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European Calvinism: Church Discipline
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This article surveys the 16th-century development and dissemination of concepts and models of ecclesiastical discipline in the Calvinistic (or Reformed) branches of the Protestant Reformation. While most Reformed churches shared a stress on the importance of discipline, its implementation varied considerably from region to region, due to varying political circumstances and theological emphases. Such differences, however, did not rise to the level of confessional disagreements, and traditional dichotomies between ecclesiologies modelled on Zürich and Geneva, or two-mark and three-mark ecclesiologies, are often overstated. The article lays particular stress on often-overlooked influences on and varied transfers of Reformed models of church discipline.

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Introduction

The idea of church discipline (*Kirchenzucht*) is frequently linked particularly with the moral rigor of the Reformation-era movements often identified as "Calvinist" or "Reformed." Indeed, it is among the Reformed that church discipline arose as a confessionally distinctive "mark" or "sign" (*nota*) of the true church, and among those inspired by John Calvin (1509–1564) (➔ Media Link #ab) that a consistorial model of church discipline came to expression.[1] But the simple correlation between European Calvinism in the 16th century and a unique emphasis on discipline administered by ecclesiastical authorities can obscure more complex realities and dynamics, both within and outside the confessionally Reformed churches of the 16th century. Once we consider early Reformed political and ecclesial communities in places like Zürich and Bern alongside the Calvinist strongholds Geneva and Lausanne, we discover a variegated practice of church discipline within the context of civil authority and social life.[2] At the same time, while a confessional emphasis on church discipline can be considered a characteristic expression of at least some Reformed churches, the radical Reformation in its diverse expressions also emphasizes (in some cases to an extreme degree) the determinative place of church discipline in other Christian communities. Lutheran *Kirchenordnungen* also consistently made provisions for the discipline of sinners in congregations, including the use of excommunication.[3]

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It has been common to distinguish between two rival schools of thought in 16th-century Calvinism on the question of church discipline, one associated with John Calvin and Geneva, the other with Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) (➔ Media Link #ac) and Zürich.[4] Calvin and Geneva represent a line of thinking that emphasizes a "disciplinarist" conception of the role of church authorities, which took the form in Geneva of an ecclesiastical consistory that had relatively broad powers of oversight, exhortation, and punishment of various violations of Christian religious and moral standards. In Zürich, however, inspired by the view of Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) (➔ Media Link #ad) and codified in the leadership of Heinrich Bullinger, a different "magistratical" conception of the relationship between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities resulted in a model of discipline that considered spiritual formation and moral exhortation to be the responsibility of the church, while the application of temporal punishment, including excommunication, was the responsibility of the civil magistrate.[5] While this distinction is in many ways generally accurate, these two positions are better understood to represent different ends of a more variegated spectrum of Reformed opinion on church discipline in particular and the relationship of the church and state more broadly in the 16th century. Other figures and centers of Reformed thought would have significant influence on the development of Reformed views of church discipline, and no single model of church discipline was uniformly agreed upon as Reformed theology developed and expanded into different areas of Europe.

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Early Swiss and Rhenish Alternatives, 1520–1530

In attempting to trace the historical developments and dissemination of Reformed views on church discipline, it is necessary first to realize that Geneva and Zürich are not, strictly speaking, comparable. While the origin of a magistratical model is rightly associated with Zwingli and later Bullinger in Zürich, the disciplinarist tradition within Reformed theology did not arise first in Geneva, but rather with Johannes Oecolampadius (1482–1531) (➜ Media Link #ae) in Basel and Martin Bucer (1491–1551) (➜ Media Link #af) in Strasbourg.[6] Later doctrinal discussions between Zürich and Geneva, on predestination and the covenant, for instance, thus cannot be used to account for these differing approaches to church discipline. Instead, the differing and increasingly diverse views of the relationship of the discipline administered by church and civil authorities can be traced to figures (notably Oecolampadius and Zwingli in the early 1520s) associated in the previous decade with the Erasmian humanist ferment centred in Basel.

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While Oecolampadius continued to live and work in Basel from 1522 onwards, Zwingli was the leading pastor in Zürich after his arrival from Basel in 1518. In 1523, Bucer had joined an important group of reforming figures in Strasbourg, including Matthias Zell (1477–1548) (➜ Media Link #ag) and Wolfgang Capito (1478–1541) (➜ Media Link #ah). Over the course of the 1520s, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Bucer pursued the agenda of reform in their respective locations, with significant mutual support and correspondence. In spite of substantial agreement on a variety of doctrinal issues, the local contexts in which reform was pursued, and the reformers' individual convictions, helped shape different attitudes towards church discipline.

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Zwingli was largely supported in Zürich by a stable civil authority committed to reform.[7] The greatest internal dangers to the success of reform in Zürich were traditional (from Roman Catholics) and radical (from Anabaptists). On the one hand Zwingli was concerned to remove ecclesiastical privilege associated with papal practices, such that already in 1523 Zwingli had connected refutation of clericalism with emphasizing the dignity and authority of lay civil magistracy.[8] The Anabaptist rejection of the civil magistracy, while distinct from the Roman Catholic relative derogation of civil power, likewise elevated the significance of the ecclesial community in distinction from the civil order, a view met fiercely by Zwingli, most notably in his treatise *In catabaptistarum strophas elenchus* (1527).[9] Against both Roman Catholic clericalism and Anabaptist radicalism, Zwingli was concerned to defend the significance of a godly magistracy: "a judge or magistrate ought particularly to be a Christian and a spiritually-minded man. So God himself deigned to call them by his own name Elohim, because they should be most like God as high priests of righteousness, equity and firmness."[10] In Basel and Strasbourg, however, Oecolampadius and Bucer faced somewhat different dynamics, and were concerned less with articulating a defence of the Christian civil authorities than with outlining the role of church leaders in reforming the morals and practices of the Christian community.

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Defining the Church: Anabaptism and the Notae Ecclesiae, 1530–1540

With the deaths of Zwingli and Oecolampadius only months apart in the fall of 1531, Bucer continued as the leading representative of the disciplinarist position among the Reformed, while Bullinger succeeded Zwingli as Antistes of the Zürich church where he consistently advocated for the magistratical position until his death in 1575.[11] Whereas Zwingli and later Bullinger would sharply repudiate the Anabaptist emphasis on the separate purity of the church in favor of an integrated Christian commonwealth, the relationships between the Reformed and the Anabaptists in Strasbourg took on a rather different character than in Zürich.[12] Although Bucer shared Zwingli's misgivings about the Anabaptist zeal to use excommunication to create a separate and pure community, he was challenged by his interaction with the Anabaptist position to integrate in a more systematic fashion an articulation and defense of a comprehensive vision of church discipline.[13] In this way, Bucer was more open than Zwingli to the idea that a way in which to pursue the humanistic and reformational ideal of a godly commonwealth was through the exercise of discipline by church authorities. However, limited support from the Strasbourg magistrates hindered his program, as it had Oecolampadius's in Basel.

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Despite the emergent differences in these early Reformed communities as they responded diversely to the threat of Anabaptism, all these reformers continued to share a basic ecclesiological consensus. The Augsburg Confession of 1530 had succinctly defined the Church as "the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly."[14] These two visible marks, however, were understood as mere pointers toward the hidden reality of the church; as Bucer's *Tetrapolitan Confession* (1530) put it,

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> Although that whereby it is entitled to be called the Church of Christ – namely, faith in Christ – cannot be seen, yet it can be seen and plainly known from its fruits ... [which] undoubtedly cannot be absent where the Gospel and its sacraments are purely administered.[15]

Accordingly, even visible congregations which possessed the Gospel and sacraments remained mixed multitudes, in which "tares are mixed into the Church of Christ."[16] Discipline, then, could only serve to approximate, not define, the boundaries of the true church, and its chief function was to discipline, edify, protect, and bring to repentance the members of the visible church.[17]

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John Calvin's *Confession de foy* of 1536/1537 thus reaffirms the Word and sacraments as the proper marks of the church, and the mixed character of this church thus discerned.[18] Excommunication remains central, however, for three reasons:

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> we hold the discipline of excommunication to be a thing holy and salutary among believers ... in order that the wicked by their damnable conduct may not corrupt the good and not dishonor our Lord, and that being ashamed they may turn around by repentance.[19]

