What the Korean Presbyterian Church can learn from contemporary debates about infant communion among Reformed Christians in North America.

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WHAT THE KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CAN
LEARN FROM CONTEMPORARY DEBATES
ABOUT INFANT COMMUNION AMONG
REFORMED CHRISTIANS IN NORTH AMERICA

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This thesis entitled

What the Korean Presbyterian Church Can Learn from Contemporary Debates about Infant Communion among Reformed Christian in North America

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ABSTRACT

Can children participate in the Lord’s Supper? This practice was prohibited at the fourth Lateran Council; however, at the end of the 20th century, among Reformed churches in North America and some Europe Churches, debated the validity of infant communion or children’s communion. Is, then, infant communion or children’s communion biblical? What was the practice of the early New Testament church? Can infants or children have faith and enough cognitive ability to discern the body of Christ? Many biblical scholars, systematic theologians, church historians and local church pastors participate in this debate. Both the Christian Reformed Church and Reformed Church in America deal with this theme as their denominational agenda.

While studying at Calvin, this theme gave me a great motivation to study worship theology more deeply. I especially came to feel that this study requires interdisciplinary methods, in other words using biblical, systematic, historical, and educational methods. These methods are reflected in each chapter to give a more clear understanding about the essence of the possibility of infant communion.

Until now the theme of children’s participation at the Table has been argued, even though the Christian Reformed Church decided that an appropriate age should be considered before participation by children in the sacrament could be observed and based on the church community’s permission. Therefore, my thesis, rather than giving a decisive solution for this problem, will give a good foundation and theological reflection on this issue.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose Statement

Should churches welcome children to celebrations of the Lord’s Supper?

Although the theme of “infant baptism” has been a controversial issue throughout church history, concern about children at the Lord’s Supper has not received as much attention.\(^1\) However, since the 1971 Conference of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, largely due to themes advanced by the 20\(^{th}\) century liturgical movement, the topic of children at the Lord’s Supper has been a topic of concern in many of the major Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran churches, as well as, to a limited extent, in the Roman Catholic Church.\(^2\) Many European churches also have adopted the practice, including the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN), which allows consistories to permit the practice under certain conditions.\(^3\) In America, the CRC, RCA, OPC, and PCA denominations have each conducted studies about the possibility of infant communion.\(^4\)

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\(^2\) Christian Reformed Synodical Study Committee Report 34, “Committee to Study the Issue of Covenant Children Partaking of the Lord’s Supper,” in *Agenda for Synod 1986* (Grand Rapids: Board of Publication of the Christian Reformed Church, 1986), 348.

\(^3\) In England, eighteen denominations now consent to infant communion: The Church of England, The Church of Scotland (provided that children are accompanied by parents or supporting adults), The Church in Wales, The Methodist Church, The Orthodox churches, The Roman Catholic Church, and The United Reformed Church. See *Children and Holy Communion: An Ecumenical Consideration amongst Churches in Britain and Ireland*, British Council of Churches and Free Church Federal Council, 1989, 36-48. See also *And Do Not Hinder Them: An Ecumenical Plea for the Admission of Children to the Eucharist*, ed. Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 70-81, for information about churches in Denmark, Finland, Canada, Norway, Germany, New Zealand, and Switzerland.

\(^4\) In June 1988, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America voted “to encourage boards of elders of RCA congregations to include baptized children at the Lord’s Table.” See James I.
In light of this recent discussion, the purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the propriety of children’s participation in the Lord’s Supper by analyzing recent debates about biblical, doctrinal, and educational concerns for Reformed Christians. Part of the debate which this thesis will review is historical. The Reformers, including Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli, did not promote children’s participation at the Lord’s Supper. Instead, they called for a public profession of faith prior to participation in the Lord’s Supper.\(^5\) Many of their successors, including Zacharius Ursinus and Herman Bavinck, opposed infant communion because they thought the Lord’s Supper required the participant’s active response.\(^6\) They typically downplayed the capacity of infants and very young children to engage in active participation at the table. This view is, however, not universal in church history. While studying early church history, we find some

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\(^6\) Bavinck says, “Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, a sacrament in which a human is passive: the Lord’s Supper is the sacrament of maturation in communion with Christ, the formation and presupposes conscious and active conduct on the part of those who receive it of the spiritual life.” See Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. IV, ed. by John Bolt, trans. by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 583.
mention that the early church permitted infant communion until it was prohibited by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215).  

Throughout all of this history, the heart of the debate about infant communion has been focused on issues of Biblical interpretation. This is a very complex topic because, while the Bible does not oppose infant communion, it also does not prescribe infant communion. The core basis of the anti-paedocommunion view is the importance of the requirement of a person to “examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup” (I Cor. 11: 28) and the profession of one’s faith. In contrast, the core basis of the paedocommunion view is the concept of the covenant, and the point that infants are offspring of the covenant who obtain proper church membership through infant baptism. Some proponents of infant communion emphasize that, by prohibiting the participation of covenant infants, adults deprive them of God’s grace.

To adequately address this complex topic requires attention to several questions: Is infant communion biblical? If a child is born in the covenant community, can he or she automatically receive the Lord’s Supper? Does the 1 Corinthians 11 text give permanent rules concerning the Lord’s Supper? Should we focus on the background of the Corinth Church? Based on the similarity between infant communion and Passover or other feasts in the Old Testament, can we directly apply them to the participation of infants in the Lord’s Supper? Can children have faith? What is their limitation of cognition? Do we have to recognize the structure of cognition between infants, children, and adults? What

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7 I will write about the reasons for the prohibition of infant communion in the chapter titled “Historical Arguments Concerning Infant Communion.”

8 Clearly arranged in the Bibliography are those who concur and oppose infant communion.
is the impact of children at the Lord’s Supper on the people who live in the twenty-first century? What can the Korean Church learn about infant communion?

The aim of this thesis is to provide proper theological reflection on these issues. Throughout this work, I will offer arguments from multiple perspectives attempting to be as even-handed and neutral as possible. In the conclusion of the thesis, I will argue that children’s participation at the table may be advisable for churches, not because of a sacramental theology in which God’s grace is given only through sacramental signs (ex opera operato), but rather because of God’s gracious covenant for us. I will also contend that healthy practices of welcoming children to the Lord’s Supper depend upon having strong church polity and education programs in place. Thus, Korean churches have much to learn from this discussion, even if welcoming children to the Lord’s Supper is not likely to be adopted anytime soon.

This conclusion, however, does not affirm every argument for infant communion. For there are, in fact, two related, but distinct types of arguments for children’s participation: some call for the adoption of the Eastern Orthodox practice of communing infants, others call for the age-appropriate participation of young children. This distinction is made, for example, by Cornelis Venema, who argues:

This language [of paedocommunion] is used as shorthand for any position that argues for the admission of children to the sacrament of holy communion. Though a useful piece of shorthand, it does not distinguish adequately between two very different views of the children who are to be admitted to the Table . . . The ‘soft’ paedocommunion view, which admits younger covenant members to the Table who have made a simple, but credible profession of the Christian faith, or a ‘strict’ paedocommunion view, which admits any covenant member who is able to receive the elements. The latter view is evident in the practice of the Eastern Orthodox churches who serve communion to infants on the occasion of their baptism and thereafter.”

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This thesis is particularly concerned about the participation of young children who come to the table with a very basic expression of faith.

B. Significance of the Topic

This is a significant topic for several reasons. First, if those who advocate young children’s participation at the table are right, the previous tradition of prohibiting children’s participation is depriving covenant children of the privilege of receiving the Lord’s Supper, and from some educational profit. Second, if those who argue against the participation of young children at the table are right, then those who follow this practice would be eating and drinking judgment on themselves (I Cor. 11), as well as confusing the relationships between baptism, profession of faith, and church membership. This topic therefore is a weighty matter.

It is especially important that Korean Churches consider this matter carefully. Yet, Korean churches and theologians have engaged in very little study of this topic. This thesis is significant in that it will provide an introduction to the topic of infants or children at the Lord’s Supper for a Korean audience. This introduction will summarize and analyze key arguments in historical, biblical, and theological interpretation, with the goal of also emphasizing the importance of the theology of the Lord’s Supper, the importance of liturgy, and intergenerational worship.

Until now, there has been no official argument about the theme of infants or children at the Lord’s Table in South Korea. Traditionally, in contrast to the emphasis of God’s Word, Korean churches show little concern for liturgy and the sacraments, which is the visible Word of God. As a result, the Korean Church has lost the precious tradition
of church and richness of worship. This thesis therefore will have great value in appealing to the necessary focus on the theology of the sacraments.  

