

Don't Stop Believin, Hold on You Genevans
A Journey into the City-State of Geneva Before and During John Calvin's Pastorate

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The city-state of Geneva held an influential role in the protestant reformation of the 16th century. The city officially adopted the protestant faith and was visited by John Calvin, who would minister there (with a break for an exile-sabbatical) from 1536 until his death in 1564.

This paper will argue that Calvin's influence in Geneva, especially pertaining to worship, was a good and virtuous one, and that he was no dictator nor comparable to a protestant pope. A large part of the project sets up the contrast between pre-reformed and reformed worship in Geneva and draws conclusions from this. At times scholars have argued that Calvin was a vindictive dictator in Geneva and that he made the city-state into a strict and joyless commune.¹ The historical data will show that a more accurate portrait is a different one.

Churches, pastors, and Christians in the pews today can learn from Calvin's faithful example as a pastor and from the church services of reformed Geneva as a model for capturing the essence of Gospel worship under the New Covenant. The essence of Christian worship is shown in early reformed Geneva in a brighter frame than most eras partially due to the fact that the city-state and her churches had known only Roman Catholic worship until the reformation, which sets up a vivid contrast. A different, better air filled the buildings when the pulpits were occupied by protestant preachers. Those who had breathed the old were well positioned to be struck by the freshness and life of the new. We can let this serve to refresh our memory of what has been achieved for us in the reformation. We should be zealous to preserve pure Gospel

¹ F.L. Cross ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 220, "From 1555 to his death he [Calvin] was the unopposed dictator of Geneva, which, through him, had become a city of the strictest morality. ... his vindictiveness and his claim to be the supreme authority to decide what is true Christianity and what is not was resented even by many of his followers." Strong wording such as, "unopposed dictator" and "his claim to be the supreme authority" are absent in the third edition of *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, published 1997.

doctrine and worship. We should relish it all the more when sweet, plain worship and good preaching takes place among us regularly.

A Portrait of Pre-Reformed Geneva and Reformed Geneva

Politics and City Life

Politically and economically, Geneva has a rich history. Prior to the reformation, it had long been a moderately prosperous merchant city, though relatively small. Its politics and civic structure had been subject to shifting with the times in the years leading up to the reformation. A period of increasing political independence has been traced from 1387 to 1536.² Medieval Geneva had been under the threefold government of bishops (who served as lords of the city under the emperor), the *vidomne* (the bishops' deputy or sheriff for executing justice, an office which was held by the house of Savoy from 1290 to 1525, the reformation-era Duke of Savoy commonly being referred to as the prince-bishop) and democratically elected syndics holding administrative offices.³ By 1387, the people further established chartered rights of their own by securing the *franchises*, "the Magna Carta of Geneva,"⁴ which increased the power of the city's own elected officials in judicial proceedings, police administration, and other matters. The momentum toward self-government rolled forward, and a long struggle ensued with the house of Savoy. Geneva enlisted the help of Bern, a city which accepted the reformation before them and

² Herbert D. Foster, "Geneva Before Calvin (1387-1536): The Antecedents of a Puritan State," *The American Historical Review* 8, no. 2 (1903): 217, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1832923>.

³ Foster, "Geneva Before Calvin," 219.

⁴ Foster, "Geneva Before Calvin," 220.

would exercise some peer pressure to push Geneva toward reform. Foster notes an additional factor leading up to Geneva shifting to the reformed faith:

Up to 1533, the struggle had been political, against the duke and bishop as temporal rulers hostile to Genevan chartered rights. But there was another ground for objecting to the regime of the ecclesiastical prince. ‘There were,’ says a recent Catholic writer on Geneva, ‘real and evident abuses to be noted among the Catholics and even among the higher clergy . . . and above all among the monks.’⁵

This dissatisfaction among the people themselves is important to note, as well as the people’s own movements toward political independence and self-imposed social and governmental restructuring. Geneva obtained its independence with roughly 30 dependent villages attached to it. This independence meant that the city officials also inherited control of the religious establishment. “By 1536, and before Calvin's arrival, the councils had also assumed the entire control of morals and religion which they had formerly shared with the ecclesiastical authorities.”⁶