The first reason (protecting other believers from error) and the third (protecting the sinner by leading him to repentance) highlight edification as the purpose of excommunication, and are recurrent themes in Reformed treatments of the subject. The second, however, protecting the Lord's honor, signals Calvin's particular concern to fence off the body of Christ against profanation or sacrilege,[20] although elsewhere he was to resist such a logic of purification, contesting the Anabaptist emphasis on discipline as a way to protect the visible purity of the ecclesial body of Christ.[21]

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The ambivalence between a hidden or a visible purity of the church is certainly present in the *First Helvetic Confession* (1536), where the "immaculate bride of Christ" although ultimately "known only to the eyes of God" is "not only ... discerned and known, but also ... so constituted that no one may be reckoned to be in it" without "public and legitimate discipline."[22] Bucer was not long in following this addition of discipline as a *nota ecclesiae*, affirming in 1538 that "there cannot be a church without *ein* ban."[23]

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From this seemingly decisive shift, many scholars have identified the addition of this "third mark" as a watershed in the development of a distinctive Calvinist concept of the church as a self-governing institution, increasingly free from magistratical interference.[24] Despite a certain prima facie plausibility, this claim is simplistic.[25] For instance, we may note that John Calvin, though pursuing a disciplinarist polity, almost always retained just two marks, while Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562) (➜ Media Link #aj), who became a staunch ally of Bullinger and a supporter of the English royal supremacy, spoke of three.[26] Although it is certainly instructive to trace the development of the third mark, different senses of the word "discipline" and indeed of the concept of the "marks" require a much more sophisticated narrative.[27] Indeed, for all the apparent importance of this taxonomic question, the third mark as such does not appear to be a point of significant argument among early Reformed theologians.[28] Rather than seeking the origins of later fault lines at the level of formal theological principles, then, we should attend to the ways in which the different dimensions of the disciplinary impulse, notably edification and purification, were actualized in various social and political contexts, and how these actualizations often tended toward new ecclesiological understandings.[29]

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Developing Cantonal Politics: Between Zürich and Geneva, 1541–1560

As Reformed teaching on church discipline developed from its foundations in Zürich, Basel, and Strasbourg, the views of Zwingli and Bullinger as well as of Oecolampadius and Bucer, along with a host of other direct and indirect sources, would influence the direction of reform movements throughout Switzerland and beyond. If we understand Zürich as one major tributary of Reformed doctrines of church discipline, then one of its chief channels was the cantonal capital of Bern, whose political influence was at a zenith during this period. By 1536 the French-speaking Vaud came under the direct control of Bern, and the Vaud was to be a source of some significant controversy.[30] Bern also influenced the ongoing reformation of Geneva, supporting it against the Roman Catholic influence of Fribourg. John Calvin had first arrived in Geneva in 1536, but was asked to leave, in part because of disagreement with Bern over the direction of reformation in the city. Calvin returned to Geneva from a pastorate in Strasbourg in 1541, but tensions, particularly on the relationship between the church and state and the authorities ultimately responsible for social discipline, continued.

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By the time of Calvin's return to Geneva, the basic contours of his ecclesiological vision were well established. He was committed to an increasingly popular perspective that a reformed church must seek to visibly manifest its fellowship with Christ by a godly, pure, disciplined life, to the conviction that civil magistrates, though a necessary part of this task of edification, were not sufficient, and that the church must have additional distinctive means for realizing this holy ideal – chief among them the tool of excommunication. On this he was emphatic that, as the fate of souls and the honor of God were at stake, ministers, not magistrates, must have the prerogative.

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While significant elements of this vision were in place during Calvin's first stint in Geneva,[31] his exposure to Bucer's administrative energy and zeal for moral reform as well as his own pastoral experience during his three years in Strasbourg (1538–1541) confirmed and sharpened these trajectories, helping shape his 1541 *Ordonnances ecclésiastiques*.[32] Prepared at the invitation of the Geneva city Councils, this text provided the blueprint for Calvin's famous and remarkably successful disciplinary system, of which the chief distinctive was the Consistory. This body, consisting both of elders (twelve laymen chosen from among city Councils) and ministers, was responsible for hearing cases related to various forms of immorality and disorderly conduct, as well as superstition, doctrinal error, contempt of ministers, and more.[33] Functionally, it served for "infra-judicial settlement of pastoral matters which had got out of hand," and as "a tribunal of first resort, sifting out those cases which should properly be passed on to the civil courts."[34]

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Although the *Ordonnances* as enacted are often portrayed as an unstable compromise, falling short of Calvin's vision for an essentially independent ecclesiastical polity, this represents a considerable overstatement.[35] In fact, there was remarkable agreement between the Council and Calvin, and Calvin does not seem to have been particularly uncomfortable with the quasi-civil character of Genevan elders and deacons.[36] For all his emphasis on discipline, the ministerial office, and the distinctive institutional form of the church, Calvin never seems to have entertained the Anabaptist separation of church from commonwealth, viewing the whole populace of Geneva as part of the visible church, and never questioning the important role of Christian magistrates in defending and edifying this church.[37] Nor, as mentioned above, did he systematically elevate discipline to a *nota ecclesiae*, a consequence of his firm commitment to the doctrine of the hiddenness of the Church's identity in Christ.[38]

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Meanwhile, in 1549 the reformer Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563) (➔ Media Link #ak) came to neighboring Bern to occupy the chair of theology. Although trained by Bucer and Capito in Strasbourg in the previous decade, Musculus held to a magistratical view of Christian discipline, a view generally shared by his contemporaries Bullinger and Peter Martyr Vermigli, as well as his colleague in Bern Johannes Haller (1523–1577). For Musculus, the civil magistrate had primary concern over the externals of religion and social life. This included jurisdiction over clergy as well as laypersons, as well as ultimate responsibility for the care of religion (*cura religionis*).[39] This led to conflict on various points with Calvin and Pierre Viret (1511–1571) (➔ Media Link #al) about the course of reformation in Geneva and the Vaud, in particular, on whether excommunication was to be included among the "externals" belonging to the magistrate.[40]

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This conflict did not remain merely external to Geneva. As is well-known, Calvin clashed repeatedly with the Genevan councilmen on the issue of excommunication: could a sentence of excommunication passed by the Consistory be appealed to the Small Council, as could rulings from other lower courts in Geneva? The councilmen, considering the significant civic ramifications of an excommunication sentence, thought it should; Calvin, considering the minister's responsibility for the soul of an unworthy receiver, and for the sanctity of the Table, could not agree.[41] In 1555, Calvin won the point, although when the Consistory's power ebbed at the beginning of the 17th century, the Council reasserted their right to hear appeals.[42]

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For Calvin, then, although the practice of discipline was not of the essence of the church, few things were more important for maintaining its health and holiness;[43] it defended the honour of God, protected the faithful from the corrupting leaven of evildoers, and corrected and redeemed straying sinners.[44] Moreover, as he increasingly emphasized, the Word of God commanded discipline as well as the best form for implementing it – a claim that set the stage for future tensions among Calvin's followers.[45] For magistratical reformers like Musculus and Bullinger, however, the importance of discipline must be balanced against the demands of civil concord and order, restricting the autonomy of church authorities. Thus, while these Swiss reformers found broad agreement on significant points of doctrine, such as the covenant of grace and predestination, significant divergence remained on the question of church discipline.[46]

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The Spread of the Strasbourg Vision: Vermigli, Łaski, and the Gallican Churches, 1540–1560

Although Calvin's highly successful ecclesiastical program in Geneva has largely overshadowed other heirs of Bucer's disciplinary agenda at Strasbourg, recent scholarship increasingly suggests that other colleagues of Bucer, such as the Italian reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli and the Polish reformer Jan Łaski (1499–1560) (➜ Media Link #am), exercised an equally decisive influence on the development of Reformed discipline across Europe. Vermigli, having joined Bucer at Strasbourg in 1541 after fleeing Italy, was forced into exile again along with Bucer in 1548, when the imposition of the Augsburg Interim rendered their position there untenable. Both were invited to England, to participate in the nascent reformation there engineered by Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556) (➜ Media Link #an), and they brought with them a passion for rigorous reformed discipline. In his 1548/1549 commentaries on 1 Corinthians, Vermigli echoed Bucer's language of discipline as a third mark of the Church, and helped contribute to Cranmer's 1552 *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticum*, which sought to replace canon law with an evangelical church law, including a more vigorous, locally-administered practice of discipline and excommunication.[47] The enormous influence of Bucer and Vermigli on the English Protestant clergy may account for their frequent citation of discipline as a third mark (although the *Forty-Two Articles* of 1552 and the *Thirty-Nine Articles* of 1563/1571 omit it)[48] and the zealous programs for enhanced church discipline shared to a large extent by both Puritan-minded and conformist clergy in the reigns of Edward VI (1537–1553) (➜ Media Link #ao) and Elizabeth I (1533–1603) (➜ Media Link #ap).[49] This shared commitment to discipline, however, obscures emerging trajectories in ecclesiology. Bucer, despite partial sympathies with Anabaptist ecclesiology while at Strasbourg, retained a significant role for the magistrate in the church in his 1551 *De Regno Christi*,[50] while Vermigli later emerged during Elizabeth's reign as a vigorous defender of magisterial authority over matters of church polity, being in this matter of one mind with his close friend Heinrich Bullinger at Zürich.[51]