C. Limits of the Study and Research Methodology

From the history of the early church until the present, there were some liturgical texts which mention infant communion and some books related to the theme of infant communion. However, due to the limitation of this paper, not every text that is relevant for my study will be discussed. Thus, I will focus on articles, books, and denominational reports which were published from 1975 to 2008. This work has significance in that it deals with recent resources which were published during 1975-2008 regarding infant communion. It will deal with the main debates about infant communion more clearly and succinctly. It will particularly give some good information on how the North American Church has thought about and dealt with the Lord’s Supper for children and infants.

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10 I will deal with the history of Korean Presbyterian Worship and its present situation in more detail in the next chapter.

11 It is very hard to find liturgical texts which were only for infant communion. Even though the Orthodox Church adopted infant communion from the time of early Christianity, they did not have a special liturgical text for infants. See http://www.scoba.us/. However, there are many mentions related to Infant Communion. First, in The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions, we find mention of Infant Communion. In VIII, 13, 14, we also find that infants were evidently participating in communion. Hippolytus, The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions: A Text for Students, trans. W. Jardine Grisbrooke (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1990), 42. Also, in VIII, 12, 44, we can see the Eucharist prayer having content for infants. In addition to this, VIII, II, 10 tells about instructions when infants and children participated in the Lord’s Supper. Second, in The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, especially chapter eight, there is “The Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with children.” Enrico Mazzas, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, translated by Matthew J. O’Connell (New York: Pueblo, 1986). The Roman Catholics published a “Directory for Masses with Children” on November 1, 1973. They tried to make a proper liturgical text for infant communion. See http://www.adoremus.org/DMC-73.html.

12 I began the study of infant communion from the year 1975 because I consider Christian L. Keidel’s article as having great impact on the study of infant communion. See “Is the Lord’s Supper for Children?” WTJ, 37 (1975): 301-341. Tim Gallant assesses, “His article dropped like a bomb into the more conservative and evangelical Reformed community.” See Tim Gallant, Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord’s Table Should Be Restored to Covenant Children (Grand Prairie, AB: Canada: Pactum Reformanda Publishing, 2002), 18.
Based on these resources, I will deal with an interdisciplinary set of issues involved in both the defense of and opposition to infant communion, in the following area: biblical theology (the continuity and discontinuity between Old Testament feasts and the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament, the concept of “covenant”), historical theology (early church, medieval church, the Reformation), systematic theology (sacramental theology), and church education (developmental theory, pedagogy, and psychology). This will offer a comprehensive view of the current debate.

In examining each of these topics, I will use the method of comparison and contrast to analyze the main views. In chapter two, I will deal with the history of Korean Presbyterian worship and the present state of the Lord’s Supper. Before studying the possibility of the Lord’s Supper for children, it is very important to know the concept of the Lord’s Supper and the Liturgy of Korean churches. In this thesis, I will focus on the Korean Presbyterian Church. In chapter three, based on recent articles and books (1975-2008), I will examine the validity of the Lord’s Supper for children. In chapter four, based on this interdisciplinary learning, I will discern the best prospects for Korean congregations.

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13 Of course, in the case of the form of worship, there is no big difference among denominations in South Korea. Therefore, not only Presbyterian, but also other denominations will profit from this thesis.
CHAPTER 2: THE LORD’S SUPPER IN KOREA

Is it possible to observe infant communion in the churches of South Korea? From 1885 until now, the Korean Presbyterian Church has never held infant communion. Neither has infant communion been a theological issue. Thus, it is very hard to find theological articles or theses about this theme. Nevertheless, to assess the prospects for infant communion in Korea, it is important to identify the traits of Korean Presbyterian worship, including major emphases on theology and piety. First, I will describe the history of early Korean missions which had great impact on the formation of Korean Presbyterian worship. Second, I will analyze the characteristic features of Korean Presbyterian worship. Finally, I will describe the prospects for the application of infant communion in a Korean context.

A. Historical Attitudes about the Lord’s Supper

The Korean churches received the Gospel from missionaries Horace G. Underwood (sent by The Presbyterian Church in the USA in 1885), Henry G. Appenzeller (sent by The Methodist Episcopal Church in the USA in 1885), Henry Davies (sent by The Presbyterian Church of Australia in 1889), and W.D. Reynolds (sent by The Presbyterian Church in the US in 1892), who stood in the tradition of the Puritans.1 Among them, from the early stages, the Korean Presbyterian Church developed through the influence of the PCUSA and the PCUS, in line with the conservative Reformed tradition. Except for a few, as A. J. Arthur Brown points out, the missionaries

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were the most conservative in the world. In 1909, there were 40 missionaries ordained by the PCUSA, including F.S. Curtis who cooperated with PCUSA missionaries but was not ordained by the PCUSA. When we look at the schools from which they graduated, we see 16 were from Princeton, 11 from McCormick, 4 from San Francisco, and 3 from Union (NY). Even though Princeton Seminary was most dominant in number, the most impressive missionaries, for example, Graham Lee, Samuel A. Moffett, Charles Allen Clark, and William L. Swallen were alumni of McCormick. Also, at that time, the faculty of Princeton Seminary was Charles Hodge (1797-1878), A. A. Hodge (1823-1886), and “uncompromising Calvinist” Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921). We can suppose, then, that the PCUSA missionaries were conservative and Calvinist. In addition to this, Kyeong Jin Kim says, “According to Clarks’ Digest (1918), there were 226 Presbyterian missionaries officially working in Korea in 1918. Among them, 113 were American Presbyterians (Northern) (50%), 50 were American Presbyterians (Southern)  


4 In the case of Korea, there was the impact of the Old and New school in worship at the same time. Julius Melton describes these two schools: “The best known difference between the parties was their degree of attachment to Presbyterian Polity and Calvinistic theology. But they had also drifted apart in their approach to worship. Uppermost in the mind of New School Presbyterian liturgical leadership was evangelistic effectiveneness. On the other hand, Old School ministers were more sensitive to the scripturality and decorum of their service.” See Julius Melton, Presbyterian Worship in America: Changing Patterns since 1787 (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967), 29.


(22%), 33 were Australian Presbyterians (15%), and 30 were Canadian Presbyterians (13%). While considering the dominant influence of PCUSA missionaries, we can conclude that the early missionary’s stance was characterized by Puritanism and orthodox Calvinism which is similar to the Old School. They were faithful to the Reformed tradition and the Westminster Confession.

The Korean Church founded the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea in 1912. In 1915, the General Assembly chose some people to create church polity and a worship directory. In 1918, the committee revised the church ordinance, Westminster Directory, and it was presented to General Assembly. In 1921, the Korean Church adopted the Constitution and it was published in 1922. This Constitution was composed of five parts, generally following the American Presbyterian Church’s Law. In the case of church polity and ordinance, the law followed the North Presbyterian Church in the USA, and in the case of the worship directory, it followed the South Presbyterian Church in the USA. According to the assessment of Kyeong Jin Kim, “the

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7 Digest of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Chosen), 1918, 170-78 in Kyeong Jin Kim, 169.


9 Yung Jae Kim, 140; Kyeong Jin Kim, 116.


11 Kyeong Jin Kim, 232.


13 Kyeong Jin Kim, 118-123. He says, “There were no valid theological or practical reasons why the Korean Church needed to adopt the Directory of Southern Church as their model.” In Kyeong Jin Kim, 120.
Directory for Worship of the Presbyterian Church in the United States expressed a very strong non-liturgical tradition.\textsuperscript{14} Also, Korean churches favored the Westminster Confession as their standard of faith, and they emphasized the Word and preaching rather than the sacraments.\textsuperscript{15} Generally, the Westminster Directory promotes simplicity in its liturgy. Adherents of these documents tend to downplay the significance of liturgy, and sometimes subordinated the sacraments to preaching.\textsuperscript{16} Because of the influence of these documents, there is not a long tradition of scholarship or teaching about liturgy and the sacraments in Korea.\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{Traits of Korean Presbyterian Worship}

Until now, we have seen the early missionary’s impact on the formation of Korean Presbyterian worship and their theological stance. While considering this characteristic of missionaries, we need to research in detail the traits of Korean Presbyterian worship.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{14} Kyeong Jin Kim, 121.

\textsuperscript{15} Yong Kyu Park assesses that missionaries considerably respect the Westminster Confession while quoting Moffat’s preface about Bible Commentary. See Yong Kyu Park, \textit{History of Thought in the Korea Presbyterian Church} (Seoul: Chongshin University Press, 1992), 70.

\textsuperscript{16} This is because the Westminster Confession emphasized correcting the remnant of Roman Catholics and Ritualism. See A. A. Hodge, \textit{The Westminster Confession: A Commentary} (Edinburgh, Scotland; Carlisle, Penn: Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 355-365.

