

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Diagram 1: Traditional Presbyterian Colonial Style
Diagrams 2A to 3B: Traditional and Modern Presbyterian Liturgical Centers
Diagrams 4 & 5: Good and Bad Aisle Plans
Diagrams 6 & 7: Traditional and Modern Presbyterian Back Balcony and Narthex
Diagrams 8 to 10: Alternatives for Seats of Preacher, Preacher's Family, and Elders

Introduction

1. What Is a "Church"?
2. The Bible and the Formation of Church Buildings
3. The Early-Medieval Deformation of Church Buildings
4. The Protestant Reformation also of Church Buildings
5. Churches de-form again -- into Theaters
6. In this crisis -- what then must be done?
7. The Auditorium and other Church Buildings We Need
8. The Acoustics in the Auditorium-Sanctuary
9. The All-important Auditorium-Sanctuary
10. The Auditorium-Sanctuary: Inside and Out
11. The Inside of the Auditorium-Sanctuary
12. The Front of the Auditorium-Sanctuary
13. The Auditorium-Sanctuary's Pulpit and its Bible
14. The Auditorium-Sanctuary's Background Behind the Pulpit
15. The Sacramental Symbols
16. The Baptismal Font
17. The Lord's Table
18. The Flower Stand
19. The Elders' Seats
20. The Deacons' Seats
21. The Liturgical Center
22. The Seats for the Congregation
23. The Racks for Bibles and Song Books
24. The Choir
25. The Vocalists and Musical Instruments
26. The Windows in the Auditorium-Sanctuary
27. Babies in the Auditorium-Sanctuary
28. The Choir Room/Bride's Room
29. Ventilation in the Auditorium-Sanctuary
30. How Firm a Foundation?
31. The Educational Facilities
32. Other Ecclesiastical Facilities
33. Conclusion

Bibliography

List of Model Auditoriums/Sanctuaries Worth Studying
About the Author

INTRODUCTION

Important indeed are the theological considerations in designing a new church. Congregations are likely to spend well over a million dollars of the Lord*s money on their new church building facilities. Accordingly, may Almighty God first open the hearts of Christians to listen very carefully to the requirements of His most Holy Word before they proceed to undertake construction.

For “strength and beauty are [to be] in His sanctuary.... [Let Christians then] give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name [before they] bring an offering and come into His courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!” (Ps. 96)

This article was originally written in 1976 for the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Kosciusko (Mississippi), which then desired to build a new Sanctuary. This writer then pastored that congregation. Accordingly, it is geared to the then-Reformed ethos of the relevant denomination -- the Presbyterian Church in America.

The article was subsequently published in the January 1991 edition of *The Presbyterian*, official organ of the British Reformed Fellowship. In 2003, Rev. Reed de Pace of the U.S.A., at the recommendation of my very good friend the PCA’s Rev. Dr. Carl Bogue of Akron (Ohio), wrote and asked me for a copy. So I then updated it, and sent it to Rev. de Pace electronically. I apologize for the quality of the (enlargable) diagrams attached, but include them to facilitate understanding the article.

I now send forth this revised and expanded article, while retaining its original American spelling, in the hope that it may be a blessing to all lovers of God and His Word everywhere who are contemplating the erection of places of public worship. May such faithfully reflect our love of the Bible and its Lord – for the salvation and sanctification of many; for the expansion of Christ’s Church; and, above all, to the glory of our one true Triune God!

— Rev. Dr. Francis Nigel Lee,
Professor-Emeritus of the Queensland Presbyterian
Theological College,
Brisbane, Australia, 2003.

1. WHAT IS A CHURCH?

The Holy Spirit, speaking from the opened Bible and through the faithful preacher, is the One Who convenes the Church alias the people of God for worship. Indeed, it is also the Holy Spirit Who ultimately moves their hearts to erect a building for worship where they can regularly continue to hear the Word of God. Gen. 1:3,26, 28; 2:16f.; 3:8f.; Ex. 31:1-11; Rom. 10:8-17.

Hence the congregation*s opened Bible and the pulpit which supports it, are of fundamental importance in church architecture. The mere shell of the church building, and especially its outward form, are purely secondary considerations. Their structure should proceed from the centrality of the Bible on the pulpit; and not the other way round. For we have no permanent monument to God*s mighty deeds other than the written record of Holy Scripture! Ps. 119:89f; Matt. 5:17-19; Luke 21:33.

According to the Holy Bible (Rom. 4:3; II Pet. 1:19f), the “Church” is not a building at all. Instead, the Church is a part or the whole of the people of God (Eph.1:22-23; 5:23f; Col. 1:18). Consequently: “churches” are groups of Christians; “church meetings” are congregations or assemblies of Christians; and “church buildings” are places set aside for church meetings of Christians. Heb. 2:12f; 4:9f; 6:10f; 8:2f; 10:25f; 12:22f; 13:10-14.

A building with a steeple -- especially with a Romish cross on top of it -- is not a “church” at all. Nor is it even a church-building -- unless those who meet there really are a church. Acts 17:1f; 17:10; 18:10f; 17:24; Rev. 2:9 and 3:9. Conversely, even a large private home can be “the church’s building.” Indeed, it is so -- whenever those who worship there really are the Lord*s people. Acts 1:13f; 12:12; 20:6-8.

This is why the 1975 Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America correctly declared “that the true beauty of worship is found in the presence of the Holy Spirit with the congregation. Thus, elaborate places of worship are not necessary for proper worship of the living God.... Since church buildings, as such, have no place in the life of the Church in the New Testament, it is incumbent upon modern congregations to consider carefully the matter of how much should be invested in such properties, lest they become an end in themselves, diverting the efforts of God*s people from their primary task.” *Minutes*, p.113.

2. THE BIBLE AND THE FORMATION OF CHURCH BUILDINGS

The above is not at all to say that church buildings are unimportant. Cf. Ps. 96:5-9 and Acts 1:13f & 2:1-2. Indeed, the General Assembly went on to say that “care should be taken, on the other hand, to provide a place of suitable dignity for the spiritual worship of God...in an orderly fashion.” (*Idem.*)

Under the Old Covenant, God gave detailed descriptions of what the sanctuary should look like. Ex. chs. 25 to 40; I Kgs. chs. 5 to 7; Ezek. chs. 40 to 48. Especially the Old Testament temple environment was indeed a place where God was to be worshiped in the beauty of holiness. I Kgs. chs. 6 to 8 & Ps. 96:6-9. Each piece of temple furniture was rich in meaning, in the way it pointed forward to the advent of the Messiah. II Chr. chs. 2 to 7 cf. Zech 3:1 to 4:3 and Rev. 1:12-13 & 4:5 & 5:6-8 & 8:3-5 & 11:1-4,19 & 15:1-5 & 21:3,12,22.

However, under the New Testament economy, all of this -- which then pointed forward to Calvary -- has now been fulfilled in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. See: Acts 1:6-11; Col. 2:13-23; Heb. 8:1-6 & 10:1-20f. Today we are required to worship God only in spirit and in truth. This means: in the spirit of the Holy Ghost, and in the truth of the Holy Bible as His written Word. Jn. 4:19-26 & 17:14-20 & 20:30-31; II Cor. 3:3,12-18; II Tim. 3:14-17; Jas. 1:16-25; and I Pet. 1:22 to 2:6.

With the destruction of the temple already during the times of the Older Testament, the synagogue arose when the Israelites were exiled abroad. ‘Synagogue’ means the place where folk come together especially to hear the preaching of the Word of God. Cf. Neh. 8:1-10.

There, one reads that “all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street.... And they spoke to Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra...brought the Law before the congregation...and all that could hear.... And he read therein..., and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

“And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit [or a large and high object]...which they had made for the purpose.... And Ezra opened the Book in the sight of all the people – for he was above all the people. And when he opened it, all the people stood up.

“And Ezra [prayed and] blessed the Lord, the great God. And [he]...caused the people to understand the Law...in the Book in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the meaning, and caused them to understand

the reading.

“And Nehemiah...said to all the people: ‘This day is holy to the Lord your God’.... All the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them: ‘Go on your way.... The joy of the Lord is your strength!’”

Especially in the intertestamentary times between the Old and the New Testament administrations of the same covenant of grace, synagogues like the above became commonplace. They were very useful -- also in preparing the way for their fulfilment in and replacement by pulpit-centered buildings for public worship at the advent of the Messiah.

Thus, in Luke 4:15-21 we are told that the Lord Jesus taught in the synagogues. He was accustomed to going into synagogues on the sabbath. He stood up there, to read God’s Word audibly and publicly – to expound it, and to apply it.

Also the Apostle Paul stood up in a synagogue in what is now Turkey, and expounded and applied the Bible. Acts 13:13-44. Indeed, when he preached in a synagogue at Berea in Greece, his noble Jewish listeners “received the Word with all readiness of mind – and searched the Scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so. Therefore, many of them believed – and also not a few honorable Greek women and men.” Acts 17:10-12.

In New Testament times, church buildings -- whether private or public -- were preeminently edifices where God*s people could meet in an orderly manner. For they were to meet under the leadership of special officers: to hear the Lord*s Word; to enjoy His Sacraments (of Baptism and the Lord*s Supper); to bring gifts to Him and for the least of His brethren; to sing His praises in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; to pray together in His Name; and to edify and exhort and fellowship with one another. Matt. 25:35-40; John 17:17; Acts 1:20f; 2:16f; 2:38-42; 6:2-4; 20:6-11; I Cor. 11:17-33; 14:23-40; 16:1-2; Eph. 5:18-20; Heb. 10:25; and Rev. 2:1-11.

This, then, is the picture of the Ancient Church in the Apostolic times of the “reformation” of Old Testament worship (Heb. 9:10f). It is the picture of the New Testament Church at the time of its formation.

Sadly, however, that Apostolic Church later experienced deformation under the influence of huge errors such as Eastern-Orthodoxy (*sic*) in the East and Roman Catholicism in the West. Fortunately, though, it once again underwent reformation at the guidance of the great Protestant Theologians -- only later to deform yet once again

under the influence of the modern theater.

The crucial question today, however, is whether we are going to allow our church architecture to experience still more deformation -- or whether we will promote its continuing reformation? For the True Church of the Lord is both ever-Reformed and ever-reforming – in the light of God's Word. Ps. 36 :9. “What says the Scripture,” then, about worship? Rom. 4:3.

3. THE EARLY-MEDIEVAL DEFORMATION OF CHURCH BUILDINGS

After the first few Christian centuries, the Church gradually fell away from the above-mentioned New Testament principles into errors like those of (so-called) Eastern-Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. The Church (that is, the congregation itself) became less and less important in the eyes of church leaders. Instead, the church building and the “clergy” rather than the people of God as a whole more and more became the focus of attention.

This took place when early-medieval Eastern and Romanistic architecture began to reflect a syncretism or admixture of fulfilled Old Testament elements on the one hand and anti-reformational elements from Paganism on the other. The “pre-reformational” or Pre-Calvary liturgical devices of the Old Testament dispensation (cf. Heb. 9:1-10f), were resuscitated.

Then and thereafter, they were combined also with practices from the ancient pagan religions of the Orient, Greece and Rome. Thus church buildings too begin to reflect such syncretism.

Initially, these ritualistic and/or heathen elements were added to the reformational mode of worship in the New Testament. Gradually, however, they almost totally suppressed it. And ultimately, the simple edifices of the Apostolic period were replaced by totally different kinds of structures.

