (cf. 1 Cor. 1:13) which cannot happen” are the special sign of this edition and were not apparent in the first edition.

\textsuperscript{81} Nijenhuis, “Church Unity in Luther and Calvin”, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{82} Stauffer, The Quest for Unity, p. 22.
permitted to spurn its authority, flout its warnings; resist its counsels, or make light of its 
chastisements – much less to desert it and break its unity. 83

It means that to admit and to accept each other became the essential factor in the 
church’s unity. We could say that the unity of the church could be implemented when 
there is a mutual admission and acceptance among the churches in every place, since it 
has the ministry of Word and the sacraments in it. In accordance with this de Jonge 
and Aritonang in their description of reformation ecclesiology, said the following:

It is notable here that for Calvin, the unity of the visible church is not necessarily implemented 
in the unity of organization. The ecclesiastical organization could be different from city to city 
and country to country, but as long as churches and congregations could admit each other as 
the church who has the Words and Sacrament, then the unity of the church could be 
implemented. 84

The unity of the church is not uniformity of organization and involving in a certain 
way also church order. However Calvin gave freedom to each church to determine its 
own form. In this matter, there is a freedom to choose its own order. The most 
important thing is that both notae ecclesiae should be absolutely apparent in such 
form. Those two notae ecclesiae in a certain time in future will unite the variety of 
church orders.

4. Imperfection is no reason for separation from the church.
It is interesting to note here what Calvin wrote in the book IV.i.14:

Among the Corinthians no slight number had gone astray; in fact, almost the whole body was infected. There was not one kind of sin only, but very many; and they were no light errors but 
frightful misdeeds; there was corruption not only of morals but also of doctrine. What does the 
holy apostle – the instrument of the Heavenly Spirit, by whose testimony the church stands or falls – do about this? Does he seek to separate himself from such? Does he cast them out of 
Christ’s Kingdom? Does he fell them with the ultimate thunderbolt of anathema? He not only 
does nothing of the sort; he even recognizes and proclaims them to be the church of Christ and 
the communion of saints (1 Cor. 1:2). Among the Corinthians quarrels, divisions, and 
jealousies flare (1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3; 5:1; 6:7; 9:1 ff); disputes and altercations burgeon together 
with greed; an evil deed is openly approved which even pagans would detest (1 Cor. 5:1); the 
name of Paul (whom they ought to have honored as a father) is insolently defamed; some 
mock the resurrection of the dead, to the destruction of the whole gospel as well (1 Cor. 15: 
12); God’s free gifts serve ambitions, not love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:5), and many things are done 
without decency or order. Yet the church abides among them because the ministry of Word 
and Sacraments remains unrepudiated there. Who then would dare snatch the title ‘church’ 
from these who cannot be charged with even a tenth part of such misdeeds. 85

The above sentences reflected that Calvin supported what Paul said to the Corinthians; 
that misdeeds could happen in the church, and many immoral persons could stay in the 
church. The other possibility is that there could be many differences during the 
implementation of the main teaching as the mutual basis of truth. However, in this

83  Inst. IV. i. 10.
84  Jan S. Aritonang & Christiaan de Jonge, Apa dan Bagaimana Gereja, Jakarta, 1989, p. 34.
85  Inst. IV. i. 14.
matter, we could not estrange ourselves from the church, since however it may be, the Apostle Paul persistently called them the church of Christ and the communion of the saints. The church will remain a church as long as the Word and the sacrament are firmly affirmed. It means that God and Christ will always be in the church. Thus, to estrange oneself from the church means to deny God and Christ.

5. Fundamental criteria for the unity of the church.
Eventually, Calvin again reaffirmed the unconditional admission of the fundamental beliefs as the implementation of the unity of the church. The particular fundamental beliefs, for Calvin, were the foundation and at the same time, also, the undeniable truth. In this case, every party should be in accordance with it. Even though in reality, there were also particular fundamental teachings which became the causal factor of dispute in the church, it should not invite division. Calvin said:

What is more, some fault may creep into the administration of either doctrine or sacraments, but this ought not to estrange us from communion with the church. For not all the articles of true doctrine are of the same sort. Some are so necessary to know that they should be certain and unquestioned by all men as the proper principles of religion. Such are: God is one; Christ is God and the Son of God; our salvation rests in God’s mercy; and the like. Among the churches there are other articles of doctrine disputed which still do not break the unity of faith. Suppose that one church believes—short of unbridled contention and opinionated stubbornness—that souls upon leaving bodies fly to heaven; while another, not daring to define the place, is convinced nevertheless that they live to the Lord. What churches would disagree on this one point? Here are the apostle’s words. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be of the same mind; and if you be different in anything, God shall reveal this also to you (Phil. 3:1). 86

This means that for Calvin the most important thing is mutual agreement in certain principles as the absolute truth. Those principles became the basic factors which characterized Christianity. It does not matter when there is a particular difference of unessential things. So Calvin was tolerant of other churches as long as the differences concerned the unessential principles of the Christian faith. It was the basic things which unite the church, the great things, not the small or unessential things. This is what Hesselink called the criteria for unity according to Calvin. According to him:

In fact, Calvin’s list of essential or fundamental doctrines is surprisingly slim. Although he is speaking illustratively, it still may surprise many to learn that the doctrines which ‘are so necessary to know that they should be certain and unquestioned by all men as the proper principles of religion’ are only these: God is one; Christ is God and the Son of God; our salvation rests in God’s mercy; and the like (et similia). 87

This will definitely raise the question about what Calvin meant with “and the like” in the above quotation. The answer was not found in the Institutes, but in a treatise which he wrote as the answer to Joachim Westphal. There Calvin described it as follows:

86 Inst. IV. i. 12.
In regard to the one God and his true and legitimate worship, the corruption of human nature, free salvation, the mode of obtaining justification, the office and power of Christ, repentance and its exercise, faith which, relying on promises of the gospel, gives us assurance of salvation, prayer to God, and other leading articles, the same doctrines are preached by both. We call on one God the Father, trusting to the same Mediator; the same Spirit of adoption is the earnest of our future inheritance. Christ has reconciled us all by the same sacrifice. In that righteousness which he has purchased for us, our minds are at peace, and we glory in the same head. It is strange if Christ, whom we preached as our peace, and who, removing the ground of disagreement, appeased to us our Father in heaven, do not also cause us mutually to cultivate brotherly peace on earth.  

3.1.5. Contextuality and development in Calvin’s ecclesiology

Before summarizing our description of Calvin’s concept of the unity of the church in the Institutes, it is necessary for us to examine the Institutes to find his interaction with the contexts, Rome and the Anabaptists.

Already in the 1536 edition we find Calvin’s reaction toward the Anabaptists, in several subjects of teaching. They related to the law, ecclesiology, judgment of love, discipline, baptism, Holy Communion, office in the state, oath, liturgy, attitude to the government, pacifism, tax and jurisdiction and legal resistance to oppose tyranny. 

Not all these subjects will be discussed. Instead, we will take two subjects in order to prove the purpose of this part. The subjects concerned will be about ecclesiology and church discipline.

a. About the church

In chapter two of the 1536 edition of the Institutes which was entitled Faith, we can find an explanation about the church. The strong impression we get is that Calvin was confronting Rome. However, actually his teaching about the church had a double direction: Rome and the Anabaptists which became his target. In the 1536 edition Calvin’s opposition to Anabaptism was more apologetic. It was a plan on behalf of the evangelicals in France so that they would not be identified with the Anabaptists in Germany. In the later editions Calvin’s exposition is colored by his own experiences with Anabaptists. There are two points we could mention in relation with it:

1. Calvin asserted that it would not be possible that the church could be so perfect at that time. This was stressed in relation to spiritualism and subjectivism in Rome and the Anabaptist groups. Therefore, it should need an order and office of the minister in the church. Consequently, he showed prominently the invisible dimension and hidden aspect of the church and also the nature of the church as one. But more than Luther, he added predestination and the glory of God.

First we believe the holy catholic church – that is the whole number of the elect, whether angels or men (Eph.1:9-10;Col.1:16), whether dead or still living, in whatever lands they live, or wherever among the nations they have been scattered – to be one church and society and one people of God. …Consequently, the Lord when he calls his own, justifies and glorifies his


89 Balke, Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals, p. 48-70.
own, is declaring nothing but his eternal election, by which he had destined them to this end before they were born. Therefore no one will ever enter into the glory of the heavenly Kingdom, who has not been called in this manner, and justified, and seeing that without any exception the Lord in this manner sets forth and manifests his election in all men who He has chosen.90

2. He asserted that there could not be two or three churches since the church was catholic and universal, one body with Christ as the head, to be one congregation of God where Christ is the good shepherd, a unity of believers. From this we start to have a clear picture of Calvin’s firmness in refusing all sectarian tendencies.

Now this society is catholic, that is, universal, because there could not be two or three churches. But all God’s elect are so united and conjoint in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:22-23) that, as they are dependent on one Head, they also grow together into one body, being joined and knit together (cf. Eph. 4:16) as are the limbs of one body (Romans 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12,27).91

If we look up the Institutes of 1539, Calvin did not forsake this view. However, there was a new dimension which he put forward: the visible dimension of the church. About the visible dimension of the church he commented in two points:

1. The idea of the unity of the church: that the unity of the church should be manifested in the visible church. While the traditional church was in ruin and has become an ecclesia deformata and the Anabaptists boasted that they had the ecclesia perfecta and tended to be exclusive, for Calvin it was always necessary to preserve the unity of the church. By quoting Cyprian that “there is no salvation outside the church” and Augustine who differentiated between “I believe in the church” and “I believe the church” he said that the truth was “I believe the church”. It means that we are aware of our fundamental basis that we believe the church as our faith that we are also members of the church. The basis on which we believe the church is that we are fully convinced that we are members of it.92 Therefore, to withdraw from the community of the church is an inconsistency. Claiming that we believe the church means we have to participate actively in the church.

2. The idea of the church as mother of all believers was meant to assert that it is necessary for every believer to be a church member. He said:

It is important for us to know what benefit we shall gain from this. The basis on which we believe the church is that we are fully convinced we are members of it. In this way our salvation rests upon sure and firm supports, so that, even if the whole fabric of the world were overthrown, the church could neither totter nor fall. First, it stands by God’s election, and cannot waver or fail any more than his eternal providence can. Secondly, it has in a way been joined to the steadfastness of Christ, who will no more allow his believers to be estranged from him than that his members be rent and torn asunder. Besides, we are certain that while we remain within the bosom of the church, the truth will always abide with us. Finally, we feel that these promises apply to us: “there will be salvation in Zion” (Joel 2:32; Obadiah 17, cf. Vg).93

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91 Idem, p. 58.
With this idea Calvin wanted to oppose the tendency of the Anabaptists to walk out from the church and build up a new church consisting of holy, perfect men.

b. About discipline
In the 1536 edition, Calvin commented that the intention of applying discipline in the church is:

> To commit to God’s hand, commend them to His goodness… We must bear with one another in mutual equity and patience and nourish peace and love, not stupidly bursting into God’s more secret judgments.  

Since the fall of Adam man is not perfect. As such he needs to be orderly, organized by law and reprimanded for mistakes. The application of discipline basically is a pastoral action, not rigorism. Discipline should be applied without rigorism or violence. The Anabaptists refused all kinds of violence but in their conception of discipline they were rigoristic. Calvin pleaded always for moderation and a pastoral attitude in discipline. The church members who are excommunicated should be guided to have better attitude.

The thought concerning human limitedness and the imperfection of the church (ecclesia imperfecta) has impressively appeared in the 1539 edition as Calvin’s reaction towards the Anabaptists. Therefore discipline is absolutely necessary. He persistently refused the perfectionism and rigorism embodied in the Anabaptists’ point of view.

The next edition of 1543 showed another development. Here Calvin pointed out the place where discipline could be applied. According to Calvin the implementation of discipline could be applied in an ecclesiastical institution like a consistory. For Calvin discipline was so important that he considered it as one of the essential elements of the church. Practically, he organized the church and the Genevan society by applying a strict discipline, which caused his exile from Geneva to Strasburg.

It is obvious that the Anabaptists were quite a significant challenge for Calvin. Most of his doctrines were related to the wrong teaching of the Anabaptists. So we could say that on the one hand Calvin confronted Rome and on the other hand the Anabaptists. It is true that Calvin strongly stressed the unity of the church and struggled for that because of his opponents. His struggle towards the unity of the church occurred as a war in two battlefields.

In sum, what we can conclude from all the above explanation is that:

1. It was very obvious that the unity of the church became the main focus of attention in Calvin’s ecclesiology. From the first to the last edition, the unity of the church has always been the highlight and was emphasized. It has proved, by the prominent accentuation of the catholicity and universality of the church, to be the first thing which should be understood in the understanding of the church.

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2. The core of the unity of the church according to Calvin was not unity in organization and church order but spiritual unity. What he referred to was the unity in and because of Christ, the unity in the basic Christian faith and the true doctrine; which can be called the criteria of the unity; the unity in mutual acknowledgment and acceptance as churches which perform the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. These are the principal and fundamental elements of the unity. This kind of unity should be apparent in the visible church. Although various structures are possible, also differences concerning unessential matters are possible.

3. We can see how necessary the unity of the church was for Calvin, so he strongly refused the tendency of schism. In this manner, he related the unity to other principles in the explanation of the sacraments, discipline and offices. These three subjects were all for the sake of unity.

3.2. The unity of the church in Calvin’s other writings

After having analyzed the Institutes, we go further into the other writings of Calvin to see how Calvin described the unity of the church, such as his commentaries, letters, sermons, his reply to Sadoleto, and catechisms. We can do this only in a limited way, so we can give only some examples. Out of the commentaries we can refer only to those on texts in which the unity of the church is explained. In the letters also we limit consideration to those where Calvin has explicitly discussed the subject of the unity of the church. The whole reply to Sadoleto is a flaming protest against Sadoleto’s accusation of schismatism. In his catechism and sermons we learn how important the unity of church was to Calvin, and how sharply he instructed his people in this topic.

3.2.1. Commentaries

The relation between the Institutes and Calvin’s commentaries is essentially close. Therefore, the scholars strongly recommend reading the Institutes and the commentaries simultaneously. The commentaries of both the Old and New Testaments were an important work of Calvin and could not be neglected in the effort to deeply explore his thought. Taking into consideration that we have to limit ourselves, we will take some texts from the Old and the New Testaments as a representation.

1. We start with Calvin’s first commentary on Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, chapter 12, which contains general rules for the Christian life. Calvin is following Paul in his exhortation to all believers to be one body. “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office. So we who are many are one body in Christ and severally members of one of another” (Rom. 12:4). He comments:

…For we are called for this end, that we may unite together in one body, since Christ has ordained a fellowship and connection between the faithful similar to that which exists between the members of the human body; and as men could not themselves come together into such a union, he himself becomes the bond of this connection. As then the case is with the human body, so it ought to be with the society of the faithful. By applying this similitude he proves how necessary it is for each to consider what is suitable to his own nature, capacity, and vocation. But though this similitude has various parts, it is yet to be chiefly thus applied to our present subject, - that as the members of the same body have distinct offices, and all of them are distinct, for no member possesses all powers, nor does it appropriate to itself the offices of
others; so God has distributed various gifts to us, by which diversity he has determined the order which he would have to be observed among us, so that every one is to conduct himself according to the measure of his capacity, and not to thrust himself into what peculiarly belongs to others; nor is any one to seek to have all things himself, but to be content with his lot, and willingly to abstain from usurping the offices of others. When, however, he points out in express words the communion which is between us, he at the same time intimates, how much diligence there ought to be in all, so that they may contribute to the common good of the body according to the faculties they possess. 96

Here emerges a basic image for the conception of the unity which is as important for Paul as for Calvin in all his writings.

2. It is interesting that from what Calvin is teaching in his commentary on Isaiah (1551), we learn that there is a principle issue which became the basis and bond for unity. Then here it is asserted that the sense of it is the truth of the Word of God. And about the Word, there is no plurality in it. That is an absolute condition. “In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; one shall be called, the city of destruction.” (Isaiah 19:18). Since for Calvin:

This ought to be carefully observed, that we may understand what is the true method of agreement. We must by all means seek harmony, but we must see on what conditions we obtain it; for we must not seek any middle course, as is done by those who overturn religion, and yet who wish to be regarded as peace makers. Away with such fickle and changeful tongues. Let the truth itself be preserved, which cannot be contained but in the word. Whosoever shall determine to agree to it, let him talk with us, but away with everyone who shall corrupt it, choose what language he may. Let us abide firmly by this. It will therefore be impossible for Egyptians to speak the language of Canaan till they have first relinquished their own language, that is, till they have relinquished all superstitions. 97

3. In the church the plurality or variety in religious ritual ceremony could be seen, for instance. Such variety could be tolerated since it does not deal with essential matters which become the bond or basis for unity. As such, plurality cannot be taken as a reason of schism. Plurality should be regarded respectfully in unity. Calvin said this when he interpreted Mathew 9:14 in his commentary on the harmony of the Gospels (1555). “Then came to him the disciple of John, saying, why do we and the Pharisees fast but thy disciples fast not”:

We must especially beware that the consensus of the faithful is not split over an issue of external ceremony, and so the bond of charity is broken. Practically all of us labor under the affliction of attributing to the rites and worldly elements far more than they deserve (cf. Paul, Col. 2:8 and Gal. 4:9). Thus they have no hesitation in setting the first rudiments to a great extent above the highest perfection. Gloom and prudery bring another evil in their train, then individuals compel the whole world to follow their example. If we find something to our liking, we immediately desire it to be put into the Law, that others may live by our judgment. When we read that John’s disciples were ensnared in the coils of Satan, let us first learn that

97 W. Pringle, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah by John Calvin, Grand Rapids, 1955, p. 70.

It is an important statement that the unity is not based on secondary matters but in the heart of the doctrine of Christ. Christ is basic for unity. This means that faith in Christ is also a fundamental element for unity. So in this faith in Christ all Christians must be same.

4. Impressive are Calvin’s remarks on schism, which are totally in line with abhorrence of schismaticism. “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Mathew 24:28).

Whereas the carcass is. The meaning is: by whatever methods Satan tries to scatter the children of God, this way and that, in Christ is found the holy bond of unity (sacrum unitatis vinculum) by which they should hold together. Real dispersion occurs when many drift away from Christ, in whom alone we have firm ground. This means is prescribed for fostering a holy union (fovendae sanctae coniunctionis) to prevent the separations of error tearing the Body of the Church; we must stay firm in Christ. Note carefully: it is not to the primacy of the Roman see nor to any other silliness that Christ ties us down, but the binding of His Church is of this kind alone, that all men everywhere should regard Him as their only Head. It follows that whoever adhere to Him as their only Head. It follows that whoever adhere to Him in pure faith are beyond the danger of schism.\footnote{D.W. Torrance & T.F. Torrance (eds.), Calvin’s Commentaries, Vol.3: A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke & the Epistles of James & Jude, Grand Rapids, 1972, p. 91-92; CO 45, 665.}

Schism is the fruit of Satan’s work since the schismatics persistently put in effort to separate God’s children. But Christ himself is the holy bond, the best way to promote the holy unity which unites the broken church, since He is the only head. Being united by Christ with the genuine faith, we will avoid the threat of schism.

5. Psalm 133 is a lovely poem of the strong relation between love and unity. Calvin expounded in his commentary on the Psalms (1557) how the blessing of God is connected with brotherly love. “As the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commended the blessing, even life for evermore.’’(Psalm 133:3). Calvin interpreted it as below:

Let us then, as much as lies in us, study to walk in brotherly love, that we may secure the divine blessing. Let us even stretch out our arm to those who differ from us, desiring to bid them welcome if they will but return to the unity of the faith. Do they refuse? Then let them go. We recognize no brotherhood, as I have said, except amongst the children of God.\footnote{J. Anderson (transl.), Commentary on the Book of Psalms by John Calvin, Grand Rapids, 1949, p. 166; CO 32, 355.}

Brotherly love was regarded as a life atmosphere which could give God’s blessing. As such, it is our call to \textit{stretch out our arm}, to invite those who differ from us to return to
the unity of faith. The brotherly love should be manifested within the children of God. It is as desired by God.

6. For Calvin the unity of the church has nothing to do with an in-crowd. The harmony of love has an opening and a kind of invitation to all. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133:1). Calvin interpreted this text as follows:

There can at the same time be no doubt that the Holy Ghost is to be viewed as commending in this passage that mutual harmony which should subsist amongst all God’s children, and exhorting us to make every endeavor to maintain it. So long as animosities divide is, and heart-burnings prevail among us, we may be brethren no doubt still by common relation to God, but cannot be judged one so long as we present the appearance of a broken and dismembered body. As we are one in God the Father, and in Christ, the union must be ratified amongst is by reciprocal harmony, and fraternal love. Should it so happen in the providence of God, that the Papists should return to that holy concord which they have apostatized from, it would be in such terms as these that we would be called to render thanksgiving unto God, and in the meantime we are bound to received into our brotherly embrace all such as cheerfully submit themselves to the Lord.\(^{101}\)

When we look up these particular texts, then some main points of view will arise. For instance: the variety of gifts is intended for the unity, the truth of the Word is the basis for unity, the unity means to respect plurality, Christ is the bond of unity in the church, the unity which is desirable for God, unity means living in harmony. The above six texts are expected to represent the texts taken by Calvin to affirm the unity of the church in his commentaries. Accordingly, essentially what he has mentioned in the Institutes could also be found in his commentaries.\(^{102}\)

3.2.2. Sermons

What is no less important and essential to be discussed here is Calvin’s sermons. For his sermon was the important element in his ministry as the minister of the Word. He regarded the sermon as the medium to build the congregation’s life. As described by Hesselink:

Calvin conceived of himself first of all as a minister of the Word. Preaching was one of his major concerns and activities, for he was convinced that it is by preaching of the Gospel that God forms, builds and rules his church.\(^{103}\)

Edwin Dargan described Calvin as a minister who was clear, vigorous and pointed, without ornament, but chastely and severely elegant. Even he came to a conclusion that, ‘And so, though the highest qualities of oratory found no place in Calvin’s

\(^{101}\) Anderson (transl.), *Commentary on the Book of Psalms by John Calvin*, p. 164; CO 32, 353.

\(^{102}\) His opinion that the sinner in the church will not be a threat to the unity, that unity alone is safety, and that present disunity need not discourage, can be found in his commentaries on Psalm 26:5; 122:3, and Isaiah 18:7; see L.R. de Koster, *Living Themes in the Thought of John Calvin*, Michigan, 1964, p. 360-362.

preaching, the power of his thought, the force of his will, the excellence of his style, and, above all, the earnestness with which he made the truth of God shine forth in his words made him a great preacher and deeply impressed on his hearers the great verities of the Christian faith. 104

One of Calvin’s sermons which will be described here is the sermon about the church based on Eph 4:1-5. 105 In this sermon, he brought out several ideas about unity. Firstly he spoke about the satanic power. He requests the congregation as church to be careful against the satanic powers which showed their face boastfully, which could be apparent in every believer. When this attitude emerges, schism will definitely occur in the church which is the fellowship of the children of God. To avoid such a tendency, then, modesty, gentleness and patience becomes very important. This attitude will enable the acceptance to all brothers and sisters in the church fellowship. 106 Moreover, it was said that modesty would make us become open-minded to all our brothers and sisters and accept them, since we also need their help. Therefore, mutual assistance among brothers and sisters in the fellowship of the church will enable the church to survive. 107 Besides, as for Paul, according to Calvin, we have to keep the unity of the Spirit consistently by a peaceful bond, since the unity of Spirit is the essential element for the church as the flock of God’s sheep. The unity of Spirit is remarkably important since if we are not united then we will be definitely estranged from God. 108

Thus, it was said that it is Christ who rules the church, according to Calvin. As such, the church under the rule of Christ is obliged to be united, since Christ is not divided. The church has to be united like the fingers in one hand. Despite many different interpretations, it is very human. Even though we are in a different line, we could stay together. 109 Those are important points in this sermon.

3.2.3. Letters

But perhaps the most rewarding study is the reading of Calvin’s extensive correspondence. Here theory and practice come into a close conjunction with each other. Here Calvin is seen in day-to-day action in the interests of the church. Here he reveals himself with a minimum of formality and self-consciousness, and hence in a peculiarly true fashion. Here, too, his broad contacts with all sorts of people are seen. 110

Through this principle assertion by Kromminga we learn how important the source of Calvin’s correspondence is for his thought about the unity of the church. Nijenhuis especially focused on Calvin’s letters which are relevant to the unity of the church. As

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105 The text has been translated into Dutch and completely published in J. Douma and W.H. van der Vegt (transl.), Het gepredikte Woord, Preken van Johannes Calvijn, Preken over de kerk, Franeker, 1941, p. 121-139. English transl. in: John Calvin Sermons on The Epistle to the Ephesians, Edinburgh/Carlisle/Pennsylvania, repr. 1975, p. 317-332.
106 Douma and van der Vegt, Het gepredikte Woord, p. 121-122.
107 Idem, p. 125.
108 “Indien wij dus niet een zijn met elkander, zijn wij van God vreemd”, see Douma and van der Vegt, Het gepredikte Woord, p. 129.
110 Kromminga, “Calvin and Ecumenicity”, p. 150.
the outcome of his research, Nijenhuis discovered the actual theological basis of Calvin’s ecumenical effort which is reflected in his letters. However, in addition to it, the ecclesiastical and political issues during that period have also colored the enrichment of Calvin ecumenicity. He concluded that:

Calvin’s ecumenical activities had their foundation in the first place in his ecclesiology, in the second place in the ecclesiological and political circumstances of his time. In his ecclesiology he made a distinction between the visible and invisible church. In his dealing with both of these aspects he emphasized the unity of the church. Starting from the actual unity the church had in Christ its Head, he tried to promote a visible union between the various churches of the Reformation. His doctrine of the church was a definition against the Roman ecclesiology on the one hand and again the sects on the other.\footnote{Nijenhuis, \textit{Calvinus Oecumenicus}, p. 275-308.}

From his letters, we will take three of them as representative, which reflect explicitly Calvin’s opinion and endeavor in relation with the unity of the church.\footnote{Idem, p. 313.} Those three letters were the letters to Bullinger, Farel and the Reformed church in France. In his letter to Bullinger he said:

We see indeed of how much importance that is, not only on our own account, but for the sake of the whole body of professing Christians everywhere, that all those on whom the Lord has laid any personal charge in the ordering of his Church, should agree together in a sincere and cordial understanding. Indeed Satan himself perceives that very clearly, who while he plots, by every method he can devise, the ruin of Christ’s kingdom, plies no more earnestly with all his might, than to sow division and discord among us, or somehow at least to estrange the one from the other. For that very reason, therefore, it is our duty to oppose these sort of devices; and the more our adversary strives to rend asunder our connection, so much the more ought we to strive against him with more determined resolution and intense anxiety to cherish and uphold it. Since, therefore, it is our duty carefully to cultivate friendly fellowship with all the ministers of Christ, so we must need also endeavor by all the means we can, the churches to which we faithfully minister the word of the Lord may agree among themselves.\footnote{The famous letter to Thomas Cranmer will not be discussed again, since it has already been frequently mentioned.}

In this letter, Calvin saw that unity is a mandate entrusted by God to every church minister. It is a danger that Satan persists to divide Christ’s kingdom. It is the duty and responsibility of the church minister to oppose the efforts of Satan by any means. One of the ways is to keep the fellowship among the ministers themselves by persistently trying to be in line with the righteousness of God’s Word.

To Farel, he affirmed that schism should not exist because of doctrinal differences on inessential matters. The unity should be maintained despite the plurality in certain doctrines. Some divergence in doctrine is permissible. The most important and fundamental is the ministry of God’s Word and the sacraments, which has achieved the main place in the teaching and practice of ecclesiastical life. Such thoughts were put in his letter below:

\footnote{J. Bonnet, \textit{Letters of John Calvin}, New York, 1972, p. 113; written in March 1539.}
We do not slacken our endeavor, and continue to cry incessantly for a conference until it shall have been obtained … This, in brief, was the sum of our discussion; that among Christians there ought to be so great a dislike of schism, as that they may always avoid it so far as lies in their power. That there ought to prevail among them such a reverence for the ministry of the word and of the sacraments, that wherever they perceive these things to be, there they may consider the Church to exist. Whenever therefore it happens, by the Lord’s permission, that the Church is administered by pastors, whatever kind of persons they may be, if we see there the marks of the Church, it will be better not to break the unity. No need it to be any hindrance that some points of doctrine are not quite so pure, seeing that there is scarcely any Church which does not retain some remnants of former ignorance. It is sufficient for us if the doctrine on which the church of God is founded be recognized, and maintain its place. Nor should it prove any obstacle, that he ought not to be reckoned a lawful pastor who shall not only have fraudulently insinuated himself into the office of a true minister, but shall have wickedly usurped it. For there is no reason why every private person should mix himself up with these scruples. The Sacraments are the means of communion with the Church...

The third letter was written to the Reformed churches in France in December 1560, several years before he died. In this letter he had the opinion that to be able to stop schism in Christendom, it was necessary to hold a universal and free council. Such council had the function to appease the disputes incurred in Christendom, simply for the sake of the unity,

To put an end to the divisions which exist in Christendom, it is necessary to have a free and universal council. Now it would not be enough to hold a council, unless it were to be universal; that it to say, if the object of it were not to appease all the troubles of Christendom. …"Wherefore, it is indispensably necessary that those who demand a reformation, should accept the council which will be held, in order that all Christendom may be united, or that those who shall be unwilling to range themselves under the banners of unity and concord be declared and held for schismatic”, Calvin said.

The council was the place to determine the agreement for unity and also gave an opportunity for those who had the tendency of being schismatic to realize their deviation.

3.2.4. Reply to Sadoleto

In March 1539, Cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto, bishop of Carpentras in the southern part of France, wrote a letter to the city council and the whole Genevan community. The intention of this letter was to require them to return to the authority of the Roman pope. It was replied to by Calvin in order to protect and keep the Genevans within the reformation.

Sadoleto was a renaissance humanist and represented reformed Catholicism. Already in 1537 Sadoleto had directed a friendly letter to Melanchthon with the obvious intention to change his mind, and later on a similar letter to John Sturm in Strasbourg. Recent historians are hesitating in their judgment: these initiatives of Sadoleto, are they a whim of naivety or an expression of a carefully planned policy? It

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115 Idem, p. 101-102; written in October 1538.
116 Idem, p. 158-160; written in December 1560.
is certain that the renaissance humanist Sadoleto never reached a real understanding of the reformed theology. His reform proposals stick fast in a personal change. There was no opening toward a biblical reformation required by the church as such. His goal was to gain the evangelicals and bring them back under the roman and papal jurisdiction. This goal is very clear in his letter to Geneva. In a polemic form he derives his arguments from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, culminating in his accusation that the doctrine of justification sola fide was formulated to undermine all morality and as experience learns, to stir up rebellion. Sadoleto tried to plea the Genevans as victims of the seduction of some ungodly man, enemies of Christian concord and peace. The reformers are condemned as schismatic innovators.

If we notice carefully the content of Calvin’s letter replying to Sadoleto, then such a letter contained Calvin’s idea about the church and the unity of the church. The main issues which were disputed by them were the statement about the church and its authority, and the doctrine about justification by faith. According to Colin, in approaching these two issues, their temperament played a great role. And they reflect too the temperaments and personal histories of the men who wrote them. Sadoleto’s letter has an irenic approach, an emphasis on the unity and peace of the church highly characteristics of the Christian humanism he represented. Calvin’s reply is in part a personal defense, an *apologia pro vita sua*, that records his own religious experience. Colin overlooked the fact that both man were thoroughly trained in humanism and that Sadoleto used his polished Latin to get Geneva back in the Roman camp and that the reformers were sharply accused of schismatism and revolutionary rioting. In an even more splendid Latin Calvin rejected all their accusations and revealed his true ecumenical spirit. In reforming the church Calvin is building the unity of the church.

Sadoleto brought forward some points: the supremacy of *caritas* in obtaining eternal life; the authority of the church before God’s judgment seat; exhortation and conclusion. Calvin treated the purpose of writing the letters; the basis of inquiry, the basis of the question raised by Sadoleto; doctrine; discipline; personal summons before God’s judgment seat and Sadoleto’s accusation of heresy and schism; refutation of Sadoleto’s accusation of avarice and ambition; summary; prayer for unity. But his main topic was his definition of a sect. Calvin said we are offended by two sects: Rome and the Radicals. They had both one thing in common: they loose the holy bond (*sacer nexus*) between Word and Spirit. Both factions boasted of being in possession of the Holy Spirit, but they set aside the authority of the Word of God. Calvin affirmed that what he and his friends had done was not based on personal ambition, but simply based on what he called, *illus vocatus fui*. He was certain that all his activities were because of God’s vocation. Such vocation he implemented in his practical ministry as doctor and pastor.  

Calvin had the wish to draw out of the Scriptures the right understanding about the church. So, when Sadoleto said that the church under papal authority is the only right church, as the infallible church since it is led by the Spirit of Christ, as an advocate in law Calvin apologetically replied: “Where is the Word of God in this, that most eminent sign which the Lord himself so often commend to us when he designates the church?” As for Calvin, a church which is catholic, is founded on the Word of God alone.

In such context, he described the catholicity of the church as referring to unity and also described the church as the mother of the believers. We can see Calvin is taking the same position as in the Institutes when he stresses that away from her bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation, as Isaiah testified. As quoted by Reid he said:

Now if you can bear to receive a truer definition of the church than your own, say in the future that it is the society of all the saints which, spread over all the world and existing in all ages, yet bound together by the doctrine and the one Spirit of Christ, cultivates and observes unity of faith and brotherly concord. With the church we deny that we have any disagreement. Rather, as we revere here as our mother, so we desire to remain in her bosom.

It should be noted here that he repeatedly mentioned what he has affirmed in the Institutes and commentaries that Christ is the unifying binder. For him, the unity in faith and mutual agreement is the cornerstone for his ecclesiology. Sadoleto accused Calvin and his companions as heretics, extremists, instigators of factions, sects and rebellion. He called them “enemies of Christian unity and peace, innovators or modernists”. In responding to Sadoleto, Calvin expressed his hatred of schism by giving a strong biblical statement: “the most rude violence is the fact that we are trying to tear the bride of Christ, i.e., the church”.

It is interesting to see that although Calvin was in the midst of a situation of sharp conflict, he ended his letter by praying for Sadoleto, his party and for the unity of the church.