\textsuperscript{17} Seong-Won Park, \textit{Worship in the Presbyterian Church in Korea : its history and implications} (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 41.

\textsuperscript{18} Kyeong Jin Kim categorizes its trait as follows: 1) Puritanism, 2) Pietism and the Revival Movements, 3) Influence of the Theology of Old School and New School.
Kyeong Jin Kim says, “According to Brown, the early missionaries, who came to Korea before 1911, were of the Puritan type.” So, Korean Presbyterian worship has been affected by Puritanism. Brown says,

The typical missionary of the first quarter century after the opening of the country was a man of the Puritan type. He kept the Sabbath as our New England forefathers did a century ago. He looked upon dancing, smoking and card playing as sins in which no true follower of Christ should indulge. In theology and bibical criticism he was strongly conservative, and he held as a vital truth the premillenarian view of the Second Coming of Christ. The higher criticism and liberal theology were deemed dangerous heresies. In most of the evangelical churches of America and Great Britain, conservatives and liberals have learned to live and work together in peace; but in Korea the few men who would hold the modern view have a rough road to travel, particularly in the Presbyterian group of missions.

Brown’s statement shows the theological mood of the Korean Presbyterian Church. The Korean Church especially emphasizes the authority and inspiration of the Bible. It is related to the principal missionary, John Livingston Nevius. In 1890, Nevius gave lectures for two weeks in Seoul about mission strategy. While participating in this class, the Korean Presbyterian missionaries adopted his method of missions, and this method was representative of the Korean missionary’s method.

Most scholars understand Nevius’ mission strategy in the local church, which is to be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. However, the real core of the

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19 See Kyeong Jin Kim, 170.
22 See Jeong Man Choi, “Historical Development of the Indigenization Movement in the Korean Protestant Church: With Special Reference to Bible Translation” (D. Miss. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1985), 32.
method lies in the Bible study group. By focusing on Bible study and keeping the authority of the Bible, Nevius planned to make native laity leaders in the Korean Church. In other words, because there was in the early stage of Korean Missions, missionaries, according to the theory of Nevius, who firstly wanted to enlarge the foundation of the Korean Church, they condensed much of the liturgy to simplify it and make it more understandable to the Korean people. Kyeong Jin Kim appraises this movement as follows:

Since Nevius encouraged the worship service led by native lay members, he did not include the benediction, and the Biblical teaching was included instead of a sermon. Again, this kind of a simplified liturgy is consistent with the Puritan principles of worship.

Therefore we can conclude that early missionaries stood in the line of Puritanism, and under the situation of missions, they emphasized Bible study, and relatively reduced and simplified the liturgy.

One of the peculiar traits of Korean Presbyterian worship is an emphasis on pietism and revival movement. Generally, the mood of worship in the Korean Church is more or less rigid and gloomy. C. A. Clark, who was a missionary in the early days of the Korean Church, teaches that the aim of Sunday worship is delivering people from the penalty and dirtiness of sin. In fact, the foundation of this notion can be seen in

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Calvin’s Strasburg rites in 1540 and Geneva rites in 1542. When we see the contents, we find that fraction (repentance) is in the first part of worship.\textsuperscript{27} It is not bad to emphasize repentance in worship, but, if we seek repentance all the time, it is not only unbalanced, it also despises God’s mercy and grace.

In the primitive church, even though they did not forget the passion of Christ, worship primarily focused on Jesus’ resurrection, glorified body of the risen Lord, victory and completion, and the new creation.\textsuperscript{28} In the case of Sundays, “No fasting, was the rule. During this time, too, they did not kneel for prayers of petition, as they otherwise did, but prayed standing. This order was to express their conviction that they had arisen with Christ.”\textsuperscript{29} In this respect, Korean Presbyterian worship needs to have balance between piety and joy in worship. Second, Korean Presbyterian worship was affected by the revivalism from the early stages. In 1907, the Korean Church experienced a great awakening and revival.\textsuperscript{30} So, many people flowed into Korea, and considered its worship form as the norm. Kyeong Jin Kim delineates this trend.

The best example of the atmosphere of a revival liturgy in Korea that can be illustrated is the Great Revival of Korea, which took place during 1903-1910…This great revival started through the ‘prayer meetings’ and ‘week of prayers.’ The Great Revival of Korea was characterized by the emotional outpouring of Korean Christians...As we have seen, the Korean Church adopted the Directory of worship, which was the same as the American Church (Southern) version save for a few modifications. The Directory for Worship of the


\textsuperscript{29} Josef A. Jungmann, \textit{The Early Liturgy}, 27.

\textsuperscript{30} See Yong Kyu Park, \textit{The Great Revivalism in Korea} (Seoul: Lifebook, 2000).
Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern), which was reproduced as the Directory of Worship of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, opposed the influence of revivalism as well as ritualism.\footnote{Kyeong Jin Kim, 181, 186.}

At a worship service in a Korean church, the vocal prayers and enthusiastic features are similar to that in a Pentecostal church. However, throughout the worship, a mood of pietism is dominantly maintained. Therefore, even though it would seem that it would be difficult for both types of worship to co-exist, the Korean churches incorporate both styles of worship.

These emphases are due, in large measure, to the influence of American missionaries. Julius Melton states, “As to the theory of worship, American Presbyterianism bore allegiance to the Puritan approach of the Westminster Assembly but blended with it the concerns of the Great Awakening and an American penchant for practicality and tolerance.”\footnote{Julius Melton, \textit{Presbyterian Worship in America}, 27.} The connection between American and Korean worship is well attested by \textit{The Directory of Worship of the Presbyterian Church of Korea} in 1919, which directly adopted large portions of worship directories from American Presbyterian sources.\footnote{Kyeong Jin Kim, 122, 226-248. See also \textit{The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Chosen, 1919} (Seoul: Korean Religious Book and Tract Society, 1919), 71.} The American connection is also prominent in revivalist practices, which were forged in the Great Awakening, and are sometimes described as the “Frontier Worship Tradition.”\footnote{Jangbok Jeong, “Study about Worship which was begun at the time of Western Frontier: Its impact on the Korea Church,” \textit{Jangshinnondan}, Vol. 14. (Seoul: Jangshin University Press, 1998), 307-308.}

Both then and now, commentators observe that the frontier tradition has both many merits and many weak points. James White says, “The essential discovery of the
frontier churches was a form of worship for the unchurched.” Therefore, the focus of worship was always the conversion of attendees. The emphasis on the Eucharist in the Protestant churches was Gethsemane piety. In other words, “Christ died for you, so can’t you at least do a bit better?” In this context, the Korean church worship is very serious, emphasizing repentance and being a new person.

The Reformers, who are theological models and forerunners of the Korean Church, did not have a deep knowledge about the foundation and principal of worship. William Maxwell argues that, “The results of the Reformation movement, so far as the forms of worship were concerned, were imperfect. Their service was excessively didactic and inadequate in structure.” In addition to this, William Maxwell analyzes the most serious problem as follows:

The most serious defect lay in the fact that the continental Reformers were without any profound historical knowledge of the origins and principles of worship. Their acquaintance with liturgical forms appears to have been largely restricted to the contemporary Roman forms; of Gallican and Eastern worship they appear to have known almost nothing…Both in the Eucharist and the offices they simply omitted what they considered superfluous or incompatible with the new teaching; at other points they made drastic substitutions. Yet throughout, apart from the new psalmody and hymnody, there was little that was creative.

The Reformers gave priority to God’s Word. Therefore, the Word was emphasized, but the sacraments, especially the Lord’s Supper, were not emphasized. Calvin wanted to


36 Ibid., 181.


38 Ibid., 72-73.

39 Maxwell also says, “The oft-repeated statement that the Reformers sought to replace the mass by the sermon is a misrepresentation: They sought to replace the mass by a celebration of the Lord’s Supper with sermon and communion. See William D. Maxwell, 116.
observe the Lord’s Supper every week\textsuperscript{40}; however, it was declined by the Geneva City Counsel. As a result, Geneva followed not Calvin, but Zwingli’s stance. According to Maxwell’s assessment, “Zwingli did not regard the Lord’s Supper in itself as a means of grace, or as the norm of Christian worship.”\textsuperscript{41} By the effect of Zwingli’s opinion, many churches consider the Lord’s Supper not an essential factor of Sunday worship, but rather a commemoration which should be celebrated irregularly.