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For the origins of a more "Puritan" conception, in which church discipline was the responsibility of a self-governing church community, ordered in strict accordance with Scripture, we must look especially to Jan Łaski.[52] Łaski, like Bucer, had responded to Anabaptist pressures during his tenure as superintendent of the church at Emden (1542–1548) by adopting a stricter discipline administered by lay-elders within the congregation. His ideas about church organization and discipline were shaped by his work with Bucer in 1544 on ecclesiastical ordinances for the reforming Archbishop of Cologne, Hermann von Wied (1477–1552) (➜ Media Link #aq). But he only had a free hand to develop them fully as pastor of the London Strangers' Church, a collection of congregations composed of Dutch and French Protestant refugees which Łaski administered from 1548 to 1553. There Łaski, together with French pastor Valérand Poullain (1515–1560) (➜ Media Link #ar), pioneered the creation of a form of church discipline (described in his *Forma ac ratio*) that, although retaining the emphasis on discipline as a means of edification, and redemption of recalcitrant sinners, was particularly severe even by the standards of the day.[53] Moreover, since the English authorities gave the exiles freedom to govern their own affairs more or less autonomously, Łaski was able to create a church structure remarkably reminiscent of the Anabaptist ideal – a gathered, self-governing community of believers who agreed to commit themselves to the biblically modelled system of discipline, which helped purify the body of the faithful from the "tares" of worldly Christians.[54]

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By its very presence in the heart of London, Łaski's church exerted a radicalizing influence on many in England, and perhaps even on the Scottish reformer John Knox (ca. 1514–1572) (➜ Media Link #as), who was preaching in London at this time.[55] When Mary I (1516–1558) (➜ Media Link #at) came to the throne in 1553, the members of the Strangers' churches, their ranks swelled by fleeing English Protestants, scattered to several continental havens, taking the model of Łaski's *Forma ac ratio* with them – back to Emden, to Frankfurt, and even to Geneva. It has been convincingly argued that the English exile churches in Frankfurt and even in Geneva itself (which John Knox pastored) modelled themselves chiefly on Łaski's Strangers' Church, and not, as usually assumed, Calvin's Geneva.[56]

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It is not hard to see why. Whereas Calvin's Geneva remained, for all its clericalism, a fundamentally corpus Christianum model, Łaski provided a more explicit blueprint for a disestablished Reformed congregation to conduct its own discipline with little need for a magistrate.[57] This vision proved compelling to returning English exiles, to leaders of the nascent Dutch Reformed who had been nurtured in Łaski's London congregation, and to John Knox as he framed a discipline for the church in Scotland.[58]

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Depending, then, on whether the civil authorities were advocates of reform, merely tolerated, or openly opposed it, different versions of church government arose in different cultural, social, and political contexts.[59] In France, for instance, where the Reformed were a minority under constant threat of persecution, the church order was largely influenced by the thought of Calvin and Theodore Beza (1519–1605) (➜ Media Link #au), not least because of their knowledge of the French language and their concern for the French reform movements.[60] The danger of Nicodemism, or outward conformity to the practices and ceremonies of Roman Catholicism with an inner disposition toward evangelical or Reformed doctrine, was also a significant element in directing the formulation of Reformed church polity and discipline in France. Calvin's ecclesiological views, notably disseminated via his correspondence, thus evidence a kind of flexibility and relevance transferable into a variety of socio-political contexts.[61]

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The *Gallican Confession* and the initial *Discipline Ecclésiastique* of 1559 are significant in this regard on a number of points.[62] Consistent with Calvin's general emphasis throughout his career, the confession makes no explicit mention of discipline as a mark of the true church. But this should not be understood as making discipline a matter of little or no importance. Indeed, throughout the text of the confession there is a consistent emphasis on the significance of the government of the visible church and its administration of the sacraments, the role of the clergy and consistory, and the spiritual discipline of laypersons. The true church, then, is "the company of the faithful who agree to follow his [God's] Word, and the pure religion which it teaches; who advance in it all their lives, growing and becoming more confirmed in the fear of God according as they feel the want of growing and pressing onward" (art. 27). There is no true church "where the Word of God is not received, nor profession made of subjection to it, nor use of the sacraments" (art. 28), the latter also including "excommunication, which we approve and confess to be necessary with all its antecedents and consequences" (art. 33).[63] The *Gallican Confession* would also enshrine in incipient form a presbyterial polity, in which each pastor is understood to "have the same authority and equal power under one head, one only sovereign and universal bishop, Jesus Christ; and that consequently no Church shall claim any authority or dominion over any other" (art. 30). This is consistent with the basically presbyterial thrust of the *Discipline Ecclésiastique* of 1559.[64]

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Disciplinary Conflicts in the Netherlands, England, and Heidelberg, 1560–1590

As Reformed teaching gained a firm foothold in various regions, myriad influences continued to inform its development, and views derived from centers like Strasbourg, Geneva, or Zürich were often enlisted against one another. In addition to the later influence of Calvin, the reformation in the Netherlands drew significant inspiration, particularly on the subject of discipline, from Bucer, Łaski, and to a considerable extent, Anabaptism.[65] By the 1540s, Anabaptism had made deep inroads into the Dutch provinces, and as with Bucer at Strasbourg and Łaski at Emden, many Dutch reformers responded by imitating the Anabaptist zeal for discipline and visible godliness, even while using that very discipline as a means of rooting out the Anabaptists from their midst.[66] By his early work in East Frisia and in the London Strangers' Church, which provided a home for many future leaders of the Dutch church, Jan Łaski helped to stamp the third mark of discipline on the Dutch Reformed at an early stage.[67] So it is unsurprising that when Guy de Brès (1522–1567) (➜ Media Link #av) drafted the *Belgic Confession* in 1561, he unambiguously listed discipline as a *nota ecclesiae*, departing at this point from the letter, if not the spirit, of his chief source text, the *Gallican Confession*.[68]

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In the early stages of Dutch Protestantism, discipline was administered in independent voluntary congregations, but as these increased in number and the need to avoid sectarian strife increased, these churches imitated the *Discipline Ecclésiastique* of their co-religionists in France and began to band together into presbyterian synods. However, this development was followed soon after by the formal adoption of the Reformed faith by several Dutch cities, raising the question of the role of the Reformed magistracy in the Church. Some Dutch ministers, such as Beza's former colleague Lambert Daneau (ca. 1535–ca. 1590) (➜ Media Link #aw), held staunchly to the independent consistories formed during the years of persecution, and refused to equate church with city-state, while others, such as Caspar Coolhaes (1536–1615) (➜ Media Link #ax) at Leiden and Huibert Duifhuis (1531–1581) at Utrecht, argued that now a Christian magistracy was at hand, the church could be overseen by the city councillors as part of their government of the new reformed commonwealth.[69] Differences frequently returned to the question of excommunication; whereas the magistratical party took a much more lenient line, the disciplinarists rigorously fenced the table. Debate was vigorous between the two parties in the 1570s and 1580s, with the disciplinarist party appealing to Beza in Geneva for support, and the other accusing them of "new monkery" and soliciting support from Bullinger and Rudolf Gwalther (1519–1586) (➜ Media Link #ay) in Zürich. Indeed, these differences persisted well into the 17th century, albeit with an increasing disciplinarist consensus.[70]