The Lord grant, Sadoleto, that you and all your party may at length perceive, that the only true bond of ecclesiastical unity would exist if Christ the Lord, who hath reconciled us to God the Father, were to gather us out of our present dispersion into the fellowship of His body, that so, through His one Word and Spirit, we might join together with one heart and one soul.

3.3. Conclusion

The conclusion we can take is that in almost all kinds of Calvin’s works, the unity of the church becomes the important highlight when he was speaking about the church. The continuity of thought and the relation of one part of the content to the others are

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121 Idem, p. 164.
122 Inst. IV. 4.
124 W. Balke, Omgang met de Reformatoren, Kampen, 1992, p. 133.
125 Olin, The Reformation Debate, p. 94.
the undeniable facts. The whole of Calvin’s work shows the unity of unanimous and integrated thoughts. Although what we have done is only a selection we are convinced that these texts are representative of Calvin’s thought.

In addition to their relationship, we could also notice that Calvin was trying to be consistent in his thought. His thought in the Institutes was persistently maintained in the other works. There is no disagreement between the concept of the previous and latter works, we can only draw attention to a continuous debate with his opponents, and each extension is to be seen as a further enrichment of his view. It is clear how important the unity was for Calvin, because in the catechism and liturgy as documents for use in church life he expresses it explicitly. In his Geneva Catechism, Calvin described the unity of the church as follows:

**Question:** You conclude from this that outside the Church there is no salvation, but only damnation and ruin?

**Answer:** Certainly. Those who disrupt from the body of Christ and split its unity into schism, are quite excluded from the hope of salvation, so long as they remain in dissidence of this kind.  

Salvation is not simply a matter of belief in Christ, but about living inside the church as Christ’s body and keeping the unity. To be out and to be estranged from the unity of the church means to estrange ourselves from salvation. Further he said:

To this end, while the consensus of faith still existed and flourished among all, bishops used once to send synodal letters across the sea, with which, as by tokens, they might establish sacred communion between the churches. How much more necessary is it now, in the dreadful devastation of the Christian world, that those churches which worship God rightly, few and dispersed and hedged about by the profane synagogues of Antichrist as they are, should give and receive mutually this sign of holy fellowship, and thereby be incited to that fraternal embrace of which I have spoken? …All the more, then, must we labor to gather by our writings such remains of the Church as may persist or even emerge after our death… What agreement in doctrine our Churches had among themselves cannot be observed with clearer evidence than from catechism.

In this Catechism also, Calvin described the meaning of the words *catholic* and *universal* which are applied to the church. In a question-and-answer form, the teacher asked the disciples: “What is the meaning of the attribute catholic or universal?” The disciple answered: “By it we are taught that, as there is one head of all the faithful, so all ought to unite in one body, so that there may be one church spread throughout the whole earth, and not a number of churches” (Eph. 4:3; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27).

Beside the Catechism, in fact in the liturgy of the Lord’s Supper prepared by Calvin to be used in Geneva, he mentioned the unity of the church. After performing the creed prayers, the minister speaks out loudly on behalf of many people that they all will live and die in Christian teaching and religion. For those who do not live that way, they will suffer excommunication. It was said in the liturgy that

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126 Reid, *Calvin’s Theological Treatises*, p. 104.
127 Idem, p. 99-100.
128 Idem, p. 103.
Therefore, by holding that order, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by his power, I excommunicate all the idolatry, those who are humiliating God, and those who are tending to become sectarian in order to break the unity of Church.¹²⁹

CHAPTER 4

CALVIN’S ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES

An emerging question is how Calvin implemented his vision in practice? The entire chapter is intended to deal with this question. It is obviously apparent that Calvin with the greatest effort was in several ecumenical meetings which were held during that period. Also evident was his participation and role in resolving the conflicts which threatened the integrity of the Christian church, causing separations.

This chapter will particularly draw attention to several ecumenical meetings during Calvin’s lifetime which related to this issue. It is meant to prove that Calvin did not simply theorize but instead he also applied his biblical vision in practice. Such meetings, like those held in Hagenau, Worms and Regensburg and an ecumenical meeting of the reformists’ leaders in Lambeth Palace in London, and Calvin’s proposals, show how important these activities were.

We will also see what Calvin had done in several disputes, which reflected how he was very sensitive to separation and tried hard to avoid it. Calvin was involved in efforts to end the conflicts in Neuchatel and Frankfurt and also the disagreement concerning the Lord’s Supper which resulted in the Consensus Tigurinus. Additionally, his tolerant attitude to various issues, such as the ecclesiastical structure in Poland is part of the evidence.

We will commence with the meetings between Rome and the Protestants in Hagenau, Worms and Regensburg, then a plan of another meeting in Lambeth Palace in London, then the disagreement concerning Holy Communion between Lutherans and Zwinglians following the conflict in Neuchatel and Frankfurt, and we will conclude with reference to Calvin’s tolerant attitude.

4.1. Meetings in Hagenau, Worms and Regensburg

During 1540-1541, there were colloquies between representatives of Rome and the Protestants in Hagenau, Worms and Regensburg. During that time, there was a strained situation between the two parties and the Protestants suggested a church council as a resolution. The Emperor Charles V agreed with such an idea since he needed support from the German princes for the stability of his imperial territory. This invited criticism from the pope that he was too tolerant toward the Protestants. It was notable that he himself was directly involved in the conversations during the meetings.

These meetings were intended to minimize the tension between them, and also expected to reach reconciliation. They were promoted by the emperor. He fully supported those meeting since on the one hand he considered that the tension between these two groups could disturb the security and integrity of his empire, and on the

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other hand he needed the united forces of the German princes to confront the new challenge of the presence of Turkish power besides that of other enemies, such as France.

The meeting in Hagenau was held in June 12 - July 8 1540. The Emperor Charles V requested his brother Prince Ferdinand of Austria to facilitate it. The Protestant princes did not attend this meeting, but they sent several delegations and theologians. The distinguished theologians who attended it were Cruciger, Menius, Brenz, Osiander and Bucer. Melanchthon was not able to come due to illness. Calvin did not join all the programs but sometimes he came from Strasbourg with Capito and Farel. The papalist party was represented by theologians like Eck, Faber and Cochlaeus.

The debates in Hagenau had not touched the main religious issues, but mostly discussed the method, and particularly the subjects which could be put forward as the principle issues to improve the conversation. For the Protestants, the Augsburg Confession was significantly fundamental. Therefore, it became the main subject of the debate. But, they did not reach an agreement. So, the main issue was only procedural.

It was the first time Bucer had met Herman von Wied, Archbishop of Cologne. Also present during that time was the Ambassador of France who tried to get the support of the German Protestant princes in his struggle against the Habsburg supremacy. This development was considerably important to Bucer and Calvin so they seemed very enthusiastic. Unfortunately, this meeting did not produce any of the results expected. The meeting finished on 28 July with the agreement to continue it in Worms.

The meeting in Worms was held from 25 November 1540 to 18 January 1541 as the continuation of the previous meeting in Hagenau. The Emperor Charles V delegated Cardinal Granvelle to represent him and to give the opening speech. From the Protestants in Strasbourg Bucer, Capito, Calvin and John Sturm attended. They arrived in Worms on 1 November. Meanwhile from the German Lutherans Amsdorf, Brenz, Osiannder, Melanchthon and Musculus attended along with several delegations,

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5 H. Eells, Martin Bucer, London, 1931, p. 271-272; Dankbaar noted that according to Calvin, the failure was caused by the change of opinion of the pope who liked war, and even offered 300,000 ducats to the emperor for that purpose. Meanwhile, according to Eck, the discussion had simply strained the relationship of the reformed followers; see Dankbaar, Calvin Djalan Hidup, p. 56.


so the Protestants were represented by twenty-three persons. Calvin participated in the Strasbourg delegation because of his familiarity with the French language.

The basic teaching which was discussed in Worms was the justification by faith, the Holy Mass and the special position of the pope. On these three subjects Calvin also gave his opinion. After a long discussion about the subjects that had to be discussed, they came to an agreement that the Augsburg Confession could be part of the agenda of the meeting. However, Cardinal Granvelle did not agree with this. Nevertheless, Bucer and Capito tried to confer secretly with Gropper from the Roman parties on 15-31 December 1540. The secret discussion resulted in a book which was named the “Regensburg Book”, proposed as the main agenda to be discussed in Regensburg at next meeting. The meeting in Worms was colored with a public debate between Melanchthon and John Eck on 14-17 January about original sin. One day after the debate, Granvelle closed the meeting in Worms.

The meeting in Worms was very important for Calvin since after that he became very precisely informed about all the differences between the parties, and he became aware of the closest information about the political tensions behind them. This all encouraged him to see that it was necessary to take serious measures and steps towards the unity of the church. Additionally through this meeting, there had been the establishment of a close relationship between Calvin and Melanchthon, which was important for the relationship between the Lutheran and Reformed groups in the future.

In addition, for the third time, there was a similar meeting in Regensburg (in French: Ratisbonne), held from 27 April to 22 May 1541. The main material of the discussion was “Book of Regensburg” previously produced. Cardinal Granvelle chaired the meeting while Cardinal Contarini became the official delegate of the pope. He arrived in Regensburg on 12 March, one month earlier, since he was very enthusiastic and optimistic that the meeting could bring out something. He played an important role during the theological debate to represent the Roman party.

The delegates of Rome consisted of John Eck, Gropper and Julius Pflug from Mainz, while the Protestants were represented by Melanchthon, Bucer and Johann Pistorius from Hesse. On Melanchthon’s invitation, Calvin was also present to represent the church of Strasbourg, although during that time he had already been asked to return to Geneva since the situation had changed there and he was needed. He

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10 Eells called it “Worms Articles” as the result of a “secret colloquy” between Bucer and Gropper. The long way of the secret colloquy has even resulted in “Worms Articles” or the “Regensburg Book” as described by Eells in the articles as mentioned above, also in his book about Bucer; see Eells, “The Origins of the Regensburg Book”, p. 355-356; Eells, *Martin Bucer*, p. 280-287. In fact, the secret meeting could be implemented with the full support of the emperor; see Dankbaar, *Calvin Djalan Hidup*, p. 57.
12 Heinz Mackenson discussed the diplomatic role of Gasparo Contarini in two articles which are: “Contarini’s Theological Role at Ratisbon in 1541”, in: *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 2, 1960, p. 36-57; and “Diplomatic Role of Gasparo Contarini of Ratisbon of 1541”, in: *Church History* 27, 1958, p. 312-337; His biography and works can be read in: P. Matheson, *Cardinal Contarini at Regensburg*, Oxford, 1972.
arrived in Regensburg on 10 March and stayed there until 16 June. After that, he returned to Strasbourg to prepare his departure to Geneva.\(^{13}\)

There were several subjects from the Book of Regensburg which were debated during the meeting, i.e. articles about original sin, justification by faith, Holy Communion and about the Church. They agreed on several points about the two first subjects, yet there was still a different vision about the Holy Communion, on which they could not reach an agreement. The dispute about the Holy Communion ended without any resolution, while the dispute about the Church resulted in a deadlock.\(^{14}\)

During that time, there was discussion about a ‘political diet’ which was concluded on 8 June because of negotiation of the war against Turkey. Charles V issued resolutions of the meeting and forced the Protestants to be obedient to the resolutions. However, Luther and the pope, as well as Calvin, disagreed with it. Calvin himself expressed his disagreement in his edition of the “Actes de Ratisbonne”.\(^{15}\)

From the historical record above, it is obvious that the series of the meetings were not attended by all the prominent leaders from the Protestant party. Because of a great suspicion that the meeting would fail, Luther and Bullinger did not attend it. But Calvin, Bucer, Capito, Sturm and Melanchthon were present. Melanchthon represented the Lutherans, while Capito, Bucer, Calvin and Sturm represented the Protestants from Strasbourg. From the Roman side, there were Pighius (a theological doctor) and Cardinal Contarini, Pflug, Gropper and Eck.\(^{16}\) Calvin himself considered this meeting very important, so he postponed his departure to Geneva for the sake of the meeting.\(^{17}\)

As already acknowledged, Bucer was the mentor for Calvin so in many cases Calvin fully respected him. Consequently, Calvin’s role during that meeting was not too significant compared with Bucer and Melanchthon. He did not act as a speaker for the Reformed party. Hesselink mentioned: “Calvin participated but played a minor role, apparently deferring to Bucer, his old friend and colleague in Strasbourg, and Melanchthon, who was the principal Lutheran representative”\(^{18}\).

From his several letters, Calvin showed clearly that although he fully respected these two men, he was very concerned about the formulation they made which sounded ambivalent, seeking simply for a compromise. Calvin was very doubtful about Bucer’s attitude of persistently endeavoring to find a kind of adjustment to the formulation which was already made. The formulation about transubstantiation as a compromise between Bucer and Melanchthon with Rome was considered to be a two-

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\(^{13}\) Nauta, “Godsdienstgesprek te Regensburg”, in: Chrstelijke Encyclopedie, Vol. V, Kampen, 1958, p. 598. Before the meeting in Worms, Bucer has received a letter from Geneva which forced Calvin to return. Bucer replied to it by saying that Calvin was incredibly needed at the meetings. Finally Calvin postponed his return to Geneva; see Eells, Martin Bucer, p. 278.

\(^{14}\) Idem, p. 598.

\(^{15}\) Idem, p. 598.

\(^{16}\) Bratt, “John Calvin and Ecumenicity”, p. 18.

\(^{17}\) Dankbaar, Calvin Djalan Hidup, p. 185; cf. T.H.L. Parker, Calvin. An Introduction of His Thought, Westminster, 1995, p. 79.

faced formulation.\textsuperscript{19} Through his letter it could also be seen that Calvin was quite disappointed because there were three meetings in three places but all failed. Apparently the factors that caused the failures were not the leaders who attended the meetings, instead, these meetings as an effort to unite the separating parties, could not succeed because the political power in the background prevented their success.\textsuperscript{20}

Calvin’s attitude was very clear in his writing on the “Actes de Ratisbonne”, as follows:

There are many holy persons in all nations, true lovers of the truth of God and desirous of the advancement of his kingdom. They wait from day to day for the time when the Lord will be pleased to set his church in order again, and have their ears open listening continuously for news that some overture has been made for putting the church in a better state. But there are also many weak people throughout the world, who dare not decide what path they must follow until there is a reformation brought about by the combined authority of those to whom God has given the rule and government of Christendom. I thought therefore that it would be a useful task, and one profitable for all Christians, to set in order the sum of what has lately been treated of amongst all the States of the Empire at the Conference of Ratisbonne, touching differences in Religion. My purpose is that the former may have reason to be comforted and to rejoice in our Lord, seeing that the truth of the Gospels, though assailed by the devil, has not been suppressed and vanquished, but rather set forward; and that the latter may realize, from the proceedings which took place there, that it is time wasted to rely upon men, as they will easily see; and that they may accept the light of God when it is offered to them, without looking this way and that to see which way the wind is blowing.\textsuperscript{21}

It is evident here that Calvin saw that the essence of the Christian faith was being threatened by a political power in the conference at Regensburg. What is necessary is to have a certain attitude on the differences in religious life, not to sharpen it but to approach it. The suitable approach to this plurality should be viewed in the light of what is the essence of Christian faith, which is the righteousness of the Gospel. In other words, to return to the essence of the Christian faith is the best way to reconcile the dispute. In this sense, our willingness to receive the light from God should be beyond the obedience to any human. And it should be incurred during the conference.

To comment on it, Cadier said: “this passage takes us back to the situation of those times, the situation of men with their ears open, ready to receive any overture made to them in the interests of the Gospel, but at the same time entertaining no false hope”.\textsuperscript{22}

It is clearly evident that Calvin was consistent to his principle that the church as dominated by the pope was on the wrong way. However, the interesting thing was Calvin’s approach to the Catholics. He approached them not in a confrontation, but with a pastoral care. He invited them to look up the genuineness of the teaching which is based on the righteousness of the Gospel, and refrain from human interest. Hesselink mentioned that Calvin polemicized issues with a pastoral nuance. He consistently attacked the papalist party on the doctrinal level by putting forward the

\textsuperscript{19} Dankbaar, \textit{Calvin Djalan Hidup}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{20} Hesselink, “Calvinus Oecumenicus”, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{21} Hesselink, “Calvinus Oecumenicus”, p. 105; see also Cadier, “Calvin and the Union of the Church”, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{22} Cadier, “Calvin and the Union of the Church”, p. 122.
existential situation as the starting point. In other words, “despite his antipathy to the ‘papists’ and his irritation with their attacks against Protestants, Calvin did not resort to continual anti-Roman polemics. He had more important and more constructive things to do.”

In fact, in his preface, Calvin considered those meetings were beyond their expectations. Nevertheless he persisted to partake in them since, for him, there was still the possibility that experimental steps towards reconciliation could be taken. As clearly apparent in his letter to Farel sometime after the meeting, he said it was difficult to reach agreement between the papalists and the Protestants about fundamental teaching like justification by faith, the church and its authority and the Holy Communion. Calvin absolutely did not intend to compromise in these matters. In this relation John Bratt noted the following interesting point:

Calvin attended with some misgivings and little optimism since, in his estimation, Pflug and Gropper were poor theologians and Eck was theatrical and impertinent and would “spoil all by his officious meddling”. The temperature of Calvin’s anticipations fluctuated. He wrote in March of 1541, “Although scant, there is however the hope of doing somewhat”, but a month later he said, “If anything very desirable shall be attained, it will fall out beyond all my expectation” and furthermore, “I do not indeed despair but when I begin to hope then I remember what took place at Worms.”

Meanwhile, Bucer and Melanchthon seemed quite flexible during the discussion about the Lord’s Supper and tended to compromise their formulations, as was seen in the effort to combine those two teaching into one. Although Calvin respected their effort he was disappointed about it. According to Stanford Reid:

In the discussion which took place, apparently Bucer and Melanchthon tended at times to compromise. They drew up a statement on the Lord’s Supper which could have both a Protestant and a Catholic interpretation. Calvin appreciated that they wished to take this action to aid Christ’s Kingdom. But said, he, “this policy does not please me”. They were not clearing up the difficulty but rather increasing it. To Calvin there could not be compromise with the Mass, for it was plainly opposed to the teachings of the Scripture. There could not be unity where such a basic division existed.

The objective of those three meetings, as expected by the emperor was not achieved. Reconciliation of religion and stability in the nation had not yet become reality. However, we noted that Calvin yearned for a church which could be reconciled and united although his yearning was beyond the reality. A reconciled church according to Calvin was a church which put the truth of the Gospel above obedience to man.

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4.2. Planning for an Ecumenical Meeting in Lambeth Palace in London

Having observed the distinctions which existed in the Protestant camp which could lead to schism, in 1552 Archbishop Thomas Cranmer from Canterbury suggested holding an international congress, intended for Protestants particularly. He was in full expectation that in this congress the existing division of opinion about the Holy Communion could be united, meanwhile at the same time the Trent Council had issued a resolution that the things which were used during the Eucharist should be worshiped. Even, according to him, if it was necessary, they could prepare a creed which was acceptable to all Protestants.

His intention was put in his letter which was addressed to Bullinger, Calvin and Melanchthon. In this letter he reiterated that they should organize a conference in England or somewhere else. According to him, King Edward VI has promised to give official support if the conference took place in England, in Lambeth Palace. Cranmer wished that all the key persons in Protestantism could be present, especially Lutheran theologians like Brenz because he had a different concept about the Holy Communion.\(^\text{27}\)

Calvin also, like Melanchthon and Bullinger, was very enthusiastic about such planning. In his reply to Cranmer, he gave his support which was expressed as follows:

> I wish indeed it could be brought about that men of learning and authority from the different Churches might meet somewhere and, after thoroughly discussing the different articles of faith, should, by unanimous decision, hand down to posterity some certain rule of faith…. As, to myself, if I should be thought of any use, I would not, if need be, object to cross ten seas for such a purpose. If the assisting of England were alone concerned, that would be motive enough for me. Much more, therefore, am I of opinion that I ought to grudge no labor or trouble, seeing that the object in view is an agreement among the learned, to be drawn up by the weight of their authority according to Scripture, in order to unite widely severed Churches.\(^\text{28}\)

History recorded that this planning was not fulfilled. The death of King Edward VI and the rise to the throne of his sister, “bloody Mary” which brought about the death of Cranmer himself as a martyr, destroyed these plans. Nevertheless, history also noted the incredible enthusiasm from Calvin to support all efforts and initiatives from anybody who intended to unite the church and to defend the Reformed faith.

Perhaps we will raise question, what was the result of all Calvin’s efforts? In this relation, it is necessary to underline what Hesselink quoted from the distinguished Lutheran historian Karl Holl, that many Reformation history experts were in accordance in judging that Calvin saved Europe for the Reformation.

For more than the German Reformers Calvin lived for the common interest of Protestantism. …His involvement in the whole movement takes place in an age when the question was


whether the Reformation would be able to maintain its international position. …One must
count it extremely fortunate (ein hohes Glück) for Protestantism that Calvin entered the scene
at this time. His intervention meant above all two things: decisiveness and organization.
Thereby he saved the Reformation from extinction.  

4.3. The Consensus Tigurinus

The reformation of Calvin had faced a great defiance from the papalists and the
Radical Anabaptists, but in fact, the internal defiance was no less significant since it
almost broke the integrity of reformation. It came from the different opinions about the
presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, between Luther and his followers in
Wittenberg and Zwingli (and his successor Bullinger) and his followers in Zurich. The
polemic of this issue had actually emerged already in 1529 where a solution was
endeavored in Marburg.  

Tension between the two parties was sharpened when in 1544 Luther published
his writing about the Lord’s Supper which was entitled, Kurzes Bekenntnis vom
heiligen Sacrament wider Schwenckfeld und die Schweizer. Zurich responded to
Luther’s writing with a confession entitled, Wahrhaftes Bekenntnis der Diener der
Kirche zu Zürich. Apparently the difference of opinion was so critical that it was felt
too difficult to reconcile it immediately, or in the very near future.

The main problem was the statement about the presence of Christ in the Holy
Communion. Is bread and wine the materialization of Christ’s actual presence in the
Holy Communion? Luther and his followers claimed that the teaching from the
papalists should be rejected. Consequently, he refused the teaching of
transubstantiation which was taught by the papalists. He disagreed with their idea that
in the celebration of Holy Communion in the Mass Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross is
repeated without blood. However, he stressed that Christ was bodily present in bread
and wine which a person received during the Lord’s Supper. In this case, theologically
and emotionally, Luther was holding and bound to the tradition of the mediaeval
church.

It was not transubstantiation, but in fact consubstantiation which was believed
by Luther. The meaning is that two elements of the Lord’s Supper, bread and wine
embodied two substances at once: as physical substance, it remains bread and wine
and as spiritual substance, Christ’s body and blood which in reality is received during
the Lord’s Supper. He rejected transubstantiation since it contained mystical
assumptions and disregarded the actual reality of bread and wine which will not

31 W. de Greef, The Writings of John Calvin, Grand Rapids, 1993, p. 184-185. It was noted that Luther wrote many treatises and sermons about the Lord’s Supper as reaction to various opinions that, according to him, were incorrect, including Zwingli’s opinion; see Abineno, Perjamuan Kudus, p. 35-43.
change and will remain bread and wine.\textsuperscript{33} Therefore, bread and wine will remain as they are but Christ is present physically when bread and wine is served. Christ’s presence in bread and wine, according to Luther, could occur through belief that in a particular hidden way Christ’s body and blood is in that bread and wine.\textsuperscript{34} Thus Luther came to his conception of the ubiquity (omnipresence) of the body of Christ.

There are several reasons for Luther to have such an opinion. Firstly, it should be reiterated that for him, faith is very important in the sacrament, faith which originated initially from the preaching of God’s Words about mercy and salvation. The Holy Sacrament is a real sign that the salvation that is promised in the Words about redemption by Christ on the Cross, is actually given to a man who surrenders himself in faith to God’s mercy. Without faith, the Holy Communion will be meaningless, but with faith, the Lord’s Supper becomes the effective sign of salvation. Salvation could not be given by the priest who leads the Mass.\textsuperscript{35}

Moreover, under the mediaeval theological influence, he saw that the Holy Communion was not simply a symbol, but really a place for believers to meet Christ. There Christ is bodily present. Therefore, there is physical fellowship with Christ. So, to deny that Christ is present in the table of Holy Communion was for Luther similar to denying salvation.\textsuperscript{36}

Additionally, his commentary on Jesus’ words during the Last Supper has affirmed his above opinion. According to him, if the Holy Bible says “take and eat”, these words refer to the understanding that the bread and wine here is really Christ’s body and blood as Jesus himself speaks of them. It is what Jesus really tells, not a lie.\textsuperscript{37} However, Zwingli had a contrary opinion. If Luther said that Jesus Christ is physically present in the bread and wine in a hidden way, then according to Zwingli, Christ is present in the Spirit, not in the bread and wine, but within the community who are celebrating the Lord’s Supper.\textsuperscript{38} So, Christ’s presence could not be denied, but he is present in a different way, spiritually.

The reason for this argument according to him is the fact that salvation as the spiritual meal for the soul could not be bound to physical things, like bread and wine. Therefore, he started to understand Jesus’ words “this is my body and this is my blood” as an expression that is not necessarily taken literally. Body and blood is the symbol of salvation which Christ secured with His body and blood on the Cross.\textsuperscript{39}

Zwingli put the basis of his teaching in his commentary on several themes from the Holy Bible; like John 6 and Mark 16, for instance. According to him, what is meant by bread in John chapter 6 is not “sacramental bread” like most people’s assumption; instead, it is ‘belief’ in Christ. Belief is to abolish any kind of hunger and thirst from our soul. Bread here should be understood as ‘gospel’ and ‘eat’ here should

\textsuperscript{34} Abineno, Perjamuan Kudus, p. 32-33.
\textsuperscript{35} De Jonge, Apa Itu Calvinisme?, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{36} Idem, p. 218.
\textsuperscript{37} Abineno, Perjamuan Kudus, p. 45. A detailed book about Luther’s doctrine is: Hermann Sasse, This is My Body: Luther’s Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar, Minneapolis, 1959.
\textsuperscript{38} De Jonge, Gereja Mencari Jawab, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{39} De Jonge, Apa Itu Calvinisme?, p. 218.
be understood as ‘believe’. Meanwhile, he related Mark 16:19 about the ascension of Christ to Heaven with the Holy Supper. To him, with Jesus’ ascension to Heaven His bodily presence in the Supper is abolished. Christ is already in Heaven. As such, Jesus Christ as human could not be present simultaneously in Heaven and in bread and wine.

Bullinger, as Zwingli’s successor, principally had the same opinion. However, apparently he stepped a little beyond Zwingli because he was influenced by the writings from the Waldensian Brethren and Augustine’s books. Paul E. Rorem summarized Bullinger’s idea as below:

> With Zwingli, Bullinger denied that God is bound to the sacrament and that it confers grace. Nevertheless, beyond these common denials, Bullinger made much more pointed affirmations than Zwingli about the sacraments as God’s way of testifying and confirming the Spirit’s work on the heart. The primary activity in the Supper, for Bullinger, is not that of the congregation, remembering and testifying to the faith, but that of God who by visual analogy testifies to the redemption accomplished in Christ’s body and blood. Grammatically and theologically, the believer is not the subject, but rather the direct and indirect object of this activity, as he summarized much later: “The supper of the Lord is an holy action instituted unto the church from God, wherein the Lord by the setting of bread and wine before us at the banquet, doth certify unto his promise and communion, and sheweth unto us his gifts, and layeth them before our senses.”

The dispute was so critical that there was tangible separation between the Lutherans in Wittenberg and the Zwinglians in Zurich which in time could threaten the unity of the church. The dispute continued for quite a long time and it seemed no party was able to reconcile them. There were several efforts to achieve reconciliation in one meeting in Marburg in 1529, as already mentioned above, but it was fruitless. Moreover, Luther saw Zwingli and his friends as spiritualists and radicals, and this became a reason to break off his relationship with the reformation movement in Switzerland.

When Calvin started his career, such dispute had already emerged, and had even become a continuing threat of separation within the church. As a person who was concerned about the conflict and schismatic tendency, he started to take proper measures and involved himself in the efforts to find a solution. The first step he took was to write about the explanation of the Lord’s Supper. That is what we can see in the Institutes and other treatises. One of the treatises he wrote in 1541 and published in Geneva was focused on the discussion of the various current issues. In this writing, Calvin’s thought was obvious, as quoted by Cadier:

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40 Abineno, Perjamuan Kudus, p. 68.
43 De Jonge, Apa itu Calvinisme?, p. 221.
44 See Inst. IV, xvii-xviii; for more detail, see also the articles about the Lord’s Supper in the Institutes 1536, article 4.
45 The title in French: Petit Traité de la Sainte Cène; see Cadier, “Calvin and the Union of the Church”, p. 124.
We must be satisfied that there is brotherhood and fellowship between the churches, and that all are in agreement in so far as it is necessary in order to be united according to God’s commandment. We all confess then with one mouth that in receiving the sacrament by faith according to the Lord’s ordinance we participate truly in the very substance of the body and blood of the Lord. How this happens, some can better deduce and more clearly expound than others. Suffice it to say that in order to exclude all mistaken earthly notion we must lift up our hearts to heaven, not imagining that the Lord Jesus is abased to the point of being enclosed in a few tangible elements. On the other hand, so as not to underestimate the efficacy of this holy mystery, we must realize that it takes place by the secret and miraculous power (French vertu = Latin virtus) of God, and that the Spirit of God is the bond of this participation, which for this reason is described as spiritual.46

The next measure was to write to the disputing parties. It was notable that he wrote several letters to Bullinger (Zwingli’s successor) and to Melanchthon, over a period of several years.47 In one of his letters to Bullinger, for instance, he said that what he missed was no other but peace in the church life and for that he expected that one day he could meet Bullinger face to face:

What, my dear Bullinger, should more anxiously occupy us in our letters than to keep up and to confirm brotherly friendship among us for we see how important it is not only for our’s but a good reputation of all Christians that all those to whom the Lord has committed the affairs of his church should harmoniously cooperate toward a real mutual agreement. Satan himself sees it very well, who machinates with all means to ruin the kingdom of Christ, that there is no better advancement of his case than sowing the seeds of dissension between us and alienating us from one another. …It is therefore our duty to cherish a true friendship for all preachers of the word, and to keep the churches at peace with each other. As far as in me lies, I will always labor to do so. I wish that something would occur that would give me the opportunity of discussing the whole matter with you face to face.48

Besides that letter, he also traveled around to make dialogue with the conflicting parties. In January 1547, Calvin made a round trip to several cities in Switzerland. In Zurich, he met Bullinger and had a discussion with him. At that time, Bullinger

47 Essentially, Calvin’s letters expressed the combination of theory and practice. As mentioned by Kromminga, “(h)e theory and practice come into the closest conjunction with each other”, see J.H. Kromminga, “Calvin And Ecumenicity”, in: J.T. Hoogstra (ed.), John Calvin Contemporary Prophet, Grand Rapids, 1959, p. 150.
48 CO 11, Letter 213, Calvinus Bullingero, 12 March 1540, p. 27-30; see also Bonnet, Letters of John Calvin, Vol. I, p. 112-115, Letter 31 Calvin to Bullinger, written 12 March [1539]; J.T. McNeill, “Calvin’s Efforts Towards the Consolidation of Protestantism”, p. 416-417. This letter was written in 1539. But before it in 1538 he also wrote another letter to Bullinger saying: “Oh, if only a pure and sincere agreement could be reached among us at last. What then would prevent the assembling of a public synod, where individuals might propose whatever they think best for the churches? A way might be found out of going to work by common deliberation, and, if need be, that the cities and princes also should assist in this understanding by mutual exhortation and counsel, and also confirm what is done by their authority. But in such great perplexity, the Lord is rather to be inquired of, that he himself may open the way”; see CO 10b, Letter 93 Calvinus Bullingero, 21 February 1538, p. 153-154; cf. Hesselink, “Calvinus Oecumenicus”, p. 107; Bonnet, Letters of John Calvin, Vol. I, Letter 18, Calvin to Bullinger, 21 February 1538, p. 66-67, there 66-67.
forwarded him a text in response to what Calvin had written. Calvin responded to that writing with a letter in which he described his understanding about Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper. According to him, as summarized by De Greef:

Christ is not present before the eyes, for his body is in heaven and the Lord’s Supper is celebrated on earth. But for the believing heart this spatial gulf is bridged by the power of the Spirit. The bread and wine are indeed signs, but not empty signs. For the bread signifies not only that the body was once sacrificed for me, but also that it is offered to me today as the food by which I live.

Calvin was disappointed because he failed in a conversation with Bullinger when they met face to face. It was expressed in a letter he addressed to him. He said that what he and Farel worked on was not a dispute but an agreement; he also expected that Bullinger could join to work together on how to solve the conflict in Bern.

As clearly found in both his treatises and letters, in his effort to mediate the existing conflict, Calvin reiterated his vision about the main issue of the conflict which is Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper. For Calvin Christ is really present during the Lord’s Supper through the Holy Spirit and being united with the believers to strengthen their faith. But he denied that the body of Christ descends from Heaven and entered into the bread and wine when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated. The presence of Christ is not in a bodily way but in a spiritual way.

When we carefully observe Calvin’s thought it is very clear that he gave much effort to mediate the conflict between the two parties. He was seen in line with Luther in particular matters, but also with Bullinger in other parts. Nevertheless, he rejected particular assumptions from them. In this division, Calvin put himself forward as a mediator.

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49 De Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin*, p. 185-186; his writing was entitled: *Absoluta de Christi Domini et Catholicae Ecclesiae Sacramentis tractatio*. In fact the tension was not only between Zurich and Wittenberg. A similar tension also happened in Bern. Calvin saw the same reality during his trip and his concern was increasing. In another letter to them (*CO* 12, Letter 1006 *Calvinus ministris Bernensis*, April 1548, p. 675-679) he gave an explanation about the Holy Supper and taught them to strive for reconciliation, see De Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin*, p. 186; see also Bonnet, *Letters of John Calvin*, Vol. II, Letter 224, *Calvin to Bullinger*, 26 June 1548, p. 168-173.


By Calvin’s strong effort, Bullinger changed. Bullinger even asked Calvin’s forgiveness for being tough and awkward for quite a long time. This opportunity was not neglected by Calvin. He immediately prepared a confession with his colleagues who also ministered in Geneva. This was in November 1548. Then a confession about the Lord’s Supper was arranged which consisted of 24 articles. Calvin immediately sent this text to Bullinger and asked for his comments. Bullinger commented and Calvin gave his response. It seemed that an open way was prepared. At the same time, there was a synod assembly in Bern in March 1549. So, the confession was also sent to this assembly, but failed to gain acceptance since there was still rejection from certain parties. Bullinger invited Calvin to come to Zurich. Accompanied by Farel, Calvin departed to Zurich. There – in May 1549 - they completed the text together and eventually there was a consensus to which some articles were added afterwards.