The Korean Church also, at this point, did not follow Calvin’s stance but Zwingli’s stance. Moreover, the Korean Church was impacted by revivalism, and so present is the tendency to make little of the sacraments. Therefore regarding the Lord’s Supper, the Korean Church holds ideas that are similar to Zwingli’s memorialism.\textsuperscript{42}

The Korean Presbyterian Church was founded by Horace G. Underwood (sent by The Presbyterian Church in the USA in 1885). He led public worship from July 1885.\textsuperscript{43} At that time, worship had a free form and was not restricted by certain sequences.\textsuperscript{44} The Korean Church worship settled into preaching-centric worship. This was influenced by

\textsuperscript{40} Cf. Institutes 4, 17, 43; 44; 46.

\textsuperscript{41} Maxwell, 81.


\textsuperscript{43} Seong-Won Park, Worship in the Presbyterian Church in Korea: its history and implications (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 31.

\textsuperscript{44} Saemoonan History Compilation Committee, Seventieth Anniversary History of Saemoonan Church (Seoul: Saemoonan Church, 1958), 20. With the mention of Horace Underwood, we can better know the trait of worship at that time. He says, “In the homes of missionaries regular Sunday services were gradually developed, but at the start, both lack of knowledge of the language as well as inability to appreciate on the part of the audience, such services were very informal; only gradually, as we became more proficient in the language, and as our audiences were better able to appreciate the true idea of worship, did we attempt to have more formal services.” See Horace G. Underwood, The Call of Korea: Political-Social-Religious (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co, 1908), 136.
the missionaries’ teaching and theological background. Nevertheless, some people recognized the need to resist many of these tendencies and to rehabilitate the theology and practice of worship in the Reformed tradition. In his article, “Teach Us to Worship,” Charles A. Sauer argued, “we need to develop worship services that are not preaching services.” His introduction is very persuasive:

Someone has written a book entitled, *The Recovery of Worship*. Missionaries in Korea need to read that book because the art of worship was lost before missionaries came to Korea…Our grandfathers tried to combine the two, the result is that we say we are going to worship; what we then actually do is to go to hear a sermon, and if we do any worshipping at all the speaker is the object of about 90% of our adoration.

However, after that time, there were no alternative ideas and arguments for the flow of form to the present state. It is difficult to discern any difference in the form or content of worship between the practices of one hundred years ago and the practices of today.

B. The Present State of the Lord’s Supper in Korea

If someone tried to find a clear barometer showing the understanding and concern of the Korean Church for the Lord’s Supper, it would be the frequency of Lord’s Supper over the course of a year. Most Korean churches celebrate the Lord’s Supper two to four times a year. Calvin insists that Christians need to have the Lord’s Supper once a week.

45 Early missionary W. R. Foote asserted as follows: “The only way to be saved through Christ is by preaching. There are other means like theological article or home visits or sacrament for evangelism but those are no more than supplemental to preaching and never can replace preaching.” W. R. Foote, “Requisites of Effective Preaching,” *Shin Hak Chi Nam* (October 1921), Vol. 4, No. 1, 80 in Seong-Won Park, 72. This statement reveals well the attitude of early missionaries to the sacrament and worship.


47 Ibid., 155.

48 Regarding the Lord’s Supper, the *Lord’s Supper in the Directory of Worship* (1922) says, “The Communion, or the Supper of the Lord, is to be celebrated frequently; but the exact frequency may be determined by the Session accordingly for its edification.” See Presbyterian Church of Korea, *Choson*
at least, though this was never practiced in Geneva. But following the Reformation, the weekly observance of the Eucharist suffered and declined. As a result, the sermon was the core of worship and worship became rather wordy and didactic. When we look back through Korean history, American missionaries who tried to evangelize Koreans thought the Korean Christians were uncivilized and could not understand the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. Therefore, there was no Lord’s Supper for twenty-five years after baptizing the people. Traditionally, the core of Korean church worship was preaching. This tendency is not only Presbyterian but also that of the Methodist, Baptist, and Holiness churches. Korean churches have no real balance between God’s Word and the Eucharist. We conclude, therefore, that the trait of Korean Protestant churches is non-liturgical. The mood of the Lord’s Supper in Korea is very penitent. JinHwan Han says, The Korean Presbyterian Church is deficient in understanding the Eucharist as God’s sealing of the blessing of the New Covenant. For the Korean Church, the Eucharist remains as a mere symbolic rite to help people commemorate the death

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49 John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.43.


52 Ibid.
of Christ, or most critically speaking, it is appreciated as an audio-visual aid to commemorate vividly the passion of Christ. 53

The Korean Church does not have a deep understanding of the profound meaning of Eucharist, or if they do understand, it is not well expressed tangibly in the worship service. Above all, by the limited frequency of the Eucharist, we can consider it is very difficult for pastors and believers to get the concern about the Lord’s Supper itself. It is important that the churches in Korea understand the necessity of the sacraments on a regular basis by observing the Lord’s Supper at least quarterly, if not more often. This would mean a shift from having the main emphasis on just preaching God’s Word to understanding that worship also includes the observance of the Lord’s Supper.

C. Application of Infant Communion to the Korean Church

Infant communion is not currently practiced in Korea, and it promises to be a very controversial topic. One of the most important barriers to the introduction of infant communion would be the system of “Ipkyo,” a practice that resembles what some churches call “confirmation.”

Kyeongjin Kim says, “Since Calvin and most Puritans rejected a Confirmation rite, the Directory (1922) does not use the word ‘Confirmation’ but instead uses the phrases, ‘Public Profession of the Baptized Members.’”54 He concludes that the Korean Church system originated from the opinion of the Puritans. He says, “Their strict discipline and conservatism formed the strict standards for church admission. From these


54 Kyeong Jin Kim, 200; see also Choson Yesugyo Changnohoe Honbop (Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Korea), 210-211, and John Calvin, Institutes, 4.19.12-13.
standards, the famous half-way Covenant was developed. Full membership, including the communion of those who had received baptism as infants, was not awarded until they publicly professed their faith.55

From the early times of the Korean Church, missionaries introduced the Ipkyo system. There were many religions in Korea, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shamanism. So the missionaries, while considering this situation, considered a confession of faith as an important factor in establishing church membership. To accomplish this, they set up the Haksup (Catechesis) and Ipkyo system. While considering the praxis of the early church in Korea, it is very understandable and persuasive.

However, JinHwan Han gives an assessment about the Ipkyo system.

The Korean Church usually sorts out its members into three categories, differentiating the baptized as infant from the baptized as adult: Haksup Kyoin (catechumen), Yusae kyoin (Baptized infant), and Ipkyoin (confirmed and baptized as adult). The inevitable result is damage to the value of baptism itself. If it is through Ipkyo that we can enter the church, then what was the role of baptism when received as infants? If only the confirmed members are allowed to come near to the Lord’s Table, then what did God give us through infant baptism? We are not baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection for only halfway membership. Nor were we incorporated into the body of Christ with any special reservations.56

Because of this, the Korean Church needs to consider the system of Ipkyo as 100 years have passed since the first Korean missions. The Korean Church has been nurtured and


56 Jin Hwan Han, 177. Horace T. Allen says, “That confirmation is neither an initiatory rite nor a biblical sacrament. It is a pastoral office, a moment when the local community of faith both for certain individuals who have been nurtured by the community, and for itself, remember its baptism and in that way signifies its hope for renewed faith and love…We should take the initiative in the direction of a more thorough-going redirecting of the rite toward an annual, general renewal by all. This could best be done at Easter or at Pentecost.” Horace T. Allen, “A Companion to the Worship book: A Theological Introduction to Worship in the Reformed Tradition” (Ph. D Dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, 1980), 409-410.
has formed a Christian culture and the soil has matured. If we follow the present system, infants who are baptized cannot participate in the Lord’s Supper for at least fourteen years. Even though they attend Sunday school, they do not participate in morning worship. It allows children to deviate from the tradition of church and Catholicity. In Korea, after entering college or university, students tend to participate in Sunday morning worship. If allowed to participate in the Lord’s Supper at an early age, children will have more opportunity to be accustomed to Christian worship. Also, it would minimize the gap between the old and young generation in the Korean Church. However, we should consider the alternative plan to Ipkyo. Traditionally, Ipkyo has emphasized profession of faith. For the children to participate, parents and the church committees need to promote catechism education for children. Also, before children participate in the Lord’s Supper, it would be advisable for the worship committee to meet with the parents. In this way the Korean Church can work to promote an intergenerational worship experience.