The Genevan city authorities were fairly strict in enforcing religious code, prior to Calvin’s arrival. An example is the story of Jean Balard, a respected citizen who did not like reformation doctrine but was willing to quietly contribute to the good of his city and stay out of the way. That didn’t work though, as Balard was threatened repeatedly, arrested by the city magistrates, and forced to say “the mass is bad.” Foster interprets this in the following way,

It is a sadly significant picture -an honored and sane magistrate and not a fanatic, nobly pleading for broad tolerance and freedom of conscience, but compelled to submit his religious convictions to the apparent political necessities of his day. As patriotic as he was

⁵ Foster, “Geneva Before Calvin,” 223. The reference Foster gives for the “recent Catholic writer”, with additional comment from himself, is, *Mem. et Doc. pub. by l'Acadlemie Salesienne*, Tome XIV. (Annecy, 1891, "Pier mis d'imprimer, 8 Oct. 1890, Louis, Eveque d'Annecy."), pp. 175-176. On this point, there is substantial agreement between Catholic and Protestant historians; compare the nun, Jeanne de Jussie, *Le Levain de Calvinisme, etc.*, and Kampschulte (Calvin, etc., I. 90-91, 169-170) with the accounts in Bonivard, *Chron.*, I. 90, and the extracts from records in appendix to Revilliod's edition of Fromment, *Actes et Gestes, etc.*, esp. pp. ci-cv.

⁶ Foster, “Geneva Before Calvin,” 229.

tolerant, the statesman sacrificed his theology to his patriotism and remained to serve his state. The story of Balard, instructive in itself, is still more significant because of its date. The first inquisition, in July, 1536, occurred before Calvin settled in Geneva, the final one, in 1539, during Calvin's exile when his anti-clerical opponents were in power. Calvin found Geneva and Europe intolerant; he did not make them so.⁷

Moreover, prior to Geneva becoming protestant, they had a history of civil policies against many common amusements as well as policies in religious matters. In the year 1430, Genevan authorities banned “playing” before the celebration of the mass. In 1492, they banned dances without permission from the authorities. By the year 1530, prior both to Calvin’s arrival and the city becoming protestant, the following things had been outlawed by city ordinances by authority of the city’s small council: playing dice in the streets, as well as bowls and cards, and blaspheming the name of God “and His glorious mother.”⁸

Referenced at the beginning of this paper was an excerpt from the first edition of the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, claiming that “From 1555 to his death he [Calvin] was the unopposed dictator of Geneva, which, through him, had become a city of the strictest morality. ... his claim to be the supreme authority to decide what is true Christianity and what is not was resented even by many of his followers.” The historical data provided as to Geneva’s development as a politically independent city-state which had its own religious code enforced by the magistrates prior to Calvin’s arrival shows that the people had a mind of their own for self-government, and they were already in the habit of enforcing moral and religious codes. Thi,

⁷ Foster, “Geneva Before Calvin,” 233. Concerning Geneva’s religious changes and enforcements prior to Calvin’s arrival, see also Thomas A. Lambert, *Preaching, Praying and Policing the Reform in Sixteenth Century Geneva* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Microform, 1998), 165-166, “The shift in Genevan official religion was abrupt and dramatic. With the interdiction of the Mass, much of what was left of the resident clergy withdrew from the city. For those who remained, the climate in Geneva became so hostile that the Council could not guarantee their safety. ... On the last day of the month [of October] at the end of a session of the Two Hundred, the Council burned images in public at the Maison de Ville. It was the first act of state-sponsored iconoclasm.”

⁸ Foster, “Geneva Before Calvin,” 231.

coupled with the fact that, as we shall see, from 1536 to 1555 Calvin experienced massive pushback and was constantly at risk of being expelled from the city, serves to show the unlikelihood of Calvin's success had he attempted to set himself up as a dictator.⁹ The people were wary of prince-bishops and had essentially already fought a bitter war with one. They would not, and did not, allow Calvin to become one. Moreover, the people of Geneva were already accustomed to the enforcement of religious and moral codes in the city. Calvin did not intend to make Geneva into a protestant Rome nor himself into its pope.¹⁰ Any who think that Calvin made a "claim to be the supreme authority to decide what is true Christianity and what is not" must be informed that the reformation in Geneva and elsewhere was not just all about Calvin. He was extremely dependent on his colleagues and his many close friends in Geneva and throughout Europe. Gordon and Trueman provide a glimpse into this aspect of Calvin's persona in the following quote.

