

DOEN DIT, SO DIKWELS

Hoe gereeld moet nagmaalviering plaasvind?

deur S. Le Cornu

*“Net so ook die beker ná die ete, met die woorde: Hierdie beker is die nuwe testament in my bloed; doen dit, so **dikwels** as julle daaruit drink, tot my gedagtenis. Want so **dikwels** as julle hierdie brood eet en hierdie beker drink, verkondig julle die dood van die Here totdat Hy kom.”*

(1 Kor. 11:25–26)

INHOUDSOPGAWE

1. Vraagstuk, oorsig en bevinding	5
2. Belydenis, kerkorde en liturgiese formuliere	9
2.1) <i>First Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland (1560)</i>	
2.2) <i>Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis, artikel 35 (1561)</i>	
2.3) <i>Heidelbergse Kategismus, vraag en antwoord 77 (1563)</i>	
2.4) <i>Heidelbergse Kategismus, vraag en antwoord 103 (1563)</i>	
2.4) <i>Die Dordtse Kerkorde, artikels 62, 63, 64 (1618/19)</i>	
2.5) <i>The Westminster Directory of Public Worship (1645)</i>	
3. Verklarings deur die kerkgeskiedenis tot vandag toe	21
3.1) <i>Die vroeë kerk en die Reformasie</i>	
3.2) <i>Gibson & Earney, Reformed Worship</i>	
3.3) <i>J. Calvyn, Institusies</i>	
3.4) <i>J. Knox</i>	
3.5) <i>Puriteine by Westminster vergadering</i>	
3.6) <i>T. Doolittle, Treatise concerning the Lord's supper</i>	
3.7) <i>J. Daille and the Huguenot tradition</i>	
3.8) <i>W. a'Brakel</i>	
3.9) <i>J. van Lodenstein</i>	
3.10) <i>R. Baillie</i>	
3.11) <i>JD Du Toit (Totius)</i>	
3.12) <i>H. Bavinck</i>	
3.13) <i>H. Klaassens</i>	
3.14) <i>D.C.S. van der Merwe</i>	
3.15) <i>J. Willison</i>	
3.16) <i>I.H. Marshall</i>	
3.17) <i>A.C. Barnard, Die Erediens</i>	
3.18) <i>Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)</i>	
3.19) <i>F.N. Lee, Kwartaallikse nagmaalviering</i>	
3.20) <i>R.A. Phillips</i>	
3.21) <i>B.R. Schwertley</i>	

3.22) <i>K.A. Mathison</i>	
3.23) <i>K.J. Stewart</i>	
3.24) <i>R. Van Neste</i>	
3.25) <i>E. Bancroft</i>	
3.26) <i>M.S. Horton</i>	
3.27) <i>R.C. Barcellos</i>	
3.28) <i>A. Kuehner</i>	
3.29) <i>S.C. Matthis</i>	
4. Kommentare by Hand. 2:42,46; 20:7 en 1 Kor. 11:25, 26	73
4.1) <i>Puritan Board</i>	
4.2) <i>J. Calvyn</i>	
4.3) <i>H. Witsius</i>	
4.4) <i>C. Hodge</i>	
4.5) <i>J.A. Bengel</i>	
4.6) <i>F. Godet</i>	
4.7) <i>S.J. Greijdanus</i>	
4.8) <i>F.W. Grosheide</i>	
4.9) <i>E.P. Groenewald</i>	
4.10) <i>F.F. Bruce</i>	
4.11) <i>I.L. De Villiers</i>	
4.12) <i>F.B. Meyer</i>	
4.13) <i>S. Kistemaker</i>	
4.14) <i>A.C. Thiselton</i>	
4.15) <i>S.C. Mathis</i>	
5. Samevatting en konkluderende opmerkings	89
6. Bronnelys	91

1. VRAAGSTUK, OORSIG EN BEVINDING

Die twee wesentlike vrae waarmee hierdie studie homself besig hou, is:

1. hoe *dikwels*, oftewel, hoe *gereeld* moet nagmaal deur die kerk van Christus gevier word, is dit: weeklikse nagmaalviering, maandelikse nagmaalsviering, kwartaallikse nagmaalviering, of jaarlikse nagmaalviering? en, dan

2. Is dit 'n *wesentlike* saak waaroor daar moet saamgestem word, of is dit 'n saak waaroor gereformeerdes onderling mag en kan verskil, anders gestel: is die openbaring oor die presiese gereeldheid so duidelik dat dit *gewetensbindend* van aard is vir alle kerke?

Albei vrae moet natuurlik deur sola Scriptura bepaal word, maar deel van die Skrif ondersoek oor vraag 1 is dan vanselfsprekend vraag 2?

Hierdie is eerstens 'n kerk- oftewel dogmahistoriese studie van, en **leesboek** vir die onderwerp, dus om te kyk wat teoloë deur die eeue daarvoor geskryf het, en tegelyk is dit 'n eksgetiese studiebron, want in die bestudering van die kerkgeskiedenis (belydenis- en teoloë) kom hulle verskillende eksegetiese verklarings na vore oor die saak. Dieselfde as daar gekyk gaan word na ons belydenisskrifte (beide die Dordtse en Westminster Standaarde) en die verskillende bronne daarvoor.

Daar word ook gekyk na verskillende kommentatore se verklarings van belangrike Skrifgedeeltes oor die saak: Hand. 2:42,46; 20:7 en 1 Kor. 11:25,26.

In die laaste hoofstuk gee ek 'n paar van my eie besinnings en aanbevelings deur.

Hier is dan my voorlopige bevinding (sien ook hoofstuk 5) nadat ek die verskillende bronne bestudeer het:

In 'n neutredop sou my antwoord vanuit die studie (Skrif, belydenis, kerkgeskiedenis) wees:

a. *Samevattend*, in die woorde van Mathison, self 'n sterk voorstaander vir weeklikse nagmaalviering (2010), in sy boekresensie van Letham se boek oor die nagmaal (2001):

"Regarding the frequency of communion, he argues that **the church is at liberty to arrange it as frequently as it sees fit**. He notes that the early church observed the Supper regularly and frequently and that Calvin called for weekly observance, but he argues that **since there is no binding command in the New Testament, the church is free to observe it as often as seems appropriate**. Letham does observe, however, that "the degree to which the church desires it [the Lord's Supper] is a reliable gauge of how eagerly it wants Christ." The key question, he argues, is "How much do we desire communion with Christ?"

Kenneth Stewart (2012) se woorde is ook gepas: "This essay maintains that **none** of the approaches to the question of frequency of communion (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually) are self-evidently the "right" one, given the fact that the New Testament does not directly address the frequency question. Dogmatism on the subject cannot, therefore, be warranted."

b. *Begronning*

i. Die 'dikwels' van 1 Kor. 11 in die konteks van die res van die Skrif gee nie vir ons 'n eksplisiete bindende spesifieke getal van vieringe nie

ii. Nie enige gereformeerde belydenisse het 'n bindende uitspraak vir alle kerke gemaak oor die hoeveel/getal van die 'dikwels' van nagmaalviering nie.

iii. Gereformeerde teoloë deur die eeue (bv. Calvyn in Geneva), alhoewel hy sterk ten gunste van weeklikse nagmaalviering was, het dit nie as 'n **sondige** rede of grond gesien om hom dan af te

skei van die kerke waarin hy geroep was nie (vergelyk dit met die sterk afskeidende begronding teenoor Luther se nagmaal beskouing)

iv. Ek kon in die bronne (sien die bronnelys) iemand vind wat die argument gebruik dat die vermelding van 'nagmaal' in die kerntekste meen dit is elemente wat in elke erediens moet plaasvind nie, en as dit dus nie plaasvind nie, is dit nie 'n ware erediens nie, en sondig ons.

v. die debat is nie tussen eenkant (bv. vir weeklikse nagmaalviering) wat sterk Skrifgegrond is, versus ander standpunte (minder gereede nagmaalvierings) wat bloot vir 'praktiese redes' nie weekliks wil nagmaal vier nie, nee, beide kante voer bybelse redes en eksgeese aan vir hul onderskeie standpunte wat erken moet word, al verskil mens daarmee.

Hier is 'n eenvoudige samevatting van elke standpunt se Skrif- en teologies-pastorale argumente soos ek dit verstaan, met verskillende vrae vir elke standpunt (wat dan ook in die bronne hier onder beantwoord sal word deur die verskillende verteenwoordigers van die verskillende standpunte):

Weeklikse nagmaalviering	Maandelikse nagmaalviering	Kwartaallikse nagmaalviering	Jaarlikse nagmaalviering
<p>Hand. 2:42, 46; 20:7 vermeld dat die vroeë kerk nagmaal gevier het elke keer as hul saam vergader het.</p> <p>1 Kor. 11:25, 26 se konteks van 'wanneer julle saamkom', v. 17,18,20, bepaal die 'dikwels' = gereeldheid van nagmaalviering = elke rusdag.</p> <p>Soos ons honger en dors na Christus deur 'woordelikse' evangelie wat elke Sondag verkondig word, netso moet daar 'n groot honger en dors wees na die 'visuele' evangelie wat ook elke Sondag verkondig moet word.</p> <p><u>Vrae:</u> Hand. 2:42 en 46, dui dit dan nie op 'daaglikse' nagmaalviering nie, en hoekom net Hand.</p>	<p>Die konteks van 1 Kor. 11:25,26, naamlik v. 27-34 wys op deeglike selfondersoek, voorbereiding en pastorale sorg om die nagmaal heilig te hou, wat baie belangrik is om te besluit oor die 'dikwels'.</p> <p>Die regte verhouding tussen Woord en sakrament moet gehandhaaf word:</p> <p>Die Woord <i>werk en versterk</i> die geloof, die nagmaal <i>versterk</i> alleen (HK Sondag 25)</p> <p>Vraag: dui Hand. 20:7 nie daarop dat nagmaal deel was van elke rusdag se erediens deur die vroeë kerk nie?</p> <p>Is meer gereelde nagmaalviering nie juis nog meer</p>	<p>Die konteks van 1 Kor. 11:27-34 wys op deeglike selfondersoek, voorbereiding en pastorale sorg om die nagmaal heilig te hou, wat baie belangrik is om te besluit oor die 'dikwels'.</p> <p>Die regte verhouding tussen Woord en sakrament moet gehandhaaf word:</p> <p>Die Woord <i>werk en versterk</i> die geloof, die nagmaal <i>versterk</i> alleen (HK Sondag 25)</p> <p>Vraag: dui Hand. 20:7 nie daarop dat nagmaal deel was van elke rusdag se erediens deur die vroeë kerk nie?</p> <p>Is meer gereelde nagmaalviering nie juis nog meer versterkend nodig,</p>	<p>Dit is in lyn met die jaarlikse Pasga viering, vervul in Christus 'eenmaal', en Hebr. 9:25,26 wys dat 'dikwels' ook kan dui dat 'eenmaal per jaar' as dikwels en genoegsaam beskou is: "...ook nie om Homself <i>dikwels</i> te offer, soos die hoëpriester <i>elke jaar</i> in die heiligdom ingaan met bloed wat nie sy eie is nie, want dan moes Hy <i>dikwels</i> gely het van die grondlegging van die wêreld af. Maar nou het Hy <i>een maal</i> in die voleinding van die eeue verskyn om die sonde deur sy offer weg te doen. (Heb. 9:25-26). 'Dikwels' kan ook 'elke dag beteken' (Hebr. 10:11)?</p> <p>Om die nagmaal eenmaal per jaar te hou, handhaaf die totale uniekheid, heiligheid en besonderheid van die nagmaal, 'eenmalig' soos Christus se offer 'eenmalig' en genoegsaam is.</p>

<p>20:7 gebruik, en nie ook bv. hierdie verse nie?</p> <p>As Hand. 2:42, 46 en/of 20:7 volledige 'elemente van die erediens' voorskryf, wat dan van doop, belydenis in eredienste, en ander elemente?</p>	<p>versterkend nodig, soos die Woordverkondiging ook elke Sondag nodig is nie?</p>	<p>soos die Woordverkondiging ook elke Sondag nodig is nie?</p>	<p>Vraag: is daar nie 'n beweeg van OT eenmalige viering gebaseer op pasga, na meer gereelde nagmaalvieringe nie, soos Hand. 2 en 20 asook 1 Kor. 11 impliseer?</p>
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Mag ons hemelse Vader julle gemeente wysheid en insig gee in die besinning en besluitneming oor hierdie saak, dat dit to eer van Sy Naam en heil van die gemeente sal wees.

Slabbert Le Cornu, Oktober AD 2022, Carletonville.

2. BELYDENIS, KERKORDE EN LITURGIESE FORMULIERE

2.1) FIRST BOOK of Discipline of the Church of Scotland 1560

9th Head: “It **appertains to the policy of the church to appoint the times when the sacraments shall be ministered**¹...Four times in the year we think sufficient to the administration of the Lord’s Table, which we desire to be distinct, that the superstition of times may be avoided so far as may be. Your honors are not ignorant how superstitiously the people run to that action at Pasche, even as [if] the time gave virtue to the sacrament; and how the rest of the whole year they are careless and negligent, as that it appertains not unto them but at that time only...

We do not deny but that any several church, for reasonable causes, may change the time, **and may minister oftener**; but we study to suppress superstition. All ministers must be admonished to be more careful to instruct the ignorant than ready to satisfy their appetites.”

2.2) NEDERLANDSE GELOOFSBELYDENIS ARTIKEL 35 - DIE HEILIGE NAGMAAL (1561)

“...Ten slotte, ons ontvang hierdie sakrament in nederigheid en met eerbied **in die samekoms van die volk van God**, waar ons met danksegging 'n heilige gedagtenis aan die dood van Christus ons Verlosser onderhou en belydenis van ons geloof en van die Christelike godsdiens doen. Daarom behoort niemand daarheen te gaan as hy homself **nie eers deeglik ondersoek het nie**, sodat hy nie tot sy eie oordeel drink as hy van hierdie brood eet en van hierdie beker drink nie (1 Kor 11:29: *Want wie op onwaardige wyse eet en drink, eet en drink 'n oordeel oor homself, terwyl hy die liggaam van die Here nie onderskei nie.*). Kortom, deur die gebruik van hierdie heilige sakrament word ons tot 'n vurige liefde vir God en ons naaste beweeg. Daarom verwerp ons alle brouels en verwerplike versindels wat mense by die sakrament bygevoeg en daarmee vermeng het, as onheilighings daarvan. Ons verklaar dat ons tevrede moet wees met die verordening wat Christus en sy apostels ons geleer het en ons sê dieselfde as wat hulle daarvan gesê het.”

2.3) HEIDELBERGSE KATEGISMUS VRAAG EN ANTWOORD 77 (Sondag 28)

77. Vr. Waar het Christus beloof dat Hy die gelowiges so seker op die wyse met sy liggaam en bloed wil voed en laaf as wat hulle van hierdie gebreekte brood eet en van hierdie drinkbeker drink?

Antw. In die instelling van die nagmaal wat aldus lui: *In die nag waarin Hy verraai is, het die Here Jesus die brood geneem en nadat Hy gedank het, het Hy dit gebreek en gesê: Neem, eet; dit is my liggaam wat vir julle gebreek word; doen dit tot my gedagtenis. Net so ook die beker ná die ete met die woorde: Hierdie beker is die nuwe testament in my bloed; doen dit, so dikwels as julle daaruit drink, tot my gedagtenis. Want so dikwels as julle hierdie brood eet en hierdie beker drink, verkondig julle die dood van die Here totdat Hy kom (1 Kor 11:23-26).* Hierdie toesegging word ook herhaal deur die heilige Paulus waar hy spreek: *Die beker van danksegging wat ons met danksegging seën, is dit nie die gemeenskap met die bloed van Christus nie? Die brood wat ons breek, is dit nie die gemeenskap met die liggaam van Christus nie? Omdat dit een brood is, is ons almal een liggaam, want ons het almal deel aan die een brood (1 Kor 10:16-17).*”

Opmerkings:

In die 19 kommentare wat ek geraadpleeg het op NGB artikel 35 en HK Sondag 28-30 wat handel oor die heilige nagmaal (Beets, 1929; Gispén, 1932; Wielenga, 1947; Van Rooyen, 1948; Feenstra, 1950; Polman, 1958; Bos, 1957; Van der Walt, 1957; Van Bruggen, 1965; Van Wyk De Vries, 1973; Veldkamp, s.a.; Hoeksema, 1976; Doekes, 1979; Booyens, 1980; De Jong, 1980;

¹ Kursief en beklemtonings bygevoeg in die hele dokument om bepaalde sake uit te lig.

Williamson, 1993; Ursinus, 1997; Hyde, 2008; Engelsma, 2019), is dit opmerklik dat daar geen of baie min gemaak word van die onderwerp van die spesifieke getal van die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering, behalwe hier en daar bloot vermelding dat daar verskille daaroor was.

ENGELSMA (2019: 290), stel dit samevattend as volg by sy verklaring van NGB artikel 35:

“Frequency of the administration of the Lord’s supper **is left to the liberty of the congregation**. Article 63 of the Church Order of Dordt specifies that the “Lord’s supper shall be administered at least every two or three months.” It is well known that John Calvin advocated administration of the Lord’s supper every Lord’s day. Certain details of the administration are left to the liberty of the local congregation, for example the celebrants’ partaking by coming to the front of the auditorium or remaining in the pews, the use of a common cup or the use of individual cups, and the tearing off of pieces of bread from a single loaf or the distribution of bite-size pieces of bread.”

VAN DER WALT (1957: 237) gee die volgende verklaring by v/a 77 van die HK, wat help verduidelik waarom die kerk van Christus vryheid toegelaat het oor die gereeldheid van die nagmaal, omdat daar verskillende bybels-pastorale redes betrokke was van die beweeg van nagmaal by *elke* samekoms (daagliks) na later weekliks en dan later maandeliks of kwartaalliks:

“In die vroegste Christendom het dit die gewoonte geword om elke aand saam te kom in een of ander huis en die liefdesmaaltyde (agapae) te hou, waarby daar in later tye 'n mate van onordelikheid ingetree het (vgl. 1 Kor. 11:17-34). Teen die einde van die maaltyd is dan ook die nagmaal gevier. Later is die nagmaal net elke Sabbat gevier, en later het dit verminder tot vier of ses keer per jaar. Calvyn se begeerte was dat die nagmaal soveel moontlik gevier moet word, minstens ses keer per jaar.

En vandag staan ons dikwels so koud teenoor die nagmaalsviering. Daar is mense wat ter nouernood een keer per jaar by die nagmaal kom. Hoe minder nagmaal ons gebruik, hoe minder begeerte ons daarvoor het. En tog behoort dit nie so te wees nie. **Ons behoort met groot verlange uit te sien na elke nagmaal.** Dit moet nie maar so terloops in die gang van die kerklike lewe wees dat ons weer by die nagmaal beland nie. Nee, ons moet doelbewus uitsien na die nagmaal. **Dit behoort die hoogtepunt in ons lewe te vorm, waarheen ons lewe gerig is en wat ons hele lewe beheers en koers gee.**

Leef ons werklik in die krag van die heilige nagmaal? As dit die geval is, dan sal ons hele lewe niks anders wees nie as 'n *gestadige toetrede tot die heilige bruilofsmaal van die Lam*. Maar ons vrees dat vir vele die nagmaal 'n blote sleurgang is en dat hulle maar net daaraan toetree om tog nie heeltemal los van die kerklike lewe te staan nie. Daarom word hulle nog net by die nagmaalsviering in die kerk gesien. As ons miskien meer dikwels sou nagmaalvier, sal baie van daardie soort die eerste wees om beswaar te maak. Hulle moet reeds *vier* nagmale bywoon, en nou word nog meer opofferinge van hulle gevra. Wat 'n nagmaalsbeskouing!”

URSINUS (1989: 77) se verklaring van 1 Kor. 11:25, 26, spesifiek die woorde ‘so dikwels’ dui daarop dat hy dit nie verstaan in term van ‘n spesifieke getal wat geopenbaar word deur die Skrif nie, maar wil wys dit moet aangaan ‘herhalend’ tot die wederkoms (in kontras met die doop wat eenmalig is):

“Het Avondmaal wordt dikwijls herhaald. Want de verkondiging van Christus' dood dient dikwijls herhaald te worden, volgens Zijn eigen bevel: ‘Doet dat zo dikwijls als gij dien drinken zult, tot Mijne gedachtenis.’ En volgens het bevel van de apostel Paulus (in 1 Kor. 11:25v.): ‘Want zo dikwijls als gij dit brood eten en dezen drinkbeker drinken zult, zo verkondigt den dood des Heeren, totdat Hij komt.’”

Zo vereisen ook de bevestiging des geloofs inzake de eeuwigdurendheid van het verbond, en de verzameling der gemeente en haar gemeenschap in de liefde, **dat dit sacrament dikwijls herhaald wordt; zoals ook het Pascha om die redenen jaarlijks gevierd werd.**

Maar de Doop moet niet herhaald worden, zomin vroeger de besnijdenis herhaald werd. Enerzijds omdat dit nergens in de Schriften geboden is. Maar daar heet het van degenen die eenmaal gedoopt zijn, wanneer zij geloven, dat zij door de Doop verzekerd worden van de genade Gods en van hun zaligheid. Anderzijds omdat de Doop een teken is van de opneming in Gods verbond, dat wanneer het eenmaal gesloten is, nooit weer verbroken wordt, maar steeds vast blijft, wanneer men zich bétert en bekeert.

Want de gaven en de roeping Gods zijn onberouwelijk (Rom. 11 : 29). En wanneer men soms gevallen is en zich dan opnieuw bekeert, wordt er geen nieuw verbond gesloten, maar dan wordt het eenmaal opgerichte verbond weer vernieuwd en bevestigd. Daarom mag ook het teken van het verbond, dat eenmaal opgericht is, niet weer herhaald worden, opdat de allerstandvastigste wil en waarheid van God niet betwijfeld of verduisterd worde.

Dus al is het zo, dat van het Avondmaal geldt: 'Doet dat zo dikwijls' enz., toch wordt op die wijze niet over de Doop gesproken, maar als volgt (in Rom. 6:3 en 10): 'Weet gij niet, dat zovelen als wij in Christus Jezus gedoopt zijn, wij in Zijnen dood gedoopt zijn? Want dat Hij gestorven is, dat is Hij der zonde eenmaal gestorven', en (Mark. 16:16): 'Die geloofd zal hebben en gedoopt zal zijn, zal zalig worden.' ...

Want zo dikwijls als gij van dit brood zult eten. Dus moet het Avondmaal dikwijls herhaald worden, enerzijds om het bevel van Christus en van de Apostelen, anderzijds om het doel waartoe het ingesteld is, n.l. tot gedachtenis van Christus en Zijn weldaden, die dikwijls verhaald dienen te worden. Verkondigt de dood des Heeren, n.l. door inwendig met het hart te geloven en uitwendig met de mond te belijden en groot te maken; alsof hij zeggen wilde: Geloof dat Christus gestorven, ja ook voor u gestorven is; belijdt dit bovendien in het publiek voor alle mensen.

Totdat Hij komt. Dus zal de viering van het Avondmaal des Heeren voortduren tot aan het einde der wereld, en men heeft geen nieuwe godsdienstvorm te verwachten voor de oordeelsdag; zoals er geschreven is in 1 Petrus 1 : 25: 'Maar het Woord des Heeren blijft in der eeuwigheid; en dit is het Woord dat onder u verkondigd is', en Openb. 2:25: 'Hetgeen gij hebt, houdt dat, totdat Ik zal komen.' "

Opmerkings: daar is geen aanduiding uit die gereformeerde belydenis van hierbo van 'n spesifieke getal vir die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering nie. Die klem val op die betekenis en dat dit moet plaasvind volgens God se bevel.

2.4) HEIDELBERGSE KATEGISMUS VRAAG EN ANTWOORD 103 (Sondag 38)

Vraag: Wat gebied God in die vierde gebod?

Antwoord: *God wil **Ten eerste** dat die Woordbediening en die skole in stand gehou word. Ook moet ek veral op die rusdag ywerig met die gemeente van God saamkom **om die Woord van God te hoor, die sakramente te gebruik**, die Here openlik aan te roep en die Christelike liefdegawes te gee. Ten tweede moet ek elke dag van my lewe van my bouse werke rus, en die Here deur sy Gees in my laat werk. So begin ek die ewige sabbat reeds in hierdie lewe.*

URSINUS (1989: 342) sê egter weel meer oor die gebruik van die sakramente by sy verklaring van v/a 103, "Bediening der sacramenten naar de instelling van God. Ook deze moet geschieden door de dienaars der Kerk, die wettig geroepen zijn; en toch is zij niet, **zoals trouwens de leer ook niet, aan bepaalde dagen gebonden. Wel moeten ze vooral op de sabbat, in de vergadering**

der gemeente bediend worden, 1 Kor. 11 : 20: „Als gij dan bijeen samenkomt, dat is niet des Heeren Avondmaal eten”, en vers 33: „Zo dan, mijne broeders, als gij samenkomt om te eten, verwacht elkander”; en Hand. 2 : 42: „En zij waren volhardende in de leer der apostelen, en in de gemeenschap, en in de breking des broods, en in de gebeden.”

“Het gebruik der sacramenten, dat wettig zijn moet, n.l. naar de instelling van God, Hand. 20:7: „Op den eersten dag der week, als de discipelen bijeengekomen waren om brood te breken, handelde Paulus met hen.” Zo had God geboden, dat het Pascha gehouden zou worden in de plechtige vergadering des volks, en Hij had voor de andere feesten en sabbatten hun bijzondere offers verordend. En op dezelfde manier als God wil, **dat in de publieke samenkomsten der gemeente de ware leer gehoord wordt, zo wil Hij ook, dat daar het wettige gebruik van de sacramenten gezien wordt.**

Want Hij wil dat deze beide bekend zijn, opdat Zijn gemeente gekend en onderscheiden zal worden van andere sekten en volken. Ook de sacramenten zijn - evenals het Woord - middelen, om het geloof en de Godzaligheid in ons te wekken en te voeden, en een (onder)deel van de openbare godsdienst(oefening) in de gemeente. **Dus komt het gebruik ervan het allermeeft op de sabbat van pas.”**

Opmerkings: uit bogenoemde kommentaar van Ursinus, saam met sy kommentaar by Sondag 28, blyk dit dat Ursinus geglo het die nagmaal moet ‘veral’ op die rusdag plaasvind, omdat dit ‘dikwels’ moet wees, sonder om te sê presies ‘elke rusdag’ of aan die anderkant ‘net’ elke rusdag, aangesien hy meen dit kan ook op ander dae plaasvind, moontlik ‘daaglikse’ of ook op ander dae nagmaal te vier?

VAN DER MERWE (1974) maak die volgende pleitdooi vir weeklikse nagmaalviering op grond van Sondag 38:

“Die verandering van die Ou Testamentiese bedeling na dié van die Nuwe Testament word ook daarin duidelik dat volgens apostoliese gebruik die Kerk heel gou die sabbat vervang het met wat ons vandag Sondag noem, die eerste dag van die week, die dag van die Here. (Hand, 20: 7, I Kor. 16: 2, Openb. 1: 10.)

Dit is die dag van die opstanding van Jesus Christus, dus 'n feesdag van oorwinning. Die Heidelbergse Kategismuss praat nog van die sabbat, maar noem dit ook die rusdag, waarop elke gelowige ywerig met die gemeente van God moet opkom **“om die Woord van God te hoor, die Sakramente te gebruik, God die Here openlik aan te roep,...” (Antw. 103.)**

Soos reeds gesê is dit eintlik die enigste plek in die belydenisskrifte waar iets gesuggereer word oor hoe dikwels die nagmaal gevier moet word.

Die doop, immers, is eenmalig en kan net bedien word wanneer daar dopelinge is; die nagmaal is die enigste Sakrament wat dus elke Sondag moontlik saam met die Woord bedien kan word.

So het dit ook geskied in die eerste gemeentes en in die eerste eeue. Ons het probeer aandui hoedat dit mettertyd verander het, sodat later aan die een kant daar skeiding tussen lidmaat en ampsdraers gekom het in die Roomse Mis, en aan die ander kant, skeiding tussen die dag van die Here en die tafel van die Here by die Protestante (J.J. von Allmen).” ...

“Wat baie duidelik in die Skrif staan, word dikwels nie in die belydenisskrifte herhaal nie, maar wel veronderstel. “Ses dae moet jy arbei en al jou werk doen” (Ex. 20: 9 en Deut. 5: 13) is in sekere sin die basis van die vierde gebod.

God het eers gewerk, in die skepping en in die verlossing, en daarna gerus; die mens moet sy kultuurtaak uitvoer, sy deeltjie in die voleinding waarop die geskiedenis afstuur volgens die raadsplan van God. Indien daar geen sondeval sou wees nie, moes hy dit onder die eerste Adam

in die werkverbond doen; na die sondeval moet hy dit nogtans doen, maar nou in die genadeverbond uit dankbaarheid vir die verlossing uit genade. So word sy sesdaagse arbeid in albei weergawes van die Tien Gebooie in die genade van God gegrondves in die inleiding: 'Ek is die Here jou God wat jou uit Egipteland, uit die slawehuis, uitgelei het'. (Ex. 20:2en Deut. 5: 6.)

Dit word veronderstel, hoewel nie eksplisiet gesê nie, in die eerste sin van Sondag 38 se verklaring van die vierde gebod: "Eerstelik, dat die kerkdiens of die predikamp en die skole onderhou moet word. ... Die Christen se plig gee die Kategismus mooi raak: **“ek moet op die rusdag ywerig met die gemeente opkom "om die Woord van God te hoor, die Sakramente te gebruik..."** d.w.s. om altyd weer en meer en meer te hoor van skepping, herskepping en voleinding, asook om versterking te ontvang vir my roeping en taak op my aardse pelgrimstog; verder om "God die Here openlik aan te roep en aan die armes Christelike liefdegawes te bring", d.w.s. om met woord en daad in liefde op God se liefde te antwoord.

Verder sluit die Kategismus dan af met: "Ten tweede, dat ek AL die dae van my lewe van my bese werke moet rus, die Here deur sy Gees in my moet laat werk en so die ewige sabbat in hierdie lewe moet begin". Hier is dit weer liturgie op straat, d.w.s. godsdiens ALdag en ELKE dag, nie net Sondag nie, op alle terreine en in die wêreld waar ek beweeg en leef en nie net in die kerk nie, As ek dit getrou doen, nl. om van my bese werke te rus en die Gees van God in my te laat werk, sal ek vanself my missionêre plig getrou nakom en as goeie getuie van Jesus Christus die Evangelie uitdra, vanaf Jerusalem tot aan die eindes van die aarde.

Die eskatologiese moment wat so duidelik deur Jesus Christus self genoem word by die instelling van die nagmaal kom hier ook tot uiting. My daelikse arbeid en my sabbatsrus op aarde moet steeds gerig wees op die voleinding, en daarom ook gedurig 'n voorsmaak daarvan wees. Vir elke Christen is die einde van sy lewe, sy dood, in prinsiep al die voleinding, nl. die afsluiting van sy lewenstaak, waarin hy hetsy met hout en stoppels of met goud en silwer op die godgeleegde fondament Jesus Christus voortgebou het (1 Kor. 3: 9-23)

Om hierin te kan slaag, nl. om goed en reg te kan bou, is die gereelde weeklikse gebruik van albei genade-middele, Woord en Sakrament, noodsaaklik."

2.5) DIE DORDTSE KERKORDE, ARTIKELS 62, 63, 64 (1618/19)²

Artikel 62 **“Elke kerk moet die nagmaal hou op die wyse wat na sy oordeel tot die meeste stigting dien.** Dit moet egter goed verstaan word dat die uitwendige seremonies wat in die Woord van God voorgeskryf is, nie verander mag word nie, dat alle bygeloof vermy moet word en dat na die preek en algemene gebede, die formulier van die Heilige Nagmaal, asook die gebed wat daarby behoort, gelees moet word.”

Artikel 63 “Die nagmaal van die Here moet **minstens** elke drie maande gehou word.”

Artikel 64. “Die bediening van die nagmaal vind alleen in 'n erediens plaas onder toesig van die ouderlinge.”

JANSEN (1952: 272)

“De tijd der Avondmaalsviering. Pas na de instelling werd het H. Avondmaal dagelijks, althans elken rustdag gevierd, Hand. 2: 46; 20: 7. Bij Rome werd dat later: éénmaal in het jaar voor de leken (de communie) en elken dag de Mis. Met de hervorming trachtte men de apostolische traditie weer te herstellen. Calvijn wilde het tenminste *wekelijks* op den dag des Heeren vieren. Maar dit kon hij niet invoeren. Terwille van de orde en rust pleitte hij toen voor

² Sien die verskillende kerkorde uitgewes en kommentare hier: <http://www.kerkrecht.nl/commentaren>

een *maandelijksche* bediening. Ook dit kon hij in Genève nog niet bereiken, en zoo bleef het bij *viermaal* in het jaar.

Bij de reformatie der kerken in ons land, kon er niet aanstonds over gehandeld worden. De kerken werden nog vervolgd. Waar men maar veilig kon samenkomen, daar vierde men het Avondmaal. ***Het convent te Wezel, 1568, oordeelde: 'Voorloopig kan nog niet één bepaalde tijd om het Avondmaal te vieren, voor alle kerken voorgeschreven worden,*** totdat in de synode zal overwogen zijn wat in het algemeen belang der kerken is' VI: 16.