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Although the similarities have been scarcely noted by historians to date, a remarkably comparable conflict was playing out on the other side of the English Channel during this period.[71] Following the accession of Elizabeth and the re-establishment of a Protestant church in 1559, English Protestant refugees flooded back from their continental havens – Zürich, Geneva, Frankfurt, and elsewhere – zealous to build a pure Reformed church. Nearly all the clergy, having been influenced by Bucer, Vermigli, and Łaski during the reign of Edward VI, shared a commitment to establishing discipline, order, and upright living, but the challenges of doing so on the scale of a great kingdom, still home to many loyal Roman Catholics and crypto-papists, introduced considerable tensions. The bishops, drawn largely from the ranks of Zürich exiles, were unwilling to act in matters of polity without the support of the Queen, reflecting the influence of their mentors Bullinger and Vermigli, who wrote explicitly in support of the magistrate's prerogative in the church during the 1560s Vestiarian controversy in England.[72] More radical reformers, many of whom had spent their exile in churches shaped by Łaski's *Forma ac ratio* and by the model of Calvin's Geneva, sought a more uncompromising imposition of discipline, which ministers and zealous laymen began to enact on their own initiative, according to a presbyterian structure of church government.[73]

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Following an ill-advised Admonition to Parliament in 1572, the emerging "Puritan" party encountered vigorous opposition from future archbishop John Whitgift (ca. 1530–1604) (➜ Media Link #az). In a lengthy polemical exchange with Puritan champion Thomas Cartwright (ca. 1535–1603) (➜ Media Link #b0), Whitgift drew heavily on the writings of Bullinger, Gwalther, and Musculus, insisting that the Puritan ecclesiology, while perhaps suited for a church under persecution, no longer belonged in a Reformed commonwealth, and perceiving in its harsh discipline and clerical autonomy shades of papism.[74] Cartwright, for his part, invoked Geneva as his model, and successfully solicited the support of Beza.[75] The controversy raged until the 1590s, when the presbyterian insurgence in the Church of England was blunted by a political crackdown and received a significant theological critique in Richard Hooker's (ca. 1554–1600) (➜ Media Link #b1) *Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

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The disciplinary disputes in Heidelberg in the 1560s after the drafting of the *Heidelberg Catechism* are also a remarkable instance of the increasingly divergent views of church discipline among the Reformed.[76] The course of the disputes in Heidelberg were largely shaped by the opposition between two figures: Caspar Olevianus (1536–1587) (➜ Media Link #b2) and Thomas Erastus (1524–1583) (➜ Media Link #b3). Olevianus "steadfastly worked to erect a consistory on a Genevan model that would have independent power to excommunicate wayward believers," while "Erastus sought to give a theoretical basis for a Reformed state church in which power over church discipline lay in the hands of the magistrate."[77] Controversy over excommunication (➜ Media Link #b4), its validity and proper administration, was thus central to the question of church discipline in Heidelberg. While Olevianus relied upon support from Calvin and Beza for his position, Erastus was in dialogue and correspondence with figures like Wolfgang Musculus in Bern and especially Heinrich Bullinger in Zürich.[78] In his treatment of excommunication, understood particularly as "removal from the sacrament," Erastus' exegetical efforts "could find no justification, however, for the notion that the admission to or refusal of the sacrament had been intended as a disciplinary tool."[79] This is a position shared with that expressed by Bullinger in an unpublished treatise on excommunication from 1568.[80]

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On this point concerning excommunication we can see in some relief the diversity of Reformed opinion on church discipline, and how these opinions are not bound directly to any single overarching theory of the relationship between church and state. Musculus and Vermigli, for instance, whose views were broadly consonant with the Zürich model, both allowed for the possibility of excommunication by the church under certain circumstances.[81] In this way, Erastus represents one end of the spectrum of opinion, with Olevianus at the other end. But in between these two extremes there existed numerous other (generally earlier) views about the place of excommunication and its proper administration: how often, by whom, and under what circumstances it might be employed, and so on.[82]

▲ 31

Conclusion: The Shape of Things to Come

The picture that emerges from these considerations is one of basic diversity among early reformers like Zwingli, Bucer, and Oecolampadius on the question of church discipline and the role of the civil magistrate. Originating in Zürich, Strasbourg, Basel, and later Geneva, these positions were developed and defended by figures like Bullinger and Calvin, respectively, and disseminated into various new contexts, such as France, the Palatinate, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, England, and Scotland.[83] These transfers occur in a number of ways, including the travel of students and refugees from across Europe to different centers of Reformed learning, the significant networks of correspondence, and the publication of treatises, commentaries, sermons (➜ Media Link #b7), and even historical works.[84] Ecclesial documents, especially church orders and confessional symbols, which were often circulated and influential in the drafting of later such documents, also provided critically important codifications of various influences and indices of Reformed approaches to discipline. It is vital to recognize that Reformed theories of church discipline were understood, often even by the proponents of a particular view themselves, as highly dependent on particular contexts and local circumstances.[85] For Bullinger, as well as for the advocates of the magistratical position more generally, it was essential to determine whether or not there was a Christian magistrate in place, and thus whether the church would have to take on the primary care for true religion independently.

▲ 32

This irenicism, shaped by a conviction that most matters of polity are adiaphora, emerges clearly in the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), drafted by Bullinger, with input from Beza and others.[86] Here Bullinger omits discipline as a *nota ecclesiae*, emphasizes the provisionality of all marks,[87] and cautions against too much emphasis on externals as the basis for the church's unity.[88] When he comes to the controversial matter of discipline, he affirms its necessity, and the historical pedigree of excommunication, but says that "it belongs also to the minister's duty, for the edifying of the church, to moderate this discipline, according to the condition of the time and public estate, and according to necessity."[89] Indeed, edification is the decisive consideration, bearing mention twice more before Bullinger concludes his brief discussion of discipline.[90] Although predating the outbreak of the "Erastian" controversy, the widespread adoption of this confession (wider than any other Reformed confession of the period) testifies to the prece-

dence of concord over conflict even on the issue of discipline.

▲33

Even though the magisterial reformers broadly agreed that the civil magistrate had some clear duty to promote true religion, and to defend against breaches of commandments in both the first and the second table of the Decalogue, local contexts and views about hierarchy, anti-clericalism, and the influence of Anabaptist emphasis on a gathered community (whether positive or negative), all helped shape differing views of the role of the church authorities relative to that of the civil magistrates. As the 16th century drew to a close, some models, such as that developed by Calvin and Łaski, were better situated to survive in the context of a free or disestablished, or even persecuted, church. Others, such as that advocated by Bullinger, were more naturally linked to established church polities. Subsequent hardening of differences in the 17th century thus should not obscure the fluidity, diversity, and flexibility of Reformed discipline in the age of Reformation.

▲34

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Appendix

Sources

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Notes

1. ^ See, for instance, Kingdon, Reforming Geneva 2012. The authors would like to thank a number of people whose comments and suggestions helped improve and correct elements of this article, including Emidio Campi, Irene Dingel, Matthew J. Tuininga, and Theodore van Raalte. The authors also made extensive use of the Post-Reformation Digital Library (www.prdl.org) for locating various primary sources, and thank the developers and editors of this site for the service they have rendered to digital Reformation research.

2. ^ On the relative utility of "Calvinist" and "Reformed" as descriptive modifiers, see Richard A. Muller's significant point regarding the place of Calvin with respect to the Reformed tradition in Muller, After Calvin 2003, p. 8: "Calvin was not the sole arbiter of Reformed confessional identity in his own lifetime – and he ought not to be arbitrarily selected as the arbiter of what was Reformed in the generations following his death." See also Campi, Calvin, the Swiss Reformed Churches 2011; and Strohm, Methodology 2004.

3. ^ Church discipline in 16th-century Lutheran thought has been too little studied to date. But see, for instance, treatments of the views of Johannes Brenz in Estes, Christian Magistrate 2007, pp. 135–165; and of Erasmus Sarcerius in Spalding, Discipline as a Mark 1984; and Selderhuis, Kirche im Aufbau 2006.

4. ^ See, for instance, Baker, "Calvin's Discipline" 1988, pp. 107–119; and Kingdon, La discipline ecclésiastique 2001.

5. ^ It is worth noting, of course, that Calvin and his followers agreed that all temporal punishment belonged to the civil magistrate, and accordingly denied that excommunication should be understood as such a punishment. See, for instance, Calvin, Treatises Against the Anabaptists and the Libertines 1982, pp. 82–84. Refuting the Anabaptist claim that excommunication is a punishment that takes the place of civil punishment, Calvin argues that the prerogatives of civil authority are left untouched, and says, "In sum, the action which our Lord Jesus took toward the adulteress is nothing other than what His servants and ministers of His Word take today toward all malefactors. For they only try to exhort them to repent and to turn around on the right road. Then they comfort their consciences by presenting them with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and by assuring them of the remission of sins. They do not attempt to punish them" (p. 83). See Calvin, Brieve Instruction 1545.