Calvin was never a singular or isolated figure, but a man who lived, wrote, and preached in close association with colleagues in Geneva and abroad. ... He utterly depended on a wide cast of figures such as Guillaume Farel, Pierre Viret, Martin Bucer, Laurent de Normandie, Theodor Beza, and a host of others (Bruening 2005; van den Berg 2009; Zuidema 2016). They were not simply spear-carriers in a Calvin performance, but his friends, confidants, and advisers. With other reformers, notably Bullinger, Calvin would share drafts of his work, and it greatly distressed him when the Zurich churchmen did not always reply.¹¹

Calvin's success, influence, and relative lack of pushback from the year 1555 to his death was in part due to the fact that there were no longer any organized "ant-Calvin parties" operative

⁹ Bruce Gordon and Carl R. Trueman ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Calvin and Calvinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 8, "There is no more insidious and false myth about Calvin than that he was the theocratic ruler of Geneva. His contemporaries such as Jérôme-Hermès Bolsec certainly took delight in portraying him as a despotic Zeus casting thunderbolts, but their polemic flattered the Frenchman. Until the elections of 1555 Calvin's position in the city was extremely precarious and a second expulsion was always a possibility."

¹⁰ Gordon and Trueman, *Oxford Handbook of Calvin*, 9, "Calvin never believed that the emerging Reformed churches owed anything to Geneva in terms of authority (Murdock 2004; Speelman 2014; Woo 2019). When the English exiles in Frankfurt wrote to resolve their internal controversies over worship practices, he replied that they were not to make a Rome of Geneva."

¹¹ Gordon and Trueman, *Oxford Handbook of Calvin*, 9-10.

after they were defeated in a vote in 1555. So, Calvin went largely unopposed after 1555, but remained subject to the civil magistrates and city councils until his death. He was not made a citizen of Geneva until 1559. There were powers held by the civil magistrates and city councils that were always separated from Calvin's hand. Calvin and the Company of Pastors had a role in the moral conduct expected of citizens, but Calvin's main influence was always through his preaching and persuading the people from the Scripture. "He did not have access to the decision-making bodies in the city, save for the appointment of pastors and the regulation of morals. What authority he possessed appears to have derived largely from his personality and his influence as a religious teacher and preacher; even this authority, however, was constantly challenged by the city council until 1555."¹² Then, with Calvin's reforms receiving less pushback, William Monter describes the period from 1555 to Calvin's death as "the brightest decade of Geneva's history."¹³ During that period essentially all the people of Geneva went to church weekly and heard sermons. In their public life they lived out a desire to obey God as a community. There was a general expectation that serious offenses would be reported to governing authorities. In large measure, people wanted to avoid scandal as well as God's displeasure. Geneva under Calvin has sometimes been compared to a modern police-state, with neighbors spying on each other. But this is an unnecessary and inaccurate comparison, as even the authorities to which citizens could report "had been instituted to admonish rather than punish the guilty."¹⁴

Pre-Reformed Worship

¹² F.L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Christian Church: Third Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 267.

¹³ William Monter, *Calvin's Geneva* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), 99.

¹⁴ Monter, *Calvin's Geneva*, 101.

Sources for constructing an accurate first-hand picture of worship services in pre-reformation Geneva are scarce, but Robert M. Kingdon suggests that we can assume similarity with the worship services of neighboring European countries of that time, especially France, with whom Geneva shared significant “cultural and linguistic ties.”¹⁵ The religious life of people in Geneva prior to the reformation would have involved rich sensory experience, it would have deeply bound the society together around religious ceremony. They were a religious people, there is no doubt about it. Although there was little place given for preaching in the vernacular in the Roman Catholic practice of the day, the general population would have shared basic knowledge of Christianity as Rome saw it, with the mass being central. The parish priests were not preachers and were not expected to prepare and deliver sermons. However, professional Roman Catholic preachers would go to the various cities and preach during seasons such as Lent and Advent, services which the people were expected to attend. In spite of the lack of weekly preaching, a baseline level of catechesis and shared knowledge of the faith would have been present.