De synode van Dordrecht, 1574, besloot echter, dat de kerken tot den regel moesten komen om het Avondmaal alle twee maanden te houden, ***zooveel als mogelijk is***, art. 69. Deze bepaling is door de volgende synoden overgenomen. Alleen voegde de synode van Dordrecht, 1578, er nog aan toe, dat de kruiskerken, die vaak in 't geheim moesten samenkomen, het mochten houden zoo vaak het hun gelegen kwam, art. 73, wat natuurlijk wegviel toen later de vervolging ophield, en de synode van 's Gravenhage, 1586, besloot, dat men, waar de gelegenheid der kerk het toeliet, het op Paschen, Pinksteren en Kerstfeest houden zou, en dat men ter plaatse, waar nog geen kerkelijke orde was, eerst ouderlingen en diakenen bij provisie d.i. voorloopig, stellen zou.

Zoo bleef de redactie van het artikel luiden tot de synode van Utrecht, 1905, die de beide evengenoemde slotbepalingen schrapt, en het getal „twee maanden” veranderde in „twee of drie maanden”, zoodat alleen de korte redactie overbleef: *Het Avondmaal des Heeren zal tenminste alle twee of drie maanden gehouden worden.*

In de meeste kerken werd het Avondmaal niet meer op genoemde feestdagen gevierd, omdat de gemeente dan van de feestherdenking werd afgehouden en had de bediening niet om de twee, maar om de drie maanden plaats. ***Dit laatste was een gewoontewet geworden en daarom ook in het artikel opgenomen.*** Enkele kerken, bijv. Amsterdam, hebben zich aan het oude gebruik van „twee maanden” gehouden of zijn er tot teruggekeerd. Het komt ons voor, dat dit algemeen navolging moest vinden. Wij kwamen er in elk geval nader door bij de oorspronkelijke gewoonte.”

DELLEN & MONSMA (1969: 239-240),

“Some contend that in the early apostolic Church, the Lord's Supper was celebrated every day or at least every day of rest. This is also Jansen's position (Korte Verklaring van de Kerkorde). This position is based on Acts 2:46; 20:7. ***We do not believe that these passages prove this contention. Calvin himself, though he favored a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper according to his Institutes of the Christian Religion (4.17), did not believe that the texts noted could be used to prove that the apostolic Church celebrated Communion every day or every week (Calvin, Commentary on Acts).***

The Synod of Dort 1574 held that the observation should take place every two months. Following Synods endorsed this position. But the Synod of Dort 1578 added that the “Kruiskerken,” Churches beneath the cross of persecution, which often had to meet secretly, should celebrate the Lord's Supper whenever it was convenient. This was, of course, only a temporary ruling. As soon as persecution ceased the general rule went into effect.

The Synod of 's Gravenhage 1586 decided that if circumstances were favorable the Churches should also celebrate the Lord's Supper on Easter Sunday, the day of Pentecost and on Christmas. Until the year 1905 the Church Order provided: “The Lord's Supper shall be observed, as much as possible, once every two months. It will also tend to edification to have it on Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, where the conditions of the Churches permit such.”

The Netherlands Churches altered this reading in 1905, and our Synod of 1914 adopted this new redaction, so that Article 63 now simply reads: "The Lord's Supper shall be administered at least every two or three months."

In the Roman Church the people were used to frequent masses. According to Rome the Sacraments are vehicles of grace, in and by themselves. We should therefore not be surprised that frequent observations of Holy Communion were expected by the people, and that even leaders as Calvin, at first at least, advocated weekly Communion Services.

In our Christian Reformed Churches, as is the case in the Reformed Churches of Holland, the Lord's Supper is celebrated four times a year, or every three months. In our opinion this is a well-timed arrangement. ***To celebrate the Lord's Supper very frequently might detract somewhat from its sacredness and effectiveness. To celebrate it less frequently, say once or twice a year, would rob the Churches needlessly of a much needed blessing.***"

VAN DER LINDE(1983: 212),

"Die nagmaal is 'n teken en seël om 'die belofte van die Evangelie des te beter te laat verstaan en te verseël" (H.K. Sondag XXV). ***Daarom moet dit gereeld gehou word en bepaal die kerk dat dit minstens elke drie maande gehou word.***

Calvyn wou dat die nagmaal elke Sondag gehou word in ooreenstemming met die gebruik van die vroeg-Christelike kerk. ***Daar is uit Handeling 2:46 en 20:7 afgelei dat dit elke Sondag gevier is*** (Jansen 1952 p.277). Die probleme in die praktyk soos die owerheidsverset daarteen in Geneve, en seker ook die vrees by die meeste Protestante dat deur so 'n gebruik die Roomse bygeloof wat aan die nagmaal gekleef het, sou voortduur, het verhinder dat die ideaal van Calvyn verwesenlik is.

Vandag word daar weer geywer vir die ideaal (Prof. dr. D.C.S. van der Merwe, *Elke Sondag nagmaal*). ***Daar is egter gevaar dat 'n weeklikse nagmaalsviering kan meewerk tot die verdringing van die preek*** (F.L. Bos 1950, *De Orde der Kerk*).

In artikel 63 word die aantal kere wat die nagmaal gehou moet word, nie gereglementeer nie. Kragtens die wese van die sakrament mag dit egter nie te ver uitmekaar gehou word nie. Die apostel Paulus sê dat aan hom oorgelewer is dat Jesus met die instelling van die nagmaal gepraat het ***van 'n herhaalde en dikwelse*** viering van die nagmaal: 'doen dit so dikwels as julle daaruit drink, tot my gedagtenis" (1 Kor. 11). ***Ek meen dat daar nie uit die woorde kan afgelei word dat die nagmaal in die ou kerk altyd en oral elke Sondag gevier is nie.*** Daarom het die Heilige Gees dan ook die kerke in die praktyk so gelei dat die vieringe ***dikwels en minstens*** driemaandeliks moet plaasvind."

SPOELSTRA (1989: 350-352),

"1. Die jaarlikse pasga

"Die Here Jesus stel die nagmaal in by die derde beker van die jaarlikse pasga en Hy word by die Joodse paasfees gekruisig. Indien die nagmaal bloot die pasga vervang het, ***sou 'n mens een nagmaalviering per jaar verwag het.*** Die Here Jesus vervul egter die Ou Testamentiese paasfees (Joh 1: 29; Hb 9: 13-18). Daarom stel hy die nagmaal as ***durende*** herinnering en verkondiging soos voeding van die liggaam in (Calvyn *Inst* IV.18.xix).

2. Die Nuwe Testamentiese liefdesmaaltye en nagmaalvierings

In die Nuwe Testamentiese kerk van Jerusalem vind daaglikse liefdesmaaltye plaas waarby dikwels nagmaal gevier word. **Nagmaal word baie meer dikwels as die pasga gevier.** Paulus sê vir die Korintheërs om die nagmaal ordelik te laat verloop “so dikwels” as dit gevier word (1 Kor 11: 25,26). Naas die sakramentele versekering van God se beloftes aan die gelowige, verkondig die nagmaal ook die dood van die Here “totdat Hy kom”. Calvyn het daarom tereg gesê “dat die gelowiges dit dikwels kan gebruik, en nie maar net eenmaal in die jaar, en dit nogal terloops” soos in die Roomse godsdiens nie. **Dit behoort soos in die ou kerk in elke vergadering van die gelowiges plaas te vind.** ’n Jaarlikse nagmaal noem Calvyn ’n “uitvindsel van die duiwel, want dan kan die mense ’n hele jaar lank sorgeloos lewe” (*Inst IV.17.xliv, xlv*). **Gereelde en veelvuldige gebruik van die nagmaal is gestalte van ’n gehoorsame geloofslewe. Wie sondig lewe, staan onverskillig teenoor dit wat die nagmaal afteken en verseël.**

Dit kan nie sonder meer uit die Nuwe Testament (bv Hd 2: 46, 20: 7; 1 Kor 11, ens) afgelei word dat die nagmaal weekliks gevier moet word nie. Selfs Calvyn skryf dit nie voor nie.

Weeklikse nagmaalvierings (Van der Merwe, 1974) **loop gevaar dat die nagmaalviering die Woordverkondiging sal verdring**, formele gewoonte sal vorm of selfs bygeloof mag kweek. Die burgerlike owerhede in Genève het die nagmaal driemaandeliks verlang as kompromis tussen ’n enkele keer per jaar en ’n weeklikse nagmaalviering. Dit is belangrik dat die nagmaal gereeld en sinvol vir elke lidmaat tot opbou van die gelowiges en verkondiging van die dood van die Here gevier word. **Die aantal nagmaalvierings moet aan die sin en betekenis van die nagmaal (kyk artt 59,61,62) diensbaar bly en “meer nagmaalvierings” moet nooit as ’n doel op sigself nagejaag word nie. ...**

Die kerkregtelike agtergrond verplig gereformeerde kerke om kerkordelik vir reëlmatige en ordelike nagmaalvierings voorsiening te maak. In 1563 word ses nagmaalvierings per jaar beoog, terwyl in 1578 versigtig vir bykomende nagmaalvierings op die kerklike feesdae (soos by Lutherse kerke in gebruik was) opening gelaat word (Bos 1950:231v). Die Dordtse Kerkorde van 1619 bepaal gevolglik: “Die nagmaal van die Here sa! soveel as moontlik elke twee maande gehou word en indien dit in kerke **stigtelik en paslik** kan geskied, kan dit ook op paasfees, pinksterfees en Kersdag gebeur. Indien daar egter op ’n plek nog geen kerklike 'orde' is nie, moet eers ouderlinge en diakens 'by provisie' gestel word” (Pont 1981:183).

Hieruit blyk dat gedurende die Reformasie meer nagmaalvierings as een maal per kwartaal kon plaasvind mits daar kerklike orde en selfs voorlopige amptelike toesig mee gepaard sou gaan. Tog het kwartaallike vierings gewoonte geword.

Die Nederlandse kerke het in hulle gevestigde omstandighede te Utrecht 1905 die voorlopige voorsiening van ’n kerkraad sowel as nagmaalviering op feesdae geskrap. Hulle sou gevrees het dat dit die feesdae op die agtergrond mag druk (Kruger 1966:387), ’n argument wat nie oortuigend was. In 1905 word die frekwensie vir nagmaal “ten minste elke twee of drie maande” gestel. Die kerke in Suid-Afrika het hierdie redaksie in 1916 op die voet gevolg en in 1964 slegs die “twee maande” weggelaat en vervang met “minstens elke drie maande”. ...

Twee nagmaalvierings op dieselfde dag?

Die eertydse gebruik om tydens oggend- en aanddiens nagmaal te bedien het stilswyend veronderstel dat slegs diegene wat die oggend nie teenwoordig was nie aan die “tweede nagmaal” sou gaan. Die res van die aanddiens was egter vir die hele gemeente bedoel. **Hierdie skeiding tussen bediening van die Woord en Sakrament binne dieselfde erediens is onverdedigbaar.** Indien op dieselfde Sondag in dieselfde kerk twee nagmaalvierings nodig geag word, moet die hele

gemeente in die oggend sowel as die aand aansit. Wanneer in 'n uitgestrekte gemeente op dieselfde of agtereenvolgende Sondae in verskillende wyke nagmaal gevier word en sommige ouderlinge of gelowiges by elke geleentheid teenwoordig is, durf hulle nie deelname aan die nagmaal weier omdat hulle pas 'n nagmaal meegemaak het nie. Hulle is intendeel verplig op sterkte van die eenheid in Christus en met die mede-gelowiges om die bevel van die Here **om sy dood te gedenk en te verkondig so “dikwels” as hulle gelowig kan, te gehoorsaam**. Calvyn sou selfs by elke erediens nagmaal wou bedien (*Inst* IV.17.xliv; 18.xix)."

VISSER (2006: 230),

"Vryheid van elke plaaslike kerk.

"Voordat enkele voorskrifte met betrekking tot nagmaalsviering aangetoon word, sê artikel 62 dat elke kerk die nagmaal hou op die wyse wat na sy oordeel tot die meeste stigting dien. Daar is dus 'n aantal middelmatige sake by die viering van die nagmaal wat aan die vryheid van elke plaaslike kerk oorgelaat word. Onder andere kan die volgende genoem word:

- of die nagmaal sittende of staande gevier moet word;
- of daar tydens die viering gedeeltes uit die Skrif voorgelees of toepaslike Psalms/Skrifberymings gesing moet word;
- watter tipe brood en wyn gebruik moet word;
- of daar voor die nagmaal 'n voorbereidingsdiens en daarna 'n nabetrachtingsdiens gehou moet word;
- **of daar elke Sondag nagmaal gevier moet word. ...**

Voorskrifte wat nagekom moet word.

Artikel 62 bepaal dat "die uitwendige seremonies wat in die Woord van God voorgeskryf is" nie verander mag word nie.

Wat onder die onveranderlike „uiterlike seremonies” gereken moet word en wat nie, is nie altyd so maklik uit te maak nie; daarom is daar skerp verskil van mening oor sommige van die „elemente” by nagmaalsviering.

Waaroor daar (sover my wete strek) nie verskil van mening is nie, is onder andere die volgende:

- die *maaltyd* karakter moet gehandhaaf word;
- die nagmaal moet *ná die preek, gebede en Formulier* bedien word (art. 62);
- die Nagmaalsformulier (insluitende die „Formule”, J.V. — kyk Psalmboek, uitgawe 1988, p. 624 en 630) moet woordeliks gelees word (art. 62);
- gewone *brood en wyn* moet gebruik word;
- **die nagmaal moet minstens elke drie maande gehou word (art. 63);**
- die nagmaal mag slegs bedien word *in 'n erediens, onder toesig van die ouderlinge* (art. 64). ...

Twee nagmaalsvierings op een Sondag.

Ter wille van lidmate wat as gevolg van skofwerkery nie die oggend nagmaalsvierings kan bywoon nie, vier sommige gemeentes soggens en saans nagmaal. As sodanig kan hiermee nie fout gevind word nie. Die verkeerde sluip is wanneer lidmate wat in die oggend nagmaal gebruik het en weer in die aanddiens teenwoordig is, dan nie weer nagmaal gebruik nie. Dan word die aand se nagmaalsviering 'n *opsionele* viering. En dit mag nie.

Die sinode van 1967 (Handelinge p. 165, art. 53 (63, 242)) het dan ook besluit dat 'n *opsionele* tweede nagmaalsviering op een Sondag nie toelaatbaar is nie.

Dit beteken dus dat as daar op 'n Sondag 'n oggend en aand nagmaalsviering is, *alle lidmate* wat in die diens(te) teenwoordig is, *moet* nagmaal gebruik. Geen lidmaat het dus die reg om 'n *keuse* te maak of hy/sy by die oggend- of aandediens nagmaal wil gebruik nie.”

VAN OENE (1990:275-277):

“Article 60: The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least every three months. ***There is no direct command from the Lord telling us how often we are to celebrate His supper.*** From the words of our Saviour "as often as you do this" it is clear that what is stipulated here in Art. 60 is a bare minimum, if even that. From the New Testament we get the distinct impression that the Lord's Supper was celebrated regularly, every Lord's day. Compared to that, we are acting poorly when celebrating it every two or three months. The old redaction of our Church Order stated that this celebration was to take place "at least every two or three months." This did not make much sense because, when the term "at least" is used, the two different periods should not be left to choice. It is either at least two or at least three, not both.

Now it is provided that it shall be done "at least once every three months." In several churches the celebration takes place once every two months, and they can just continue this practice; in other churches it is customary to do it once every three months, and they should not be compelled, because of a provision in our Church Order, to increase the frequency, although such increase is to be encouraged and promoted. It would be beneficial when all churches decided that the Lord's Supper will be administered to believers at least once every two months. Once every month would even be better, but perhaps this is wishing for too much.”

OPMERKING: Uit die kerkorde verklarings blyk dit dat die gereeldheid van die nagmaalsvierings deur plaaslike kerke bepaal mag word, en nie gebonde is aan een spesifieke getal nie. Die ‘dikwels’ word verklaar as gereeld en herhalend, met geen gewetensbinding aan ‘n bepaalde getal nie.

Let egter wel op art. 63 DKO se bewoording, nl. “***minstens*** elke drie maande gehou word”, d.w.s. dit kan meer gehou word, dus maandeliks en/of weekliks.

2.6) THE WESTMINSTER Directory of Public Worship

A key passage in the Directory is:

“The communion, or supper of the Lord, is frequently to be celebrated; but how often, may be considered and determined by the ministers, and other church-governors of each congregation, as they shall find most convenient for the comfort and edification of the people committed to their charge. And, when it shall be administered, we judge it convenient to be done after the morning sermon... Where this sacrament cannot with convenience be frequently administered, it is requisite that publick warning be given the sabbath-day before the administration thereof: and that either then, or on some day of that week, something concerning that ordinance, and the due preparation thereunto, and participation thereof, be taught; that, by the diligent use of all means sanctified of God to that end, both in publick and private, all may come better prepared to that heavenly feast.”

GILLESPIE’S NOTES oor die ‘Westminster Assembly’ aangaande die gereeldheid van die nagmaal³

“Minutes, Gillespie, George – in *Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and Other Commissioners at Westminster* 1846 This passage is important as it shows what ‘frequently’ in the Westminster Directory for Public Worship meant:

³ <https://reformedbooksonline.com/the-frequency-of-the-lords-supper-2/>

'The majority of the Assembly, being presbyterian, thought that observing the Lord's Supper at least four times a year fulfilled the Scriptural requirement for it to be 'frequent'. **Gillespie objected to putting a number on it, which goes further than Scripture and proposed that it be left to human discretion.** Newcomen had Independent leanings (see his book *Irenicum*) and said that 'all the new gathered churches', that is, the Independents, observed the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day. To avoid a prolonged debate on the issue, both sides could agree on the wording which was adopted, that the Supper was to be administered 'frequently'. That is the answer to what 'frequently' was intended to mean: **it allowed for both sides, each side being able to agree on it. However see the larger context in the Directory below, which does not so easily agree with weekly communion.'**

The Westminster Confession of Faith

Westminster Confession 23.5 classes the Lord's Supper as a part of the 'ordinary religious worship of God': "The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God:

"This is sometimes used as an argument that the Lord's Supper ought to be as frequent as preaching, etc. However this classification puts baptism in the same category, which has its own qualifications limiting how frequent this is done, it not being done, usually, every Lord's Day. As is seen above and below, **the greater context of Westminster considered quarterly communion**, for instance, to be an 'ordinary' part of worship, whereas religious oaths, vows and other parts may not be that frequent.

The paragraph in the Confession continues: "...beside religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner."

Sometimes it is argued that 'Communion seasons' must be classed with these parts of religious worship for special occasions, taking place in their several times and 'seasons'. The 'season' of 'Communion season', though, **refers to the extended length of time involved in preparing for, celebrating and giving thanks for the Communion**, whereas the Confessions use of 'season' refers to a prolonged period of the year or the times in which certain fitting circumstances are present. It is not clear that the term 'Communion season' was in use in the 1640's; rather, it is likely that term was coined and popularized much later. The similarity of the term being used in the Confession and in the later term is purely equivocal and incidental. If there were any doubt, as is seen documented above and below, **the Westminster context was largely practicing 'communion seasons', and yet they considered them an 'ordinary' part of worship, as they considered this to be within the bounds of the Supper being 'frequently' observed.**

The Westminster Directory of Public Worship

A key passage in the Directory is: "The communion, or supper of the Lord, is frequently to be celebrated; but how often, may be considered and determined by the ministers, and other church-governors of each congregation, as they shall find most convenient for the comfort and edification of the people committed to their charge. And, when it shall be administered, we judge it convenient to be done after the morning sermon..."

Where this sacrament cannot with convenience be frequently administered, it is requisite that publick warning be given the sabbath-day before the administration thereof: and that either then, or on some day of that week, something concerning that ordinance, and the due preparation thereunto, and participation thereof, be taught; that, by the diligent use of all means sanctified of God to that end, both in publick and private, all may come better prepared to that heavenly feast.”

Some (such as Richard Bacon, [Westminster Standards & the Frequency of the Lord's Supper](#)) have made the first sentence of the second paragraph out to mean that ‘frequently’ meant, or lent itself to, a weekly observance. Only if the Supper could not be observed weekly, then public notices were to be made in advance for upcoming weeks.

However, this is far from the case, as is confirmed by the materials below.

As the minutes (above) show, ***the majority of the presbyterian assembly thought that quarterly communion fulfilled the obligation of ‘frequently’***. Where the Supper was not being frequently observed at such regular intervals known beforehand, then when the travelling minister showed up to the rural town in order provide the Supper for them, he was to give at least a week’s notice (as opposed to simply observing the supper that day or next day, as weekly-advocates might do) so that persons may take ‘all means’ to preparing thereto.”

‘All means’ included all ‘public’ means, which included, according to the passage, prior, public, preparatory instruction the Sabbath before or on a mid-week day. Naturally, if taking ‘all means’ was a moral requirement for the infrequent celebration of the Supper, it is also naturally a requirement for the frequent administration of the Supper to be rightfully observed. Having a public, preparatory service before the Lord’s Supper on the Sabbath, as a rule on a regular basis, is virtually exclusive of weekly communion.

Dr. Bacon, in his article advocating weekly communion, is quick to remove the necessity for such a public, preparatory service. However the Westminster Directory requires it by inference for the ‘frequent’ observance of the Supper.

The principle in the Directory for taking ‘all means’ for rightly observing the Supper is Scriptural and puritan. Whatever God commands, we ought to do it personally, fully and spiritually, with all of our heart, soul and strength (as Jesus said, Mk. 12:30. Or, as the Larger Catechism states it in #93:

“The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man...” Jesus, rightly, sets the Law at the highest, spiritual bar (see the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. 5-7). Hence the puritans (in contrast to the minimalist approach of much of Christianity in our own era) sought to fully please the Lord according to his will in all of his Revealed Will, including observing the Supper with all of their spiritual might so as to fill up the glory of God due in it. Thus, the requirements for what a right observance of the Supper includes, according to the Westminster Larger are detailed, full and stringent, according to the full teaching of Scripture and the nature of the Sacrament (read [Larger Catechism](#) #171-175).

The Lord’s Supper is a public Sacrament for the whole congregation (not to be distributed privately, according to Scripture and the Reformation) ***and the elders of the Church have a responsibility and obligation to see that the people prepare themselves adequately for the Supper***. Hence, in conformity with the public, corporate nature of the Supper and the nature of the Church, their ought to be, as the Directory spells out, public preparations for the Supper. All of this together excludes weekly communion as a regular practice.”

OPMERKINGS:

Uit bogenoemde is dit duidelik dat daar nog altyd verskil was oor die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering in die Westminster/Presbiteriaanse/Puriteinse tradisie, en dat beide kante hul beroep op Skrifbeginsels oor die saak.

3. VERKLARINGS DEUR DIE KERKGESKIEDENIS TOT VANDAG TOE

3.1) DIE VROEË KERK EN DIE REFORMASIE

JOHNSON (1996: 6,11, 18) gee hierdie oorsig oor die erediens inkleding in die vroeë kerk, asook die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering, sake waarna die Hervormers ook teruggekeer het in hul reformasie terug na die Skrif in erediens en aanbidding:

“The Reformers claimed to be doing nothing more or less than reviving the worship instituted by the Apostles. Calvin’s liturgy claims to provide a “Form of Church Prayers . . . According to the Custom of the Ancient Church.” As Hughes O. Old has demonstrated in his important (but neglected) study, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, the Reformers based their reformation of worship primarily upon the exegesis of Scripture. Theirs, however, was not a naive Biblicism. They also valued the Church Fathers as witnesses to how Scripture was understood by those closest to the Apostles. For them, as Old argues, “the writings of the Fathers were read as witnesses to the purer forms of worship of the ancient church.” The Fathers were valued because they “could confirm a usage which had been established by Scripture.” Consequently, when they argued from Scripture for a given reform, they were able to demonstrate through extensive citations of ancient sources both that the early church was the model upon which their work was based, and that the medieval liturgy had departed from this earlier tradition.

The following elements, many of which have become common to the regular worship of both Roman Catholics and Protestants, were restored on the basis of the Reformers careful study:

invocation and/or call to worship;
Scripture reading and preaching by *lectio selecta*;
prayer of illumination;
reading of the law of God, and confession of sin;
prayer of intercession;
congregational hymnody and Psalmody;
recitation of the creed;
benediction.

Equally significant and influential, ***they restored the “fencing of the table,” weekly communion, and communion in both kinds, to the eucharistic practices of the church.*** Because they reasoned on the basis of Scripture and the practice of the early church as described in the ancient histories, theological writings, and sermons of the Church Fathers, their arguments largely prevailed. Reformed worship was no passing fad. With deep biblical and historical roots, its normative claims should not be dismissed lightly. ...

Speaking of weekly communion and communion in both kinds, Old says, “Patristic literature is filled with references to both practices” (*Patristic Roots*, p. 307). Indeed the Orthodox churches have maintained both practices through the centuries. Calvin could correctly claim that even in the west the people had communed in both kinds for 1,000 years, though as early as the end of the end of the fourth century, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, and Cyprian were preaching against the widespread practice of attending, but abstaining from communion. ...

The Communion Service is included with the regular morning and evening services because such services should be regular, either weekly, or at least, monthly. It is well known that Calvin advocated weekly communion throughout his life. ***The Scottish First Book of Discipline advised monthly communion, and the Westminster Directory says “the communion, or supper of the Lord, is frequently to be celebrated.” Quarterly communion should be seen as a regrettable historical accident, contrary to the convictions of most of the Reformers.***

One benefit of infrequent communion, however, was the development of the spiritually charged communion season of the Scottish Presbyterian church. Lasting the better part of a week and involving members of neighboring congregations, these were times of careful self-examination and repentance as well as powerful evangelistic preaching. Revivals in Scotland, as well as North America, were frequently the result of these communion seasons.

Increased frequency in the present day, joined with the depth and seriousness of the old ways, would provide the best of both worlds.

It is important that the communion service be conducted with simplicity and dignity. Care should be taken that no rituals or movements be added to the service that distract attention from the administration of the bread and cup.

The minister should face the congregation from behind the table, the host should not be elevated or adored, bread and not wafer should be used, and the elders should serve the people at tables or in pews. Anything that implies change in the substance of the elements should be avoided. Only actions that reinforce the spirituality of the Supper should occur. The service outlined may be adapted to the regular services, as noted.”

3.2) GIBSON & EARNEY (2017:39), in een van die mees resente studies oor ‘Reformed Worship’, gee hierdie oorsig van die verskillende gereformeerde standpunte deur die eeue oor die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering, wat daarvan getuig dat daar nog altyd ‘n verskeidenheid van standpunte daaroor was, en vandag nog is:

“The frequency of Communion ***was another point of diversity among the Reformers.*** Luther, Schwarz, Bucer, and Cranmer all instituted weekly Communion. However, whereas Schwarz and Bucer intended weekly Communion in the city and monthly in the more rural areas, this frequency became the general pattern in England by default, despite Cranmer’s best intentions to see widespread weekly Communion across the whole country.”

Calvin also desired weekly Communion but was hamstrung by the Genevan Council, who ordered it be celebrated four times per year. This was also the practice of Zwingli and Bullinger (though the 1559 publication of the Ziirich rites mentions only three times).

John Knox envisioned monthly Communion (as did the German Palatinate Church Order), but on his return to Scotland, The First Book of Discipline (1560) modified the frequency to four times per year, and this became the practice in the Book of Common Order (1564).

In addition to these impediments was the nexus between the Sacrament and church discipline, known as “fencing the table.” The importance of fencing the table is captured well in Cranmer’s Book of Common Prayer (1549 and 1552), which is echoed in Knox’s Genevan Form of Prayers:

[S]o is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily (for then we are guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Savior; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord’s body; we kindle God’s wrath against us, and provoke him to plague us with diverse diseases and various kinds of death).

Since the Lord's Supper required self-examination to see whether one was in the Faith, and was exhibiting repentance and love, the Reformation liturgies involved exhortation and warning concerning unworthy participation. The church also played a role in this fencing of the table through its processes of discipline, whereby notorious sinners were excluded from the Lord's Supper. The goal of this disciplinary process was not merely to exclude hypocrites from participation, but to give opportunity for sinners to repent and amend their lives.

Thus, each church provided a warning to the congregation in advance of Communion, and this preparation for the Sacrament took different periods of time depending on the church.

Where Communion was intended frequently, there was a shorter period for preparation. Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer (1552) stated that communicants could signify their names to the curate overnight, or else in the morning before the service.

A Lasco's bimonthly Communion took a period of two weeks and even involved a special preparatory service the day before. Thus, an important contributing factor to the differing frequencies of the Lord's Supper throughout the churches of the Reformation was the balance between the desire for frequent Communion, and the desire for thoroughgoing church discipline."

Gibson en Earny se lywige boek gee baie verskillende liturgieë deur die eeue asook skrywes oor liturgieë deur wat dan nagmaalviering insluit en nie insluit nie wat dui op die verskillende standpunte daarvoor (2017:669ev).

OPMERKINGS:

Uit bogenoemde sien mens dat vir baie gereformeerdes het die 'self ondersoek en voorbereiding en toesig oor die heiligheid van die nagmaal' 'n baie groot rol gespeel in die oorweging om nie weekliks nie maar maandeliks of kwartaaliks nagmaal te vier, en dit is ook bybelse redes daarvoor, naamlik 1 Kor. 11:27-3.'

3.3) CALVYN (Institusie, deel IV, 17.43)

"Sover dit die uiterlike handelwyse (by die nagmaalsbediening) aangaan, maak dit nie saak of die gelowiges dit in die hand neem of nie, of hulle dit onder mekaar deel of elkeen afsonderlik eet wat aan hom gegee is nie: of hulle die beker weer in die hand van die diaken terugplaas en of hulle dit aan hulle naaste reik nie, of die brood suurdeeg bevat of ongesuurd is nie, of die wyn rooi of wit is nie. Dit is alles middelmatige sake en in die vryheid van die kerk geleë.

Dit is nogtans seker dat die gebruik in die kerk van ouds so was dat almal dit in hulle hande ontvang het. En Christus het ook gesê. "Deel dit onder julle" (Luk. 22:17). Die geskiedenis vertel dat brood met suurdeeg en gewone brood voor Alexander, biskop van Rome gebruik is, en dat hy die eerste was wat ongesuurde brood wou hê. Ek kan nie sien wat die rede daarvoor was nie behalwe dat hy die oë van die gewone mense deur hierdie nuwigheid tot bewondering wou dwing eerder as om hulle gemoedere in die opregte godsdiens te onderrig. ...

Maar ons - ons moet onthou dat God die gehoorsaamheid aan sy Woord so hoog ag, dat Hy wil dat ons sy engele en die hele wêreld na aanleiding daarvan moet beoordeel.

Wanneer ons verder so 'n groot hoop seremonies uit die weg geruim het, **kan die nagmaal dus op die mees gepaste wyse soos volg bedien word: dit moet baie dikwels en ten minste een keer per week aan die gemeente voorgesit word.** Dit moet begin met gesamentlike gebede; daarna volg die preek; dan moet die bedienaar die instelling van die nagmaal weergee terwyl die brood en die wyn op die tafel staan; daarna moet hy die beloftes voordra wat daarin vir ons nagelaat is en tegelyk ook almal daarvan uitsonder wat volgens die gebod van die Here daarvan weerhou moet word; daarna moet ons bid dat die Here met dieselfde milddadigheid waarmee Hy hierdie heilige voedsel aan ons geskenk het, ons ook mag leer en vorm om dit uit die geloof en dit van harte uit dankbaarheid te ontvang.

En aangesien ons uit onself dit onwaardig is, dat Hy deur sy barmhartigheid ons so 'n eetmaal waardig moet ag, hierna moet psalms gesing of iets geles word en nadat die bedienaars die brood gebreek en die beker aan hulle oorhandig het, moet die gelowiges in betaamlike orde in die heilige eetmaal deel. Wanneer die nagmaal afgehandel is, moet die gelowiges aangespoor word tot opregte geloof en geloofsbelydenis, tot liefde en sedes wat Christene waardig is. Ten slotte moet daar dankbetuiging wees en lofliede moet vir God gesing word. Wanneer dit alles beëindig is, moet die gemeente in vrede uiteenga.

CALVYN (Old&Payne, 2020: 15) het reeds in 1537 'n groot pleitdooi gedoen vir die meer gereelde nagmaalviering en meen die Roomse mis is die rede waarom dit minder gedoen is:

“Seeing that the Supper was instituted by our Lord to be used more frequently by us and also that it was the same way in the ancient church until the devil upset things and set up the Mass in its place, **the infrequency of our current celebration is a fault which ought to be corrected, so that the Supper be celebrated more often.**”

Calvyn het egter ook hierdie geskryf in sy *Short Treatise on the Supper of our Lord* (2002: 179-180),

“As to the time of using it, there can be no certain rule for all. For there are certain particular impediments which excuse a man for absenting himself. **And besides we have no express command, constraining Christians to make use of it every day it is offered to them.** However, if we have careful regard to the end for which our Lord intended it, we should realize that the use of **it ought to be more frequent than many make it.** For the more infirmity oppresses us, the more frequently we need to have recourse to that which is able and ought to serve to confirm our faith and further us in purity of life.

Therefore, the custom ought to be well established in all Churches, of celebrating the Supper **as frequently as the capacity of the people will allow.** And each individual in his own place ought to prepare himself to receive it whenever it is administered in the congregation, unless there be some grave hindrance which compels him to abstain. Though we have no express command defining the time and the day, it should be enough for us to know **that the intention of our Lord is that we use it often;** otherwise we shall not know well the benefit which it offers us.”