Under the influence of Eastern-Orthodox and/or Romanism's deformation of the churches and their auditorium-sanctuaries, central pulpits and their Bibles were reduced in size and pushed to the side of the church buildings. Blasphemous ‘Masses’ were performed on huge centralized stone altars cluttered up with crosses and candles and erected in the middle of the front of the ecclesiastical buildings. Altar rails were

introduced, effectively barring God*s people from going together with the “clergy” into the allegedly “holy” area up front. Incenses were burned, bells were rung, and gaudily-dressed priests and altar-boys first chanted and later sang in choirs all around the altar in the front of the ecclesiastical buildings. In the West, gigantic and gloomy Romish cathedrals with their huge statues and images reduced the individual worshipers to utter insignificance. And the illiterate people were exposed to picture-stories in crucifixes and sculptures and stained-glass windows -- rather than to powerful preaching from the infallible Word of God.

In one word -- Romanistic church leaders gave their congregations dramatic and visible representations of what the “clergy” considered to be the most important aspects of Christianity. And the largely-illiterate priests either could not or would not encourage the people to hear and to read and to do the centrally-important teachings of Holy Scripture. Acts 17:10-12; Rom. 10:11-17; Col. 2:18-23; Jas. 1:18-27.

4. THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION ALSO OF CHURCH BUILDINGS

With the arrival of the Protestant Reformation -- Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox attempted to return to the simplicity of New Testament worship. This they did by de-Romanizing the old ecclesiastical edifices -- and by building brand-new church buildings, in a Biblical way.

In the old ecclesiastical buildings which they inherited from the Romanists, the Protestant Reformers removed the altars and candles and crosses and images. They pushed the pulpits back from the side, once again into the middle of the front of the church edifice. They enlarged and elevated the pulpit, and especially its Bible. And they removed the altar-boy choirs and the musical bells and the altar-rails from the front of the ecclesiastical building.

In all new church buildings originally constructed by the Protestants themselves, everything architecturally possible was done to activate not the priests and the altar-boy choir but the whole of the people of God to hear and to read and to do God*s Word and to sing to His glory. So choirs and musical instruments were moved to the back of the church buildings from where (in Lutheranism and Anglicanism) they could encourage the congregation itself to praise the Lord. In the more-thoroughgoing Reformation (of Calvinism), in many cases such choirs and musical instruments were dispensed with altogether.

5. CHURCH BUILDINGS DE-FORM AGAIN -- INTO THEATERS

About a hundred years ago, under the influence of the modern theater, Protestant and Biblical principles were undermined by new designs for church buildings taken from the world of entertainment. The large central pulpit and its Bible were replaced by a small central lectern at the front of the ecclesiastical edifice -- which small lectern was generally placed on a prominently elevated platform where the choir too was henceforth to be seated and robed. Organs were pushed up from the back to the front area of the building. Pianos were added opposite the organs -- and sometimes brass bands or even orchestras. The large Lord's table became a small flower stand. The baptismal font shrank in size almost to invisibility (and when not in use was often removed altogether during most services). Even the outside of the building began to look more like a movie house than a place of worship.

Thus the church building ceases to be a church building. Instead, it becomes an edifice used for entertainment on the Lord's day (and therefore for the subtle promotion of the desecration of the Sabbath). Here, the Minister is far less a Preacher of God's Word. In essence, he largely becomes the Producer-Director of a sabbath-desecrating and Sunday-secularizing theatrical performance.

6. IN THIS CRISIS -- WHAT THEN MUST BE DONE?

Sadly and evan-jellyfish-ly, even many evangelical churches today have adopted for their church buildings architectural features derived from Romanism or from the theater -- or both. The mind of the Presbyterian Church in America's General Assembly, however, is clear on this matter as far as the erection of all future church buildings is concerned:

“First, there should be nothing that directly contradicts any clear Scriptural teaching -- such as the erecting of images or idols, as forbidden by the Second Commandment.

“Second, the Reformed principle of worship should be observed, namely, that we are to include in our worship only that which is either expressly set down in Scripture, or may by good and necessary consequence be deduced from it. Nothing should be built into the sanctuary that would cause the congregation to break this principle.

“For example, the Bible does not authorize the use of any visible representations of God or any part of His creation as a center of worship. The sanctuary should not include such, either as stained glass windows, crosses or other symbols.

Christ gave us only one thing by which to remember Him -- the Lord's Supper [and Baptism]. The use of other things for this purpose has no Biblical basis, and should be discouraged.

“Third, the Reformed view of worship emphasizes the centrality of the reading and proclamation of the Word. Thus, the preferred arrangement of the sanctuary is one that preserves the centrality of the pulpit.

“Fourth, since the Reformed Faith views the Sacraments as an extension of the pulpit in that they are ‘sensible signs’ by which ‘Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied’ -- the placement of the baptismal font and communion table in relation to the pulpit so as to symbolize this concept, is most desirable.

“Fifth, since the Lord's Supper portrays the communion of the congregation with her Lord, it is most suitable that the congregation be seated around the table of communion, or at least that the table be placed on the level of the congregation and not elevated above it.

“Finally, it should be remembered that the true beauty of worship is found in the presence of the Holy Spirit with the congregation. Thus, elaborate places of worship are not necessary for proper worship of the living God. Care should be taken, on the other hand, to provide a place of suitable dignity for the spiritual worship of God. The exact form of the sanctuary is thus unimportant, so long as the congregation has a suitable place in which to worship God in an orderly fashion.” (*Op. cit.*, pp. 112-113.)

7. THE AUDITORIUM AND OTHER CHURCH BUILDINGS WE NEED

In the light of the above, we next proceed to apply the principles of Scripture first to the auditorium alias the auditorium-sanctuary. That is the central place where the congregation as a whole assembles for the services of divine worship.

Very much secondary considerations, are the rest of the church facilities. Such include: the Sunday school classrooms; the preacher's study; the church office; the church library; the bride's/choir room; the church kitchen; the church hall; the church's restrooms; the youth director's quarters; the recreational facilities; the parking lot; and the church grounds.

Only later shall we apply Biblical principles to the above secondary church facilities. For it is the auditorium, used as a sanctuary, that is of prime importance. Acts 19:8f cf. Ps. 96:9-9.

8. THE ACOUSTICS IN THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY

‘O earth, earth, earth, **hear** the Word of the Lord!’ Jer. 22:29f. “Give **ear**, O you heavens, and I will **speak**; and **hear**, O earth, the **words** of My mouth! My **doctrine** shall drop [or drip down] like the rain. My **speech** shall distil like the dew.... Because I will **publish** the Name of the Lord. **Ascribe** greatness to our God!” Deut. 32:1-3; cf. Isa. 34:1; etc.

There can be no doubt that **hearing** God*s Word in an **auditorium** (or “hearing place”) is much more important than **seeing** a whole host of beautiful objects in a **gallery** (or “viewing place”) or even meditating about religion in a **sanctuary** (or “holy place”). For the divine Christ Himself was and is essentially the humanly-audible **Word** of God the Father, rather than essentially His humanly-(in)visible His image. John 1:1-5 cf. I Tim. 1:17 & 6:14-18.

Adam **heard** Gods Word before he saw anything in the universe (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:16f; 3:8f). Prophets were to be **heard** rather than to be seen. Almost countless times, they proclaimed in all the ages: “Thus **says** the Lord!” or “The **Word** of the Lord came to me” or “**Hear** the Word of the Lord!” For “faith comes by **hearing**, and hearing by the **Word** of God” (Rom. 10:17).

Always, then, the **acoustics** at the prophets’ disposal had to be good. That is why Christ’s immediate forerunner John the Presbyterian preached and baptized in the desert -- largely surrounded by a mountain amphitheater. That is why Paul preached on the prominent Areopagus or Mars’s Hill in Athens. For there were **no microphones** back then.

The root question as regards the salvation and edification of souls, then, is this: “How shall they **hear**” the **preaching** of the **Word** of God? Rom. 10:14. Accordingly, only the very finest acoustics are good enough for truly Christian worship.

Church buildings, therefore, should be designed primarily as **auditoriums** for **listeners** rather than as **theaters** for **entertainers** or as **galleries** for **art-lovers**. The whole structure of a Christian auditorium-sanctuary should therefore be developed around good acoustics -- and not primarily built up around the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (I John 2:16). Ideally, then, loudspeakers and **sound amplifiers** really should not even be needed.

9. THE ALL-IMPORTANT AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY

The place for the public worship of Almighty God is first and foremost an **auditorium** (or “hearing place”). Only secondarily should that acoustical auditorium also be a **sanctuary** (or “holy place”).

It would be better by far to worship God truly, even without a building in a natural auditorium in the open air (Gen. 2:1-3 & 2:15f & Acts 17:23-25) -- than to go into a church building and to sit there even quietly though in an unworshipful frame of mind (Isa. 1:13-15 & Jer. 7:2-4). Yet it is probably better still to worship God truly **inside** a suitable auditorium building specially set aside as a sanctuary for that purpose (Ps. 96 & Acts 19:8f).

In that case, we should never forget that it is the presence of **God** and His Spirit-indwelled people in the “sanctuary” which makes it holy – not *vice versa*. See Matt. 23:16-22. So too, it is only the presence of God’s Holy Spirit in His people which makes them holy. Where these spiritual conditions are met, an auditorium used as a sanctuary building should be much more important to the people of God than all the rest of the church facilities combined.

For the auditorium used as a sanctuary is where the whole congregation meets regularly for that acme of human activity -- the worship of Almighty God. Hence, far more thought should be given to the planning of the auditorium to be used as a sanctuary -- than should ever be given to the planning of all of the rest of the church*s buildings.

10. THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY: INSIDE AND OUT

Clearly, inasmuch as the congregation holds its services inside and not outside the auditorium-sanctuary, far more attention and forethought should be given to its internal than to its external structure and appearance. This is not to say, however, that the external appearance is unimportant. To the contrary, all passers-by should clearly be able to recognize that the edifice concerned is a well-designed and frequently-utilized Presbyterian church building. They should not be able to think that it could perhaps be a huge Romish or Episcopalian cathedral, a Baptist chapel, a modern Jewish synagogue, an Islamic mosque, or even a new movie house.

For this reason, there is great merit in adopting the well-known “colonial style” for Reformed church buildings and educational facilities here in North America. For the “colonial” design automatically suggests to the American beholder that the building concerned is an educational building (and is therefore either a church building where God*s Word is taught or an old-time Christian Dayschool building where instruction is given about God*s world).

Yet the tented-rectangular or prism-shaped colonial style is, however, by no means the only possible or acceptable shape for a church building. Indeed, careful consideration could also be given to cross-shapes, cones, cubes, pyramids, cylinders, ovals, spheres and especially fan-shapes. Cf. Rev. 21:10-22. Significantly, an opened fan is the shape open air listeners automatically fan out into. For an excellent example of a good fan-shaped church, see the photograph of the (NGK) Winterton Reformed Church in South Africa (on our front cover).

However, we recommend the “colonial prism” church sanctuary shape for the United States. And we do this for symbolical, acoustical, aesthetic, historical and economic reasons.