The weekly rhythm of religious life was focused on the celebration of the mass. In Sunday service, the priest would stand afar off in front of the people, with his back turned to them for much of the ceremony, saying words in Latin while the people watched or prayed. It was not necessary for the people to know or hear what was being said, only that they be present and offer prayers and adoration at the appointed time. Once the priest consecrated the elements, a bell would ring which indicated that the attendees should look up from their prayers to observe the “bread which had become God.”¹⁶ They were taught to believe that God was uniquely among

¹⁵ Robert M. Kingdon, *Reforming Geneva: Discipline, Faith, and Anger in Calvin's Geneva* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012), 27

¹⁶ Kingdon 28. Kingdon points out that Protestants in the city referred to the mass wafer as “the Dough God.”

them now, and so the host was elevated and the people were to give reverence. This paints a picture of an overtly visual experience, with very little understanding required on behalf of the laity in attendance. For the laity, there was no partaking of the mass that could be expected weekly, although most could participate on Easter, after a thorough season of preparation. The laity could, however, eat regular bread each week that had been blessed (not to be confused with the host). There would also be prayers, some Scripture readings, and a brief oral message in the vernacular in which announcements would be made and catechetical instruction given.¹⁷

Reformed Worship

The worship in reformed Geneva, as usual in reformation-era protestant churches, was a drastic shift in the experience of the laity from medieval Catholic practice. Instead of a mostly visual experience, most visual attractions were removed from protestant places of worship. The focus was on the teaching and preaching of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It became necessary for the people to *understand*, not just observe or participate. Elsie Ann Mckee writes of the common people,

When they came to church the place and the experience of worship itself were significantly changed from their pre-reform lives. Not only were there fewer buildings where services were held, but these looked rather different inside. The statues and most of the religious art had been removed in the first iconoclastic days; progressively the rest of the medieval devotional material was dismantled, although it took some years to complete the process... The most notable change of behavior for the majority of people who came to worship in Protestant Geneva was that now they were expected to sit down and listen for the whole service.¹⁸

¹⁷ Kingdon 28-29.

¹⁸ Elsie Ann McKee, *The Pastoral Ministry and Worship in Calvin's Geneva* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2016), 253, 255.

As noted previously, sermons did not hold a high place in medieval Catholic worship. Sermons held a very high place in early reformed worship. Multiple times each week, most of the people of Geneva would hear sermons that explained passages of the Bible, rebuked sin, and encouraged faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. The protestant doctrine of justification by faith is part of what caused the shift from the Roman emphasis on visual observation and participation in the host of the mass, to the protestant emphasis on the cognition of all who attended. Everyone needed to hear and understand the Gospel, for “faith comes by hearing” (Rom. 10:17). Calvin’s method followed that of Zwingli, preaching verse by verse through books of the Bible. The most important elements of worship to Calvin, and thus reflected in the Genevan services, were prayer, preaching, and sacraments. There were multiple preaching centers in Geneva, with preachers rotating between different locations. “This practice of rotation was designed by Calvin to ensure that Geneva’s townspeople would be edified by a variety of preachers; it also affirmed the collegial nature of pastoral ministry in the city and discouraged ministers from viewing their preaching posts as personal fiefdoms.”¹⁹

The protestant Genevan conception of the Lord’s Day came from Calvin’s understanding that the Lord’s Day is a Christian ordinance, necessary for the meeting of God’s people for prayer and instruction. His understanding of the Sabbath was far less strict than the medieval conception, and he emphasized the spiritual rest which believers experience in God through faith in Christ. The Lord’s Day was to be a day of rest; Calvin told the people to physically rest from their labors on that day, while viewing the commandment as fulfilled in a special way in Christ.²⁰

¹⁹ Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin’s Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 20.

²⁰ McKee, *Ministry and Worship in Calvin’s Geneva*, 297-300.

Congregational singing was a large change in the eyes of people living through the reformation. Men, women, boys and girls would raise their voices together in Genevan worship services in the singing of Psalms. There were actually significant educational endeavors initiated during Calvin's time to help the people in their ability to sing. Calvin loved music, arguing that it was one of the chief means of recreation God had given to us, and he was delighted to consider that the people of Geneva could now be lifting their voices in fields and homes, singing praise to God.²¹ The Psalters produced in Geneva were some of the best-selling books of the century.