57 In the law of the Korean Presbyterian Church, the possible age of participation according to Ipkyo is 14. Jin Hwan Han says, “But if children are to be initiated into the grace of the New Covenant, they must not be hindered from sharing the grace of the Covenant. The people who belonged to the Old Covenant allowed their children to eat the Passover. If through the faith of the community children are to be initiated, they are also capable of receiving all the benefits of the Eucharist through the corporate faith of the assembly.” Jin Hwan Han, “A Historical Theological Analysis of the Renewal of Worship of Korean Presbyterianism in the Context of the Directory for Worship of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Ko-Sin),” 214. It is very interesting that this thesis was written 20 years ago by the Presbyterian Scholar while considering the praxis of the Korean Presbyterian Church. He also insists the propriety of “Unity of Christian Initiation.”

58 In some Presbyterian denominations, for example, the Kosin Presbyterian Church, polity documents explain that youth should participate in public worship beginning at the time of Middle School.
CHAPTER 3: CURRENT DEBATE ABOUT INFANT COMMUNION IN NORTH AMERICA

The current debate over infant communion in North America includes several references to practices throughout the history of the church. Both the paedocommunionists and the anti-paedocommunionists develop their point of view with reference to historical considerations. The following paragraphs summarize the most important historical developments and the use of these historical arguments.

A. Historical Arguments Concerning Infant Communion

*Eastern and Western Churches Prior to the Reformation*

There is no mention of infant communion in the New Testament. Some commentators cautiously surmise that references to “households”—sometimes called the “oikos-formula (Acts 16:15; Phil. 16:33; 1 Co. 18:8)—implies that children of believers would have received baptism and participated in the Lord’s Supper. Many scholars have researched records which were written in the early church, and the church fathers’ opinions, to search for references to the practice of infant communion. However, there is no record of infant communion in the documents written in the first and second

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2 The “Oikos formula” was used to support historicity of infant baptism by Jeremias. See Joachim Jeremias, *The Origins of Infant Baptism: A Further Study in Reply to Kurt Aland* (Naperville, Ill., A.R. Allenson, 1963), 9-32. However, his opinion was opposed by Kurt Aland. See Kurt Aland, *Did the Early Church Baptize Infants?* Trans. by G. R. Beasley Murray (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004).
centuries;\(^3\) also, there are many arguments between paedocommunionists and anti-paedocommunionists about records of the church fathers after the third century.\(^4\)

In this section, I will research the outline of the traditions of infant communion in the Eastern and Western Church. Then I will identify and evaluate the church fathers’ main arguments about paedocommunion.

Historically, the Orthodox Church has emphasized the faith of the church in accepting a child for baptism and welcoming even infants to receive Holy Communion.\(^5\) Venema says, “Since the baptized child is granted entrance into the kingdom of God and born again by the Holy Spirit, he or she is properly to be admitted to the sacrament of the Eucharist, which provides the necessary and indispensible nourishment of participation in

\(^3\) Jeremias, Origin of Infant Baptism, 39. Winzer says, “There is no reference to paedo-communion until a.d. 251. . . . Even when paedo-communion is mentioned in 251, it is not described as a custom, nor is it claimed to be apostolic. It is referred to rather incidentally in the process of relating a series of events which fell under the judgment of God. It is not until 150 years later, in the fifth century in the west, that paedo-communion is specifically referred to as a practice—but that by this time, the communion-service was complex, including various categories of participation; and that the elements, of which infants partook, were more than likely not a part of the ordinary communion service.” See Matthew Winzer, “The True History of Paedo-Communion.” The Confessional Presbyterian, Vol. 3. (2007): 27; see also Keith A. Mathison, Given for You, 313.

\(^4\) Even though they see the same text, because of their different historical aspects, they give different interpretations about the church fathers’ stance.

\(^5\) A. Langdon, Communion for Children?: The Current Debate (Oxford: Latimer House, 1988), 13. Rylaarsdam says, “In contrast to the West, the Eastern church insisted on retaining the unity of the ceremonies which marked a person’s entrance into the church. Presbyters in the East were allowed to confirm a baptism immediately if a bishop was not available. Therefore, a newly baptized person would participate in communion.” See David Rylaarsdam, “United, Separated, Re-United: The Story of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper,” Calvin Theological Seminary Forum (Spring 2007): 5. Venema says, “It is important to observe that the eastern church came to practice a form of paedocommunion throughout its various branches and continues to do so until the present day.” C. Venema, Paedocommunion in History (2), The Outlook Vol. 55 No. 11 (December 2005): 26.
the body and blood of Christ.” For the Orthodox, baptism and communion has been part of the one act of initiation for a child.

In the Eastern branch of the church, traces of this practice are to be found in the liturgy of St. Clement (c.150-219), in Pseudo-Dionysius, in Evagrius (345-399), and in John Moschus (c. 550-619), and it is still practiced by Eastern churches to this day. Justine (110–165) and Hippolytus (c. 170-236) speak of the baptismal Eucharist in such a way that all those who have been baptized must also be seen as receiving the Eucharist immediately after their baptism. However, we still have insufficient data to risk dating the beginning of the practice.

The first known witness in the Western Church is Cyprian in 251, followed by Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430), Innocent I (d. March 12, 417), Gelasius of Rome (d. November 19, 496), and Gennadius of Marseilles (d. c. 496). Cyprian said that having

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9 Justin: 1 Apo. 61, 10-12.


11 David Holeton, Infant Communion-Then and Now (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1981), 4. Rylaarsdam says, ‘Ancient liturgies say that both baptism and communion were part of the ceremonies that marked a person’s entrance into the church. These ceremonies included baptism, a laying on of hands, and immediate participation in communion. See David Rylaarsdam, “United, Separated, Re-united: The Story of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper,” Calvin Theological Seminary Forum (Spring 2007): 5.


13 See Christian L. Keidel, Is the Lord’s Supper for Children? 301.
been baptized in the Spirit, the newborn drinks from the Lord’s cup. Further, Keidel argues that infant communion was approved at the councils of Macon (585), Toledo (675), in the Gelasian Sacramentary, and the *Ordo Romanus*. Around the 12th century, “the Western church began to emphasize the importance of catechetical instruction and preparation for the sacrament of confirmation, which was increasingly viewed as preparatory to reception to the Eucharist.” This pattern continues to this day in the Roman Catholic Church.

In summary, one challenge in addressing this topic is that paedo-communionists and anti-paedocommunionists use the same texts to support their opinions. Therefore it is necessary to carefully review their arguments.

Justin Martyr (100-165)

Generally, scholars consider Justin Martyr’s mention as the first clear witness about infant communion. However, the paedo-communionist’s and anti-paedocommunionist’s opinions are different. Justin Martyr says:

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16 C. Venema, “Paedocommunion in History (2),” 27.


18 Because early Church fathers’ mentions are not clear, sometimes it is somewhat symbolic, and we cannot fully understand the context of their writings. Kelly says, “In the fourth and fifth centuries little or no attempt was made, in East or West, to work out a systematic sacramental theology. The universal assumption was that the sacraments were outward and visible signs marking the presence of an invisible, but none the less genuine grace.” See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958), 422. As this mention well shows, it is very hard to see the consistent and elaborated sacramental theology in the early Church.

And this food is called among us Eukaristia, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these… (Justin, ANF 1:185)

When we study this statement, it seems to emphasize the believer’s faith and not mere participation. Especially the phrase, “who has been washed with the washing that is for remission” and “not as common bread and common drink” seem to support the prohibition of children. Based on this information, Leonard Coppes concludes that children did not participate in the Lord’s Supper in the early church.20 Also, Matthew Winzer says as follows:

The assertion that ‘no one is allowed to partake but…’ means that what follows are the only qualifications by which anybody might be admitted to the Eucharist. These qualifications, besides baptism, were a profession of the church’s faith and a life conformable to Christ’s commandments; or as would be stated in modern terms, a credible profession of faith.21

In addition to this, Venema concludes, “Justin’s description of the church’s practice does not expressly exclude the reception of children at the Table of the Lord, though this seems to be the inference that is demanded.”22 However, Gallant gives a different perspective on this mention:

With the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration which Justin mentions, is clearly used in reference to baptism. In Justin’s statement, this mention of baptism is apparently set within a logical order: belief, baptism, Christian living. If the passage implies believers-only communion, it likewise implies believers-only baptism….Simply put, this means that those who believe

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that infant baptism was practiced in the second century cannot cogently appeal to this text in order to refute paedocommunion.\footnote{Tim Gallant, \textit{Feed My Lambs}, 109.}

Justin’s statement is not clear for us to understand whether infants or children could participate in the Lord’s Supper during his time. While considering the opinion of Venema, it can be thought that Justin’s mention does not directly point out the exclusion of children in the Eucharist. Instead, as Gallant says, it seems to require that the participants already be baptized based on faith. However, in this text, we cannot find any refutation of infants or children in the Eucharist.