WALLACE (1997: 252-253) gee 'n goeie oorsig van Calvyn se **voorkeur** vir weeklikse nagmaalviering **maar ook aanvaarding** van maandelikse asook kwartaallikse nagmaalviering vir pastorale en kerkordelike redes:

“Since the sacraments are to be given such an exclusive place in the life of the Church, it follows that they are to be celebrated with such frequency as will befit their importance, and justify the exclusion of all other ceremonies from a central place in the Church. The visible centre of the Church's worship must not be left as a blank space for long periods of the year. Calvin, accordingly, declares himself in favour of **weekly** communion.

"All this mass of ceremonies being abandoned, the sacrament might be celebrated in the most becoming manner, if it were dispensed to the Church very frequently, at least once a week."

"It was not instituted to be received once a year and that perfunctorily (as is now commonly the custom)."

He, indeed, goes the length of saying that "we ought always to provide that no meeting of the Church is held without the Word, prayer, the dispensation of the Supper, and alms"; and he calls the custom of communion once a year "an invention of the devil".

"The practice of all well ordered Churches should be to celebrate the Supper frequently, **so far as the capacity of the people will admit.**"

It may be noted that Calvin in practice was forced to adapt himself to the capacity of the people more than he could have wished. In the "Articles on Church Organisation and Worship at Geneva" of 1537, which were drafted by him for the Council, he sets forth his view that the Holy Supper should be celebrated at least every Sunday, having regard to the comfort it can minister and the spiritual fruitfulness which is engendered in every way in the Church by its frequent use. But, he concedes, "**since the infirmity of the people is still such that there is danger that this holy and excellent mystery might be brought into contempt if it were celebrated too often ... it has seemed good to us that the Holy Supper should be celebrated once a month**".

Later on, in 1541, after his return to Geneva, he further gave in to the weakness of human nature and agreed to a celebration **four times a year**, viz. Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and the first Sunday of September."

OPMERKINGS:

Dit is duidelik dat Calvyn 'n baie sterk voorkeur vir weeklikse nagmaalviering gehad het, maar nie minder gereelde nagmaalvieringe as 'onbybels' beskou het nie, en wel gemeen het dit kan vir bybels-pastorale redes minder plaasvind. Voorstaanders vir en teen weeklikse nagmaalviering verskil daarom ook oor hoe 'dogmaties' Calvyn oor hierdie saak was, soos in latere verklarings hier onder weergegee sal word. Ek het nie by Calvyn die argument gevind dat as nagmaal nie plaasvind nie, dan is dit nie 'n volwaardige erediens nie.

3.4 KNOX (1995: 318-321)

"We have some respect also, that no more be given to the external sign, than is proper to it: that is, that it is the seal of justice and the sign of regeneration, but neither the cause, neither yet the effect and virtue [power]. The seal once received is durable, and needs not to be iterated, lest by iteration and multiplication of the sign, the office of the Holy Spirit, which is to illuminate and to purge, be attributed unto it.

"But by the same reason," some may reply, "ought not the Lord's table to be commonly used?" Yes, but if the signification of both sacraments be deeply considered, we shall see why the one ought to be but once used, **and the other often times**; for the holy disciples and servants of Christ Jesus dare not dispense with the ordinance of their Lord and Saviour, but rather are humbly subject to the same. And therefore, such as this day condemn the use of the sacraments (of the Lord's table I mean, and also the external word) declare themselves repugnant to the wisdom of God, **who has commanded his disciples (1 Cor. 11:26) to use that table in remembrance of him**: that is, of his death, and of the benefits purchased unto us by the same, till his coming again. ...

Hereof | suppose that it is proved, that baptism once received suffices in this life, but that the use of the Lord's Table **is oftentimes necessary**: for the one, to wit, baptism, is the sign of our first entrance; but the other is the declaration of our covenant, that by Christ Jesus we are nursed, maintained, and continued in the league with God our Father.

The sign of our first entrance needs not to be iterate, because the league is constant and sure; but the sign of our nourishment and continuance, by reason of our dullness, infirmity, and oblivion [forgetfulness] ought oft to be used."

3.5) THE PURITANS AT WESTMINSTER (Old&Payne, 2020: 357-358)

"When we look at the specific directions for the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion, the first thing we find is a discussion of the frequency with which the Supper is to be celebrated. **The question is not decided by the Directory other than to say it should be celebrated frequently.**

It is left to the pastor and those in charge of the pastoral care of the congregation to decide exactly how often. Apparently there was considerable diversity in English Protestant congregations in the middle of the sixteenth century. As is well known, Calvin had advocated that the sacrament be celebrated each Lord's Day. On the other hand, neither he nor any of the Reformers wanted to celebrate the sacrament without the participation of the congregation. For centuries the congregation had come to church Sunday by Sunday to watch the celebration, but not to partake. One could hardly expect the congregation suddenly to present itself every Lord's Day to receive the Lord's Supper when for centuries the Supper had been received but once a year at Easter.

In some Holy Communion in the Piety of the Reformed Church areas, Protestant churches celebrated the sacrament more frequently than others. For one reason or another, there was considerable popular resistance to the weekly celebration. ***The moral and spiritual intensity required for weekly communion was more than the average congregation could support.***

Perfunctory celebrations were an offense to the Puritans. The dilemma was simply that if the Puritans insisted on a frequent celebration, the celebrations would become more routine. If they wanted a more intense celebration they would have to be less frequent. ***This would allow for preparatory services with special preaching to help communicants prepare for the sacrament as well as to allow the elders to exercise true sacramental discipline.*** Confronted with a choice between weekly celebrations that lacked intensity and more disciplined and intense celebrations observed less frequently, the Puritans chose the latter.

The sacredness of the sacrament was a fundamental assumption. The Puritans, of course, were not the first Christians to be confronted with this problem.

Already at the end of the fourth century both John Chrysostom and Augustine had been confronted with the problem of Christians who came to the sacred service but did not receive communion. Sometimes it was because of an overly scrupulous concern that they not receive the sacrament unworthily; sometimes it was simply that they had settled for a lukewarm Christian life and a partial commitment and were afraid to come too close to God lest they fall under his judgment."

3.6) THOMAS DOOLITTLE'S TREATISE CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER (Old&Payne, 2020: 357-358)

The treatise begins with an overall look at 1 Corinthians 11, where the Apostle Paul admonishes the Corinthians on the proper celebration of the sacrament. In the course of a few pages, Doolittle expounds the text, pointing out that what we are to do is "in remembrance of me."

It all seems very perfunctory and abbreviated. While the modern reader might have a hard time with Doolittle's legalistic approach to proving that regular receiving of the Lord's Supper is required of the faithful Christian, there are nevertheless several helpful pages here.

Just as the annual observance of Passover was obligatory for serious Jews, so the observance of the Lord's Supper is obligatory for Christians. There is also a beautiful passage showing the value of remembering God's mighty acts of creation and providence. Doolittle's insights here are based on several of the thanksgiving psalms, notably Psalms 103, 104, 105, and 106. The Puritans did know their Old Testaments and this gave them good insights when it came to eucharistic theology.

It is easy to conclude that the proper frequency for celebrating the sacrament was vigorously debated, among both Puritans and Anglicans. ***There were those who argued that like Passover it should be celebrated once a year. Most Protestants agreed that daily celebrations constituted an abuse. More realistic ministers figured that while weekly observance was ideal, few of their people would present themselves for a weekly celebration. The more usual practice for Puritans would be quarterly, maybe monthly for the most devout.*** There were plenty of good Catholics, it must be remembered, who considered the annual Easter obligation sufficient while Protestants who observed it only once a year made it a high holy day.

When it was celebrated but once a year it was celebrated with great solemnity. Preparatory services and thanksgiving services were held each day for a week. **Frequency was no indication of the seriousness with which it was celebrated. The trouble, of course, was that Scripture is not at all clear how often Jesus intended it to be celebrated. The text simply says, "Do this as often as you do it in remembrance of me."**

The argument from the usage of the early church seems to favor the celebration of the sacrament each Lord's Day, but by late antiquity daily celebration was widespread. Doolittle contented himself with the ambiguity of the discussion, arguing simply that it should be observed frequently.

That, at least, he could draw out of Scripture. Nevertheless he based his argument on common sense. We need to be reminded of God's love frequently because our memories are short-lived. Celebrating the sacrament nourishes our thankfulness toward God. Our faith will be supported by regularly enjoying the intimate presence of our Savior in the observance of the holy feast."

3.7) JEAN DAILLÉ AND THE HUGUENOT TRADITION (Old&Payne, 2020: 419-420)

"One way of coming to an understanding of this problem of the frequency of our participation in the Supper is to contrast it with the sacrament of baptism. One of the reasons for this is that baptism introduces us to the church. The Supper, on the other hand, nourishes us in the faith. Quite simply, then, it belongs to the symbolism of the sacred meal that it must be often repeated.

One remembers that Calvin's *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper* begins the discussion by pointing out this distinction. The *Genevan Psalter* reminds us that in baptism we are received into the household of faith. It is once and for all. Then, in the Supper, we are fed and nourished, and this is continual. **This continuity belongs to the essential nature of the sign.**

Furthermore, very interestingly, Daillé links this with a discussion of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. What Daillé seems to have in mind is that there is a paradox in the teaching of the Reformed church. Baptism is seen as the once and for all nature of the Christian life while Communion points to the constant renewal of the work of God in our hearts. Again, Daillé comes up with a beautiful typological interpretation of the Old Testament. He sees in the story of Joshua and the children of Israel crossing the Jordan River a type of baptism. Joshua crossed from the hunger of the wilderness to the fat of the Promised Land. Once in the Promised Land he and all the people of God continually drank from the river of his delights, the sacred feast of Holy Communion."

3.8 a)"BRAKEL (2015: 567), maak die volgende opmerking:

"Both time and frequency cannot be determined and it is of no relevance as far as the essence of the sacrament is concerned. It is most desirable that it be administered upon the Sabbath Day when the congregation gathers, as well as at such a time when one would normally eat a meal, so that as a result of the physical desire for food, one would be that much more fit to partake of this spiritual food symbolized by the bread and wine. Christ instituted it in the evening, since He could not do so any earlier due to the last Passover having to be eaten in the evening. He also could not have instituted it at a later moment since His suffering began during that same night. We have thus considered this sacrament **in its nature and attending circumstances.**"

3.9) JACOBUS VAN LODENSTEIN (Old&Payne, 2020: 432-433)

“Series of eucharistic sermons, such as these, played an important role in the piety of Protestantism in the seventeenth century as is clear from the number of series of such sermons which were published. For twentieth-century tastes, a series of sermons on the Song of Solomon may seem a bit subjective. ... A number of remarkable features appear in these sermons which help us to understand this concern to deepen the Reformation. To begin with, these preparatory sermons show us the tremendous importance which the celebration of the Lord’s Supper occupied in Protestant piety.

All too many have imagined that the frequency with which the sacrament was celebrated is the index to its evaluation—those churches which celebrate the sacrament daily treasuring it most dearly, those celebrating it but quarterly valuing it least. Nothing could be more misleading.

One need only read the preparatory sermons of the English Puritan John Owen or the American Presbyterian Gilbert Tennent to realize that the celebration of the Lord’s Supper was the high feast of the Christian life. These preparatory sermons of van Lodenstein show us the same thing. They are symptomatic of the deepening of the devotional life which was being experienced throughout Protestantism during the seventeenth century.”

3.10) ROBERT BAILLIE (1645)

A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time, wherein the Tenets of the Principal Sects, Especially of the Independents, are Drawn Together in One Map (1645), [ch. 6](#), p. 121

“For the manner of their [Independents’] celebration, they who have seen it profess it to be in a very dead and comfortless way: it is not as in New England, once in the month, but as at Amsterdam, once every Lord’s Day, which makes the action much less solemn than in any other of the Reformed Churches, **and in this too much like the daily masses of the Church of Rome.**

They have no preparation of their flock before: they are so happy as to have all their members prepared always sufficiently for the Lord’s Table, from their first entrance into their Church to their dying day; for all this time there is no catechizing among them; this exercise is below their condition and altogether needless in any of their congregations. They will have no sermon in the week before, nor so much as any warning [fore-notice] of the Communion. This practice of New England, to give warning the Sabbath before, is disliked now at London: nor must there be any sermon of thanksgiving after that sacrament: They use not so much as a little application of the doctrine in the sermon before it to that occasion.

When they come to the action, there is no more but one little discourse and one short prayer of the minister; all the time of the participation, there is nothing in the congregation but a dumb silence: no reading, no exhortation, no psalms; their people need no such means to furnish them in their sacramental meditations;”

That the Lord’s Supper is Not of the Same Nature as the Preaching of the Word, & Hence Need Not Always to be Conjoined thereto in Confirmation of it

The preaching of the Word is to indiscriminate hearers, not only to the congregation, but to non-Church members and excommunicates, and is often used evangelistically not to the congregation at all, but to persons who are wholly not God’s people. The Lord’s Supper is only to those having a credible profession of faith, able to discern the meaning of the Supper, etc. (that is, to those to whom, with Christian charity, the promises of salvation apply).

The preaching of the Word is to involve the whole counsel of God. The Word attending the Supper is specifically about Christ’s death, atonement, the Covenant of Grace, etc.

The Word is not inherently a seal; it only takes on this function as it is received by faith and spiritually applied by the Holy Spirit to those things it speaks to and to the heart of the believer. The Lord's Supper is a physical seal, and that not simply of the Word of God, but of the Covenant of Grace.

The Scriptural injunction to examine and judge oneself is made specifically to the Lord's Supper, and not any other element of worship. That is, preparation is specifically appended to the Supper (as the Westminster Catechisms teach), whereas it is not in the same intensity of degree in all cases with the hearing of the Word. Preachers are to preach in season and out of season. The Word, by God's design, often meets people with no preparation at all.

The sanctions, or judgments, attending the Supper are much higher than hearing the Word without faith. Persons may hear the Word without faith, and go their way, and there may not necessarily be any outward judgment at all. Such was not the case in Corinth with the Supper, with professing Christians dying from sicknesses for receiving it unworthily.

The reason why the sanctions are higher in the Supper is because there is more responsibility in the Supper. The reason why there is more responsibility in the Supper is because there is a more clear manifesting (even by sight, sound, eating, etc.) of God's revelation and a greater spiritual communion with Christ therein, as there is a more particular and close application (by Spirit and physical sign) of the promises of the Covenant of Grace and salvation to God's chosen and beloved people.

Also, as there is a greater revelation of God and his Covenant in the Supper, and communion with Christ therein, it is a law of natural equity (not to mention that it is evidenced throughout Scripture) that there is to be a greater preparation thereto, to come suitably for the blessing. Thus the often trotted out justification that persons come prepared for the Supper simply by their everyday spiritual maintenance in the Christian life or preparation for the worship service is inadequate and wrong. The preparation needed for the Supper is greater than that of a worship service.

In the O.T. there were plenty of times where additional preparation was required of God's people on various occasions of the greater revelation of God and their salvation, many of those times of extra preparation being precisely the annual sacramental communion meals that all male Israelites had to attend."

OPMERKINGS:

Hierdie is 'n belangrike teks om te lees, om te verstaan waarom baie gereformeerdes versigtig was en selfs teen weeklikse nagmaalviering, weens a) positief: die heiligheid, tug, uniekheid te handhaaf, en b) negatief, die nagmaal te bewaar teen allerlei misbruike.

3.11) TOTIUS (Venter, 1977: 273) skryf as volg oor nagmaalviering in die 17de en 18de eeu, wat ook wys waarom sommige gereformeerdes nie gekies het vir weeklikse nagmaalviering nie:

"Byna algemeen het die ou Gereformeerde kerke in Nederland gekies vir 'n nagmaalsviering wat van vier tot ses maal in die jaar plaasgevind het. Deur hierdie keuse het die nagmaal 'n **hoogtepunt** indie gemeentelike lewe geword. Enersyds het die gemeente nie alte seer ontwend geraak aan dié **hoogheilige** handeling nie. Dit sou byvoorbeeld die geval gewees het as net een maal per jaar 'n viering ingestel was. Andersyds het die nagmaal ook nie te veelvuldig voorgekom nie, sodat die gevaar om daar '**n blote gewoontewerk** van te maak, soveel moontlik uitgesluit was. Die gebeurtenis is, soos dit by 'n hoogtyd pas, vroegtydig aangekondig.

Alreeds die Konvent van Wezel, die oudste kerkvergadering van die Gereformeerdes, het dit as sy gevoele uitgespreek dat dit baie nuttig is om 14-dae voor die tyd waarop die nagmaal gevier sal word, dit aan die gemeente bekend te maak, sodat (1) die lede hulle betyds kan **voorberei** en (2) die ouderlinge hulle **huisbesoek** op die regte wyse kan volbring. ... Aan die nagmaal sou egter nie alleen 'n aankondiging voorafgaan nie. In 1578 het die Sinode van Dordrecht 'n proefpredikasie ingestel. Daarin moes gehandel word **oor die bekering, die selfbeproeving en die versoening met God en die naaste.**"

3.12 BAVINCK (1967: 540-541)

"Eindelik doet ook de plaats en de tijd, waarin het avondmaal ingesteld en oudtijds gevierd werd, duidelijk uitkomen, dat het een wezenlijke maaltijd is. Immers stelde Jezus het avondmaal in bij gelegenheid, dat Hij met zijn discipelen aanlag aan de paasdis. En in de eerste tijd werd het avondmaal in verbinding met een gewone maaltijd, Hd. 20:7,11; 1 Cor. 11:21, in de openbare vergadering van de gemeente, 1 Cor. 10:17; 11:18, 20, 21, 33, **en dagelijks of althans elke rustdag**, Hd. 2:46; 20:7.

Eerst langzamerhand werd het avondmaal **van de agapae losgemaakt**, uit de avond- naar de morgengodsdiensttoefening verplaatst, buiten de vergadering van de gemeente ook aan zieken en stervenden in hun huizen bediend, als mis geheel en al buiten en zonder een samenkomst van de gemeente gevierd, **en het gebruik van het avondmaal voor de gelovigen op drie, of op een enkele maal van het jaar als minimum vastgesteld.**

Hoewel nu enkele Gereformeerden van oordeel waren, dat het avondmaal in zeer bijzondere gevallen ook wel aan zieken in hun woning, maar dan toch in bijzijn van anderen, mocht bediend worden, hielden zij toch algemeen de gedachte vast, dat het als een deel van de cultus publicus in de vergadering van de gemeente thuis behoorde en niet privaat gevierd mocht worden. En al is de praktijk sterker gebleken dan de leer en de viering van het avondmaal **gewoonlijk tot zes of viermaal in het jaar beperkt, toch was het oorspronkelijk de wens van Calvin, om het minstens eemaal per maand te vieren.**"⁴

OPMERKINGS:

In die voetnotas van die Engelse vertaling van Bavinck se *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Bolt, 2008: 565), word die verskillende sinodebesluite aangaande die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering gegee,

"Synod of Dort (1578), art. 73: "Since the Lord's Supper should not be celebrated in the places where no organized church is established, it shall be celebrated in the established churches **every two months as much as possible**. But the secret churches and those under the Cross shall be free to celebrate [the Lord's Supper] as often as is convenient" (De Ridder, 219).

Church Order of the Synod of Middelburg (1581), art. 45: "The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated, as much as possible, **once every two months**; however, in whatever place there is as yet no established order, elders and deacons must first be installed" (De Ridder, 280).

Church Order of the Synod of 's Gravenhage (1586), art. 56: "The Lord's Supper shall be administered **once every two months**, as much as possible, and in an edifying manner. Wherever the circumstances of the churches allow, the same shall be done on Easter, Pentecost and Christmas, but in places where as yet a church has not been established elders and deacons shall first be provisionally installed" (De Ridder, 358).

3.13 KLAASSENS (2006) skryf oor nagmaalviering in die 17de en 18de eeuse Nederland as volg:

"In the seventeenth century... The intention was to celebrate the eucharist six times a year; however, **liturgical freedom** led in some cases to an even lower frequency, sometimes only once a year."

3.14) VAN DER MERWE (1974)

Dr. DCT van der Merwe maak 'n sterk pleitdooi vir weeklikse nagmaalviering, en in sy studie wat veral fokus op breë openbaringshistoriese temas uit die Skrif, nl. verhouding OT en NT, die wederkoms met verwagting van die bruilof van die Lam, ens. as begroning vir sy oortuiging. Van der Merwe se studie is belangrik om kennis te neem van besinning oor die onderwerp van die gereelde nagmaalviering kwessie in die GKSA in die 20ste eeu. Hy skryf samevattend die volgende, wat ek in die volgende hoofpunte saamvat:

1) Die saak in die GKSA in die vorige eeu

“Op die oog af is dit 'n allereenvoudigste saak. My kerkraad moet net besluit dat ons voortaan elke Sondag nagmaal hou en dan kan ek gereeld **elke week aan die tafel van die Here geestelik versterk word**. Die Gereformeerde Kerkorde het daar niks teen nie; dit word net bepaal **dat die nagmaal MINSTENS elke drie maande gevier moet word**. Die eerste gemeente in Jerusalem het na Pinkster ELKE SONDAG nagmaal gevier en ook nog in die week, **al het Christus ook nie vir hulle, net soos vir ons, uitdruklik beveel hoe dikwels ons Hom aan sy tafel moet gedenk nie**.

Waarom het hulle dit met soveel blydschap en vreugde gedoen en waarom doen ons dit nie meer nie? Wat het gebeur in die kerk in die afgelope twintig eeue? As Christen is ek deel van die liggaam van Christus, sy Kerk, wat vanaf Adam af strek tot op die laaste dag en wat vandag oor die ses kontinente van die aardbol versprei is onder 'n legio van volke, nasies en tale. As ek dus die saak vir myself moet uitmaak kan ek dit nie alleen, soos Robinson Crusoe, doen nie, **maar moet ek deeglik kennis neem van wat die Skrif leer en van wat in die kerkgeskiedenis plaasgevind het**.

Dwarsoor die wêreld is daar vandag in die Christelike kerke sterk stemme en pleidooie dat die nagmaal elke Sondag gevier moet word. In die vroeg-sestiger jare het die kerkraad van Potchefstroom, onder leiding van Ds. P.W. Buys, met 'n beskrywingspunt na die klassis gekom dat die nagmaal meer as vier keer per jaar gevier moet word, Ongeveer 1968 het die kerkraad van Belville, onder leiding van Ds. A.J. du Plessis, 'n studie van die saak gemaak en o.a, tot die konklusie gekom **dat vermeerdering van nagmaals-vieringe sal lei tot verdieping van die geestelike lewe**. In 1970 skryf Ds. J.H. van Wyk in Die Kerkblad en betoog dat ons ELKE SONDAG nagmaal mag vier. In 1974 beveel die klassis Rustenburg aan dat nagmaal meer dikwels gevier moet word, nadat die saak deeglik in studie geneem is. Die klassis Boland is ook besig om die saak tans te bestudeer., Belangrikste en interessantste in hierdie verband is dat bg. roeringe wat die mens betref, los en selfstandig van mekaar tot openbaring gekom het.

Dit wek die oortuiging dat ons hier met iets meer te doen het, 'n werking van die Heilige Gees, nie net in die Gerefor meerde Kerk in S,A, nie, maar dwarsoor die wêreld.”

2) Liturgie verandering vanaf die OT na die NT

“Die grootste oorgang en verandering in die Kerk is seker dié vanaf die Ou Testamentiese bedeling na dié van die Nuwe Testament, In die liturgie bring dit 'n geweldige verhoging van die menslike verantwoordelikheid mee: in die tyd van Moses is aan die volk van God in fynste besonderhede voorskrifte gegee van hoedat die erediens, in sy geheel en onderdele, ingerig en uitgevoer moet word. Die bou van die ark en selfs die kleredrag van die priesters is tot in die fynste besonderhede deur God self gegee, asook duidelike bepalinge in verband met die tyd, plek en wyse van viering van die paasfees.

In die Nuwe Testament word die grondbeginsels in hoofsaak duidelik gegee, maar geen voorskrifte in detail nie. Die instelling van die nagmaal deur Christus vind ons in die Evangelies en in I Korinthiërs; in Handeling word vertel hoedat die eerste gemeente op die eerste dag van die week bymekaar gekom het, nagmaal gehou het en hoedat hulle daeliks ook van huis tot huis dit gevier het, ***maar definitiewe bevele en bepalinge, soos in die Ou Testament, ontbreek heeltemal.*** Na die uitstorting van die Heilige Gees op Pinkster, gaan die kerk voort, onder leiding van die apostels in hulle heel-besondere en eenmalige grondleggende amp.

Voordat die Nuwe Testamentiese boeke in skrif beskikbaar was en later as kanoniek aanvaar is, moes die gemeentes op grond van mondelinge oorlewering aangaan, ook in die liturgie.

Hierdie belangrike verskil tussen Ou Testamentiese en Nuwe Testamentiese bedeling maak dus die verantwoordelikheid van die mens in die kerk des te groter. Die moontlikheid van duiwelse veranderinge of van duiwelse halstarrigheid om godgegewe veranderinge te aanvaar is ook des te groter.

Oor wat verander moet word en wat nie mag verander word nie, het die kerk deur die eeue lank en diep besin en in die tyd van die Hervorming die waarheid van die Skrif in dié verband saamgevat in artikel 25 van die Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis: *"Ons glo dat die seremonies en sinnebeelde van die Wet opgehou het met die koms van Christus en dat aan alle skaduwees 'n einde gekom het, sodat die gebruik daarvan onder die Christene afgeskaf moet word; nogtans bly die WAARHEID EN WESE DAARVAN vir ons bestaan IN CHRISTUS JESUS IN WIE HULLE HUL VERVULLING GEVIND HET, Intussen gebruik ons nog die getuienisse - wat aan die Wet en die Profete ontleen is - om ons in die Evangelie te bevestig en ook om ons lewe te reël, in alle eerbaarheid, tot eer van God, volgens sy wil."*

Hierin het ons ook die nodige grondbeginsels vir verandering al dan nie in die liturgie van die kerk. Die vraag is nou in hoeverre dit kerk sig deur die heen en onder die groot verskeidenheid van volke en nasies in hieraan gehou het."

3) Calvyn verwerp 'sakramentalisme' en 'Woord-isme'

"Hier tussen in neem Calvyn 'n heel besondere standpunt in. Hy bepleit volhardend dat die nagmaal elke Sondag gevier moet word, alhoewel dit van owerheidsweë prakties onmoontlik gemaak is. Hy verwerp baie beslis die transsubstansiasieleer van die Roomse, asook die konsubstansiasieleer van die Lutherane, maar ook netso beslis die gedagte dat die nagmaal 'n blote herinneringsmaal is. Die brood en wyn verander nie letterlik in die liggaam en bloed van Christus, soos die Roomse glo nie; dit is ook nie tergelykertyd natuurlike brood en wyn én die liggaam en bloed van Christus soos die Lutherane sé nie, maar tog, op een of ander manier word die gelowiges daarin en daardeur, deur die werking van die Heilige Gees, gevoed met die liggaam en bloed van Christus.

Dit is 'n absoluut-noodsaaklike versterking vir die geloofslawe en mag daarom nie net so nou en dan gebruik word nie. Hierdie gedagtes van Calvyn vind hulle neerslag in die Calvinistiese konfessies en nagmaalsformuliere; nogtans het dit nooit in die Calvinistiese kerke sover gekom dat elke Sondag nagmaal gevier is nie.

Calvyn se gedagtes dus tussen die twee uiterstes van sakramentalisme, waarin die Woord op die agtergrond raak, en Woord-isme, waarin die sakramente nie tot hulle reg kom nie.

Waar die Nuwe Testamentiese oerkerk dus elke Sondag nagmaal gevier het, en selfs meer, en waar dit in die Middeleeue daarop uitgeloop het dat die gewone lidmaat slegs een of enkele kere in die jaar nagmaal gevier het, daar bring die Hervormers dit ten minste terug tot op vier maal per jaar. Hierin het hulle wel weer die gewone lidmaat, die kerkvolk, teruggebring na die kommunie, die gemeenskapsmaal, maar het hulle, volgens J. von Allmen, ***weer die fout gemaak om die dag van die Here en die tafel van die Here te skei.*** Op baie Sondae word net die Woord alleen bedien, so gans anders as in die tyd van die apostels en net daarna.

As ons hierdie kardinale fout nie regmaak nie, sal die kerklike liturgie in sy geheel ook nooit regkom nie.

4) Die gevaar van 'teologiese teoretiese denke' wat gehoorsaamheid aan God se bevele kan verdring

"In baie sake gee die Bybel baie duidelik en volledig uitspraak, maar soos reeds aangetoon, bv. nie in die liturgie van die Nuwe Testamentiese kerk nie. Hier moet die mens self volgens die vasstaande grondbeginsels van die Skrif struktureer en uitbou.

Hierin vind ons dat alte dikwels eers gehandel word, wel nie dierlik-instinktief nie, maar wel spontaan in kinderlike geloof voortgaande, ***gehoorsaam aan dit wat wel duidelik in die Skrif gegee is***. So is bv. in gehoorsaamheid aan die sendingbevel van Christus die Evangelie oor die hele destydse "wêreld" uitgedra en is eers baie eeue later gekom tot 'n uitgewerkte sendingteorie of -leer. W. Elert toon aan dat dit ook die geval was in die liturgie van die kerk: ***eers is kerk gehou en nagmaal gevier volgens wat wel duidelik in die Bybel gegee is*** en slegs daarna het die teologie, die wetenskaplike nadenke en verklaring, gevolg. M.a.w. die gelowige praktyk het voorgestaan en die teorie het agterna gekom.

Dit gebeur vandag nog steeds, al is dit in 'n veel geringer mate.

By die wêreld word die teorie op geestelike gebied dikwels gesien as die volmaakte en ideale, maar tergelykertyd daarom as die onmoontlik-uitvoerbare op hierdie sondige aarde. Daarom word dit verwerp en verag as onprakties en beleef ons in baie opsigte 'n geweldige stroom van sogenaamde anti-dogmatisme.

Hiermee word die kind met die badwater weggegooi. Daarom kry ons, goddank, ook 'n sterk reaksie daarteen. 'n Wêreldbekende sendingleier soos H. Kraemer pleit vir 'n deeglike teologie, omdat doeltreffende en vrugbare aksie onmoontlik is sonder heldere denke; so ook E.B. Idowu, professor in teologie in Ibadan, Nigerië in verband met die liturgie van die kerk vir Afrika; so praat J.C. Gilhuis ook van 'n dors na teologie in Sjina. Die mens is nie net lus om te dink en te redeneer nie, maar dit is ook sy godgegewe taak en roeping. ***Hierin moet hy dan baie helder en duidelik waak vir die verleidinge en slaggate van die wêreld se denke, wat sonder Skrif en openbaring op eie houtjie aansukkel.***

5) Woord en sakrament moet saam gebruik word

"Netso verkeerd en gevaarlik as wat dit is om die sakramente sonder die Woord as openbarings-, genade- en gemeenskaps-middel te stel en te gebruik, is dit ook om die Woord, die hoorbare en verstaanbare openbaring van God, op hierdie sondige aarde te gebruik ***sonder die wettige tekens wat God as Sakramente daarby gevoeg het***.

Dit lei uiteindelik tot wat ons genoem het Woord-isme. Jesus Christus word uitgeskakel as bykomstig en onbewus word teruggegly tot die gedagte dat die kruis en versoening eintlik onnodig was, asof die mens daarsonder kan voortgaan soos in die sondelose toestand van voor die sondeval. Toe was die Openbaringswoord en woordelike gemeenskap tussen God en mens wel daar, en wel in die werkverbond; deur die sondeval moes die Vleesgeworde Woord bykom, sy bloed moes vloei en sy liggaam verbreek word, en wat die mens betref het die verbond 'n GENADEverbond geword.

Hierin moet die mens sy eie sondegebrokenheid sien en ervaar in die gebreektheid van die liggaam van Christus, soos hy dit sien en eet en drink aan die nagmaal, om daardeur by vernuwing ook deel te hê aan sy opstanding en oorwinning van die dood en sonde. ***Die mense en kerke wat die sakramente verwerp en verwaarloos kom gewoonlik weer by een of ander vorm van eie werkverbond uit, eiegeregtigheid en werkheilgheid***, waarin of permissief die hele wêreld as sondeloos gesien word of eksklusief die eie wêreldjie as die toppunt en toonbeeld van heilgheid."

6) Eskatologiese verwagtinge pleit vir weeklikse nagmaalviering

“Soos reeds in ons voorwoord genoem het die eerste Christene die wederkoms van Christus aanvanklik byna onmiddelik verwag. Dit het miskien 'n baie belangrike rol in die nagmaalviering gespeel, veral omdat Christus self so duidelik en pertinent na sy wederkoms verwys het by die instelling. Die eskatologiese en missionêre momente was daarom albei baie sterk bewus in hierdie tyd. Daarom het die Kerk gegroei en vinnig uitgebrei oor die Romeinse Ryksgebied en selfs verder. Teen 'n alte vroeë verwagting van die wederkoms waarsku Paulus self in II Thess. 2. Tog lees ons ook weer in Openb. 22: 20: "Hy wat dit getuig sé: Ja, EK KOM GOU. Amen, ja kom, Here Jesus".

Die gelowiges moenie verskrik word en hulle verstand verloor nie, maar ook nie hulle waaksaamheid en verwagting dat die Here Jesus tog gou sal kom nie. Ten alle tye moet Hy verwag word, moet die Kerk as sy bruid na sy koms as Bruidegom verlang en uitsien. Is dit nie om hierdie rede dat Christus self nie by die instelling van die nagmaal beveel het hoe dikwels dit gevier moet word nie? **Is dit nie eintlik vanselfsprekend dat die Bruid elke opstandingsdag sal vier in die allersterkste verwagting van die koms van die Bruidegom nie?** Het die eerste gemeente dit nie daarom gedoen nie en is dit nie ons dure liefdesplig om dit, nou dat ons 2000-jaar nader aan die einde is, juis nou weer te doen nie?