The order of service on a typical Lord's Day in Protestant Geneva had multiple iterations from 1533 until Calvin's death. Farel developed a service order that began with a prayer of intercession, then Scripture and the sermon, the people would be catechized and encouraged to confess their sins, the Lord's Prayer would be recited, then the Apostle's Creed, then it would close with more prayer and a benediction.²² Calvin's own order of service developed from the influence of Farel upon him, as well as Bucer, and through his own convictions concerning Scriptural worship. We must keep in mind that Calvin came into a project already started and did not want to tear down good work that had been done. As many pastors know who have taken roles in churches where they would prefer to see things done differently, change takes time, great patience, and gentleness.

A typical Lord's Day as experienced by the laity under Calvin would look as follows: Sunday began as bells rang and called the people to the worship of God. They would gather to one of the buildings appointed for preaching in the city. People would enter, filing in and finding seats without putting on a show. There would be no special place of seating for noble persons,

²¹ McKee, *Ministry and Worship in Calvin's Geneva*, 325

²² McKee, *Ministry and Worship in Calvin's Geneva*, 315

anyone could sit wherever they liked. The pastor would enter the pulpit and he would pray, during which prayer the people knelt. The congregation sang a Psalm together, then the pastor prayed and asked for God's help to understand the text. He read the appointed text of Scripture and preached on it. The pastor would pick up right where he had left off the previous Sunday in the biblical text, going verse by verse as time permitted. The pastor gave a prayer of intercession at the end of the sermon, then he recited the Apostle's Creed²³ and the service was concluded with the benediction of Numbers 6:24-26. From 1540 to 1562 the order of service shifted slightly, adding slots for more singing of Psalms or singing of the Decalogue or Simeon's Song. There was likely a brief time for announcements, and an afternoon service would be held that looked quite similar to the morning service.

Four times a year, the Lord's Supper would be celebrated. On those days, the regular order of service would be added to. The celebration of the Lord's Supper is another area where a drastic shift can be seen from medieval Catholic services to those of the reformed. Now, the people could partake each time as long as they believed in Christ and had solemnly prepared. No longer was there just a priest communing with God, but all believers in good standing had access to the Supper on every occasion of its celebration. Calvin himself gives commentary on this change in a sermon delivered to his congregation,

But since then [the days of the apostles], the world has become so corrupt and depraved that they came to disregard that institution [of the Lord's Supper]. It seemed to them [Catholics] that since the priest had played his little game and was there on their behalf, it

²³ It seems uncertain whether the people participated verbally in the service other than singing. They would have been expected to know the Apostle's Creed, but it may have just been spoken from the front by the pastor on their behalf. There is evidence, though it is admittedly ambiguous and difficult to draw conclusions from, that the congregation recited the creed at least in services when the Lord's Supper was taken. For example, John Calvin, *Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Rob Roy McGregor (Banner of Truth, 2008), 70-71, "all of us, being united with the body of Jesus Christ, share in this breaking of bread, which is His holy Supper, to show that we must live in peace and harmony with our neighbors, just as the members of a body are joined together in harmony. That is what we confess in the creed after confessing our belief in the church of God when we say we believe in the communion of the saints."

was enough that he had drunk and eaten by himself without the participation of the others. But we see how Jesus Christ spoke of the supper when He instituted it: ‘This cup is the new and everlasting covenant in my blood. Take it and drink, all of you’ (1 Cor. 11:25; Matt. 26:27). In that, there is no suggestion that one individual should drink and indulge himself apart from others. On the contrary, in the mass everyone is excommunicated. To deprive the people of this communion is to excommunicate them.²⁴

It seems that Calvin wanted to celebrate the Lord’s Supper more than four times per year, and perhaps every week. He was prevented by the authorities, and it seems, from the same sermon, that he may not have viewed the people as godly enough to partake more than four times per year anyway. Calvin said to his people in the same sermon,

One of our great faults is that we do not celebrate the Lord’s Supper with the zeal of the primitive church. They did not limit their practice to four times a year, but they served it every Sunday, and sometimes even every day. The faithful wanted so much to follow evangelical teaching that when they were assembled, they served the Supper at least every Sunday. ... Even though we know the teaching is pure and complete, we are still so wretched we cannot receive it as we should. For although we are to come only a few times a year to commune at the Supper, how many will come with their wicked affections? Some will come with their hatreds, their grudges; others will be full of avarice, greed, thefts, and others will cling to their blasphemies, their filthiness, or their excesses. Or else, even if they are in any way prepared when they come, they will not wait until the next day to return to their sins, to their vindictiveness, to their quarrels, and to their old hatreds. They will return to their old ways. So we are very far from being prepared to receive the Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ every day or every Sunday. Even with great effort we cannot come prepared four times a year to free ourselves from our iniquities. We have good reason to deplore our iniquity.²⁵