\textit{Origen (c185-254)}

Origen is important in the study of infant communion because not only he is an early church father, but his writing also is an important source for the anti-paedocommunionists, such as Beckwith.\footnote{See Roger. T. Beckwith, “The Age of Admission to the Lord's Supper,” \textit{Westminster Theological Journal} 38 (Winter 1976): 126-127. Venema says, “Shortly before the statement of Cyprian, which speaks positively of the practice of paedocommunion, Origen, one of the most influential of the Eastern Church fathers, also seems to suggest that children were not given the sacrament of communion.” See Venema, Paedocommunion in Church History (Part 1), \textit{The Outlook}. Vol. 55 No. 10 (Nov. 2005): 18. Also see Jucicum Hom vi.2 (GCS 30.500).}

Origen says,

\begin{quote}
Before we arrive at the provision of the heavenly bread, and are filled with the flesh of the spotless Lamb, before we are inebriated with the blood of the true Vine which sprang from the root of David, while we are children, and are fed with milk, and retain the discourse about the first principles of Christ, as children we act under the oversight of stewards, namely the guardian angels.\footnote{\textit{Homilies on the Book of Judges} 6:2.cited in Beckwith, 126.}
\end{quote}

In exegeting this passage, Leithart says, “It would be equally possible that Origen was speaking instead about the relationship of the Old and New Covenants.”\footnote{See Peter J. Leithart, \textit{Daddy, Why was I Excommunicated}? (Niceville, Florida: Transfiguration Press, 1992), 39.} In other words,
Leithart interprets Origen’s mention as symbolism or metaphorical language. However, Beckwith opposes this opinion. He sees that Origen’s intention was to point out literal children, arguing, “So, it seems that he is speaking of literal children, already baptized, but waiting for admission to the Lord’s Supper.” Similarly, Venema says, “Origen makes a distinction between children, who are fed with the milk of the Word of God and are not yet able to receive the flesh and blood of Christ, and more mature believers, who are at a stage of spiritual maturity that permits them to do so.” He emphasizes that even though Origen did not give an age for participants or detail criteria in communion, he intended to exclude immature children from the Lord’s Table. Gallant, in turn, opposes this opinion, insisting “it ought to be clear that the appeal to Origen by no means provides a definitive proof that paedocommunion was not practiced in the early Church. At most, the passage illustrates that the Church had not yet begun to practice intinction.”

When seeing the opinions of both sides, firstly, as Leithart says, we need to remember the style of Origen’s tendency using the metaphorical language in his writing.

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27 Drobner well analyzes the traits of Origen’s exegetical premise. He says, “Origen assumes three senses of the text: the corporeal or literal sense, the psychic or moral sense, and the spiritual or mystical sense. The literal sense refers exclusively to the immediate, concrete meaning of words, not to their symbolic or figurative use, which occurs frequently in the Bible. Hence for Origen the latter biblical passages have no literal sense. But since every individual word of the biblical text has to have a sense worthy of, and corresponding to, God because of the verbal inspiration by the Holy Spirit, this sense is to be sought at higher levels…Finally, the mystical sense fulfills three functions: it unfolds the OT typologically as prophecy in anticipation of Christ; it interprets the faith statements of salvation history; and it explains the Christians’ eschatological hope. The Center and key of the mystical meaning is Christ himself, who fulfilled the OT promises in his life and at the same time pointed to his return.” See Hubertus R. Drobner, The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction. Trans by Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 140-141.

28 Beckwith, 126.

29 Venema, “Paedocommunion in Church History (Part 1),” 18.

30 Tim Gallant, 111.
In this sense, we cannot abruptly conclude that his mention deals with the matter of infant communion. Instead, we can surmise another interpretation as Mark Dalby says.

The children concerned are not literal children but catechumens, and the contrast is not between infants who have not yet received the Eucharist and adults who have, but between catechumens under the guidance of angels and believers armed by the Lord.31

Dalby interprets that Origen wanted to give instruction for catechumen, not for literal children who were reared in the Christian family. When we see the opinions of both sides, we cannot conclude whether Origen meant to address adult catechumen and children in a particular statement.

_Cyprian (ca. 200-258)_

Beckwith says, “The earliest definite reference to infant or child communion, on the other hand, is in Cyprian (On the Lapsed 9, 25) about the year 251.”32 This mention shows the importance of Cyprian’s record in the study of infant communion. Cyprian’s statements have been the battlefield between the paedocommunionists and anti-paedocommunionists. Also, there is an additional reason why Cyprian’s mention is important. Beckwith says, “Cyprian was a Western Father, by then permanently resident in Palestine, states that children (parvuli) are not given communion, and what he says may well apply not only to Palestine but also to his homeland of Egypt.”33 Cyprian states:

> And when, as the rest received it, its turn approached, the little child, by the instinct of the divine majesty, turned away its face, compressed its mouth with resisting lips, and refused the cup. Still the deacon persisted, and, although against her efforts, forced on her some of the sacrament of the cup. Then there followed a

31 Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 10.


33 Ibid.
sobbing and vomiting. In a profane body and mouth the Eucharist could not remain; the draught sanctified in the blood of the Lord burst forth from the polluted stomach. 

Regarding this text, Winzer gives a sharp analysis while considering the text and its context, arguing as follows:

This is an isolated reference to a child being given one element of the communion, and it fails to give the impression that it was a custom in the church...He was in the process of deprecating the corruption of discipline in the church which had led to the practice of indiscriminate communion. Contrary to Mr. Jewett, the context makes it clear that the author does scruple at the practice, for the incident is related as an example of the judgment of God upon 'heedless persons.' Cyprian was so far from thinking that the infant ought to have been a partaker of communion, that he interpreted the little child turning away her face from the wine as being inspired 'by the instinct of the divine majesty.' He does not describe paedo-communion, but the force-feeding of a child with one of the elements of the communion. One does well to notice the practice of the heathen in forcing the food of idols down the throats of Christian infants, for the purpose of gaining them to their superstitions...this incident of forcing the Eucharist upon an infant who had fallen into the hands of the heathen, may well have been derived from the heathen.

These observations are very assertive and faithful to the text. However, we can raise the dissension. In the case of children or infants, aren’t there any cases when they refuse what parents give? Also, don’t they sometimes vomit when they are sick? If some of the people who went to the heathen meetings receive the Christian Eucharist, will they naturally vomit or be cursed? Isn’t it a subjective interpretation of Cyprian’s position?

Warren offers another opinion of Cyprian’s stance. He says, “Infants received the Eucharistic elements, probably, once in close connection with their baptism, but did not become regular communicants until they were more advanced in years.”

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34 Cyprian 5.444, cited in Matthew Winzer, 31.

35 See Winzer, 31-32.

36 See F. E. Warren, Liturgy and Ritual of the Ante-Nicene Church 2nd ed. (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1912), 116. Also, we need to notice Everett Ferguson’s statement: “Cyprian told the story to illustrate the serious consequences of idolatry and its incompatibility with
Cyprian’s testimony, Warren’s opinion is worthy to be considered. We need to view Cyprian’s books in more detail for additional mentions.

With mutual exhortations, people were urged to their ruin; death was pledged by turns in the deadly cup. And that nothing might be wanting to aggravate the crime, infants also, in the arms of their parents, either carried or conducted, lost, while yet little ones, what in the very first beginning of their nativity they had gained. Will not they, when the day of judgment comes, say, We have done nothing; nor have we forsaken the Lord’s bread and cup to hasten freely to a profane contact; the faithlessness of others has ruined us.\(^{37}\)

The above quote shows that infant communion existed in the district in which Cyprian lived. Regarding this, Venema appraises it as follows: “If this is correct, Cyprian’s statement represents the first clear testimony for the practice of paedocommunion in the churches with which he was acquainted.”\(^{38}\) However, Venema does not think that infant communion was widely spread at the time of Cyprian. He points out:

A contemporary of Cyprian’s, the author of Didascalia, confirms that the practice in Syria and Palestine was in accord with what we have seen to be Origen’s experience, namely that believers were admitted to the table of the Lord only after a period of instruction in the faith.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{39}\) See Venema, “Paedocommunion in Church History” (Part 1): 19. This means participation in the Eucharist after confessing the faith.
To proceed, Beckwith says that Didascalia’s mention is more confidential because it is not affected compared to other liturgies, and more similar to Palestine Judaism and primitive Judaism.\(^{40}\) What then are the contents of the Didascalia?