The compromise between them has resulted in what we call the Consensus Tigurinus (Resolution of Zurich) which was published in May 1551. The Consensus Tigurinus consisted of 26 articles and was divided into three sections: 1) Articles 1-6 were an introduction which speaks about Christology; 2) Articles 7-20 as the substance speak about the sacrament of Holy Communion where there was a rejection of the papalist teaching; 3) Articles 21-26 were a conclusion where there was rejection of other’s opinions.

Indeed in the Consensus Tigurinus, Calvin could not avoid the demand that he make a concession. Therefore, he was not free from that accusation. There were some who accused him of being too Lutheran, and on the other hand, there was also the accusation that he was too Zwinglian. However, he did it all for the sake of unity. For him, the unity of the church was more valuable than the concession he made. And because of this consensus, schism in the reformation camp could be avoided. Definitely, Calvin’s role was significantly important. Nijenhuis, for instance, said that in history, the Consensus Tigurinus was not simply regarded as the historical evidence of the existence of reconciliation between Zwinglians and Calvinists in the dispute about the Holy Sacrament. The Consensus Tigurinus has also become a basic charter for Reformed Protestantism. Through his hard work, the three streams in Protestantism

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54 De Greef, The Writings of John Calvin, p. 188. Seemingly, Bucer’s role in this change was not small.
58 De Greef, The Writings of John Calvin, p. 188-189.
59 De Jonge, Apa itu Calvinisme?, p. 225; cf. W. Nijenhuis, “Ecumenical Calvin; Calvin, Luther, And Lutheranism”, in: Ecclesia Reformata. Studies on the Reformation, Vol. 2, Leiden, 1994, p. 67-68. It was said that all the cities all over Switzerland had accepted the Zurich Consensus except Bern.
could be reduced to two. Even for the Reformed in Geneva, the *Consensus Tigurinus* was a stage on the way towards unity with the Lutherans.\(^{60}\)

In accordance with Nijenhuis’ thought as mentioned above, Dankbaar stated an interesting comment about the *Consensus Tigurinus* which deserves to be underlined:

The *Consensus Tigurinus* was an ecumenical step which was incredibly meaningful. By such, Calvin has saved the unity in Reformed Protestantism. The characteristic of Geneva and Zurich was joined in it and although there were still various stresses that could be seen for years in various cities, but since 1549, there has been Reformed Protestantism stream as a union.\(^{61}\)

### 4.4. Conflict in Neuchatel and Frankfurt

During the *Consensus Tigurinus* Calvin was struggling with the dispute between Lutherans and Zwinglians meanwhile in the conflict in Neuchatel and Frankfurt where he was even confronted with the conflicts between the leaders and the congregations. In other words, in the conflict in Neuchatel and Frankfurt, Calvin was struggling with conflict of grass root versus top level.

In Neuchatel, around the year of 1541, there was also a dispute between Farel and the congregation there. It originated in Farel’s affair with a lady which at that time was considered a scandal that stained the reformation. The lady’s family conveyed severe criticism to Farel and strongly requested the intervention of the Magisterium of Bern.\(^{62}\) Calvin felt that kind of dispute could not be disregarded because it could both slow down the reformation movement and also put the Reformed church there in danger of destruction. As such, this issue seriously demanded immediate resolution.

Due to his many activities, Calvin could not go and meet them directly. He delegated Viret to endeavor the reconciliation there.\(^{63}\) Through a letter, he explained to them the essence of the church as the body of Christ where the congregation and the leaders are members of one body. And as the members of one body, every member should support the others in their weakness so that the body would always stand firm. He further said:

> In as much as we are members of the same body, …it is the duty of our office, for the communion of the saints means first of all that neighboring churches have mutual care to confirm each other.\(^{64}\)

It is apparent here that Calvin’s understanding about unity has been developing. Besides basic conceptions he had already established, he viewed solidarity as the implementation of such principles. To partake in resolving the existing dispute and to

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\(^{60}\) Nijenhuis, “Church Unity in Luther and Calvin”, p. 66-67.

\(^{61}\) Dankbaar, *Calvin Djalan Hidup*, p. 145.


\(^{63}\) McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, p. 158.

try to reconcile, is considered to be the Christian obligation of the members of the one body of Christ for the sake of unity of the body itself.

In September 1556, Calvin traveled to visit the Protestant congregations in Germany. There he encountered a quite critical conflict which emerged within the congregation of the refugees in Frankfurt. There were together there refugees from Scotland, England and France because of oppression and persecution. The main factor in the conflict was that they came from various traditions and mixed together, which gave rise to the question, what kind of worship expression could be applied in common. Sometimes, they used The Book of Common Prayer during the service, which was in use by the refugees from England and Scotland. It seems that this situation was not suitable for the immigrants who came from France.

Calvin delegated John Knox to serve there. Knox tried to introduce a worship ritual which was more Calvinist, taking into consideration that the Book of Common Prayer contained some papalist reminiscences. Finally he tended to be intolerant and inflexible with regard to the Book of Common Prayer. Coincidentally there had been several religious leaders, like Edmund Grindal and Richard Cox, who supported the reformation but still used the Book of Common Prayer. It had brought tension between the two groups, one the ‘Knoxian’ (the term for Knox’s followers) and one the ‘Coxian’ (the term for Cox’s followers) which grew sharper day by day.

Calvin’s reaction to this situation was to advise Knox with respect to ceremony: “I trust that you will moderate your rigor”; and he reminded him that certain things should be tolerated: “even if you do not quite approve of them.” Further Calvin rebuked him for his tactlessness and advised him to retain the Prayer Book in the interest of peace even though it contained certain absurdities. And when the fiery Scottish reformer launched his first blast against the monstrous regiment of women, Calvin urged him to tone down his utterances and be moderate in his expostulations. For Calvin the Book of Common Prayer could be used, but only concerning the ministry of the Word, the sacraments and discipline. These three subjects were more important than other various ceremonies in the Book of Common Prayer. If we put them in order, the first is the ministry of the Word, the second is the sacraments and the third is discipline, and followed by the Book of Common Prayer in the fourth. So, because of this matter, Calvin did not expect that the schism would not necessarily occur here.

Calvin’s approach like this has affirmed the consistency of his vision about the unity which is the unity in fundamental matters of the Christian faith. Outside the fundamental issues, there might be diversity. The principal thing is that there should not be a denial or ignorance regarding the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, as if they were not essential in the Christian faith.

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68 Idem, p. 18.
69 Idem, p. 41.
the two essential things which characterize the church. This kind of attitude and vision will be more apparent when we discuss Calvin’s tolerance.

4.5. Calvin’s tolerance

What is the characteristic and attitude which was shown by Calvin in his struggle, in both doctrine and in practice for the unity of the church? Calvin did not express this in all conditions and situations, but only in certain situations, that is when there was difference in opinion and ecclesiastical practice in a church which according to Calvin was not so fundamental.

It is necessary to state firmly here what Calvin meant by tolerance. Tolerance here is not similar with tolerance as currently people understand it, that every religion should be given the same space to realize its diversity and therefore, appreciation and respect to each other is required, nor in a sense of freedom of conscience granted by the state to certain individuals or religions. Tolerance to Calvin is the tolerance in one church, that is the Christian church, and related to the attitude towards the diversity of opinion and thoughts and practices of church life as long as it is not incompatible with the Gospel. It means that there is a principal norm to a tolerance which also functions as the border line of taking a certain tolerant attitude to determine whether particular things embrace tolerance or not. Concerning the principal norm there is no tolerance. Robinson called it the fundamental position. He described it as follows:

Fundamentally, Calvin sought tolerance where it was a matter of detail and of human differences. He was intolerant where it seemed to him that the truth of God was at stake. He urged tolerance of different modes of worship, he sought accommodation with the several Protestant views of the Lord’s Supper, and he magnified other Reformers and their writings even though these differed in detail from his own position. On the other hand, he was intolerant of what he regarded as error in the presentation of the truth of God whether that came from papal additions to the Word, Libertine misuse of the doctrine of the Spirit, or rationalistic denials of the trinity. He stood for the revealed truth of God and the life in accord therewith, and in the difficult tensions of history went further in advocating punishment for the propagation of heresy than his own principles or earlier statements warranted.

This is what Jean Cadier called adiaphora; the attitude of Calvin in facing the conflicts. It means that for Calvin there are ‘fundamental’ things and there are also ‘secondary’ things which are implemented in the endeavor for the unity of the church practically. By quoting the Institutes, Cadier explains Calvin’s view as follows:

All points of the doctrine of God are not of the same order. There are some, the knowledge of which is so necessary that no man may question them, for they are fundamental pronouncements principles of Christianity: as for example that there is one God, that Jesus Christ is God and God’s Son, that our salvation rests on his mercy alone, and other such doctrines. But there are others which are disputed among the churches, and yet do not break

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73 Cadier, “Calvin and the Union of the Church”, p. 127.
their unity. To give an example: suppose one church happened to maintain that the soul upon leaving the body is carried at once to heaven and another church believed simply that the soul lives in God, without venturing to define the place; if this difference of opinion were held without contention and obstinacy, why should the two churches separate? The words of the apostle are that if we will be perfect we must be of one mind; moreover that if we think differently, God will reveal it to us (Phil 3:15). Does this not show that if Christians have any disagreement over matters which are not essential, this must not cause disorders and rebellions amongst them? … I do not intend by this to support certain errors, not even the slightest ones, and I would not have them fostered by covering them up or indulging them. But I say that it is wrong to leave a church inconsiderately, on the grounds of a disagreement, when that church maintains in its integrity the principal doctrine of our salvation, and the sacraments as our Lord appointed them.75

For Calvin if there were differences of inessential matters, he wished these would not divide the church. Indeed, discussion about the essential or fundamental and inessential or secondary matters could bring different interpretation. However, to non-fundamental matters like differences in church order, ritual or religious ceremony, tolerance could be given.75

Referred to this basic principal mentioned above, Calvin dared to confront the plurality which existed within the reformation camp during his lifetime, where it could bring the seeds of schism if it was not wisely responded to. Several examples can be revealed as evidence.

The first evidence could be taken from Calvin’s attitude towards a certain party that undermined him and demanded that he and Farel leave Geneva. Some of Farel’s faithful followers sent message to him that the church they left in Geneva was in a bad and critical situation, so it was not necessary to join it. When Calvin acknowledged such a tendency there, he responded by emphasizing the calling not to be separatists.

As long as the fundamental teachings of the Gospel were to be heard in the sanctuaries, the church was there and “a departure from the church is a renunciation of God and Christ” (Inst., IV.i.10). “For so highly the Lord esteems the communion of His church, that He considers every one as a traitor and apostate from religion, who perversely withdraws from the Christian society which preserves the true ministry of word and sacraments”. God has ordained that the inestimable treasure of the Gospel be communicated to us from earthen vessels, each of whom is enveloped in some cloud of ignorance, and many of whom are in error in non-essential points. A Christian communion is not to be rejected even though it be charged with many faults, but one must forgive mistakes in those things of which a person may be ignorant.76

Even after his return from Strasbourg in response to the call, he did not pursue revenge or punishment of those who has thrown him out. He even suggested what was called “a wise and conciliatory course.”77 It was evident in his letter addressed to Myconius from Basel as below:

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74 Idem, p. 127-128; Cadier quoted from Inst. IV. i. 12.
75 Cadier, “Calvin and the Union of the Church”, p. 128; other subjects are about church order and ecclesiastical offices.
77 Idem, p. 40.
I value the public peace and concord so highly, that I lay restraint upon myself... On my arrival it was in my power to have disconcerted our enemies most triumphantly, entering with full sail among the whole of that tribe who had done the mischief. I have abstained. If I had liked, I could daily, not merely with impunity, but with the approval of very many, have used sharp reproof. I forbear; even with the most scrupulous care do I avoid everything of the kind, lest even by some slight word I should appear to persecute any individual, much less all of them at once. May the Lord confirm me in this disposition of mind.  

Another evidence of Calvin’s tolerance could be seen when there was a different view between him and Melanchthon, as could be found in Melanchthon’s book *Loci Communes* and his book the Institutes. At that time, *Loci Communes* had become a kind of textbook for theological students which seemed to be the source of a debate with the *Institutes*. The difference was in the understanding about “the place of human will in salvation”. For Calvin, this variant understanding should be directed so as to avoid the tension, which possibly could become more critical with time. Through correspondence, they discussed such subjects in a friendly atmosphere which was encouraged by mutual understanding. Calvin even published in the new edition of *Loci Communes* in French in 1546 a complementary preface stating that the book was a summary of all fundamental faith which is important to the Christian who wanted to know the way to salvation. Robinson reiterated that Calvin admitted the difference between them concerning free will, but for Calvin, “Melanchthon seems to concede to man some share in his salvation, yet in such a manner that God’s grace is not in any way diminished and no ground is left to us for boasting.”

Calvin’s view and attitude about the structure of the church in England has shown his great tolerance. During his time the reformation of the church in England had been established. The structure was still episcopal. Bishoprics were maintained and religious ceremonies as in papal churches were still applied. But Calvin did not raise an objection or denial, although some form of their ceremonies he did not use in Geneva.

To the King of Poland, he suggested that it could be that the archbishop become the leader of the church in that country within a synod of his colleagues who consisted of provincial bishops. However, both the archbishop and the bishops should be obedient to God’s Word. They had not to be ecclesiastical administrators submissive to the papal hierarchy, but for all they had to be true pastors. For Calvin, office in the church is preaching the gospel and true administration of the sacraments and fulfillment of pastoral duty.

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79 Robinson, “The Tolerance of Our Prophet”, 41; There is an interesting comment from P. Henry about this matter. He said: “So free were these men of ambition, love of glory, and littleness of spirit; that they thought of nothing but the salvation of the world. Calvin wanted France to love Melanchton as much as he did, and to be converted to Christ through him”, see P. Henry, *The Life of John Calvin*, Vol. I, London, 1983, p. 376.
4.6 Conclusion

There are many more examples. But it is sufficient that by giving the description of the evidence mentioned above we can see clearly that Calvin was so tolerant simply to protect the unity of the church. Tolerance here could not easily be paralleled with compromising understanding in the political field which would give the impression of a tendency of ignoring the principle of the truth. Calvin had an obvious principle, so he would only be tolerant if it did not conflict with those principles.

All explanation in this chapter has given a clear picture about Calvin’s ecumenical efforts in practice, and shows us the concordance of his teaching and life. As such, we could not make a separation between a theoretical Calvin and a practical Calvin. Between concept, view, teaching and practical activities, there is a close relation.

This is an obvious reason for many scholars to summarize all Calvin’s ecumenical activities in quite interesting statements. There are some who consider that about the unity of the churches, Calvin did not simply theorize, but also combined words and action and applied what he learnt from the Scripture into a concrete situation. He did not only urge the leaders who had variant opinions, wherever possible to minimize the difference among them, but he spent his time to directly involve himself in various activities which led to ecumenical discussion.

As a conclusion we may state that to keep the unity of the church, Calvin made use of tolerance in various circumstances. He did not require of all Christians the same insight in all questions; neither did he require of all churches the same height of spiritual life in all circumstances.

It is a common opinion that Calvin is, compared with Luther and Zwingli, the one international ecumenical reformer. We learnt that Calvin’s theology was originally and essentially an ecumenical theology. This theology, as is obvious especially in his ecclesiology, is aimed to build bridges between the different churches. Practically he struggled all his life to bring a visible unity in reality in the various Reformed churches of his time. Though he distinguished between the visible and the invisible church, in both cases he stresses the necessity of unity. We agree with William Stanford Reid:

One could pile up example upon example of the way in which Calvin followed his own teaching on the unity of the church. He was anxious that the church of Christ should indeed be one as Christ and His Father are one. That he taught the necessity of such unity is very apparent. He also worked for it. His dealing with Luther, with Bullinger, with Cranmer all prove his anxiety to see the church possessing true unity. In the best sense of the term he was an ecumenical Christian.

Robinson mentioned some points, like his response to Sadoleto, the Frankfurt issue and the Consensus Tigurinus. Nijenhuis even considered that in the Servetus and Castellio case, Calvin was still showing his tolerance [as well]; see Robinson, “The Tolerance of Our Prophet”, p. 40-43; Nijenhuis, “Calvin’s Life and Work in the Light of the Idea of Tolerance”, p. 121-129.

Bratt, “John Calvin and Ecumenicity”, p. 17.

In accordance with this, when he completed his description about Calvin’s vision and practice of the unity of the church, Jean Cadier came to this conclusion:

Calvin had a very firm vision of the unity of the church. In our day he would certainly have been on the side of the movement towards the uniting of the churches, the Ecumenical Movement; not the ecumenism of Roman Catholicism which he would abhor, and which is unthinkable for a son of the Reformation, for it consists in return to a church in which the power of the Papacy has hardened still more than in the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{84}

This is Calvin’s “undying credit” which he bequeathed to the church. Evaluating Calvin’s ecumenical activities, we can summarize that it is to Calvin’s undying credit that he looked for every opportunity to resolve the differences in Christendom. He was of a strong ecumenical spirit.

\textsuperscript{84} Cadier, “Calvin and the Union of the Church”, p. 128-129.
CHAPTER 5

THE MEANING OF CALVIN’S VIEW ON THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH FOR THE CHURCHES IN INDONESIA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Independent Indonesian research into Calvin and Calvinism started only in 1990. It was J.L.Ch. Abineno who published in 1990 his book, *Perjamuan Malam Menurut Para Reformator* (The Lord’s Supper According to the Reformers), in which he described Calvin’s view on the Lord’s Supper. Eight years later, a monograph on Calvinism was produced by the Dutch church historian Christiaan de Jonge. The publishing of this monograph motivated Indonesians to pursue further studies and research.

In the present chapter we will discuss how Calvin’s teaching influenced the churches in Indonesia. We will begin with how Calvin’s teaching entered the Dutch East Indies. Then we will look at the ecumenical journey of the churches in Indonesia since the formation of the Council of Churches in Indonesia (ICC) as well as the results that were achieved. Clearly in this journey ideas from Indonesian Calvinist leaders played a significant role. Therefore, their views on church unity are also included in this chapter. So this chapter will consist of three parts:

1. Calvin’s teaching enters the Dutch East Indies.
2. The ecumenical journey of the churches in Indonesia.
3. The views of several Indonesian Calvinist theologians regarding ecumenicity.

We are not dealing with the confessions of faith of the individual Protestant Churches in Indonesia in this chapter. As stated by J.L.Ch. Abineno in his book *Gereja dan Ibadah Gereja* (1986), before or up till 1986, no written documents were available within the churches in Indonesia regarding a confession of faith, except the HKBP confession of 1951; however, that is neither a really Reformed confession nor a purely Reformed church. Of course we agree with J.A.B. Jongeneel who cites Abineno as follows:

Het bestaan van een kerk is niet afhankelijk van et al dan niet hebben van een geschreven geloofsbelijdenis. Zij kan ook belijden… door haar prediking, door het getuigenis van haar leden en dargelijke. Wij erkennen dit ten volle. Desondanks kunnen wij het hebben van een geschreven geloofsbelijdenis in een kerk zien als een teken, dat daar ook levend geloof is. Want waar geloof is, waar de gemeente getrokken en meegesleept word om haar geloof in

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1 Christiaan de Jonge was at that time a professor of Church History in the Jakarta Theological Seminary. His book *Apa Itu Calvinisme?* (What is Calvinism?) was published in 1998 by BPK Gunung Mulia in Jakarta. Prior to that, H.E. Nienmeer had studied Calvinism and the colonial city culture of Batavia in 1619-1725 which resulted in a dissertation entitled, *Calvinisme en koloniale stads cultuur Batavia 1619-1725*, defended at the VU University (Vrije Universiteit) Amsterdam in 1996. Many years before, around 1967, a book had been published already, titled *Calvin Djalan Hidup dan Karjanja*, which was a translation of W.F. Dankbaar, *Calvijn: zijn weg en werk*, Nijkerk, 1957.

2 At the time of the VOC Indonesia was known as the Dutch East Indies.

Jezus Christus te belijden, daar zal op den duur een (geschreven) geloofsbelijdenis worden geboren.  

In any case, we will focus on the document called Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia (the PBIK) issued by the Churches which form part of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia.

5.1. Calvin’s teaching enters the Dutch East Indies

This paragraph will begin with a brief history of the introduction of Calvin’s teaching into Dutch East Indies. Here we will focus on the parties who brought Calvinism to the Dutch East Indies as well as the characteristics of the Calvinism they brought. The parties that had a role in bringing Calvinism to Indonesia are the Veerenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), the mission societies which were working at the initiative of inter-church Christian groups, and the mission bodies of particular Calvinist churches.

5.1.1. Calvin’s teaching enters the Dutch East Indies through the VOC

Calvinist Christianity was introduced first of all by Dutch people with the arrival of the VOC (United Dutch East Indies Company) in Indonesia. The VOC was formed by private merchants, with the approval of central Dutch government, as a shipping and commerce company. Therefore the primary objective of the VOC was commercial, not religious. The rights of governing all of the occupied territories of the Dutch Republic in Asia stretching from South India to Taiwan (Formosa) were given to this organization. One can say that the VOC was the government with which the emerging church in Indonesia had to deal. Its primary objective was to gain an exclusive monopoly in commerce between Asia and Europe.

That the VOC had no religious purpose can be seen in its first actions immediately after it arrived in the Dutch East Indies. As the institution which was given full rights to act in the name of the General Council (Staten Generaal) of the Dutch Republic, within the framework of monopolizing the spice trade, which at that time was the most profitable commodity in world trade, they did three things: they expelled the Portuguese, opposed the coming of the Spanish to East Indonesia through their base in the Philippines, and they forced the indigenous kings to trade only with the VOC.

Nevertheless since the VOC was the “Dutch government in Indonesia”, the need to attend to matters of religion could not be avoided. According to Calvinist understandings as represented in article 36 of the Belgic Confession (1561), the

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6 Th. van den End, Ragi Carita 1, Jakarta, 1999, p. 33.

7 Chr. de Jonge, Apa itu Calvinisme?, p. 30; Van den End, Ragi Carita 1, p. 33, 65.
government is obliged to protect the church and to advance true religion that is the Reformed religion.\(^8\) Thus the VOC was not allowed to neglect matters of religion. In fact the opposite was true; it was required to involve itself, indeed be responsible for matters of religion. Besides, there were two other reasons that forced the VOC to attend to religious matters. First, the crews of ships and the VOC staff under appointment in Indonesia consisted partly of members of the Reformed Church. They needed spiritual care. Secondly, indigenous Catholic Christians who had now become Protestants requested ministry from the Dutch as their new overlords after their former overlords, the Portuguese, had gone.\(^9\) Concretely these responsibilities were spelled out in what was called the second “letter of authorization” (octrooi), issued by the General Council to the VOC in 1622.\(^10\) Based on this letter of authorization the VOC claimed that all matters of religion were in its hands, public worship, organization, supervision, as well as finances. The result of this was that the VOC expelled the Catholic missionaries because they considered them to be Portuguese and Spanish spies and replaced them with Protestant personnel. With this action Catholic people automatically switched over to the Protestant, in this case Reformed, camp.

The VOC did not have its own pattern of organizing religious life. In matters involving religion the VOC followed the patterns of the Reformed Church in the Dutch Republic. In the case of public worship, the liturgy was the same as the one used in the Republic, down to the time of the day services were held. As to the organization, the VOC followed the presbyterial-synodal Church Order specified in the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) with exceptions here and there, so that the VOC itself appointed ministers. While in the matter of oversight of the congregation, it followed three confessional documents used in the Dutch Republic: the Belgic Confession (1561), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Canons of Dordrecht (1619) which are called the Three Forms of Unity. The saying is true that the Reformed Church in Indonesia was a copy of the Reformed Church in the Republic, so that the church in Indonesia was tied to the mother church in the Republic.\(^11\)

So, as stated by Christiaan de Jonge, the Christianity that colored the work of the VOC in the area of religion, and which had to be impressed upon the employees and taught to the Indonesians was the one and only true religion, that is the pure

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\(^8\) Article 36 reads: “We believe that because of the depravity of the human race our good God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers. He wants the world to be governed by laws and policies so that human lawlessness may be restrained and that everything may be conducted in good order among human beings. For that purpose he has placed the sword in the hands of the government to punish evil people and protect the good. And the government’s task is not limited to caring for and watching over the public domain but extends also to upholding the sacred ministry, with a view to removing and destroying all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist, to promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to furthering the preaching of the gospel everywhere; to the end that God may be honored and served by everyone, as he requires in his word…” See Jaroslav Pelikan & Valerie Hotchkiss (eds.), Creeds & Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition, Vol.II, London, 2003, p. 424.; cf. Th. van den End (ed.), Enam Belas Dokumen Dasar Calvinisme, Jakarta, 2000, p. 53.


\(^10\) De Jonge, Apa Itu Calvinisme?, p. 31.

\(^11\) Idem, p. 31-32.
Christian faith that was taught by the public or privileged church in the Republic, the Reformed or Calvinist Church. For this reason only the Reformed Church was permitted to serve in the Dutch East Indies at that time. However, this Calvinism that was brought to the Dutch East Indies was not carried to every area of the country. The VOC only involved itself in regions where they thought they would be able to make a profit. In those areas they established governmental centers and in those areas religious activities were carried out. Because of this, it was only in the areas where there were VOC governmental centers, such as Ambon (including Banda and Lease) and Batavia, that Calvinism was maintained in the Dutch congregations and the indigenous Christian congregations in those locations. Beyond those areas there was little attention to religion. For the Dutch and indigenous Protestant congregations in the VOC centers pastors were always supplied, while for the indigenous Protestant congregations in other areas pastors rarely were available. Hardly any attention was paid to evangelization beyond the churches, even though people were aware of the need. Evangelization beyond the church community was only undertaken if it would bring profit to the VOC. Therefore, as De Jonge put it, in the VOC era the church that was planted was a Calvinist church. But that Calvinism was not rooted and did not give any special color to the indigenous Protestant congregations outside the cities where the Dutch congregations were located. Only in Ambon and the surrounding islands was the church well rooted in the lives of the indigenous Protestants, because, there ministers were working, and Indonesians served as member of the consistory. Also, there was guidance through catechism and schools.

As was already stated above, in religious matters the VOC followed the pattern of the church in the Republic. As far as possible they tried to make sure that the ways of the mother church in matters of organization, teaching and church practice were followed also in the Dutch East Indies. So basically the Three Forms of Unity used in the Republic became the foundation of teaching, both in preaching and other teaching settings. According to C.W.Th. Baron van Boetzelaer van Asperen en Dubbeldam, the obligation to hold tightly to these Three Forms of Unity in the ministry of a pastor and congregational teacher was spelled out in the Church Order of 1624. There it was stated that the pastors, the visitors of the sick and the congregational teachers had to sign a copy of each of those documents. In the area of organization they put into practice the church order that was finalized by the National Synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619) which followed a presbyterial-synodal system.

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13 Van den End, Ragi Carita 1, p. 33-34.
14 De Jonge, Apa Itu Calvinisme?, p. 33-34.
However not all provisions of this Church Order could be carried out perfectly in the Dutch East Indies. In practice there was adjustment and adaptation. We can note a number of examples.

1. In the Large Meeting (Groote Vergadering) between the government and the ministers, present among others was the Reverend Sabastian Danckaerts, who in the name of the Governor General raised 15 issues that needed to be clarified regarding the working together of the VOC government with the church. The second of these issues was the question whether the Church Order that was used and followed in practice in Batavia was in line with the Church Order of the Reformed Churches in the Dutch Republic. The information given by the meeting of ministers to the Governor General stated that up to that time they had no written Church Order in Batavia.

Reverend Danckaerts brought a concept from the Republic and gave it to the Governor General. In that concept the Church Order had four articles. First, about church ministry; secondly, about churchly meetings; third, about teaching, sacraments and other ceremonies; fourth about church discipline. This Church Order was accepted by the large meeting and the Colonial Government and became known as the Church Order of 1624. It contained certain items that were not found in the Dordrecht Church Order (1619) followed in the Netherlands. First, the main deviation results from the impossibility, for the time being, of forming Classes, or of holding particular Synods. Almost in all cases, where the Dordrecht Church Order requires the cooperation of these bodies, this has been replaced within the Indische Kerk-orde by cooperation of an especially created KerkJelijke Vergadering (ecclesiastical meeting), which meets yearly in Batavia and to which other churches send their representatives, or in case this is impossible, to which they send their written recommendations (Dutch: advies).

Though the assembly in Batavia changed this yearly meeting into a three yearly gathering, apparently it soon was recognized that under the present circumstances holding such a gathering was almost impossible. For many years there were no other predikanten (ministers) in Java besides those in Batavia. Travelling to Banda, Ambon, or Ternate took, in the most favorable situation, four to six weeks. Therefore, nothing was heard later on about efforts to hold such meetings or even to make a plea for it.

A number of regulations, in which this KerkJelijke Vergadering takes the position of a Classis or particular Synod, could not be implemented. The Church Board in Batavia several times acted as though it was a Classis, which was criticized by the churches in the Classis Amsterdam. These instead should have shown a way by which a Church Order could be implemented that took the possibilities of this country into account. The fact that the Church in the Dutch Republic did not do so, was seriously harmful for the Indische Kerk, because soon the Indische Government forced upon the Church a Church Order in which the Government got an almost unrestricted say in church matters.

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17 Mooij, Geschiedenis der Protestantsche Kerk, p. 123.
18 A ‘Classis’ corresponds to the ‘Presbytery’ in English-language Reformed churches.
20 Idem, p. 38. Compared to the Dordrecht Church Order, article 29 which says “Vierderly Kerckelijke t’samen-comsten sullen onderhouden worden, de Kercken-Raet, de Classicale verhaderinghen, de particuliere Synodus, ende de Generale ofte Nationale”.
magistrate to appoint in the Church Board one or two delegates, being members of the congregation, in order to listen and join in the discussions of current matters. It is very significant, that this regulation has been left out in the draft of the Indische Kerkorde and replaced by the words: “ende sullen in deze Kerckenraedt geen andere als kerckelijcke saecken ende dat op kerckelijcke wijse gehandelt worden” (and in this Church Board only church matters will be dealt with, in a church-like way). Concerning this Van Boetzelaer comments, it is typical that the Grote Vergadering was brave enough to make this change, and even more typical that the VOC Government did not protest. Nevertheless, soon Commissarissen Politiek would attend all meetings of the church board. Thirdly, according to the Dordrecht Church Order article 53, “alle Dienaren der Woords” (preachers of the Word), and Professors of Theology have to endorse (Dutch: ondertekenen) the Confession of Faith of the Nederlandsche kerken; article 21 of the Indische Kerkorde states, that the “dienaren des Woords, krankbezoekers en schoolmasters” have to endorse not only the “Belijdenis des Geloofs der Nederlandsche kerken” and the Heidelberg Catechism, but also the Canons of the National Synod of Dordrecht 1619. Here the requirements of the Indische Kerkorde are stricter than those in the Dutch Republic. Fourthly, regarding the process of calling church ministers according to the steps of the process: election, examination, agreement, and ordination. Nor it is stated that the ones with the right to call are the church council and the deacons with the advice and agreement of the classis, since none of these functioned. Exactlly the opposite occurred; the ministers and church council members were called and appointed by the government. Thus the church council members were viewed as representatives of the government. Churchly meetings like the ones mentioned in article 29 of the Dordrecht Church Order almost never occurred except for church council meetings. In fact, in church council meetings two political commissioners attended who certainly represented the government as supervisors. In many respects the presbyterial-synodal system could not be fully applied. In many congregations the offices were not complete, except in Batavia and Ambon. Deviations from the Dordrecht Church Order were also noted by Baron van Boetzelaer, i.e., because there was not yet a classis and synod, everything was turned over to the annual Churchly Meeting in Batavia, which later became triennial meetings. The matter of Classis and synod has been regulated in the 1624 Church Order, though it was never applied. The reason is that the mother church in

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23 Idem, p. 39.
25 According to De Jonge, the church order of 1624 followed the Dordrecht Church Order as much a possible. But in reality a non-government classis and a synod could not be formed. Instead the tasks of the classis and synod were given to a churchly meeting that had to be held in Jakarta. But this regulation was never applied. Instead, in the church order drawn up in 1643, this task was given to the VOC government. See De Jonge, Apa Itu Calvinisme?, p. 130. Regarding the 1643 Church Order, see Van Boetzelaer, De Protestantsche Kerk, p. 45-48.
26 Van Boetzelaer, De Protestantsche Kerk, p. 37, writes, “…is dit in de I.K.O. vervangen door die eener in het leven te roepen Kerkelijke Vergadering, die jaarlijks te Batavia samenkomt en
the Dutch Republic did not give to the church council in Batavia the status of a classis.  

2. One of the agenda items discussed in the Great Meeting in Batavia was regarding the way to bring unbelievers (kafir) to Christian faith. Could the children of unbelieving families be baptized? The meeting came to the conclusion that children from unbelieving families could not be baptized because their parents were not Christians. But they could be blessed. It was decided, “kleine kinderen van heidenen geboren, niet te doopen, maar in een godsdienstroefening met oplegging der handen te zegenen en zoo aan de Kerk te verbinden” (not to baptize infants of heathen people, but to bless them in a church service by laying on of hands, and this way to join them to the church), according to the decision read. This decision was then included in the 1624 Church Order. In practice a special formulation was prepared for use in the rite of laying on of hands and the blessing of those children. Things of this kind were not done in the mother church in the Republic because it was considered to contradict the witness of the Bible.

The process of adaptation, of which the above is an example, was caused by the context of the Dutch East Indies which was different from the context in the Netherlands. De Jonge noted that the achievement of the Calvinist ideals in the Dutch East Indies during the VOC period did not go smoothly, because of the following factors related to the context:

1. The total dependency of the church on the VOC was such that it lost its freedom to organize itself. In the matter of evangelization, for instance, they were not able to bring evangelists from their country of origin because the funding for that came from the VOC. When the VOC’s income went down, which happened during the eighteenth century, bringing church workers from overseas was terminated. In the matter of spiritual care and discipline of church members, VOC employees, whose behavior was regarded as inappropriate and who treated the indigenous people harshly, could not be rebuked because the VOC government tended to protect its employees.