Perhaps Calvin expected too much of his people in this matter. Were not the churches in the days of the apostles full of sinners just like churches in 1556 or today? Yet when he preached this sermon Calvin believed the churches in the days of the apostles took the Lord’s Supper weekly. Again, there were difficult circumstances with magistrates not allowing more frequent communion, and the issues of ungodliness among the people may have been severe and

²⁴ John Calvin, *Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Rob Roy McGregor (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2008), 70-71.

²⁵ Calvin, *Sermons on Acts*, 70-71.

extenuating. It is hard, rather it is impossible, to step fully into Calvin's shoes, and we must exercise humility. Elsie Ann McKee suggests that "He [Calvin] insists that the real worthiness needed in order to partake is repentance and trust in Christ, not perfection."²⁶ Calvin also clearly taught a very edifying view of the Lord's Supper, stating that "it always remains true that our souls have no other pasture than Jesus Christ" and "If we wish, then, to communicate worthily in the sacred Supper of our Lord, we must hold in firm and hearty confidence the Lord Jesus Christ as our sole righteousness, life and salvation, receiving and accepting the promises which are given us by Him as certain and assured; renouncing on the other hand all other confidence, in order that, distrusting ourselves and all other creatures, we may rest fully in Him and content ourselves with His grace alone."²⁷ So, the most fundamental part in Calvin's eyes for preparation for the Lord's Supper was that the believer really be believing in Christ for salvation. Pastors today must be careful not to expect perfection, but encourage sincere believers to come to the Lord's Supper and to participate in the other means of grace for the spiritual nourishment needed to grow in grace.

Reflections on the Trip

A Roman Catholic Frenchman and opponent of reform provided one of the most thorough eyewitness accounts of a Genevan worship service under Calvin that we have. He published what he saw after visiting Geneva to mock what they were doing there, but listen to his description of the church building and the Lord's Day service he attended:

²⁶ Elsie Ann McKee, *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001), 104.

²⁷ McKee, *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 107-108, wherein Calvin's *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper* is quoted at length.

It is altogether like the interior of a college or school, full of benches, with a pulpit in the middle for the preacher. And in front of the pulpit there are benches for the women and small children. And around them, raised up, the men are seated, without any distinction of personal rank. The stained glass windows are just about all knocked out, and the plaster dust is up to the ankles. . . . And immediately [the townspeople] entered the church, each person choosing his own place to sit, as in school, and then they waited for the preacher to come to the pulpit. And immediately, when the preacher appeared, all the people knelt down, except the preacher. And he began praying, with uncovered head, and his hands joined. His prayer was entirely in French, created out of his own imagination, which was concluded with the Lord's Prayer, but not the Ave Maria. Then all the people responded quietly "Amen." And two times a week, [they] sing a Psalm before the sermon (but only in the cities). Everyone sings together while seated, men, women, girls, and infants.²⁸

The picture is far different, and far more faithful to the Scriptural ideal, than a medieval Catholic service. The people come in to be taught the Word of God. Personal rank is laid aside and all sit as equals, people whose souls need saved, whose sins need forgiven, people thankful for the work of Christ. Pomp, circumstance, and pretension are left at the door, and hopefully purged from the heart. There is the plain singing of Psalms and the understanding of all the people is enlightened as Christ is held forth from the clear reading and explication of the Word of God. This is the positive effect of John Calvin, nay, of the Scriptures, on the city-state of Geneva.

I, Wyatt Abell, have written this paper exclusively for CH620. If this paper, in part or full, was submitted previously in another context, I have received permission from the course professor to use it for this assignment. While I may have received editing or proofreading advice, I made all corrections myself. I have properly cited each paraphrase, quotation, and borrowed idea in compliance with *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (9th edition) and the RPTS Style Guide.

²⁸ Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors*, 32, quoting Antoine Cathelan in *The Parisian Passwind*.

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