6. ^ On Oecolampadius, see Kuhr, Die Macht des Bannes 1999. On Bucer, see Burnett, The Yoke of Christ 1994. For the de-

velopment of church order in Basel, see Campi, Basler Kirchenordnungen 2012.

7. ^ A classic study of Zwingli on these topics is Walton, Zwingli's Theocracy 1967. On the development of church order in the Zürich church, see Campi, Zürcher Kirchenordnungen 2011.

8. ^ See Zwingli's contention that "the spiritual (so-called) power has no justification for its pomp in the teaching of Christ" (art. 34), but rather that "the lay has power and confirmation from the deed and doctrine of Christ" (art. 35) and further that "all that the spiritual so-called state claims to have of power and protection belongs to the lay, if they wish to be Christians" (art. 36). See Zwingli, Usslegen und Gründ der Schlussreden oder Artcklen 1523, English translation: Zwingli, The Sixty-Seven Articles 1901, pp. 114–115. See also Moeller, Zwinglis Disputationen 2011.

9. ^ See Zwingli, In catabaptistarum strophas elenchus 1527; English translation: Zwingli, Refutation of the Tricks of the Baptists 1901.

10. ^ idem, Refutation of the Tricks of the Baptists 1901, p. 204. In 1523 Zwingli had affirmed that the ban was valid, but that it was to be applied by the church as a whole, "that is the congregation of those among whom the one to be banned dwells, together with their watchman, i.e., the pastor." See Zwingli, The Sixty-Seven Articles 1901, art. 31, p. 114. Later, however, Zwingli affirmed the validity of excommunication as imposed by the Zurich Council rather than the church alone. See Davis, No Discipline, No Church 1982, p. 49; and Runzo, Communal Discipline 1978, p. 20. See also Walton, Zwingli's Theocracy 1967, pp. 174–175; Rupp, The Reformation in Zurich 1990, pp. 100–101.

11. ^ See Campi, Bullingers Rechts- und Staatsdenken 2004; and Mühling, Heinrich Bullinger als Kirchenpolitiker 2004; English translation: Mühling, Heinrich Bullinger as Church Politician 2004. See also Stephens, Bullinger and the Anabaptists 2001.

12. ^ Davis offers a very illuminating discussion of the Anabaptist theme of a purified church in Davis, No Discipline, No Church 1982, pp. 43–50. He points out that the Anabaptist insistence on rebaptism was merely a means to a much more central end – the definition and maintenance of a holy visible body of Christ, rather than the mixed multitude of the magisterial reformers: "Contrary to most Magisterial reformers' exegesis, most Anabaptists upheld that while society at large could correspond to the parable of the tares (Matt. 13) and openly include believers and unbelievers, the church could not. Rather, each church, as a corporate entity, was to be visibly and voluntarily (without any civil constraints) holy, an approximation of the heavenly, spiritual kingdom on earthly collective display" (p. 44). Constant Anabaptist pressure on Bucer eventually led him to adopt similar language, writing in his *Commentary on the Four Gospels*, "if someone in the church should not be willing to obey these holy admonitions, that is not to live by the laws of this commonwealth, which demand the penitential yoke, that is, the continual renewal of life pleasing to God ... it belongs to this power to expel such from the commonwealth and to exclude him from the communion of Christ and the Saints." See Bucer, In sacra 1536, pp. 353–354; English translation: Mitchell, Martin Bucer 1960, pp. 337–338; quoted in Davis, No Discipline, No Church 1982, p. 53.

13. ^ On the fourfold sense of Christian discipline as it developed in Bucer's thought, see Burnett, Church Discipline 1991. For the influence of the Anabaptists on Bucer's thinking regarding discipline, see Davis, No Discipline, No Church 1982, pp. 49–56; and Kreider, The Anabaptists 1955.

14. ^ According to the Latin text as it appears translated in Kolb, The Book of Concord 2000, art. 7, p. 43. For the original Text cf. CA 7, BSLK 1952, p. 61.

15. ^ Bucer, The Tetrapolitan Confession (1530) 2008, p. 157, art. XV. Original text in Bucer, Opera Omnia 1969, Artikel XV, pp. 115f. This affirmation of discontinuity between the invisible reality of the church *coram Deo* and its external manifestation mandates an insistence on the provisionality of ministerial power, as in The First Helvetic Confession (1536) 2008, p. 347, art. 16: "Yet we ascribe all the virtue and efficacy in these things [the preaching and judging of ministers] to the Lord, the ministering nevertheless to the ministers. For it is certain that this power and efficacy is not tied to any creature, but is dispensed freely by the graciousness of God to those to whom He wishes."

16. ^ The First Confession of Basel (1534), attributed to Oecolampadius 2008, p. 292, art. VII: "Certainly because tares are mixed into the Church of Christ, Christ also gave His Church power to root out tares of this kind, when these show themselves, by unbearable wickedness and sin, to rise up against the commandments of the Lord: in which the church retains its appearance, as much as it is able to, without stain; which is the reason we retain the use of excommunication in our church."

17. ^ As Bucer, The Tetrapolitan Confession (1530) 2008 insists, "there is no power in the Church except for edification" p. 153, art. XIII). And for Oecolampadius, it remained important to assert, against Anabaptism, that "the Christian church does not excommunicate save unto the grace of conversion. On which account, they also receive with joy and thanks the excommunicate ones after they abandon their scandalous life and amend themselves" (The First Confession of Basel (1534) attributed to Oecolampadius 2008, p. 292, art. VII).

18. ^ Calvin, Geneva Confession (1536/37) 2008, p. 400, art. XVII: "We understand that the proper mark for rightly discerning the Church of Jesus Christ is that His holy gospel is purely and faithfully preached there, proclaimed, heard, and guarded, that his sacraments are rightly administered, although there may be some imperfections and faults, as there always will be among men."

19. ^ ibidem, art. XIX.

20. ^ This concern receives very strong emphasis in the Institutes. See Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion 1960, 4.12.5, p. 1232: "The first [end of excommunication] is that they who lead a filthy and infamous life may not be called Christians, to the dishonor of God, as if his holy church were a conspiracy of wicked and abandoned men. For since the church itself is the body of Christ, it cannot be corrupted by such foul and decaying members without some disgrace falling upon its Head. Therefore, that there may be no such thing in the church to brand its most sacred name with disgrace, they from whose

wickedness infamy redounds to the Christian name must be banished from its family. And here also we must preserve the order of the Lord's Supper, that it may not be profaned by being administered indiscriminately." See also Caswell, Calvin's View 1966, p. 217; and Höpfl, The Christian Polity 1982, p. 63: "The sacrosanctity and the mystery of the Lord's Supper were taken by Calvin to demand and justify the most energetic measures to prevent its profanation. Calvin here ransacked the French language for terms expressing pollution: he wrote of the sacrament being "pollué," "contaminé," "profané," and followed this with talk of cutting off "membres punais et pourriz ... corrompus ... gastez" (quotations from Calvin, Opera Selecta 1926–1928, vol. 1., p. 371; vol. 2, p. 415).

21. ^ In his Brieve instruction 1545, Calvin argues extensively that although discipline seeks to purify the church, it accepts that the church will remain always mixed and impure; for this reason, neither must we infer that a church without discipline is not a church, nor are we polluted by sharing the Eucharist with the impure – they bring condemnation only on themselves. For the English translation see Calvin, Treatises Against the Anabaptists and the Libertines 1982, pp. 57–65. Calvin insists that ultimately, God remains responsible for protecting his own honour, and we must "endure the imperfections that we are unable to correct" (p. 66). See also Balke, Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals 1981, p. 230; and Demura, From Zwingli to Calvin 2001.

22. ^ The First Helvetic Confession (1536) 2008, p. 347, art. 15. This confession reflects significant influence from Bucer and Capito, though the leading Swiss divines Bullinger, Oswald Myconius, and others also participated in its drafting.

23. ^ Littell, New Light 1962, p. 148. This article provides an English translation of Bucer's debates with Anabaptist leaders at Marburg (Oct. 30–Nov. 1, 1538), where he made his most significant concessions on the importance of discipline. For a full discussion, see Davis, No Discipline, No Church 1982, pp. 51–55. See also Avis, "The True Church" 1977, pp. 336–337.