Des te meer omdat Calvyn reeds honderde jare gelede dit as noodsaaklik gestel het en op sy voetspoor ons Gereformeerde belydenisskrifte dit by implikasie ook gestel het, ten eerste, deur Woord en Sakrament steeds saam te voeg, ten tweede, die maaltyd-karakter, die geestelike voedingsaard van die nagmaal so duidelik en sterk uit die Skrif te beklemtoon. M.a.w. die saak is klaar uitgewerk en uitgepluis, dit moet net uitgevoer word.”

7) Konsekwensies van Nagmaal elke Sondag

7.1 DIE PROBLEEM VAN DIE TWEDE DIENS, wat in die meeste kerke vandag deur baie lidmate eenvoudig genegeer word, verval as daar elke Sondagaand nagmaal is. Diegene wat nog maar net in naam lidmate van die kerk is, sal wegloop omdat dit nou te warm word in die kerk; ander sal hulle bekeer en met nuwe geloofsgloed die lewe aanpak in die naam van Jesus Christus.

M.a.w. selftug sal baie sterker na vore tree. Die beswaar wat al geopper is, nl. dat dit onmoontlik is om elke Sondag nagmaal te hou omdat dit baie moeilik is om elke week huisbesoek te doen en elke week kerkraadsvergadering te hou, verval hierdeur. Elke kerkraad kan dit nog soveel as moontlik doen, maar is nie verplig om dit elke week te doen nie.

7.2 DIE KWESSIE VAN TWEE NAGMALE OP DIESELFDE SONDAG in dieselfde gemeente verval vanself. Geen lidmaat sal elke Sondag van die 52 van die jaar by die nagmaal kan wees nie, maar daar sal nou regverdige geleentheid vir elkeen wees. Die positiewe punt waarby die Gereformeerde Kerk in S.A. op sy Nasionale Sinode uitgekom het, nl. dat daar geen opsionele nagmaalviering mag wees nie, word nou eintlik werklik konsekwent deurgetrek: dit is tog immers opsioneel, van kerkraadsweë al is dit nie van die kant van die lidmaat nie, as net op sekere Sondae van die jaar nagmaal gevier word.

7.3 DIE VERKORTING VAN LITURGIESE FORMULIERE kry nou eintlik sin en sal nou planmatig en nie willekeurig gedoen kan word nie. Ons kan nie regressief teruggaan na net wat in die Nuwe Testament direk gegee is nie, die dogmatiese groei en ontplooiing van die Kerk in die opsig moet tot sy reg kom sonder om die nagmaalsformulier te lank te maak. 'n Meer pertinente verdeling van die formulier in sy inherente onderdele, sal miskien baie help om die lidmate intelligent te laat meeluister. Om dit reg en goed te kan doen, sal 'n intensiewe studie van die liturgie van veral die eerste vier eeue na Christus gemaak moet word.

7.4 DIE PREDIKERS SAL OPNUUT AANDAG AAN HULLE PREKE MOET GEE, om dit direk op die kruis af te stem, sonder om elke Sondag maar net weer te herhaal. Die Kategismusprediking, wat in die kerkorde vasgelé is by die Gereformeerde Kerke, sal aandag moet geniet. M.i. kan en

hoef dit nie afgeskaf of verdring te word nie, maar dit sal moontlik sy regmatige plek vind in die môrediens. Dit sal ook histories korrek wees: die oerkerk het eers sy katkisanter onderrig voordat oorgegaan is tot die nagmaalviering. Die persoonlike gerigtheid van die Kategismus op elke lidmaat in sy verhouding tot Christus sal waarskynlik meer tot sy reg kom. Die kwessie van die noodsaaklikheid van 'n afsonderlike nabetrachtingsdiens sal opnuut oorweeg moet word.

Dit is interessant dat dit nie in die kerkorde bepaal is nie, maar aan die kerkrade oorgelaat is. Die Sinode van Dordrecht van 1574 laat dit oop, maar bepaal net dat daar 'n danksegging na die nagmaal moet wees, soos ons dit teweens het in die huidige formulier.

7.5 GEMEENTES MOET KLEINER WORD. Die Paasfees was 'n familiefees, 'n fees van 'n geslote kring van mense wat mekaar andersins ook goed geken het. So het Christus ook die nagmaal in die dissipelkring ingestel en so is dit aanvanklik selfs in die huise gevier. ***Dit is 'n saak van klein groepies mense, d.w.s. van die plaaslike gemeente*** (J.G. Davies en J.J. van Allmen.). Daarom is daar moeilikheid en probleme oor die toesig en die uitvoering van die nagmaalviering sodra as 'n gemeente te groot word. Dan word die tafelgemeenskap prakties onmoontlik en moet ander uitweë gepraat word, soos bv. dié van kelkies, waarteen soveel skrywers hulle tereg uitlaat. Sinodale of ekumeniese nagmaalvieringe is eintlik ook 'n kontradiksie van die wese van die nagmaal as tafelgemeenskap van die "familie" van Christus; 'n mens kan tog nie afgevaardig word na die nagmaal en dit namens 'n groep mense gebruik nie; dit is 'n persoonlike uitnodiging van Christus wat ek persoonlik aanvaar of verwerp.

7.6 DIE EENHEID IN CHRISTUS EN DIE VERSKEIDENHEID VAN EN IN DIE VOLK VAN GOD kom tot sy reg deurdat al die kerke elke Sondag op dieselfde tyd nagmaal vier en liggaamlik met Christus, aan die regterhand van die Vader, gemeenskap beoefen, Die sigbare en insitute eenheid van die Kerk kom op ander maniere tot openbaring. Hier op aarde is dit tog immers onmoontlik om alle Christene op een plek bymekaar te maak vir 'n gesamentlike nagmaalviering; die lidmate van die klein Gereformeerde Kerk in S.A, kan nie eers in 'n betreklike klein stad op een Sondag bymekaar gebring word nie!

Dieselfde wyse van nagmaalviering dwarsdeur die Kerk bring ook die eenheid sigbaar tot openbaring, sonder om daardeur aan die verskeidenheid van volk en taal tekort te doen. Die absolute deurslaggewende belang van die taal in die liturgie mag nooit oor die hoof gesien word nie, juis omdat ons in die liturgie te doen het met woordelike verbonds-gespreksgemeenskap van die gelowiges met hulle Verbondshoof, Christus. Die verskeidenheid van tale weerspreek nie die eenheid nie, maar verryk dit, soos die verskeidenheid van musiekinstrumente die klank van 'n orkes.

7.7) DIE PLEK VAN DIE DOOP sal vanself duidelik word. As inlywing in die genadeverbond is dit logies iets aan die begin van die ere diens, sodat die ingelyfde verder deel mag hê aan die heerlike verrigtinge, selfs ook as baba. 'n Argument wat A. Kuyper e.a. noem dat die doopsbediening in elk geval aan die einde van die erediens moet plaasvind, netsoos die nagmaal na die preek, omdat die Woord primêr is teenoor die Sakrament, gaan o. i. nie heeltemal op nie. ***Die Woord is primêr, maar nie net die preek is Woord nie.*** Die seëngroet is dit ook, en so ook die doopsformulier.

Netsoos ons by die nagmaal moet oppas dat dit nie NET 'n kwartaallikse tugmaatrel word nie, moet ons oppas dat die doop nie vereng word net tot die belofte van die ouers om die kind reg en goed op te voed nie. Die doop is tog immers ook die bad van wedergeboorte en 'n daadwerklike inlywing van die dopeling in die verbondsgemeenskap, wat daarom so gou as moontlik op die rusdag moet plaasvind, d.w.s. so vroeg moontlik in die eerste erediens, As daar dopelinge is moet elke Sondag gedoop word en nie gewag word vir 'n bepaalde Doopsondag nie - ook weer een van die gevolge van te groot gemeentes, waarin niemand belangstel in die doop van 'n onbekende kindjie van onbekende ouers nie.

Vanself kom die balans van die rusdag dan tot sy reg: in die môre - die Sakrament, plus Woordbediening daarna, die aand - eers Woordbediening en daarna, die ander Sakrament.

Selfs kleinere items en kwessies, soos die sing na die geloofs belydenis al dan nie of die sing al dan nie van die Twaalf Artikels self, sal byna outomaties opgelos word as ons die geheelstruktuur van die liturgie raaksien oor die hele Sondag, en in verband met die hele lewe.

7.8 DIE IDEAAL VAN ELKE GEMEENTE MET SY EIE PREDIKANT word nou eers ten volle sinvol, want, waar daar geen predikant woon nie, **kan nie elke Sondag nagmaal bedien word nie**. Waar daar noodgedwonge meer as een predikant in een gemeente te staan kom, word die gemeente tog gewoonlik onder die predikante verdeel wat die pastoraat betref. Dan is dit eintlik logies dat elke deel saam met sy eie predikant die nagmaal vier sodat die groep so klein as moontlik bly. Dit is die konsekwensies van elke Sondag nagmaal wat ons tot dusver raakgesien het. Daar mag nog meer wees.

8. Van der Merwe se slot en konkluderende oproep tot verdere reformatie

“In elk geval sal dit, veral vir Protestantse Kerke **wat die Woord tereg primêr stel**, en tans gewoonlik net kwartaalliks of ses-maandeliks nagmaal hou, 'n geweldige praktiese omwenteling wees, selfs in die struktuur van hulle kerkgeboue, 'n omwenteling wat seker nog nie naby so groot sal wees as dié wat die Hervormers onder die volk deur die genade van God bewerkstellig het nie.

Vir die nie-Protestantse Kerke, wat op een of ander manier reeds elke Sondag 'n sakramentele fees vier, sal dit netso 'n groot omwenteling beteken, omdat hulle dan weer die Woord in sy volle rykdom sy plek moet gee in die liturgie. Dit geld ook vir die Protestantse Kerke en rigtinge wat ook geneig is om sakramentalisties te dink en te handel; baie van hulle sal hulle teologiese opleiding van predikante as bedienaars van die Woord moet omskep en opknap, sodat die prediker weer meer ver kondiger van die Woord kan word en nie blote liturgiese voorleser bly nie.

Vir almal moet die Sondag weer ten volle sy diepste, Skriftuurlike betekenis kry.

Die Dag van die Here as Sondag, rusdag, opstandingsdag, loop uiteindelik uit op die Dag van die Here as oordeelsdag. In die begrip Dag van die Here het ons dus die volkome eenheid van hier, nou, elke week, en tergelykertyd die eskatologiese, die voleinding, in sy diepste en rykste sin.”

3.15) WILLISON (1750) , John – [Preface, pp. VIII-X](#) in *A Sacramental Catechism* (d. 1750)

“Willison, an early-mid 1700's evangelical and orthodox minister in the Church of Scotland, who wrote classics on the Lord's Supper, exhorts his readers to a 'frequent' partaking of the Lord's Supper. Yet, he speaks of his satisfaction of a quarterly observance as meeting this requirement, and elsewhere throughout his works assumes and argues for a full communion season. This shows how the language of Westminster was understood as harmonious with the Scottish practice.”

3.16) MARSHALL (1980) in sy Nuwe Testament studie oor die nagmaal kom tot die volgende konklusies vir vandag oor die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering:

“In line with **what appears to have been the practice of the early church** in the New Testament the Lord's Supper should be celebrated frequently in the church, and there is good reason for doing so on each Lord's Day. The New Testament links the exposition of the Scriptures and apostolic teaching with the celebration of the Lord's Supper; the Supper ought always to be an occasion for the preaching of the Word.”

3.17) BARNARD (1981:138-142) gee die inligting oor hoe dikwels die nagmaal gevier is:

“Hoe dikwels is die nagmaal gevier? Uit die gegewens van die Nuwe Testament **kan nie met sekerheid vasgestel word hoe dikwels die nagmaal gevier is nie**. Wanneer gespreek word van die “breking van die brode”, kan dit sien op sowel die nagmaal as op die gesamentlike ete, wat ook

die nagmaal kon insluit. Ons kan met groot stelligheid sê dat die nagmaal weekliks, op die opstandingsdag, gevier is. Dit is ook moontlik dat dit meer gereeld en selfs daagliks plaasgevind het.”

“Hand. 2:42. Hier word dié besondere kenmerk van die pinkstergemeente aangegee naamlik dat hulle “volhard het” om ’n paar dinge te doen, en hierdie paar dinge is tegelyk die grondtrekke van die erediens. Hulle het “volhard” of hulle “heelhartig toegelê” op:

- Die leer van die apostels, dit is die boodskap van Jesus Christus soos die apostels dit van Jesus opgevang en verder verkondig en geleer het.
- Die onderlinge verbondenheid of gemeenskap, wat in die samekomste tot uitdrukking gekom het.
- Die “breking van die brode”, **wat spoedig die terminus technicus geword het vir die nagmaal**, maar wat ook die gemeenskaplike maaltye aangedui het. Hiertydens is, soos reeds aangedui, die nagmaal gevier.
- Die gebede, wat sien op die gesamentlike gebed op baie maniere.
- Hand. 20:7. Ook hier is ons by ’n Sondagaand waarop die dissipels byeengekom het:
- Hier is die doel van die samekoms om “brood te breek”, in die sin soos hierbo aangedui.
- Hiertydens geskied die Woordbediening deur Paulus.”

3.18) OPC (Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1997)

“The Directory for Worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church seems to give two very different instructions about the Lord’s Supper. On the one hand, it describes the Lord’s Supper, along with Baptism, as an “**occasional**” element of the public worship of God. On the other hand, it directs congregations to celebrate the Lord’s Supper “frequently.” So which is it, a literalist might ask: occasional or frequent? In good Presbyterian fashion, the Directory leaves that for sessions to determine: “**the frequency may be determined by each session as it may judge most conducive to edification**” (IV:A:2).

When the OPC was founded in 1936, it inherited a pattern of **quarterly** observance of the Lord’s Supper that was well-established in American Presbyterianism. Many OP churches have increased observance to **bimonthly or monthly rates**, but even that leaves some ministers and elders dissatisfied. Should churches celebrate the Lord’s Supper **weekly**? As sessions wrestle with the issue of frequency, a look at how Presbyterians have practiced communion in the past might be instructive.

Most students of Calvin are aware that it was his desire that churches practice weekly communion. Calvin believed that this frequency could be found in both apostolic teaching and example, and that weekly observance was also the practice of the church fathers. Moreover, **Calvin saw weekly observance as necessary for uniting the ministry of Word and sacrament**. By sealing the promises proclaimed in the preaching of the Word, weekly communion enabled Christians frequently to return in memory to Christ’s work, and “by such remembrance to sustain and strengthen their faith.”

Infrequent communion, Calvin claimed, was a superstitious horror, “a most evident contrivance of the devil,” and he considered it among the worst of the many abuses of worship in medieval Catholicism. For Calvin, weekly communion was no less important than other reforms he sought, such as the use of the cup by the laity and worship in the language of the vernacular. So Calvin came to the conclusion that “the Lord’s Table should have been spread at least once a week for the assembly of Christians, and the promises declared in it should feed us spiritually.”

Students of Calvin also know that he did not have his way on the matter of communion frequency. The Geneva Town Council never approved this element of Calvin's reform program. Nor have his Presbyterian descendants adopted Calvin's desire. The blame for this is usually placed upon another Reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, and his memorial view of the Supper. If the sacrament is not a means of grace, and if the bread and wine merely symbolize and do not embrace the body and blood of Christ, there is little urgency for frequent celebration. **Zwingli himself suggested quarterly observance: once in the autumn and on Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.** While the OPC in her confessional standards officially rejects a Zwinglian view of the sacraments, we would do well to ask if we have become Zwinglians in practice, when the supper becomes an infrequent addition to the ministry of the Word. As Donald MacLeod has suggested, "there are more Zwinglians among Presbyterians today than one would hazard to guess."

But contemporary Presbyterian practice may owe less to the legacy of Zwingli than to generally overlooked developments in Scottish Presbyterianism. Although John Knox's *Order of Geneva* (1556) advocated monthly communion, the *First Book of Discipline* adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (1562) advised quarterly observance in the towns, and twice a year in rural parishes.

By the eighteenth century, Scottish practice gradually became even less frequent, to the point where communion was generally celebrated annually. The reasons for this decline included hostility toward episcopacy, poverty (that made bread scarce), and a lack of qualified ministers. As historian Leigh Eric Schmidt tells the story in his *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (1989), the result was a triumph of festivity over frequency. These annual rites developed into elaborate week-long festivals, called "Communion Seasons," that typically included a Thursday fast day, a Saturday preparatory service (where communion tokens were distributed), and a Thanksgiving service on the Monday following Sunday observance.

The effect of these seasons was a subtle redefinition of Presbyterian spirituality. Popular piety began to revolve around these massive outdoor gatherings. As these occasions frequently resulted in religious revival, they became the forerunner of the camp meeting and the sawdust trail of American revivalism. And ironically, their spectacular services would exceed in pageantry the medieval Catholicism that Presbyterians had sought to reform.

The Scottish communion season was transplanted into the new world with the 1787 Directory of Worship for American Presbyterianism. But the practice came under attack from the pen of a Scottish-trained New York pastor, John Mitchell Mason. In his 1798 book, *Letters on Frequent Communion* Mason hoped that the reinstitution of frequency would restore simplicity and reorient the rhythm of Presbyterian piety. Because the Bible sanctioned no holy days and no festivities beyond the weekly Sabbath, churches should cultivate piety not through big shows with itinerant evangelists but through the steady and unpretentious observance of all of the outward and ordinary means of grace. **This continual and sustained devotion, Mason argued, could be nurtured only through weekly communion, Sabbath after Sabbath.**

Mason's critique of Scottish festivity found favor with J. W. Alexander. Writing in the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* in 1840, Alexander saw the Scottish innovation of a Communion season as "pernicious" and without Scriptural warrant. By adding to the length and number of services connected with the sacrament, the church was taxing the strength of the "feeble members of the flock." While the practice did heighten the "gravity" of the celebration, it also added "an unscriptural mystery or awfulness.... Instead of being an attractive and delightful ordinance, it thus becomes fearful and repulsive." Alexander concluded with Calvin and Mason that "ecclesiastical history affords the strongest presumption that the Lord's Supper was celebrated every Lord's day."

To be sure, mere frequency will not rid our churches of Zwinglianism or other false beliefs and practices of the Lord's Supper. And we should be wary of how weekly communion might tempt partakers toward a deadening familiarity with the sacrament (a warning, of course, that applies to other means of grace that churches rightly observe weekly).

Still, Orthodox Presbyterian pastors and elders who are striving for greater faithfulness in the observance of both the Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper ought to consider Mason and Alexander's suggestion that the two must work together, and not at cross-purposes. When sessions offer two different rhythms for devotional life, the outward and ordinary cadence of Sabbath observance and the infrequent and extraordinary habit of occasional communion practice, it is any wonder that corporate devotional life seems off-key? The efficacious power of the sacrament is compromised if it falls to the margins of the public worship of God. ***Weekly observance, Mason maintained, restores the Lord's Supper to the heart, and away from the circumference, of Christian worship.***"

3.19) LEE (2001)

Prof. dr. Nigel Lee is baie sterk ten gunste van kwartaallikse nagmaalviering, en meen dat meer gereelde nagmaalviering as seisoenlike nagmaalviering moet afgewys word. Hy verklaar ook dat Calvyn se standpunt verander het van weeklikse na maandelikse of kwartaallikse nagmaalviering. Sy betoog vanuit die Skrif, belydenis en kerkgeskiedenis, is as volg:

1) Die Skrif getuig regdeur van 'seisoenlike' feesvieringe en daaruit volg die afleiding vir kwartaallikse nagmaalvieringe

'Seasonal Communion' three or four times a year best harmonizes with the totality of Biblical teaching. Indeed, on the very first page of the Holy Bible, Gen. 1:14's "seasons" or *moo'a:diym* are not just climatic — but also liturgical (as further seen in Lev. 23:4-37 etc.). This is further evident, also because Gen. 1:14 — just like Lev. 23:4-37 too — was infallibly inscripturated by God and through Moses. Mk. 10:3-9 cf. Ex. 23:14f. This was done for the benefit of regulating the worship of the true covenant people — and, indeed, for all time. Dt. 12:32; Est. 9:22; Rom. 15:2-4; I Cor. 11:23-29; Heb. 8:1-5. God ordained the festive seasons or *moo'a:diym* — Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter — not only in Gen. 1:14 (cf. Lev. 23:4-27). For even Gen. 4:3-4's 'offering' at the 'end of days' or *miqqeets yaamiym* — again seems to indicate a harvest festival alias a 'seasonal' celebration. Too, even after Noah's Great Flood — at Gen. 8:20-22, we find the celebration of a regular seasonal thank offering. This was apparently to be re-celebrated quarterly "while the Earth remaineth." That means: as long as this great straight planet Earth continues: in the Spring and the Fall (alias at "Seedtime and Harvest"), and again during "Cold and Heat" (alias in Summer and Winter). Nor was this a peculiarly 'Jewish' ordinance. For, as a Noachic Law, it was apparently instituted 'Pre-Judaically' — for all people, and for all time. The Apostles reminded the pagans of this, when the latter brought them their seasonal offerings.

The First General Assembly of the Presbyterian New Testament Church, meeting in Jerusalem around 49 A.D., implicitly yet clearly decreed that these Noachic ordinances were to continue among the Gentile Christians. Indeed, even in the New Testament Church of the 'Heavenly Jerusalem' — the Noachic rainbow continues to remind all men everywhere of the Creator God's undeserved yet faithful seasonal blessings. Gen. 8:20-22; 9:1-17; Ps. 100:1-5; Acts 14:15-18; 15:18-21; Rev. 4:3-11. Too, a quarterly 'season' elapsed — between the institution of the Passover in Egypt, and the festive re-promulgation of the Law on Sinai's altar. Ex. 12:1-6; 19:1-2; 20:18-26; 24:1-18. Indeed, at Ex. 23:14-17, God yet again insists: "Three times thou shalt keep a Feast unto Me in the year" — viz., "the Feast of Unleavened Bread"; and "the Feast of Harvest"; and "the Feast of Ingathering." Compare too at Ex. 34:23, at Lev. 23:4-37, and at Dt. 16:16. Add to this the later Winter "Feast of the Dedication" at *Chanukah* alias 'Christmas time' (John 10:22f & I Macc. 4:52-59 cf. Est. 9:17-19) — and one sees 'Seasonal Communion' four times annually. In fact, these 'Seasonal Feasts' were widely known throughout the ancient world — and implicitly upheld by the First General Assembly of the Christian Church in the middle of the first century A.D. See: Acts 14:15-18 & 15:18-21 cf. 18:21. Passages like Gen. 1:14 & 8:20f and Ex. 23:13f & 34:23, then, seem to be the germs of 'Seasonal Communions' each quarter. Compare the remarks on the former pair of these passages — made by the mature Calvin in his 1563f *Commentary on Genesis*.

"The sun," he explains, "by its nearer approach, warms our earth...; introduces the vernal seasons [each Spring]...; and is the cause of Summer and Autumn." Indeed, the 'recession' of the sun preludes the advent of Winter. "The word *Moadim* [in Gen. 1:14]...signifies both time and place, and also the assemblies of persons.

"The Rabbis commonly explain the passage as referring to their festivals [cf. Ex. 23:14-17].... I extend it further, to mean...the opportunities of time...called...'Seasons'.... This passage teaches us that Sacrifices were instituted from the beginning [Gen. 1:26 – 8:20f].... When the Holy Fathers [alias the Pre-Abrahamic Patriarchs] formerly professed their piety towards God by Sacrifices — the use of them was by no means superfluous."

2) Hand 2:42-46 wys nie om 'daaglikse nagmaalviering nie', maar die deel van gewone voedsel

"To the above, it might be objected that although the Passover (together with the other two or three Old Testament 'Seasonal Feasts') was observed annually — nevertheless the Lord's Supper was commemorated probably daily, or at least weekly. Cf.: Lk. 2:41; Acts 2:46; 20:7. Now certainly, even the Passover itself was previously sometimes observed more frequently than but once a year.[1] Too, the Holy Communion indeed replaced the Annual Passover — and also the two or three other Old Testament Feasts.[2] Indeed, the Lord's Supper was probably held at least twice in the first half of the year in which Jesus died. Mk. 14:22f & Acts 2:42-46.

However, there is absolutely no Biblical evidence whatsoever for the ritualistic and episcopalian practice of 'Weekly Communion' etc. Even less is there Scripture for the 'Daily Communion' yet practised in certain Eastern 'Greek Orthodox' Churches. Still less is there any ground at all for Romanism's several 'Masses' every day. For texts like Lk. 24:30f, 24:42f, John 21:9, Acts 2:46 & 27:35 are not referring to Sacramental Communion — but only to the frequent sharing of ordinary food. Indeed, every single New Testament reference to the Lord's Supper — is geared exclusively to the annual Passover Feast at Easter-time and/or to the annual Feast of Pentecost fifty days later. Lk. 2:41; 22:1f; Acts 1:3; 2:1, 42f; 12:3-4; 20:6-16; I Cor. 11:20f (cf. 5:6-8 & 16:8)."

3) Geen 'weeklikse nagmaalviering' in Hand. 20:6,7 nie

"Nor does Acts 20:6f teach 'Weekly Communion' — alias manducation of the Holy Sacrament once every seven days. It is true that I Cor. 1:2 & 16:1-2 imply that the Corinthian Church and the Churches of Galatia — and indeed the Christian Church in every place — apparently took up collections "on every first day of the week" or *kata mian sabbatou hekastos*. Yet Acts 20:6-7 does not. Instead, it simply states that the disciples came together to break bread upon the first day of the week right after the Easter "days of unleavened bread" — *meta tas heemeras toon azumoon...en de tee; mia; toon sabbatoon suneegmenoon heemoon klasai arton*. Compare too "the days of the unleavened bread" at "Easter" — in Acts 12:3-5.

Thus, during a year subsequent to the one mentioned in Acts 12:3f, the 'infrequently-observed' Sacrament of the Lord's Supper had (in the Acts 20:6f year) been scheduled to be re-commemorated specifically at that same particular time of the year (namely right after Easter). For, among the Christians, it had replaced the 'annual' Sacrament of the Passover previously held by God's true people at that very time — yet even then (and now) still being held by the Jews precisely at that season of the year, and fifty days before the subsequent annual Feast of Pentecost (Acts 20:16)."

4) 1 Kor. 11:25 en 26 beteken nie 'so dikwels as moontlik' nie, maar 'wanneer julle werklik deelneem aan die nagmaal' "Paul rebukes the careless Corinthian Christians for their abuse of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He reprimands them for commingling it with the 'love feast' (in the very way the 'Weekly Communionist' Gunn himself does, in his own misunderstanding of Acts 20:7-11). For, in First Corinthians (11:20,21,22,34) Paul specifically distinguishes the Christians' communal conviviality — from the Holy Sacrament of the vastly different Lord's Supper. Sadly, the 'carnal Christians' in Corinth had been confusing and commingling their own communal convivialities or 'love feasts' — with Christ's solemn Sacrament of Holy Communion. I Cor. 3:1-3 & 11:20,29 — cf. II Pet. 2:13 & Jude 12.

Further, I Cor. 11:25-26's phrases "as oft as ye drink it" and "as often as ye eat" — mean: "whenever you really do partake of the Lord's Supper" itself. They do not mean: "as frequently as possible" etc. For the total context (I Cor. 11:20-29) makes it quite clear that the celebration of the Lord's Supper at Corinth — over the years — should have been occurring much less frequently than was actually then happening there. Indeed, the wider context of I Cor. 5:6-8 and I Cor. 16:8 — with I Cor. 11:20-29 right in the middle of that wider context — seems to indicate that the Lord's Supper should have been celebrated precisely after Passover (and before the following Pentecost), apparently each year. Acts 12:3-4 cf. 18:21 & 20:6-16."

5) Die gereeldheid van nagmaal moet deur die geheel van die Skrif verklaar word, nie net sekere dele nie

"Paltry indeed are the portions of passages like Acts 2:42-46 & 20:6-7 & I Cor. 11:25f, that are therefore here improperly appealed to by Grover Gunn. Indeed, they have, against conservative Classic Calvinism, been cited for countless centuries especially by the sacramentalists — by Romanists, Anglicans, Plymouth Brethrenists, Church of Christ Campbellites and even Crypto-Episcopalian Presbyterians — all as authority for their own erroneous positions. Are such 'magicians' Gunn's ultimate mentors? Yet all such texts — once examined in their proper context — do not in any way authorize either two-monthly or six-weekly or monthly or bi-monthly or weekly or multi-daily or daily or hourly Communion Services.

The daily breaking of bread from house to house in Acts 2:46 after Pentecost Sunday (Acts 2:1f), is therefore not talking about the Lord's Supper just instituted the previous Easter when it replaced the annual Passover (1:3 cf. 12:3f). Instead, it is discussing the frequent showing of Christian hospitality to other Christians (in the form of mutual meals or refreshments enjoyed together). Yet the later breaking and tasting of the bread during a subsequent year — on the first Christian Sabbath after Easter at Troas in Acts 20:6-11 — is referring only to the special Communion Service. Indeed, it is describing the 'seasonal' Sacrament right after the Passover (Acts 20:6) and before the next Pentecost fifty days later (Acts 20:16). It has no reference whatsoever to the fictions of 'Daily Communion' and 'Weekly Communion' — and still less to 'love feasts' (whether frequent or infrequent).

Indeed, in a still later year, we find the precisely the conclusive I Cor. 11:20f] — wedged solidly between the annual Easter Passover at I Cor. 5:6-8 and the annual Feast of Pentecost at I Cor. 16:8. Self-evidently, this reprimands the confused Corinthians even for their cavalier 'communing' at that very time.

6) Hippolytus (AD 230) oor die gereeldheid van die nagmaal

"The Primitive Church celebrated the Eucharist seasonally or quarterly. This was the case prior to the rise of ritualism — and the resultant ever-increasing frequency of the 'Mass' in the Later Church (from the 250 A.D. time of Cyprian onward). Thus, the 230 A.D. Early Church Father Hippolytus accurately recorded the 'seasonal' frequency of Holy Communion — in the untarnished Primitive Patristic Period. Hippolytus not only wrote a "treatise on *The Lord's Supper*." In his *Homily on the Paschal Supper*, he again dealt with Christ and His cup. Indeed, in his still more famous book *Against All Heresies*, he also wrote that because "Christ kept the Supper..., it is needful that I too should keep it in the same manner as the Lord did." [\[12\]](#)

Now Hippolytus, in his famous *Discourse on Elkanah and Hannah* (I Sam. 1-2), anti-dispensationalistically recognized the clear connection between the Old Testament Feasts of Israel and the New Testament Christian Eucharist. There, he explains: "Three seasons of the year prefigured the Savior Himself — so that He should fulfill the mysteries prophesied about Him." In the Feast of Tabernacles, Christ's incarnation was prefigured. This foreshadowed the Season of His Advent (at 'Christ-mas'). Lev. 23:37-43 cf. John 1:1-14 & 8:12 & 10:22. Then again, there was also "the Passover Season.... As the Apostle says: 'Even Christ...our Passover was sacrificed for us.'" I Cor. 5:7 cf. Lev. 23:1-8. "And at Pentecost — so as to presignify the Kingdom of Heaven — He, having first ascended to Heaven, brought man as a gift to God." John 3:13 & Acts 2:34 cf. Lev. 23:9-22."

7) Die middeleeuse kerk wat die nagmaal gedeformeer het om te beweeg na weeklikse nagmaalviering

"Especially after the 250f A.D. time of Cyprian, however, the Lord's Supper degenerated from its apostolic simplicity. On the one hand, under the increasing influence of a resurgent paganism, it gradually became credited — with assumed '**magical**' properties. This finally resulted, *via* the Mediaeval Mass especially from the 8th century onward, in the promulgation of the iniquitous doctrine of transubstantiation (at the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215 A.D.).

On the other hand, and because of this '**magical**' mirage, those Masses were celebrated more and more frequently. Finally, they were 'offered' every day — and even several times daily. Ecclesiastical laws were also enacted, making it a 'mortal sin' for laymen not to 'go to Mass' — at least once a year.

The Reformation, especially in Switzerland, acted strongly against the daily Masses of the Late Middle Ages. Especially Ulrich Zwingli not only repudiated transubstantiation. He also reverted to the Seasonal Communion of Holy Scripture.

The famous Swiss-American theologian Rev. Prof. Dr. Philip Schaff, in his famous *History of the Christian Church*, ^[13] thus describes the Pre-Calvinian Swiss "Reformed celebration of the Lord's Supper" by Ulrich Zwingli: "The first celebration of the Communion after the Reformed usage, was held in...April, 1525.... The Communion Service was to be held four times in the year — at Easter, Whitsunday, Autumn, and Christmas."

This is the very view which the later Calvin himself finally embraced. First, however, he over-reacted against the infrequent eucharistic practice of most Romanists at that time. For then, they had very generally been attending Mass only annually — even though it was regularly 'offered' several times every day!"