For the prism-shape of the “colonial style” building with its tented roof reminds us that Christ made His tent or tabernacle among us (John 1:14 & Rev. 21:3-22). The colonial style marks the auditorium (here in North America) as an educational edifice. And, the steeple tower identifies it unmistakably as a Christian church building.

All together, these three features clearly proclaim that the edifice concerned is a church building where the people of God are truly being educated. In other words, these three features identify the edifice as a Calvinistic or Presbyterian church building. See Diagram 1.

Needless to say, however, there should be no crosses at all on the steeple tower nor elsewhere on the outside (or inside) walls of the auditorium-sanctuary. Nor should crosses be erected anywhere else inside the house of God. See the PCA's *ibid.* and Calvin's *Institutes* I:11:7-13.

For Christ is no longer crucified and dead. He is not being re-presented on altars in the Mass. But He is alive, and risen. Rom. 8:34 & 10:9 & I Cor. 15:4-32 & 15:35-58 & II Cor. 5:16-18 & Phil. 3:10-21 & Rev. 1:5,10,18.

The Protestant church auditorium-sanctuary's steeple points beholders to heaven. For that is where Jesus now is, and remains -- until He shall return in judgment at the very end of history. Col. 3:1 cf. Acts 3:20-21. Till then, let the worshipful words of Jesus Himself in respect of earthly sanctuaries never be forgotten:

“You shall neither on this mountain [in Samaria] nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.... The hour...is now, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those that worship Him – must do so in spirit and in truth!” John 4:21-24.

The simple colonial church-school style is admittedly old-fashioned. Yet it well serves to remind all in North America of the old-time religion of the Pilgrim Fathers and the Puritans. Moreover, it especially recalls the church at Ephesus, where Paul separated the true believers from the Jewish synagogue and preached to the Christians in the school of Tyrannus for a number of years (Acts 19:8-9).

11. THE INSIDE OF THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY

Frankly, however, the format of the inside of the auditorium-sanctuary should really be considered before the outside of the building is designed. This is so because the inside is more important than the outside; is where the congregation assembles; and because the design of the inside will to some extent determine the final appearance of the outside of the building too.

Now the whole of the inside of the auditorium building is the “sanctuary.” The liturgical center up front (where the preacher functions) is not a holy sanctuary within a secular auditorium, nor even a holier part of a holy auditorium building in the larger part of which the congregation sits. For this reason, everything possible should be done by the architect to stress the holiness of every part of the sanctuary in which the congregation will sit and worship God.

To put a whole host of objects that please the eye (such as a robed choir, organ pipes, beautiful stained-glass windows, flags and flowers) only up front in the liturgical center of the auditorium-sanctuary -- is to downgrade the rest of the building! The display of a large symbol (such as that of a Spirit-inspired Bible) above the outside of the doors giving entrance into the back of the auditorium-sanctuary, however, can help promote this vitally important idea that the whole assembled congregation is to keep on being filled with the Spirit and to keep on walking under the authority of the Word of God (cf. Diagram 7). For as the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* states: "The Members of this visible Church are all persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and promise submission to His Laws" (*BOCO* 1-3). See too Acts 2:38-42 and I Cor. 1:2 and 7:14.

12. THE FRONT OF THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY

The midpoint of the front of the inside of the auditorium-sanctuary is called the "liturgical center." For this is where the congregation's worship of God is focused. The only **objects** which should be put up front there, are those which the Word of God authorizes for the purpose of worship. Such objects are: the Congregation's Bible on the pulpit which supports it; the Lord's table and its accompaniments; and the baptismal font and its stand . Cf. Luke 4:16-20 and Acts 10:43-48 & 20:7.

This therefore excludes all crosses, candles, flags and such like from the liturgical center. Indeed the only **persons** who should be seated up front permanently, are the **officers** whom God has appointed to lead the worship services. *Viz.:* the Ruling Elders who supervise the preaching; the Minister of the Word and Sacraments or the Preaching Elder as one of their number; and the Deacons who supervise the collection and distribution of the gifts of God's people.

This therefore excludes permanent front seats in the liturgical center for other persons such as soloists, choir members, the pianist and the organist. For they are not the Biblically-required ordained officers of Christ's Church. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-8f; 5:17-18; Acts 6:1-7; Jas. 2:1-4 & 3:1; and Prov. 25:6-7.

Hear again the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order*: "Christ, as King, has given to His Church officers, oracles, and ordinances.... He is present with the Church by His Word and Spirit, and the benefits of all His offices are effectually applied by the Holy Ghost.... The officers of the Church, by whom all its powers are administered are, according to the Scriptures, Preachers or Teaching [Elders] and Ruling Elders and Deacons.... All [congregations] which maintain the Word and Sacraments in their fundamental integrity are to be recognized as true branches of the Church of Jesus Christ" (*BOCO*, I & 1-4 & 2-2)

Simple white walls and simple furniture are appropriate for the liturgical center. For not the building and its contents but Christ rules His Church in His offices of Prophet, King and Priest. He does so through the officers of His Church -- His prophetic preachers, His

kingly elders, and His priestly deacons. And He also does this: as His prophetic preachers proclaim His Words; as His kingly elders supervise His baptisms; and as His priestly deacons serve His tables. See diagrams 2A and 2B. Note too the front of the sanctuary of Grace Chapel at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi.

13. THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY'S PULPIT AND ITS BIBLE

There can be no question that the Protestant Reformed Faith of true Presbyterians requires a large and opened congregational Bible. See: Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5-6; Isa. 8:19-20; Jer. 8:3 & 36:4-32; Ezek. 2:9 to 3:4; Matt. 4:4,7,10; Luke 4:15-20; 16:29-31; 24:25-27,44-48; John 5:39-46; 17:17; 20:30-31; 21:24; Acts 13:15f; 15:21; 17:2-3; 17:10-12; 18:25-28; 20:6-11; 28:16,23f,30f; Rom. 4:3; 10:17; 15:4,8-12; 16:29-31; 24:25-27,44-48; I Cor. 1:2 & 5:9; Col. 1:2; 4:16; II Tim. 3:15 to 4:5; Heb. 4:12-13; 10:7,25; I Pet. 1:10-12,25; 4:11; II Pet. 1:19-21; 3:15-17; I John 5:11f; Rev. 1:11f & 2:1f; 5:1-7; 6:1f; 10:1-2; 10:9 to 11:2; 14:6-7; & 22:18-19. It should be exhibited right in the middle of the front of the church building, clearly visible from the very backmost pew. Ps. 119:89f; Neh. 8:1-8; Luke 4:15-20; John 17:17; I Thess. 2:13; and I Pet. 1:23 to 2:2.

This vital matter needs to be made as prominent as possible. Too, also for acoustical reasons, the preacher's proclamation of the life-giving message of that Bible should clearly be heard everywhere throughout the auditorium-sanctuary.

For theological reasons, the congregation's Bible should be visible even from the very back of the auditorium-sanctuary. This can be achieved by elevating the large Pulpit Bible at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and supporting it on a somewhat larger sloping bookstand made from transparent material to enhance the Bible's visibility.

Indeed, that bookstand and its Bible should be exalted upon a prominent pulpit. Neh. 8:4f. That pulpit should preferably be a large, hollow, half-cube (and not just a small and insignificant lectern).

There is a great need for a large pulpit – gentle in color, and soothing to the eyes. Therefrom, the congregation's Bible needs distinctly to be heard and clearly to be seen.

“How shall they hear, without a preacher?” Rom. 10:14. For “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Rom. 10:17. A pulpit with a large and square front embossed with a somewhat smaller design shaped like an opened Bible (or like an opened Biblical scroll, or like a bookroll, or like the two tables of the Law) -- states this vital truth loud and clear. So too does a large pulpit with a front itself shaped like an opened Bible or scroll, or shaped like the Decalogue's two tables of stone.

We do not need nor recommend a platform up front across the width of the liturgical center. However, if there is to be a platform there, the elders and perhaps too the deacons but not the choir should be seated on it -- next to the pulpit. It is much cheaper and better to

make the pulpit stand on the level floor. Such is the case in Grace Chapel at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson (Mississippi) -- even though its pulpit is perhaps considerably higher than it need have been.

The pulpit itself should be simple and unadorned and designed by the architect himself as the focus of attention of the congregation. For it needs to be in harmony with the rest of the auditorium-sanctuary developed around it.

Especially if the floor of the sanctuary slopes down toward the pulpit -- and such a slope is a very expensive and unnecessary extra -- the pulpit needs to be prominent and of some height above the eye-level of the sitting congregation. It should be simple and unadorned, and its design wholly left to the architect. He should develop the rest of the sanctuary around the pulpit. Those surroundings need to emphasize the pulpit, and thus to be in harmony with it.

The importance of a large Bible on a high pulpit is clearly emphasized in Scripture itself. This is why “all people gathered themselves together as one man.... Ezra the scribe [was then] to bring **the Book** of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought **the Law** before the congregation.... And he read therein...from the morning until midday.... And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a **pulpit** (Hebrew: ‘**high** place’) of wood, which they had made for that purpose.... And Ezra opened the Book in the sight of all the people (for he was **above** all the people).... And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God.... And the Levites caused the people to understand the Law.... So they read in the Book of the Law of God **distinctly**, and gave the sense” or **meaning**. Neh. 8:1-10; Luke 4:15-21; and Acts 13:13-44 & 17:10-12.

14. THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY’S BACKGROUND BEHIND THE PULPIT

The auditorium-sanctuary’s background behind the prominent pulpit, should be of a gentle yet contrasting color to the pulpit. The background should be as simple in design as possible (in order to emphasize God’s Word and its pulpit as much as can be done architecturally). Cf. Matt. 5:14-19.

Consequently, a naked wall is a much better backdrop to a pulpit than is a frilly curtain. Furthermore, robed choirs or beautiful stained-glass windows – if used at all -- should be put **elsewhere** than behind or behind and above the pulpit. For they are much less important than the Bible on the pulpit.

In addition -- particularly if illuminated strongly -- if placed behind and above it, they can only distract the congregation’s attention from the central importance of the Bible. Indeed, they can even cause painful headaches to the people in the pews forced to look at them behind the pulpit -- or behind and above the pulpit -- throughout the worship service.

“Do not let anyone who delights in...the worship of [choirs of] angels disqualify you from the prize! Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.... They are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations have indeed an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship...., but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence” or carnality. Col. 2:18,22,23, *NIV*.

A sounding board above the pulpit, however -- perhaps with an outline of the Spirit-inspired open Bible or of the two tablets of the Spirit-inspired Law of God etched upon it -- would give a much better acoustical projection of the preacher*s voice, and also give more prominence to the pulpit itself and its Spirit-inspired Bible. See diagrams 2B & 3B.

For “God is Spirit, and those that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit.” John 4:24. Moreover, a pointed front of the sanctuary, with the pulpit centrally in the point of the pointed front -- see diagrams 3A & 3B and 8-9 -- would perhaps help to emphasize the dominance of the Word of God more clearly than would a square-fronted sanctuary (as in diagrams 2A & 2B & 10).

15. THE SACRAMENTAL SYMBOLS

Romanism dwarfs the pulpit. It also elevates and deforms the Lord’s table into a huge priestly altar and conspicuously centralizes it far removed from the dwarfed pulpit or lectern (which it moves out to the side of the liturgical center).

The theater design, on the other hand, dwarfs both pulpit and table. Indeed, it elevates the preacher-performer -- and especially the robed choir.