24. ^ See, for instance, Kirby, Richard Hooker's Doctrine 1990, pp. 81–86; idem, Richard Hooker 2005, pp. 21–26; and, in somewhat more nuanced form, Avis, The Church 1981, pp. 48–51; and idem, "The True Church" 1977, pp. 336–339.

25. ^ Indeed, the use of three marks is not necessarily even a Reformed distinctive, since Melanchthon himself adopts this language in his latest writings. See ibidem, pp. 326–327.

26. ^ See Kingdon, Peter Martyr Vermigli on Church Discipline 2002, although Kingdon is among those who seem to attribute too much significance to this taxonomic decision, considering Vermigli to have "filled the gaps" in Calvin's theology, providing the Reformed tradition with a foundation for one of its key distinctives.

27. ^ See Sunshine, Discipline as the Third Mark 1998, for an excellent discussion. Sunshine distinguishes between discipline as (1) the whole task of Christian discipleship, involving training and maintenance in moral purity (Bucer's primary use of the term); (2) as a particular form of church-polity (the sense often present in Beza and English Presbyterians such as Thomas Cartwright); and (3) as the specific practice of disciplining an offender, centring around the practice of excommunication (a sense emphasized by John Knox).

28. ^ See ibidem, p. 479. See also the comparison of Calvin and Vermigli on this point by Campi, John Calvin and Peter Martyr Vermigli 2011, pp. 97–101, where he argues that even as Vermigli designated discipline a "mark" and Calvin did not, there was not much substantive difference in their understanding of discipline.

29. ^ The approach here proposed has certain parallels with the general method (though not necessarily the particular conclusions) proposed by Höpfl, who insists on reading the development of Genevan polity neither as a mere application of a priori principles to practical circumstances, nor as a posteriori rationalization of political exigencies, but as a more dialectic process, in which theological priorities take on particular institutional forms according to the requirements of circumstance, and these forms generate fresh theoretical models. Höpfl, The Christian Polity 1982, p. 1: "Calvin's practice as a framer of ecclesiastical polity is not a matter of the simple application of principle to practice; this I take to be an impossibility, both in general, for political conduct is always a matter of political judgment as well as principle. ... Nor is Calvin's political theology a simple rationalization of preceding practice."

30. ^ See Bruening, Calvinism's First Battleground 2005.

31. ^ See, for instance, Caswell, Calvin's View 1966, p. 210; and Höpfl, The Christian Polity 1982, pp. 39–76.

32. ^ On the relationship between Bucer and Calvin, see Spijker, The Ecclesiastical Offices 1996, p. 341: "The relation between Bucer and Calvin was one of mutuality. In many respects Calvin was also an example to his older friend." For the ecclesiastical ordinances, see Calvin, Ordonnances ecclésiastiques, 1541 (1964), vol. 1, pp. 1–13; English translation: Calvin, Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances (1541) 2000. For Bucer's influence on the Ordonnances, see Stauffer, Calvin 1985, p. 23; Höpfl, The Christian Polity 1982, p. 79; Wendel, Calvin 1963, pp. 143–144; and Davis, No Discipline, No Church 1982, pp. 56–57. But see Kuhr, Calvin and Basel 1998; and Demura, Calvin's and Oecolampadius' Concept 1984.

33. ^ The range of offences dealt with by the Consistory is staggering, including such matters as gambling, usury, marital strife, drunkenness, and inheritance disputes – to a great extent, its responsibility in such matters was to enforce extensive Genevan morals legislation that predated the Reformation (though such continued to proliferate in Calvin's time). See Lewis, Calvinism in Geneva 1985, pp. 48–49; Höpfl, The Christian Polity 1982, pp. 198–199. See also Lambert, Registres 1996–2010. For methodological considerations concerning consistory records, see Pollmann, Off the Record 2002.

34. ^ Lewis, Calvinism in Geneva 1985, p. 49.

35. ^ See, for instance, Stauffer, Calvin 1985, p. 24.

36. ^ See Lewis, Calvinism in Geneva 1985, pp. 44–45. Indeed, the deacons might be said to be almost entirely civic functionaries. Gillian Lewis writes, "All that the 1541 article did was to confer upon these officials the Scriptural cognomen 'Deacon', and the dignity of being regarded as a part of the fourfold ministry. From the outset, however, they were in no real sense ministers, but lay office-holders elected by the civil power" (p. 44). Elders, moreover, could easily be viewed (as the

Councils were inclined to view them) as a municipal institution, especially as one Syndic (one of the city's highest officials) always sat on the Consistory. See Kingdon, The Control of Morals 1972.

37. ^ Lewis speaks of the Consistory as part of a "continuum of edification" (Lewis, Calvinism in Geneva 1985, p. 50) operative in all the institutions of Genevan society, and says that it contributed to a "dovetailing of the activities of the spiritual and the civil power" (p. 45). See also Höpfl, The Christian Polity 1982, pp. 190–197. Regarding Calvin's opposition to Anabaptism, Davis says that despite Anabaptist influences on Calvin's disciplinary agenda, "Following Bucer, the church organization and the state organization were to be functionally distinguished but not entirely separated. The visible church for Calvin still included the whole Christian social order" (Davis, No Discipline, No Church 1982, p. 57). See also Duke, The Ambivalent Face 1985, p. 124; and Calvin, Treatises Against the Anabaptists and the Libertines 1982, pp. 61–66. For a full treatment of Calvin's engagements with Anabaptism, which were extensive, see Balke, Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals 1981.

38. ^ See, for instance, Calvin, Antidote 1958, vol. 1, pp. 102–103: "That there is a universal church … we all acknowledge. The appearance by which it may be recognised is the question. We place it in the word of God, or, if one would so put it, since Christ is her head, we maintain that, as a man is recognised by his face, so she is to be beheld in Christ. … But as the pure preaching of the gospel is not always exhibited, neither is the face of Christ always conspicuous. … Let us hold then that the church is seen where Christ appears, and where his word is heard." For the original see Calvin, Les articles de la sacrée Faculté de Théologie de Paris 1544. It is not untenable to suggest that although omitting the third mark formally, Calvin essentially admitted it by the stress he laid on the qualifying phrases in his delineation of two marks. See Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion 1960, 4.1.9, p. 1023: "Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a Church of God exists." See also, for instance, Caswell, Calvin's View 1966, p. 211: "The abolition of discipline would mean the entire dissolution of the church." In *Treatises Against the Anabaptists and the Libertines*, however, Calvin is quite clear on the importance of maintaining only two marks, and stresses that while the lack of discipline may leave the church "disfigured," it is not thereby "destroyed" (Calvin, Treatises Against the Anabaptists and the Libertines 1982*)*. Avis has convincingly argued that Calvin's commitment on this question to the evangelical definition of the essence of the church (as expressed in the early formulations of the Augsburg and Tetrapolitan Confessions noted above) was staunch and self-conscious. See Avis, "The True Church" 1977, pp. 327–332. Moreover, Torrance Kirby has argued that, despite his increasing emphasis on the visible church and the spiritual authority of the ministry, Calvin never lets go, in the *Institutes* at any rate, of a Lutheran two-kingdoms schema that situates the ministry of the visible church in the "civil kingdom" or "external forum." See Kirby, A Reformed Culture 2011, pp. 54–57.

39. ^ See Musculus, Loci communes 1560, loc. 69, p. 816, "Nos vero simpliciter omnes eos qui non sunt in functione Magistratus, pro subditis habendos esse censemus. ..." See also Ballor, Covenant 2012, pp. 183–194, 201–211; and Ford, Wolfgang Musculus 2000.

40. ^ See Bruening, Calvinism's First Battleground 2005, pp. 204–209, 248–249.

41. ^ Kingdon offers an overview of the controversy in Kingdon, Social Control 1993, pp. 524–527. See also Lewis, Calvinism in Geneva 1985, p. 49.

42. ^ Kingdon, Social Control 1993, p. 528.

43. ^ Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion 1960, 4.12.1, p. 1230: "As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so does discipline serve as its sinews, through which the members of the body both hold together, each in its own place. Therefore, all who desire to remove discipline or to hinder its restoration … are surely contributing to the ultimate dissolution of the church." See also Caswell, Calvin's View 1966, p. 211.