8) Die vroeëre en latere Calvyn oor die gereeldheid van die nagmaal

Volgens Lee het die vroeë of jonger Calvyn in oorreaksie teen die Pousdom se mis, nog nie al die Skrifgedeeltes in ag geneem oor die kwessie van die gereeldheid van die nagmaal nie:

"Here, at age 31, Calvin still over-reacts to Romish idolatry. For here, he still ignores relevance of the infrequency of the Bible's own quarterly feasts such as the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles *etc.*"

Maar aan die einde van sy lewe kies hy vir kwartaallikse nagmaalviering: "Yet even then in 1555, Calvin's consistent conclusion is again clear: "We celebrate the Lord's Supper four times a year." This once again very clearly underscores the principle of quarterly or 'Seasonal Communion' — as indeed first presupposed at: Gen. 1:14; 4:3-4; 8:20-22; Ex. 23:14-17; Dt. 16:16; Lk. 2:41; John 5:1; 10:22f (cf. I Macc. 4:52f); Acts 14:15-18; 15:18-21; 18:21; 20:6-16; I Cor. 5:6-8; 11:20-33; 16:8; *etc.* Calvin's 1560 Second Edition of his *Commentary on Acts*, clearly comes down against a sacramentalistic and a frequentative misinterpretation of Acts 2:42-46 and 20:6-16. Significantly, and personally with his own full endorsement — it was the 'Seasonal Communion' practice of Calvin's *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* that was taken over by Knox and others in their own 1560 *First Book of Discipline* — just four years before Calvin's own death in 1564.

Rev. Prof. Dr. J.K. Cameron, in his great work *The First Book of Discipline* [of the 1560f Presbyterian Church in Scotland], states the true position exactly. He explains: "Of the 'reformed cities' of Switzerland, only Basel provided for a weekly celebration. In other German-speaking areas, three times a year was normal."

Calvin, in the last twenty or so years of his life, more and more accepted this position as correct. His mature views on this matter were taken over not just by the Scottish Presbyterians, but also by all of the mainstream Calvinists of Holland and Germany. For they followed the predominant pattern already established in both French- and German-speaking Protestant Switzerland itself.

Indeed, it was in the very year of his death that Calvin's definitive statement appeared — in his 1564 *Commentary on Genesis* (1:14 and 8:20f). There, he implicitly opted for 'Seasonal Communion' each Quarter, four times a year — apparently even as a 'creation ordinance' itself."

9) John Knox vir kwartaallikse nagmaalviering

"So in May 1560, following his mature mentor Calvin, the latter's student John Knox decreed ^[22] for the Church of Scotland: "Four times in the year we think sufficient to the administration of the Lord's Table. This we desire to be distincted, [so] that the superstition of the times may be avoided so far as may be."

Thus the great Presbyterian John Knox. Such was his high view of the great holiness of the Lord's Supper. To him, quarterly alias 'Seasonal Communion' was thus therefore altogether adequate.

So too the 1978 *Reformed Book of Church Order* of the National Church Association of the Church of Scotland. Thus it too rightly remarks: ^[23] "The Reformers in Scotland stated in the *First Book of Discipline* (1560): 'Four times in the year we think sufficient to the administration of the Lord's Table.'"

Two years later [in 1562], the General Assembly decided that four times a year in the towns and twice a year in the country were sufficient. As Knox's contemporary colleague the historian John Row then declared, the Scots "took not their pattern from any kirk in the world; no, not from Geneva itself; but, laying **God's Word** before them, made Reformation according thereunto — both in doctrine first, and then in discipline."

10) Westminster Sinode oor die gereeldheid van die nagmaal

"At the Westminster Assembly in 1643, George Gillespie, one of the most famous of the representatives from Scotland, objected to the proposal that there should always be at least four ministrations of the Lord's Supper per year. For, said he, **Scripture itself** laid down no such rule. Ex. 23:14f cf. 34:23; Lev. 23:4-37 & Dt. 16:16. Hence, Reformational Scottish opinion was unfavourable to more frequent observance of the Lord's Supper than quarterly. As Scotland's Rev. Dr. J.D. Douglas of Fife states in his 1974 *New Bible Dictionary* ^[24] — even in the Church of Scotland today, "the Lord's Supper [is] generally celebrated quarterly" — alias precisely at each season.

Even from 'the light of nature' itself, such "seasons" can easily be determined. Indeed, we maintain that the Lord's Supper each season — every Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter — is one of those several "circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the 'light of nature' and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed." *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1:6.

Those "general rules of the Word" agree also as regards the desirable (quarterly) frequency of going to the Lord's Table. Gen. 1:14; 8:20-22; Ex. 23:14-17; 34:22-26; Lev. 23:4-44; Dt. 16:16; Est. 9:17-19; Lk. 2:42-47; 22:1-20f; John 10:22f; Acts 1:3; 2:1f; 12:3-4; 14:15-18; 15:18-21; 18:21; 20:6-16; 27:9; I Cor. 5:6-9; 11:20-34; 16:8. We affirm, then, the teaching on 'Holy Communion' of the thoroughly Biblical 1645-48 *Westminster Standards*. Though "differently administered in the time of the Law and in the time of the Gospel," and though "the Lord's Supper" is to be "administered with more simplicity" yet "in more fulness" than "the Paschal Lamb" which it replaced — nevertheless, "there are not therefore two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations."

Indeed, "the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself." Accordingly, it is "so limited by His own revealed will — that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men...or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture."

So there is to be "the due administration and worthy receiving of the Sacraments instituted by Christ..., thanksgivings upon special occasions which are in their several times and seasons[!] to be used in a holy and religious manner." *Confession* 7:5-6 & 21:1-5. Without doubt, Lord's Suppers are foremost among such "thanksgivings — as is evident from their very name (*eucharistias*).

Note here that the "Sacraments" and "thanksgivings" (*cf.* 'eucharists') are "to be used" on "special occasions." Those occasions are then stated to be precisely at "their several times and **seasons**" (from year to year). Continues Westminster: "The Sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were for substance the same with those of the New.... The Lord Jesus hath...appointed His Ministers to...bless the elements of bread and wine and thereby to set them apart from a common" use [including the communal 'love feast'] — and instead to dedicate them "to a holy use" [such as at the 'Holy Communion'].

Thus Christ's Ministers are "to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and...to give both to the communicants [alone], but to none" other.... All ignorant...persons, as they are unfit to enjoy Communion with Him..., are...unworthy of the Lord's Table and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these 'Holy Mysteries' or be admitted thereunto."

Indeed, all censured Communicant Members are to be given "suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season." See the *Westminster Confession* 27:5; 29:3-8; 30:1-4. Carefully note that the *Confession* here refers specifically to the "**season**"(!) of "the Lord's Supper" *etc.*"

11) Dordtse Gereformeerdes oor weeklikse nagmaalviering

"Also the great Dutch Reformed Church denominations have followed the quarterly or 'Seasonal' Communion of Calvin's Ecclesiastical Ordinances. Indeed, it should be remembered that precisely the French and Dutch Reformed Churches are the oldest ecclesiastical institutions in North America (1562f) — both in St. Augustine (Florida) and New Amsterdam (New York), as well as further north in 'Canada' (Nova Scotia and Quebec). Wrote the great seventeenth-century theologian Rev. Prof. Dr. Herman Witsius: "Our Lord only recommended 'frequent' Communion — not just once and for all, as in Baptism.... By that word 'as oft' (I Cor. 11:25-26), a certain medium [usage]...should seem to be observed; lest...by the too frequent use..., thus sacred food should be disesteemed, or we should slight...that august Table of the Lord!" ^[25]

Writes the noted American Historian Dr. Winthrop Hudson: ^[26] "Peter Minuit, the first Director of New Netherlands, had been a Ruling Elder of the French Reformed Church at Wezel." Thus he had been a Presbyter even before he came to what is now New York. "In 1628, the first Minister — Jonas Michaelius — arrived" in New York. There, he "immediately organized a church. Michaelius reported that there were 'fifty Communicants — Walloons and Dutch' — at the first administration of the Lord's Supper." Indeed, observes Dr. Hudson: "Every four months...he did administer the Lord's Supper 'in the French language and according to the French mode.'"

It is precisely this 'French mode' (of Calvin) which, via Holland, got exported to North America — and also to South Africa. Furthermore, via Knox, it also took root in the Presbyterian Churches first of Scotland and then later world-wide.”

12) Kwartaallikse nagmaalviering waak teen kindernagmaal

“Calvin's own and therefore the traditional Presbyterian practice of quarterly Communion Services — the Lord's Supper served annually each Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter — corresponds to the four God-created seasons. It also corresponds to the Pre-Mosaic, the Mosaic, the Exilic, the Post-Exilic, and the New Testament sacramental cycle for the Seasonal Feasts. It further corresponds to the mature views of both the mature Calvin and the mature Knox — thus becoming the standard Presbyterian practice ever since. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible — from Scripture — to justify a more frequent administration of Holy Communion for the local Congregation.

Already in the Introduction to our D.Ed. dissertation, we noted the bond between 'Weekly Communionism' and 'Child Communionism' on the one hand — and Episcopalianism on the other. Indeed, we there saw how 'Weekly Communionism' and 'Child Communionism' in 1988 finally 'transubstantiated' the Tyler (Texas) 'Westminster Presbyterian Church' of 'The Association of Reformation Churches' in the U.S.A., into the 'Good Shepherd Episcopal Church' in the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest within the American Episcopal Church.

As the good old proverb says: familiarity breeds contempt. And 'Frequent Communion' inevitably leads to a relaxation of discipline. Next, it lapses into a 'free for all' feed. And finally, it ends up by degenerating into magical and repetitious Romish and Greek-Oriental 'Masses' — if not ultimately also becoming the 'Infant Communions' for which especially the moribund 'Ancient Oriental Churches' and the Eastern-'Orthodox' are still notorious.”

13) Samevatting van dr. Lee se standpunt

“The author's own earlier practice of daily manducation at 'Holy Communion' — commenced when he was but a seven-year-old Roman Catholic child. The memory of it still haunts him, from time to time. He is fully convinced today, as a Bible-believing Protestant, that the traditional Presbyterian practice of quarterly sacramental manducation — alias 'Seasonal Communion' — is a far more blessed procedure.

Proper Sacramental Communion involves the most careful preparation. ^[28] It is to be administered strictly according to the infallible Word of God. ^[29] Accordingly, it should ideally be received — no more frequently than at the four seasons of the year.

"Three times you shall keep a Feast for Me in the year" — "the Feast of the Unleavened Bread" (in the first quarter); and "the Feast of the Harvest" alias Pentecost (in the second quarter); and "the Feast of the Ingathering" (in the third quarter); and the later Winter "Feast of the Dedication" at 'Christmas time' (in the fourth quarter of the year). Gen. 1:14; 4:3-4; 8:20-22; Ex. 12:1-6 (cf. 19:1f & 24:1-18); 23:14-17; 34:22-26; Lev. 23:4-37; Dt. 16:16; Lk. 2:41; John 5:1; 10:22f; 18:28,39; 19:14,31; Acts 14:15-18; 15:18-21; 18:21; 20:6-7; 20:16; I Cor. 5:6-8; 11:20-34; 16:8; Rev. 4:3-11. Thus saith the Lord!”

3.20) PHILLIPS (Ryken, 2003:219-220),

How often should our church celebrate the Lord's Supper? ***The biblical data is helpful but indecisive.*** Jesus spoke of frequency only in terms of “whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup” (1 Cor. 11:26). A well-known passage in Acts (2:42–47) speaks of the earliest church breaking bread as part of their regular daily meeting: “They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts” (v. 46). It is not certain, however, that this communal eating consisted of the sacramental supper instituted by Christ, although that impression is natural enough.

Likewise, Paul's admonition to the Corinthians implies that the sacrament was a regular feature of their frequent meetings (1 Cor. 11:20–22). ***What is not certain, however, is that Paul commends this practice; indeed, it seems that he would be happier with less frequent and more careful partaking of the supper of the Lord.***

Historically there are two poles on this matter, those who commune with great infrequency, perhaps only once a year, and those who receive the sacrament on each occasion of their gathering together. The former was practiced by a number of churches in the Puritan and Scottish Presbyterian traditions and ***was motivated by a desire*** not merely to fence the table but to effectively enforce restricted Communion.

A pastoral examination assessed one's worthiness to commune based on knowledge of the confession and a consideration of his godliness. Only then would permission be granted and a token be issued to attend the annual celebration of the sacrament. While such zeal for proper discipline may be commendable, it is hard to imagine that this level of infrequency accords with the sacrament's place as instituted in Scripture.

The biblical support for the other extreme is much stronger, as stated above, but not without qualification.

Calvin weighs in strongly on the side of frequent Communion. He writes that the sacrament "was ordained to be frequently used among all Christians in order that they might frequently return in memory to Christ's Passion, by such remembrance to sustain and strengthen their faith."

On that basis Calvin advocates the administration of the Lord's Supper "at least once a week," although we should note that the Geneva city council refused this advice and directed that Communion be held ***no more than four times a year***.

Prudence may dictate that weekly Communion militates against meaningful preparation and improvement. My own experience with weekly Communion is that when practical it is of the greatest benefit to the church; the dangers of excessive familiarity are in my view overstated and are easily overcome with proper pastoral oversight and presentation. Given the balance of the biblical and pastoral considerations, the Lord's Supper ought to be celebrated no less frequently than monthly and may be administered weekly with real blessing to Christians and to the whole church."

3.21) SCHWERTLEY (2008)

Hy stel die verskillende standpunte en argumente oor die gereeldheid van nagmaalvieringe as volg:

"The issue of how often the church ought to conduct the Lord's supper is one of wide disagreement within Reformed circles.

- Some believe that like the Passover the holy supper ought to be conducted only once a year.
- Some churches conduct communion only once every six months.
- Others argue that the eucharist should be given quarterly. This argument follows the seasons and certain Jewish feasts.

- Today, many Presbyterian churches have communion ***once a month***. The once a month view is often based on pragmatic considerations such as: We want communion to remain special so we should not do it too often; weekly communion would not be practical. It would be cumbersome; if we celebrate the Lord's supper too often it would be taken for granted, etc.

- There are a few Presbyterian churches which celebrate the Lord's supper ***every week***.

One of the reasons there is a wide diversity of practice on this ***issue is that Scripture issues no specific instructions of the frequency of communion***. The only inspired guidance we have on this issue is the inspired history of the church. If the apostolic church which was led by the specially guided apostleship practice communion frequently, then we ought to follow their example.

What do the Scriptures say?

Can we even ascertain frequency from the inspired record?

In Luke's account of the early church in Acts he notes "they [those who were baptized] continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (2:42). "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (2:46). If the expression "the breaking of bread" refers to the celebration of the Lord's supper or even the love feast that included communion, it would appear that the holy supper was celebrated frequently.

In favor of the Eucharistic interpretation Kistemaker writes, "***In the Greek, the definite article precedes the noun bread [v. 42] and thus specifies that the Christians partook of the bread set aside for the sacrament of communion....*** The words breaking of bread appear within the sequence of teaching, fellowship, and prayers in worship services. Therefore, we understand the term as an early description for the celebration of Holy Communion."

In Acts 20:7, 11 the church at Troas came together "on the first day of the week...to break bread." In this section of Scripture there is no question that we have public worship service with teaching. On Sunday during the local worship service the word was preached and communion celebrated.

John Calvin supports this interpretation. He writes, "Though the breaking of bread doth sometimes signify among the Hebrews a domestical banquet, yet do I expound the same of the Holy Supper in this place, being moved with two reasons. For seeing we may easily gather by that which followeth that there was no small multitude gathered together there, it is unlikely that there could any supper be prepared in a private house. Again, Luke will afterward declare that Paul took bread not at supper time, but after midnight. Hereunto is added, that he saith not that he took meat that he might eat, but that he might only taste. Therefore, I think thus, that they had appointed a solemn day for the celebrating of the Holy Supper of the Lord among themselves, which might be commodious for them all."

While the evidence gathered from Scripture points toward weekly communion, apparently the evidence is not strong enough to forge a uniform practice in Reformed Christendom.

Perhaps the abuses of Rome and various high church opinions of the ordinance have influence Reformed practice. Some of the current objections one hears regarding the weekly celebration of communion are as follows:

(a) If the eucharist is celebrated weekly it will lose its special character and be taken for granted. While this may be a problem for some, we would hope that prayer, the singing of praise and the preached word are not taken for granted and abused for they are practiced weekly. Also, we hope that people do not pray less, or listen to less sermons to keep them special. Such an argument doesn't make a lot of sense.

(b) If communion is practiced weekly, it will detract from the preached Word and may even lead to high church views of the sacrament. The objection fails to take into account that any biblical ordinance and practice can be abused and perverted if the pastor and elders do not do their job and teach the people properly and diligently regarding the various ordinances. It is ignorance and poor teaching that leads to bad practices, not a humble submission to Scripture.

Further, a very infrequent communion service is more likely (logically) to lead to an exaltation of the sacrament above the preached Word. The old Scottish practice of a communion season with fasting, sermons on Saturday before communion as well as sermons following communion on Monday has no warrant from Scripture. Because communion was so rarely celebrated, its practice developed into a sort of an extra-special super celebration. With this type of a rare occurrence it is very easy for congregants to view the holy supper as a kind of special oasis in a desert. But the eucharist ought to strengthen our faith through the signs of bread and wine and focus our attention on our continuous communion with the living Savior.

We are not visiting a Person who is far off, who rarely communes with us; but, with the living resurrected glorified redeemer who is always present with us, who is always strengthening us with His redemptive benefits and glorified life.

While we must diligently oppose those who are in favor of weekly communion because of high church sacramentalist views of the eucharist, we must not forget that: **the apostolic church very frequently celebrated communion** and, the Lord's supper is truly a means of grace and was given to us by Jesus Himself for our own benefit. Let us not throw out the baby with the bath water.

(c) But doesn't the practice of weekly eucharist contradict our heritage, our Presbyterian tradition of infrequent communion? In a certain sense it does. **But what is important in this matter? Is it whether or not that tradition is based on a correct interpretation of Scripture or was it a result of unique historical circumstances?** A study of Presbyterian church history indicates that historical circumstance and not biblical exegesis was the driving force behind infrequent communion. D. M. Murray writes,

The Reformers wished to restore the Lord's supper to the service for every Lord's day, following Calvin's Genevan ideal, but this was not achieved in practice. The Book of Common Order (1564) recommended a monthly celebration and the First Book of Discipline said that Communion should be celebrated quarterly in towns and twice-yearly in country areas. Although mass had been said frequently, the people had long been accustomed to communicate only once or twice a year at Christmas and Easter. There were also not enough ministers available to cover all the parishes of the land. Since the Christian year was no longer observed, the Lord's Supper was celebrated at times other than the main Christian festivals. The Sunday service in the BCO, however, was based on the celebration of the Lord's Supper as the norm, with the prayers of intercession and the Lord's Prayer coming after the sermon, as would be the case on a Communion Sunday.

The Westminster Confession reiterated the "high" doctrine of the sacrament of the Reformers, and the order of service in the Westminster Directory was still based on the celebration of the Lord's Supper as the norm of Sunday worship. With the troubled times of the mid-seventeenth century, however, Communion was celebrated even less frequently than before for several years. The practice developed of parishes grouping together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, as did the observance of a fast day held beforehand to prepare for the sacrament. The "fencing of the tables" was a common feature of the service whereby a warning was given to those who might communicate unworthily. More elaborate arrangements were made for the celebration of the "season," with the emphasis on the minister's catechetical examination of the congregation and Communion tokens being given to those considered eligible to participate. Two sermons would be delivered on the fast day preceding the Sabbath, two on the Saturday, and then several "sittings" of Communion would be held on the Sunday, with the minister assisted by visiting clergymen. A thanksgiving service with two sermons would be held on the Monday."

Schwertley se konklusie:

"Once we truly understand the reason why the practice of infrequent communion arose in Presbyterian circles, the appeal to the reformers and the Second Reformation becomes all the more inadequate as a proper guide to our current practice. Further, the tendency of some to lean on tradition as a reason for a practice or as a source of authority in matters of faith, doctrine or worship is Romanizing, unbiblical and dangerous."

OPMERKINGS:

Volgens Schwertley was dit tydelike en praktiese redes waarom baie kerke maandeliks en kwartaalliks nagmaal gevier het, en nie Skrif redes nie. Hy meen verdere reformasie beteken dan 'n terugkeer na weeklikse nagmaal. Hier onder is daar 'n paar verklaarders wat met hom en ander wat soo hy oortuig is, verskil en ander Skrif redes gee vir minder gereelde nagmaalviering.

3.22) MATHISON (2002:272-277) is 'n sterk voorstaander vir weeklikse nagmaalviering, en verwoord dit as volg:

1) Die verskille onder Presbiteriaanse en Gereformeerde kerke het daartoe gelei dat ouderlinge van elke kerkraad bepaal hoe gereeld nagmaal gevier sal word in 'n plaaslike kerk

"Among Reformed churches, there is no agreement on how frequently the Lord's Supper should be celebrated. Most Presbyterian and Reformed churches observe the Supper on a monthly or quarterly basis, but there are others that observe it more or less frequently. There are some, for example, that observe the Supper on an annual basis. But there are also a growing number of Reformed churches that observe the Supper on a weekly basis. The decision has generally been left to the determination of the elders of each local church.

2) Die vraag is egter nie wat wel gedoen word nie, maar wat moet gedoen word = die Skrif wys op weeklikse nagmaalviering

The real question, however, is not what our churches are doing, but what they should be doing. Calvin's desire was that the Supper be celebrated at least weekly. Are there any grounds for such a practice? In the following pages, we shall attempt to answer this question.

The Practice of the Church

Scripture indicates that the celebration of the Lord's Supper was one of the regular parts of early Christian worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7). The practice of regular, weekly observance of the Lord's Supper continued into the period immediately following the death of the apostles. The earliest testimony we have concerning the practice of the church points to a weekly observance of the Eucharist.

The Didache (ca. 50-150), for example, provides the following instructions about the observance of the Lord's Supper: "On the Lord's own day gather together and break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure." In the writings of Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165), we see the same witness to weekly observance:

'And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.'

The evidence from Scripture and the writings of the early church fathers point to the regular, weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Infrequent communion became the normal practice of the Roman Catholic Church later in the Middle Ages. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) required that the faithful partake of the sacrament only once a year. In other words, frequent communion was the practice of the early church, and infrequent communion was the later Roman Catholic innovation. It was against this background that such men as John Calvin and Martin Bucer called for a return to the apostolic Christian practice of weekly communions.

Calvin devotes several sections of his Institutes to the argument for weekly communion (4.17.44-46). He explains, "The Lord's Table should have been spread at least once a week for the assembly of Christians, and the promises declared in it should feed us spiritually."

3) Die wese van nagmaal bepaal sy gereeldheid

"Nature Determines Frequency

It is not difficult to understand why Calvin desired weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. ***Even if the Scriptures and the writings of the early church did not indicate that this was the established practice of the apostolic church***, his understanding of the nature of the sacrament naturally entailed frequent communion.

As Michael Horton explains,

'One's view of the nature of the Supper plays no small part in determining frequency. It should come as no surprise that those who view the Lord's Supper primarily as a platter of subjective mental recollection would see no need to celebrate it frequently. On the other hand, those like Calvin, who see the Lord's Supper as a real and effectual means of grace, understandably desire to celebrate it as often as possible.'

When we understand what the Lord's Supper actually is and why God instituted it for us, then we do not view it as some kind of tedious add-on to the regular worship service of the church. Instead, we begin to see it with joy as an integral and necessary part of the worship of the new covenant communion.

When we begin to understand the true nature and purpose of the Lord's Supper, we wonder why any Christian wouldn't want to receive all that God offers in it every tulle the church gathers for worship. The Lord's Supper is said by the apostle Paul to be the communion of the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). Here we encounter the central mystery of the Lord's Supper and probably the main reason why Calvin desired communion to be celebrated at least weekly. In the Lord's Supper, we truly commune with Jesus Christ. Our union and communion with him is strengthened and nourished as we partake of his body and blood in the sacrament. In a singularly unique way, the life of the true Vine is communicated to the branches in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Why would any Christian not want this communion with Christ to be a part of every worship service?

According to Scripture, the Lord's Supper is also a proclamation of the death of Christ (1 Cor. 11:26). This is the sanic message that Paul says is the heart of his gospel message (1 Cor. 2:1-3). Is the church not called to proclaim the death of Christ. Do believers not need to be continually reminded of this message, to hear this gospel? The heart of the preached word is Jesus Christ and him crucified. The heart of the visible word is the same-the death of Christ.

If the Lord's Supper truly is the proclamation of Christ's death, as Paul says it is, why would any Christian not want this proclamation to be a part of every gathering for worship. The apostle Paul also tells us that the Lord's Supper signifies the oneness of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 1(1:17). According to Paul, "We, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread." When Christians gather to partake of the same bread and wine, there is no Jew or Gentile, there is no rich or poor, there is no male or female. All are one because all partake of the one body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. If the faithful teaching of this truth accompanies the frequent observance of the Lord's Supper, it inhibits division because it repeatedly and forcefully emphasizes the sinfulness of worshiping with an unforgiving heart (cf. Matt. 5:23-24).

In fact, it is not beyond possibility that the infrequent observance and corresponding devaluing of this sacrament has contributed to the ongoing division and strife in the modern church. Again, we have to ask why any Christian would not want such a sign of Christian unity to be a part of the regular worship of the church.

Jesus Christ commands that the Lord's Supper be observed in remembrance of him (Luke 22:19; cf. 1 Cor. 11:24). This does not mean that the Lord's Supper is merely a time for subjective mental recollection. It is a memorial of the saving acts of Jesus Christ by which he inaugurated the new covenant. In the Lord's Supper, we do not merely recollect these great acts of redemption. We unite ourselves with the new covenant community for which they were accomplished. ..."

4) Beware teen weeklikse nagmaalviering beantwoord

4.1) The primary Reformed objection to weekly communion is that it is not specifically commanded anywhere in the New Testament. It is argued that the lack of any explicit commandments mean that local churches are free to celebrate the Lord's Supper as frequently as each church sees fit. There are several problems with this line of reasoning.

In the *first* place, the same argument could be used against virtually everything that is done on a weekly basis in Reformed worship services. It is true that there is no explicit New Testament commandment to celebrate the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis, but there is also no explicit command anywhere in the New Testament to preach, teach, pray, or sing on a weekly basis. There is simply no New Testament version of the book of Leviticus that prescribes each element of new covenant worship. Instead, what we find in the New Testament are descriptive texts telling us what the early church actually did, and in these descriptive texts the Lord's Supper is considered to be as much a part of regular worship as preaching, teaching, or praying. *Secondly*, the New Testament does provide explicit teaching on the nature of the Lord's Supper. The frequency of observance is a natural extension of the church's understanding of the nature of this sacrament.

4.2) Another objection that is raised against weekly observance of the Lord's Supper is that it is a Roman Catholic practice. Unfortunately, this objection is based on several misunderstandings. *First*, weekly observance of the Lord's Supper was the practice of the early Christian church, but this was before the rise of what could properly be called "Roman Catholicism." In fact, with the rise of Roman Catholicism, infrequent communion became the normal practice. Reformers such as Calvin and Bucer called for a return to the early practice of the church. If weekly communion was the goal of the Protestant Reformers, how can it be considered "Roman Catholic"? In the *second* place, what the Roman Catholic Church does or does not do is not the final standard of faith and practice. It is true that the Mass is celebrated at every Roman Catholic service of worship, but the same is true of the reading of Scripture, the praying of the Lord's Prayer, and the preaching of sermons. Are all of these practices to be discarded or observed less frequently because they are observed in Roman Catholic churches each week?

4.3) Some object that the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper would obscure the centrality of the preaching of the word. This objection seems plausible only if both the written word and the visible word are misunderstood. Calvin referred to the Lord's Supper as a seal of the promise contained in the gospel concerning our being made partakers of Christ's body and blood. If the Lord's Supper is a seal of the promises of the gospel, it cannot possibly detract from that gospel. The observance of the Lord's Supper cannot detract from the preached word if that word is preached accurately and if the Lord's Supper is explained and observed carefully. This is why men like John Calvin, who were undeniably strong advocates of the centrality of the preached word, could also advocate weekly observance of the Supper. The preached word and the visible word are complementary, not contradictory.

4.4) One of the least reasonable, but most frequently heard objections to weekly observance of the Lord's Supper is the claim that such frequent observance would make the Lord's Supper meaningless and boring. But this objection would apply just as easily to everything else that is done in a Christian worship service. Everything we do weekly in worship, from preaching to prayer, from singing to giving offerings, can become a meaningless routine. In fact, the entire service can become a matter of going through the motions and mouthing words that we do not sincerely mean. We do not stop meeting regularly or preaching regularly or praying regularly just because these things have become mere routines for many people, and we should not hesitate to observe the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis simply because it too may become routine for some.

5) Tradisie, nie die Skrif nie, bepaal die minder as elke week nagmaalviering

"The practice of the church, as described in the New Testament, was regular, weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. This practice continued for the first several centuries of the church's existence. In the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church gradually moved away from a weekly celebration in which everyone participated. During the sixteenth century, many of the Reformers called for a return to the practice of the apostolic church. For a variety of reasons, they often had to settle for less than the ideal, and unfortunately what they settled for, rather than what they preferred, often became part of the received tradition in Reformed churches. In fact, this ingrained tradition is the only thing preventing the Reformed churches from finally achieving the goal of such early Reformers as Calvin by returning to the ancient Christian practice of weekly communion."

3.23) STEWART (2012)

Hy is van mening dat die verskillende relevante tekste aangaande die gereeldheid van die nagmaal, is nie een oortuigend om daarvoor 'dogmaties' te wees nie, so daar moet vryheid wees vir weeklikse, maandelikse, kwartaallikse of jaarlikse nagmaalviering.

Eksegeties meen hy die Evangelies maak nie daarvoor 'n uitspraak nie.

Die Handelingte tekste vir die 'breek van brode' meen hy kan dui om gewoon saam te eet, en som dit as volg op:

"In sum, [Acts 20:7](#) provides no adequate basis for claims about weekly observance. It may not refer at all to the Holy Meal. In any case, it is a piece of narrative about a single place and single occasion."

Hy was ook daarop dat die kerkhistoriese gegewens van die vroeë kerk asook Calvyn se voorkeur was nie deurslaggewend nie:

“Ah, but Calvin favored weekly communion!” This appeal is made by a growing number who like to cite Calvin’s opinions as decisive. By 1559, Calvin favored “at least weekly” communion (his views had fluctuated somewhat earlier). He believed that this was an early church practice; yet his preference never prevailed in Geneva. But the vital questions for us are, “What scriptural basis did Calvin provide for his preferred view?” In the *Institutes*: [Acts 2:42](#); in the *Acts* commentary: [Acts 20:7](#). “Did Calvin’s contemporary co-Reformers agree with him?” Not especially. “Do the common doctrinal confessions of the Reformation era endorse Calvin’s view?” In a word, ‘no.’ “

Volgens Stewart is daar twee deurslagwende sake wat kerke en gelowiges moet oorweeg in die besluit oor hoe gereeld die nagmaal gevier gaan word:

1. *Leerstellig: wat is die verhouding tussen die prediking van die Woord en die sakramente?*
2. *Pastoraal: dien meer gereelde nagmaalviering die inkleding van die erediens vandag?*

Hy stel dit as volg en dan ook sy opsommende konklusie oor die vraagstuk (naamlik dat ons kan argumenteer vir die ‘beste’, maar nie gewetens bind waar die Skrif nie bind nie):

“Two basic concerns remain. *First*, what is the proper relationship between the preaching of the Word and the ceremonies Jesus instituted? Historically, Protestants have judged the proclamation of the Word to be *absolutely* essential to salvation, and the administration of the two ceremonies to be only *relatively* essential. We make the distinction not to disparage these ceremonies, but in light of such Scriptures as [Luke 23:43](#) and [1 Corinthians 1:17](#).

The Word of the gospel *can* stand alone; the ceremonies *cannot* because they “lean on” the Word and derive their meaning from it. Frequent communion is not, therefore, essential, even if we consider this desirable.

Second, Christians today increasingly compress the Lord’s Day into one hour. It was not so, formerly, when there were two gatherings: one chiefly focused on believers and another more focused on the not-yet believing. This state of affairs is now almost gone. Increasingly our single services are all-purpose. Calls for more frequent communion must thus balance distinct concerns:

1. *Does the Word remain central in our services, addressing both believers and unbelievers?*
2. *Are the ceremonies that “lean on” the Word offered with suitable frequency?*

An insistence on weekly communion both goes beyond the NT evidence and compels congregations—with multiple *bona fide* priorities—to attempt too much in that always more compressed hour of the Lord’s Day. In sum, we honor the command of Jesus to remember him with bread and wine by a periodic observance tailored to local church realities.”

3.24) VAN NESTE (2012) is ‘n baie sterk voorstaander vir weeklikse nagmaalvoering, maar hy skryf hierdie belangrike opmerking aan die begin van sy artikel, wat daarop wys dat die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering kom neer op ‘n kwessie van wat is die ‘beste’, nie ‘reg of verkeerd’, of ‘n kwessie van ‘sonde’ nie:

“I am an avid proponent of weekly communion for our churches. ***This practice is not directly commanded in Scripture, so I am not accusing others of sin.*** The issue is the pursuit of “best practice,” what best fits the patterns found in Scripture and makes best use of the resources God has given us.”

Hy gee drie redes waarom hy oortuig is van weeklikse nagmaalviering:

1) Die Nuwe Testament openbaar 'n weeklikse patroon van nagmaalviering

"First, then, I think there is strong evidence of a pattern of weekly observance in the New Testament. Already in [Acts 2:42](#), we see communion listed as a central piece of Christian worship. The four activities listed here are not four separate things but the four elements that characterized a Christian gathering. One of the key things the early church "devoted" itself to was the "breaking of bread," i.e. the Lord's Supper. The wording suggests that each of these activities occurred when they gathered.

Perhaps the most striking reference to the frequency of the Lord's Supper occurs in [Acts 20:7](#): "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight."