2. Communication between one congregation and another was difficult because of the broad expanse of Indonesia, while the number of Christians in these congregations was very few. This reality made it impossible to apply the presbyterial-synodal system in a proper way. Only in certain centers where congregations were large enough was it possible to form a church council complete with a minister. So geographical realities were also an influence.

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27 Idem, p. 38. ”…Dit zou waarschijnlijk alleen mogelijk zijn geweest door in vele gevallen aan den Kerkeraad van Batavia de bevoegdheid te verleenen als Classicale vergadering op te treden, of door naast dezen Kerkeraad een bestuurslichaam in het leven te roepen, dat deze functie kon vervullen”.


29 Mooij, Geschiedenis der Protestantsche Kerk, p. 130.

3. The number of ministering personnel brought from Europe was very inadequate. This made ministry difficult. At the same time the personnel sent from Europe were reluctant to entrust ministry to indigenous personnel.\textsuperscript{31}

When the VOC was dismantled (1799) and the government of the colonized areas was taken over by the Dutch East Indies Government, things became different. The Dutch East Indies government pursued a new way to deal with religion because of the influence of the Enlightenment. As happened in the Dutch Republic itself, in the Dutch East Indies also the freedom of religion was promulgated. In the eyes of the government no religion or church was to have a special position. King William I pursued a new way to unite all Protestant congregations in Indonesia and to create one body called the Protestant Church in the Dutch East Indies (Protestantsche Kerk in Nederlands Indië or Gereja Protestan di Hindia Belanda) which later became the Protestant Church in Indonesia (Gereja Protestan di Indonesia or GPI). Thus the Reformed congregation and the Lutheran congregation in Batavia were amalgamated.\textsuperscript{32} One can imagine what happened to Calvinism at that time. The Calvinist teachings, for example about the church, could not be applied because the church did not organize itself, the government did. In a regulation published by the king in 1820, it was said that all Protestants were to become members of the Protestant Church. This church was governed by a Kerkbestuur (Church Administrator) appointed by the Governor General and based in Batavia. The chairperson had to be somebody holding a high level position in the government apparatus. The local congregations were to be lead by a council that was not chosen by the congregation. Their appointment would have to be approved by the local government. The appointment and placement of ministers was done by the Governor General after receiving suggestions from the Church Administration. Everything having to do with the relationship of the Protestant Church of the Dutch East Indies and the church in the Netherlands was to be handled by a commission consisting of seven ministers located in The Hague in the Netherlands. So it was called the Haagse Commissie (the Hague Committee). This commitee had the task of testing and ordaining the ministers who were to be sent to the Dutch East Indies. All the commission did had to receive the approval of the cabinet minister for the colonized areas.\textsuperscript{33} In these respects things were not very different from the period of the VOC.

G.P.H. Locher has observed that in general the offices existing in the church order were minister, elder and deacon, and also doctor as can be seen in the Dordrecht Church Order (1619). And all these offices have the same status. No one office is any higher than the others. But in the Indonesian congregations there were only three offices, without doctor, and in practice a deacon was considered to be a second class

\textsuperscript{31} De Jonge, Calvinisme di Indonesia, p. 24.
A deacon performed the same tasks as an elder, since in the communities in the Moluccas, Minahasa, and Timor the pattern of life in those communities was very tight, and village fellowship was very close. There was little noticeable differentiation between people, and the understanding of ownership and using things together meant that there were almost no poor people. And if there were any, they were cared for in the communal fellowship which was still very strong. Furthermore, several different kinds of congregational leaders were known whose offices were not known in Calvinism. Apart from the predikant (minister), there were the Indisch predikant (indigenous minister) who may or may not have the authority to administer the sacraments, the teacher of the congregation (guru jemaat) and, the evangelist (utusan Injil). The position of minister was taken by congregational leaders of widely different levels of education and, related to that, levels of authority. This was caused by the inability of the congregation to pay for a minister with a high level of education. As to congregations with limited resources, it was enough for them to be ministered to by a teacher of the congregation or gospel teacher with limited authority, that is, without the authority to administer the sacraments.

According to Locher this condition was caused by the reality that during the time when the Protestant Church organized its life in a church order, they could not spell out a theory of church order for their own situation that accorded with that spelled out in the church order of the Reformed Church in patria. The problems they faced were basically the same as those faced by the Reformed Church, and all churches. Further, in resolving these problems the Protestant Church pursued a similar direction since the two churches were close to each other. Nevertheless the church’s own story, its geographical location, its presence in the midst of millions of Muslims and followers of folk religions, its position in a country and among groups of inhabitants who had a political, economic, social and cultural structure that was very different, demanded that the Protestant Church in the Dutch East Indies think through and draw up an understanding of church order in its own way.

In conclusion, the Indonesian people were first introduced to Calvin’s teaching not by a mission society of the church but through a commerce company. This fact has an impact on two things. Firstly, the teachings introduced through the Three Forms of Unity were not well rooted in the indigenous people in the Dutch East Indies because the goal of the VOC was not the planting of religious teaching. And secondly, because the church was fostered by a state institution, the VOC, she became a state church. Therefore, any autonomy of the church to organize itself ceased to exist until at least 1934, when the Kerkbestuur in Batavia started to give autonomy to the congregations in Minahasa to organize themselves so as to become an independent church, called the Protestant Evangelical Church in Minahasa. Also to be noted is that the face of Calvinism in Indonesia is not exactly alike Dutch Calvinism. This is because the
Indonesian context forced adaptations, both during and after the VOC period. Therefore, Calvinism in the Dutch East Indies was a result of the adaptation of Dutch Calvinism in an Indonesian context.\(^\text{38}\)

### 5.1.2. Reformed ideas enter the Dutch East Indies through non-church based mission societies

Calvinism arrived also in the Dutch East Indies through mission societies from Europe, not formed by churches, but rather by the initiative of the members of several churches. They began their work by the end of the eighteenth century. The background for the formation of these mission societies in Europe involves the changes happening in Europe during the seventeenth century. Two main streams appeared in Europe during this century, to wit the Enlightenment and the Pietist Revival. Of these two main streams the Pietist Revival had the greatest influence on evangelistic efforts, including those in the Dutch East Indies.\(^\text{39}\) In the eighteenth century interest in mission increased as a result of the influence of the Pietist movement. The center of this movement was in Halle (Germany) and the Herrnhut congregation. In the Dutch Republic the same interest arose when they saw the efforts of the missionaries sent from Herrnhut. And after seeing the developments in England with the establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society (1792) and The London Missionary Society (1795), which were especially aimed at evangelization, an initiative arose among Dutch Christians to form evangelistic mission societies as well.

A group of Christians formed a mission society called *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap* or NZG (the Netherlands Missionary Society) in Rotterdam in 1797. In Germany the *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* or RMG (Rhenish Mission Society) appeared in 1828. At the same time in the Dutch East Indies itself Christians who were not satisfied with a Protestant Church in Indonesia that was unconcern with missionary work formed the *Javaansch Bijbelgenootschap* (Java Bible Society) which later became the *Oost-Indisch Bijbelgenootschap* (the East Indies Bible Society). Then also were formed missionary fellowships in Batavia and in Surabaya (1815) and in other places. Aside from these fellowships, here and there there were Christians who started evangelistic activities on their own initiative.\(^\text{40}\)

These societies were established and organized by people who to a greater or lesser degree were influenced by the ideals of the Pietist Revival. Therefore within these societies we can discover characteristics which remind us of those ideals. Among others they were not tied to the church order of the teachings of a particular church. The missionaries who were sent should be ordinary people without academic degrees, who were prepared to make their own living, and from unbelievers who repented they would only expect “heartfelt faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Divine Savior, who

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\(^\text{38}\) Van den End mentions in a paper he delivered at a seminar on Calvin and Calvinism in Indonesia that the Calvinism, which entered Indonesia in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, is a tamed and castrated Calvinism. See Th. van den End, “Calvinisme dan Pengaruhnya Dalam Ajaran Gereja Protestan di Indonesia”, Jakarta, 2000, p. 5; non-published paper.

\(^\text{39}\) Van den End, *Ragi Carita I*, p. 139-142.

\(^\text{40}\) Idem, p. 151-152.
for us and in our place bore our sins in his body on the wooden cross, according to the command of the Gospel.\footnote{41}

Below we will look at these mission societies as well as to their theological characteristics. We begin with the NZG. From the beginning of its work, the NZG sent missionaries to South Africa, India and the Dutch East Indies. Yet, from 1839 until around 1900 the NZG worked in Indonesia only in several areas, such as Moluccas, Minahasa, Timor, East Java and Central Java, Karo in North Sumatra, Central Sulawesi and Bolang Mangondow, and later in South Sulawesi and Sawo.\footnote{42} Even though all of the NZG pioneers belonged to the Reformed Church, nevertheless various theologies and streams of spirituality came together within the NZG. Some missionaries followed the orthodox traditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among them were those who interpreted these traditions according to the Pietist pattern of the eighteenth century. So some chose to hold onto the teachings of Calvin and the Three Forms of Unity. While others maintained relationships with the Herrnhut movement or the Revival in England which was Pietistic. Some others yet were somewhat influenced by the Enlightenment.\footnote{43} They could work together because they emphasized the experience of Christian faith in love and witness. The work of the NZG was open to members of other churches. The missionaries were not tied to specifically Reformed teachings and confession of faith or church order and liturgy. It was considered enough if they held to the Old and New Testaments and to the twelve Articles of Christian Faith.\footnote{44}

If we look at the structure of the NZG, it can be said that the Calvinist aspects of this mission society entered through people holding to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century orthodox tradition, through people who held firmly to Calvinist teachings and the Three Forms of Unity. So in the churches that were born as the fruit of NZG evangelization in the area mentioned above we can see a Calvinist heritage by their using the Heidelberg Catechism and the Psalter song book. Nevertheless we must be aware that in the areas mentioned above we do not only find the Calvinist heritage.

Theological and spiritual differences later caused a split in the NZG around the 1850s. Subsequently other mission societies appeared besides the NZG, such as the Java Comité or JC (Java Committee) in 1855, the Nederlandse Zendingvereniging or NZV (The Netherlands Missionary Association) in 1858, and others. Beside the NZG there was also the Doopsgezinde Zendingen Vereniging or DZV (Mennonite Missionary Association) which had been founded in 1847.

In 1850 in the Ermelo congregation in the Netherlands a revival took place that caused this congregation to separate itself from the Dutch Reformed Church. Among it members there grew a rather strong enthusiasm for mission. Missionary candidates from this congregation were sent to Angkola (North Sumatra and Central Java). However, the Ermelo congregation was not able to continue this work. Because of this its mission workers in Angkola were taken over by the Java Committee and the Rhenish Mission, while the efforts in Salatiga were continued by the Neukirchen

\footnote{41} Idem, p. 152.
\footnote{42} Th. van den End, Ragi Carita 2, Jakarta, 1999, p. 19.
\footnote{43} Idem, p. 12, 20.
\footnote{44} Idem, p. 20.
Mission (*Neukirchener Mission*) and by the supporters of the Salatiga Mission on Java. These missionaries themselves founded a Society of Missionaries of the Salatiga Mission in Java. These three organizations together formed what was called the Salatiga Mission (*Salatiga Zending*). The Christian Church of North Central Java (later called *Gereja Kristen Jawa Tengah Utara* or *GKJTU*) was the fruit of the work of these mission bodies. The pattern or organization used by the Ermelo congregation as to the relationship between the mother congregation and its missionaries was congregational, the missionaries were independent and did not need to follow instructions from a guiding board as was the case with the missionaries of NZG and other organizations.\(^{45}\)

How could Calvinist teaching influence churches that were the fruit of the evangelization of this movement? As mentioned above, before separating itself, members of the Ermelo congregations were Dutch Reformed. Further the Rhenish Mission which took over this ministry belonged to the united Lutheran and Calvinist church, called *Unierte Kirche*. As we know, in the *Unierte Kirche* elements of Calvinism and Lutheranism were combined. So through people sent by the Ermelo congregation and through the Rhenish Mission, Calvinist teaching could enter and exercise its influence.

Further, in Batavia in the middle of the nineteenth century a small group of Christians had a desire to initiate evangelistic efforts. There was no organization though their numbers were rather small. There was no organization to bring their desires together because the Protestant Church of the Dutch East Indies was not allowed to carry on evangelistic efforts. So they established an organization of their own with the name *Genootschap voor In-en Uitwendige Zending te Batavia* or GIUZ (Society for In-and Outward Mission in Batavia). Its goal was to expand the kingdom of God among Christians, among unbelievers and Muslims. Later it gave its attention only to nominal Christians whose faith was very shallow. The GIUZ had a branch in the Netherlands called the Java Committee. At first the Java Committee was only meant to channel funds to the GIUZ. But when a number of missionary craftsman lost their bearings, the Java Committee agreed to become the mother organization for them. Personnel were sent to Angkola and to the Madurese people in the eastern part of Java. The work in the area of Batavia in 1903 was turned over to the Netherlands Mission Association (NZV).\(^{46}\) One can say that those who established this organization were people who were living and working in the Dutch East Indies since the period of the VOC. Because of this, in their work Calvinist teaching was used because the teaching and practices of the church in the VOC period was based on the Three Forms of Unity.

As we saw above, the *Nederlandse Zendingsvereniging* or NZV came into being in 1858; next to it the *Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging* or UZV (the Utrecht Mission Association) in 1859 and the *Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zending Vereeniging* or NGZV (the Netherlands Reformed Mission Association) were founded, both in 1859. These three organizations were established partly by the traditional Calvinist group and the group which left the NZG.

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\(^{45}\) Idem, p. 22-23.

\(^{46}\) Idem, p. 23.
The NZV was established as a protest against the influence of modernism in the NZG, but those who established it were concerned that over time the NZV might be infiltrated with modernist thinking too. Therefore, this NZV decided that only those people who confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and stated that they would not work together with anyone who denied His divinity could become members. The NZV worked in West Java among the Sundanese and the Chinese, and later in Southeast Sulawesi. We can say that the NZV inherited the theology of the NZG which had not yet been influenced by modernist thinking. And as in the NZG there was a traditional group which emphasized the Calvinist tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and maintaining the Three Forms of Unity, so also Calvinist teaching were to be found in the NZV.

The NGZV was active in Central Java and on Sumba. This organization was established by people who left the NZG but who did not want to join any of the other organizations that had already been established alongside it. The people who established it embraced orthodox theology and desired to hold fast to the Calvinist theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the Three Forms of Unity accepted by the Reformed church of that period. In 1894 the NGZV was incorporated into the Mission of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Zending der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederlandsch Indië or ZGKN, see next section) which carried on its work in Central Java. The Calvinist teaching continued to be apparent in the work of the NGZV because, aside from holding to the Calvinist theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they also followed the Three Forms of Unity. Therefore it can be said the churches that were the result of the evangelization of this mission manifested Calvinist teaching.

Later one other mission organization appeared with the name Reformed Mission League (Gereformeerde Zendingsbond or GZB). It was established in 1901 by a group of Christians from the Reformed (Hervormd) Church who in the events of 1886 which led to the so called Doleantie did not leave the Dutch Reformed (Hervormd) Church. Before 1892 they supported the NGZV. But after that organization was absorbed by the ZGKN they discontinued their support and established their own organization. They used the name Re-reformed (Gereformeerd) to indicate that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tradition was their frame of reference. But in this organization as well some of the members were traditional, particularly those whose spirituality had a Pietist color. With the suggestion and help of the NZG, this organization began to work in Toraja and the area of the kingdom of Luwu (today Luwu county) in South Sulawesi. With regard to church organization, they followed the pattern of the Mission of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (ZGKN). It is clear from the name (Gereformeerd) that the GZB had Calvinist markings, particularly the tradition which developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Therefore the churches in Toraja, which are the fruit of the work of the GZB carry a Calvinist identity. Nevertheless because the GZB merged also with people who had a Pietist background, Pietist spirituality was apparent among them.

48 Idem, p. 25.
Most mission organizations mentioned above were formed by Christians who had a Reformed (Gereformeerd or Hervormd) background which was Calvinistic blended with Pietism. However, other denominations, also established missionary organizations. We have mentioned already the Mennonite Mission Association. It is appropriate to mention also the Netherlands Lutheran Society for In-and Outward Mission (Nederlandsch Luthersch Genootschap voor In-en Uitwendige Zending), which was founded in 1872. This organization worked on the Batu Islands off the coast of Sumatra. Its missionaries were trained at the Seminary of the Rhenish Mission in Barmen. A number of congregations growing out of the Reveil (Revival) movement, that is the Free Evangelical Congregations (Vrije Evangelische Gemeenten or VEG) carried on mission work on the island of Samosir in cooperation with the RMG. The RMG worked in the Unierte tradition. They worked in South Kalimantan, North Sumatra, and Nias.\(^{49}\) Finally we mention here also the Sangi and Talaud Committee which was formed in 1887 by the Java Committee, the NZV and the UZV. In 1903 the NZG was incorporated into this commitee.\(^{50}\)

In conclusion, none of the above-mentioned inter-church mission societies brought in the Dutch Calvinism only. They did not deliberately spread Calvinist teachings, nor did they try to develop them. Within those mission societies, Calvinist thinking was already mixed with Pietistic zeal. Leonard Hale in his research on the Pietistic heritage in the churches in Indonesia stated that the missionary bodies such as the NZG, NZV, UZV, NGZV, GZB, and RMG worked with two colors namely Reformed background and Pietistic spirit.\(^{51}\) The Reformed background for example can be found in the use of Heidelberg Catechism by missionaries like Joseph Kam from the NZG. He translated the Heidelberg Catechism into Malay, from 129 questions to become 133 questions to be used in catechism.\(^{52}\) The Pietistic spirit can be seen in the stress on piety of life rather than confessional tenets. The important thing is that many souls can be saved rather than to become a member of the church. Then, too, there was Lutheran flavor. Nevertheless, because inter-church mission societies included Calvinists (Reformed), churches begun through the evangelistic efforts of these mission societies also exhibited Calvinist tendencies. It is understandable that Calvinist teachings and practices are found in these churches, scattered across nearly all parts of the archipelago. As an example, we can see that a presbyterial-synodical system is still being used by many churches in Indonesia and also the election of presbyters and deacons is practiced in the congregation. Also in some churches, the Heidelberg Catechism is still being used in catechism class.

\(^{49}\) Idem, p. 41.
\(^{50}\) Idem, p. 26.
5.1.3. Reformed ideas enter the Dutch East Indies through the mission organizations of particular churches

Besides the mission organizations mentioned above, from the end of nineteenth century (1892) to the middle of twentieth century several smaller Reformed churches such as the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken (CGK) and the Vrijgemaakt Gereformeerde Kerken started mission efforts. We will not mention them one by one.

One other mission organization which ought to be mentioned is the Zending der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. This mission was formed by the Churches united in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland or GKN) established in 1886. These churches embraced a theology which stated that evangelization has to be carried out by the local church itself, not by organizations established by individual Christians. When several converts have been baptized, they immediately form a congregation on the same level with the GKN congregations in the Netherlands. The ZGKN worked since 1896, in Banyumas, Kedu, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and several other locations in Central Java. In serving these congregations they used the songs of the Psalter, the Heidelberg Catechism (translated into Javanese), which was used as a guide in explaining the Bible as the foundation of the church, and the formula used in the ministry of the sacraments was the same as that used in the Netherlands. So the Calvinist character of the churches born as the fruit of this mission is clear. This can also be seen in the way they organized their congregations, i.e., no congregation has a higher position or authority than the others, which is a characteristic of the presbyterial-synodal church order.

All mission organizations mentioned in this section so far originate from the Dutch Reformed church. However, there are also mission organizations that are not offspring from the Reformed church. An example is the Mennonite Mission Association (Doopsgezinde Zendings Vereniging or DZV), which was formed in 1847 by the Mennonite Church in the Netherlands. The special characteristics of this church are, rejection of infant baptism, rejection of the oath and military service, and the use of a congregational ecclesiology. This mission society worked from 1851 in North Central Java and later also in North Sumatra (Angkola-Mandailing). One of the churches which grew out of the work of this mission was the Evangelical Church of Java (Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa or GITJ). At first this church manifested a congregational system of organization, but later in some respects it moved into a moderate synodal direction. One of their missionaries, Pieter Jansz, was the first one who translated the Heidelberg Catechism to be used as a teaching aid. So, even though this church was basically not a Reformed church, nevertheless certain Calvinist teachings entered into it through using the Heidelberg Catechism.

Finally we have to add that for about thirty years there has been another channel through which Calvinist teaching entered Indonesia, that is, through the Evangelical Reformed Movement in Indonesia (Gerakan Reformed Injili Indonesia or GRII). The

54 Van den End, Ragi Carita 2, p. 238-239.
55 Idem, p. 240.
56 Idem, p. 21.
57 Idem, p. 233.
objectives of this movement is to bring back the churches to the basis of the revelation of God in the Bible, which was championed by the reformers, particularly Calvin and his followers to the present day.\textsuperscript{58} This movement appeared during the 1980s. They hold to the Reformed confessions of faith like the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Canons of Dort and the Westminster Confession and Catechism.\textsuperscript{59} They founded the Evangelical Reformed Theological Seminary of Indonesia.

So, from the end of the nineteenth until the middle of the twentieth century we begin to find mission societies established by churches which were Reformed in themselves, in this sense the Dutch Reformed. Only a few were not, such as the DZV (though there is a certain Reformed/Calvinist element in it) and the Lutheran Mission Society. Most mission societies did not bring in and spread any teachings other than Calvinist teachings. However, because their area of work was limited, those churches which were established as a result of their missionary work were not distributed throughout Indonesia. Therefore Calvinist teachings were in effect in those churches when they became independent. This is why we can see Calvinist teaching in certain churches in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{60} Even later, the impact of Calvinist teachings can be found also among Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal churches.\textsuperscript{61} In his research Aritonang stated that the Baptists’ teachings on the authority of the Bible and on church and state were impacted by Calvinist teaching. Melton refers to the London Confession (1647), the Philadelphia Confession (1742) and the New Hampshire Confession (1833) used by the Baptist church; actually these were a modification to the Westminster Confession and have many similarities with other Calvinist Confessions.\textsuperscript{62} In the Twenty Five Articles of Religion of the Methodist church, the teaching about Trinity, Christ, sufficiency of the Bible, sin, salvation, and new life, were impacted by Calvin doctrines.\textsuperscript{63} The same is true for the teaching on sanctification of the Pentecostal Church.\textsuperscript{64}

\subsection*{5.2. The ecumenical journey of the churches in Indonesia}

From the historical overview provided above, the Indonesian churches established through the evangelistic efforts of mission societies, and the old Protestant Churches differed from each other in their characteristics and Christian traditions. The awareness of this situation eventually encouraged the ecumenical movement in Indonesia. We focus here primarily on how Calvin’s view of church unity was employed in the ecumenical movement which led to the Council of Churches in Indonesia (\textit{Dewan

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{58} S. Tong, \textit{Gerakan Reformed Injili}, Jakarta, 1999, p. 8.} \\
\textsuperscript{59} J. Susabda, \textit{Pengantar Kedalam Teologi Reformed}, Jakarta, 1994, p. 5.} \\
\textsuperscript{60} Churches in Indonesia which can be categorized as Calvinist can be seen in Jean-Jacques Bauswein & Lukas Vischer (eds.), \textit{The Reformed Family World Wide}, Grand Rapids, 1999, p. 230-231. The section on Indonesia was written by Th. van den End.} \\
\textsuperscript{61} See Jan S. Aritonang, \textit{Berbagai Aliran Di Dalam Dan Di Sekitar Gereja}, Jakarta, 1995, p. 139, 161, 169.} \\
\textsuperscript{63} Aritonang, \textit{Berbagai Aliran Di Dalam}, p. 161.} \\
\textsuperscript{64} Idem, p. 169.}
Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia or DGI) which later became the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia or PGI). For this reason the long road to unity needs to be traced. To understand what kind of ecumenism was achieved, we have to go back to the establishment of the DGI. Next it is important to understand how ecumenism developed and what conceptual changes occurred from one General Assembly to the next up until the latest Assembly, in 2004. This research will also look at the relationship between the emerging insights about the church and its unity, and Calvin’s views. Besides, we will pay attention to important basic changes such as the change of the DGI into PGI, the origin of the so-called Lima Dokumen Keesaan Gereja (LDKG or Five Documents of Church Unity) and Dokumen Keesaan Gereja (DKG or Documents on Church Unity).

5.2.1. Brief History of the Council of Churches in Indonesia

From the history of Christianity entering Indonesia, we can see that the churches in Indonesia showed diversity in their traditions and theology. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the entire Protestant community in Indonesia converged under one church organization, which was a Reformed (Gereformeerd) one. This organization was under the leadership of the consistory (congregational elders) in Batavia and had close associations with the VOC government. However, by 1714 there had also been a Lutheran congregation in Batavia which was forced by the colonial government to join the Protestant Church in 1854. On the other hand, in 1835, the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft began working in Kalimantan and succeeded in creating a number of congregations that did not belong to the Protestant Church. The Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap which worked in East Java also successfully started several congregations which later gained independence. Meanwhile, in other areas as well, a number of independent churches took form. In the Minahasa (North Sulawesi) the NZG formed several congregations which were annexed to the Protestant Church in 1875 due to the colonial government’s purpose to have only one Protestant Church in Indonesia. As a result, until the 1940s, the Protestants in Indonesia were divided up between two major groups, the Protestant Church on the one hand and the churches formed by missionary institutions on the other. However, between 1934 and 1948 the Protestant Church in Indonesia broke up into four churches, thus ending its special status as a uniting forum in Indonesia. By the middle of the twentieth century, missionaries from various denominations in America and elsewhere entered Indonesia. In general, these denominations had Pentecostal and Charismatic traits. Consequently, what eventuated in Indonesia was ecclesiastical diversity.

The ecumenical efforts toward unity were inspired by a spirit of nationalist unity which came about during the Indonesian nationalist movement in the early twentieth century. The effect of the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 was a revival of self confidence among colonized nations in Asia to fight for freedom from colonization. For that, national unity was needed. Thus Asian nationalism grew and

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66 Van den End, Ragi Carita 2, p. 381.
Indonesian nationalism with it, starting from regional gathering groups, which sporadically fought its battle, but in the end everything centered around Indonesian nationalism. All regional movements joined in the national movement with the purpose to be freed from colonialism and to develop a modern Indonesia. Therefore, national unity was seen to be essential. This enthusiasm was what gave birth to Sumpah Pemuda (Oath of the Youth) on October 28, 1928, which states “One homeland, one nation, one language”. In this oath the Indonesian youth expressed its commitment to free their nation from colonization and become independent. This spirit of national unity and totality also infiltrated the churches. Churches born from single national ethnic backgrounds realized the importance of this unity and totality within their own church in order to further push the Indonesian national movement.

So, attempts towards church unity started, led until 1942 by Europeans, but Indonesians also carried out these attempts between 1942 till 1945; and the Japanese occupation forces also did so for political reasons. Finally, after independence in 1945, the Indonesian Christians themselves continued these efforts. Regarding the early ecumenical efforts by the Indonesians, it is important to mention the names of several pre-war ecumenical organizations. The Christen Studenten Vereniging op Java (The Christian Students Association in Java), formed in 1926, was a medium for university students from various churches and denominational backgrounds. In 1928 followed the Christen Jonge Vrouwen Federatie (The Christian Young Women’s Federation). The rise of these groups was influenced by the spirit of nationalism as shown in The Oath of the Youth that unity is essential. The formation of the Hoogere Theologische School (Theological College) in 1934 provided opportunities for young people from different churches and denominational backgrounds to meet, socialize and live together. However, all these forums were limited to bringing together individuals, not churches.

The first attempt to bring together churches and congregations began among the Chinese Indonesian Christians. They created a Bond Kristen Tioghoa (Association of Chinese Christians) in 1927 as a unifying forum for Christians in general and congregations specifically. Later, in 1939, a conference of churches and Protestant mission organizations was held to discuss the formation of a National Christian Council (Raad van Kerken en Zending in Nederlands Indië). During the Japanese occupation, churches in the Central and South Sulawesi regions founded a unifying Christian forum called Dewan Kristen Sulawesi (Christian Council in Sulawesi) in 1942, pioneered by a Japanese navy chaplain, Reverend. S. Miyahira. This regional council included Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Adventist Church, the Pentecostal Church, and even the Roman Catholic Church. Meanwhile, the Masehi Churches in Ambon-syu (Geredja-geredja Masehi di Ambon-Syu) joined together in 1943 as a Regional Church with the Roman Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Adventist and Pentecostal Churches. Then from 1946-1947 two councils were created which can be understood as Regional Councils of Churches, namely Dewan Permoesjawaratan Geredja-geredja di Indonesia (The Deliberative Council of the

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Churches in Indonesia), in 1946 in Yogyakarta which included six churches on Java, and a *Madjelis Oesaha Bersama Geredja-geredja Kristen* (The Board for Mutual Efforts of the Christian Churches) which was formed in 1947 at the Malino conference held in Malino (South Sulawesi) and attended by all the churches from the Eastern parts of Indonesia. This Board held office in Makassar and included the churches in Sulawesi and in Eastern Indonesia. It was these councils which actually initiated the Council of Churches in Indonesia.

Through various influences from several International Christian Conferences such as the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948 in Amsterdam, a Planning Committee was formed to found the Council of Churches in Indonesia. The suggestion to form a Planning Committee came from three public figures who were also pioneers in the formation of Church Councils or Commissioners in their own regions. They are Reverend T. Sihombing of the Lutheran Batak Protestant Christian Church in Sumatera, Reverend B. Probowinoto of the Reformed Churches in Central Java (GKJ), and Reverend W.J. Rumambi of the Reformed Evangelical Protestant Church in Minahasa. They met in Jakarta on January 23, 1948, and then sent a letter to a number of prominent Christians and church leaders with the suggestion to create a Planning Committee which would arrange the formation of a Council of Churches in Indonesia.70 The task of the Planning Committee was to prepare material for the preliminary ecumenical conference, which was held from November 6-12, 1949 in Jakarta, and attended by representatives from twenty-nine churches.71 Then, that same month, Rumambi who at the time served as General Secretary of the temporary ecumenical body *Madjelis Oesaha Bersama Geredja-geredja Kristen* with lots of ecumenical experience, both nationally and internationally, sent a memo to the Planning Committee. The memo contained points of thought that were intended to provide guidelines to the Planning Committee in carrying out its work. In the memo he articulated the motivation behind the concept of a Council which had to cooperate closely with the International Missionary Council. He also stated the support from various groups, namely the Protestant Church in Indonesia and the so called *Zendingsconsulaat* for the founding of such a Planning Committee.72 The *Zendingsconsulaat* was created in 1906 as a representative body of all Protestant mission societies which were working in Indonesia. Its purpose was to tackle the problems they faced in the evangelization work and to handle the tensions in connections with the government.

Then finally, the Council of Churches in Indonesia was formed. At Pentecost May 25, 1950, 26 churches attended the meeting where that Council was launched as a

70 DGI, *Dua Puluh Lima Tahun DGI*, p. 16. The specific difficulties the Protestant Church in Indonesia faced in 1948 as to its relation to a new ecumenical body, have been mentioned by Christiaan de Jonge, ‘Momen-momen oikumenis’, p. 89-93. Should the three churches which together formed the Protestant Church (the GMIM, GPM and GMIT) each join the new ecumenical body, or should the Protestant Church of Indonesia itself, as a truly ecumenical body, invite all other churches to join the existing Protestant Church? Here Rumambi and Marantika, both pastors of the Protestant Church of Indonesia, have played important roles.

71 Idem, p. 17.

forum for consultation and common efforts by the joint Indonesian churches. The forming of the Council of Churches in Indonesia was announced in a manifest, dated 25 May 1950, which states:

We, participants of the Conference for the formation of the Council of Churches in Indonesia, hereby declare, that the Council of Churches in Indonesia is already founded, as a place of consultation and common effort of the churches in Indonesia towards the unity of the churches in Indonesia, as stated in the constitution of the Council of Churches in Indonesia already decided by the conference on 25 May 1950. We believe that the founding of the Council of Churches in Indonesia as an effort towards the implementation of God’s message to His people, is simply God’s grace. We trust this council into the hand of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May God always keep its going out and coming in from this time on and forevermore, for the glory of the Lord in the world.

The founding formula displayed the uniqueness of the Council of Churches in Indonesia and did set it apart from other similar councils in other countries, for the formation of a United Christian Church in Indonesia is mentioned as its clear and explicit aim.

Thus it can be understood that the formation of the Council of Churches in Indonesia was encouraged by a number of factors: a) The understanding of the Bible regarding unity, especially John 17:21, and the Confession of Faith; b) Nationalism in Indonesia prior to and post World War II; c) The experiences of Christian youth in the Student Christian Movement and at the Theological Seminary in Jakarta; d) Experiences during the Japanese period; e) Ecumenical influences from outside such as the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches and influences from several prominent missionaries.

One can add that two of the significant figures mentioned above came from Calvinist churches. So, the role of prominent Calvinists in the formation of the ecumenical Council of Churches in Indonesia forum in Indonesia is significant. Chris

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73 It is important to note the churches attending the opening conference of Council of Churches in Indonesia: the Batak Protestant Christian Church, the Protestant Batak Karo Church, the Methodist Church in Indonesia, the Protestant Christian Church on Nias, the Evangelical Kalimantan Church, the Protestant Church in Indonesia, the Protestant Church in West Indonesia, the Pasundan Christian Church, the (Mennonite) Evangelical Church in Java, the Java Christian Churches, the East Java Christian Church, the Indonesia Christian Church in West Java, the Indonesia Christian Church in Central Java, the Indonesia Christian Church in East Java, the Bali Protestant Christian Church, the Sumba Christian Church, the Evangelical Christian Church on Sangir Talaut, the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa, the Evangelical Christian Church in Bolaang Mangondow, the Christian Church in Central Sulawesi, the Christian Church in South Sulawesi, the Protestant Church in South East Sulawesi, the Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera, the Protestant Church in the Moluccas, and the Mamasa Toraja Church. See Hartono, Gerakan Ekumenis di Indonesia, p. 77.