44. ^ ibidem p. 216.

45. ^ ibidem p. 211: "To Calvin discipline was essential because it was taught in the Word of God. This is the secret of reformed ecclesiology. Discipline was desirable, not because men thought the church should be so organized in view of its task, but because these same men declared that the Word of God was explicit regarding this institution. … The Reformation itself was brought about by the Word, not by the Reformers' insight, and in this Word discipline was ordained as part of the power of the keys."

46. ^ See Ballor, Covenant 2012, pp. 56–57, 77–78.

47. ^ See Spalding, Reformatio Legum 1970, pp. 165–169. See also Kingdon, Peter Martyr Vermigli 1979, pp. 204–206.

48. ^ However, the *Homily for Whitsunday*, part of the *Book of Homilies* endorsed by the Thirty-Nine Articles, explicitly lists "the right use of ecclesiastical discipline" as the third mark. See Griffiths, The Two Books of Homilies 1859, p. 462. Indeed, England provides perhaps the best proof of how uncontroversial the mere taxonomic question of whether to consider discipline a *nota ecclesiae* could be. From Cranmer through to Bancroft, there seems to be no consistent standard of terminology even among firmly pro-establishment bishops. See Sykes, Old Priest 1956, pp. 8–12; and Avis, The Church 1981, pp. 64–67, for examples of the variations on this point.

49. ^ James Spalding argues for seeing the shared roots of disciplinary zeal among Elizabethan reformers in Cranmer and Vermigli's early attempts in this direction during the reign of Edward VI. See Spalding, Reformatio Legum 1970. Mark VanderSchaaf has also shown that Archbishop Parker (in office from 1559 to 1575), widely seen as a mere upholder of the status quo, was actually eager to see more vigorous imposition of discipline in the English church, though under the auspices of the monarch, in this following his mentor Martin Bucer. See VanderSchaaf, Archbishop Parker's Efforts 1977.

50. ^ Indeed, the entirety of the work is dedicated to Edward VI, and Book II spells out in great detail the ways in which he must advance the Reformation, build up the ministry, and ensure a thorough education and discipline for the people. See Bucer,

De Regno Christi (1551) 1969. See also idem, De regno Christi Iesu servatoris nostri 1557.

51. ^ On Vermigli and Bullinger, see Kirby, The Zurich Connection 2007. See also Euler, Couriers of the Gospel 2006; and Kreßner, Schweizer Ursprünge 1953.

52. ^ On Łaski, see Springer, Restoring Christ's Church 2007; Becker, Gemeindeordnung und Kirchenzucht 2007; and Strohm, Johannes a Lasco 2000.

53. ^ As Springer relates in Restoring Christ's Church 2007, one striking example of Łaski's disciplinary zeal was his directive in the *Forma ac ratio* for ministers to visit anyone who fell ill in their congregation, in order to "warn the afflicted that God uses illness as a warning and evidence of his divine justice, and that the stricken should endure it with patience and gratitude. … [And] because the illness had been sent as a punishment, the preacher or elder should encourage the parishioner to reconcile with anyone they had offended" (p. 92).

54. ^ Particularly remarkable in this regard was the insistence in the *Forma ac ratio* that the sacraments could only be administered to individuals who had pledged to abide fully by the discipline of the community. See Springer, Restoring Christ's Church 2007, pp. 84, 87. If we define the Anabaptist or "radical" ecclesiology according to the four themes identified by Avis, The Church 1981, pp. 55–61 – voluntarism, primitivism, exclusivism, and obsession with discipline – it is hard not to see the influence of this model on Łaski's (and to a lesser extent, Bucer's) ecclesiology. A distinctive element in Łaski's system, however, which certainly ran contrary to Anabaptist congregationalism, was the office of superintendent, a quasi-bishop or permanent moderator of sorts for a small group of congregations, who helped oversee their administration and guide their teaching. Unlike Lutheran superintendents or English bishops, however, Łaski's superintendents were chosen by congregants, not magistrates. See Springer, Restoring Christ's Church 2007, pp. 62–67.

55. ^ See ibidem, pp. 86–89.

56. ^ See ibidem, pp. 126–132.

57. ^ See ibidem, p. 147: "Lasco provided a model that allowed refugee congregations to remain autonomous from local magistrates, who often disagreed with their Reformed rites." Of course, it should be emphasized that Łaski was still far from being an Anabaptist; his *Forma ac ratio* reverences the divine office of Edward VI as protector of the church, and gives him responsibility for approving all ministers prior to their ordination.

58. ^ For Łaski's influence on Knox and Scottish polity, see Springer, Restoring Christ's Church 2007, pp. 144–145.

59. ^ See Sunshine, Reforming French Protestantism 2003, pp. 12–13: "In many ways, the key factor which shaped French Protestantism was its status as an unsanctioned religion within the kingdom. Whereas magisterial churches could rely on state support to set doctrinal standards and to establish an institutional structure for the church, early French Protestantism was forced to develop its own systems of belief and organization while being a persecuted minority religion." See also Dingel, Art. "Kirchenverfassung" 2001.

60. ^ On the ongoing importance of Strasbourg, see also Stauffer, L'apport de Strasbourg 1979. Sunshine also argues for direct influence of Strasbourg on the French Reformed in Sunshine, Discipline as the Third Mark 1998, p. 472.

61. ^ See, for instance, Benedict, Christ's Churches 2002, pp. 109–114.

62. ^ On the difficulties of establishing a text of the 1559 *Discipline Ecclésiastique*, see Sunshine, Reforming French Protestantism 2003, pp. 6–7.

63. ^ On the disciplinary implications of the language of "subjection" in article 29 of the Gallican Confession, see Sunshine, Discipline as the Third Mark 1998, pp. 471–472, who uses this as evidence to support his argument for "an influence from Strasbourg unmediated by Geneva."

64. ^ See Sunshine concerning the original form of the Discipline, Sunshine, Reforming French Protestantism 2003, pp. 44–45: "the disciplinary responsibilities of the synods were limited to church officers: the national synod had no specified disciplinary duties beyond mutual admonitions among the deputies; the provincial synods were responsible for pastoral oversight and discipline of church officers, but not of ordinary church members except perhaps in cases of heresy." The crystallization of a basically presbyterian, rather than congregationalist, polity in France owes much to the influence of Beza, who intervened repeatedly against the more democratic proposals of Jean Morély and Peter Ramus. See Maruyama, The Ecclesiology 1978, pp. 80–109. But the influence of Antoine de la Roche Chandieu is generally accepted as particularly decisive. See Sunshine, Reforming French Protestantism 2003, pp. 87–89.

65. ^ In fact, it is noteworthy that Calvin was little known in the Netherlands until the late 1550s and did not become a decisive influence for at least another decade. P. M. Crew has shown that only one-seventh of Dutch Protestant preachers prior to 1566 had any ties with Geneva. See Crew, Calvinist Preaching 1978, pp. 84–87. See also Duke, The Ambivalent Face 1985, p. 120.

66. ^ ibidem, pp. 115–116.

67. ^ ibidem, pp. 119, 123–125. See also Tracy, Public Church 1993, p. 503, although he speaks of the influence of Strasbourg generally, not its mediation through Łaski.

68. ^ Gootjes, The Belgic Confession 2007, contends that Guy de Brès "obviously looked at the Gallican Confession and Beza's confession. Bringing together statements from both, he was able to forge them into a well-balanced and well-organized article" (p. 87). On the general difference in their respective relationship to Anabaptism, see ibidem, p. 67: "the Belgic Confession is more comprehensive and more pointed in its rejection of the Anabaptist positions. This will have been occasioned by the fact that their doctrines were much more influential in the Netherlands than in France." Despite the hostility, however, the prominence of discipline and the visibility of the church betray parallels to the radical Reformation. See Brès, The Belgic Confession (1561) 2010, p. 442, art. XXIX: "The marks, by which the true Church is known, are these: if the pure doctrine

of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin: in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto corrected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known from which no man has a right to separate himself." The *notae*, including discipline, are treated as having remarkable empirical precision. The false church may be as readily recognized by the lack of these marks as the true can be recognized by her possession of them, such that "these two Churches are easily known and distinguished from each other" (ibidem). By observing these marks, Christians can fulfil their obligation "to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church, and to join themselves to this congregation [of the true church], wheresoever God has established it" (ibidem, p. 441, art. XXVIII).