However, truly Protestant Presbyterianism alias Biblical Christianity has a prominent Lord’s table and prominent baptismal font. Yet prominent as they are, they are always to be even visibly subservient to and in front of and beneath the discipline or authoritative teaching of the even more prominent pulpit and especially its uplifted large congregational Bible. For it is from the Pulpit Bible alone that the table and the font both derive their very authority.

The Presbyterian Church in America has declared that “the preferred arrangement of the sanctuary is one that preserves the centrality of the pulpit.” Indeed, “the Reformed Faith views the Sacraments as an extension of the pulpit.” Consequently, “the placement of the baptismal font and communion table in relation to the pulpit so as to symbolize this concept, is most desirable.”

The only correct place for table and font, then, is: up at the front of the church building; beneath the pulpit; and clearly visible even from the backmost pew. Accordingly, we recommend that the congregation, when seated, should see: first the baptismal font (as the symbol of the sacrament of never-to-be-repeated initiation); then, behind it, the Lord*s table (as the symbol of the sacrament of frequently-repeated reconfirmation); and last, above them

both, the all-controlling Pulpit Bible (as the symbol of the centrality and exaltedness of the always-dynamic Word of God). For the latter alone should tower above the sacramental symbols, and be seen to give them their Scriptural validity.

Declares the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order*: "The body of Christ of professing Christians...maintain[s] the Word and Sacraments in their fundamental integrity"(*BOCO*, 2-2). And the Presbyterian Church in America's Third General Assembly further professed that "the sacraments...are sensible [alias visible and tangible and audible] signs' by which 'Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied.'"(*Minutes*, p.113).

Let us too then be sufficiently 'sensible'(!). Let us permanently and conspicuously 'represent' both the baptismal font and the Lord's table! And let us do so boldly enough for every Member of the congregation to see them standing there at all times beneath the Pulpit Bible -- right at the very front of the auditorium-sanctuary, and right under the authority of the congregation's Pulpit Bible!

16. THE BAPTISMAL FONT

"Since the Reformed faith views the Sacraments as an extension of the pulpit..., the placement of the baptismal font...in relation to the pulpit so as to symbolize this concept is most desirable." Presbyterian Church in America's Third General Assembly's *Minutes*, p. 113.

Surely this implies that the baptismal font should be not at the back of the auditorium-sanctuary but at the front and near the Pulpit Bible. Surely this implies that the font should not be above nor behind but below and in front of and subordinate to the Pulpit Bible. Yet surely this also implies that the font should also be so large and so prominent that it can be seen at all times even from the backmost pew. Acts 2:2-4,8,33,38-41 & 8:36f.

Surely the considerable size of the laver in the tabernacle – containing enough water to wash both hands and feet -- has implications for the proper size of a baptismal font today? Cf. Ex. 30:17-21; John 3:23-26; 13:3-10; Heb. 9:10-21; 10:22.

Surely this also implies that the font should be of sufficient size and contain enough water so that the sprinkling or pouring (and not just the inadequate dabbing) of that water over the head of the baptizee can clearly be seen to be at least a mild rainfall even from the very back of the auditorium-sanctuary. Ezek. 36:25-27; Joel 2:16,23,28; Acts 2:1-3,16-18, 8-39; I Cor. 10:1-4 with Ps. 77:15-20; and I Pet. 1:2 & 3:20-21 with Gen. 7:4f.

Indeed, surely a large font with three prominent feet is an appropriate reminder of the Trinity in Whose Name baptism is always to be administered. Cf. Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 12:3-6; 12:12-14; Eph. 4:4-6). See diagrams 3A and 3B.

17. THE LORD'S TABLE

“Christ gave us.. .the Lord’s Supper (by which to remember Him).... Since the Reformed Faith views the Sacraments as an extension of the pulpit..., the placement of the...communion table in relation to the pulpit so as to symbolize this concept, is most desirable.” Presbyterian Church in America*s Third General Assembly’s *Minutes*, pp. 112-113.

Certainly this requires a large and prominent table subordinate to the Pulpit Bible but yet clearly visible at all times from the very back of the auditorium-sanctuary. It is a good idea to keep suitable symbols such as a wine jug and a bread basket on the table at all times, even when not in use (cf. Ex. 29:32; Ps. 23:5; 116:12-13; Song 7:2; Matt. 26:26-27; John 6:13). And when about to be used, it is a good idea to cover that table with a white linen tablecloth as well.

It is appropriate that the table be located between the baptismal font and the pulpit. When this is indeed the case, the Members of the congregation can physically move their eyes from the baptismal font (nearest them) to the Lord’s table (just a little further away).

This better enables them to understand the antipaedocommunionistic theology of Classic Calvinists alias consistent Presbyterians. For such proceed from their covenantal baptism during their infancy, *via* or by way of being catechized from the Word of God (Prov. 22:6 cf. Ex. 12:26-28 & 12:48) -- toward the Lord’s table in later childhood (when mature enough to understand its meaning sufficiently). Luke 2:30-43 cf. I Cor. 5:7-8 and 11:27-30.

The table should be surrounded with chairs or pews (Luke 22:13-20). It may suitably be a large four-legged rectangular wooden structure (perhaps elongatable during communion services in order to make it long enough to seat at least twelve apostolic elders). Or it may be a large specially-shaped table (should the congregation’s mature Members all desire to be served communion while seated at that table rather than in their pews). Cf. Matt. 26:20,26.

Suggested shapes for large tables for this purpose include: the inverted-T; the inverted-V; the H-shape; the X-shape; the O-shape; the hollow square; and the hollow triangle. The communing Members of the congregation would then sit opposite one another on both sides of the table -- and all at the same time take first the bread and then the wine. Cf. I Cor. 11:21-33 cf. Luke 22:1-20f. See too diagrams 2 through 3B.

At any rate, the table should not be elevated in an altar area (as in Romanism). Nor should it be placed upon a platform together with the pulpit (as staged in the theater design). Let pulpit, table and font all be at floor level -- with both the font and the table nearer to the congregation than to the preacher!

For as the Presbyterian Church in America suggests, “since the Lord’s Supper portrays

the communion of the congregation with her Lord, it is most suitable that the congregation be seated around the table of communion; or at least, that the table be placed on the level of the congregation and not elevated above it" (*idem.*). Cf. too Isa. 25:6f; I Cor. 1:2 with 10:21 & 11:20-33 and Rev. 19:4-9.

18. THE FLOWER STAND

The session should make the decision as to whether or not flowers or plants are to be permitted in the auditorium-sanctuary. For some Members of the congregation (and even the preacher) may well be allergic to pollen. If such authorization is given, let not the communion table be used as a flower stand! For this detracts from the character of the table being the table of and for the Lord's Supper -- on which only objects such as wine jugs and bread baskets should be exhibited.

Certainly flowers were later brought into the Old Testament tabernacle a long time after its construction and inauguration (Num. 17:8-10 with Heb. 9:1-4). But these flowers were kept out of sight and away from the congregation, inside a closed box. Possibly there were also palm-trees or even cedars of Lebanon growing in the house of the Lord or at least in its surrounding courts. Cf. Ps. 92:12-13. But at any rate, all this was fulfilled and abolished in the New Testament dispensation (Col. 2 and Heb. chs. 9 & 10).

If flowers are ever to be placed in the sanctuary at all, the best location for them is right in the front **corner** of the building -- or better still, at the back of the congregation. For if flowers and trees and shrubs and flags and choir robes and other non-essential items are ever to be exhibited in places of public worship -- which Scripture nowhere requires nor remotely encourages -- the best place for them is within the congregation and thus subject to God's Word in the Pulpit Bible. Accordingly, they should rather not be installed by way of custom in the liturgical center -- in competition with the congregation's Bible. Diagrams 2A and 2B.

As the Presbyterian Church in America stated at its 1975 Third General Assembly: "We are to include in our worship only that which is either expressly set down in Scripture, or may by good and necessary consequence be deduced from it. Nothing should be built into the sanctuary that would cause the congregation to break this principle. For example, the Bible does not authorize the use of any visible representations of God or any part of His creation as a center of worship. The sanctuary should not include such -- either as stained glass windows, crosses, or other symbols."

Flowers and shrubs are not God, and do not depict Him. Yet they are certainly, as just stated above, "part of His creation." *A fortiori*, to park them in a very prominent place such as on the communion table in the "center of worship" -- compounds the breach of the Decalogue anent the Regulative Principle of Worship.

However, if flowers are to be displayed in the front of the church -- let them be arranged on a wall shelf in the corner of the liturgical center above the elders' pews! And let that shelf

then not function as a horticultural exhibition -- but rather clearly state those officers' function as rulers (in terms of Num. 17:2,3,5,6,8)!

19. THE ELDERS* SEATS

The oldest Presbyterian church buildings had the elders sitting up front near the pulpit. This was to emphasize that the congregation concerned was a Presbyterian church -- that is, a church governed by presbyters or elders. Acts 11:29-30; 14:23f; 15:2f; 21:18-26; I Tim. 3:1-5; 5:1; 5:17-19.

Now government by elders implies rulers who watch over and who control the preaching and who visibly empower the preaching elder as one of their number to deliver their sermon on their behalf. This they can best do by sitting on special elders* seats as symbols of their ruling authority. Cf. Ex. 24:1f,9f; Deut. 33:21; Ruth 4:2,11; Ps. 107:32; Prov. 31:23; Ezek. 8:1; Matt. 23:2-3a,6b; 26:57f; 28:12f; Rev. 4:4; 11:16.

Indeed, in some Presbyterian Churches, a ruling elder shakes the hand of the preaching elder on behalf of the elders of the session in front of the whole congregation before the service. He does so again after the service -- provided the session is then satisfied that the Word of God has been faithfully preached. The latter handshake is publically withheld, however -- if the session is dissatisfied. Invariably, the preacher's next sermon then gets much better prepared!

Consistent Presbyterianism might perhaps best be promoted by the elders sitting in such a way that they can see whether all of the sheep in the ward which each one pastors are attending divine worship regularly or not. Ex. 18:12,24-26; Deut. 1:13-16; 19:12,15; Matt. 18:16-18; Acts 20:17,20,28; I Pet. 5:1-5; Rev. 4:4-7; 5:8-14; 7:9-13f; 14:1-3; 19:1-4; 21:12-14.. Cf. diagrams 8-10.

For the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* (9-4) **requires** that "ruling elders...watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge.... They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourners, and guard the children of the church...as official duties."

Accordingly, perhaps the best possible place for the elders to sit, is at the front of the church next to the pulpit in such a way that they can see both the preaching elder and their own sheep, thus supervising both. See diagrams 2A through 3B, and compare the front of the sanctuary of Grace Chapel at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson (Mississippi).

Another possible (though perhaps less advisable) place for the elders' seats, is in the first row or two of pews in the front of the church. They could even rule from the back of the church, which would enable them to spot and to quell any disturbance of the worship service by talkative Members or crying children sitting in front of them, *etc.* See too at section 27 below.

However, to emphasize to the congregation that the elders are not just ordinary members of the church but in fact her special officers empowered to rule the congregation and who are every bit as important as the preacher -- probably a better place for them is right next to the pulpit. This would obviously emphasize the important fact that the preaching elder himself (while indeed a Member of the regional Presbytery or Classis or Circuit), is also one of the elders -- and clearly an extension also of the session (I Tim. 5:17-18).