75 Chr. de Jonge, Menuju Keesaan Gereja, Jakarta, 1990, p. 83; cf. DGI, Dua Puluh Lima Tahun DGI, p. 9-20.
Hartono has remarked that Rumambi’s memo was highly valuable in its connection with the ecumenical movement in Indonesia, especially with regards to the pace of processing the existence of the Council of Churches in Indonesia.76 And one can state that during the formation of the Council of Churches in Indonesia, the Calvinist churches played an important role through their leaders. In this respect, Aritonang’s remark is important that one supporting factor for that role was the insights of the unity of the church inspired from Calvin, in a similar way as when the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches was formed in 1875.77 If we look back to Calvin and Beza, both proposed the need to have meetings and discussions between the reformation churches at their time.78

The name Council of Churches in Indonesia was changed into the Communion of Churches in Indonesia during the tenth assembly in Ambon in 1984. Up to 2009, the membership of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia had increased to a total of 88 churches.79

5.2.2. The development and changes in the understanding of unity: From the First General Assembly (1950) until the Tenth General Assembly (1984)80

Below, only major and significant decisions will be discussed, which were mainly developed during the General Assemblies. What happened during other meetings will be mentioned only in as far it pertains to the General Assemblies. 1950 can be viewed as the year of the first Sidang Lengkap of the Council of Churches in Indonesia.

In article 3 of the DGI’s constitution, it is stated explicitly that the purpose of the DGI is the formation of a United Christian Church in Indonesia (Gereja Kristen Yang Esa di Indonesia or GKYE). This aim is inspired by the prayer of Jesus in John 17:21 that all become one so the world will believe that Christ was sent by the Father. The question that immediately emerged was what would this intended United Christian Church in Indonesia look like, and how would it come into being? Would it have the form of a federation emphasizing togetherness of the many autonomous churches?

If we pay close attention to the statement in the manifesto mentioned above, we can interpret the United Christian Church in Indonesia as a “united church”. This is evident in the sentence, “the DGI is already founded as a place of consultation and common effort of the churches in Indonesia towards the unity of the churches in Indonesia.”

Efforts to give content to this United Church began at the second Sidang Lengkap in 1953. The meeting produced a statement which declares:

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76 Hartono, Gerakan Ekumenis di Indonesia, p. 67
78 See De Jonge, Menuju Keesaan Gereja, p. 60.
79 Data taken from the Standing Committee meeting of the CCI held in Makassar in February 16-19, 2009.
80 Actually the term General Assembly wasn’t used until the seventh Assembly in Makassar. Prior to that the term Sidang Lengkap (Assembly of the entire membership) was used. Both terms are being used here depending on the time indicated.
After hearing and investigating the explanation about Towards Forming a United Christian Church in Indonesia, the *Sidang Lengkap* of the DGI held in Jakarta from June 20-30, 1953 states its views as follows: a) that the unity claimed to be existing among churches in Indonesia and experienced by the DGI in its constitution ought to be manifested in a more concrete way; b) that the collective effort by the Indonesian churches towards the unity of the churches in Indonesia ought to be put into practice immediately.  

The first point demonstrates the recognition that this unity already exists through Christ. However, such oneness must be actualized in a more concrete shape, and the efforts in that direction must immediately begin. The Assembly also further tried to formulate the meaning of the purpose of the DGI, that what is meant by the words forming a United Christian Church is the formation of one Church of Christ in Indonesia, having one confession of faith and one underlying foundation for a church order. For that reason, three main committees were formed: a Faith and Order Committee, a Life and Work Committee, and a Committee for Non-Theological Factors, each with their own duties. The formation of these three committees was of course inspired and influenced by the approach the World Council of Churches used at that time. Thus organizational unity had become the initial concept for the direction ecumenism among the churches in Indonesia would take.

When we analyze this development, we may say this direction is far away from Calvin’s thought of the unity of the church. Calvin attached great interest to a church organized according to a church order, but he did not aim to have one church organization with one church order as an expression of unity. The main thing for Calvin was that there was agreement on fundamental matters of the Christian faith among the churches. And he saw this as the manifestation of unity in a concrete way (see chapter 3).

The third *Sidang Lengkap* in 1956, under the theme “Our Unity in Christ and Our Dissension as a Church”, discussed more concrete ecumenical issues. In this theme the churches were confronted with the idea that unity was not just a theoretical problem but a practical one as well because of existing dissension. The theological concept that evolved at that time was that church unity is based on the person and work of Jesus Christ, as seen in the communion of Christ with his followers and the visible association of his followers.

The recommendations from this *Sidang Lengkap* included: a) that each member church of the DGI forms a committee to study and formulate a consensus of opinion on the problem of unity with neighboring churches; b) that the main committees on Faith and Order, Life and Work, and Non-Theological Factors, continue their work. c) that each church’s committee sends to these three main committees the materials they needed, such as: church order, confession of faith, liturgy, and so forth. This is where unity in the sense of communion with Christ, as visible in the communion of believers

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81 Ngelow, *Jalan Keesaan DGI*, p. 49.  
83 Ngelow, *Jalan Keesaan DGI*, p. 49.  
84 DGI, *Dua Puluh Lima Tahun DGI*, p. 49.  
85 Ngelow, *Jalan Keesaan DGI*, p. 46.  
86 DGI, *Dua Puluh Lima Tahun DGI*, p. 50-51.
with Christ and with each other, would become pre-eminent. It is vital to underscore this awareness because from Calvin’s perspective, spiritual unity in Christ needed to be made concretely evident. The churches in Indonesia would be in line with Calvin if they realized that ecumenism is not just a theoretical issue but a practical one as well. In chapter three of this dissertation, Calvin’s ecumenical activities have been discussed. The format of organizational unity would still be the same, however, consisting of one church with only one church order, confession of faith and order of worship or liturgy.

The shape of the church unity would continue to be contemplated until 1960 when the fourth Sidang Lengkap of the DGI was held in Jakarta with the theme, “Jesus Christ the Light of the World”. However, between the third and fourth Sidang Lengkap, new ideas about ecumenism began to emerge. One that deserves being mentioned is the fundamental idea R. Soedarmo presented in 1958 at the Standing Committee Meeting (Sidang Badan Pekerja Lengkap or BPL) of the DGI. R. Soedarmo, a professor of Systematic Theology at the Jakarta Theological Seminary, belonged to the Javanese Christian Church. The following proposals emerged from discussions about church unity in this Standing Committee Meeting:

Even though there are many churches, church unity does not need to become problematic as long as they are aware of their oneness in Jesus Christ, the head of the church. The issue will not become heated unless confessions about Jesus Christ differ, as though there were more than one Jesus Christ. The command of Church unity is not to seek uniformity in the church with one church order and one set of elders. The intent of seeking church unity is not to become like the structure of the Roman Catholic Church. The command is not to recognize any group wherever it exists as the church of Jesus Christ. The unity achieved would be deadly if we gathered all groups together without a confession in one Jesus Christ – external oneness but internal dissention. Minor differences between one church and another must be left alone, permitted to exist, become a topic of study, and respected. As long as differences do not create the desire for secularism, they will not cause love to grow cold or relationships to break up.\(^7\)

Soedarmo’s observation contains many Calvinist elements. These will be discussed specifically in part three which follows (see section 5.3.3). His view moved the churches and gave birth to a new approach to the problem of unity - that diversity in churches and in their traditions needs to be valued. If the thinking of the previous Assembly (1953) was directed toward “uniformity”, that is uniformity in confession of faith and church order, it was now directed toward “unity in diversity”. Apparently this sort of approach to unity was well-received by those churches present at the fourth Sidang Lengkap (1960). The commission and group reports state that the fourth Sidang Lengkap of the DGI calls us to perceive the diversity we have inherited as an opportunity to bring blessing to the ecumenical movement in Indonesia. We should be encouraged each time to see it from the perspective, Jesus Christ, Light of the World,

\(^7\) Ngelow, Jalan Keesaan DGI, p. 48.
and for all of us to remember that such matters can be hazardous because they can come between us and in our mutual objective. One interesting thing that came out of the Fourth General Assembly should be mentioned here with respect to Calvin. This is the recommendation that each DGI member church could issue a statement that: a) recognizes church members from other member churches b) accepts the services of church officials from DGI member churches in preaching the Word and administering the sacraments; and c) allow their members to join the DGI member churches wherever they lived and worked. Mutual recognition was to be the concrete evidence of unity because it includes preaching the Word and administering the sacraments. Calvin felt that the church organization could differ according to the situation and place. Yet if there was mutual recognition and acceptance as a church to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, then unity had already been achieved. Perhaps this view was inspired more by the World Council of Churches but in my opinion the influence of WARC in the WCC should be considered as well.

Members continued to mull over the structure this unity would take until 1964 when DGI’s fifth Sidang Lengkap was held with the theme, “Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd”. In the run-up to that assembly, the DGI’s executive board asked representatives from member churches to put forward their ideas about church unity. Three delegates from member churches, that is Reverend G. Siahaan from the Batak Protestant Christian Church, Reverend P.H. Rompas from the Protestant Church in Indonesia, and Reverend R. Soedarmo from the Java Christian Churches were asked to present their opinion as to the issue of “Convention” or “Synod”, which had become a hot topic of debate during the fourth Sidang Lengkap.

In his paper entitled, “Church Unity in Indonesia”, Siahaan insisted that unity was incorporated within the essence of the church. Therefore no church would oppose the idea of unity. In regard to unity, churches differed only in the way in which that structure was interpreted. When a church is referred to as the body of Christ, it does not depict church structure or organization but unity or partnership. This is a beautiful, dynamic partnership, a gift from God. The church as the body of Christ is varied, yet one at the same time. This unity, however, is not characterized by organizational uniformity but by a “prosperous relationship”. Furthermore, this relationship already exists among the churches of Indonesia. It is manifested in their love for one another and recognition of each other’s baptism. Church unity is not found in a uniformity of structure, church order, liturgy, and the words of the confession of faith, but rather in a unity of spirit. We do not need to contemplate the design of a United Christian Church. The shape of that unity in Indonesia will continue

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89 PGI, Arak-arakan Oikumene, p. 199-200; cf. DGI, Dua Puluh Lima Tahun DGI, p. 52.
90 See Inst.1536, 58; Inst.iv.7b; Inst.iv.9b.
91 DGI, Dua Puluh Lima Tahun DGI, p. 55.
92 Idem, p. 56.
to evolve, and we do not know exactly in which direction it will take us. Therefore, we simply hand it over to our leader, the good Shepherd, Siahaan said.

Next, the Rev. P.H. Rompas sought to use the Protestant Church in Indonesia as an example of church unity. He stressed that the unity of the Protestant Church in Indonesia was based on the idea that “together we represent one church, but each church exists within its own organization.” On the one hand each church sets up its own structure of life and work according to the gifts with which God has blessed it. In that way it is able to carry on its work, loyal to Jesus Christ, in the direction in which it has been called by him. On the other hand, it is also cognizant that it does not stand alone, that it is bound to other churches and is one with them. That unity is founded on Ephesians 4:4-6a. Based on this confession, the Protestant Church in Indonesia strives to express its unity in a similarity of church organization, worship, and confession of faith. Another form of unity is to build ecumenical relations with overseas churches. In so doing, the unity of the body of Christ becomes increasingly visible. The task of each member church is to support the ecumenical effort and strengthen the DGI through its work and funding. The DGI functions as a place of partnership for prayer and endeavor as it motivates and coordinates member churches in their effort to express their unity. That unity must come from the member churches themselves, said Rompas. So, Rompas, in other words wanted to stress unity in diversity. By having together the same organization, worship, confession of faith, and relationship with churches wherever they are, unity can be expressed. And initiatives for unity should come from every church itself.

Finally, Soedarmo’s paper emphasized that if churches, as clarified by the previous assemblies, stood ready to seek a United Christian Church in 1950, a new point of view had emerged at the General Assembly in Jakarta which indicated that a cooperative effort like the DGI was enough to show unity. This could, of course, be considered a step backward in the effort to achieve church unity. Right now we are further from church unity in Indonesia than in 1950, according to Soedarmo. He then said that the unity intended by Jesus in his prayer was a visible unity, something that was not impossible to achieve. There was no principal difference in fundamental matters that unconditionally divided the churches. There were only two important differences in church circles at that time: a) the Muria Christian Church’s (Mennonite) view of infant baptism, and b) the Protestant Batak Christian Church’s understanding of the sacraments. But these differences, in his opinion, could be talked over and did not need to interfere with the creation of a United Christian Church in Indonesia.

Rompas and Soedarmo came from the Reformed churches (see above). And Siahaan was from the HKBP with a Unierte tradition. So we can take note that their views were influenced by their church background. They accepted unity in Christ as a reality of the church, hoped for a visible evidence of unity, did not give priority to

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93 Idem, p. 56.
94 Idem, p. 57.
95 Idem, p. 57-59.
96 DGI, Yesus Kristus Terang Dunia, p. 245.
97 DGI, Dua Puluh Lima Tahun DGI, p. 60-61.
uniform organizational structure, and valued differences. These kinds of views have been developed also in the ecumenical movement generally.

The Sixth Sidang Lengkap was then held in Makassar in 1967 with the theme “Behold, I Make All Things New”. The outcome of the previous Sidang Lengkap continued to inspire discussions at this assembly, as attested to by the on-going work of conceptualizing the Confession of Faith, Church Order, and liturgy. The concept of the Confession of Faith was patterned after the Apostles’ Creed. Yet the concrete struggles facing the church, both in faith and in society, were not overlooked. On the contrary, church order became an issue, for the commission thought that what the second Sidang Lengkap had intended by unity was “uniformity”. It was unacceptable if that meant one church order, one confession of faith, and one liturgy. The rationale was that uniformity was not in accordance with the theological concept of the churches nor with their historical, sociological and geographical conditions. As to the liturgy, the commission had already successfully assembled three kinds of liturgy that accommodated the three dominant traditions in Indonesia: Calvinist, Lutheran and Methodist.98

As mentioned above, the Commission on Unity refuted the idea that uniformity was the type of unity desired. Unity in diversity was preferred, as the previous the DGI Sidang Lengkap had argued. The idea of unity as “convene” and “federation” was thought irrelevant. A different concept was needed. After heated discussions, the Commission on Unity presented a new concept at the Sixth Sidang Lengkap in Makassar, the concept of an Ecumenical Synod of Churches in Indonesia (Sinode Oikumene Gereja-gereja di Indonesia). According to the commission, this form of unity was more realistic at the time.99 What the churches needed to strive for now was an Ecumenical Synod even though this Ecumenical Synod had not yet become the United Christian Church in Indonesia. The basic thinking behind this idea of an Ecumenical Synod of Churches in Indonesia was that, according to the aims of churches in Indonesia prior to the United Christian Church in Indonesia, it expressed a more visible unity than that which Jesus Christ gave to his Church.100 The Ecumenical Synod’s Confession should be the Apostles’ Creed and a Confession of Faith (yet to be compiled by Member Churches). The task of the Ecumenical Synod was to continue the work that had been carried out by the DGI, as noted in chapter four of the constitution of the churches in Indonesia. Members of the Ecumenical Synod were to be the churches in Indonesia which endorsed the principle and confession of the Ecumenical Synod and which would join in working toward a United Christian Church in Indonesia. The Ecumenical Synod would be augmented by the Ecumenical Assembly (assembly of member churches which would meet once every four years), the Ecumenical Synod Executive Board (that would meet at least four times a year), and Commissions and Bodies (that assisted the Ecumenical Synod in certain service sectors). Regional church councils would continue too, as a cooperative effort of

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98 Later on the Pentecostal tradition was considered to be the fourth tradition.
99 Ngelow, Jalan Keesaan DGI, p. 60.
100 DGI, Dua Puluh Lima Tahun DGI, p. 66.
churches in each region until greater unity that is the United Christian Church in Indonesia had been achieved.\textsuperscript{101}

The Ecumenical Synod Order compiled by the Commission and proposed to the Sixth Sidang Lengkap dealt with the following basic concerns: The fellowship of Churches in Indonesia within the Council would become an ecclesiastical umbrella in the form of a synod. The decisions of this main assembly would be binding for its members. The number of delegates of each church to the general assembly would be determined by the membership of each church. Member churches would still be free to relate to their partner churches. The basis of the ecclesiology and the confession were the Scriptures, the Confession of Faith, and the Common Understanding of Faith.\textsuperscript{102}

The results of this commission were handed over to the Sixth Sidang Lengkap (1967) for further discussion. However, this Assembly did not respond favorably to the ideas put forth as to such an Ecumenical Synod of Churches in Indonesia. The Assembly only accepted the concept on an Ecumenical Synod Order as material for the churches to discuss and wrestle with in the future. No other decision about it was reached. It was felt that the churches needed more time to discuss it. Therefore the Sidang Lengkap gave two assignments to the Standing Committee Meeting of the DGI: 1) to forward the concept to member churches which had not yet received or discussed it, requesting all member churches to send their official responses to the Standing Committee Meeting no later than two years after the Sixth Sidang Lengkap of the DGI; 2) to collect those official responses and have the Standing Committee Meeting prepare a new concept to be sent to all member churches, requesting them to take an official position on the matter so that a decision could be reached at the next General Assembly.\textsuperscript{103}

The Standing Committee Meeting completed its assignment and urged member churches to thoroughly discuss the concept of the Order of the Ecumenical Synod of Churches in Indonesia and give their reactions so that the results could be discussed at the Seventh General Assembly. However, the attitude was one of apathy, just as it had been when the concept was first introduced. A poor response from churches was reported in 1970, when the Standing Committee of the Assembly and Commission on Unity was holding consultations.\textsuperscript{104}

“Commanded to go into the World” was the theme of the Seventh General Assembly, which convened in 1971 in Pematang Siantar.\textsuperscript{105} This theme clearly illustrated the endeavor of the churches to go forth, not only to serve themselves but the society, the people and the nation as well. This calling was manifested in the appeal for all church members to participate responsibly in the 1971 general election. The General Assembly even issued a statement on “Our task and responsibility after the general election”. The General Assembly noted that the church’s calling in the world had not changed, that it was to announce the good news of the Kingdom of God


\textsuperscript{102} Ngelow, Jalan Keesaan DGI, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{103} DGI, Keputusan Sidang Lengkap VI DGI, Jakarta, 1967, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{104} Only five member churches responded after discussing it at their Synod Assemblies, whereas five others indicated that the concept was still under consideration.

\textsuperscript{105} Hartono, Gerakan Ekumenis di Indonesia, p. 92.
within the context of this nation which was being developed under Pancasila (the five basic principles of the Republic of Indonesia). When the church participated in the national development, it was involving itself in the world and witnessing.

In addition to other important decisions made by the seventh General Assembly, one important matter which illustrates that the churches’ interest was being directed to the world outside the churches should be mentioned here. A new approach toward unity had emerged. This idea and new approach toward unity was “integrating unity within church worship, witness and service” or, in other words, unity in witness and service. Unity was sought in action, realizing the call together within the society. This meant that one aspect of achieving unity could be accomplished if the churches in Indonesia could carry out their calling together. With that, less attention began to be paid to organizational unity. In anticipating this new approach, the reordering and restructuring of the DGI then began.\textsuperscript{106} With that understanding, the seventh General Assembly issued an important statement, which reads as follows:

We are called to share the responsibility of freeing humankind from suffering caused by backwardness, poverty, disease, fear and legal uncertainties. We are called to fully participate in striving for justice in all areas of life: justice in economics and politics, justice between people and classes, social justice, and international justice. We are called to do away with deceitfulness and hypocrisy, corruption and dishonesty. We are called to work to improve the physical and spiritual well-being of all people.\textsuperscript{107}

Several Assembly executive boards played an active role prior to the Eighth General Assembly.\textsuperscript{108} At the Assembly of the Standing Committee in 1974, a Committee of Nine Persons was formed. This Committee produced a document entitled “Basic Concepts on the Structure of Unity”, which contained new ideas. These concepts recommended that several things be done to improve the DGI constitution, particularly in relation to articles 2 and 4: the need to develop unity at local levels and in the regions according to provincial divisions of the government, and to change the name “council” to “communion” to avoid any impression of hierarchy in the Regional Councils of Churches in Indonesia.

The 1975 Standing Committee Meeting had the executive committee and the Commission on Unity prepare a working paper for the Eighth General Assembly. The Committee of Nine was asked again to prepare a working paper entitled, “The Formation of the United Christian Church in Indonesia and How to Attain it”. As for the road to unity, one important idea was presented here - the need to develop a unified theology, to set up structures for witness -service and involvement in development, and to establish structures for the ecumenical movement at all levels.\textsuperscript{109} As far we can see, the development of thinking of the churches in Indonesia concentrated on the form and the content of unity from the first to seventh General Assemblies. Starting from

\textsuperscript{106} DGI, \textit{Notulen Sidang Raya VII DGI}, Jakarta, 1971, p. 50-70. Prior to this, members of the Standing Committee were made up of certain people chosen by the General Assembly, not representatives of member churches.

\textsuperscript{107} DGI, \textit{Tiga Puluh Tahun DGI}, Jakarta, 1980, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{108} Since this year the term Sidang Lengkap was changed to Sidang Raya (General Assembly).

\textsuperscript{109} Ngelow, \textit{Jalan Keesaan DGI}, p. 71.
uniformity and spiritual unity, next organizational unity, then to unity in diversity, back again to organizational unity, and ended with idea of unity in witness and service to the world. Yet the tension between spiritual and organizational unity has not ended.

This working paper was discussed during the 1976 Standing Committee Meeting in Sukabumi. This meeting made two recommendations for churches which would be taken to the eighth General Assembly in Salatiga from 1-12 July, 1976: one is to change the name of the Council of Churches in Indonesia to the Communion of Churches in Indonesia; and two, to change the term General Assembly to Ecumenical Synod.110 These recommendations were presented to the Eighth General Assembly in Salatiga in 1976 with the theme “Jesus Christ Frees and Unites”. But the General Assembly gave a cold response to changing the name from Council to Communion. Their reason was that a name change does not guarantee that the intended goal will be achieved.111 So in 1977, at the Standing Committee Meeting in Bali, DGI’s Executive Board proposed several new ideas, one of which was to change the formulation of the DGI objectives from “The Formation of a United Christian Church in Indonesia” to something along the lines of “The Manifestation of the Unity of the Christian Church in Indonesia” Aside from that, it was suggested that the name Council of Churches in Indonesia be changed to Ecumenical Fellowship of Churches in Indonesia and that the General Assembly of the Council of Churches in Indonesia become The National Ecumenical Assembly of Churches in Indonesia.112 The reason given was that on the one hand the DGI was well-known and recognized, but on the other, it made people wrongly assume that the DGI was a substructure of the World Council of Churches and therefore for the churches and people which had not joined the DGI this become spook.113 The suggestion to change the name was only accepted in 1979 at the Standing Committee Meeting in Sukabumi.

Yet in 1980 at the Ninth General Assembly in Tomohon, with the theme “Your Kingdom Come”, a different decision was reached. The recommendation of changing the name was not considered vital. The word Communion could be used at the regional and local levels because the word Council was regarded as still relevant in national context.114 At least two important decisions were made at the Ninth General Assembly regarding the aims of the DGI: 1) It was agreed to add “within the Communion of the DGI” at the end of each church’s name. 2) It was resolved that during the next four years the DGI together with the churches would develop and carry out concrete programs in stages at the local, regional and national levels to prepare for establishing One United Christian Church at the Tenth General Assembly of the DGI.115

From that starting point the General Assembly gave the Standing Committee the assignment during the first assembly after the General Assembly to do all the groundwork to achieve the above goal, that is to prepare for the establishment of One

110 DGI, Notulen Sidang Raya VIII DGI, Jakarta, 1976, p. 146-147.
111 Idem, p. 147.
112 Ngelow, Jalan Keesaan DGI, p. 80.
113 Idem, p. 80.
115 Idem, p. 200.
United Christian Church in Indonesia. The next Standing Committee assemblies of the DGI were also given the task of improving and finalizing those preparations.116

At the Standing Committee Meeting in 1981 it was noted that basic agreement among churches on the United Christian Church already existed. The United Christian Church could be established: 1) If the churches could mutually accept and recognize the manifestations of the church of God including the mutual acceptance and recognition of baptism, confirmation, offices, repentance, and other services; 2) If churches and Christians from various churches at certain times could worship and celebrate Holy Communion together; 3) If churches could do certain things jointly in the areas of witness, service and instructing the people; 4) If the churches and Christians could help each other at times of joy and sorrow, in good times and bad; 5) If churches, by using certain institutions, could regularly meet, deliberate, and make joint decisions in facing their work and problems.117 These five “ifs” could be called preconditions which promoted the cause of unity. Therefore it was hoped that these five “ifs” could be realized, both within the DGI as well as in member churches.

Based on this five “ifs” idea, further the Standing Committee Meeting in 1982 proposed what they called “Symbols of Unity” that is documents that proclaim the tenets of the United Christian Church in Indonesia. Those documents include: a Charter/Vows of Unity of the Churches in Indonesia; a Joint confession or understanding of faith; a Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance; Principles of Church Order; and finally an Ecumenical Hymnal.118

These documents were later discussed and revised in 1983 during the Standing Committee Meeting in Rantepao. While working on these documents, a new development emerged. The Charter/Vows of Unity was changed into a Declaration of Unity and later became the Preamble. The Joint Confession of Faith was changed into a Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia. The content of the Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance was amended to include church membership, ecclesiastical discipline, Basic Teachings of the Christian Faith, Marriage, and Funeral. The title Principles of the Church Order needed to be clarified. Because of problem with funding, different theological understanding, etc., the Ecumenical Hymnal could not be completed. The DGI Executive Board saw that, as a statement of the ideals of the United Christian Church in Indonesia, one important matter was the Common Understanding and Vision of the cooperative work of the churches in Indonesia, in and for Indonesia, by seeing Indonesia as a region of witness and service together. Therefore another document describing the Common Understanding of that cooperative work was needed. Later this document was compiled and entitled Outline of the Mission of Common Calling. The DGI Executive Board also noted that autonomy in the areas of theology, power, and funding was another important question related to the ideals of the United Christian Church. The issue of autonomy needed to be considered more fully.

117 Idem, p. 40.
Therefore, a document was drawn up as a study for developing understanding about autonomy. This document later became a supplement to the Symbols of Unity.\footnote{Idem, p. 44-45.}

After discussing these documents, the Standing Committee Meeting decided to adopt the revised number and names of documents and to give comments for improving them. After that the documents were discussed by churches at the regional level to provide input to the Executive Board of the DGI. The Executive Board formulated these materials for presentation in 1984 at the Standing Committee Meeting, and this board in turn reformulated the documents and presented them in 1984 at the Tenth General Assembly in Ambon. The DGI’s Executive Board compiled the five texts of the Symbols of Unity into a book entitled the Five Documents of Church Unity. Intensive discussions on these five documents were held at sections of the Tenth General Assembly in 1984 with the theme “Jesus Christ the Life of the World”. After each section had reported the results of its discussions at a plenary meeting and after hearing the response of assembly participants, the five documents were unanimously accepted with revisions, additions and improvements, both to content as well as wording.\footnote{See PGI, Memasuki Masa Depan Bersama, Notulen Sidang Raya DGI, Jakarta, 1984, p. 174-198.}

After that the churches in Indonesia referred to the Five Documents of Church Unity as a structure that unified the General Assembly of the Communion of Churches of Indonesia in Palangka Raya in 2000. The five documents, known as The Five Documents of Church Unity, consisted of:

1. Outline of the Mission of Common Calling
2. Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia
3. Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance of the Member Churches of the CCI
4. Constitution of the CCI
5. Towards Self-Reliance in Theology, Manpower and Funds.

In my opinion, two of those five documents are very significant in reference to Calvin. Those documents are the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about Christian Faith in Indonesia and the Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance (see points two and three above). The Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia reflects consensus on the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. When it comes to those basic doctrines, all member churches have the same understanding. The Charter of Mutual Recognition Acceptance is a concrete visualization of that agreement in terms of mutually acknowledging offices, service, discipline, worship and so on as ordered in that text. In relation to unity, these two concerns were similar to Calvin’s.

Without underestimating the relevance and significance of the other documents for the churches of Indonesia, it is important to look at the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) and the Charter of Mutual Recognition Acceptance in relation to Calvin. The placement of these texts themselves within the full document is also worth noticing because the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) precedes the Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance. This is in accordance
with Calvin who assigned primary importance to the common acceptance of basic doctrines of the Christian faith.

In terms of content, sections of these two documents which seem Calvinist in nature will be quoted below. The Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) perceives the church as follows:

The Holy Spirit gathers His followers from every nation, tribe, people and language into one community, that is, the church, where Christ is Lord and Head (Eph. 4:3-16; Rev. 7:9). In that way the church and its members can fully comprehend the meaning of Baptism and Holy Communion, which are always administered together with preaching of the Word in the worship service, as a sign of the church’s presence and sanctity.\(^\text{121}\)

The acknowledgement that preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments are signs of the presence and sanctity of the church is Calvinistic, and also Lutheran. For Calvin, the church was alive when preaching was done faithfully and the sacraments were administered correctly, as instigated by Christ. The following quotation, emphasizing that the church is universal or catholic in nature, is Calvin’s first affirmation of church unity.

That fellowship is comprised of all believers from every place on earth throughout the ages and includes every nation, tribe, people, language and social class that is gathered in the body of Christ, that is, the church. The church, as such, is universal (catholic).\(^\text{122}\)

Next, in the Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance we note that the Holy Communion is a means toward unity. The Holy Communion is viewed not only as a sign of God’s redemption of the world but of the unity of humanity as well. Through fellowship there is a yearning for oneness. In Calvin’s view there is a relationship between Holy Communion and unity since in the Lord’s Supper union with Christ is given, and from that source the union of the congregation as his body. Through the fellowship of Holy Communion, the church itself is also a sign of the work of God’s redemption in the world, as a sign of unity of a new mankind. In that sense, the Holy Communion of the church yearns for the unity of all people of the kingdom of God that goes beyond the institutional limits of the church, so that Christ becomes all in all (Mk 12:25; 1 Cor. 11:26, Col. 3:10-11).\(^\text{123}\)

In my opinion, the teachings of Calvin on government and the relation between church and state are echoed in the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia.\(^\text{124}\) Chapter 4 article 13 of the Five Documents of Church Unity emphasizes that the government is instituted by God and given the task of protecting those who are good and resisting evil. The church is obliged to pray for the government and help it to carry out its job. The church is also expected to


\(^{122}\) PGI, *Dalam Kemantapan Kebersamaan*, p. 89.

\(^{123}\) Idem, p. 104; PGI, *Lima Dokumen Keesaan Gereja*, p. 65. Here we are once again reminded that the purpose is not to conduct detailed research on the Mutual Recognition Acceptance Charter.

\(^{124}\) De Jonge holds the same opinion in *Apa Itu Calvinisme?*, p. 312-313.
criticize the government if it wrongly exercises the authority it has been granted (Rev.13). If the government should demand something that is incompatible with the faith, Christians are to show their allegiance to God before man. Further in Chapter 6 article 21 of the Documents on Church Unity it is said that the church is an autonomous institution apart from the state and is free of any state intervention. Meanwhile, the church has no right to intervene in the life of the state, for both have their own tasks. In connection with this, William A. Mueller stated that in Luther’s time, while the church in German territories often became nothing more than the servile maidservant of the respective rulers due to the introduction of the territorial regime, Calvin manfully and against much opposition fought for the independence of the church towards the state. The venerable company of Calvin’s clergy insisted on freedom to teach the Word of God and to enforce the discipline of the church without interference from the secular authorities.

In sum, the objectives originally formulated by the Council of Churches in Indonesia seemed forthright enough, but whether or not they could actually be applied in Indonesia had not been thought through well. As a result, two concerns created a lot of tension for more than three decades (1950-1984) with the one stream stressing organizational unity and the other spiritual unity. The churches in Indonesia spent a great deal of time searching for the kind of unity that suited their context best. That tension only subsided after the wording of the DGI’s objectives was changed from “establishing unity” to “manifestation of unity”. The name “Council” was then changed to “Communion”, as noted in the Five Documents of Church Unity. In this case actually Calvin’s theology about realizing unity could have become a reference if the churches had wanted to learn the roots of their traditions. Unfortunately, however, academic studies of Calvin were never conducted by the churches in Indonesia at the time. In spite of that, some of the ideas that grew out of the discussions from assembly to assembly were not so far from the line of Calvin’s thinking. As a result, the Five Documents of Church Unity were drawn up, and later these became the Documents on Church Unity in 2000. This document exhibits a Calvinistic approach or Reformed traits toward unity both in title and content, as found within the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia and the Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance. As to the change of order in the Documents on Church Unity, perhaps what is important for us is not the position of these two documents (Statement and Charter) within the whole per se but the fact that they must not be left out in the Documents on Church Unity. The tension about unity went on for a long time because member churches were not serious about following up decisions that had already been made at each assembly. This raises the question of why churches were motivated to join the ecumenical movement in Indonesia in the first place. Some only sought protection under the umbrella of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia when they faced problems with the local community or government.

125 PGI, Dalam Kemantapan Kebersamaan, p. 85-86.
126 PGI, Dokumen Keesaan Gereja, 2006, p. 81.
5.3. The views of several Indonesian Reformed theologians regarding ecumenicity

The second section of this chapter has referred to the way in which the ideas of church unity were developed. It explicitly mentioned several Reformed figures involved in shaping the Council of Churches in Indonesia and those who put forth their ideas at ecumenical meetings such as the General Assembly of the Council of Churches in Indonesia. This paragraph will discuss how Calvinist theologians viewed church unity. Their ideas helped to advance the ecumenical movement in Indonesia. Several of them have already been mentioned above. There are many, but a few of the outstanding ones include: J. Leimena, W.J. Rumambi, R. Soedarmo, H. Hadiwijono, J.L.Ch. Abineno, Agustina Lumentut, and Eka Darmaputera. In choosing these particular names, the following considerations were taken into account: membership in Calvinist-based churches; regional representation; activeness in the ecumenical movement both with ideas as well as involvement in the organizational structure of the Council/Communion of Churches; and gender representation. Broadly speaking, Indonesian churches can be divided into the Eastern region and the Western region. People like Leimena, Rumambi, Abineno and Lumentut are seen as representing the Eastern region, whereas Soedarmo, Hadiwijono and Eka Darmaputera are seen as representing the Western region. With the exception of Harun Hadiwijono, all have held positions in the Council of Churches in Indonesia or the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. Agustina Lumentut was the first woman to hold an office in the Communion of Churches in Indonesia.