69. ^ See Tracy, Art. "Magistracy" 1996, pp. 490–492; and Duke, The Ambivalent Face 1985, pp. 128–132. Indeed, Cornelis Hooft in Amsterdam would argue against his consistorian opponents that they were further from Calvin than he, since in Geneva, the reformed magistrates had a role in the appointment of elders. See ibidem, p. 123.

70. ^ ibidem, p. 132.

71. ^ A number of facts suggest much more extensive cross-pollination between the Dutch and English disputants in this period than has generally been recognized. The chief leaders of Elizabethan Presbyterianism, Thomas Cartwright and Walter Travers, both spent extensive time as pastors of English churches in the Low Countries, which also served as a haven for Puritan publishing efforts. See Pearson, Thomas Cartwright 1925, pp. 167–232; and Knox, Walter Travers 1962, pp. 41–53. Conversely, Dutch Erastian Adrian Saravia, frustrated with the success of Presbyterianism in the Netherlands, spent the last 24 years of his life in England, where he became a close friend of Richard Hooker and wrote a stinging critique of Beza's anti-Erastian *Tractatus Pius* (written in 1571, but published in 1590, in response to Whitgift's publication of Erastus's treatise in 1589 as a weapon against the Puritans), which prompted a sharp literary debate with Beza. See Maruyama, The Ecclesiology 1978, pp. 112–113 on the background of the *Tractatus Pius*, and pp. 179–194 for a thorough treatment of the subsequent engagement with Saravia.

72. ^ See Kirby, Relics 2007.

73. ^ Note that the term "Presbyterian" here is used loosely, with some English Puritans leaning in a more congregationalist direction, but along a fairly continuous spectrum. See Brachlow, The Communion 1988. In any case, while far from all of those who can be classified as "Puritan" were committed to an anti-episcopal agenda, many of the most active and visible agitators were. This emphasis led to a shift of focus, away from the original Bucerian ideal of a vigorous Reformed parish discipline, which could exist within episcopacy, to the replacement of episcopacy with a different form of polity altogether. See Black, From Martin Bucer to Richard Baxter 2001, p. 650: "'Discipline' became a code word pointing to the establishment of a system of church government that most closely reflected New Testament priorities. ... As a result, Bucer's notion of a reformed parish discipline was essentially squeezed out of the discussion."

74. ^ See, for instance, Whitgift, Defence (1574) 1851, pp. 390–391. This is a recurring theme throughout his *Defence of the Answere*.

75. ^ See Maruyama, The Ecclesiology 1978, pp. 174–179.

76. ^ See Gunnoe, Thomas Erastus 2011, p. 136: "The Heidelberg conflict, rather than being an isolated controversy, was only one of many clashes – though it may well have been the defining battle – within the Reformed communion on the question of proper church discipline and what role, if any, the Christian magistrate should have in its exercise."

77. ^ ibidem, pp. 135–136.

78. ^ For Erastus and Musculus, see Bodenmann, Wolfgang Musculus 2000, pp. 444–449. See also Gunnoe, Thomas Erastus 2011, pp. 80–81, 457. For Erastus and Bullinger, see ibidem, pp. 442–445; and Benrath, Die Korrespondenz 1975.

79. ^ Gunnoe, Thomas Erastus 2011, p. 178. Sometimes "excommunication" was understood by magistratical reformers to refer more broadly to discipline itself. See Baker, Church Discipline 1985, p. 13. In this sense discipline was not found to be problematic, as long as it was administered by the proper authorities. In other cases discipline administered by church authorities was admitted as a necessary contrivance for the church when operating under the auspices of a non-Christian magistracy.

80. ^ In his unpublished *Tractatus de excommunicatione* dated from 1568, Bullinger expressed perhaps the most pessimistic view of the validity of excommunication among the Reformed, although this position may have developed in dialogue with Erastus himself. Compare Gunnoe, Thomas Erastus 2001, p. 166, n. 6, p. 177. See also Baker, In Defense 1975.

81. ^ For Vermigli, see his comment at the end of 1 Corinthians 5, in Vermigli, In selectissimam S. Pauli 1551, pp. 125–132. See Kingdon, Ecclesiology 2009. For Musculus on excommunication, see his excursus: Musculus, De excommunicatione 1559. See also the treatment *De excommunicatione* by Musculus's younger contemporary in Bern, Benedict Aretius: Aretius, De excommunicatione 1604 [1573], loc. 112.

82. ^ That Bullinger's manuscript was never published, and that Erastus' theses were not in fact published until 1589, may indicate a desire to keep the dispute from becoming too divisive for the Reformed churches across Europe, and to protect the liberty of diverse and contextually appropriate church-state relations. See Gunnoe, Thomas Erastus 2001, p. 413: "From all indications, Erastus was not particularly attached to his own program of church-state relations, since he was willing to accept the compromise solution that the 1570 church discipline order represented. Erastus's program was one of dissent and opposition. He was not nearly so eager to install his own vision as he was to derail the imposition of his opponents' vision." Likewise, Beza sought to exert a moderating influence on the dispute, insisting to both Olevianus and Bullinger during the dispute that "church discipline was divinely instituted, not for the destruction of the church, but for the edification of it, and

83. ^ For one of the leading Hungarian Reformed theologians of the era, see Kis, Theologiae sincerae 1585, pp. 205–208, including tables on the correction of the church (*de correctione Ecclesiastica*) and a set of *Canones de Excommunicatione*. More broadly see Murdock, Excommunication and Moral Discipline 2010. For Calvin, see Mühling, Calvin and Eastern Europe 2009. For Bullinger, see Bryner, Bullinger und Ostmitteleuropa 2007; and Zsindely, Bullinger und Ungarn 1975.

84. ^ For the significance of Zürich as a nexus of correspondence, see Henrich, Bullinger's Correspondence 2004. For Bullinger's historical reference points and inspiration, see Campi, Bullinger's Early Political and Theological Thought 2004; and Moser, Die Dignität 2012. For the "common efforts on behalf of religious refugees" by Calvin and Bullinger, see Campi, Calvin, the Swiss Reformed Churches 2011, pp. 124–125.

85. ^ This point was made quite well with respect to Bullinger in a paper by Christian Moser on the correspondence between Pierre Viret and Bullinger related to various disputes in the Vaud, Moser, Viret and the Zurich Reformers 2011.

86. ^ For the significance of the diversity of local contexts among the early Swiss Reformed, see Burnett, "It Varies" 2009, p. 262: "The Swiss Reformation did not end with the deaths of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, its two most important early leaders, or with the political settlement following the defeat at Kappel. It was an ongoing development, tied to the spread and consolidation of Reformed theology and to the formation of new practices and ecclesiastical structures over the course of the sixteenth century. Although we can certainly discern general patterns and tendencies, the precise course that it would take was influenced by both local factors and developments on the international stage. Rather than looking at Zurich as normative and seeing other cities as deviating from that pattern, then, it is time to acknowledge the rich variety within the Swiss Reformation. As with everything else in Switzerland the course of the Reformation differed from canton to canton."

87. ^ Although one can discern the two traditional marks – word and sacrament – in Bullinger's exposition, they are listed as part of a more informal description of what characterizes true Christians, not as formal constitutive and absolutely determinative elements of the church. See Bullinger, The Second Helvetic Confession (1566) 2010, p. 849, ch. 17: "But yet we do not so strictly shut up the church within those marks before mentioned, as thereby to exclude all those out of the church which either do not communicate in the sacraments (not willingly, nor upon contempt, but how, being constrained by necessity, against their will abstain from them, or else do want them); or in whom faith sometimes fails, though not quite decay, nor altogether die: or in whom some slips and errors of infirmity may be found."

88. ^ ibidem, p. 850, ch. 17: "Furthermore we teach, that it is carefully to be marked wherein especially the truth and unity of the church consists, lest we either rashly breed or nourish schisms in the church. It consists not in outward rites and ceremonies, but rather in the truth and unity of the catholic faith."

89. ^ ibidem, p. 858, ch. 18.

90. ^ ibidem: "Wherein this rule is always to be held, that 'all things ought to be done to edification, decently, and honestly' (1 Corinthians 14:40) without any oppression or tumult. For the apostle witnesses that 'power was given to him of God, to edify and not to destroy' (2 Corinthians 10:8). And the Lord Himself forbad the cockle to be plucked up in the Lord's field because there would be danger lest the wheat also should be plucked up with it (Matthew 13:29)."

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