Oor 1 Kor. 11, wys hy op die volgende: "Of course the longest discussion of the practice of the Lord's Supper is in 1 Corinthians. Many issues can be raised here, **but the fact that abuse of the Lord's Supper was such a problem in Corinth strongly suggests the Supper was held frequently**. Could it have been such a problem if it only occurred quarterly? Is this the sense that arises from the passage? Notice the wording of [1 Corinthians 11:20](#): "When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat." It is widely agreed that the terminology "come together" here is used as a technical term for gathering as the church. This wording suggests that when they gathered they ate a meal which they intended to be the Lord's Supper.

Though they are abusing the Supper, their practice (which is not considered odd by Paul) is to celebrate each time they gather. Even the wording in [1 Corinthians 11:25](#), "As often as you drink," which is often used to suggest frequency is unimportant, in context actually suggests frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper. Commenting on this verse, Gordon Fee notes, "This addition in particular implies a frequently repeated action, suggesting that from the beginning the Last Supper was for Christians not an annual Christian Passover, **but a regularly repeated meal** in 'honor of the Lord,' hence the Lord's Supper."

2) In 'n tyd van mensgesentreerd, bring die weeklikse nagmaalviering ons daartoe om opnuut te fokus op Christus, wat tog die beste vir gelowiges sal wees

"If we want to be gospel-centered why not make the Christ-ordained portrayal of the gospel a centerpiece in our weekly worship? In an increasingly "visual" age might we not benefit from regular use of the visible, tangible portrayal given to us by Christ? In a day seemingly interested merely in Our Best Life Now, do we not regularly need the Christ-ordained means of reminding us of the Lord's return and the wedding feast of the Lamb? Might not the Bride be more pure if regularly reminded of the coming wedding? In the end, the issue, to me, **is not whether or not we have to celebrate communion weekly but that we have the privilege to do so.**"

3) Weeklikse nagmaalviering maak die eredienste Christusgesentreerd

"Last, communion at the close of each service has a way of tying the service to the gospel. Too easily a well-intended sermon can end up preaching only the commands of Scripture, failing to undergird the people with the hope of gospel provision and power. The Table anchoring the conclusion of the service has a way of shaping all that comes before it, focusing on the cross of Christ and his return as our hope and joy.

Unbelievers are also confronted visibly with the gospel as they see the work of Christ portrayed before them and yet are reminded that these benefits are only available to those who believe. With these benefits, why not celebrate communion weekly?"

3.25) BANCROFT (2012)

Hy pleit vir die standpunt dat die Skrif nie 'n bindende uitspraak vir enige spesifieke getal nagmaalvieringe nie, terwyl hul gemeente wel besluit het vir maandelikse nagmaalviering, hy skryf:

“Unfortunately, the history of the church shows such observance of the Lord’s Supper became only an annual observation, if not even less frequently. As the Reformation returned the Word of God to its authority, the Reformers also returned to regular times of observing the Lord’s Supper. But then they needed to determine just how often was often. Today such discussion continues. Some contend for weekly. Others contend for every time the church gathers, meaning several times throughout the week in some cases. Others contend for frequent but not necessarily weekly partaking.

Everyone seems to have their favorite person from church history to support their position. I am in that latter group practicing it regularly but not weekly. I won’t try to pit Luther against Calvin. ***I won’t try to exegete a Greek word to win my position. I think the point is much easier to make. Scripture is silent on this matter as it applies to being prescriptive for us today.***”

Hier is hul rede vir maandelikse nagmaalviering:

Die waarskuwinge wat aan die nagmaalvieringe gekoppel is

“It has been our intentional practice as a church to observe the Lord’s Supper on the first Sunday of each month. Why? The warnings attached to the Lord’s Supper in Scripture are concerned with drunkenness, selfishness, unrepentance, and other displays of partaking in an “unworthy manner” ([1 Cor. 11:17-34](#)). So Castlevue Baptist Church (CBC) has chosen to have our observation be in a predictable pattern of the first Sunday of the month. This allows a sense of anticipation and preparation of our people of that important time. We rally around the work of Christ seen in the displays of the bread and wine (“fruit of the vine,” i.e. grape juice, for those us influenced by the American temperance movement). We are called to remembrance, repentance, restoration of Christian relationships, and a reminder of a reunion to come, all for the honor of Christ.

Carefully considering our religious landscape and a possible inclination toward meaningless repetition, we have chosen to find a cadence of practice that calls for our regular remembrance, repentance, and reminder of his coming return without a frequency that inclines us toward ritualism.

I applaud what has happened in many evangelical churches of late, namely the return to frequent, if not weekly, observance. Such desire to find the balance between remembrance and ritualism seems to only set the table for the more important matters, such as the “fencing of the table,” which has been missing for far too long. May our frequency be characterized by such commitments as we remember that “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” ([1 Cor. 11:26](#)). To that I say, “Maranatha!”

3.26) HORTON (2000:163-169)

Hy gee die volgende pleitdooi ten gunste van weeklikse nagmaalviering:

“But I would like to conclude this all too cursory analysis with a few exegetical remark and some general observations. As we have already observed from Calvin’s exegesis of **Acts 2:49** (*sic*, 46?), the ordinary practice appears to have been frequent (weekly) Communion along with the preaching and teaching on the Lord’s day. It was the earliest practice of the Christian church as well, and only changed in the direction of annual celebration as the church descended into superstition, innovation, and ignorance in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, Jesus said, in his institution of this meal, “As often as you do this, do it in remembrance of me.” ***Of course, this is not necessarily***

equivalent to a command for weekly communion, and whatever is not commanded is not required of all churches. Nevertheless, does it not at least assume frequent celebration?

The Apostle Paul seems to assume frequent Communion when he identifies the celebration in terms of “when you come together” (**1 Cor. 11:17**). In fact, the Corinthians are accused of gathering for a purpose other than receiving the Supper: “When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord’s supper” (v. 20). Granted, the criticism is directed at their coming together for sinful activities, but there may be an inference here in support of Communion as a common event in the life of the church sufficient for it to even be regarded as a reason for their coming together. When we come together to receive Christ and his benefits through the Supper in faith, we have no doubt that we are participating in the communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ our risen Savior (1 Cor. 10:16). Furthermore, we are knit together as the body of Christ through this heavenly action (v. 17). Why should this be infrequent?

The writer to the ***Hebrews, in Chapter 6*** particularly, warns believers not to return to the shadows of the law—and this should warn us against formalism. Any attempt to capture God in ritual or habit is as futile today as it was in the Old Testament. Yet there is no doubt but that God acts in the new covenant just as miraculously through the ordinary means that he has provided. Those who belong to the covenant are within the sphere of God’s redemptive activity, described here as those who have been “enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come” (vv. 4-5). It is no wonder, then, that to fall away from this covenant is such a dangerous act. It is through the ordinary ministry of Christ in his church that the branches of the heavenly Tree of Life stretch forth their heavy boughs with the fruit of everlasting life. If we “taste of the heavenly gift” and “share in the Holy Spirit” through the sacraments as well as having “tasted of the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come” through the preaching, why would we settle for less than God offers as a medium for communicating this grace?

Praktiese argumente deur Horton:

My other arguments are more practical in nature. Perhaps our services are sometimes regarded as dull and cerebral because we have not only neglected to vigorously proclaim God’s law and gospel as they converge in Christ, but because we have neglected to make use of the only other repeatable means that God has ordained for our growth in Christ. When the service includes both word and sacrament, the saving work of Christ is always central and there is often a sense of completion: the promise has been given this day not only in word, but in act. Here and only here do we have God’s authority not only to hear the promise, but to “taste and see that the Lord is good.”

I realize that there are often extenuating circumstances in executing a weekly Communion. We have already seen how Calvin and Bucer fell short of their goals, exasperated by their city councils. John Knox’s Book of Discipline and Directory for Worship both call for Communion to be celebrated “frequently,” although in practice this was often thwarted by the lack of sufficiently trained Protestant ministers. ***But it would be a profound pity if, without their enormous obstacles, our practice today nevertheless followed that which they considered less beneficial to the long-term health of Christ’s flock.***

A third practical argument concerns the diaconal implications. As Karel Deddens remarks,

Here we have the very root of diaconal work. The festive spirit in which we celebrate the Lord's Supper is also an occasion for us, in accordance with Lord's Day 38 of the Heidelberg Catechism, to show compassion for the poor. Ideally speaking, it should be possible for the deacons to conduct their work of providing for the poor in the congregation from this [Communion] collection alone. And this ideal would become reality if the festive character of the Lord's Supper came to full expression in our services.

Martin Bucer was correct to wonder at how our conduct toward each other would be improved if we were an eucharistically-oriented people? Could there be churches just on either side of the tracks, we might wonder, which took no account of each other, being baptized into this passing age instead of Christ? Through the Spirit's agency, the Word, Baptism, and the Supper form a single island of divinely-created unity out of the world's divisive rivalries. Here is the one place where "all are one in Christ." It's not the musical style that unites them, the socio-economic or racial complexion of the community, the age or political orientation. Here, in the pew, at the font, and at the table, only one division really matters: Christ and idols.

In fact, as Deddens reminds us,

'If the Lord's Supper were celebrated more often, we should not view such a change as an accommodation to 'sacramentalists' who wish to place less emphasis on the service of the Word; rather, we should view it as an execution of Christ's command.... There are some people who say: 'But the congregation is not asking for more frequent communion!' This may be true, but such a consideration is not determinative. Instead we should be stimulated to engage in some reflection.'

Deddens points to important synods in the Netherlands judging that there should be 'more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper..., pointing to 1 Corinthians 11:17 and other passages by way of support.' Deddens complains that certain factors have contributed to a certain weakening of the importance of the Supper: the inordinate length of an overly didactic form, which undermines the festive character of the sacrament, and the influence of pietism in certain circles: 'Under the influence of pietism and mysticism, a sense of 'unworthiness' is awakened within them, and they become afraid that they may be 'eating and drinking judgment unto themselves.' As for those who were still bold enough to go to the table of the Lord, their faces suggest that a funeral is underway rather than a celebration.' We need to make clear to our congregation that they cannot excommunicate themselves.

What then of the Preparation Form in the Psalter Hymnal?

Does worthy eating not require greater introspection than weekly Communion affords?

Calvin offers a warning against an overly introspective approach to this question:

'Certain ones, when they would prepare men to eat worthily, have tortured and harassed pitiable consciences in dire ways; yet they have not brought forth a particle of what would be to the purpose. They said that those who were in the state of grace ate worthily. They interpreted 'in the state of grace' to mean to be pure and purged from all sin. Such dogma would debar all the men who ever were or are on earth from the use of this Sacrament [of

the Supper]. For if it is a question of our seeking our worthiness in ourselves, we are undone; only ruin and confusion remain to us.'

It is inspection, not introspection, for which the Apostle calls in 1 Corinthians 11:27-34. The context appears to be quite clear about this: eating and drinking unworthily at least in this case took the form of orgies, selfish neglect of others, and the apparent absence of any discipline of notorious sinners among them. While there may be more involved with the preparation of our hearts for the Supper, Paul was not initiating a liturgical element of preparation to worthily receive. Once more, Holy Communion (like baptism and the preaching) is chiefly an objective affair and it is something that God does for us, not something that we do for God. He does not need our resolution or our memorializing of his Son's death, but we need to hear again and not only hear but see his resolve and his remembering of his own promise to us individually as his covenant children. As in every covenant there are two parts, so too in this one we are called upon to respond to the gracious work of God in Christ; nevertheless, the word and the sacraments are called means of grace for a purpose. It is because their chief force lies not in the opportunity they afford us for stirring up our zeal, but in the sheer fact that through them the Holy Spirit gives us a share of that inheritance that we have in Christ.

It seems to me that there is no reason to abandon the Preparation Form, but to assimilate it perhaps into the ordinary service. Care should be taken here, as throughout the service, not to be overly didactic and wordy. This is a time for God to act according to his promise, not primarily an opportunity for us to teach. Or, alternatively, one could use the Preparation Form once a month.

Regular Communion would also affect the Communion Form.

The forms that I have written for Christ Reformed Church (URC) in Anaheim incorporate most of the elements and even paraphrase sections of the Communion Form in the Psalter Hymnal. However, they vary slightly. In fact, I would actually recommend adding alternative services, so that the liturgy could enjoy some variety (as one example, singing the Ten Commandments one Lord's day before the public confession and then saying them the near the end of the service, indicating both the first and third use of the law).

One final appeal.

Some of us have come from charismatic, non-Reformed backgrounds influenced by the "Jesus People" and the California beach culture in which a Communion service of Coke and potato chips was thought to underscore the unimportance of the physical element and play up the spiritual meaning. We may respond in horror at such a thought, but then we must ask ourselves why we refuse to use the element that the Savior and King of the church prescribed, viz., wine.

Abandoning wine in favor of grape juice was unknown in the church until American Prohibition, a movement led almost entirely by Arminian revivalists (especially Methodists and disciples of Charles Finney). American fundamentalism rested its case against wine in Communion on the exegetically untenable position that the "wine" in the New Testament was never fermented. While many conservative Reformed and Presbyterian brothers and sisters would regard this conclusion as naïve, many of us have nevertheless argued that fermentation is not essential to wine. This

argument was unknown to our forebears, as it was to Scripture. And if it is not a sound argument, why should we continue to replace our Lord's required element with an element that he has not commanded?

Obviously, there is a bit of practical change involved with such a recovery of the Reformed appreciation for the Supper.

Furthermore, we must beware of equating weekly Communion with the Reformed doctrine itself. Obviously, churches were able (though with difficulty) to accept their hardships and celebrate infrequently. ***It is essential that this issue of frequency never become a matter of division among us, when the sacrament was given in part to preserve unity.*** But I do hope that, whatever our practice, we will find it suitable to the view of this great gift that we find in Scripture and in our confession:

'This banquet is a spiritual table at which Christ communicates himself to us with all his benefits. At that table he makes us enjoy himself as much as the merits of his suffering and death, as he nourishes, strengthens, and comforts our poor, desolate souls by the eating of his flesh, and relieves and renews them by the drinking of his blood' (Belgic Confession, Art. 35).

3.27) BARCELLOS (2013:108-109) wys daarop dat as nagmaal een van die wesentlike elemente is van die erediens soos die Here dit beveel, dan moet elke erediens nagmaal gevier word. Hy meen as ons weeklikse aanbidding, gebede, prediking kan aflei uit die Skrif, so ook dan weeklikse nagmaalviering:

"The frequency of the Supper is also a question worth pursuing in light of our study. The Supper is a sacred, covenantal meal. It is a means of grace. But how often should churches take the Supper?

Some are re-thinking this issue in our day and are celebrating communion more frequently than in the past. Others, out of concern not to trivialize the sacred (a concern I share), are content with a monthly or less-frequent celebration. But prayer is sacred, and the reading and preaching of the word are sacred, and no one (as far as I know) argues from that to less frequent public prayer and less frequent public reading and preaching of the word of God. These words by John Brown of Haddington make this point well,

... I fear it will be no easy task to prove that our way of administering the Supper is agreeable to the Word of God. ... That its infrequency tends to make it solemn I do not see, for if it so why not administer baptism but once a year also, as it, in its own nature, is as solemn as the Supper? Why not pray seldom, preach seldom, read God's Word seldom, that they may become more solemn too?

Horton suggests that a diminished interest in frequent communion ***is the product of an inordinate emphasis upon 'the individual's inner piety'***. He says:

The problem with the pietistic version of the Lord's Supper, therefore, is that in its obsession with the individual's inner piety, it loses much of the import of the feast as a sacred meal that actually binds us to Christ and to each other. Instead of viewing it first as God's saving action toward us and then our fellowship with each other in Christ, we come to see it as just

another opportunity to be threatened with the law. Instead of celebrating the foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb on Mount Zion, we are still trembling at the foot of Mount Sinai. It is no wonder, then, that there is a diminished interest in frequent communion.

Whether Horton is right or not, I do not think the trivializing of the sacred by a too frequent celebration of the Supper argument is valid.

It is clear that the New Testament nowhere commands weekly communion, but neither does it command weekly singing or weekly prayer or weekly preaching, at least not explicitly.

We believe in weekly corporate singing (and prayer and preaching) by the church because we believe it is necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture, and rightly so. Singing is an element of public worship and is a means of grace of a sort but only if and when we sing the truths of the word of God. Singing can be conducted more than once, and it ought to be done at least on the Lord's Day when the church gathers.

But we also believe that the Supper is an element of public worship and repeatable, unlike baptism (though we can be reminded of our baptism), and ought to be conducted on the Lord's Day, at least ordinarily.

But how many Lord's Days per year?

How many Lord's Days per month?

These are questions pastors and churches must wrestle with.

The early church apparently celebrated the Supper weekly. The Didache 14:1 says, 'On the Lord's own day gather together and break bread and give thanks.'²⁰ It appears that the Supper was so important to the early church that the early believers took it weekly. It could be that they made a theological connection between a weekly Lord's Day and a weekly Lord's Supper.

Whatever the case, it is important to think through the issue of frequency with the fact that the Lord's Supper, like the word of God and prayer, is a means of grace."

3.28) KUEHNER (2014)

Behalwe Matthis, is Kuehner die mees deeglike pleitdooi vir a) vryheid vir gemeentes om te besluit oor die gereeldheid van die nagmaal, b) waarom hy meen die minder gereelde nagmaalviering beter vir kerke is, en b) om Calvyn meer gebalanseerd oor die saak te lees.

Hy gee die volgende redes in sy artikel, ['Calvin, Weekly Communion & the Scottish Reformed Tradition'](#)

1) Die Westminster Sinode verwerp ten minste 'n Goddelik verordineerde mandaat vir net weeklikse nagmaalviering

"The Westminster Assembly's 'Directory for the Publick Worship of God', which was adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1645, contained the following statement on communion frequency. 'The communion, or supper of the Lord, is frequently to be celebrated; but how often, may be considered

and determined by the ministers, and other church-governors of each congregation, as they shall find most convenient for the comfort and edification of the people committed to their charge.'

At the very least, the foregoing statement indicates a rejection of divinely-mandated weekly communion, since it leaves frequency up to the church courts. However, it is particularly helpful to consider the communion practices of the seventeenth century Church of Scotland, the only church to actually adopt and enforce the directory. Without a doubt, the seventeenth century Church of Scotland did not practice (or even attempt to practice) weekly communion. Rather, it embraced the quarterly practice and disciplinary rationale outlined by Knox in the Book of Discipline. Sherman Isbell observes,

'The seriousness with which the authorities approached the Examination is indicated by a postponement of the communion at St. Andrews in 1600. After six weeks of examining the parish population, in which the communicants alone numbered over three thousand, the sacrament was delayed a week to allow the examination to be completed. In 1645 the General Assembly confirmed that this long-standing custom of examining congregations prior to communion was to be continued. Into the middle of the seventeenth century, the Examination constituted a demanding responsibility for ministers, who could be excused from meetings of Presbytery to allow them time for preparing the people in this way for the Lord's Supper.' ([The Administration of the Lord's Supper](#), p. 18)

Clearly, the Church of Scotland would never have adopted the Westminster Directory if it had understood it to mandate or even encourage a level of communion frequency that would prevent the examination of communicants. Therefore, its adoption of the directory indicates that it understood this document to be perfectly suited for use within the context of quarterly communion.¹ (¹ It should be noted that Scottish communion frequency is too often viewed in a simplistic manner. Some rural Scottish congregations celebrated the Lord's Supper only once or twice per year, while others kept a quarterly schedule. Nevertheless, the common practice of parishioners communing in adjacent parishes meant that many were able to commune more frequently than four times per year. This fact is often overlooked."

2) Calvyn word eensydig gebruik vir die 'weeklikse nagmaalviering alleen' standpunt

Kuehner se studie oor die nagmaal is belangrik in terme van om die opkoms van die huidige 'alleen weeklikse nagmaalviering is reg' standpunt (as vrug van die 'liturgiese beweging in die 20ste eeu) in die konteks van die geskiedenis beter te verstaan. Hy poog om die volgende skets van die 'nagmaal debat' in sy studie aan te spreek en te weerlê waarin volgens hom Calvyn **eensydig** gelees en verstaan word, soos hy dit veral sien in Mathison (2000), Godfrey (2009) en Horton se werke oor die onderwerp:

"Not surprisingly, the ripple effect of this liturgical movement has made its way into Reformed circles as well, where many portray weekly communion as the only reasonable option for churches. Keith Mathison writes, "When we begin to understand the true nature and purpose of the Lord's Supper, we wonder why any Christian wouldn't want to receive all that God offers in it every time the church gathers for worship." A common line of argument contends that weekly communion is simply a revival of John Calvin's approach to the sacrament. Calvin, they assert, tried to institute weekly communion in Geneva but was forced by the city council to put up with a quarterly

observance. Hence, they say, Calvinists of later generations “often had to settle for less than the ideal, and unfortunately what they settled for, rather than what they preferred, often became part of the received tradition in Reformed churches.

On this view, later Reformed churches followed Geneva’s sacramental frequency so blindly that “this ingrained tradition is the only thing preventing the Reformed churches from finally achieving the goal of such early Reformers as Calvin by returning to the ancient Christian practice of weekly communion.” As common as this polemic is in the Reformed community today, the question remains as to whether it is truly accurate. Is this “return to tradition” really a revival of Calvin’s overall perspective, or are these polemical appeals giving us only part of the story? The remainder of this paper will seek to answer this question by examining Calvin’s understanding of communion frequency in the context of his own writings and experience.”

3) *Hy wys daarop dat Calvyn inderdaad ‘n sterk voorstaander van weeklikse nagmaalviering was, maar dat daaruit nie afgelei kan word dat hy dit is a universele binding sien vir alle kerke orals nie:*

“In the minds of some, these early statements prove that Calvin promoted weekly communion as a universal, divine mandate. For instance, Mathison presents Calvin’s view as opposed to the notion that “local churches are free to celebrate the Lord’s Supper as frequently as each church sees fit.” However, nothing in these quotations from Calvin requires a universal, divine mandate. He merely asserted what the Church “could have” and “should have” done under certain circumstances. Certainly, he did believe that the Apostles celebrated weekly communion, but this does not necessarily mean that he viewed weekly communion as divinely mandated for the church in all ages. As we will see, Calvin’s nuanced position allowed him to cite the Apostles as precedent for his own preference, without suggesting that their practice was universally binding on the church.”

4) *Die verhouding van gereelde nagmaalviering in verhouding tot die doeltreffendheid (effek) daarvan:*

“Some weekly communion advocates have suggested that Calvin’s understanding of communion *efficacy* determined his position on communion *frequency*, invariably leading him to embrace weekly communion. In other words, they associate non-weekly communion with a denial of the Reformed and Calvinistic teaching that worthy communicants “feed upon the body and blood of Christ . . . in a spiritual manner . . . truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.” ...

Calvin’s view of communion *efficacy* could not help but impact his position on communion *frequency*. ***However, the claim that weekly communion logically follows the notion of “the Lord’s Supper as a real and effectual means of grace” raises some serious questions.*** For instance, what about the frequency practiced by other sixteenth century Reformed churches that agreed with Calvin’s view of sacramental efficacy? The Huguenots, for instance, adopted the *French Confession* (1559), which clearly echoed Calvin’s view. In addition, the French Huguenots “in times of freedom” enjoyed “the administration of the Lord’s Supper on feast days” (i.e. three times per year). While much could be researched and written concerning communion frequency among the French Huguenots or within the illustrious Dutch Reformed tradition, we will now focus our attention on the Scottish Reformed tradition, from John Knox to the Second Reformation. Few

theological traditions provide a more striking example of Reformed sacramental efficacy alongside less-than-weekly sacramental frequency.”

5) Kuehner antwoord Horton se aanklag dat minder gereelde nagmaalviering in Skotland (1560-1648) was as gevolg van die tekort van protestante predikante, maar dit was juis omdat die Skotse gemeentes Calvyn wou nagvolg in sy hoë waardering van die heiligheid van die nagmaal asook deeglik toesig en selfondersoek vir nagmaalgeleenthede

“Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the Scots viewed non-weekly communion as something that “thwarted” their agenda. **In their minds, quarterly communion was frequent communion.**⁵ Whatever practical hindrances they encountered for lack of Protestant ministers, their goal was frequent communion on a quarterly basis.

The Book of Discipline contained an explicit statement concerning the Scots’ rationale for quarterly communion. **Far from denying a strong view of sacramental efficacy, the Scots were supremely motivated by their adherence to Calvin’s teaching on this point.** In order to prevent such vain participation as would bring God’s judgment upon unworthy communicants, a stricter discipline was adopted. This stricter discipline, as detailed below, would be almost impossible to coordinate on a weekly basis.”

5) Calvyn en die Westminster Sinode oor die gereeldheid van die nagmaal “At first glance, one may be tempted to see a strong contrast between Calvin and the Westminster Assembly on communion frequency, as though the former demanded weekly observance while the latter left it up to the discretion of church courts. However, a further examination of Calvin’s view will demonstrate that the Westminster Assembly was actually following Calvin in viewing communion frequency as a circumstance of worship which is not authoritatively specified in Scripture.”

6) Calvyn sien die doeltreffendheid van nagmaalviering nie net in weeklikse viering nie maar ook in die pastorale bediening:

“This proposal sheds light on Calvin’s two-fold approach to the issue of communion frequency. On the one hand, he connected the Supper’s efficacy with a general principle of frequency, as exemplified in the supposed weekly communion of the Apostles. On the other hand, the precise extent of this frequency was to be determined by pastoral discretion. Sensitive to the spiritual needs of his flock, Calvin proposed monthly communion, thereby minimizing dangers that could arise “if it be celebrated so often.” Nevertheless, much to his chagrin, the Council opted to continue quarterly communion.”

7) Daar is volgens Huehner geen bewyse dat Calvyn se berusting by die Strasburg gemeente se maandelikse nagmaalviering om hom ‘afgedwing’ is soos in die geval by Geneva nie: “Some have contended that Calvin’s request for monthly communion in 1537 was nothing more than a strategic compromise with city officials in Geneva, who refused to allow communion every week. Whether or not this is the case, the situation in Strasbourg appears to have been much different, since the city council permitted Bucer to serve weekly communion in the

⁵ “It should be noted that Scottish communion frequency is too often viewed in a simplistic manner. Some rural Scottish congregations celebrated the Lord’s Supper only once or twice per year, while others kept a quarterly schedule. Nevertheless, the common practice of parishioners communing in adjacent parishes meant that many were able to commune more frequently than four times per year. This fact is often overlooked.” (Kuehner, 2014: 12)

local cathedral. There is no reason to believe that this willingness to permit weekly communion would not also have applied to Calvin's congregation. Hence, Calvin's choice of communion frequency in Strasbourg was certain to shed unique light upon the practical application of his perspective on communion efficacy, frequency, and administration.

It may surprise many to learn that Calvin chose to institute monthly communion in Strasbourg, not weekly. In a letter to Farel from Strasbourg in October of 1538, Calvin wrote, "For the first time, we have administered the sacrament of the Supper in our little church according to the custom of the place, which we purpose to repeat every month." The phrase "according to the custom of the place" likely refers to the content of Calvin's sacramental liturgy, which was heavily influenced by Bucer's existing "customs". In terms of the frequency of administration, we must simply take Calvin at his word, that monthly communion was something that "we purpose" to do, not something that was forced on him by local officials.

8) *Getroue pastorale sorg en beskerming van die heilige nagmaal in terme van deeglike ondersoek was vir beide Calvyn en Knox baie belangrik in terme van die doeltreffendheid van die nagmaalvieringe, en daarom ook maandelikse nagmaalviering:*

"Calvin consistently required the church to examine every communicant prior to every administration of the Lord's supper. His refusal to administer communion without this process shows that he prioritized conscientious shepherding above communion frequency. When one compares Calvin's Strasbourgian model with Knox's Book of Discipline, the procedures are strikingly similar. Since Calvin and Knox shared a high view of the Supper's spiritual efficacy, both instituted a frequency ***which allowed for due preparation beforehand.*** ...

The similarities between this excerpt and the Scottish Book of Discipline are remarkable. Like Knox, Calvin held a deep-seated conviction that communicant examination was appointed by Christ for the peace and purity of His church. Though such a practice might reduce the frequency of the Supper, he believed it to be an essential responsibility of the Church, when "partaking in so great a mystery" as the Lord's Supper."

9) *In Calvyn se 'Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper' kom dit duidelik na vore dat die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering ook deur pastorale oorwegings vasgestel kan word*

"While in Strasbourg in 1540, Calvin wrote his *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, which was later published in 1541. Included in this work is a section entitled, *Times of Using the Supper: Propriety of Frequent Communion*, where he stated the following,

As to the time of using it, no certain rule can be prescribed for all. . . However, if we duly consider the end which our Lord has in view, we shall perceive that the use should be more frequent than many make it, for the more infirmity presses, the more necessary is it frequently to have recourse to what may and will serve to confirm our faith, and advance us in purity of life; and, therefore, the practice of all well ordered churches should be to celebrate the Supper frequently, so far as the capacity of the people will admit. Rather than asserting a universal Scriptural mandate for weekly communion, Calvin here prescribed a general principle of frequency, modified by a certain measure of pastoral discretion relative to "the capacity of the people". He explicitly asserted that "no rule can be prescribed for all," thus distancing himself from the more dogmatic views of many contemporary weekly communion advocates. Indeed, during his brief pastorate in Strasbourg, an unfettered

Calvin freely instituted and maintained less-than-weekly communion, out of love and concern for the well being of his flock.”

9) *Calvyn se laaste woorde in die 1559 Institusie oor gereelde nagmaalviering:*

“It should be noted that the final edition of Calvin’s Institutes, published in 1559, did include his earlier comments about apostolic weekly communion, but with virtually no further elaboration. Calvin also cited these passages in a debate with Romanist Tileman Hethusius in the late 1550s, critiquing the Romish practice of annual communion, but making no specific appeal for weekly communion. In 1561, despite helping to bring further reformation to Geneva’s Ecclesiastical Ordinances, Calvin lamented the perpetuation of quarterly communion. “I have taken care,” he writes, “to record publicly that our custom is defective, so that those who come after me may be able to correct it the more freely and easily.” Conspicuously absent in all of these passages is the notion that weekly communion is the church’s only alternative to Rome’s annual observance or Geneva’s quarterly observance.”

10) *Calvyn se besorgdheid oor die heiligheid van die nagmaal en die selfondersoek*

“Given Calvin’s understanding of communicant **self-examination and personal preparation**, is it any wonder that he decided against weekly communion in Strasbourg, or that he delayed the Supper when prior notice had not been given? Is it surprising that he told the Geneva Council that “because the frailty of the people is still so great, there is danger that this sacred and so excellent mystery be misunderstood if it be celebrated so often”? Should we be shocked that, when addressing communion frequency, he stated that “no certain rule can be prescribed for all” and that frequency should be ordered only “so far as the capacity of the people will admit”?

Kuehner se konklusie:

“Based on the foregoing evidence, there appears to be substantive agreement between Calvin and the later Scottish Reformed tradition as to the following tenets:

1. Christ’s body and blood are spiritually present in the Lord’s Supper, to be received by faith alone.
2. The Lord’s Supper ought to be celebrated frequently.
3. Preparatory examination (both pastoral and personal) is a God-ordained means of fencing the Lord’s Table.
4. Since the Scriptures do not mandate a particular ‘frequency formula,’ the fencing of the Lord’s Table (both pastoral and personal) should determine its frequency.

In truth, if any have abandoned Calvin’s legacy, it is those who champion the first two points in this list (efficacy and frequency) while discarding the latter two (Table-fencing). Congregations where the Lord’s Supper is celebrated on a weekly basis without any form of communicant examination or without sufficient emphasis on personal self-examination have departed significantly from the sacramental theology and practice of Calvin.

Sadly, the tendency to downplay the disciplinary element in Calvin’s ecclesiology is quite common among weekly communionists today. This fact makes their claim to be perpetuating Calvin’s view highly misleading. As Philip Schaff observed concerning Calvin, “Discipline was the cause of his expulsion from Geneva, the basis of his flourishing French congregation at Strassburg, the chief

reason for his recall, the condition of his acceptance, the struggle and triumph of his life, and the secret of his moral influence to this day.”

Hopefully this fresh examination of the facts will enable more Reformed believers to appreciate the nuances of Calvin’s perspective and to confess with discipline and the correction of vices are like the nerves to sustain the body in a state of health and vigor.”

3.29) MATHIS (2005)

1) *Sy studie van oor die 90 bladsye is ook daarop gefokus om die hedendaagse aanklag aan te spreek van o.a. Horton en Mathison dat om nie weekliks nagmaal te vier nie, ‘morally negligent’ is.*

Hy wys op die implikasies van hierdie aanklagtes as volg:

“Moreover, the doctrinal background of Mathison’s statement appears to be logically rooted in a peculiar understanding that the Word and Sacrament are mutually interdependent:

‘Without the word, the sacrament is merely an empty sign. Without the sacrament, the word is not properly sealed and does not have its full, intended effect. [emphasis added]...neither the preaching of the word nor the observance of the sacrament is superfluous or optional in regular Christian worship (cf. Acts 2:42)’

Thus, in arguing for a weekly Supper, the author contends that if the Church truly understood the nature of the Supper it would lead her to see it as needful for the Word to have its “full, intended effect”— that the Meal is an “integral and necessary part of the worship of the new covenant Communion.”

Granted, not all proponents of a weekly Supper are willing to defend these statements; however, as will be clear later, some of the justifications, arguments and rationales logically lead to such sentiments and practices.

The following quotes, although cautious, also challenge the church to take seriously the benefits and rationales for weekly Communion:

On the other hand, even if I fall short and preach do’s and don’ts rather than the gospel, the Lord’s Supper helps to remind the congregation of the gospel basics...