5.3.1. J. Leimena

Johannes Leimena (1905-1977) came from Ambon. It could be said that, like his parents, he inherited Calvinist Christianity which was brought to Ambon. He was a member of the Protestant Church of Western Indonesia in Jakarta. This is another church of Calvinist background which, along with, among others, the Protestant Church of the Moluccas before it, belonged to the Protestant Church of Indonesia. After graduating from STOVIA (School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Arsten (School for the Training of Indigenous Physicians), Leimena worked as a medical doctor in Bandung for eleven years from 1930 on. He received his doctor’s degree in the health sciences in 1939. He was very actively involved in the struggle for Indonesian independence, both visibly and in the underground movement. After independence had been proclaimed, he held several government posts beginning with minister and vice-minister of finance, up to acting president. He was often entrusted to represent Indonesia in international negotiations. He can therefore be considered one of Indonesia’s national figures. But Leimena was also a lay church leader. He was one of the founders of the Christen Studenten Vereniging in Java, a coordinating institution for Christian student associations from various churches which gave rise to the

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Council of Churches in Indonesia (see 5.2.1 above). On several occasions he and his colleagues participated in international ecumenical conferences such as the one in 1938 in Tambaran. In the board of the DGI he once served as a vice-chairman.

Leimena poured out his ideas in various writings that revolved around two topics – nationalism, which involved bringing the people together, and church unity. These two concerns often seemed to be closely linked in his thinking. A.G. Hoekema noted that Leimena’s thinking was influenced by meeting with people like C.L. van Doorn, Hendrik Kraemer and W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft. Through them, the need for harmony and oneness became very apparent to Leimena. For him, the motto “That they may be one” (Ut omnes unum sint) taken from John 17:22 was not only the job of the nation but a special task for the church. Van Doorn was an agriculturalist and a member of the Reformed church. He was assigned to work with Christian youth, particularly in Batavia, by the Dutch Christian Student Association (Nederlandsche Christen Studenten Vereniging or NCSV). Meanwhile, Hendrik Kraemer was sent by the Dutch Bible Society (Nederlandsch Bijbel Genootschap, or NBG) to Java. W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft was to be the first secretary of the World Council of Churches who became actively involved in the development of the Indonesian Churches after the conference in Tambaran in 1938. In Tambaran he met Leimena and friends. So, the Reformed heritage that influenced these three men had an effect on Leimena. In an article entitled, “De Zending en wij” (Mission and Us), Leimena wrote:

The job of the church is to knock down the walls of misunderstanding between ethnic groups here, between Europeans, Indonesians, and Chinese, if the church really wants to fulfill Christ’s command, that they be one.

In another article, he declared that the church must work together for the renewal of society. Before independence in 1945, renewal was focused on the journey to Indonesian sovereignty. After independence, it was focused on harmony within that young country. The contribution of the church in this aspect of renewal began with individual renewal. The church would only be able to contribute if that renewal was visible within itself. In that regard several times he enthusiastically proposed that the churches in Indonesia unite.

Thus, for Leimena a conflict between nationalism and church unity should not be allowed even though the two differed. On one occasion he stressed that there was no other alternative for a Christian in Indonesia than to defend the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia which was based on Pancasila. He even saw the goal of creating a fair and prosperous society as the task of a Christian. This is important in reference to the continental blocks that existed which could threaten world peace and brotherhood. He said:

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130 Hoekema, Denken in dynamisch evenwicht, p. 115.
131 J. Leimena, "De Zending en Wij", in CSV Blad 7/1, Agustus 1940, p. 10-14.
132 J. Leimena, “De ontmoeting der rassen in de Kerk”, in De Opwekker 87/12 1941, p. 626-635.
Therefore Christians have no alternative but to defend the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila. The goal of forming a just and prosperous nation, based on Pancasila must also be the goal of Christians. In the world split into blocks, with its “hot spots” in many continents, it is fitting that we as a people should participate in building up brotherhood among nations and peace in the world.133

But the Christian faith is above nationalism. According to Leimena, our relationship with the universal church must determine our relationship with our own people and with other peoples.134 For Leimena, the churches’ self-understanding in Indonesia could not be separated from their understanding of the universal church. And this is important because the problem of the universality of the church was stressed by Calvin also as he described church unity.135 That means that there is plurality both in society and in the church. The church is pluralistic because it contains people of every race or nation. Yet that reality cannot create dissidence or conflict. On the other hand, plurality makes room for certain ethnic churches to forge ahead to a future vision. Leimena voiced this opinion when the need for a National Christian Council began to surface. For him, the future of the church in Indonesia was expressed as follows:

And so it shall be if God so wishes. We see in the future the establishment of one Indonesian church, one Chinese church and one Dutch church which together shall form one Protestant church in the Netherlands East Indies, as a Christian witness in the midst of a large and strong Muslim population.136

Leimena’s stance gives the impression that his idea of church unity in Indonesia was some sort of federation of churches, something that had come up once as a question about the shape and content of church unity in Indonesia. However, this type of unity was not discussed further after that. He was very aware that the churches in Indonesia were ethnic and traditional churches that followed their home church. In this kind of situation, such churches could become narrow-minded and show little respect toward the ecumenical movement in Indonesia.

This ethnic basis, and to some extent traditionalism as well, can cause the churches to have a rather limited outlook, with the consequence that this can hinder ecumenical life in Indonesia.137

Because of that, churches needed to build up their self confidence and self-reliance in the realization that although they were separate as regional churches, together they formed a church that was ecumenical.138 And an important element in the framework of church unity in Indonesia was this:

134 Leimena, “De Ontmoeting der rassen in the Kerk”, p. 626.
135 See chapter 3 of this dissertation.
136 Leimena, “De Ontmoeting der rassen in the Kerk”, p. 635.
137 Leimena, “The Task of Restoring Fellowship”, p. 61
138 Idem, p. 61.
The efforts in the field of nation and character building at this time parallel our efforts in the ecumenical field in Indonesia. Efforts to strengthen the unity and union of the people parallel our efforts to unite the Christian churches in Indonesia. In this too Christian churches in seeking for unity are making a positive contribution to nation and character building in Indonesia. There is a possibility that God wishes to use our Churches, which are scattered throughout Indonesia in their efforts to form one united church, as an instrument to strengthen the union and unity of Indonesian people. Therefore our efforts in the field of the unity of the church responsibility for which has been given to the National Council of the Churches and which has received a good response from all the regional churches, should be continued so that, if this is God’s will, in the future there will be in Indonesia one Christian church in our country.\textsuperscript{139}

It is not surprising, then, that in addition to being actively involved in the struggle for nationhood, Leimena was also actively involved in the church ecumenical movement in Indonesia.

\textbf{5.3.2. W.J. Rumambi}

W.J. Rumambi (1916-1984) came from the Minahasa. From 1940-1947 he served as a minister of the Evangelical Protestant Church in the Minahasa (GMIM). Like the GPM, the GPIB, the GMIM at its inception also belonged to the Protestant Church in Indonesia (GPI). During World War II Rumambi worked in the Office of Religious Affairs in Manado under Japanese supervision. As mentioned above, he was one of those who designed and framed the Council of Churches in Indonesia. When the Council of Churches in Indonesia was established in 1950, Rumambi became its first General Secretary, a position he held until 1954. Before that he had once been General Secretary of the Protestant Church of Indonesia (1948-1950). In public life he once was a member of Indonesia’s Constituent Assembly and he served as a minister in various cabinets from 1959-1966.\textsuperscript{140} Thus it could be said that he was not just a church figure but a national figure as well.

His views on church unity can be seen from his lectures, speeches, and sermons. In July 1948 the General Synod Assembly of the Protestant Church in Indonesia was held in Bogor. The assembly not only discussed the GPI matters but also deliberated over the establishment of a coordinating institution with the Council of Churches in Indonesia. In that assembly, Rumambi was chosen as the General Secretary of the executive committee of the GPI. There he presented his ideas about the need to strive for church unity in Indonesia by forming a coordinating institution together. When he started this new position in 1948, he recounted in his speech discussions that had taken place at that Assembly in Bogor concerning the formation of the Council of Churches in Indonesia. He felt the article on ecumenism had become an important item on the agenda of that Assembly. F.L. Cooley quotes a statement by Rumambi in 1948 in which the importance of this issue is underscored:

\textsuperscript{139} Idem, p. 62.

At the General Assembly of the Synod in Bogor, lengthy deliberations were held on the chapter of relationship between and oneness of the churches in Indonesia, the chapter on ecumenism. It can be said, that this chapter became the most important issue, as assembly reports indicated.\(^{141}\)

Here we see that the impetus, even the pressure, to create a coordinating ecumenical Council of Churches in Indonesia had come from Rumambi, a Calvinist from Minahasa, but that it was also supported by the GPI. Since its inception, then, the GPI was one of the predominantly Calvinist churches that supported the drive for unity in Indonesia.

This GPI Assembly could be described as a proto-Ecumenical Church Assembly in Indonesia because among those present were delegates from the conference of churches centered in Yogyakarta; local church leaders from Medan (Sumatra), Dayaks from Kalimantan, and representatives from Chinese, East Javanese, and Pasundan churches.

Then, on 30 September 1949, Rumambi delivered a sermon at the 15th anniversary celebration of GMIM in which he described the main purpose of that celebration. In it we can see his ecclesiastical insight which stressed church unity. We quote from this sermon:

> Our primary purpose at this time is, together with GMIM, to praise God, the head of the Church, who has led GMIM for 15 years as an autonomous church. We do this because, as Christians together in Indonesia, we experience each other’s joy. In a similar way, in times of difficulties, together we try to help churches which are facing difficulties. Are not the Christians in Indonesia and even in the whole world the expression of the one body of Christ with God himself as the head? Through this event tonight we hope that the unity of the churches in Indonesia has become strengthened; that the sense of fellowship and the Christian family has been affirmed.\(^{142}\)

This ecclesiastical understanding is seen in the realization that Christians in Indonesia are the actualization of the body of Christ, where Christ himself is the head. Here Rumambi acknowledged that the church in Indonesia is part of the universal church, a view consistent with Calvin’s concept of the church. The universal church is the body of Christ where Christ is the head. Church unity is found in Christ, the head of the church. Therefore Rumambi’s premise that the GMIM’s 15th anniversary celebrations strengthened the unity of the churches and affirmed a sense of brotherhood and fellowship is Calvinistic.

The drive for church unity also needs to be seen from the viewpoint of evangelistic cooperation. Church divisions can become a stumbling block, preventing the world from believing the news the church proclaims. For that reason the church must not only witness but be united in that effort.

In carrying out evangelism, the churches in the world should cooperate or, more appropriately, attest to their oneness. The church must witness and also be united. Only if churches are

\(^{141}\) F.L Cooley, “Bagaimana Terbentuknya DGI” in: Peninjau II/4, 1975, p. 302. See also De Jonge, “Momen-momen oikumenis”.

\(^{142}\) Rorimpandey (ed.), W.J. Rumambi Setelah Fajar Merekah, p. 350.
united, can their message in this world be true appropriate. Can the world believe the church’s message if the church itself is broken, rife with internal dissent and demonstrating a lack of mutual concern?  

Seeing churches divided like this saddened Rumambi. He saw unity not just as something to be conscious of and to talk about but to put into practice in the life of the church.

With sadness we confess that there are divisions among the Lord’s churches. These divisions are also visible in the field of evangelism. As much as possible we must overcome those divisions and form a more perfect union, realizing it in practice, in the life of the church.

That church unity must be visible in the life of the church, we should note, is a Calvinist idea. Calvin stressed that church unity must be evident in a church that is visible. The visible church must manifest church unity. This was proposed in the 1539 Institutes.

Clearly Rumambi’s contribution to church unity in Indonesia was not just ideological or theoretical. He donated his time and effort to the leadership of the ecumenical movement in Indonesia. Rumambi, S. Marantika and other colleagues were referred to by Hoekema as the proponents of ecumenism in Indonesia because of their involvement in the ecumenical movement.

5.3.3. R. Soedarmo

Raden Soedarmo (1914-1991) came from Java. As was mentioned above (5.2.2), his church was the Javanese Christian Church (GKJ), a Gereformeerde church in Central Java where he served as a pastor. He began theological studies at VU University Amsterdam (Vrije Universiteit) in 1937 and remained there throughout the war, finishing his doctorate in 1957 at the same university. From 1955-1978 he taught Dogmatics at the Jakarta Theological Seminary. He contributed his ideas on the church and church unity to the ecumenical movement in Indonesia, both through presentations at ecumenical assemblies and through his book Ikhtisar Dogmatika (1965) which he wrote as a textbook for theological seminaries.

As mentioned in part two of this chapter, in 1958 Soedarmo presented his ideas on unity at the Standing Committee meeting of the DGI. Undoubtedly Soedarmo’s background played a role in shaping these ideas since he had come from a Calvinist church and had studied theology at a Calvinist university as well. It should be noted that he recognized the existence of many churches but felt that the number need not become a problem. “Even though there are many churches, church unity does not need to become an issue,” he said. This idea was later presented in his above mentioned Ikhtisar Dogmatika. In it Soedarmo discussed the pluralistic church. The church has

143 Idem, p. 254.
144 Idem, p. 254.
145 Hoekema, *Denken in dynamisch evenwicht*, p. 212-214. Marantika’s ideas are not discussed separately here considering that they have already been dealt with in connection with Leimena and Rumambi who can be considered to represent the Calvinist church in the Eastern region of Indonesia.
multiple forms, both in organization as well as in confessions of faith. Yet, unlike in the Roman Catholic Church, different forms were not problematic: according to the Reformed no church is absolutely correct and perfect. Here we see that Soedarmo’s opinion is the same as the one expressed by Calvin in opposing the sectarian tendency of the Anabaptists who wanted to create an ideal church based on the New Testament. For Calvin this tendency meant a denial of New Testament testimony that the church was made up of sinners. For Soedarmo none of the churches were complete or ideal, but they were headed in that direction. In their eagerness to emphasize certain teachings, divergent views of the Holy Scriptures had arisen and created differences. Those differences could be overcome as long as churches abided in love. For him, the dissention of the church is sinful. Soedarmo agreed with the Reformed churches which, he concluded, saw plurality in three matters: a) churches were not right or wrong, but all were correct to a greater or lesser degree. A holy universal church simply did not exist; b) therefore, churches should not slander one another but put love into action; c) there must continually be an effort to achieve unity, for a church of dissention was the result of sinfulness.

Soedarmo then presented the reason for these ideas. “The main thing is that churches are conscious of their oneness in Christ. This issue can only become contentious if they differ in their confessions of Jesus Christ, as if there were more than one Jesus Christ,” (see 5.2.2 above). This view reminds us of Calvin’s confirmation of unity in Christ, a unity centered in Christ, the head of the church. Christ is the basis and center of the church, and therefore it is Christ who unifies the church. As long as Christ is there, the church is there as well. For that reason Calvin considered unity to be based on the confession of Christ and not on uniformity in church organizational structure. This was also emphasized by Soedarmo. For him church unity was not synonymous with a command to seek a united worldwide church with one church order or one set of elders. Oneness as seen in the Roman Catholic Church could not become the objective. To achieve unity by gathering all groups together, regardless of a confession of Christ, would be deadly – appearing to be one on the outside but broken on the inside.

It is also of interest that Soedarmo emphasized unity in the same confession of Jesus Christ and saw this as the core problem for unity as well. Differences beyond that were considered secondary concerns that should be left alone, permitted, respected and valued. ”Minor differences between one church and another must be left alone, permitted to exist, allowed as a subject for inquiry, and respected. As long as differences do not create the desire for secularism, they will not cause love to grow cold or relationships to break up.” These ideas are in line with Calvin who saw the need for agreement in basic matters of the Christian faith and saw that unity was made visible in that way. Outside of those basic concerns, diversity could exist and did not need to be challenged. A Calvinist outlook like this is known as adiaphora.

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148 In his article entitled “Mencari Bentuk-bentuk Keesaan Gereja di Indonesia”, (mimeographed, source unknown) he supports this idea by saying that “In the Bible there are matters which are central and matters which are not central”.
If we read deeper ecclesiastically, the Calvinistic influence is obvious. Two matters clearly point this out: a) he analyzed the essence of the church from two perspectives, from that which is visible and from that which is invisible, and b) the visible identifying marks of a church include the faithful preaching of the Word of God, the right administration of the sacraments, and the existence of church strategy.\textsuperscript{149}

As shown above, Soedarmo’s ideas influenced the ecumenical movement in Indonesia and helped to develop the concept of unity in diversity.

5.3.4. H. Hadiwijono
Harun Hadiwijono (1915-1989)\textsuperscript{150} also came from Central Java and belonged to the same church as Soedarmo. For that reason his opinions were colored substantially by the Reformed tradition. After graduating from the Theological Seminary in Yogyakarta, he continued his studies at VU University Amsterdam (the Vrije Universiteit), and received a doctor’s degree from that institution in 1967. In addition to being a lecturer, he became President of Duta Wacana Theological Seminary long before that school had become a university. His views were expressed in several of his writings. Best known among them is the book \textit{Iman Kristen} (Christian Faith), a handbook in dogmatics for theological seminars in Indonesia.

In 1964 Hadiwijono wrote a brief article entitled, “Kesatuan Geredja” (Church Unity).\textsuperscript{151} In it he describes unity as a spiritual problem, that is, unity in Christ. Church unity is experienced in the one body of Christ. This was the type of unity which we found in the article of the Apostle’s Creed; “I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints.” In this confession he felt that Christians acknowledged one church which was holy and universal. This confession is consistent with the Bible and in accordance with the declaration of the church as the body of Christ. Hadiwijono explained:

\begin{quote}
In our confession of faith we state: I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints. In this confession of faith we acknowledge that there is one holy and universal church. This confession is indeed in accordance with the Bible. Is the church not the body of Christ? (Ephesians 1:23). And there is only one Christ, and he only has one body.\textsuperscript{152}
\end{quote}

Note that the starting point for Hadiwijono was the confession of faith. When Calvin described his views on the church and church unity in the book Institutes, he too, used the confession of faith as his point of departure. Calvin also stressed that acknowledging the church as the body of Christ indicated in essence that God has only one church on earth.

Despite that, Hadiwijono did not reject the fact that there are many kinds of churches and that each of those churches regards itself as the true church. He felt that

\textsuperscript{149} Idem, p. 212-213, 215.
\textsuperscript{150} An extensive biography of Harun Hadiwijono can be found in the commemorating volume Yusri Panggabean et alii (ed), \textit{Penabur Benih Mazhap Teologi Menuju Manusia Baru}, Jakarta, 2000.
this conflicted with the Lord’s Prayer in the gospel of John, “so that they may become one”. That is why people of faith must work to achieve that unity. “Even though Jesus Christ prayed that his people would become one, and even though the Holy Spirit was poured out upon His congregation, Christians themselves must also work to achieve that unity.”\textsuperscript{153} According to Hadiwijono, church divisiveness is sinful and goes against the will of God. Soedarmo had voiced the same opinion. If sin is considered the act of the devil, we are reminded of Calvin’s statement that separatism is the work of the devil.

Based on the discussion about the Lord’s Prayer in the Gospel of John and supported by the words of Paul in Ephesians 4:4-6, Hadiwijono argued that since all people of faith made up the body of Christ, they are also of one Lord and one faith. Again and again he stressed unity in the spiritual sense of the word, just as Calvin did.

Like Soedarmo, Hadiwijono acknowledged plurality and organizational diversity within the church, which was caused by different views of truth. Yet he saw that organizational unity might be implied as well in church unity. For him, however, organizational unity was not essential. The important thing was unity in faith, in the truth.

Nevertheless we are also aware that organizational unity is not absolutely essential for church unity. The church can be united as an organization yet in essence become divided. So first of all we must seek unity of faith, unity in truth. If this is achieved, it will be easy for organizational unity to follow.\textsuperscript{154}

Was this not Calvin’s observation as well?

It is interesting that Hadiwijono stated very emphatically in his book \textit{Iman Kristen} that “Divisiveness in a church is insulting to the Church.”\textsuperscript{155} This he said in relation to the concept of the church as the body of Christ. The term \textit{body of Christ} points to unity, unity in diversity. There may be role differences but all of it is carried out in one body, that is, in the body of Christ, the church.\textsuperscript{156} In discussing characteristics of the church, he stressed that the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church was more or less the same as the unity found in Calvin’s thinking.

It is impossible that the Church as a universal church would only be made up of like-minded people (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist), closed to other groups, forming an elite nation or tribe, or tied to one specific period or culture. If in essence the Church is truly catholic, it must be universal because God’s love is directed to the whole world.\textsuperscript{157}

\subsection*{5.3.5. J.L.Ch. Abineno}

J.L.Ch. Abineno (1917-1995) came from Timor. He belonged to the Evangelical Protestant Church in Timor (Gereja Masehi Injili Timor or GMIT) which, along with the GMIM, the GPM, and the GPIB came together under the umbrella of the Protestant Church in Indonesia (GPI). After finishing his theological education at the Jakarta

\begin{footnotes}
\item Hadiwojono, “Kesatuan Gereja”, p. 7.
\item Idem, p. 7.
\item Idem, p. 371-375.
\item Idem, p. 379.
\end{footnotes}
Theological Seminary, he returned to Timor and became the Chairman of the GMIT Synod from 1950-1953. He also served as the President of the Theological Seminary of Timor. Later he continued his doctoral studies at Utrecht University in the Netherlands and received his doctoral degree in Practical Theology in 1956 on a study about liturgical patterns in the Indonesian churches. Returning from the Netherlands, he lectured at the Jakarta Theological Seminary as a professor in Practical Theology. He served as general chairman of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia and as a member of its Advisory Board. He wrote more theological books in the Indonesian language than any other theologian.

In 1983 Abineno presented his ideas about the church and church unity in a speech at the 49th Anniversary of the Jakarta Theological Seminary in Jakarta. He described the ecclesiology of churches in Indonesia and pointed out that, in his perception, it emphasized three different aspects. There is first of all an ecclesiology that emphasized the church as an institution; secondly, an ecclesiology which emphasized the church as a spiritual union; and finally, ecclesiology that points to the church as the people of God sent into the world. These three aspects are found in Indonesian churches and are flourishing. The aspects which emphasize the institution relate to the teachings about the church as a godly institution for the salvation of humankind. The emphases on spiritual union relate back to Reformation teachings about the church which is visible and the church which is invisible. And the aspect which emphasizes the church being sent into the world relates to the ecclesiology which has been developed after the Second World War in Protestant circles in Europe and elsewhere. Based on his experiences in directing the Council of Churches in Indonesia, he noted that these three emphases were frequently contradictory. It was not surprising, therefore, that people were calling for a review of the church.

And it is these varying opinions that apparently are involved in causing church members within the Communion of Church member churches to suggest that we all once again carry out a review of the church. If we consider this seriously, as I think we should, then how should that review be conducted?

In reference to that review, he suggested several points for further study, including the need for a new ecclesiology, the understanding of church unity, and the understanding of unity and truth. For the understanding of church unity, he analyzed the purpose of the prayer of Jesus in John 17. What was intended in this Bible verse, Abineno said, was not a “mystical unity” or “spiritual unity” that is invisible but “unity as a visible reality that could be seen by each person.” In addition to unity (=oneness), Abineno also discussed the understanding of “the body of Christ” and Unio cum Christo. Once again he stressed that what was intended was not something mystical, something

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158 His curriculum vitae is to be found in Sularso Sopater (ed.), Apostole Pengutusan Kumpulan Karangan Dalam Rangka Memperingati 70 Tahun Prof.Dr. J.L.Ch. Abineno, Jakarta, 1987; See also “In Memoriam”, in: Berita Oikumene 222-223, Jan-Febr. 1995, p. 25-27.
161 Idem, p. 11-16.
supernatural, or something that was beyond our world. *Unio cum Christo* always assumes concrete action, concrete obedience, concrete loyalty, and concrete service.\(^{162}\)

This belief is related to the understanding that the church is a visible reality, not something abstract but concrete.\(^{163}\) Abineno reminds us about Calvin who felt that church unity is not only suited for churches that are invisible but must also be visible in the life of the church. Indeed, according to Abineno, there is diversity in a church that is visible. This fact cannot be overlooked in the task of unification because the Bible emphasizes both. Therefore unity must be thought of within diversity, and so also must diversity be encompassed within unity. One cannot exist at the expense of the other. Both are equally essential.\(^{164}\)

### 5.3.6. Agustina Lumentut

Agustina Lumentut (1937-2006) came from Central Sulawesi. She finished her pastoral studies at the INTIM Theological Seminary (STT INTIM) in Makassar and then was sent by her church, the Christian Church of Central Sulawesi (GKST) to study at Trinity College in Singapore. In 1959 she was ordained as a minister in Tentena. Her experiences in the ecumenical movement included being the Vice General Secretary of the PGI and member of the World Council of Churches’ Standing Committee.\(^{165}\) Her presence at the leadership level of the PGI attested to the fact that women have been deeply involved in the ecumenical movement in Indonesia.

A summary of her views can be found in an article entitled, “Mau ke Mana Gerakan Keesaan di Indonesia?” (Where is the Movement toward Unity Headed in Indonesia?).\(^{166}\) In this writing she indicates her concern about the churches which had joined the PGI. In her opinion they had not fulfilled their commitment to support togetherness or a sense of community under PGI coordination. This was evident in their unwillingness to carry out the decisions of the General Assembly and to contribute something to the cause of unity.\(^{167}\) As the sense of oneness and integration within the Indonesian society had weakened, so too had the churches’ interest in unity. The history of the Council and Communion of the Churches in Indonesia shows that spiritual union and organizational unity developed hand in hand with the ecumenical movement of the churches in Indonesia. These two forms of unity in fact did not need to contradict each other. Still, along the path to unity, Indonesian church leaders seemed inclined toward division. They considered the Communion of Churches to be important if they themselves were benefited by it. If they were not, they became indifferent.

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\(^{164}\) Abineno, *Gereja dan Keesaan Gereja*, p. 15.

\(^{165}\) Her curriculum vitae can be found in Margaret Kirk (transl. Caroline Pattiasina), *Agustina Wanita Masa Kini Mediator Pembangunan Pejuang Keadilan*, Jakarta, 2000.


\(^{167}\) Lumentut, “Mau ke Mana Gerakan Keesaan”, p 91.
Two things that did not need to conflict with each other or contradict each other in reality seemed to justify the divisive attitude of many church leaders. It was as though the important and meaningful thing was unity in fellowship in matters related to worship, visiting, and exchanging pulpits. If, however, it was something related to unity with the umbrella institution, such as membership in the PGI, they changed their tune. As long as our church is not asked to do a lot, we will execute the stipulations together; as long as it is not detrimental to our identity, we can tolerate the decisions of the General Assembly; as long as we play a managerial role at the national and regional levels, our church will support all programs without a reward, and so on.\textsuperscript{168}

So, what was important to the churches in Indonesia was spiritual union. It was the spiritual union of churches that confessed Jesus Christ to be the head of the church, even though they felt that the PGI had always stressed both aspects of this union. Even though Calvin did not take church organization lightly, he felt that spiritual unity was very important. Church organization can differ according to the local situation. Yet if mutual recognition and acceptance existed within the one church as the realization of the brotherhood of the body of Christ, church unity would exist as well. So even though spiritual unity was stressed, it had to be expressed visually as well. Agustina’s views were respected and rightfully so. To see the direction that churches in Indonesia were taking, she felt they needed to: a) fully experience unity and put it into practice; b) make their oneness visible and observable; c) manifest that unity as long as the church was in the world until the end of time.\textsuperscript{169} A perceptible unity in the life of the visible church is the concept we find in Calvin.

5.3.7. \textit{Eka Darmaputera}

Eka Darmaputera (1942-2005), a Javanese of Chinese descent, was a pastor of the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI). He studied theology at the Jakarta Theological Seminary from 1960-1966. In 1977 he began his doctoral studies at Boston College, Boston, USA and finished his degree in 1982 with a dissertation, titled \textit{Pancasila A Search for Identity and Modernity}. He was his church’s youngest Synod Chairman. Eka Darmaputera was active in the ecumenical movement and at one time served as chairperson of the PGI.\textsuperscript{170} As a theologian, he was a prolific writer. His writings can be found in a variety of books, journals and newspapers. One of his widely-known books on the ecumenical movement is \textit{Berbeda Tapi Bersatu} (Diverse but United), published in 1974. For our purposes here, his paper entitled “Penyatuan GKI, Keesaan Gereja dan Persatuan/Kesatuan Bangsa” (The Unification of the GKI, Church Unity, and National Unity/Integration) was used as a reference for throwing light on the cause of church unity in Indonesia. In this article he focused on the process of unifying three Indonesian Churches (the Indonesian Christian Church of West Java; the Indonesian Christian Church of Central Java, and the Indonesian Christian Church of East Java - all three originally mainly had a membership of Indonesians with a Chinese background) and its relationship to and interaction with church unity and national

\textsuperscript{168} Idem, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{169} Idem, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{170} His curriculum vitae can be found in Ferdy Suleeman (ed.), \textit{Struggling in Hope}, Jakarta, 1999, p. 865-867.
integration. At that time, just two years later in 1994, these three Indonesian Christian Churches told the General Assembly of the PGI in Jayapura that from that time on they would no longer be three churches but one, using the name *Gereja Kristen Indonesia* (GKI, Indonesian Christian Church). Eka had prefaced his article by expressing confusion. From the perspective of globalization, this GKI merger might just give rise to other excesses, namely the strengthening of primordial sentiments such as race, ethnic group and tribe. On the one hand globalization can indeed break down boundaries, but on the other it can create new barriers between people as well. In other words, this GKI merger could tear down old boundaries but at the same time create a new identity, a primordial identity. And this primordial tendency had threatened and was threatening national integration, the unity of the church, and the GKI itself.

I am not making it up if I say that the spirit of primordiality and sectarianism are ripping our national unity and integration apart, disabling the movement toward church unity, and casting a shadow over the unification of the GKI.\(^{171}\)

In his assessment, even though Indonesia was a united country, it was being penetrated and permeated by compartmentalization based on religion, region and tribe. The same was true of the movement toward church unity in Indonesia. The PGI as the coordinating institution had become weighed down with bureaucracy and self-interest.

The Communion of Churches in Indonesia is no longer a movement but an organization, a division. It has become very bureaucratic. Within it the stench of self-interest has become very strong as well.\(^{172}\)

This did not only exist in the PGI umbrella institution but in its member churches as well. Without realizing it, the sectarian spirit had already overwhelmed the churches in Indonesia. By saying this, Eka wanted to warn the churches in Indonesia that as they strove for unity they had to be careful of primordial and sectarian tendencies. I am reminded again of Calvin. Calvin stressed that church unity was also related to the sectarian tendency he faced at that time with the Anabaptists. He firmly insisted that sectarianism was the work of the devil and therefore had to be resisted. So, for Eka what was important for the future was to have a vision of the future. It was in that regard that he recommended that the Vision of Ecumenism and Vision of Nationalism become the Vision of the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) in the future.\(^{173}\)

5.6. **Concluding remarks**

The seven figures discussed above have passed away. Yet they left a legacy of ideas and a spirit of ecumenism that are important for the churches of Indonesia. We may possibly meet up with similar figures in the future, but the degree to which their ideas...

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173 Idem, p. 18.
will continue to inspire scholars and participants in the ecumenical movement in Indonesia at this time and in the future remains to be seen.

Roughly speaking, the first five figures were contemporaries. They lived and experienced the social and church life just before and after independence as well as the establishment of the PGI. Their life context was Indonesian nationalism that prioritized national unity and integration as well as the spirit of global ecumenism. It is not surprising, then, that their thinking was influenced by nationalism and ecumenical fervor. In fact, nationalism was supportive of ecumenism. This is very discernable in Leimena who did not make a contrast between nationalism and church unity. He was aware that plurality was present in the society and in the churches of Indonesia. Church unity could stand above plurality. This kind of thinking is relevant to Indonesia’s situation of today.

Meanwhile, with Rumambi we see that in order to create church unity, a cooperative coordinating institution was needed as a medium. Without organizing, church unity could not be expressed. Here we note that when Leimena emphasized the establishment of one church, Rumambi emphasized the need for one common coordinating institution for that purpose. Through that institution, the churches could witness together and develop a sense of oneness or solidarity and a sense of responsibility together. For Rumambi it is impossible for churches to walk together without being organized by a coordinating institution.

The seven theologians discussed above were influenced by their church backgrounds and the institutions of higher education where they studied. This, for example, is quite apparent with Soedarmo and Harun Hadiwijono. These two scholars of Systematic Theology served as educators at the Theological Seminary in Jakarta and at Duta Wacana Theological Seminary in Yogyakarta. They were obviously well-versed in Calvin because of that. Soedarmo’s ideas on how to view church plurality with all of its variance were in line with Calvin’s concepts. Therefore he developed the concept of unity in diversity. Unity in diversity would be realized if there were mutual recognition and acceptance. Meanwhile, Harun Hadiwijono considered the confession of faith to be the primary path to unity. A common confession of faith became the basis for organizational unity. Thus, he perceived that unity in faith was foremost. This view was consistent with Calvin and also dependent upon Calvin. Upon closer scrutiny it could be said that the two important documents within the Church Documents on Unity, that is the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia, and the Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance, actually contained the same idea.

Using the Outline of Mission of the Common Calling and the Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance as a departure point, concrete evidence of unity would be visible only if churches carried out the stipulations of those two documents. From this perspective, it is interesting to consider Abineno’s view that church unity must be evident in the visible church. We cannot talk about unity in a spiritual sense only – unity in Christ and that’s it. With his colleagues, Abineno followed the ideas about which concrete form of unity was needed in Indonesia. Responding to the idea of SINOGI in 1967, Abineno had pondered this and in 1983 stressed that, as the Bible
testifies, both unity and diversity are essential. One cannot exist at the expense of the other.

In the next generation Agustina Lumentut and Eka Darmaputera followed the course of PGI during most of their lives. They were concerned about contemporary problems in the coordinating institution of the PGI which arose during the ecumenical movement. Lumentut, for example, was concerned about the lack of a spirit of togetherness that member churches had shown by not making decisions together. Darmaputera focused on the problem of uniting the three churches which had predominantly Chinese-Indonesian membership. Both Lumentut and Darmaputera felt it was important to be wary of the public’s tendency toward primordiality which could weaken their spirit of unity. It is important to listen to the reminders of these two figures because in reality church relationships could be disrupted by neglecting to carry out the decisions which had been made. Does being ecumenical not require a commitment to sacrifice one-sidedness? Does being strongly primordial not shut the door to others so that there is less space in which to live together? A critical question that could be posed in the current context is whether or not church unity is still dependent upon a united and integrated nation. Should the increased level of maturity of our churches mean instead that unity only needs to be based upon theological calling?

There are also some challenges the churches in Indonesia are facing regarding unity, and critical voices towards Calvin’s teaching by theologians and church leaders in Indonesia. We will see this in the final chapter.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After tracing Calvin’s thoughts on the unity of the church, the context in which he developed his thoughts and how he implemented these in the ecumenical activities of his time, now we come to several conclusions and recommendations.