Honor the bishops, who have loosed you from your sins, who by the water regenerated you, who filled you with the Holy Spirit, who reared you with the word as with milk, who bred you up with teaching, who established you with admonition, and made you to partake of the holy Eucharist of God, and made you partakers and joint-heirs of the promised of God.\(^{41}\)

However, Ruth Meyers says, “Beckwith is imposing his model of Christian initiation upon this text, whose context is not a description of the rites of initiation in the Syrian church, but rather a discussion of the role of the bishop.”\(^{42}\) This means that the mention of the Didascalia is not about Christian initiation, but about the bishop’s role. However, when we consider that Christian initiation of the early church developed by a relationship with the role of the bishop, we find that it is not easy to give a clear conclusion about this subject.

\(^{40}\) Beckwith says, “Now, many patristic scholars today are inclined to regard evidence from Syria and Palestine, where the geographical and linguistic links with Palestinian Judaism and with primitive Jewish Christianity were strongest, as more likely than any other to have reserved traditional links with the Christianity of Jesus and his earliest followers, comparatively unaffected by outside influences. If so, the evidence of Origen and the Didascalia on the practice of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt is not only the earliest evidence bearing on our subject, but is on other grounds also more likely than Cyprian’s to reflect the ancient Christian custom. See Beckwith, 126-127.


Augustine (c. 354-430)\(^{43}\)

It is very hard for us to prove the historicity of infant communion while researching the record or text written during the third century.\(^{44}\) However, generally, scholars admit that the practice of infant communion was widely spread among the Eastern and Western Church after the fourth and fifth centuries.\(^{45}\) Regarding this trend, Venema explains that this came by the development of the effectiveness of the sacraments in the Middle Ages, so people wanted to receive grace through participating in the Lord’s Supper.\(^{46}\)

Therefore, we need to look to Augustine, who was the representative scholar during the fourth and fifth century. He says,

In the church of the Savior, infants believe by means of other people, even as they have derived those sins which are remitted them in baptism from other people. Nor do you think thus, that they cannot have life who have been without the body and blood of Christ, although He said Himself, unless ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye shall have no life in you.\(^{47}\)

When reading this statement, we see that Augustine insisted that the sacraments were needed for salvation.\(^{48}\) Venema evaluates this opinion that greatly impacted the practice

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\(^{43}\) For the bibliography and foundation which shows Augustine’s attitude on infant communion, see Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 14.


\(^{45}\) Venema, “Paedocommunion in Church History (Part 1),” 20.


\(^{48}\) Kelly says, “Thus for Augustine any child born into the world was polluted with sin, and baptism was the indispensable means to its abolition.” See J. N. D. Kelly, 430. Also see Augustine, *E.g. de
of infant communion after the fourth century. However, Matthew Winzer says that Augustine did not clearly confirm whether infants or children frequently participated in the Lord’s Supper. We need to research deeper the records of St. Augustine: “Yes, they are infants, but they are his members. They are infants, but they receive his sacraments. They are infants, but they share in his table, in order to have life in themselves.”

Regarding Augustine’s statement, Winzer says, “These statements only demonstrate that Augustine thought it was necessary for infants to partake of the sacramental body and blood of Christ; they nowhere state when or how they participated.” However, when we consider the general attitude of Augustine on infant communion, it would be more assertive that Augustine permitted the participation of infants or children into the Lord’s Supper. William Harmless says, “Augustine’s theology of baptism could at the same time be a theology of Eucharist.” Also, in Augustine’s sermon, we find that he gave communion to infants after finishing the baptism. While synthesizing the records and theological stance of Augustine, Rylaarsdam says,

A number of references in Augustine imply that participation of all baptized in communion was the universal practice of the Church and assumed to be ancient. The practice of first communion immediately following baptism continued through most of the Middle Ages. Infants participated by some accommodating

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49 Venema, “Paedocommunion in Church History (Part 1),” 20.

50 Matthew Winzer, 32.


52 Matthew Winzer, 33.


54 See Sermons 174.7 and Epistle 217.
means such as receiving in their mouths the priest’s little finger dipped in the wine. For nearly twelve centuries, the church in the east and in the west agreed that communion was a part of initiation.\footnote{David Rylaarsdam, “Reconnecting Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, Sacraments of the Covenant Community,” \url{www.crconnect.org} (October 2004 - January 2005), 13.}

While studying the records of Augustine, we find that infant communion generally spread after his time. However, in evaluating the historicity of infant communion, there are no clear resources until A.D. 251, and there is no clear mention of infant communion which was written from the time of Cyprian to Augustine, which is a weak point in supporting the paedocommunionists.\footnote{See Matthew Winzer, “The True History of Paedo-communion.” \textit{The Confessional Presbyterian}, 2007, 27-36.}

In summary, some of the same early church texts are used by current scholars to defend both paedocommunion and the opposition of paedocommunion. The topic is further complicated by the lack of textual evidence, and by the regional diversity of practice.\footnote{We can easily point out differences and diversity of liturgy according to the region. Frank Senn categorizes major families of rites as follows: “East Syrian, West Syrian, Alexandrian (Egyptian), Roman, and Gallican-Mozarabic (Visigothic).” See Frank C. Senn, \textit{Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical} (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 115-144} It is nearly impossible to arrive at a definitive assessment.

In fact, the Bible does not tell whether or not infant communion was observed in early Christianity. Before the time of Augustine, there is no document testifying to the universal or widespread practice of infant communion.\footnote{Of course, there exist some records which can be used for upholding the validity of Infant Communion.} However, we should consider the regional character in the development of Christian liturgy. According to James White, the time of early Christianity has a tendency to develop from the freedom to the
formula. So, there existed liturgical diversity. This makes it difficult to find liturgical unity in early Christianity and therefore, in infant communion. Therefore, we need to infer the developmental process of early liturgy.

After the persecution of the Roman Empire, many people converted to the Church. This then required adult catechism education. As time passed, many children were born into Christian families, so the church needed liturgy for the children.

While researching opinions on infant baptism and infant communion, we find complex motivation for them. In the time of early Christianity, there existed not only an emphasis on catechism education, but also an emphasis on the means of grace in the church. So, liturgy and theology of the early Church is not clear and gives various cases. Because the Bible and history do not speak about infant communion before the third century, we should be reticent about it. We must conclude that we cannot give an answer from an historical aspect. The answer to the question of the validity of infant communion

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60 Ibid., 44.


62 Hippolytus says, “And let them be examined as to the reason why they have come forward to the faith. And those who bring them shall bear witness for them whether they are able to hear. Let their life and manner of living be enquired into, whether he is a slave or free.” See The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome, ed. by Gregory Dix (Ridgefield, Conn.: Morehouse, c1992), 23. See also Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips, The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002).

63 Kelly epitomizes the fourth century’s attitude about efficacy of sacrament as follows: “These two ideas, that the grace contained in sacraments is God’s gift and has nothing to do with the officiant as such, and that its production is tied to the divinely prescribed formula rehearsed by the minister, go a long way towards the so-called ex opere operato.” See J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, 427. Also, Carl Volz says, “Both views of the sacrament, that of a physical change in the elements and that of a spiritual presence of Christ with the elements, continued in the church for many centuries, with the realist view gaining dominance.” See Carl A. Volz, Faith and Practice in the Early Church: Foundations for Contemporary Theology (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House), 109.
must be formulated on the basis of biblical theology and systematic theology, not historical precedent.

The Argument About 12th Century Decline

Scholars who argue that infant communion was prominent in the early church go on to argue that it declined in the late medieval period. By understanding these historical analyses, we will be able to see the essence of infant communion in more detail. If the reasons for the rejection of infant communion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are reasonable, it would be natural for it to be refused in the present. However, if these reasons are not proper or not contrary to the essence of our belief, it would contribute to supporting the possibility of infant communion.

First, I will present the scholars’ opinions on why infant communion has disappeared in the Western Church. Second, I will describe whether those reasons were reasonable or not. Then, I will demonstrate that the reason infant communion disappeared was not because it was heretical or unbiblical, but because of complicated reasons in respect to doctrine and matters of confirmation related to the religious privileges of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is certain that infant communion was widely observed in the European Church until the twelfth century.64 Williston Walker says, “The Western Church, in the twelfth

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and thirteenth centuries of the practice of infant communion, which had been universal, continues in the Greek Church to the present." However, gradually, local councils and synods came to repudiate its practice.

What then is the decisive reason for the decline of infant communion, even though it was pervasively spread in the West? David Holeton explains four reasons why infant communion disappeared. First, the separation of baptism from the Eucharist; second, the separation of the chalice and the laity; third, the injunction against reservation under two kinds; and finally, the factor that makes all this possible, the loss of any sense among both religious and the laity that communion was a normal part of the mass.