If special seats up front are to be provided for the elders -- as is the practice of many Presbyterian churches even today -- there may be merit in their wives and children sitting with them -- so as not to fragment the covenantal family. "For it is important and desirable that families worship together." Thus PCA's *Book of Church Order*, 50-4, cf. diagrams 8 & 9.

Of course, consistently applied to the no-way-superior preaching elder, this would encourage also the preacher's family to sit with him (on or right next to the pulpit). In this respect, the desirable seating arrangement would depend on whether the elder's covenantal family obligations while in church are to be considered more important than his presbyterial obligations while in church -- or *vice versa*.

Some Presbyterian church buildings even have reading desks and lamps for the elders to sit at, where they can carefully check out everything the preacher is saying -- by verifying it in their *Westminster Standards* while he preaches. And certainly, the elders' desks or pews could be provided with Bibles and *Westminster Standards* to enable them to do this.

However, a church which seats its choir next to the preacher in the place where the elders or presbyters sat in times of old -- does not understand Reformed Polity. For it is clearly "Choiryterian" -- rather than Presbyterian.

Declares the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order*: "The ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church, are Teaching Elders or Ministers of the Word who are commissioned to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments; Ruling Elders whose office is to have the government and spiritual oversight of the church; and Deacons whose office is to receive and administer the offering of the people. As in Scripture, the offices of both Teaching and Ruling Elders are given to men only, who are known as presbyters and who share equally in the governing of the Church." *BOCO* 7-2.

Effectively to state the ruling nature of the office of elder, churches might emboss a conspicuous symbol such as a crown either on the front edge of their pew or on the wall just above their heads or in the corner at the very back of the liturgical center up front (Rev. 4:4,10). If a flower stand is to be used at all, perhaps it can be thus embossed and installed at the edge of the liturgical center on the corner wall above the elders' pews (Num. ch. 17). Likewise the deacons merit a suitable symbol too (I Tim. 3:8). Cf. diagrams 2A through 3B.

20. THE DEACONS* SEATS

The deacons are a help-rendering but non-ruling body of special officers subject to the rule of the session. They are commissioned to “serve tables” (Acts 6:1-3) -- that is, to supervise the collection, allocation, and distribution of church funds especially to the needy such as to Christian widows, orphans, missionaries, and especially to the congregation’s own full-time preacher and his dependent family. Acts 6:1-8 and I Tim. 3:8-13 & 5:3-17f. This is why preferably the deacons themselves should take up the collections, and not leave this important task to the “ushers.” For where in Scripture do we read of ushers at all; and where are we told that they should collect the funds which the deacons should administer?

Indeed, in at least some of the early Christian churches, the deacons would assist the congregation to lay her gifts to God for her poor on the communion table. This would be done out of gratitude for God’s gift of His Son which His “poor” congregation had symbolically just received in the Lord’s Supper. Cf. Acts 2:42-46 & 6:2-3; I Cor. 11:17-33f & 16:1-2; II Cor. 8:9f; and I Tim. 3:8,13 & 5:3-9f.

The New Testament knows only of the special officers of Ruling Elder, Teaching Elder and Deacon. Hence it is recommended (as was the historic practice of early Presbyterianism) that the deacons too sit alongside of the pulpit. Their historic position was right opposite the elders on the other side of the liturgical center.

From that position, they can readily be recognized by the congregation to be the special officers they are. Indeed, from that position they can themselves more easily supervise the taking up of the collections. See diagrams 2A through 2B, and cf. the front of the sanctuary of Grace Chapel at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson (Mississippi).

However, another possible though perhaps less advisable place for the deacons* seats, is in the first row or two of pews in front of the church (next to but separate from the elders). For “if a man desire the office of a bishop [or elder, Acts 20:17-28 and Titus 1:5,7], he desires a good work.... Likewise the deacons.” I Tim. 3:1,5,8 cf. Phil. 1:1.

It is further recommended that the deacons* collection plates (or baskets or bags or boxes) both before and after taking up the collection -- be exhibited in a special place in the auditorium-sanctuary. In some early Christian churches, this place was on top of the communion table – emphasizing the congregation’s gifts to God out of gratitude for God’s great Gift to His congregation, as symbolized in the Lord’s Supper. Acts 2:42-46; 6:2-3; I Cor. 11:17-33.

Alternatively, and perhaps even preferably, the deacon’s collection receptacles may be kept on a not-too-low special wall shelf or collection table (other than the Lord’s communion table) near the deacons’ seats and fully visible to the congregation. Acts 6:1-3; I Cor. 16:1-3 cf. Mark 12:41-44 and Matt. 5:23 with 8:4 and Lev. chs. 1 to 16 and Num. chs. 7 to 9, *etc.* See diagrams 2A through 3B.

“Likewise must the deacons be...not guilty of filthy lucre.... For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree....” I Tim. 3:8-13. They are to be “men of honest report...and wisdom.” For the deacons have been appointed over the necessary business of serving tables -- and thus of trustworthily and mercifully caring for the

material requirements of God*s needy people. Acts 6:1-3.

Effectively to state the merciful or heartfelt nature of the office of deacon, there is merit in embossing a conspicuous symbol such as a heart either on the front edge of their pew or on the wall just above their heads. Compare Calvin*s famous symbol of the heart offered up to God.

An excellent place for such a symbol would be on a wall shelf in the deacon*s corner at the very back of the liturgical center up front where the collection receptacles could be kept (and constantly uplifted before God*s grateful people). Cf. diagrams 2A through 3B.

Alternatively, to emphasize that the elders alone rule Christ*s church, there may be merit in seating the elders up at the front -- while seating the deacons at the back of the sanctuary, from where they would come forward to take up the collection. Cf. diagram 10.

21. THE LITURGICAL CENTER

All of the above -- pulpit, Lord*s table, baptismal font, elders* seats and possibly also deacons* seats -- should be up front in the "liturgical center" where the congregation can clearly see them all. But the liturgical center should preferably not be built on a platform elevating the elders and the preacher and possibly also the deacons above the congregation. The sanctuary is the entire church building where the congregation worships -- and not just the liturgical center thereof (as in Romanism). Hence, the liturgical center and its officers should not unnecessarily be lifted up above the rest of the congregation.

Inevitably, the preacher stands higher on the pulpit. But this is only so that God*s Word can clearly be heard and be seen to be preached -- by the rest of the congregation. Neh. 8:1-8. Precisely for this very reason, it is highly desirable to have the elders near the preacher in the liturgical center itself. This then clarifies to the congregation that the preacher is merely a fellow elder. I Pet. 1:1 & 5:1f; cf. section 19 and diagram 10.

In addition, everything architecturally possible should be done to stress the parity of importance and the equal holiness of all Christians -- for Christ*s sake. For proper emphasis must be laid on the general office of all believers (and not just on the special offices of the prophetic preacher and the priestly deacon and the kingly elder). This proper emphasis can strongly be stated by avoiding an elevated platform up front (as in the theater [per]version of the auditorium-sanctuary), and by adopting a level floor for the entire auditorium-sanctuary (thus stressing the prophethood and priesthood and kingship of all believers. See: Ex. 19:3-8; Deut. 10:15; I Cor. 3:17; I Pet. 2:5-9; Rev. 1:4-6. Compare too sections 13 and 17.

22 . THE SEATS FOR THE CONGREGATION.

God*s people need to be comfortable in order to be attentive to His Word. Therefore, their seats should preferably be cushioned. After all, the congregation has come together to hear the thorough exposition of Holy Scripture. And thorough exposition takes some time. Should God*s people then be given chairs -- or pews?

Scripture itself is silent on this subject. Pews have traditionally been used to express the idea of the oneness of the whole congregation -- all being together on the same pew(s) as one big happy family of believers. Chairs, however, are probably more comfortable, and can be arranged together to promote the same feeling of unity.

If pews instead of chairs are chosen for the congregation, it is recommended in the interests of uniformity that pews (and not chairs) should also be installed behind the pulpit and around the Lord*s table. Such should then be the permanent seating facilities for the elders and the deacons.

The seats may be curved in arcs. This is expensive. It is not recommended, because the folk seated at the ends of the arcs easily tend to gaze across the church building and to look at the other end of the arcs and at the side windows beyond -- rather than to give their attention to the exposition from the Pulpit Bible straight ahead.

Alternatively, and perhaps much better, the seats may be set in straight parallel lines (which is inexpensive and less distracting). Again, the pews may be set together either on the same horizontal level. Or they may be made to slope downward from the back toward the front of the auditorium-sanctuary.

This latter arrangement is very expensive and not recommended. For churches should rather save money and build a high pulpit on a level floor with level pews throughout the auditorium-sanctuary -- than build a low pulpit on an expensive and Non-Presbyterian platform in front of downward-sloping pews (Neh. 8:4-5). See sections 13 and 17.

There should preferably only be three or four aisles between the walls and the several rows of chairs or pews. For more aisles than this unnecessarily split up the congregation into atomistic blocks, and this destroys its unity.

Obviously, the wide~narrow-narrow-wide aisle pattern of diagram 4 succeeds in preserving the congregation*s unity better than does the narrow-broad-narrow aisle pattern of diagram 5. This is so because the first pattern does not carve God*s people into two halves right down its center (as does the broad middle-aisle in the second pattern), but rather unites the people by encircling them all with its broad side-aisles next to the walls.

Indeed, once again, the preferred first pattern only gently distinguishes the aisles into three nearby areas. It does so, by means of two non-divisive non-central narrow aisles (respectively one-third and two-thirds of the way across the breadth of the auditorium-sanctuary). By avoiding a broad central aisle, it also makes it much harder for that church later to facilitate processions down through the middle of the building toward the liturgical center and to destroy Protestantism in the way the Oxford Movement thus semi-romanized Anglicanism.

23. THE RACKS FOR BIBLES AND SONG BOOKS

God*s people are to be a Bible-reading people. Bibles should be kept in church auditorium-sanctuaries to enable and to encourage all literate worshipers to follow the preacher*s Scripture readings from the Pulpit Bible, and to check out the scripturalness of his sermons against the (same version) open pew Bibles in their hands even during the preaching. For they are to "search the Scriptures" (John 5:39). Indeed, they are to be like the worshipers in the synagogue in Berea who "received the Word [from the preacher] with all readiness of mind, and [who then] searched the Scriptures daily [to see] whether those things were so." Acts 17:11.

God*s people are also to be a singing people. They are required to sing the Psalms of David. Many also sing hymns paraphrased from Scripture, and New Testament songs. God commands: "Keep on being filled with the Spirit by speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs while singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord!" Eph. 5:18-19 cf. Col. 3:16 & Jas. 5:13.

In the pews, the Bibles and Psalm books and/or the Hymn books can be stowed either on the back or underneath the back of the pew or chair right in front at the one who uses them. Stowing underneath is neat, and conserves space. A decided disadvantage of the usual method of stowing books on racks at the back of pews, is that especially tall people with long legs may unnecessarily bang their knees against those projecting book racks and hurt themselves.

24. THE CHOIR

If all God*s people are to be a singing people, choirs can only be justified **at all** if they help the whole congregation to sing. A choir sitting up front throughout the service in a theater-type auditorium and which sings to rather than with the audience, hardly aids congregational worship.