In the Introduction we defined our research question and hypothesis. The main question is what is Calvin’s opinion concerning the unity of the church and will such a view be useful to the churches in Indonesia in their struggle for unity? In the hypothesis we stated that Calvin had a clear idea about the unity of the church and also of the way to achieve it. Did we find sufficient proof in the preceding chapters to answer this research question positively and to affirm the hypothesis?

We have studied many of Calvin’s works such as his Institutes, commentaries, letters, and also other works like his sermons, catechisms and liturgy in order to get a comprehensive and clear understanding of his thinking about church unity. And this made clear that regarding the unity of the church, the issue of building up a new structure of the church or a bureaucratic organization was not the main issue for Calvin. The most important factor is that we have to start with the basic issue of faith in Jesus Christ as the head of the church. In other words, a confession stating the fundamentals of the Christian faith became the basis of Calvin’s view on ecclesiastical unity. For Calvin, church unity is based on the foundation of Christian belief. So, to Calvin it is fundamentally a spiritual issue, and based on that we can reflect on it as a structural or organizational unity. But even though unity is a spiritual issue, the church should implement it in a concrete way. That is why with a strong spirit, he joined several colloquies of his time.

To me this means, that having the same confession as to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith and belief in Christ, should be an urgent need for the churches in Indonesia in their search for unity. The Indonesian churches have gone into this direction in their search for unity. An indication of this is the fact, that one of the important Five Documents of Unity (FDU) is the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith that is used by the churches in Indonesia up till now. Besides, we also have mentioned the Mutual Recognition and Acceptance Charter, also one of the documents belonging to the FDU. This document should be understood as the manifestation of unity in a more concrete way. We can refer to several points in these documents that are similar to Calvin, like the understanding of the church and the relationship between church and state in the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith. We can mention too the article on mutual recognition and acceptance of ministry and the sacraments in the Mutual Recognition and Acceptance Charter. Thus, in my opinion Calvin’s thought about the unity of the church is a benefit and meaningful for the churches in Indonesia nowadays. I prefer to state that unity by having these Five Documents of Unity as sufficient within the Indonesian context. Failure of forming such a United Church in Indonesia is caused by lack of awareness to learn from some of the sixteenth-century reformers’ views about unity, and especially Calvin’s. So, what in the future will be important is not thinking about how to form a GKYE but how to manifest this United
Christian Church in accordance to the decision of the Tenth General Assembly of the Council of Churches in Indonesia in 1984. The Tenth General Assembly decided that since 1984 the goal of the DGI was changed to become “to manifest the GKYE”, not “to form the GKYE” (see 5.2.2.).

6.1. Factors that challenge the proposed unity from a Calvinist perspective

   a. Ethnic factors
   There are several factors that obscure ecclesiastical unity in Indonesia. Firstly, ethnical factors. Most of the churches in Indonesia are ethnic. The GKI group, for example, is a Chinese church, the GPM is Moluccan, the HKBP is a Batak church, the GKJ is Javanese, Gereja Toraja is a Torajanese church; the GKE is a Dayak (Kalimantan) church. To cooperate with churches outside their ethnic context is not always easy. Their ethnic character is more conspicuous than their national character.

   b. Nationalism instead of church unity
   The failure of forming a GKYE is caused by the reality that a spirit of nationalism has strongly influenced the churches in Indonesia in forming the Council of Churches in Indonesia (DGI). As we have seen in chapter 5.2, this spirit of national unity infiltrated the churches. That is why the goal of forming the DGI, as in the declaration form in 1950 is to form one United Christian Church in Indonesia. This is quite different compared for example to the World Council of Churches (WCC). We could say that this goal is typical for the Indonesian churches. It looks like something not yet mature, just an attempt to accommodate themselves to what was happening in society without thinking about its relevancy as to the pluralistic context of the churches in Indonesia. To me this indicates, that when the DGI was formed, the twenty-six founding churches were not yet thinking carefully. Nationality can only be a supporting factor for stimulating unity. The main factor for unity should be a calling of the churches based on the Bible with strong consciousness of the context itself. Nationality is different from catholicity. Catholicity is wider than nationality.

   c. Non-creedal churches
   Some churches, like the Baptist Church, and the Methodist Church are ‘non-creedal’ in the sense that they are not bound to any Confession of Faith. For these churches, it is not necessary to have a confession of faith. What is needed is only something to be a standard or criterion for teaching in the church. So, it is not easy to approach these churches asking for an agreement in the sense of having one Confession of Faith for all, such as the Mutual Profession (Understanding) about Christian Faith. That is why, for example, the Baptist Church is standing outside the PGI.

   d. The problems of re-baptism
   Another challenge the churches in Indonesia are facing is in connection to the realization of the Mutual Recognition Acceptance Charter. In this document it has

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been stated that re-baptism should be avoided, as an ecumenical commitment among
churches that belong to the World Council of Churches.\textsuperscript{2} If a change of membership
takes place from Reformed or other churches to Charismatic, Pentecostal, or other
churches, no rebaptism should occur, but only the name of the person involved should
be pronounced in front of the new congregation in a Sunday service. But it doesn’t
happen this way. That is why the unity of the churches in Indonesia is very often
disturbed by re-baptism practices. Therefore, we need a strong commitment to
conciliar decisions. A lack of concern for conciliar decisions will threaten the progress
of expressing unity. Being ecumenical is not just something theoretical; it needs to be
put into practice as well. It is not coming together, discussing, reaching decisions, and
then going home, only to become busy with our own affairs and to forget those
decisions. The ecumenical decisions and agreements must be enacted in each church.
The tensions that we still see between churches frequently result from not executing
the decisions reached together. Agustina Lumentut once mentioned this.\textsuperscript{3}

\textit{e. The power of confessional families}

There are “confessional families” like the \textit{Dewan Pentekosta Indonesia} (Indonesia
Pentecostal Council or DPI), the \textit{Persekutuan Injili Indonesia} (Indonesia Evangelical
Community or PII), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Lutheran
World Federation (LWF), the Mennonite World Conference (MWC), the World
Methodist Council (WMC) and others. In my observation, the churches feel bound
more closely to their own confessional families than to ecumenical commitment. And
this becomes an obstacle for reaching unity. The churches must go beyond their
confessional boundaries towards a common understanding of Christian faith as -
among others - Calvin stressed for the sake of unity. In this, ecclesiology as catholicity
becomes a critical point.

6.2. \textit{Critical theological voices}

Some theologians and church leaders are proposing a negative evaluation concerning
the significance of Calvinist teaching in the Indonesian context. Eben Nuban Timo, a
lecturer in Systematic Theology in the Faculty of Theology at Artha Wacana Christian
University and chairman of the GMIT Synod in Kupang, West Kupang, published a
book entitled \textit{Pemberita Firman Pencinta Budaya (Proclaimers of the Word, Devotees
of Culture), 2005}. In the context of the culture of the Atoni tribe of Timor, he
discusses, among others, Calvin’s views on the doctrine of predestination, which have
appeared in church history down through the years.\textsuperscript{4} One of these views is John
Calvin’s notion of double predestination. Calvin, Nuban Timo says, used the phrase,
\textit{decretum absolutum} to refer to his teaching on the election. God’s election of the
chosen came before grace (\textit{gratiam praecedit electio}). This means that God’s final

\textsuperscript{2} PGI, \textit{Dokumen Keesaan Gereja}, Jakarta, 2006, p. 91; cf. WCC, \textit{Baptism, Eucharist and

\textsuperscript{3} See chapter 5, point 5.3.6.

\textsuperscript{4} Eben Nuban Timo, \textit{Pemberita Firman Pencinta Budaya}, Jakarta, 2005, chapter VI, pp. 137-
157, especially 151-153.
decision preceded Jesus Christ and was determined outside of the love of God in Jesus Christ. As a result, from the beginning God had chosen a select group of people to be saved and another group to be condemned. In predestination God’s will was dualistic. God intended that half of the people would be saved and the other half punished. According to Nuban Timo, Calvin’s view was exactly opposite to biblical testimony. The Bible verses cited as an example are Colossians 1:15-20. Using these verses as a starting point, he claims that nothing that God the Father decided or did was outside of or without the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Whatever the Father did, both during history or before the mountains were formed and the world created, was done in, together with, and for Jesus Christ. God the Father did not make any decision or have any other plan of work outside or prior to Jesus Christ as stated by Calvin in his *decretum absolutum*. For that reason he feels the predestination doctrine is misleading.

Another critical view was presented during a seminar on ecclesiology held by the Synod of the Moluccan Protestant Church (GPM) in October 2008. One of the speakers at that seminar, John Titaley, professor of Social Theology at Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga, presented a paper entitled “GPM dan Warisan Protestantisme: Perspektif Kontekstualisasi” (GPM and the Legacy of Protestantism: the Perspective of Contextualization). In it he stresses that one justifies his life of faith not just through his confession of faith but through his actions. Using Matthew 7:21 and Matthew 25:31-46 as departure point, he stressed that the important thing is not whether a person has to become a Calvinist but rather how he acts. In Titaley’s opinion, the GPM is a church not because it is Calvinist in the sense that it defends or upholds Calvinistic teachings and uses a presbyterian-synodal church structure, but rather because of what it does for humanity. For the GPM, to discuss Calvinism is, therefore, irrelevant. The context of Calvin was very different from the context of Indonesia. If Calvin had lived in a pluralistic society like Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population, what he wrote would have been different. He could never have applied his Geneva magistrate in Indonesia.⁵

The same idea was presented by John Ruhulessin, lecturer in Social Theology at the Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku (Christian University of Indonesia in the Moluccas or UKIM) and Chairman of the GPM Synod. In a paper presented at the same seminar, he stated that the GPM had inherited the theology and ecclesiology of Calvinism. But this theology and ecclesiology of Calvinism as well as the presbyterian-synodal system, was the product of European continental society. Meanwhile, the GPM is “an archipelagic church” whose congregations are separated by vast seas. Therefore, the theology and ecclesiology of Calvinism which was produced in a continental society might not be applicable in the context of an archipelagic church such as that in the Moluccas.⁶

Responding to these critical remarks, I am aware that Calvin should be understood from his own context. The sixteenth century situation is different from that of the twenty-first century. Calvin was a hero of his time but not of all time. This study is not

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based on the premise that the answers Calvin provided during his time can fully resolve the challenges of the church today. But in my view, Calvin is not totally irrelevant for the church today. We can say that in some doctrines Calvin is not relevant, but not in all of his doctrines. In his *The Reformation of Rights* (2007) John Witte Jr. shows that Calvin developed new teachings on rights and liberties, church and state, and religion and politics that shaped the law of the early modern Protestant countries. Calvin’s original teachings spread rapidly throughout Western Europe and stimulated dramatic legal and political reforms over the next two centuries. To a great deal we owe our basic ideas of religious and political rights, social and confessional pluralism, federalism and social contract to the early modern Calvinism. So, this reality seems to justify the conclusion that Calvin is still relevant today.

6.3. Effects of Calvin’s views

a. *In the history of the Indonesian churches*

Historical records show that when Protestantism was first brought to Indonesia, it had Calvinist features. Therefore, the first Protestant characteristics Indonesians knew were those of the Reformed faith. For that reason, Indonesian churches with the largest membership are Calvinist or Uniert. When Calvinist teachings and practices were brought to Indonesia, they could not be fully implemented because of the political, religious and cultural context, but the Calvinist influence was there. Moreover, Calvinist teachings and practices were nearly eradicated by the administration’s political policies of the time, yet Calvinism lived on. It had spread widely to nearly all regions of the Indonesian archipelago from Sumatra to Papua.

b. *Theological discussions*

To delve into the teachings of Calvin for a deeper understanding and to look for the meaning that it held for churches in Indonesia is interesting. This can be seen from what happened when two books about Calvinism were published by the BPK Gunung Mulia. The first time they were published, they sold rather quickly. Furthermore, during the last decade interest in studying Calvin has emerged. There have been writings by Gerrit Singgih (GPIB), Henny Sumakul (GMIM), and Eben Nuban Timo (GMIT). In his book *Reformasi dan Transformasi Pelayanan Gereja* (Reformation and Transformation of Church Ministries) published in 1997, Gerrit Singgih discusses how Luther and Calvin reacted to the societal changes of their time. He sees the reformation as an answer of faith to the changes of the time which were shaping them, but that at the same time the Reformation also brought about social change. Calvin in particular was concerned about shaping and developing Christian personality through strict discipline. In the face of social changes marked by the reformation in Indonesia,

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we can take inspiration from Calvin by promoting the growth of personality and liberty in the development of human individuality.  

In his *Pemberita Firman Pencinta Budaya* (2005), Eben Nuban Timo concludes that the predestination doctrine can be seen in a very special Atoni Timorese carving entitled ‘tiba’ - wooden, cylindrical lime powder or tobacco containers. Quoting J.A. Loeber, Jr., Nuban Timo says that the ornamental carvings at the top of the ‘tiba’ indicate the dogmatic intent of the carver as he had begun the work. The dogmatic principle that had become the carver’s working hypothesis, according to Loeber, was tradition (adat), that is directives their forebears had received from God that were considered sacred. Therefore, according to Eben Nuban Timo, ‘tiba’ has a deep social and religious significance which is closely related to God’s pronounced intention for humanity. So, although Nuban Timo does not agree one hundred percent with the predestination teachings of Calvin, those teachings are noticeable in the ‘tiba’. Henny Sumakul wrote a dissertation entitled *The Concept of Vocation in the Minds of Migrant Workers of GMIM in Postmodern Time* (2005) in which he discusses the understanding of calling in the theology of Calvin during the postmodern era. He observes that vocation, for Calvin, is related to the omnipotence of God and the providence of God. It is thus important to understand ‘perseverance’, that is how Christians answer the call and conduct their lives in a holistic sense, not only at home but also in their economic, social and political lives as well. From the viewpoint of postmodernism, what Calvin and Reformed theology offer gives meaning to people’s lives and to Christians themselves.

c. Global contributions

It is true that the world ecumenical movement obtains support, contributions, and strength from the Reformed churches. The contributions of the Reformed or Presbyterian churches have been recognized in the world ecumenical movement. It is interesting to note John Hesselink’s conclusion concerning this:

More important, from the time of the Reformation until the present, many of the strongest and ablest proponents of the unity and catholicity of the church have come from the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition. John Calvin hated schism and was one of the most zealous promoters of unity among the Protestant forces in the sixteenth century. The earliest Reformed confessions speak forcefully about the catholic (i.e., universal) nature of the church. When the ecumenical tide began to rise in the nineteenth century, one of the first leaders was Alexander Duff, a Scottish Presbyterian missionary to India. Throughout most of the brief history of the World Council of Churches its leadership has been Reformed: the first General Secretary, W.A. Visser’t Hooft, was Dutch Reformed, and his successor, Eugene Carson Blake, was an American United Presbyterian. Other figures from our tradition who have played leading roles in the World Council of Churches are Hendrik Kraemer, Lesslie Newbigin, John Mackay, and Albert van den Heuvel, to mention only a few of the more prominent leaders.

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10 Idem, p. 55-60.
As shown in the world ecumenical movement, Calvinist churches are largely support for the effort to achieve a United Christian Church (GKYE) in Indonesia. It was hoped that along with the Lutherans, Methodists, Pentecostals and Evangelicals and others, they could give a positive contribution to the churches in Indonesia. Admittedly they did a lot in terms of theology, resources, and infrastructure, especially when the DGI was first being established. Yet in recalling that, it is not wrong to occasionally remind these churches of their role and contribution at each stage of the ecumenical movement in Indonesia so that the Calvinist ecumenical tradition can retain its meaning throughout time.

**d. Calvin’s positive influences in the life of the churches**

Calvin’s theology of unity has influenced the ecumenical movement and the Protestant churches in Indonesia. The United Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) and mission societies in Indonesia left behind a legacy of Calvinist traditions still being preserved by Indonesian churches. Investigations into the teaching, confession of faith, church order, liturgy, and other church practices reveal the following aspects:

**d.1. The main Batak church (HKBP) in its Confession of Faith** recognizes the Reformed doctrine of the true church as distinguished by the three signs of the church mentioned by Bucer and Calvin. This is interesting because the traditional legacy left for this church is not fully Calvinist but can be referred to as Uniert. As to the signs of the true church, it is said, “We believe and confess that the church is the true church: 1) where the Gospel is purely preached. 2) where the true sacraments are administered in accordance with the Word of Jesus Christ. 3) where the discipline is imposed to prevent sin.”  

15 Similar signs are enunciated by another church in the Batak area of North Sumatera, the GKPI in its Confession of Faith. One point about the church asserts that the church is called to be faithful to the work and calling ordained by Jesus Christ. That faithfulness is evidenced primarily in its willingness to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. It is those two features that signal the existence of a true church: whether the Word is preached and the sacraments are administered in the correct way.  

The same thing is found in the Indonesian Methodist Church. Its understanding of the church is also Calvinistic and is inscribed in what is called The Twenty Five Articles of the Methodist Faith (Dua Puluh Lima Pokok-Pokok Kepercayaan Methodis). Article 13 states, “The visible Church of Christ is a fellowship of faithful men where the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance in all those things.”

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d.2. If we examine the acknowledgement of the church in the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith, we see that the church’s catholic and universal dimension is adequately delineated. The church’s scope is unlimited. It crosses boundaries of tribe, nation, language, and social level. Thus the church is catholic, it states. This catholic nature of the church of Jesus Christ can be found in several Calvinist confessions of faith such as article 27 of the Belgic Confession and article 25 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Chapter 4, article 13 of the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) of the Christian Faith still reverberates with Calvin’s teachings about the church and nation. The government, as an institution decreed by God, is entrusted with the task of protecting people and rejecting evil, while the church is obligated to pray for and assist the government but also to admonish it if it misuses its authority.

d.3. Some churches clearly identify themselves with Calvinism in their Confession of Faith. These include for instance the Toraja Church. As stated in the introduction to its Church Order, this confession is not totally detached from previous confessions but is “in connection with” those confessions like the Three Ecumenical Confessions and the Reformed Confessions. The Reformed Confession refers to “The Three Documents of Unity, the Geneva Confession, the Westminster Confession, etc”. This church specifically considers those confessions which are in effect in the Reformed church to be its own as well. In connection with this teaching, many churches in Indonesia used the Heidelberg Catechism as a catechism textbook before compiling their own handbook since becoming independent at the beginning of twentieth century. In fact, until today there is still a church whose Church Order states that the Heidelberg Catechism is being used as a catechism textbook in that church. In addition to being used in catechism classes, the Heidelberg Catechism has also been used as a handbook for catechism course practice at seminaries. It is important here to bring in De Jonge’s observation that when schools of theology were being established in

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19 Th. van den End, Enam Belas Dokumen Dasar Calvinisme, Jakarta, 2000), p. 43 & 130;
Hesselink, On Being Reformed, p. 87; J.M. Saruan carried out a special investigation comparing the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith and Calvinist ecclesiology. He concluded that member churches of the PGI had already developed Calvin’s ecclesiology concerning the essence and function or task of the church’s calling as discernible in this document. See J.M. Saruan, “Eklesiologi Calvinisme Dan Pengembangannya Dalam Gereja-gereja Protestan di Indonesia,” in GPI, Membelah Khasanah Pelayanan, Jakarta, 1995, p. 69-70.
20 PGI, Dokumen Keesaan Gereja, Jakarta, 2000, p. 81.
22 Article 4 of the Central Java GKI Church Order on doctrine states: “As a reformed church, the Central Java GKI accepts the reformation doctrine included in the Heidelberg Catechism”. In chapter 4 of this Church Order it is stated that before arranging and assembling its own catechism books, the Central Java GKI used as it catechismal book, Pengajaran Agama Kristen: Katekismus Heidelberg (Christian Religious Teaching: the Heidelberg Catechism) published by BPK Gunung Mulia Jakarta.
23 This, for example was in effect at the Fakultas Teologi UKIT Tomohon. The writer himself experienced this while studying at STT GPM Ambon from 1977 to 1981.
Indonesia, it was usually Calvinist theology that was being taught. The lecturers who taught were Calvinist, as were the handbooks of dogmatics that were being used.24

d.4. The Calvinist understanding, that the Word of God or the will of God must be upheld in all walks of life is still a model for Christians in society at large. The will of God must not only be conveyed within the walls of the church but also to the world and within the world. This understanding is supported by the presence of Christians in politics, despite its tarnished image. Even in the field of politics, the will of God must be upheld.25 Ngelow noted that the presence of Christians in national mass movements was motivated by a Calvinist understanding. There are even some Christian politicians who have sought to justify their involvement in politics by referring to the teachings of Calvin and Abraham Kuyper, among others A. Latumahina and I. Siagian. Referring to the view of Kuyper, they see politics and Christianity as an integral whole, meaning that Christian teaching underlies politics. For them, the government is the servant of God. They reject the view of Christians who do not want to become associated with politics because they separate religious affairs from worldly affairs, that is, the state.26 It was this understanding that advanced the formation of the Indonesian Christian Party (Parkindo) in 1945.

d.5. It should be noted that the Church Order of many Indonesian churches with a Calvinist background is a presbyterian-synodal governance system.27 Some mentioned it in the introduction and others as a part of the ecclesiological basis for that Church Order.28 This system consists of elements such as an assembly of the congregational elders, and assemblies at the level of the Classis and the Synod. So too, the procedure for choosing the congregational elders and for calling the pastor, elders and deacons is still practiced in certain churches.

24 Chr. de Jonge, “Calvinisme di Indonesia ditinjau dari Perspektif Teologi”, Jakarta, 2000, a non-published article presented at a Seminar on Calvin and Calvinism in Indonesia, p. 5.
27 See for example: GPM Church Order 1990. The Introduction states: ”For the sake of order within the life of the church, the Protestant Church of the Moluccas has decided to dynamically and creatively maintain, guide and develop the structure and function of Church Leadership in line with the presbyterian-synodical order.” Other examples are the 1982 and 1996 GPIB Church Orders which give a special explanation of the meaning of what presbyterian-synodical means. Yet another one is the 1984 GKJ Church Order. For these last two Church Orders, see Purwanto, *Indonesian Church Orders Under Scrutiny*, 28, 62. See also article 6 of the East Java GKI Church Order 1996 and article 2 of the GMIM Church Order, 1999.
28 Purwanto discovered this in his research on the various Church Orders from churches in Indonesia.
The writer has had experience with several GPM congregations which alternate the ecclesiastical hymns to be used into four weeks. They are *Dua Sahabat Lama*, *Mazmur* (Psalms) and *Nyanyian Rohani*, *Kidung Jemaat*, and *Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat*. The GJPI Church in West Papua, established through the evangelistic efforts of the *Gereformeerde Gemeenten* in the Netherlands, only sings the Psalms during the worship.


The Inter Lutheran Commission on Worship, a merger of the four largest Lutheran churches in the U.S. and Canada, compiled the Lutheran Book of Worship in 1978. This book includes several liturgical settings used by the Lutheran Church. The reading of God’s law, however, is not found in any of these settings. See Aritonang, *Berbagai Aliran Di Dalam*, p. 50.

Abineno, *Unsur-unsur Liturgia*, p. 29.

and believe that this is the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, poured out for the remission of all our sins.”

36 d.9. In regard to worship practices, there is still a tradition normally referred to as Perhadliran (attendance), which is carried out before Holy Communion or on Maundy Thursday before Good Friday in remembrance of the death of Jesus Christ. Perhadliran is meant as a “testing or self-examination” whereas Maundy Thursday is meant as a reflection on the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples in anticipation of his death. This does not deviate from the Order of Holy Communion in the churches of Calvinistic tradition.

37 d.10. The words, taken from the Order of Matrimony used by the Dutch Church, reminds us of the Indonesian church custom of announcing to the congregation that the couple intends to marry and requesting that any objections be made known. “N and N propose to be united in holy matrimony, as God intends. In doing so, they request the prayers of the entire congregation so that they may begin their Christian marriage in God and bring it to completion happily in the praise of God. If anyone should have just cause as to why this marriage should not take place or should be delayed, may he provide such evidence with sufficient notice in the manner required. If not, may he remain silent and not stand in the way.”

38 d.11. Indonesian churches, which are so enriched by variety, can learn from Calvin’s sense of tolerance toward diversity. Variety can also be found in society in the sense of religion, tribe, and culture. There is the very popular national motto called Bhineka Tunggal Ika, which means “Unity in diversity”. Calvin in this situation allowed diversity as long as differences did not amount to fundamental disagreement in faith. The diversity in different churches and even in society did not need to be raised as an issue as long as it had nothing to do with basic factors. Churches in Indonesia had reached an agreement about fundamentals in faith when they all accepted the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith. In society there is Pancasila (the five basic principles of the state) which unite all the Indonesians. Nevertheless, here and there differences are still found in worship practices, in the way hymns are used during worship services, in methods of evangelism, etc. If those differences are not considered to be principal, the distance between churches can be lessened.

36 Idem, p. 473; Notice, for example, the Lord’s Supper Liturgy of the GPM; GPIB, GKI, GMIM
37 In GPM.
38 In certain congregations of the GPIB and in the GKI.
39 Van den End, Enam Belas Dokumen, p. 496. After announcing several times the couple’s plans to marry, some congregations follow it with the words: “In essence The Order of Marriage is a worship service of the congregation, and for that reason the entire congregation is invited to attend.” The author experienced this in the Central Java GKI in Salatiga. This practice is in line with Calvin’s view of the service of marriage and is customarily used by churches in the Netherlands. See Rahman, Pengantar Sejarah Liturgi, p. 98-99; Van den End, Enam Belas Dokumen, p. 449; see also Brienen, De liturgie, p. 224-225.
6.4. Recommendations

a. It is recommended that studies on Calvin and his theology be promoted in Indonesia, both in churches and in academic theological circles. In this respect, it seems fitting to mention once again those Indonesian theologians who have already written articles or books, such as the late Abineno; Josef Manuel Saruan, Eben Nuban Timo, and Henny Sumakul. Abineno wrote several books, including *Perjamuan Malam Menurut Para Reformatior* (The Lord’s Supper according to the Reformers), (1990). This book delineates the views of Luther and Calvin. His study *Johanes Calvin Pembangunan Jemaat, Tata Gereja dan Jabatan Gerejawi* (John Calvin, Church Establishment, Church Order and Ecclesiastical Ministry), (1992) discusses how Calvin organized the church in Geneva with a church order under the leadership of the elders. In his monograph *Bucer dan Calvin* (Bucer and Calvin), (2006) he enters upon the influence of Bucer on Calvin. Meanwhile, Josef Manuel Saruan in his article, *Eklesiologi Calvinisme dan Pengembangannya dalam Gereja-gereja Protestan di Indonesia* (The Ecclesiology of Calvinism and its Development in the Protestant Churches in Indonesia) (1995) says that the churches in Indonesia have developed Calvin’s ecclesiology as can be seen in the Five Documents on Unity especially within the document of the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith. According to Saruan, in this document, the essence and the task of the church were formulated in accordance with Calvin’s concept of the church. As we saw above, Eben Nuban Timo related Calvin’s teaching of predestination to the culture of tribes in Timor in his book *Pemberita Firman Pencinta Budaya*. Henny Sumakul wrote a dissertation at the University of the Free State Bloemfontein, South Africa entitled, *The Concept of Vocation in the Minds of Migrant Worker of GMIM in Postmodern Times*, (2005) which has been mentioned above as well. These books can widen the perspective of Indonesian Christians in terms of what Calvin’s theological ideas mean and which ones are relevant to Indonesian churches. The more studies of Calvin there are, the wider the discoveries about basic teachings of Protestantism that might be useful to churches now, especially in Indonesia, in terms of their presence and purposefulness to the world. We must be thankful to the *Lembaga Reformed Injili Indonesia* (Indonesian Evangelical Reformed Institute) and the publisher Momentum that took the initiative to translate books about Calvin and Calvinism into the Indonesian language and publish them. In this way the teachings of Calvin and Calvinism can be distributed widely throughout Indonesia so even the churches can also provide critical input on the relevance they see in Calvin and Calvinism.

b. The way Calvin is received has changed since the era of the VOC, and the time of the mission societies, the *Protestantsche Kerk* of Dutch colonialism, and even up to the present. At the time of the VOC, people did not become familiar with Calvin’s teachings directly through special instruction but rather through Calvinist church practice. During the era of mission societies, even though there was no visible orientation toward Calvin, the Calvinist influence could certainly be felt. During the colonial time of the governance of the *Protestantsche Kerk*, Calvinist principles were

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nearly lost because general Protestant principles were being used instead. Yet, when churches were beginning to become autonomous, some attempted to identify themselves by referring to Calvinist principles, as, for example by choosing the presbyterian-synodal system of self-governance. Later, in the 1980s, the Evangelical Reformed movement emerged and tried to revive the teachings of Calvin by establishing an Evangelical Reformed Theological Seminary and by translating books about Calvin and Calvinism. The teaching of Calvin, then, still attracted churches in Indonesia, although not all of them. There was an interesting phenomenon in 2009 with reference to Calvin’s quincentennial or five hundredth anniversary celebrations. The GKI, for example, held a series of studies and seminars on various topics to see how the teachings of Calvin had been actualized within the Indonesian context, as did the GKE. On the occasion of its 124th anniversary, on April 11, 2009, the Theological Faculty of the Christian University of Indonesia in the Moluccas (UKIM) held a seminar on “Church Ministry and the Spirituality of GPM Pastors”. Included in the discussions about offices were those of Calvin and Calvinist churches. The Indonesian Calvin Society (ICS), a forum for study and discussion about Calvin and Calvinism in Indonesia, conducted a seminar on which principles of Calvin can still be promoted within the Indonesian context. This seminar was held in Manado in June 2009 in conjunction with Calvin’s anniversary. It can thus be said that with this latest development, there are two different attitudes toward accepting Calvin (and Calvinism) in Indonesia. Sometimes the churches in Indonesia are questioning themselves as to whether they are Calvinist or not. Therefore, I strongly recommend the churches which claim themselves to be Calvinist in Indonesia to undertake intensive studies on Calvin.

c. Admittedly many churches have still not linked up with the ecumenical movement of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI). The Roman Catholic Church has not even come on board with ecumenism in Indonesia. Since the PGI was established, the Roman Catholic Church has never been involved. Therefore in the PGI organizational structure there is no special “desk” for the Roman Catholic Church in Indonesia as there is in the World Council of Churches. The Catholics have their own organization called Konferensi Wali Gereja Indonesia or KWI (Indonesian Bishops’ Conference). Be that as it may, the PGI and the KWI have always cooperated with each other in routine and non-routine activities. Routinely, every year together they prepare and send out a Christmas Message to all Christians in Indonesia, jointly signed by the head of the PGI and the head of the KWI. Incidentally, if there is an Indonesian government policy or ruling that seems contradictory to basic teachings of Christianity or that tends to discredit Christians, the two organizations meet to discuss their position and issue a joint statement. In October 2008, PGI and KWI issued an appeal for Indonesian Christians to exercise their rights and to responsibly participate in the General Election of 2009. It also urged Christians to choose legislative candidates who would give priority to public welfare and not to personal or group interests. Such is the type of unity that exists between Protestant and Catholic churches in Indonesia. Nevertheless, Protestant churches in Indonesia are aware that they are capable of doing more than this. The Documents on Church Unity (DKG) stress that
uniting with the Roman Catholic is a universal ecumenical calling and that within the framework of ecumenism in Indonesia, relations with the Roman Catholic should be continued, increased, extended, and intensified through dialog and cooperation. As we saw in chapter 4, this kind of an attempt was made for the Reformed Church and Catholic Church where Calvin had been involved. Although Calvin severely criticized the Catholic church of his time, he did not distance himself from it. It is therefore recommended that the Documents on Church Unity’s mandate on ecumenical calling be implemented more concretely and universally by churches which have joined together in the PGI.

d. Pentecostal and Evangelical churches in Indonesia have their own coordinating institution. However, these churches are also under the wings of the PGI. Meanwhile, the Seventh Day Adventist church still stands outside of the PGI, and the same is true of the small Russian Orthodox Church, the Baptist Church, and the Anglican Church. If we pay attention to the Documents on Church Unity (DKG), it states that relationships with Christian churches and institutions outside of PGI circles should be continued, increased, extended and intensified. So the Indonesian churches belonging to PGI need to look for more concrete forms of relationship. One type of relationship that could be recommended is coming together to exchange views about mutual principles of faith put down by church reformers, including Calvin. By sitting down together and dialoging, churches could look for essential teachings recognized by all. The Statement on Mutual Professing (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in this case could become a reference; views on the principles of the Christian faith in this document could be introduced and discussed together. There would be visible openness since no matter how greatly the churches differed in their teachings, no one could deny that they were rooted in Reformed Protestantism. Neither could any of them renounce Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Thus, unity in Christ must be emphasized while embracing partnership with churches that are not yet associated with the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. In other words, it is recommended that these churches carry out joint studies about the roots of Protestantism that can bring them closer together. When trying to build communication and dialogue, the constraint normally faced is the lack of openness of Pentecostal, Evangelical, Baptist and Seventh Day Adventist churches. These churches tend to be closed and exclusive, feeling that they are more correct than others.

e. As mentioned in the conclusion, the presbyterian-synodal system is used by many Calvinist churches in Indonesia. Practice shows, however, that not all churches implement its principles integrally or according to its original intention. What stands out is a hierarchical and bureaucratic pattern of leadership. The congregation, the base which is actually the visible embodiment of the church, is under the classis (or presbytery), which, in turn, is under the synod board. The latter are the decision-makers for all policies and programs. The classis and congregations, as subordinates, simply carry out their decisions. The leadership is top down, then, initiated by the

41 PGI, Dokumen Keesaan Gereja, 2006, p. 66.
42 Idem, p. 66.
synod board, not by the congregation or consistory. The congregational members’ right of autonomy to regulate themselves is practically lost. This practice conflicts with the principles of this system, in which congregational autonomy is in balance with the overall responsibility of the synod as an assembly of the representatives of the churches (or classes) for the well being of the churches in general. It is therefore recommended that Calvinist churches conduct a study of this system to reevaluate whether it still suits the cultural context of leadership in Indonesia. In my own opinion, implementing this presbyterian-synodal system should not be hampered by the Indonesian cultural pattern of leadership, where the most powerful sovereign, the king, rules absolutely and the people at the bottom merely listen to the royal decrees. The key issue is how to design together a single church order that does not allow one level of leadership to gain a monopoly within that church structure. There must be enough room at each level of leadership for access to be gained by the congregation, classis, and regional synod on up to the synod itself. A clear division of authority is also needed for each level of leadership. A structure of this sort is truly in the spirit of what the presbyterian-synodal model received through the legacy of Calvin. This church order recognizes the diversity and uniqueness of each congregation, classis and regional synod, but unites them all in one synod. Therefore, further studies and initiatives as to the presbyterian-synodal organization within the Indonesian churches are strongly recommended.