... it [weekly Supper] might even contribute toward revival and reformation in lives, in families, and in congregations.

If the sacrament is chiefly a matter of our remembering or our attesting to our faith and obedience [Zwinglian], it is not surprising that it should be infrequent....The point is to suggest the indivisibility of nature and frequency.

In other words, it appears that Communion helps make up for deficient sermons and encourages revival while non-weekly Communion churches are quasi-Zwinglians at best. Four of the five quotes are within the last 5 years, and the fourth quote is found in the Ordained Servant of the OPC along with another article focusing on a different interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 which suggests, among other things, frequent Communion.”

2) *Mathis kom by die kern van die saak uit as hy dit as volg stel:*

Some denominations, especially in the Westminster tradition, have primarily regulated the question of the frequency of the Supper to the discretion of the session. Nevertheless, the significance of the previous quotes ought to bring to the forefront the rationales for celebrating weekly Communion. It is one thing to celebrate it out of a liberty of conscience and quite another to defend the practice upon questionable theological grounds—especially when some of these justifications downplay or move beyond proper confessional and Biblical parameters.”

3) *In sy werk bestudeer en antwoord hy dan die volgende 4 aspekte wat hy meen die argumente is vir ‘alleen weeklikse nagmaalviering’:*

1) since the Supper is an objective means of conveying the real presence of Christ and His benefits, then it should be exercised weekly (this is a combination of several similar arguments);

2) since the Old Testament worship pattern climaxes in Communion, then the Supper (Communion) should be exercised weekly;

3) since Christ and His benefits are in a “singularly unique way” communicated in the Supper, then it should be exercised weekly; and

4) since there are Biblical texts that endorse weekly Communion, then it should be exercised weekly.”

4) *Daar is ook verskillende standpunte onder hulle wat ‘weeklikse nagmaalviering alleen’ voorstaan, en wys ook op die vraagstukke wat dit veroorsaak:*

“A cursory glance at this position readily displays inconsistencies that splinter the original contention for weekly Communion into various positions. Specifically there are two explicit positions: some argue for only once-a-week Communion (presumably within a twice-a-week worship service framework), while others argue for at-least-once-a-week Communion (preferably more). This latter position is asserted in Horton’s title and at the beginning of Mathison’s defense of a weekly Supper.¹³ Throughout the rest of their papers, the focus is on once-a-week Communion.

Furthermore, Mathison, while defending at-least-once-a-week Communion, reverts to an implicit and radical position: Communion should be “part of every worship service.” Presumably, this is asserted because “...neither the preaching of the word nor the observance of the sacrament is superfluous or optional in regular Christian worship... Biblical worship includes both.”¹⁴ Thus, while

arguing for weekly Communion, Mathison actually has everyworship-service Communion in mind. This is instructive, showing that some of the arguments for once-a-week Communion are, and can be, used to defend not only at-least-once-a-week Communion but also every-worship-service Communion. For those with only two worship services that means the Supper is exercised twice a week; for churches with only one worship service a week, in practical terms, they are following Mathison’s approach.

As will be shown through the course of this thesis, these arguments and other rationales used to defend weekly Communion actually buttress an argument for the Lord’s Supper in every worship service. This would logically mean that morning, evening, mid-week, Thanksgiving and ordination services should have the Lord’s Supper.”

5) Mathis gee ook 'n goeie maar kort oorsig oor die saak deur die kerkgeskiedenis, en daarom herhaal ek nie alles wat reeds deur ander bronne hierbo vermeld word nie, behalwe om te vermeld wat hy bevind het in die 'moderne tyd', wat behulpzaam is om te sien wat hedendaagse presbiteriaanse en gerformeerde kerke daaroor besluit het:

"With a plethora of denominations in the modern ecclesiastical scene, the best approach is to sample some church orders. A sample of the American Dutch tradition as well as the Westminster tradition will be employed. The chart in appendix A enumerates the relevant sections of the URC, PRC, PCA, RPCNA and OPC:

Given that chart, it still is not easy to ascertain the normal practice in America without any statistical evidence. What is clear is that the Westminster tradition allowed a greater flexibility than the Continental tradition. Nevertheless, **the recorded practice of the earlier Reformed churches from the 1500s until the 1800s clearly pointed to a frequency less than weekly.**

Overall, the history of the church has various answers to the question of the regularity of the Supper. From daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly, the history of the church, especially before the Reformation, practiced divergent approaches that do not yield an immediate answer for the current issue. Nevertheless, it does suggest that the nature of the Supper influences the frequency, but not necessarily so.

During the Reformation, Luther, with his different view of the Supper, endorsed weekly Communion while **the Reformed churches, through the elders' and ministers' deliberations** (Calvin's protestation to the contrary) practiced a less frequent approach even though holding the Calvinian view of the Supper. Thus manifesting the genius of Presbyterian deliberations."

5) Mathis behandel in hoofstuk 3 van sy werk 'n baie belangrike saak, wat in soveel woorde in die HK Sondag 25, veral v/a 65 duidelik gestel word, nl. die Woord 'werk' en die sakramente 'versterk', en dit is 'n baie belangrike aspek wat bepalend is in hierdie saak

"Grounding all of life in the Word is the hallmark of the Reformation churches. While this is surely admitted by all of the authors in question, some of their language and emphases point toward a more mechanical approach to the Supper: Mathison speaks of the "unique way" one receives Christ, and Horton insists that the Supper is more "objective" than "subjective."

From another perspective, Wilson believes that the Supper is not only a capstone of worship but that the Supper will help overcome weak sermons.

To that end, a summary of the centrality of the Word in general—for all of life—is in order before fleshing out its detailed implications in the Christian life through the instrumentalities used by the Spirit: the means of grace, worship and the sacraments. This will demonstrate more of the "subjective" need for sanctification. It will also demonstrate that since the Word is the central and supreme means used especially by the Spirit, the arguments for the Supper are misguided, focusing on the Supper and its benefits instead of the Word that yields those benefits and supports the entire life of sanctification.

Hence, **the preached Word should be more frequent than the Supper.** This foundational and central role of the Bible in general is established through its close alignment with the Spirit, its role in redemptive history, its work in the lives of believers, and its centrality in the ministry of Jesus and Paul."

5.1) Westminster Confession notes: Q155: How is the word made effectual to salvation? A155: The Spirit of God makes the reading, but **especially the preaching of the word**, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing....[sinners].

5.2) Why is this synopsis of the centrality and significance of the Word important? First, it answers the concern of a “bias” against weekly Communion expressed by Gunn. Second, it shifts the focus of the debate from the limited scope of the significance and nature of the Sacraments to the wider and fundamental issue of its relationship to the Word. Third, it places the emphasis of the Christian life and worship on the Word of Christ just as the Bible itself does. This last point and the inferences that arise from it are explored in the following sections on the means of grace, the sacraments, and worship.”

5.3) Die verhouding publieke aanbidding en weeklikse godsdiens oefeninge:

“It can be argued that there is also a broader, private or unofficial means of grace in the lives of the Christians: Bible reading, study and memorization, daily prayers, fellowship, and private and familial worship. Although neither public or official, the reason these could be called “means of grace” is found in the fact that they are tools used by the Spirit for spiritual growth. It is inconceivable that Reformed communities would downplay the significance of private and familial worship let alone Bible reading, Bible studies or private prayers. Thus, there must be some sense in which these are means of grace.

The importance of this distinction is discovered in the balance that it presents. If the public ordinances are emphasized to the neglect of the private ordinances, an unnatural Christian life develops. Among other problems, believers more readily become mechanical in their worship and less spontaneous in their private devotional lives. On the other hand, with a neglect of the public ordinances through a disproportionate emphasis on the private means (as demonstrated in many contemporary Evangelical circles), the public ordinances are relegated to a position between tradition and irrelevance. In short, both sets of means are needful for a healthy Christian life. They must be properly integrated.”

5.4) “Nonetheless, it could be contended (and may be a hidden assumption in some of the arguments for frequent Communion) that Christ and/or His benefits are uniquely conveyed in the Supper. In other words, the need for weekly Supper is manifested in its unique feeding upon Christ. This would be a strong argument for weekly Communion on two grounds:

- 1) if Christ is only (or mostly) conveyed in the Supper;
- 2) and if the conveyance of Christ was *ex opere operato*.

The latter option is not consistent with the Reformed confessions. The first option is also not tenable. Even Calvin acknowledged the fact that believers feed upon Christ outside the Supper:

‘The ancients fell into a gross error by supposing that little children were deprived of eternal life, if they did not dispense to them the eucharist, that is the Lord’s Supper; for this discourse [John 6] does not relate to the Lord’s Supper, but to the uninterrupted communication of the flesh of Christ, which we obtain apart from the use of the Lord’s Supper. ...daily he [Christ] gives it [His body] when by the word of the gospel he offers it for us to partake, inasmuch as it was crucified... Feeding upon Christ is not narrowly restricted to the Supper.’

.... Christ is in the midst of the people when the Word is in the midst of the people. The Church feeds upon Christ when the Word is fed to the Church. Feeding upon Christ in the Supper is not such a unique event that it must occur weekly. Again, Christ and the Scriptures, especially preached, are closely integrated. Gleason summarized Bavinck’s analysis thusly: ‘The Word of God is the means of grace *par excellence*...the sacraments are subordinate to the Word.... Even the Word, occupying the first and most important place in the means of grace, can never be disjoined from the person and work of Christ. The reason is that the benefits which the Word and sacraments give are one and the same Christ.’ [2005:32]

5.5) Mathis (2005: 42), antwoord ook die eensydige etikettering van Zwingli versus Calvynse nagmaalvierings:

“Another argument for weekly Communion is closely related to this previous contention. Horton (and Wilson and Mathison to a lesser degree) believes that one’s view of the Supper within Reformed orthodoxy is either Zwinglian-like or Calvinian. And since the nature is so intimately tied to frequency, argues Horton, infrequent Communion (apparently quarterly) is closely aligned with Zwingli and frequent Communion (weekly) aligned with Calvin. And what Reformed person would not want to be faithfully Calvinian? Yet such a dilemma is more apparent than real.

First of all, scholars, such as Berkhof, Hodge, and Hoeksema point to substantial evidence that Zwingli held to a more sacramental view of the Supper. For instance, some quote the First Helvetic Confession: “These, being tokens of secret things, do not consist of bare signs, but of signs and things also...In the Lord’s Supper, bread and wine be the signs, but the thing is the communication of the body of Christ....”

Secondly, Peter Martyr, influenced by Calvin, while differentiating himself from the Roman Catholics and Lutherans, asserts: “For I know for a fact that in his books Zwingli considers the signs in this sacrament to be far from empty or useless, as we said above....”

Thirdly, and amazingly, Calvin, in the opening preface to the Consensus Tigurinus, simply asserted: ‘[I]f the two excellent doctors, Zuinglius and Oecolompadius, who were known to be faithful servants of Jesus Christ, were still alive, they would not change one word in our doctrine.’

Clearly, Calvin had a more charitable opinion of Zwingli.

Fourthly, and more importantly, even if Zwingli had a memorial view of the Supper that over-emphasized the subjective element, there is a third alternative to the Calvinian view, which is any approach that maintains the objective and efficacious dimensions as expressed in the Confessions....

In short, one does not have to explain the Supper in the same manner or detail as Calvin to maintain, as Hodge does, a Reformed view of the Sacrament. One could “explain more clearly than others” the specifics of this doctrine. Horton concedes that Calvin’s submission of the Consensus Tigurinus “reflects some degree of capitulation on both sides.”

Obviously, Calvin would not “capitulate” on principle. Hodge considered this document as a fine explanation of the Sacraments. And, presumably, Hodge and Calvin agree upon its contents.

In brief, the objective nature of the Supper does not tend toward weekly Communion because the Supper is both subjective and objective in implementation. The false dilemma of choosing between Calvin and Zwingli does not tend toward weekly Communion because a third option, as summarized in the Consensus Tigurinus, is at hand. And highlighting the benefits of the Supper, without due consideration of the freedom of the Spirit in communicating those benefits without the Meal, only confuses the real issue. A Confessional view of the nature of the Supper does not lead to weekly Communion, but supports the traditional view of its frequency.”

6) *Weeklikse nagmaalviering en die regulerende beginsel van aanbidding:*

“This is the overall problem with trying to tie the frequency question to any one given sacrifice: which one should be chosen? Secondly, in a related manner, communion was also expressed in the annual feasts. If ‘communion’ is the operative word, then one could argue for less than weekly on the feast pattern. Indeed, the feasts more readily fit not only the idea of fellowship, but also the celebratory elements of the Supper as well as the inclusion of all of Israel instead of smaller family units. Thirdly, the use of the word ‘communion’ is equivocal. As demonstrated earlier in analyzing the centrality of the Word and worship in particular, believers have communion with Christ through the Word by the power of the Spirit. This communion is experienced daily, but more particularly in weekly public worship. There through the Word preached, Christ is vividly portrayed and communion especially experienced. Thus, the Lord’s Supper is not especially needed to experience this communion unless one believes there is no true communion without the Supper—a questionable assertion at best.

Likewise, if the pattern is cleansing, consecration and communion and the Lord’s Supper is that communion, then any worship service without the Supper is a public worship without communion. Surely, the author does not desire this conclusion! Yet, for want of clarification, as well as the force of the assertion, what other conclusion is there? For instance, if the peace-offering has such a signification, what of its absence in the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16)?

Is there no communion with God on one of the most holy of days in the Older Testament? However, if the service is Word-centric, then all three elements exist by virtue of the Spirit and the Word: it brings cleansing to us (Eph. 5:26); it brings consecration to us (Jn. 17:17); and it brings communion to us (Jn. 6:63). Fourthly, as in the previous argument, this equation of Communion and peace-offering does not prove or even suggest weekly Communion but proves the exercise of the Supper in every worship service (granting this pattern). It suffers the same problem as do all of the arguments. There is no passage or pattern of weekly. Heb. 13:10 focuses, not on the peace-offering, but upon the Holy of Holies, an altar where the priests did not eat, but an altar where we can eat (thus creating a new image from the older patterns). 1 Cor. 11:30-31 Communion. No passage states: “Communion should be once a week, but another service without the Supper is acceptable.” And of the passages brought forward for weekly Communion (if binding per the Regulative Principle of Worship), they prove either the Supper in every service or prove implementing public worship only once a week and that with the Lord’s Supper.”

“In short, it is not at all clear why Leviticus 9, and the peace-offering in particular, should be evidence for partaking of the Supper weekly. On the surface, these arguments appear to defend this proposition, but upon closer inspection, this is not the case. The argument is not sufficient to establish the case or it proves too much or it does not take into consideration other factors and verses. On the other hand, the weekly pattern of public worship on the Sabbath makes more sense theologically, chronologically and psychologically as a pattern for the New Testament Church.

In such a pattern there is no weekly Communion pattern, but there is a weekly communion pattern insofar as all worship through the Word involves communion. Moreover, examining the Old Testament showed that the Holy God of the Covenant demanded moral purity—just as is demanded today. This purity is demanded in everyday life and particularly in public worship. And this purity in public worship is especially demanded in the Supper of our Lord.

As priests of the New Covenant, it is no little thing to come into His presence. Thus, weekly Communion was never practiced in the Reformed faith. On the other hand, the suggested minimal exercise of the Supper to three times a year is expressive of a lesser revelation, and the New Testament church can do no less.”

7) Wat en wie bepaal 'gereeld/frekwensie'?

"First of all, the constant use of the word frequent to describe the weekly Communion position is misleading. It is not only historically misleading (since the Reformers reacted against the annual practice of the Roman Church, then even quarterly would be frequent) and semantically ambiguous (frequent is a relative term), but it also poisons the well of theological discussion—loading the theological discourse with such implications, expressed or hidden, as "Who would not want more grace?"

For example, since the word frequent is ambiguous, those advocating a monthly practice could easily claim that their observance was frequent compared to a quarterly practice. Furthermore, all the arguments arrayed for weekly Communion can, with equal force, be used for monthly, bi-weekly, twice-a-week or daily Communion. There is no compelling reason given establishing why weekly Communion should be the stopping point.

Interestingly, those arguing for the Supper at least once-a-week can easily argue against only once-a-week Communion. Is Christ objectively present in the Supper? Then why not observe it twice a week? Does the Supper benefit the partakers? Then why not observe it two or three times a week? Why not offer it daily? Why not observe the Supper at every worship service so that Christ is always proclaimed, bad sermons are always ameliorated, fellowship with God always central, and the objective benefits and sealing are always there to convey grace. As for the question of frequency, there is no end to the possible conclusions of such logic."

OPMERKINGS

Uit al bogenoemde bronne is dit duidelik dat daar basies twee standpunte deur die geskiedenis was, en vandag nog in verskillende vorme leef:

Meerderheidstandpunt (van hulle wat ten gunste is van weeklikse of minder gereelde nagmaalvieringe): *Die Skrif openbaar nie eksplisiet bindend weeklikse of minder gereelde nagmaalvieringe nie, en daarom moet kerke in die lig van die Skrif en hul pastoraal-gemeentelike situasie besluite neem oor die frekwensie van nagmaalvieringe, daar kan nie gewetensbinding daaroor wees vir alle kerke orals en altyd nie.*

Minderheidstandpunt (van hulle wat ten gunste is van weeklikse of minder gereelde nagmaalvieringe): *Die Skrif openbaar **duidelik bindend** een of die ander, bv. weeklikse of kwartaallikse nagmaalviering, en daarom moet die kerke mekaar daaraan bind en daartoe terug reformeer, nie kerklike tradisie nie, maar Skrif alleen moet die saak bepaal.*

3. KOMMENTARE BY HAND. 2:42,46; 20:7 EN 1 KOR. 11:25,26

Verklaring van 'n paar relevante tekste (Hand. 2:42,46; 20:6,7; 1 Kor. 11:25,26), in aansluiting by al die eksegetiese opmerkings reeds vermeld in deel 2 deur verskillende skrywers:

*“En hulle het volhard in die leer van die apostels en in die gemeenskap **en in die breking van die brood** en in die gebede. ... En **dag vir dag** het hulle eendragtig volhard in die tempel **en van huis tot huis brood gebreek** en hulle voedsel met blydschap en eenvoudigheid van hart geniet,”* (Hand. 2:42, 46)

*“Maar ná die dae van die ongesuurde brode het ons van Filíppi uitgeseil en binne vyf dae by hulle in Troas gekom, waar ons sewe dae deurgebring het. **En op die eerste dag van die week, toe die dissipels vergader het om brood te breek**, het Paulus hulle toegesprek, omdat hy die volgende dag sou vertrek, en hy het sy rede gerek tot middernag toe.”* (Hand. 20:6–7)

*“Net so ook die beker ná die ete, met die woorde: Hierdie beker is die nuwe testament in my bloed; doen dit, **so dikwels** as julle daaruit drink, tot my gedagtenis. Want **so dikwels** as julle hierdie brood eet en hierdie beker drink, verkondig julle die dood van die Here totdat Hy kom.”* (1 Kor. 11:25–26)

3.1 PURITAN BOARD

Op die Puritan Board besprekingsgroep (2022), wat gereformeerde en ander gelowiges regoor die wêreld insluit, het 'n deelnemer met die gebruikersnaam 'Northen Crofter' die volgende 5 verklarings uit die Skrif gegee ter begronding vir verskillende standpunte oor gereelde nagmaalviering:

Daily: ([Genesis 1.14](#), Acts 2) We are prone to overlook the Biblical importance of each day (for example, we often focus on the Lord's Day in the fourth commandment but neglect the “Six days shalt thou labor” part of the command) but this was emphasized by the daily sacrifices in temple (see Numbers 28, end of Hebrews 7); Again, I am wary of narrative-based doctrines and note that much of the early apostolic Church's practices seemed to change: for example, the early communal living in Acts 2 (see vv.44-45) seemed to quickly give way to “this we warned you of, that if there were any, which would not work, that he should not eat” (see [2 Thessalonians 3:10-12](#)); Also, the “breaking bread” = the Lord's Supper argument seems weak - in many instances it is clearly separate from worship (see [Acts 2.46](#): “And they continued daily with one accord **in the Temple**, and breaking bread **at home**”)

Weekly: ([Genesis 1.14](#)) There were weekly sacrifices (see Numbers 28, Ezekiel 46), unique to the Sabbath, the latter which binds “all men in all ages” (WCF 21.7); [Acts 20.7](#): “And the first day of the week, the disciples being come together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued the preaching unto midnight.” - but, again, is this just referring to a common meal? (see v.11: “Then when Paul was come up again, **and had broken bread**, and eaten, having spoken a long while till the dawning of the day, he so departed.”)

Monthly: I don't see this as very plausible even though it is very common - our modern Western months are not a Biblical division of time creationally, and even though the Hebrew economy refers to lunar months which could be derived from [Genesis 1.14](#), these are not mentioned in that account or ever presented as Divinely created and/or appointed (also, what do you then do with [Psalm 104:19](#) “He appointed the moon for certain seasons”?); This seems to be disallowed by the WCF: our present 12-month division in the Western world is “according to the imaginations and devices of men” and not God's revealed will (WCF 21.1)

Seasonally: Why were seasons created? - not every part of the Earth has the same meteorological seasons or number of meteorological seasons, but they do all have the same astronomical reference points; Multiple times the Hebrews were reminded to keep “the solemn feasts, three times in the year, that is, in the feast of the Unleavened bread, and in the feast of the Weeks, and in the feast of the Tabernacles.” ([2 Chronicles 8:13](#), see also Exodus 23 and Numbers 29) and these were linked to their deliverance from bondage in Egypt in a similar way that the Sabbath was, the Sabbath and seasons both being part of the created order ([Genesis 1.14](#) - some see a fourth season observed by Christ in [John 10:22](#)); Why is Paul waiting for one of the three feasts in [Acts 18.21](#) (“But bade them farewell, saying, ‘I must needs keep this feast that cometh, in Jerusalem’” - see also [Acts 20.6-7](#))?

Annually: ([Genesis 1.14](#)) There is, of course, a direct connection to the Day of Atonement/Passover during which Christ deliberately chose to institute His Supper; When Paul repeats what is required to be celebrated according to Christ's institution he refers repeatedly to partaking of “**this** bread” and “**this** cup” (see [1 Corinthians 11.24](#), [25](#), [26](#), [27](#), and [28](#)) - did he mean the once-a-year unleavened bread? (see also the aforementioned references to Paul still keeping the feasts in [Acts 18.21](#) which appears to refer to Passover; also, if breaking bread in [Acts 20.7-11](#) refers to him observing the Lord's Supper, this occurred right “after the days of unleavened bread” according to v.6); Many of the Reformers appear to argue vehemently against an annual observance at first glance, but what they are really railing against is not that the Lord's Supper was offered only once a year (it was offered every day or at least every week in most parishes) but that

people were only required to participate once a year - see for example Calvin: "Plainly this custom which enjoins us to take communion once a year is a veritable invention of the devil." (Institutes IV, xvii, 44) and the Scots First book of Church Discipline (1560) "Your honours are not ignorant how superstitiously the people run to that action at Pasche, even as [if] the time gave virtue to the sacrament; and how the rest of the whole year they are careless and negligent" (The ninth head concerning the policie of the kirk).

Met dit as agtergrond, 'n paar Skrifverklarings by bogenoemde Skrifgedeeltes waar dit die gereeldheid (hoe dikwels) van nagmaalvieringe raak:

3.2) CALVYN (2003: 127) meen Hand. 2:42,46 verwys nie na die nagmaal nie maar die etes van die gelowiges, oftewel 'gemeenskap van die heiliges':

"Communication or fellowship, and breaking of bread, may be taken diversely. Some think that breaking of bread doth signify the Lord's Supper; other some do think that it signifieth alms; other some that the faithful did banquet together among themselves. Some do think that *koinonia*, doth signify the celebrating of the Holy Supper; but I do rather agree to those others who think that the same is meant by the breaking of bread. For *koinonia*, unless it have somewhat added unto it, is never found in this sense; therefore, I do rather refer it unto mutual society and fellowship, unto alms, and unto other duties of brotherly fellowship. And my reason why I would rather have breaking of bread to be understood of the Lord's Supper in this place is this, because Luke doth reckon up those things wherein the public estate of the Church is contained. ...

Breaking bread from house to house. Luke signifieth unto us, that they did not only show some token of true godliness publicly, but that the course and tenor of their private life was alone in that respect. ***For whereas some do think that in this place, by breaking of bread is meant the Holy Supper, it seemeth to me that Luke meant no such thing.*** He signifieth, therefore, unto us, that they used to eat together, and that thriftily. For those which make sumptuous banquets do not eat their meat together so familiarly."

CALVYN (2003: 235) verklaar egter wel dat Hand. 20:7 verwys na die heilige nagmaal:

"To break bread. Though breaking of bread doth sometimes signify among the Hebrews a domestical banquet, ***yet do I expound the same of the Holy Supper in this place, being moved with two reasons.*** For seeing we may easily gather by that which followeth that there was no small multitude gathered together there, it is unlikely that there could any supper be prepared in a private house. Again, Luke will afterward declare that Paul took bread not at supper time, but after midnight. Hereunto is added that, that he saith not that he took meat that he might eat, but that he

might only taste. Therefore, I think thus, that they had appointed a solemn day for the celebrating of the Holy Supper of the Lord among themselves, which might be commodious for them all.”

CALVYN (2003: 384) in sy kommentaar op 1 Kor. 11:25, 26 by die woord ‘dikwels’, verklaar dit as dat dit moet voortgaan tot en met Christus se wederkoms, en is daar nie enige uitsprake oor die presiese gereeldheid (frekwensie) van die nagmaal nie:

*“26. For as often as ye shall eat. Paul now adds what kind of remembrance ought to be cherished - that is, with thanksgiving; not that the remembrance consists wholly in confession with the mouth; for the chief thing is, that the efficacy of Christ's death be sealed in our consciences; but this knowledge should stir us up to a confession in respect of praise, so as to declare before men what we feel inwardly before God. The Supper then is (so to speak) a kind of memorial, **which must always remain in the Church, until the last coming of Christ**, and it has been appointed for this purpose, that Christ may put us in mind of the benefit of his death, and that we may recognize it before men. ... Until he come As we always need a help of this kind, so long as we are in this world, Paul intimates that this commemoration has been given us in charge, until Christ come to judgment. For as he is not present with us in a visible form, it is necessary for us to have some symbol of his presence, by which our minds may exercise themselves.”*

WITSIUS (1990: 459) meen dat 1 Kor. 11:25,26 se ‘dikwels’ wys net op ‘gereeld’ en niks meer nie: “Yet as our Lord has determined nothing as to the time, and in general only recommended frequent communion, by that word, as oft [1 Cor. xi. 25, 26], a certain medium, especially amidst such a corruption of manners, should seem to be observed; lest, either by the too frequent use this sacred food should be disesteemed, or we should slight or neglect that august table of the Lord.”

3.3 HODGE

As oft as ye drink of it. This does not mean that every time Christians drank wine together they should do it in commemoration of Christ's death; but, ‘as often as this ordinance is celebrated, do what I have done, to commemorate my death.’ The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's death, not only because it was designed for that purpose, but also because the bread and wine are the significant symbols of his broken body and shed blood. In this ordinance therefore Christ is set forth as a sacrifice which at once makes expiation for sin and ratifies the covenant of grace. ... What Paul had received of the Lord is recorded in the preceding verses. Here and in what follows we have his own inferences from the account which the Lord had given him. The first of those inferences is, that the Lord's supper is, and was designed to be, a proclamation of the death of Christ to continue until his second advent.

3.4 BENDEL

“Their daily partaking of food is signified, with which often was conjoined the administration of the Eucharist: ch. [Acts 20:7](#) , note; [1 Corinthians 11:20-21](#) : for it is not probable that in this book of Acts no mention at all should occur of the Holy Supper, whereas there is so frequent mention of baptism; but mention of it is made in a guarded (covert) manner, as was usual at that time, [1 Corinthians 10:15](#) (where Paul is speaking of the Lord’s Supper), and less frequently.

[1 Corinthians 11:25](#) . Μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνῃσαι , *after supper*) Therefore you, Corinthians, ought to separate common meals from the Lord’s Supper. ὡς ἄκις , *as often as*) **As often as is not a command, but it is implied that we should often eat and drink.** πίνετε , *you may drink*) this cup, [1 Corinthians 11:26](#) . εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν , *in remembrance of me*) This is presupposed by Matthew and Mark. Luke uses it once, Paul twice, because it is very suitable to his purpose. The old sacrifices were useful *in bringing sins to remembrance* , [Hebrews 10:3](#) ; the sacrifice of the body of Christ, accomplished once for all, is revived *by the remembrance of forgiveness* .

3.5) GODET

“In the injunction: *Do this*, the word *this* denotes what Christ is now doing when He holds out the cup to them, and what they themselves do when partaking of it; such is the act which is always to be repeated anew in the assembly of believers. When so? Jesus says: *as often as ye drink*. Evidently this cannot be understood: as every time ye drink, in general, or when ye take any meal whatever. The following verse is opposed to this; for there Paul says: “As often as ye drink *this cup*,” comp. also [1 Corinthians 11:22](#), where the Lord's Supper has been positively ***distinguished*** from common meals.

Meyer understands: Every time that at a love-feast you come to this final cup. Hofmann and Osiander almost the same: Every time you assemble for a love-feast. But these ellipses are very arbitrary. The thought of the Lord is better explained, as it seems to me, if it is qualified by connecting it with the words: *in remembrance of Me*, and by the evident allusion to the remembrance of the Paschal lamb: “Every time you celebrate, as members of the new covenant, the religious feast corresponding to the Paschal feast of the old, distribute the cup and drink of it in remembrance of Me.” The memory of Jesus is to be substituted in their heart for that of the lamb, every time they celebrate the new Paschal feast.

This very indefinite expression ὡς ἄκις ἅν , *every time it shall happen that*, ***shows that henceforth this ceremony will no longer be bound to a fixed day of the year, like the Paschal feast, but that it is put at the discretion of the Church.***”

3.6) GREIJDANUS (1942:94,98),

“Bij (in de breken des broden) rijst de vraag, is hier gedacht aan het gewone eten, waarbij de Joden gewoon waren brood te breken, Mark. 6:41; 8:6; Hand. 27:35 etc. of aan een cultushandeling, agape of, en avondmaal. Om tot een beslissing te komen, moet worden opgemerkt:

1. we hebben hier woorden, waarin Lukas beschrijft, wat er gebeurt en waarin dus niet het spraakgebruik uit den oudsten tijd, maar het latere is te vinden;
2. wij zijn in den kring der gemeente, waarbij nog opvalt, dat van *ho artos* het ééne bepaalde brood wordt gesproken;
3. vs 46 maakt onderscheid, er is van breken van het brood sprake en van het gebruiken van voedsel;
4. de andere woorden in dit verband hebben een sacraal karakter (Men lette op het verschil met 27:35, waar alles naar gewoon eten wijst en artos het lidwoord mist);
5. het heeft geen zin te zeggen, dat de discipelen volharden bij het gewone eten, dat deden ze vanzelf en men zou toch in verband met *koinonia* aan een gemeenschappelijk, dat is al weer een min of meer religieus eten moeten denken;
6. de paarsgewijze rangschikking der woorden (naar XBCD) verbindt klaris nauw met *proseukai*, dat van cultus spreekt;
7. Jacquier wijst er op, dat Paulus, Lukas' leermeester, 1 Kor. 10:16, het breken van het brood ook uitdrukkelijk vermeldt, vgl. Hand. 20: 7,11.

Tegen het denken aan avondmaal en agape zou kunnen pleiten, dat Jezus van het avondmaal zeide *osakis*, 1 Kor. 11: 26 en dat hier van *proskarterein* sprake is. Een overwegend bezwaar is dat echter niet, want *proskarterein te didache* zegt ook niet, dat er onafgebroken gepredikt werd. Zoo moeten we wel tot de conclusie komen, dat met *klaris tou arton*, **het avondmaal of de agape is gemeend, het laatste heeft met het oog op vs 46 iets voor, vgl. ook 20:7, 11. 'n maaltijd mogen denken. ...**

De groote vraag is, of het tweede gedeelte van vs 46 ook van den cultus moet worden genomen of dat het ziet op het gewone eten, waarvan dan gezegd zou worden, dat het met bijzondere blijdschap geschiedde. Aan den eenen kant vraagt men zich af, waarom wordt afzonderlijk van het breken des broods gesproken, als daar niet iets afzonderlijks mee bedoeld wordt, zie bij vs 42, aan den anderen kant is *metelambanon trophes* niet anders dan gewoon voedsel tot zich nemen en is *ploontes* een daaraan ondergeschikt *participium*. Letten we er op, dat aan *kloontes - afeloteti kardias*, voorafgaat en *toi ieroi* en dat volgt *ainountes ton theon*, dan is het *a priori* het waarschijnlijkst, dat ook de tusschenliggende woorden ons op religieus gebied willen brengen. Daarop wijst nog meer. Wat zou Lukas er mee bedoelen, om in dit verband mee te deelen, dat de

geloovigen in hun huizen verheugd voedsel tot zich namen? Waarom is te midden van de *participia* juist *metelambanon* hoofdwerkwoord, indien het niet iets bijzonders aangeeft?

Veel pleit er voor om een tegenstelling te lezen tusschen *en toi ieroi* en *kai oichon*, vooral omdat er niet staat *kai oichous*, ieder in zijn eigen huis of samen in elkaars huizen, maar thuis zonder meer. Want men kan niet vertalen in één huis, de gemeente was veel te groot, dan dat zij in één huis zou kunnen samenkomen (Dat *kai oikos* niet is van huis tot huis, maar thuis, ziet men Rom. 16:5; 1 Kor. 16:9; Kol. 4: 15; Flm. 2.).