Such a choir only introduces an element of entertainment foreign to Scriptural worship, especially when that choir is permanently seated in the liturgical center where only Christ*s special officers (the Ruling Elders, Preaching Elder, and perhaps too the Deacons) should sit. For the choir members are not special officers (nor officers at all) in a truly Presbyterian church.

Nor is the choir or its anthem a means of God*s revelation to man (like the Bible and the Sacraments). Such are only devices whereby part of the congregation helps express man*s thankfulness to God. Hence, a choir seated behind and above the pulpit, no doubt unwittingly but nevertheless erroneously, tends to suggest that the pulpit Bible acquires its validity from

the more-exalted choir -- and that the choir is itself perhaps the primary means of grace.

Presbyterian **choirs** should not be “singing preachers.” They should not “preach” messages in song from God to man. Rather are Presbyterian choirs the leaders of the congregational singers themselves. For the essential purpose of church choirs, should be to help the congregation to sing man*s praises of God – in answer to His preached Word.

Hence, a choir which sings with the congregation and encourages all the people to sing along with it, performs a great service. Often those in the back of the sanctuary do not sing at all, when they should. But with a choir singing from behind them, it would be difficult for them to be silent. Then, the whole edifice would resound with grateful voices to the glory of God.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the choir be seated at the back of the auditorium-sanctuary. Or, even better -- if economically feasible -- on a back balcony (as in Grace Presbyterian Chapel at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson).

If necessary, the choir could then always file down to the front of the sanctuary just to face the congregation while singing a special number (cf. I Chr. 6:32f). Thereafter, it could and should return to its regular seating place once again.

However, up to about a century ago – **no** Presbyterian church ever had (nor ever should have) choirs seated behind the preacher throughout the service, looking at the back of his head and unable to hear the sermon properly. This inadvertently distracts both the preacher and the congregation from giving their full attention to the sermon.

Certainly, it is not wrong to have a choir. Ps. 46:1 superscription; I Chr. 15:16-28; 25:5f; II Chr. 20:19f; 29:27f; Ezra 3:10f. But the seats for the choir members should be far away from the liturgical center and behind the elders and the rest of the congregation. Ex. 15:1-20; cf. I Chr. 9:33f & II Chr. 5:12f & Neh. 7:1,67f & 10:39 & Rev. 4:2-4, and 5:8-13. See diagrams 6 & 7.

25. THE VOCALISTS AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

What is true of the choir, is even more true of (solo or duet or trio) vocalists and of musical instruments and instrumentalists. If vocalists or instruments fix attention not on God but on themselves or on the persons who play them (as in the theater design of auditorium-sanctuaries), it would be better for the congregation to sing without them altogether (Heb. 13:15 and cf. Calvin*s *Commentary* on Ps. 33).

But if the vocalists and the musicians and their instruments generally encourage the timid members of the congregation to sing along to God*s glory, then they can be valuable allies. Ex. 15:5f,20f; Rev. 8:2f; 14:2f; 15:2f. In that case, their place is then with the choir at the back of the church building -- and preferably on a back balcony, where they can best

strengthen the congregational singing itself. See diagrams 6 & 7.

The organ is the king of musical instruments. For it alone combines the whole orchestra mentioned in various places throughout Holy Scripture. Gen. 4:21; Dan. 3:5-15; 1 Chr. 13:8; 15:16,19,28; 17:41f; Pss. 149 & 150; Rev. 4:1 & 8:2f & 11:15f.

However, a role for a piano in addition to that of the organ -- is dubious. But whether only an organ or both an organ and a piano are employed, they should preferably be located with the choir at the back of the auditorium-sanctuary.

If however, the organ and/or piano should less advisably be placed at the front of the auditorium-sanctuary -- they should be pushed into the corners of the church building, far away from the middle of the liturgical center (and preferably partitioned off and made invisible to the seated congregation by encasing those instruments in wooden booths). Their better location, however, is unencased on a back balcony or in the back corner of the sanctuary at floor level. For there, the beautiful organ pipes can be displayed (exposed and unencased) in all of their natural aesthetic glory against the back wall of the auditorium-sanctuary and seen by the congregation (not as a distraction during congregational worship but rather) on its way out of the building after the service.

Under no circumstances should the organ pipes be installed in the liturgical center, enthroned right above the pulpit. Such a position could easily mislead an uninstructed visitor to conclude that the congregation apparently believes that God today speaks principally through organ pipes and not through the (apparently subservient) Pulpit Bible.

“Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy [or vocally proclaim God’s Word in speech or in song].... He who prophesies, edifies the church.... Even things without life, giving sound -- whether [organ!?] pipe or harp, unless they give a distinction in the sound -- how shall what is piped or harped be known?.... If therefore the whole church come together into one place...and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad?.... Let the prophets speak!.... Therefore, brethren, seek to prophesy!” I Cor. 14:1,4,7,23,29,39.

26. THE WINDOWS IN THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY

Auditorium-sanctuaries need light (I John 1:5-7). Gloomy, depressing, Pre-Reformational Romish cathedrals seem to suggest the very antithesis of the Gospel. John 1:4-9.

For this reason, church buildings need windows. Gen. 6:16 and 8:6f cf. I Pet. 3:20f & I Kings 6:4 & 7:4-5; Ezek. 40:16,22 25 29 22,36 & 41:16,26; and Acts 20:7-9. Even if (in modern auditorium-sanctuaries with air conditioners) we no longer need open windows for purposes of ventilation, we still need windows to illuminate the inside of the church building.

The principle purpose of the windows, then, is not distractingly to beautify but to illuminate the auditorium-sanctuary. For this reason, windows with multicolored glass should be used very sparingly there. For stained glass does not transmit light and illuminate interiors nearly as well as clear glass does.

Indeed, even plain stained-glass windows are so beautiful by themselves, that their very beauty often distracts worshipers from giving full concentration to the preaching of the Word - especially when such rainbow-like windows (or even plain and uncolored windows) are placed behind the pulpit (where they can easily give headaches to the people in the pews who are then forced to keep on looking at them while trying to follow the sermon).

Indeed, when the colored glass is not plain but represents a picture story, the problem is greatly compounded by possible transgressions of the Second Commandment. See the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 21:1 and the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q. & A. 109.

As Bruggink remarks in his famous book *Christ and Architecture: Building Presbyterian/Reformed Churches* (p. 458): “There is little that can be more disruptive to the proper hearing of the Word than too many windows. One should hasten to add that it is not the number of windows as such, but their placement that makes them a cause of concern.... For unless the Building Committee is acting with deliberate malice, there seems to be no good purpose served in building a church so that anyone trying to look in the direction of minister, font, or table, is forced to be uncomfortable by looking directly into strong light.”

Regardless as to whether the church grounds and environs are (preferably) beautiful or (otherwise) ugly -- the windows of the church auditorium-sanctuary, if plain, should not be transparent. For that could tempt worshipers to look through the windows at the view outside. Translucent windows, however – while admitting plenty of light – are opaque. They thus solve this problem.

However, if for historical or personal reasons, congregations nevertheless plan to have beautiful stained-glass windows installed in the sanctuary, they can still be given a suitable location. The best place for them would then probably be toward or at the back of the church building. There, everyone could admire them when leaving the auditorium-sanctuary **after** the worship service. Located at the back, their obvious beauty would not then distract the congregation’s attention from giving her required spiritual worship during the service itself. See diagram 7.

Actually, as the Presbyterian Church in America’s Third General Assembly rightly remarked, “there should be nothing that directly contradicts any clear Scriptural teaching -- such as the erecting of images or idols, as forbidden by the Second Commandment.... The Bible does not authorize the use of any visible representation of God or any part of His creation as a center of worship. The sanctuary should not include such, either as stained-glass windows, crosses, or other symbols. Christ gave us only one thing by which to remember Him -- the Lord’s Supper. The use of other things for this purpose has no Biblical basis, and should be discouraged.” *Minutes*, p. 112f.

27. BABIES IN THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY

“The Church Session is charged...to see that parents do not neglect to present their children for Baptism.... Baptsim is not to be unnecessarily delayed.... It is not to be privately administered, but in the presence of the congregation under the supervision of the Session.... The children of believers have an interest in the covenant, and right to the seal of it.... The Son of God admitted little children into His presence, embracing and blessing them, saying, ‘For of such is the Kingdom of God...’ [Believers*] children, by baptism are solemnly received into the bosom of the visible church, distinguished from the world and them that are without, and united with believers.... Believers* children within the visible Church.. .are to be taught to love God, and to obey and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. When they are able to understand the Gospel, they should be earnestly reminded that they are members of the Church by birthright, and that it is their duty and privilege personally to receive Christ, to confess Him before man, and to seek admission to the Lord*s Supper.” Presbyterian Church in America’s *Book of Church Order*, para. 13-5 and chs. 57 through 59.

This being so, it is clear that the best place for a Presbyterian Infant, is inside the auditorium-sanctuary at the time of his baptism and for ever thereafter -- and not in a church nursery outside of the auditorium-sanctuary and removed from his parents under the care of a hired nurse. For only when a Presbyterian baptized in infancy has faithfully lived in the house of the Lord from the cradle to the grave, has the covenant of grace really been correctly understood throughout. I Cor. 7:3-5,12-14; Eph. 6:1-4; Ps. 92:13-14.

Some may object that the crying of babies inside the auditorium-sanctuary creates problems and disturbs the worship of other Members. The provision of cribs inside a soundproof babies* room with a transparent wall inside the auditorium-sanctuary solves the problem.

Parents can sit there with their covenant children. As participating worshipers, they can then all see the service and hear its sound piped into that babies’ room (if located either at floor level or on a balcony next to but soundproofed from the choir, within and at the back of the auditorium-sanctuary). This safeguards the congregation from being disturbed by the voices of Christ’s little ones. It enables fathers and mothers to tend to their own infants while watching and listening to the service. It preserves the covenantal family together intact. Indeed, it also keeps these families visibly inside the sanctuary as a whole throughout congregational worship.

As the Presbyterian Church in America’s *Book of Church Order* (49-3 & 50-1,4) declares: “It is the duty of every person to remember the Lord’s day.... When the congregation is to meet for public worship, the people...ought all to come and join therein....

“All who attend public worship are expected to be present in a spirit of reverence and godly fear, forbearing to engage in any conduct unbecoming to the place and occasion. Since the family is ordained by God as the basic institution in Society, and God in the Covenant graciously deals with us not as individuals but also as families – it is important and desirable

that families worship together” during public divine services.

We ourselves would add it is even more important and desirable that families worship together each day at home too, where rowdy children are easily disciplinable. Neglecting daily family worship, breeds unruly children during weekly congregational worship. Yet, while together also in the weekly public worship of the congregation -- just two walls of sheet glass (each only one-eighth of an inch thick yet three inches apart from one another) solves the noise problem.

For with a sound-absorbent cushion of air between them, those two panes of glass will keep both the noisiest baby and its family (with loudspeakers from the pulpit installed inside the babies* room within the auditorium-sanctuary) and the most noise-hating octogenarian (outside the babies* room on the other side of those glass panes), supremely happy. For all of God’s people in the congregation will then be able to worship God all together and in covenantal solidarity inside the same auditorium-sanctuary. For an excellent example of a babies’ room inside the auditorium-sanctuary, see that of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Shawnee (Kansas).