Churches interested in joining together in an organizational structure should consider carefully ahead of time, for it does not promise satisfaction for all. We have seen in the previous chapter (see chapter 5.2.2) what happened during the ecumenical journey of the churches in Indonesia with the idea of Ecumenical Synod of the Churches in Indonesia as an attempt to unite all churches into one church organization. The journey of the churches in the Netherlands within the so called the Samen op Weg Kerken (SOW) which later became the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN) can be an example which shows that many people feel unsatisfied. Even though the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Netherlands have succeeded in organizing themselves within one ecclesiastical organization, there are still some practical and theological issues. From the beginning, the discourse about the autonomy of the local church and the authority of the synod was in tension, which caused some of the Reformed congregations refused to join the PKN. Besides, the question plays a role about the place of mission and church world service in the structure of the church in connection with the relation between Kerk in Actie and ICCO. A practical issue is what kind of liturgy can be used in the PKN. All these matters are in discussion until now. Thus, to avoid a tendency towards structural organizational unity, I strongly recommend the churches in Indonesia to keep the Documents on Church Unity as a model of unity that is relevant to the Indonesian context and to think about its realization through what is called unity in action.
SUMMARY

This study deals with the central question of Calvin’s opinion concerning the unity of the church, and whether and in what ways, his view will be useful to the churches in Indonesia as they seek unity. To answer this question we will study Calvin’s ecclesiology, trace the ecumenical journey of the churches in Indonesia under the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, and see how far Calvin’s view influenced their thinking on the unity they are searching.

Calvin did not develop his ecclesiology in an empty space. On the one hand he faced the traditional church with its papalist ecclesiology, and on the other hand the Anabaptists as an emerging radical movement, which was not always easy to define; sometimes Calvin calls them Anabaptists, sometimes ‘fanatics’, ‘enthusiasts’, or ‘libertines’. He reacted against the Catholic identification of the church with the kingdom of God on earth, and to the Anabaptist concept of the nature of the church, the actualization of the church and the maintenance of a pure church. In this he asserted that it would not be possible that the church could be so perfect at that time. He stressed this in relation to Anabaptist spiritualism and subjectivism. This is the context that influenced Calvin’s ecclesiology, which is described in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 3 Calvin’s clear understanding about the unity of the church and also of the way to achieve ecclesiastical unity is explained and discussed. His ideas were implied in all his writings such as the Institutes, commentaries, sermons, letters, and in tracts like his Reply to Sadolete.

Examining the Institutes of 1936 we find that Calvin contextualized and developed his ecclesiology in interaction with Rome and the Anabaptists. Therefore, according to Calvin there was a need for a church order and for the office of the minister in the church. He showed prominently the invisible dimension and hidden aspect of the church and also the nature of the church as one. More than Luther did, he added the aspect of predestination and the glory of God. Besides, he asserted that there could not be two or three churches since the church is catholic and universal, one body with Christ as the head, to be one congregation of God where Christ is the good shepherd, a unity of believers. From this we begin to have a clear picture of Calvin’s firmness in refusing all sectarian tendencies.

In the Institutes of 1539, however, there was a new dimension which Calvin put forward: the visible dimension of the church. As to this dimension, Calvin stressed two things: Firstly, the unity of the church should be manifested in the visible church. While the traditional church was in ruins and had become an ecclesia deformata and the Anabaptists boasted that they had the ecclesia perfecta and tended to be exclusive, for Calvin it was always necessary to preserve the unity of the church. The basis on which we believe the church is that we are fully convinced that we are members of it. Therefore, to withdraw from the community of the church is an inconsistency. Secondly, the idea of the church as mother of all believers was meant to assert that it is necessary for every believer to be a church member. With this idea Calvin wanted to oppose the tendency of the Anabaptists to walk out from the church and build up a new church consisting of holy, perfect members.

The next edition of the Institutes, of 1543 showed other developments. Here Calvin discussed in detail the visible church. Baptism is understood as an insertion into
the body of Christ and as a sign of initiation, which was the real sign of acceptance into the visible church. The other issue of this edition is about ecclesiastical offices and the discipline which is very important for the visible church. Here we see that for Calvin, to have faith in Christ, to accept the right teaching, to love and to confess God’s Word as true and trustworthy are important unifying forces. These forces are in action where the Word is truly preached and the sacraments are rightly administered.

In the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin stressed several points such as the church as mother of the believers; the catholicity of the church; the marks of the church; that the imperfection of the church is no reason for separation from the church; and fundamental criteria for the unity of the church. The same ideas which are found in the *Institutes* could be traced also in Calvin’s other writings such as commentaries, sermons, letters, and his *Reply to Sadoleto*.

For Calvin the way towards the unity of the church was not at first an issue of building up new structures or a bureaucratic organization. The most important thing is that it had to start with the basic issue of faith in Jesus Christ as the Head of the church which is Christ’s body. Calvin’s view of unity is based on his vision of true catholicity. This is not a geographical, horizontal structure, but a spiritual communion in obedience to Christ’s commandments, and the true preaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments. What Calvin referred to was the unity in and because of Christ, the unity in the basic Christian faith and the true doctrine, which can be called the criteria of the unity – the unity in mutual acknowledgment and acceptance as churches that perform the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. These are the principal and fundamental elements of the unity. This kind of unity should be apparent in the visible church. Although various structures are possible, also differences concerning unessential matters are possible.

Calvin had not merely a theological theory about unity. He was not just a formulator of the ideas but he was the executor as well. This is the main theme of Chapter 4. Calvin really fought for this unity itself. Therefore, he took part in Colloquies of Hagenau, Worms and Regensburg, and the ecumenical meeting of the reformists’ leaders in Lambeth Palace in London. We also see what Calvin did in several disputes, which reflected how he was very sensitive to separation and tried hard to avoid it. Calvin was involved in efforts to end the conflicts in Neuchâtel and Frankfurt and also the disagreement concerning the Lord’s Supper, which resulted in the *Consensus Tigurinus*. Additionally, his tolerant attitude to various issues, such as ecclesiastical structure in Poland is part of the evidence. All this shows us the concordance of his teaching and life or between a *theoretical Calvin* and a *practical Calvin*.

In Chapter 5 we try to analyze and discuss the influence Calvin’s thinking on unity in Indonesia. We do so in a historical overview, divided into three sections, which respectively have a historical, ecumenical and theological emphasis. In the first section, it is demonstrated how Calvin’s teachings and ideas entered the Dutch East Indies (the future Indonesia) through the VOC, through non-church bound mission societies, and through missionary organizations of particular churches. The second part describes the history of the ecumenical journey of the *Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* (DGI) and its successor, the *Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* (PGI).
It can be concluded that the Reformed churches indebted to Calvin played a big role in the formation of the Council and later the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. Several Reformed pastors and theologians, whose ideas showed a deep affinity with Calvin’s thinking, influenced the form and content of the unity the Indonesian churches are struggling for. The Five Documents of Church Unity (1984) which were revised and accepted during the General Assembly of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia in 2000 to become its official Documents on Church Unity, breath the spirit and show the thinking of Calvin in several of its chapters. Calvin’s teachings on the government and the relation between church and state are echoed in the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia. One of its articles emphasizes that the government is instituted by God and given the task of protecting those who are good and resisting evil. The church is obliged to pray for the government and help it to carry out its job. The church is also expected to criticize the government if it wrongly exercises the authority it has been granted (Rev. 13). If the government should demand something that is incompatible with the faith, Christians are to show their allegiance to God before man. Another article makes clear that the church is an autonomous institution apart from the state and is free of any state intervention. Meanwhile, the church has no right to intervene in the life of the state, for both have their own tasks. So it can be said that this document exhibits a Calvinistic approach or Reformed traits toward unity both in title and content, especially within the Statement on Mutual Profession (Understanding) about the Christian Faith in Indonesia and the Charter of Mutual Recognition and Acceptance. The latter document should be understood as the manifestation of unity in a more concrete way, for instance the mutual recognition of ministry and sacraments.

In the third section of Chapter 5 the thinking about church unity of seven contemporary Indonesian theologians and church leaders is discussed. Several of them were actively involved in the DGI or PGI. Leimena stressed the parallel path of the nation and the church as to unity and diversity. Rumambi emphasized the need of a coordinating institution. Soedarmo and Harun Hadiwijono, both professors of systematic theology in Jakarta and Yogyakarta respectively, wrote important essays on the plurality of the church and the need for a common confession. Abineno pointed to the Bible which testifies the necessity of a good equilibrium between of plurality and unity. Two theologians belonging to the most recent period have been Eka Darmaputera, who encountered practical problems such as primordiality (e.g., ethnic Chinese churches) and Agustina Lumentut who was offended by the lack of a spirit of togetherness within many churches.

In Chapter 6, finally, it is attempted to draw conclusions as to the benefit and meaningfulness of Calvin’s thinking about the unity of the church for the churches in Indonesia nowadays. I prefer to state that unity witnessed to by having these Five Documents of Unity is sufficient within the Indonesian context. Failure of endeavors to form such a United Christian Church in Indonesia (GKYE) is caused by a lack of awareness as to the views about unity of some of the sixteenth-century reformers and especially of Calvin. So, what will be important in the future is not thinking about how to form a GKYE but how to manifest this United Christian Church in accordance to
the decision of the Tenth General Assembly of the Council of Churches in Indonesia in 1984.

But we have to be aware that there are factors that challenge the proposed unity from a Calvinistic perspective: ethnic factors, nationalism instead of church unity, non-creedal churches, the problems of rebaptism and the power of confessional families. Also critical theological voices have been raised from some theologians and church leaders who have a negative evaluation concerning the significance of Calvinist teaching in the Indonesian context. Nevertheless, we see that Calvin’s legacy is still kept in the church life and practices of the churches in Indonesia.

To keep the unity of the church, Calvin showed tolerance in various circumstances. He did not require of all Christians to share the same insight on all questions, nor did he require of all churches the same height of spiritual life in all situations. Compared with Luther and Zwingli, Calvin was the sole really international ecumenical reformer. His theology was basically and essentially an ecumenical one, aimed, especially in its ecclesiology, at building bridges between the different churches. Practically all his life Calvin struggled to bring a visible unity in reality in the various Reformed churches of his time. Though he distinguished between the visible and the invisible church, in both cases he stressed the necessity of unity.

This study is important for the ecumenicity of the churches in Indonesia. The Council of Churches in Indonesia was founded in 1950 and later became the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. Its aim is to form a United Christian Church in Indonesia. Two streams of thinking emerged concerning what this intended United Christian Church in Indonesia should look like, and how would it come into being. The first stream stresses the structure: the so called structural unity. The second stream emphasizes unity in togetherness by witnessing and serving, which is called the functional unity. The tension between these two streams has been for long in discussion. In this situation, it may be useful for the churches in Indonesia to learn and to study the teachings of Calvin as the reformer who settled the basic doctrines of Protestantism including ecclesiology.

Finally, the churches in Indonesia are recommended to do several things. Firstly, that study on Calvin and his theology ought to be promoted in Indonesia, both in the churches and in academic theological circles. This recommendation is more specifically directed to the churches which proclaim themselves Calvinistic. Secondly, it is recommended that the Documents on Church Unity are implemented more concretely and universally by churches which have joined together in the PGI. Thirdly, it is advised that these churches carry out joint studies about the roots of Protestantism that can bring them closer together. Fourthly, it is recommendable that Calvinist churches conduct a study of the presbyterial-synodal system to reevaluate whether it still suits the cultural context of leadership in Indonesia. Finally, I strongly recommend the churches in Indonesia to keep the Church Documents on Unity as a model of unity that is relevant to the Indonesian context and to think about its realization through what is called *unity in action*. 
RINGKASAN

Pertanyaan pokok dalam studi ini adalah apakah pandangan Calvin tentang keesaan gereja dan dalam hal apa pandangannya itu berfaedah bagi gereja-gereja di Indonesia yang sedang mengupayakan keesaan. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan ini kita akan mempelajari eklesiologi Calvin, menelusuri perjalanan oikumene gereja-gereja di Indonesia dalam wadah Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia, serta melihat seberapa jauh pandangan Calvin berpengaruh dalam pemikiran terkait keesaan yang sedang diusahakan itu. Calvin tidak mengembangkan eklesiologinya dalam ruang yang hampa. Pada satu pihak ia menghadapi gereja tradisional dengan eklesiologinya yang papalis, pada pihak lain ia berhadapan dengan kaum Anabaptis sebagai gerakan radikal yang muncul waktu itu dan yang tidak selalu mudah diidentifikasi. Calvin kadang-kadang menyebut mereka Anabaptis, kadang-kadang ‘fanatik’, ‘entusiast’, atau ‘libertine’. Ia menentang gereja Katolik yang mengidentifikasi dirinya dengan kerajaan Allah di bumi, juga konsep gerakan Anabaptis tentang hakakat gereja, aktualisasi gereja, dan pemeliharaan gereja yang murni. Terhadap hal ini ia menegaskan bahwa tidak mungkin gereja bisa menjadi sempurna. Ia menekankan hal ini dalam kaitan dengan spiritualisme dan subyetivisme gerakan Anabaptis. Ini adalah konteks yang mempengaruhi eklesiologi Calvin, yang diuraikan dalam Bab II.

Dalam Bab III dikemukakan dan dibahas secara jelas pemahaman Calvin tentang keesaan gereja serta cara bagaimana mencapai keesaan gereja itu. Pemahamannya itu tertuang dalam berbagai tulisannya seperti Institutio, tafsiran-tafsiran, khotbah-khotbah, surat-surat, dan dalam sebuah traktat yang ditulisnya sebagai tanggapan kepada Sadoletto.


Dalam Institutio 1539, ada dimensi baru yang Calvin kedepankan yakni dimensi yang kelihatan dari gereja. Tertinggi dimensi ini ia menekankan dua hal. Pertama, keesaan gereja harus dinampakkan dalam gereja yang kelihatan. Sementara gereja tradisional jatuh ke dalam kecenderungan menjadi ecclesia deformata dan kaum Anabaptis cenderung menjadi ecclesia perfecta yang eksklusif, Calvin melihat bahwa pemelihara keesaan gereja adalah sangat perlu. Pemahaman mendasar yang membuat kita percaya gereja adalah keyakinan yang sungguh bahwa kita adalah anggota dari gereja itu. Karena itu, menarik diri dari persekutuan gereja adalah tindakan yang tidak konsisten. Kedua, gereja sebagai ibu segala orang percaya, berarti hendak menegaskan bahwa setiap orang percaya harus menjadi anggota gereja.
Berdasarkan pandangan ini Calvin menentang kecenderungan Anabaptis untuk keluar dari gereja dan membentuk gereja baru yang hanya beranggotakan orang-orang yang suci dan sempurna.

Edisi selanjutnya dari Institutio yakni Institutio 1543, memperlihatkan perkembangan lagi. Didalamnya Calvin membahas gereja yang kelihatan secara detail. Baptisan dipahami sebagai masuk menjadi anggota tubuh Kristus dan tanda inisiasi, sekaligus tanda yang nyata dari diterimanya seseorang dalam gereja yang kelihatan. Hal lain yang dikembangkan Calvin dalam edisi ini adalah jabatan dan disiplin gerejawi yang menurutnya sangat penting bagi gereja yang kelihatan. Di sini kita melihat bahwa baginya, beriman akan Kristus, menerima pengajaran yang benar, mengasihi, dan mengakui Firman Allah sebagai benar dan dapat dipercaya merupakan kekuatan pemersatu yang penting. Kekuatan pemersatu ini tampak dalam tindakan memberitakan Firman secara murni dan melayankan sakramen dengan benar.

Dalam Institutio edisi terakhir tahun 1559 Calvin kembali menekankan beberapa hal yang sudah disinggung dalam edisi sebelumnya antara lain: gereja sebagai ibu orang percaya, kekatolikan gereja, tanda-tanda dari gereja; bahwa ketidaksempurnaan gereja tidak boleh menjadi alasan memisahkan diri, serta kriteria mendasar bagi keesaan gereja. Pokok-pokok dalam Institutio ini dapat pula ditelusuri dalam karangan-karangan Calvin yang lain seperti tafsiran, khotbah, surat-surat dan tanggapan terhadap Sadolete.


Calvin tidak hanya berteori tentang keesaan. Ia bukan saja perumus ide-ide tetapi juga pelaksana. Inilah tema utama yang dibahas dalam Bab IV. Ia berjuang keras untuk dan demi keesaan. Karena itu, ia mengambil bagian dalam beberapa pertemuan (colloquia) di Hagenau, Worms dan Regensburg, serta menghadiri sebuah pertemuan oikumenis para pemimpin reformis gereja di istana Lambeth London. Kita juga melihat bahwa Calvin menangani beberapa pertikaian, hal mana menunjukkan betapa ia begitu peka terhadap perpecahan serta berusaha menghindarkannya. Ia terlibat aktif dalam usaha menyelesaikan konflik di Neuchatel dan Frankfurt. Ia juga berusaha menyelesaikan pertikaian pendapat tentang perjamuan kudus yang menghasilkan Consensus Tigurinus. Lagi pula, sikap toleran yang ditunjukkannya
terhadap beberapa isu seperti antara lain struktur gereja di Polandia dapat dijadikan salah satu bukti. Semua ini menunjukkan adanya keserasian antara ajaran dan hidup, atau antara Calvin sebagai teoritis dan sebagai praktisi.


Jika pemerintah memaksakan sesuatu yang bertentangan dengan iman Kristen, maka orang Kristen harus tunduk kepada Allah dari pada manusia. Pasal lain menjelaskan bahwa gereja adalah lembaga otonom yang terpisah dari negara dan bebas dari campur tangan negara. Sementara itu, gereja tidak berhak mengintervensi kehidupan negara karena keduanya mempunyai tugas sendiri-sendiri. Jadi, dapat dikatakan bahwa Dokumen Keesaan Gereja mencerminkan cara pandang Calvinis dan ciri-ciri ajaran Reformed tentang keesaan, khususnya dalam Pemahaman Bersama Iman Kristen dan Piagam Salag Mengakui dan Salag Menerima. Dokumen yang disebutkan terakhir dapat dipahami sebagai manifestasi dari keesaan dalam bentuknya yang konkret misalnya dalam hal saling mengakui jabatan dan sakramen.


Namun kita harus sadar bahwa ada beberapa faktor yang menantang keesaan dari sudut pandang Calvinis yang telah kita bicarakan. Faktor-faktor etnis, persoalan sekitar nasionalisme dan keesaan, adanya gereja yang tidak mau terikat pada suatu pengakuan iman, masalah baptisan ulang, serta kuatnya gereja-gereja yang menggabungkan diri atas dasar konfesi atau denominasi. Juga akhir-akhir ini muncul suara-suara kritis dari beberapa teolog dan pemimpin gereja yang bernada negatif tentang signifikan ajaran Calvin dalam konteks Indonesia. Meskipun demikian kami mencatat bahwa warisan tradisi Calvinis masih tetap tampak dalam ajaran dan praktek gereja-gereja di Indonesia sampai sekarang.

Demi terpeliharanya keesaaan gereja Calvin bersikap toleran terhadap berbagai situasi yang khusus. Ia tidak mengharuskan semua orang Kristen memiliki pemahaman yang sama terhadap suatu masalah. Ia juga tidak mengharuskan semua gereja memiliki tingkat kerohanian yang sama tinggi dalam segala situasi. Jika dibandingkan dengan Luther atau Zwingli, dapat dikatakan bahwa Calvin adalah reformator oikumene internasional. Teologinya, lebih khusus eklesiologi, pada dasarnya bertujuan oikumene, suatu teologi yang bisa membangun jembatan antara gereja yang berbeda-beda. Bahkan dalam hidupnya, ia berjuang keras supaya keesaaan itu menjadi sesuatu yang dapat dilihat dalam kehidupan gereja Reformed pada masanya. Sekalipun ia membedakan gereja yang kelihatan dan gereja yang kelihatan, namun dalam keduanya ia menekankan perlunya keesaan.

seperti ini, adalah bermanfaat bilamana gereja-gereja di Indonesia mau belajar dan melakukan studi tentang ajaran Calvin, reformator yang memantapkan ajaran-ajaran dasar Protestantisme, termasuk eklesiologi.

SAMENVATTING

De centrale vraag van deze studie betreft Calvijns opvatting aangaande de eenheid van de kerk en of en op welke manier zijn inzichten vruchtbaar kunnen zijn voor de kerken in Indonesië bij hun zoektocht naar eenheid. Om deze vraag te beantwoorden, bestuderen we Calvijns ecclesiologie, volgen we de oecumenische tocht van de kerken in Indonesië die tot de Gemeenschap van Kerken in dat land behoren en gaan we na in hoeverre Calvijns visie het denken over de daar gezocht eenheid heeft beïnvloed.

Calvijn ontwikkelde zijn ecclesiologie niet in een lege ruimte. Aan de ene kant stond hij tegenover de traditionele kerk met haar pauselijke kerkleer en aan de andere kant tegenover de wederdopers als een opkomende radicale beweging, die niet altijd gemakkelijk te definiëren viel: soms noemde Calvijn hen anabaptisten, soms fanatici, soms dwepers of vrijdenkers. Hij verzette zich tegen de katholieke identificatie van kerk en koninkrijk Gods op aarde en tegen het doperse concept van het wezen van de kerk, dat wil zeggen de verwerkelijking en de bestaansmogelijkheid van een zuivere kerk. Daarbij stelde Calvijn dat het onmogelijk was dat de kerk van zijn tijd zo volmaakt kon zijn. Hij benadrukte dit in verband met het spiritualisme en subjectivisme van de wederdopers. Deze context, die Calvijns ecclesiologie beïnvloedde, wordt beschreven in Hoofdstuk 2.

In Hoofdstuk 3 wordt Calvijns heldere begrip van de eenheid van de kerk en ook van de weg om kerkelijke eenheid te bereiken uitgelegd en bediscussieerd. Zijn denkbeelden zijn te vinden in al zijn geschriften, zoals de *Institutie*, commentaren, preken, brieven en traktaten zoals zijn *Antwoord aan Sadoleto*.

De *Institutie* van 1536 doorzoekend zien we, dat Calvijn zijn kerkleer contextualiseerde en in interactie met Rome en de wederdopers ontwikkelde. Daarom was er volgens Calvijn behoefte aan een kerkorde en aan het ambt van predikant in de kerk. Hij liet uitstekend de onzichtbare dimensie en de verborgen aspecten van de kerk zien en ook dat het wezen van de kerk één is. Meer dan Luther deed voegde hij daaraan toe de aspecten van predestinatie en de *gloria Dei*. Daarnaast stelde hij dat er geen twee of drie kerken kunnen zijn omdat de kerk katholiek en universeel is, één lichaam met Christus als hoofd, om één gemeente van God te vormen waarvan Christus de goede herder is, een eenheid van gelovigen. Hierdoor beginnen we een duidelijk beeld te krijgen van Calvijns standvastigheid bij het verwerpen van alle sektarische tendensen.

In de *Institutie* van 1539 werd echter een nieuwe dimensie naar voren gehaald, de zichtbare dimensie van de kerk. Wat dit betreft, benadrukte Calvijn twee zaken. Allereerst diende de eenheid van de kerk manifest te worden in de zichtbare kerk. Waar de traditionele kerk in puin lag en een *ecclesia deformata* was geworden en de dopers er zich op beroemden de *ecclesia perfecta* te hebben en tot exclusiviteit neigden, was het voor Calvijn steeds noodzakelijk om de eenheid van de kerk te behouden. De grondslag van ons vertrouwen in de kerk is onze volle overtuiging dat we daarvan leden zijn. Daarom is het inconsistent om je terug te trekken uit de gemeenschap van de kerk. Ten tweede was het idee van de kerk als moeder van alle gelovigen bedoeld als verklaring dat het noodzakelijk is voor elke gelovige om kerklid te zijn. Daarmee wilde Calvijn zich verzetten tegen de neiging van de
wederdopers om uit de kerk te stappen en een nieuwe kerk te stichten, die zou bestaan uit heilige, volmaakte mensen.

De volgende druk van de *Institutie*, uit 1543, liet nog andere ontwikkelingen zien. Hier behandelde Calvijn in detail de zichtbare kerk. De doop wordt verstaan als een invoegen in het lichaam van Christus en als teken van initiatie, het waarachtige teken van opneming in de zichtbare kerk. Een ander belangrijk punt in deze editie betreft de kerkelijke ambten en de discipline die heel belangrijk is voor de zichtbare kerk. Hier zien we, dat voor Calvijn het geloof in Christus, het aanvaarden van de rechte leer, het liefhebben en belijden van Gods Woord als waar en waarachtig de belangrijkste krachten van eenheid zijn. Deze krachten zijn werkzaam waar het Woord getrouwelijk wordt gepredikt en de sacramenten zuiver worden bediend.

In de uitgave van de *Institutie* van 1559 benadrukte Calvijn verschillende punten, zoals de kerk als moeder van de gelovigen; de katholiciteit van de kerk; de kenmerken van de kerk; de onvolmaaktheid der kerk die geen reden kan zijn voor afscheiding; en de fundamentele criteria voor de eenheid der kerk. Dezelfde denkbeelden die in de *Institutie* te vinden zijn, kunnen ook worden getraceerd in andere geschriften van Calvijn zoals zijn commentaren, preken, brieven en zijn *Antwoord aan Sadoleto*.

Voor Calvijn was de weg naar de eenheid van de kerk niet allereerst een kwestie van opbouw van nieuwe structuren of van een bureaucratische organisatie. Het belangrijkste is te beginnen met de kernzaak, namelijk geloof in Jezus Christus als Hoofd der kerk, Christus’ lichaam. Calvijn visie op eenheid is gebaseerd op zijn visie van ware katholiciteit. Dat is niet een geografische, horizontale structuur, maar een geestelijke gemeenschap die gehoorzaam is aan Christus’ geboden, de ware prediking van het evangelie en bediening van de sacramenten. Calvijn refereerde hier aan de eenheid in en door Christus, de eenheid in de hoofdzaak van het christelijk geloof en de ware leer, die de criteria van de eenheid genoemd kunnen worden – de eenheid in wederkerige erkenning en aanvaarding als kerken, die de dienst van Woord en sacramenten vervullen. Dit zijn de voornaamste en fundamentele elementen van de eenheid. Deze vorm van eenheid hoort aanwezig te zijn in de zichtbare kerk. Hoewel een verscheidenheid aan structuren mogelijk is, zijn ook verschillen over niet-essentiële zaken mogelijk.

Calvijn had niet alleen een theologische theorie over eenheid. Hij was niet slechts degene die de ideeën formuleerde, maar ook degene die ze uitvoerde. Dit is het voornaamste thema van Hoofdstuk 4. Calvijn streefde werkelijk voor deze eenheid. Daarom nam hij deel aan de godsdienstgesprekken van Hagenau, Worms en Regensburg en aan de voorbereiding van de oecumenische bespreking van leiders van de reformatie in Lambeth Palace te Londen. Ook zien we, wat Calvijn in verschillende disputaties deed, waar blijkt hoe gevoelig hij was voor afscheidingen en hoe hard hij probeerde deze te vermijden. Hij was betrokken bij pogingen om een einde te maken aan conflicten in Neuchâtel en Frankfurt en aan de onenigheid over het Avondmaal, hetgeen resulteerde in de *Consensus Tigurinus*. Daarnaast vormt zijn tolerante houding in verschillende situaties, zoals de kerkelijke structuur in Polen, deel van het bewijs dat zijn leer en leven in harmonie met elkaar waren, oftewel dat er overeenstemming was tussen de *theoretische Calvijn* en de *praktische Calvijn*. 
In Hoofdstuk 5 proberen we de invloed van Calvijns denken op de eenheid in Indonesië te doordenken en te analyseren. Dat doen we in een historisch overzicht dat in drie delen is verdeeld, die respectievelijk een zendinghistorisch, een oecumenisch en een theologisch accent hebben. In het eerste deel wordt aangetoond hoe Calvijn leer en denkbeelden in Nederlands Indië (het latere Indonesië) terecht kwam via de VOC, door niet-kerkelijk gebonden zendingsorganisaties en door de zendingsorganisaties van individuele kerken. Het tweede deel beschrijft de geschiedenis van de oecumenische trektocht van de *Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* (DGI, Raad van Kerken) en de opvolger daarvan de *Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* (PGI, Gemeenschap van Kerken). Geconcludeerd kan worden dat de hervormde en gereformeerde kerken, die aan Calvijn veel verschuldigd zijn, een grote rol speelden bij de totstandkoming van de DGI en later de PGI in Indonesië.


In het derde deel van Hoofdstuk 5 wordt het denken over kerkelijke eenheid van zeven eigentijdse Indonesische theologen en kerkleiders behandeld. Verschillenden van hen waren actief betrokken bij de DGI of de PGI. Leimena accentueerde de parallelle weg van de natie en de kerk wat eenheid en verscheidenheid betreft. Rumambi benadrukte de noodzaak van een coördinerend lichaam. Soedarmo en Harun Hadiwijono, beiden hoogleraar systematische theologie in respectievelijk Jakarta en Yogyakarta, schreven belangrijke artikelen over de
pluraliteit van de kerk en de noodzaak van een gezamenlijke belijdenis. Abineno wees er op dat de bijbel getuigt van de noodzaak van een goed evenwicht tussen verscheidenheid en eenheid. Twee theologen die tot de meest recente tijd behoren waren EkaDarmaputera, die zich uitspraak over fundamentele praktische problemen zoals de rol van etniciteit in de kerken (bijvoorbeeld, in etnisch Chinese kerken), en AgustinaLumentut, die zich stoorde aan het gebrek aan een geest van saamhorigheid binnen vele kerken.

In Hoofdstuk 6 tenslotte wordt gepoogd conclusies te trekken aangaande het nut en de betekenis van Calvijns denken over de eenheid van de kerk voor de kerken in Indonesiër vandaag. Ik kies ervoor te stellen, dat de eenheid, die blijkt uit de Vijf Documenten van Kerkelijke Eenheid, voor de Indonesische context voldoende is. Het mislukken van de vorming van een Verenigde Kerk in Indonesï (Gereja Kristen Yang Esa, GKYE) werd veroorzaakt door een gebrek aan besef aangaande de visies over eenheid van sommige van de zestiende-eeuwse hervormers en in het bijzonder van Calvijn. Dus zal in de toekomst niet het denken over hoe een dergelijke GKYE tot stand kan komen belangrijk zijn, maar hoe deze Verenigde Christelijke Kerk in Indonesië zichtbaar gemaakt kan worden in overeenstemming met de besluiten van de Tiende Assemblee van de PGI in 1984.

We moeten ons echter realiseren dat er factoren zijn die de voorgestelde eenheid vanuit een calvinistisch perspectief op de proef stellen: etnische factoren; nationalisme in plaats van kerkelijke eenheid; kerken zonder gezaghebbend credo; de problemen van herdoop en de macht van internationale confessionele verbanden. Ook hebben sommige theologen en kerkleiders, die een negatieve waardering van Calvijns leer in de Indonesische context hebben, kritische geluiden laten horen. Niettemin zien we dat Calvijns erfenis nog steeds bewaard wordt in leven en praxis van de kerken in Indonesië.

Om de eenheid van de kerk te bewaren, gaf Calvijn blijk van tolerantie in verschillende omstandigheden. Hij verlangde niet dat alle christenen in alle kwesties dezelfde inzichten delen; evenmin verlangde hij van alle kerken in alle situaties dezelfde hoog niveau van spiritueel leven. Vergeleken met Luther en Zwingli was Calvijn de enige werkelijk internationale en oecumenische hervormer. Zijn theologie was in de grond en naar haar wezen een oecumenische theologie, speciaal in de kerkleer bedoeld om bruggen te bouwen tussen de verschillende kerken. Vrijwel zijn hele leven lang streed Calvijn er naar in de praktijk een zichtbare eenheid tussen de verschillende reformatorische kerken van zijn tijd te bewerkstelligen. Hoewel hij onderscheidde tussen de zichtbare en de onzichtbare kerk, benadrukte hij in beide gevallen de noodzaak van eenheid.

Deze studie is van belang voor de oecumeniciteit van de Indonesische kerken. De Raad van Kerken werd in 1950 opgericht en werd later de Gemeenschap van kerken. Haar doel is de vorming van één Verenigde Christelijke Kerk in Indonesië. Twee denkrichtingen ontstonden over de vraag hoe deze bedoelde Verenigde Christelijke Kerk er uit zou moeten zien en hoe ze tot stand zou moeten komen. De eerste denkrichting benadrukt de structuur: de zogenoemde structurele eenheid. De tweede richting benadrukt eenheid in gezamenlijkheid door getuigen en dienen; dat wordt de functionele eenheid genoemd. De spanning tussen beide richtingen heeft
lange tijd tot discussies geleid. In deze situatie kan het voor de kerken in Indonesië nuttig zijn om de geschriften van Calvijn te bestuderen als de hervormer die de voornaamste leerstukken van het protestantisme, inclusief de kerkleer, vastlegde.

Tenslotte eindigt de studie met verschillende aanbevelingen voor de kerken in Indonesië. Allereerst zou het onderzoek van Calvijn en zijn theologie bevorderd moeten worden, zowel binnen de kerken als in academische theologische kringen. Deze aanbeveling is specifiek gericht tot die kerken die zelf claimen calvinistisch te zijn. Ten tweede wordt aanbevolen dat de Documenten van Kerkelijke Eenheid concreter en algemener ten uitvoer worden gebracht door de kerken die zich binnen de PGI hebben verenigd. Ten derde wordt geadviseerd dat deze kerken gezamenlijke studies verrichten naar de wortels van het protestantisme, die hen dichter bij elkaar kunnen brengen. Ten vierde is het aan te bevelen dat calvinistische kerken het presbyteriaal-synodale systeem bestuderen om te overwegen of dit nog wel past bij de culturele context van leiderschap in Indonesië. Tenslotte geef ik de kerken in Indonesië met nadruk in overweging om vast te houden aan de Documenten van Kerkelijke Eenheid als een model, dat relevant is voor de Indonesische context, en om na te denken over de implementatie ervan door middel van wat genoemd wordt ‘unity in action’.
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