Is er nu een tegenstelling tusschen tempel en huis, dan leidt dat tot de exegese, dat Lukas wil zeggen, niet alleen bij den dienst in den tempel, ook thuis was het bij de Christenen bijzonder. Lezen we thans *chloontes arton*, waarbij *artos* weer in het enkelvoud staat, dan nemen we dit evenals vs 42 van het avondmaal of de *agape*. Het participium *chloonte*; heeft dan voor *metelambanon* zin, het drukt uit, dat met het gewone voedsel gebruiken een avondmaal of *agape* (Het blijft moeilijk te kiezen tusschen avondmaal en *agape*. Let men erop, dat Lukas spreekt van wat dagelijks geschiedde en ook spreekt van de groote eensgezindheid, dan heeft het veel voor, bepaald aan de *agape* te denken. Daarop wijst ook, dat *metrelambanon* hoofdwerkwoord is, vgl. G. Kittel, Theol.- Stud. u. Krit., 2, Aug, 1925, bl. 227. Maar we weten van de wijze, waarop in den eersten tijd avondmaal en liefdemaaltijd werden gehouden, zoo weinig af, dat het bijna onmogelijk is om een keus te doen. Hoofdzaak is dat het verband en de woorden naar iets bijzonders wijzen. Zie voort Komm. op 1 Kor. 11:20 vlg.) verbonden was en dat juist daarom dit voedsel gebruiken geschiedde met bijzondere vreugde.

‘*Agalliadis* is een sterk woord, jubel, dat ook van een maaltijd zonder meer moeilijk kan worden gebruikt (Steinmann wrjst er op, hoe we heel het N.T. door gesproken vinden van vreugde, gewekt door den Heiligen Geest, Hand. 8: 8, 39; 13:48, 52; 14:17; 15: 3; 16:34; Fil.4:4; 1 Thess. 1:6; Jak. 1: 2; 1 Joh. 5:4). *Aphelotis*, eenvoud, drukt van het hart gezegd uit, dat in het hart geen bijbedoelingen leven, het is eerlijk, zuiver.”

3.7 GROSHEIDE (1953: 272),

Jesus also declared that Holy Communion must become a permanent institution; *for as often as ye eat this bread* (vs. 26) ; *this do* (*poieite* imperative, not indicative) *as often as*, etc. This: not the cup, but the act of drinking it, an expression which is clear in spite of its brevity (d. vs. 24). There is not a complete parallel with vs. 24, but a material analogy. That which is new in vs. 2S is developed at length, whereas elements mentioned in the preceding verses are passed over briefly. In its complete form the clause would read: Drink frequently the Cup of the Lord and do so always in

remembrance of Me ... Likewise: *till He come* is not merely a chronological indication as to the time during which the Lord's Supper must be served, it also points to the Lord's return. He who comes to the Lord's table confesses that he believes that the glorified Lord will come from heaven. How great is the sin of the Corinthians who desecrate this Holy Communion!"

3.8) GROENEWALD (1980: 150),

"Ook hier volg die opdrag om Jesus te **gedenk iedere keer wanneer die gemeente byeen** is vir die deelname aan die brood en beker (vgl. by. v.24). ... Tot hiertoe het die apostel die oorgelewerde woorde aangehaal. Nou gaan hy voort om sy vermaning daaraan toe te voeg. Die instellingswoorde bevat 'n aanduiding dat die maaltyd van die Here telkens herhaal moet word in die gemeente, en verder dat iedere keer dat die gemeente die nagmaal vier, hy ook die dood van die Here verkondig.

Met "die dood van die Here" word bedoel alles wat in verband staan met die koms van Jesus na die aarde om hier soos 'n mens te verkeer, verraai te word deur mense, te sterf aan die hand van mense en op te staan uit die dode tot heil van mense. Die viering van die sakrament word 'n verkondiging van die heilsewangelie. Calvyn het dit genoem die sigbare verkondiging van die Woord, wat sy regmatige plek het naas die onsigbare Woordverkondiging soos dit in die prediking geskied. Met die sigbare Woordverkondiging moet voortgegaan word "totdat Hy kom". Die gemeente leef steeds in die verwagting van die wederkoms van die Here op die wolke. Iedere viering van die nagmaal versterk die verwagting en dien ook as bevestiging dat die Here vir seker in heerlijkheid sal kom."

3.9) BRUCE (1988:181, 384), verklaar Hand. 2:42 en 20:7 as verwysend na nagmaalviering:

"The apostolic fellowship found expression in a number of practical ways, of which two are mentioned in verse 42—the breaking of bread and prayers. The "breaking of bread" probably denotes more than the regular taking of food together: the regular observance of what came to be called the Lord's Supper seems to be in view. While this observance appears to have formed part of an ordinary meal, the emphasis on the inaugural action of breaking the bread, "a circumstance wholly trivial in itself," says Rudolf Otto, suggests that this was "the significant element of the celebration. . . . But it could only be significant when it was a 'signum' , viz. of Christ's being broken in death. ...

The reference to the meeting for the breaking of the bread on "the first day of the week" is the earliest text we have from which it may be inferred with reasonable certainty that Christians regularly came together for worship on that day. The breaking of the bread was **probably** a fellowship meal in the course of which the Eucharist was celebrated (cf. 2:42). It is plain from the narrative that members of the church at Troas ("they") were present as well as the travelers of

Paul's company ("we"); the occasion was **probably** the church's **weekly** meeting for worship. Paul's ministry in Troas a year or two previously had evidently been more fruitful than he realized at the time (2 Cor. 2: 12-13)."

3.10) DE VILLIERS (1977: 63),

"Verklaarders verskil oor wat met die breking van die brood bedoel word. Sommige dink aan gewone maaltye, by watter geleenthede die Jode gewoon was om brood te breek, Mark. 6:41; 8:6; Hand. 27:35. Ander dink weer aan die breek van die brood by die nagmaal of aan die liefdemaaltye wat daarmee verbind was, d.w.s. die maaltye, waar lede van die gemeente saam aangesit het en die vermoëndes soveel saamgebring het sodat ook die armes genoeg kon eet. Dit lyk die waarskynlikste om aan te neem dat die breking van die brood in verband gebring moet word met die liefdemaaltye, by watter geleenthede die nagmaal ook gevier is, voor, gedurende, of ná die liefdemaaltyd. ...(20:7) Paulus, Lukas en die ander gelowiges het die Sondag bymekaar gekom vir die gemeenskaplike maaltyd of om brood te breek, soos dit in die Grieks staan. Hierdie was die liefdesmaaltyd wat in die tyd van die apostels en daarna by die viering van die nagmaal deur die Christene gehou is (1 Kor 11:17–34). Elkeen het kos gebring en almal het saam geëet, ook die armes (vgl. ook 2:46). In die oorspronklike staan daar: "Op die eerste dag van die week." Hierdie teks is saam met 1 Kor 16:2; Op 1:10 ev 'n bewys vir die Sondagviering in die oudste kerk."

3.11) MEYER

τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου] *in the breaking of their bread* (τοῦ ἄ.). By this is meant *the observance of common evening-meals* ([Luke 24:30](#)), which, after the manner of the last meal of Jesus, they concluded with the Lord's Supper (*Agapae*, [Judges 1:12](#)). The Peschito and several Fathers, as well as the Catholic Church,[138] with Suicer, Mede, Wolf, Lightfoot, and several older expositors, arbitrarily explain it exclusively of the *Eucharist*; comp. also Harnack, *l.c.* p. 111 ff. *Such a celebration is of later origin; the separation of the Lord's Supper from the joint evening meal did not take place at all in the apostolic church, 1 Corinthians 11. The passages, [Acts 20:7](#); [Acts 20:11](#), [Acts 27:35](#), are decisive against Heinrichs, who, after Kypke, explains the breaking of bread of beneficence to the poor ([Isaiah 58:7](#)), so that it would be synonymous with κοινωνία (but see above).*

3.12) KISTEMAKER (1990: 111, 717; 1993: 397-399)

"*Breaking of bread.* Is this a reference to a meal in a private home (see Luke 24:30, 35) or to a communion service? This question is difficult to answer. The context, however, seems to suggest that it refers to a celebration of the Lord's Supper. In the Greek, the definite article precedes the noun *bread* and thus specifies that the Christians partook of *the* bread set aside for the sacrament

of communion (compare 20:11; I Cor. 10:16). Also, the act of breaking bread has its sequel in the act of offering prayers (presumably in the setting of public worship). The words *breaking of bread* appear within the sequence of teaching, fellowship, and prayers in worship services. Therefore, we understand the term as an early description for the celebration of Holy Communion. In the liturgy of the Christian church, **this celebration was and is usually accompanied by** the teaching of the gospel and by prayers. ...

Daily they come together in their private homes to eat bread and confirm the unity they possess in Christ. Of course, eating bread at home is hardly newsworthy, for this is customary and expected. However, Luke parallels the unity and harmony of the believers at the temple with their togetherness at common meals in private homes. The Christians “ate together with gladness and sincerity of heart.” Although Luke does not explicitly state so, the practice of eating common meals is comparable to the love feast mentioned indirectly and directly by Paul in his letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 11:20–22), by Peter (II Peter 2:13), and by Jude (Jude 12).⁷⁶ Walter Bauer explains the love feast as “a common meal eaten by early Christians in connection w[ith] their church services for the purpose of fostering and expressing brotherly love.”⁷⁷ In Jerusalem, the believers enjoy these meals “every day” (v. 46a), as Luke indicates in the Greek. Accordingly, we should distinguish the common meal from the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (v. 42).

Luke emphasizes the unity, harmony, joy, and sincerity of the believers. These elements are the fruits of the Holy Spirit, who is at work in the hearts and lives of the early Christians. In Acts, Luke repeatedly stresses joy or gladness, many times in relation to the influence of the Holy Spirit (see, e.g., 8:8, 39; 13:48, 52; 15:3; 16:34). Conversely, the expression *sincerity* occurs only once in the New Testament. It derives from a word that signifies smooth, plain land without any rocks that mar the surface or soil.”

“On the first day of the week” (i.e., Sunday; this is the first New Testament reference to Sunday worship) the Christians gathered **for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper**, which was followed by the communal meal, the “love feast.”¹² In Acts, the expression to break bread means to celebrate communion (2:42; and see 2:46). The worship service began with the preaching of the Word, and Luke relates that Paul preached until midnight. The believers gladly listened to Paul preach for an extended period, even though many of them probably had worked all day (see Practical Considerations in 20:7–12). They saw Paul’s visit as an extraordinary opportunity to receive instruction from an apostle, and they knew that on the next morning (Monday) Paul and his companions would depart for Syria. Hence, they rejoiced to hear Paul explain the Scriptures.

(1 Cor. 11:25, 26) “Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.” For a second time, Jesus issues **a command to observe the sacrament of Communion**. But he is more specific in giving this command. He instructs his people to celebrate and, whenever they do, to remember him in connection with his shed blood for the remission of sin.

In Old Testament times, the Israelites were commanded to observe Passover on the fourteenth of the Hebrew month Nisan. By contrast, Jesus commands his people to both eat the bread and drink of the cup regularly, **but refrains from giving his followers a fixed schedule. Some churches have Communion once every three months, others celebrate it monthly, and still others weekly.** Although the Lord’s Supper is observed in numerous churches on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, its celebration is not limited to a stated time. Instead Jesus says, “As often as you observe Communion, you must remember that I offered myself on your behalf.”

a. “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup.” Of all the New Testament writers who record the words of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, only Paul has Jesus’ command: “Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.” Paul adds his own summary of and insight into the Lord’s Supper. With the conjunction *for*, he summarizes Jesus’ formulary. He repeats the words *as often as* and links them to both the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup. These two actions must always be equal elements of this sacrament. At the Corinthian love feasts and Communion services, irregularities occurred which Paul now seeks to rectify.

b. “You proclaim the death of the Lord.” Paul teaches that all those who eat the bread and drink from the cup symbolically proclaim Jesus’ death. By his death, Jesus has made them partners of the new covenant that God established with his people and of which Christ is the mediator. Paul reminds them of the spiritual benefits that accrue from Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, and they by partaking of the bread and the cup acknowledge unity one with another in Christ.

When the church celebrates the Lord’s Supper in the setting of a worship service, ministers of the Word ought to proclaim the significance of Christ’s death. Whenever they expound the Word verbally, the worshipers proclaim it silently by partaking of the sacramental elements.

c. “Until he comes.” The members of the church proclaim both Jesus’ death and his return. They look forward to the day when Christ shall return and they shall be forever with the Lord. In the church of the second half of the first century, believers celebrated Communion and then prayed *Maranatha* (Come, O Lord). Christians cannot suppress their desire to be with Jesus; they must proclaim his death, resurrection, and return. In a similar vein, the prophet Isaiah notes his inability to suppress this desire.... ὡς ἄκις—this adverb expresses the idea of indefinite repetition (“whenever”). It occurs in both verses (vv. 25, 26) with the present subjunctive ἐσθίητε (you eat).

[Robertson, Grammar]”

3.13) THISELTON (2000:886),

“The relative adverb *hosakis* with *eav* (indefinite) is variously rendered as *often* as (AV/KJV, NRSV, and BAGD), *whenever* (NJB, NIV), or *every time* (REB). Grimm-Thayer attempt to explicate the indefinite force of the adverb with *eav* by *as often soever as*, which is strictly correct but archaic. As *often as* carries the disadvantage of perhaps seeming to introduce ***unintended nuances of frequency or regularity, while every time seems prosaic and misses the indefinite force of the clause.*** Findlay’s proposal **as many times** as seems to gain the best of all worlds and remains modern as well as accurate. This wording is un-Pauline (and usually late). Yet this alone cannot determine whether it remains part of “the tradition,” even if Paul may have taken it up from a pre-Pauline saying which he endorses. Nevertheless, other factors suggest that the isolation of the pre-Pauline tradition in 1 Cor 11:23-25 is unproblematic. We have already noted Eriksson’s identification of parallelisms and other features in vv. 23-25 (see above). In accordance with Eriksson’s arguments about Paul’s use of traditions as a basis for distinctive argument in 1 Corinthians, Paul introduces his application of the common presuppositions by *gar*, which serves as an *explicative* link with the recital of the tradition: **For as many times as...**”

3.14) KEENER (2005:98-99) se kommentaar by 1 Kor. 11:25,26

“As the Passover annually commemorated (and allowed new generations to share the experience of) the first redemption (Ex 12:14; 13:3; Deut 16:2–3; Jub. 49:15), so the Lord’s supper regularly did the same for the climactic redemption. Traditions suggest that in annually reenacting the Passover, Jewish people felt that they shared their ancestors’ experience (m. Pesah. 10:5). The regular reenactment of the Lord’s supper was no doubt intended to have the same effect, conscious of the Lord’s presence and act of redemption – which is not how the Corinthians were acting.”

3.15) MATHIS (2005) se verklaring van Hand. 2, 20 en 1 Kor. 11

Matthis se studie is baie belangrik, veral as mees volledige antwoord op die standpunt dat die Skrif ons gewetens bind aan weeklikse nagmaalviering. Hy werk met die relevante tekste, veral met die vraag hoeveel van alles wat in die vroeë kerk plaasgevind het, wat is bindend en/of wat was beskrywend, of die tekste nie ‘oorvra’ word as (my eie woorde) ‘handboek van elemente van ‘n erediens’ nie?

“The passages brought forward as evidence of weekly Communion are few. ***Those exts are insufficient to establish a principle of weekly Communion.*** In all of these instances, the real question, as propounded Presbyterian John Courtas, is: “Was it so frequently administered to the

same persons?...and except this be proven, nothing is proven at all.”⁶ For, indeed, if it were granted that the Supper was frequently offered, it may have been so due to the circumstances of the times, the people not able to attend worship at a regular basis (i.e. slaves, traveling merchants, etc.).

Thus the same individual would not have had the Meal on a weekly basis. Nevertheless, each passage will be analyzed in turn. First the Lucian passages will be examined before expounding the Pauline text.

Acts 2:42-46

This passage is the text used by almost all modern advocates for weekly Communion.⁷ However, this assertion is not defended; it is merely assumed that either verse 42 and/or verse 46 is sufficient to prove the case or strongly suggests its implementation. A simple set of questions reveals that this is not the case.

- 1) What does “breaking bread” mean?
- 2) Does it have the same referent in verses 42 and 46?
- 3) Does anything in these verses necessarily entail weekly Communion?

First of all, an examination of the Lucian usage of “breaking bread” (λαβων αρτον) in verses after the Last Supper shows an inconsistent usage of the phrase. ***It is acknowledged by advocates of weekly Communion that the presence of this phrase is not sufficient to establish the existence of the Lord’s Supper.***⁸

Logically, if Acts 2:46 refers to Communion, then the Apostles would have had to administer the Supper in a multitude of homes within one given day. With three-thousand souls saved in one day and only twelve apostles administering the Wine and Bread, the logistical considerations alone would not only be a nightmare, but would be physically impossible.⁹ On the other hand, if it refers to a general state of affairs (daily Communion at various houses and not all of them at once) then it does not prove weekly Communion.

In the second place, the question of the relation between verses 42 and 46 is in question. Some quote this whole passage as though both verses refer to the Supper. Others refer to only

⁶ *Frequency*, 10.

⁷ Horton, p.163, Wilson, p.15, Mathison, p. 225.

⁸ Gunn, p. 9. Compare Luke 24:30ff. and Acts 27:35 for non-communion usages.

⁹ The Bible actually says they broke bread from house to house, thus compounding the logistics problem beyond the incredible idea of feeding 3000 people everyday in a central location. Giving the Lord’s Supper to every household or groups of people in a house could be calculated as follows: given the size of Jerusalem and the likely fact that the believers’ homes in the city were spread out from each other, traveling by foot would make for a long day. Further, enacting the Supper in all those places would involve an entire worship service at the house. Thus, at least an hour of worship (with a short sermon?) would be practiced at each home every day, assuming they could attend at the same house everyday given the long work days. Granted, the Apostles could coordinate twelve services in twelve homes at the same time (thus, saving time): $12/3000 = 250$ people per worship service—this would mean finding 12 locations that could seat 250 people. None of these calculations include the busy ministry of the Apostles in diaconate work and prayer (Acts 6), outdoor preaching, ruling over disputes (Acts 5), healing people and fellowshiping with the saints.

the first verse.^{10/11} In such an instance, it appears that there is no consensus on this text. Alford and Meyer maintain a consistency of content in verses 42 and 46. Alford's Greek Testament commentary suggests that the breaking of bread in Acts 2:42 refers specifically to the *agape* feast commonly practiced and associated with the Lord's Supper.¹² Meyer concludes in a similar vein.¹³ Gunn notes, "The best explanation for this apparently diverse usage [vs. 42 as the Supper; vs. 46 as common meals] in such close proximity is that the early church combined the sacramental meal with a fellowship meal or love feast."¹⁴

In contrast, Calvin understands verse 42 to refer to the Supper and 46 to refer to normal meals, "...some do think that in this place, by breaking of bread is meant the Holy Supper, it seemeth to me that Luke meant no such thing. He signifieth, therefore, unto us, that they used to eat together, and that thriftily."¹⁵ Likewise, Kistemaker explains:

Daily they come together in their private homes to eat bread and confirm the unity they possess in Christ. Of course, eating bread at home is hardly newsworthy, for this is customary and expected. However, Luke parallels the unity and harmony of the believers at the temple with their togetherness at common meals in private homes... Accordingly, we should distinguish the common meal from the celebration of the Lord's Supper (v. 42).¹⁶

What is clear from the above commentaries is that there is no definite answer to this question. However, given the thrust of verses 44 and 45 (common sharing amongst the saints), it is likely verse 46 refers to the overall fellowship experienced not only in the Temple but also in every house. Nevertheless, it is not good policy to base church practice on unclear passages of the Bible.¹⁷

In the third place, even if the position of Gunn is taken, it does not logically lead to weekly Communion. As Gunn himself recognizes it leads to **daily Communion**.¹⁸ The text argues for more than is desired. Further, a natural question arises whether or not the pattern of the early Church is always and everywhere binding. If it is, then daily attendance at the Temple should be enacted and Christians should have "all things in common."

As Gunn rightly observes, the early Church existed during an extraordinary time with extraordinary activities.

¹⁰ Wilson and Horton only mention verse 42; Gunn contends that verse 42 is the Supper while 46 is a common meal (p. 9); Mathison focuses on verse 42 and 46 (p.

¹¹).

¹² *The Greek New Testament—with a critically revised text...and a critical and exegetical commentary*, Vol. II. (London: Gilbert & Rivington, 1856), 26.

¹³ *Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, Acts, Vol. IV.* trans. Venables. (Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1980), 68.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 9.

¹⁵ *Commentary of the Book of Acts*, 132.

¹⁶ Kistemaker, S. J., & W. Hendriksen. *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*. New Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, elect. Ed. (Logos), 1953-2001), 113. Both Wilson, Gunn and Kistemaker assert that v.42 refers to the Lord's Supper because the other elements within the list are part of worship. It is not clear why 'fellowship' would be an element of worship, strictly speaking. Some commentators suggest that the prayers may have been the Jewish prayer times. Even so, simply quoting verse 42 will not prove weekly Communion but only a Communion that was 'steadfastly held' (προσκαρτερου present participle) by the Church.

¹⁷ Kistemaker notes that determining this question in relation to verse 42 is "difficult".

¹⁸ In fact, if taken thusly, pastors should travel from home to home administering the Supper to each family!

Acts 20:7

As in the previous text, similar questions as in the proceeding section need answering. First of all, “Breaking bread” in and of itself does not necessitate the Lord’s Supper (cp. Acts 26:46), as mentioned previously. As for the second question, Alford and Meyer believe that both verses refer to the same *αγάπαι* Communion.¹⁹ Calvin believes it refers to the Supper as does Kistemaker. Specifically, Kistemaker maintains that verse 7 is an introductory sentence presenting the general idea before detailing the events:

Often he [Luke] introduces an incident or action which he explains in the succeeding context... Similarly, Luke’s remark that the Christians in Troas came together to break bread (v. 7) probably is introductory. The comment that Paul broke bread and ate refers to the actual celebration of the Lord’s Supper and the partaking of the love feast....²⁰

Given that this passage is written about the Lord’s Supper, does it necessitate weekly Communion? The intended purpose of this event is for celebrating the Lord’s Supper and preaching. Paul has traveled far to encourage the believers. This broader section of Acts focuses on the activities of Paul and his travels. The larger idea is not to present a snap-shot of worship *per se*.²¹ Worship was weekly practiced, but the Supper was especially practiced when Paul arrived. Calvin elaborates: “Therefore, I think thus, that they had appointed a solemn day for the celebrating of the Holy Supper of the Lord among themselves, ***which might be commodious for them all.***”²²

In other words, it was not a weekly event. Quoting verse 7 only establishes that it occurred; and even if regularly occurring²³, the frequency is not mentioned.²⁴ The fact that it happened on Sunday is questionable if verse 11 is the actually eating of Communion. In such a case, then, the Lord’s Supper was celebrated on Monday (after midnight). Moreover, the text simply states the purpose of this particular visit (being unique since Paul was there as Calvin noted). More evidence is needed to establish that weekly Communion occurred than appealing to silence or asserting that its existence in Holy Writ is sufficient evidence. This passage does not support the weekly Communion proposition.

However, this passage can be taken as a general indicator that the Church worshiped on Sunday. The number of times they met on that day, how long the services were, etc., are not definitively answered here. What it does not establish is the frequency of the Supper.

Additionally, if it establishes a regular Communal service, then it is questionable whether it is a divine precept to be followed. If it is, then Gunn has not only established a text suggestive of weekly Communion, but has established a text that is *binding* for the Church. Of course, the very question then becomes whether all actions by the early Church and Apostles are

¹⁹ Ibid, 206; Meyer, 386.

²⁰ Kistemaker, 718.

²¹ Gunn asserts that since the Spirit inserted this section, it’s most likely for the purpose of promoting weekly Communion. Yet, verse 16, through similar reasoning, may argue for the continuation of Pentecost.

²² Ibid, 236, verse 7.

²³ The verb, σ υ ν η γ α γ μ ε ν ω ν , is a perfect-passive participle used as a circumstantial. A present-active would better reinforce the weekly Lord’s Supper thesis. Courtas’ translates it “having been collected together”. He maintains that the passive implies an official call to gather and since it was not in the present it was not a regular occurrence (*Frequency*, 13).

²⁴ Regular occurrences could be quarterly, compare Lee’s *Quarterly communion At Annual Seasons*.

de facto binding. Further, if it establishes a Communion service, then it establishes the Supper with every worship service (not just once a week) if this text exemplified the normal practice of the Church. On the other hand, it could also establish *only* one public worship service in the evening, and that with the Supper. ***This pattern would preclude additional services since there is no example of two worship services on the Lord's Day in this passage.*** Similarly, this divine example would encourage long sermons with services lasting into Monday. Logically, then, the text has too many questions unanswered and if answered in line with Gunn's reasoning, leads to a one-publicworship-service-a-week paradigm with the Lord's Supper practiced late into the next day.

1 Corinthians 11:17ff.

In 1 Corinthians 11:17 and following, Paul states:

Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together [συνερχεθε] not for the better but for the worse...¹⁸ For first of all, when you come together [συνερχομενων] as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it...Therefore when you come together [συνερχομενων] in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's upper...³³ Therefore, my brethren, when you come together [συνερχομενοι] to eat, wait for one another. ²⁵

It is contended by some of the authors that this participle, *συνερχομενων*, implies weekly Communion. ***However, at best, it only suggests the possibility.*** It does not strongly nor necessarily lead to the desired conclusions. Neither Alford, Meyer, Calvin nor Kistemaker alludes to the question of frequency in this passage.

Contextually, the purpose of Paul's writing is to admonish the Corinthians. Specifically, Paul simply states that when coming together for the purpose of eating the Meal, then they should wait. ***It does not say "whenever you come to weekly worship, then partake of the Supper."***

Rather, Paul limits the circumstantial clause to the eating of the Meal: "therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another" (v. 33). Besides, if the Meal were specifically tied to the occurrence of public worship, the text would prove the partaking of the Supper in every worship service not in only one weekly service. ***There is no command for once-a-week Communion.***

MATTHIS se konklusie na sy eksegetiese ondersoek:

In summary, none of the passages brought as evidence for weekly Communion stand up to close scrutiny. If these passages prove anything (granting that they must be followed as divine patterns), ***they prove either daily Communion, or only once-a-week worship (and no more) or every-worship-service Communion.*** Such propositions are beyond the pale of Gunn and Wilsons' intended purposes; but the third proposition is closer to Horton's and Mathison's defense of *at-least-weekly* Supper.

²⁵ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (1 Co 11:33). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

5. SAMEVATTING EN KONKLUDERENDE OPMERKINGS

Dit blyk dat daar huidiglik in ons tye min of meer die volgende standpunte is oor die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering.

5.1) Aan die eenkant is hulle wat meen die Skrif openbaar genoegsaam dat ons bindende besluite kan neem oor die presiese gereeldheid van nagmaalviering, hetsy bv. weeklikse (Horton, Mathison, Schwertley, ens.?) of kwartaallikse (Lee?) nagmaalviering, en dat die kerk van Christus daarna terug moet reformeer. Iemand soos Horton noem wel dat dit nie 'n saak van verdeeldheid onder gerformeerdes moet wees nie.

5.2) Aan die anderkant is daar hulle wat sterk pleitdooie sal lewer vir hetsy weeklikse of maandelikse of kwartaallikse nagmaalviering, maar meen die Skrif openbaar nie genoegsaam om 'n bindende uitspraak te maak vir alle kerke oor die presiese gereeldheid van nagmaalviering nie, en pleit dat elke plaaslike kerk/kerkverband daaroor sal besluit in die lig van die Skrif en hul gemeente se pastorale situasie. Soos reeds genoem, die 'neem jou gemeente, lidmate' in ag in die oorweging van die gereeldheid van nagmaalviering, is nie 'n 'pragmatiese' argument nie, maar juis 'n bybelse argument gegrond bv. in die Woord van die Here in 1 Kor. 11:27-34.

Voorstanders van albei bogenoemde standpunte, verklaar dan die geskiedenis van hierdie debat deur die eeue, en die kerke en konfessies se besluite vanuit hul bepaalde voorveronderstellings uit die Skrif oor die saak, wat heeltemal verstaanbaar is. So sal Horton en Schwertley byvoorbeeld 'tradisie; praktiese oorwegings en tekort aan predikante' as rede verklaar waarom baie Skots presbiteriaanse kerke minder gereeld nagmaal gevier het, wat inderdaad so was en kon wees, terwyl bv. Kuehner en Matthis weer sal antwoord, dat daardie selfde predikante en kerke juis groot erns gemaak het met voorbereiding vir nagmaal, pastorale besoeke, tug toepassing (3de kenmerk van ware kerk wees, NGB art. 29) vir hul redes waarom daar minder gereeld 'moet' nagmaal gehou word.

Daar is ook 'n goeie argument wat pleit dat, hoe groot rykdom van die evangelie wat verkondiging is, en weekliks gehoor moet word, netso groot moet dit wees vir die 'prentjie' van daardie evangelie, die nagmaal. Dit is inderdaad so, maar mens kan dieselfde redeneer met die doop, dit vind nie elke erediens plaas nie (en nog minder ongelukkig in ons kinderseën verwerpingstye), maar dit beteken nie ons waardeer dit minder of begeer minder daarna nie?

Matthis skryf daarom, wat ook my konklusie daaroor sal wees, oor regte verhouding tussen die regte verhouding tussen Woord (heeltyd) en sakrament (gereeld): "Some laymen have asked about the relationship between the Meal of our Lord and the preached Word. What exactly is this relationship? Is one more important than the other? Their relationship is one of necessity and privilege. Since feeding upon Christ occurs outside the Lord's Supper in the act of belief through hearing of the Word, then this event can be compared to every day eating. Eating is necessary for life. In this imagery, both the hearing of the Word and the observance of the Supper are eating events.

However, the Meal is an occasional special meal wherein God calls us to pay particular attention to Christ's death. Just as one eats meals everyday with their family (and eats it properly and not slovenly), so on occasion, the family has a special "going-out" meal wherein everyone pays special attention to their attire and manners. And not unlike the parable of the feast, those without proper attire are not allowed in. So, too, preaching and reading the Word is a necessity of everyday life, but the Meal is a special occasion of the Word and Sacrament. The Word is necessary for conversion, sanctification and growth. Thus, everyone is invited because of its basic requirement

for spiritual life. Not even unbelievers are turned away from the preaching of the Word. However, the Lord's Supper is not so. It is a privilege that only admits "worthy receivers", excluding infants and children and those under discipline of the church. It is not so necessary that all members of the church must attend it regardless of their spiritual condition before the church."

Dit is vir my baie duidelik deur my ondersoek van hierdie onderwerp, dat **beide** standpunte, groot erns maak met beide:

1. die Skrif se verklaring oor die onderwerp, en,
2. die groot rykdom, vreugde en goddelike erns van die 'heilige' nagmaal.

So dit is nie dat bv. een standpunt meer en ander standpunt minder erns maak met die Woord en sakramente nie, terwyl daar natuurlik na alle en beide kante 'misbruike en gevare' kan wees in hetsy weeklikse of minder gereelde nagmaalvieringe, soos 1 Kor. 11:17-34 **ons juis leer**, dat:

- a) ongeag weeklikse of daaglikse nagmaalviering in die vroeë kerk, het daar nog steeds sondes, gevare en probleme plaasgevind wat aangespreek moes word, en/of
- b) sou dit ook kon wees volgens 1 Kor. 11 se gevare, dit dalk juis daartoe gelei het, deur apostoliese voorbeeld en vermaning van Paulus, dat daar daarom juis ter wille van die heiligheid van die tafel, om beter self ondersoek te doen, tug toe te pas, ens... die kerk van Christus geleidelik minder gereeld nagmaalviering gehou het, en indien wel dit so was, het daar ook dan gevare en probleme deur die eeue met minder gereelde nagmaalvieringe ontstaan, wat ook aangespreek moes word. DUS, die presiese gereeldheid van die nagmaalviering is nie allesbepalend en noodwendig vir enige gevare en misbruike na enige kant toe nie. Daar is 'pousgesindes, mistici, wederdopers, yweraars' aan beide kante van die saak wat hetsy Woord en/of sakramente kan misbruik, wat hetsy pleit vir dit 'moet' weekliks wees of dit 'moet' minder gereeld wees, en nogsteeds gevare en probleme tot gevare het.

Daarom is my samevattende konklusie en aanbeveling:

Dat elke kerkraad en gemeente biddend ondersoekend lerend besig sal wees oor hierdie onderwerp,

- a) vanuit die Skrif,
- b) wat ons konfessies en liturgie en kerkgeskiedenis hieroor reeds geleer het,
- c) in agnemende van elke gemeente en lidmate se situasie,

en dan sal besluit hoe gereeld die nagmaalviering sal plaasvind, hetsy weekliks, maandeliks of kwartaalliks. In die woorde van die Dordtse kerkorde,

Artikel 62 "**Elke kerk moet die nagmaal hou op die wyse wat na sy oordeel tot die meeste stigting dien.** Dit moet egter goed verstaan word dat die uitwendige seremonies wat in die Woord van God voorgeskryf is, nie verander mag word nie, dat alle bygeloof vermy moet word en dat na die preek en algemene gebede, die formulier van die Heilige Nagmaal, asook die gebed wat daarby behoort, gelees moet word."

Artikel 63 "Die nagmaal van die Here moet **minstens** elke drie maande gehou word."

Artikel 64. "Die bediening van die nagmaal vind alleen in 'n erediens plaas onder toesig van die ouderlinge."

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