However, many churches do not have such a babies* room inside the auditorium-sanctuary. Instead, they have a nursery removed from the auditorium-sanctuary. Such a separate nursery can easily undermine the doctrinal implications of infant baptism. Indeed, by removing him or her from the auditorium-sanctuary itself for several years right after his or her infant baptism, it can also make it far more difficult for such a covenant child to develop good church-attending habits at a later stage of his or her life.

If there is no way of avoiding having a nursery outside of the auditorium-sanctuary, its minimum requirements should include adequate seats for all of the babies* parents, adjacent and comfortable cribs, and especially short-circuit wide-screen television and loudspeaker systems transmitting every worship service from the liturgical center of the auditorium-sanctuary into that nursery.

But all of this is expensive. Indeed, even if the above minimal requirements are all met – the nursery outside the auditorium-sanctuary is still not really an adequate substitute for the easily-arranged covenantal babies* room with transparent yet soundproof walls within the very auditorium-sanctuary itself. See diagrams 6 and 7.

Hear the voice of Jesus Himself: “I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to the babies! Even so, Father – for so it seemed good in Your sight.” Matt. 11:25-26.

Said Jesus to His adult listeners: “Except you be converted and become like little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself like this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.... But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me -- it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” Matt. 18:3-6.

“Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them not. For of such is the Kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child -- shall in no wise enter therein.” Luke 18:16-17.

28. THE CHOIR/BRIDE*S ROOM

This double-purpose robing room for the use of the choir before worship services and of brides before weddings, is best located opposite the babies* room at the back of the auditorium-sanctuary. From this bride*s room, the bride not only proceeds to the liturgical center to get married (cf. Ps 45:5-6). In due course, she should also expect to proceed a few years later, *via* the baptismal font up front, to the babies* room opposite the bride’s room – if and when God gives her precious little covenant children. Pss. 127 to 128.

So too, in this same double-purpose choir room/bride’s room -- the (robed?) choir can sit right in the front of that room at the back of the auditorium-sanctuary. Thence it may then go forward at the appropriate time to the front of the auditorium-sanctuary to sing its special item standing up and facing the congregation, before then returning to the choir room. Cf. I Chr. 6:31-32. See diagrams VI and VII.

29. VENTILATION IN THE AUDITORIUM-SANCTUARY

Perhaps it is significant that both the Hebrew and the Greek words for “Spirit” also mean “breath” and “air” and “wind” in the Holy Scriptures. Certainly, there can be no doubt that both draughts and stuffiness greatly impede one*s enjoyment of worship.

Accordingly, we recommend central air conditioning which will sufficiently ventilate but not overcool the entire auditorium-sanctuary. The same applies to balanced heat distribution during the colder months. Here again, it is perhaps also significant that the Bible often associates warmth and true spirituality. Gen. 1:2; 2:7; 3:8; Ezek. 37:4-10; John 3:8; 20:22; Acts 2:1-4; Jas. 2:16; Rev. 3:1,15.

30. HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION?

God established the earth on firm foundations, so that it cannot be moved. Ps. 93:1; 105:25; Jer. 10:12. Abraham of old looked forward to the city of God which has foundations. Heb. 11:10-16. Indeed, King Solomon commanded that great and costly stones be hewn and brought to lay the foundation of the house of the Lord. I Kgs. 5:17f.

The Christian Church is established upon the Sure Foundation of Jesus Christ as her Chief Cornerstone. Isa. 28:16; Acts 4:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:10f. Indeed, on that firm Basis she is even now being constructed brick by brick -- arising into a spiritual house of God and firmly resting on the twelve foundations laid down by Christ's apostles. Eph. 2 :20f; I Pet. 2:3-6; Rev. 21:14.

Particularly when contemplating the erection of a sanctuary on a questionable terrain, Building Committees need to be especially careful. For as Jesus warned us: "Whosoever comes to Me and hears My sayings and does them -- I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man who built a house, and dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house but could not shake it. For it was founded upon a rock.

"But he who hears yet does not do -- is like a man who without a foundation built a house on the earth, against which the stream beat vehemently. And it fell immediately. And the ruin of that house was great." Luke 6:47-49.

The auditorium-sanctuary for a New Testament Church, then, needs to be solidly grounded. Not just as an edifice with a firm foundation -- but also doctrinally. Precisely in that regard, the whole Book of Hebrews in general and Hebrews 9:1-11 in particular, seems fundamental.

It is not true that Jesus at Calvary nailed the Old Testament to the cross, so that we are now under a lawless grace. What actually happened, is that Jesus at Calvary re-form-ed the Older Testament into the Newer Testament, so that His cosmos-embracing Ten Commandments still continue. Thus, as Heb. 9:8-10 declares, the "first tabernacle was still standing [as] a figure...until the time of Reformation" when Christ came as our great High Priest. Heb. 9:8-11. Indeed, thereafter too, God continues to put His Laws into minds and to write them on hearts. Heb. 8:8-10 cf. 13:4,5,17,21.

For the Lord Christ was God's Son before and at creation. He is the Second Adam, the Second Melchizedek, the Second Abraham, the Second Isaac, the Second Jacob, the Second Moses, and the Second David. He builds the city of God with foundations, and is Himself yesterday and today and forever the same. Heb. chs. 1 to 4 & 5-13.

Throughout the entire Bible and its many 're-form-ations' -- there is an unchanging "general equity" of the Ten Commandments within God, Adam, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus, and Christians. The ceremonial laws of Moses were fulfilled at Calvary's Reformation (Heb. 9:10). But the general equity within Ancient Israel's ceremonial and judicial laws, in the Ten Commandments, still continues especially for Christians. Heb. 12:12-13; 12:26-28; 13:2-7; 13:13-16; 13:21. Cf. *Westminster Confession* 7:1-3 & 19:1-7.

Heb. 9:1-9 says the Old Testament Tabernacle was a figure or representation of something deeper. While it stood, it depicted one's daily religion dedicated to God. Christ is the Light of the World portrayed by the candlestick, and also the domestic and social Life portrayed by the showbread. The temple (containing too the holy of holies here on Earth)

portrayed the present World.

"The **time** of reformation" in Heb. 9:10 means the fateful and decisive point of Calvary. It means the re-formed time **not** of de-formation or de-struction, but of re-newal (*dia+orth+Gsis* = recti-fic-ation).

It means: a making straight; a restoration, an amendment; a bringing right again; a better ordering of things (Vine). As in Acts 24:2, it means a "reform" (as **opposed** to a revolution); "a making straight of what had shifted from its true position" through original sin (Kittel); the "re-setting of a dislocated body-part" (Hippocrates); "the repair and restoring of what had been shattered" (Aristotle); "the setting up of a [(re)-new-ed] state" (Polybius).

Heb. 9:10's "time of reformation" is thus the time of Calvary when God re-form-ed the ceremonial laws of Israel's temple back into the simpler Adamic and Pre-Israelitic liturgy now recycled into the New Testament and its Church (WCF 7:1-6 & 21:1-8). It is also the time, within that selfsame generation of Calvary, that the risen and ascended and reigning Christ through the Romans destroyed the temple in A.D. 70 -- thus making it impossible for Israel's ceremonial laws further to continue and also causing even her judicial laws to expire except insofar as "the general equity thereof may require" (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 19:3-4).

That "general equity" is the **Decalogue itself**, which those expired judicial laws sought to implement in Ancient Israel. That is why, after that 30 to 70 A.D. "time of Reformation" in Heb. 9:10, the general equity of the Ten Commandments still remains in and for also the New Testament Church – not only liturgically, but even for the entirety of human life in all spheres of human endeavour. Yet, because of the latter – also liturgically too! Cf. Heb. 4:9; 8:10; 10:24-30; 13:2-15; 13:21.

In the centuries following the simplified liturgy and redecalogicalization of A.D. 30 to 70 and also the Early-Patristic Period, the Mediaeval Church sadly created its own syncretistic ceremonies. But at another "time of the Reformation" – with the Protestant Reformers, all those mediaeval ceremonies were swept away, and decalogical practice alone was re-established.

Regrettably, since then, also in "Protestant"(?) and trendy pentecostalizing "churches" – man-made crosses, stained-glass windows of "Jesus" (*sic*), crucifixes, masses, icons, Santa Claus, nativity scenes, baubles and gimmicks, whimnody hymnody, altars and altar calls, faith healing crusades, yahoo circuses, sabbath-desecration worldly bands, dramas and liturgical dancing *etc.* have crept into "worship." So now we need another **ongoing** Post-Pentecostalistic and Post-Modern Calvinist **Re-Reformation** – by God working in, through and with us in our churches today. Heb. 3:6,14; 4:1-16; 5:12; 6:1,7,10f; 7:2,6; 8:10; 9:24f,36; 11:1-40; 12:1-4,11,13,25,28; 13:1-21. And such a **Re-Reformation** must start in the auditorium-sanctuary itself!

31. THE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

We now conclude with the less important church facilities outside of the auditorium-sanctuary. Here we are thinking of the church's educational facilities and its other ecclesiastical facilities. By the former, we mean: the preacher's study; the church office; the youth director's quarters; the Sunday school rooms; and the church library.

If the preacher's study is to be located next to the sanctuary -- perhaps with a door from it straight onto the pulpit -- it should be a large room. For not only should it be capable of accommodating all of the Session's elders for joint seasons of prayer. But it should also be capable of housing all of the preaching elder's tools-of-trade. These include thousands of books, extensive records, a large desk, and abundant chairs for interviews, *etc.*)

The room should be separate from the church secretary's office, and should be silent enough so that the preacher will never be disturbed while counselling visitors or preparing sermons. For as the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* (54-3) correctly states (and perhaps even understates), "preaching requires much study and meditation and prayer, and ministers should prepare their sermons with care and not indulge themselves in loose and extemporary harangues nor serve God with that which costs them naught."

Ideally, then, in order to enable the preacher to construct his messages and to counsel inquirers, not the preacher but the church secretary alone should answer all telephone calls while the preaching elder is at study or in prayer. Acts 6:2-4; 1 Tim. 4:14-16; 5:17f.

Unless urgent, she should only pass those messages on to him -- as soon as possible after his daily times of study and prayer (cf. Deut. 17:17-18-19; Ps. 5:1-7; 47:7-8; 108:1-2; Eccl. 12:9-12; I Tim. 4:13-16; 5:17; 6:20; II Tim 2:1,2,15; 3:14-17; 4:1-5). Right after his daily times of devotion and study, all such messages should of course receive his immediate or speedy attention.

The quarters of the Youth Director (if any) and the Sunday school rooms are also very important. For this is where little Presbyterians covenantally baptized in infancy are class after class to be systematically prepared for their admission to the Lord's table.

This is also where those older members of the church who have already become communicants are class after class increasingly to become better equipped for an even fuller life of service in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. John 21:15,16; II Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11-15; Col. 3:18-21; I John 2:7,12f.

Similarly, the church library too should be adequate. It should preferably be housed near the sanctuary. And it should be managed not by the preacher but by a librarian or by the church's secretary. Cf. John 21:25; Acts 6:2-4; II Pet. 3:15-16; Rev. 10:8-11.

32. OTHER ECCLESIASTICAL FACILITIES

Obviously, facilities such as restrooms, coat racks, utility rooms, church grounds and

especially parking lots, *etc.*, are all necessary. Practicality and beauty should be the requirements here. I Cor. 14:40 and Ps. 96 cf. Pss 16:5-6 and 85:10f. See diagram 7.

Much prayer should be engaged in, however, before finally deciding to build a hall, a kitchen, and recreational facilities in the church building complex or auditorium-sanctuary grounds. Perhaps a church hall can be justified, provided it is likely to be used frequently by God's people for non-worship congregational activities such as sacred concerts, Christian movies, missionary slide shows, *etc.*

Note, however, the Presbyterian Church in America's Third General Assembly's Committee on Administration did not approve of "some of our churches [which] have begun to conduct bazaars, rummage sales, suppers and other benefits for the purpose of raising money for the Lord's work" (*Minutes*, p. 78). Accordingly, the use of a church hall for such purposes would be very questionable, to say the least.

Again, before deciding to build an expensive church kitchen (and mindful of the complete silence of Scripture on such a matter), many important questions first need to be asked and answered. Here are just a few such questions.

Why and how and how often shall meals need to be served? Shall sufficient help be available to do all the cooking? And would it not perhaps be cheaper to hire a restaurant or professional caterers at such times?

As regards recreational facilities and activities, it needs to be remembered that Sunday sport (even for children) is sin. Isa. 58:13-14; *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Questions 117-19. The church's meeting place and its surroundings should be a place for worship and not for non-worshipping activities such as games. Mark 11:15-17.

God's people need to put play and sport into their proper perspectives. I Tim. 4:7-8. Indeed, their sport associations with un-believers outside of the church buildings may very well be a much better testimony for Christ than their sport associations only with believers (and especially merely inside the church's premises). Matt. 5:13-16 and John 17:15,18,20.

33. CONCLUSION

Let us then implement the Presbyterian Church in America's First General Assembly's *Address to All Churches of Jesus Christ Throughout the World!* Let us "develop the idea that the congregation of believers, as visibly organized, is the very society or corporation which is divinely called to do the work of the Lord." And let us "endeavor to do what has never yet been adequately done -- bring out the energies of our Presbyterian system.... [For] **we are not ashamed to confess that we are intensely Presbyterian**; [and while] we embrace all other denominations in the arms of Christian fellowship and love...,our own scheme of government we humbly believe to be according to the pattern shown in the Mount; and by God's grace, we propose to put its efficiency to the test." *Minutes*, p. 29.

Let us then willingly be admonished to implement **accurately** the principles of Scripture -- especially in our worship of God and in our church architecture! For indeed, even “Moses was admonished by God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For ‘See,’ said He, ‘that you make all things according to the pattern shown on the mount!’” Heb. 8:5. And Christ our Greater Moses updated that by telling us also how to worship God acceptably – in His Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 5:1 to 8:1.

Let each congregation, then, “demonstrate by its attention to these matters that for the Reformed Faith, faithful and true and Biblical worship in the church is as important as the Great Commission to the world!” Thus the *Minutes* of the Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, p. 112. For strength and beauty are to be in God*s sanctuary, when we bring our offerings and come into His courts to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (Ps. 96:6-9).

Well, then, ‘Let us rise up and build!... The God of heaven, He will prosper us. Therefore we His servants will arise and build.’ Neh. 2:18-20.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abba, R.: *Principles of Christian Worship* (London, England).

Bakhuizen, van den Brink, J.N.: *Protestantsche Kerkbouw* (Arnhem, Holland).

Bannerman, D.D.: *The Worship of the Presbyterian Church* (London, England).

Berkouwer, G. C.: *De Sacramenten* (Kampen, Holland).

Biéler, A.: *Liturgie et Architecture* (Geneva, Switzerland).

Briggs, N. S.: *Puritan Architecture* (London, England).

Bruggink, D.J., and Droppers, C.H.: *Christ and Architecture -- Building Presbyterian/Reformed Churches* (Grand Rapids, Michigan).

Büchschütz, L.: *Histoire des liturgies en langue allemande dans l’Eglise de Strasbourg au seizième siècle* (Cahors, France).

Calvin, J. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

Cox, J.C.: *Pulpits, Lecterns, and Organs* (Oxford, England).

Cullmann, O.: *Early Christian Worship* (London, England).

Davies, H.: *The Worship of the English Puritans* (London, England).

Doom, J.L.: *Reformed Sanctuaries* (PCUS, Atlanta, Georgia).

Drummond, A.L.: *The Church Architecture of Protestantism* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

Du Toit, H.D.A.: *Simboliek in die Kerkargitektuur* (Cape Town, South Africa).

Erichson, A.: *Die calvinische und die altstrassburgische Gottesdienstordnung* (Strassburg, Germany).

Fiddes, V.: *The Architectural Requirements of Protestant Worship* (Toronto, Canada).

Golterman, W.F.: *Liturgiek* (Haarlem, Holland).

Hamberg, P.G.: *Templebygge för Protestanter* (Stockholm, Sweden).

Hammond, P.: *Liturgy and Architecture* (London, England).

Hammond, P.: *Toward a Church Architecture* (London, England).

Hay, G.: *The Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches* (Oxford, England).

Jones, R.P.: *Nonconformist Church Architecture* (London, England).

Koorts, R.P.: *Beginsels van Gereformeerde Kerkbou* (Bloemfontein, South Africa).

Kuiper, R.B.: *The Glorious Body of Christ* (London, Banner of Truth).

Kuyper, A.: *Dictaten Dogmatiek* (Kampen, Holland).

Kuyper, A.: *Encyclopedie der Heiligen Godgeleerdheid* (Kampen, Holland).

Kuyper, A.: *Onzer Eeredienst* (Kampen, Holland).

Kuyper, A.: *Tractaat van de Reformatie der Kerken* (Amsterdam, Holland).

Koole, J.L.: *Liturgie en Ambt* (Kampen, Holland).

Lee, F.N.: *Biblical Principles for Church Architecture*. In *The Presbyterian*, British Reformed Fellowship, Bristol, England, Jan. 1991.

Lee, F.N.: *Liturgieknotas* (Stellenbosch, South Africa, unpub.).

Lee, F.N.: *Notes on Church Architecture* (Kosciusko, Miss., unpub.).

Lee, F.N.: *Should Churches Have Choirs?* (Kosciusko, Miss., unpub.).

Lee, R.: *The Reform of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

Links, A. G.: *Kathedra en Mensa* (Amsterdam, Holland).

M’Crie, C.G.: *Public Worship in Presbyterian Scotland* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

MacGibbon and Ross: *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

MacGregor, D.: *Early Scottish Worship* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

McMillan, W.: *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church* (London, England).

Maxwell, W.D.: *An Outline of Christian Worship* (London, England).

Maxwell, W.D.: *Concerning Worship* (London, England).

Maxwell, W.D.: *John Knox’s Genevan Service Book 1556* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

Nichols, J. H. and TrInterud, L.J.: *The Architectural Setting for Reformed Worship* (UPCUSA, Chicago, Illinois).

Noordmans, O.: *Liturgie* (Amsterdam, Holland).

Pellissier, H.: *Waarom moet ek kerktoe gaan?* (Pretoria, South Africa).

Perry, W.: *The Scottish Liturgy* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

Perry, W.: *The Scottish Prayer Book, its Value and History* (Cambridge, England).

Presbyterian Church in America: *Book of Church Order* (Montgomery, Alabama).

Presbyterian Church in America: *Minutes of the Third General Assembly* (Montgomery, Alabama).

Robinson, W.C.: *Architecture Appropriate for Reformed Worship* (Weaverville, North Carolina).

Schwarz, R.: *Kirchenbau* (Heidelberg, Germany).

Thiry P., Richard N., and Kamphoefer, H.L.: *Churches and Temples* (New York, N.Y.).

Treurnicht, A.P.: *Wat gebeur daar in die kerk?* (Cape Town, South Africa).

Van der Leeuw, G.: *Liturgie* (Nijkerk, Holland).

Van der Leeuw, G.: *Sacramentsologie* (Nijkerk, Holland).

Van Schoor, A.N.: *Beginsels van Protestantse Kerkbou* (Johannesburg, South Africa).

Van Straaten J.F. and Ferreira, T.M.: *Is Beplanning van Kerkgeboue in Alle Opsigte Behoorlik?* (Cape Town, South Africa).

Winward, S.F.: *The Reformation of Our Worship* (Richmond, Virginia).

LIST OF MODEL AUDITORIUMS/SANCTUARIES WORTH STUDYING

Model auditoriums or sanctuaries from various parts of the Western World reflecting Biblical and Presbyterian principles well worthy of thorough study, would include:

- 1) Grace Chapel, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, U.S.A.
- 2) Reformed Church (NHK), Bant & Ochten, Netherlands.
- 3) St. Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- 4) Reformed Church of Leverkusen-Burig, Germany.
- 5) Old Colonial Church, Litchfield, Connecticut, U.S.A.
- 6) Westminster Chapel, London, England.
- 7) Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCNA), Shawnee, Kansas, U.S.A.
- 8) Reformed Church (NGK), Winterton, South Africa (picture on our outside front cover).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (in Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Dr. Lee's father was an Atheist, yet he married a Roman Catholic who raised her son Nigel Lee in that faith. Yet, when Nigel was seven, his father led him into Atheism.

During World War II, the Royal Navy moved Nigel's father to South Africa. There, Nigel became a Calvinist; had the great privilege of leading both of his parents to Christ; and then became a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., Dr. Lee attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his ministerial credentials to that denomination; and pastored Congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy

at Shelton College in N.J.; Visiting Lecturer in Apologetics at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Ms.; Staley Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol, Tn.; and incidental Lecturer at several other Colleges, Seminaries, and Universities. He was at that time the only person in the World serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society and the Lord's Day Alliance of the U.S.

Preacher, Theologian, Lawyer, Educationist, Historian, Philosopher and Author, Lee has produced more than 330 publications (including many books) -- and also a multitude of long unpublished manuscripts. Apart from an honorary LL.D., he has 21 earned degrees -- including eleven earned doctorates for dissertations* in Education, Law, Literature, Philosophy and Theology.

After the murder of his father, Lee had the joy of leading his father's murderer in jail (and later also the latter's parents) to Christ. Though loving to study, Lee prefers to preach and lead the lost to God.

Lee rises early; reads God's Word in ten languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the World seven times; has visited 110 countries (several repeatedly); and also every Continent (except Antarctica). He is in demand as a Promoter of Doctoral Students in Australia, England, Germany, South Africa and the United States. He has also lectured and/or preached in all of those countries, as well as in Brazil, Scotland, Korea, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, and Zambia.

A diehard predestinarian, Lee now lives in the Commonwealth of Australia -- where he was for twenty years the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College. He and his wife Nellie retired in 2000. They have two children (Johanna and Anna Marie), both of whom are teachers.

-
- * Th.D.: *The Covenantal Sabbath*
 - Ph.D.: *Communist Eschatology*
 - D.Min.: *Daily Family Worship*
 - D.Ed.: *Catechizing Before Communion not prior to Puberty*
 - S.T.D.: *Rebaptism Impossible!*
 - D.R.E.: *Baby Belief Before Baptism!*
 - D.Jur.: *Women Ministers and Australian Litigation*
 - D.Litt.: *Holinshed on the Ancient British Isles*
 - D.C.L.: *The Roots and Fruits of the Common Law*
 - D.Hum.: *Tiny Human Life -- Abortion and IVF*
 - D.Phil.: *Miracles -- What and When and Why?*