Besides these, we can find more reasons. The most important factor of the cessation of the practice was the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was enacted at the fourth

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66 J. M. M. Dalby, “The End of Infant Communion,” 60. Regarding the record of local council and synod about infant communion, see Dalby, 60. Also, Dalby’s book, *Infant Communion* shows the process of many councils’ decisions on infant communion. See Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 22.


69 Keidel says, “This gradual abrogation of communion under two kinds led Pope Paschalis the Second, in the 12th century, to emphasize in a letter to Pontius, abbot of Cluny: “As Christ communicated bread and wine, each by itself, and it ever had been so observed in the church, it ever should be so done in the future, save in the case of infants and of the sick, who as a general thing, could not eat bread.” See Keidel, 302. Charles Crawford says, “It seems that the sick and the children were habitually communicated under one kind only. In the case of infants, this was in the form of wine.” In addition, he notes, “After the time of Thomas Aquinas, therefore, Communion under two kinds went out little by little, and so did children’s Communion under the species of wine. The Lord’s precept ‘eat and drink’ was henceforth generally seen as fulfilled in the reception of both sacred species by the priest alone.” See Charles Crawford, “Infant Communion: Past Tradition and Present Practice,” *Theological Studies*, vol. 31, No. 3 (September 1970): 527, 529-30.
Lateran Council in 1215 A.D. The fear that infants and children might spill the wine and therefore profane the blood of the Lord appears to have been the most important reason for this discontinuance. The development of the theory of transubstantiation naturally further developed into requiring penance and discretion. So, to receive communion, people had to make penance, and infants and children were considered having not enough ability for doing so. Also, Keidel points out, “Additional justification given for this discontinuance was that infants received all that was necessary for salvation in baptism, and that little children, therefore, were not in danger of losing their salvation if they waited until the age of discretion before partaking of the Eucharist, at which time they would eat with more respect and understanding.” Lastly, we notice also the opinion that infant communion was banned to uphold the power of the bishop.

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70 Cornelis P. Venema, “Paedocommunion: Should Covenant Children be Admitted to the Lord’s Table? An Introduction” The Outlook Vol. 55 No. 9 (October 2005): 28. See J.J. von Allmen, Worship, Its Theology and Practice (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 187. However, Dalby says, “It is also no coincidence that infant communion disappeared in the same century that the dogma of transubstantiation was promulgated, and so far as the trend can be traced, there would seem to be a sequence of greater scruple and reverence, higher doctrine, and the disappearance of infant communion.” See J. M. M. Dalby, “The End of Infant Communion,” 64. Actually, the fourth Lateran Council decided for obligation of Easter communion to all laymen of the age of discretion. See Dalby, Infant Communion, 22. However, there was no mention of infants. See Cannon xxi, Denzinger n. 812 p. 264. Walker says, “the council required confession to the priest at least once a year.” See Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, 274. However, after then, it rapidly declined.


73 Keidel, “Is the Lord’s Supper for Children?” 303; see Council of Bordeaux, 1255, can. 5; Council of Trent, can. 4. Maxwell Johnson says, “Then after infants had in fact ceased to receive communion, the Church began to say, “Infants are not allowed to receive communion; the Church cannot be supposed to have excluded them from communion without good cause; therefore infants have no need of sacramental communion, and the grace which they receive in baptism must be supposed to suffice until they are of an age to commit actual sin.” See Maxwell Johnson, The Rites of Christian Initiation, 219.

74 James I. Cook., ed. The Church Speaks, Papers of the Commission on Theology, Reformed Church in America, 1959-1984 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 91. The source continues: “By the thirteenth century, however, the rites of baptism, confirmation were separated, and the power of
Therefore, we need to notice the opinion that the decline of infant communion is related to the relationship between baptism and confirmation, and related to the Catholic Church’s effort to uphold the power of the bishop.\textsuperscript{75} In the Western Church, there were important principles in Christian initiation, being, “no bishop, no confirmation.”\textsuperscript{76} Therefore, as Maxwell Johnson well explains, “The great increase in numbers of Christians after the peace of the church under Constantine, and the increasing size of dioceses in most parts of the world thereafter, made it impossible for bishops to be present at all celebrations of Christian initiation.”\textsuperscript{77} Also, there was a suggestion as follows: “Strengthening of confirmation was sufficient for infants, i.e. that they did not

\textsuperscript{75} Maxwell Johnson says, “it has been customary for liturgical scholars to refer to what happened in the medieval evolution of the rites of Christian initiation as a process of “disintegration,” “dissolution,” and “separation.” See Maxwell E. Johnson, \textit{The Rite of Christian Initiation}, 247-248. Also, see J. G. Davies, “The Disintegration of the Christian Initiation Rite,” \textit{Theology} 50 (1947): 407-12. Thomas Aquinas says, “… people also receive a spiritual life through baptism, which is spiritual regeneration. But in confirmation people receive as it were a certain mature age of spiritual life.” Text is cited from Paul Turner, \textit{Sources of Confirmation: From the Fathers through the Reformers} (Collegeville, Min.: Liturgical Press, 1993), 41-42. In Maxwell Johnson, 254. Maxwell Johnson says, “Confirmation emerges in the West as a distinct rite, separate from baptism itself, as a special sacrament of the Holy Spirit for an increase of grace, strength to live and fight the battles of the Christian life, and as a sacrament of maturity.” See Maxwell E. Johnson, 255.

\textsuperscript{76} See James F. White, \textit{A Brief History of Christian Worship} (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 51. Pope Innocent I wrote in 416: “As to the consignation of the newly baptized, clearly no one other than the bishop is permitted to perform it.” In James White, 50. Maxwell Johnson says, “In the texts of the Gelasian Sacramentary for the regular celebration of Christian Initiation at Rome, the rubrics draw attention to the bishop’s handlaying and prayer, saying, “Next the sevenfold gift is given to them by the bishop. To seal them he imposes his hand with these words: Almighty God, Father of our Jesus Christ…”” See Maxwell E. Johnson, 248.

\textsuperscript{77} See Maxwell E. Johnson, 247. James White says, “There are stories of bishops passing through villages while confirming from horseback.” See James F. White, \textit{A Brief History of Christian Worship}, 82.
also need the Eucharist, was a strong one.” Therefore, baptism and confirmation gradually separated. Infant communion was delayed after receiving confirmation, and the results accelerated the decline of infant communion.

We have researched the reasons why infant communion disappeared during the twelfth century while reading various scholar’s books and opinions. We should evaluate these reasons in more detail. First, we will look at the reason that infant communion disappeared by proving that it has no relationship with the matter of salvation. Dalby says, “Despite these Fathers, though, Romans and Reformers were right in denying that infant communion was necessary to salvation, and those Romans who treated its actual administration as a matter more of discipline than dogma were also right.”

However, this reason does not justify the invalidity of infant communion. Even though infant communion has no relationship with salvation, when we consider it as a means of grace, the fact that it disappeared by matter of transubstantiation, concomitant, and confirmation for upholding the power of bishop, gives us more opportunity to think about its validity.

Among the various reasons for the decline in infant communion, we should study in more detail the scholars’ strong emphasis on the power of discernment for receiving communion. In fact, these were impacted by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who actually opposed infant communion. While quoting St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas says,

78 See Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 23. William of Auxerre said, “Little children receive the body of Christ, and it is nothing to them but milk. It was confirmation which strengthened everyone, little children and grown men alike” (as cited in Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 23).

79 Dalby, *The End of Infant Communion*, 71.

80 David Rylaarsdam, “United, Separated, Re-united;” 5-6.

81 We need to know Aquinas’ opinion on the Lord’s Supper. Dalby says, “He (Aquinas) also argued that Augustine’s statement that those who lacked the body and blood of Christ could not have life referred not to sacramental eating but to the reality of the sacrament, i.e. to the unity of the church.” See
The Eucharist ought not to be given to children who lack the use of reason and who cannot distinguish between spiritual and physical food...because for the receiving of the Eucharist there is required an actual devotion which such children cannot have. But it can be given to children who are already beginning to have discretion, even before they are of perfect age, when they are about ten or eleven, they show signs of discretion and devotion.\(^8^2\)

Also, Dalby well explains Aquinas’ emphases as follows:

Those who had formerly had the use of reason should be communicated on the strength of past devotion unless there was danger of vomiting, but children who had never had the use of reason should not be communicated because there has not been any preceding devotion.\(^8^3\)

While considering the status of Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Church, we can surmise that this insistence would give great impact to the thirteenth century churches.\(^8^4\) Mark Dalby, by researching the record of local councils, says, “The discretion of faith was now affirmed as the real reason for the denial.”\(^8^5\) Then this criterion was handed on to the Reformers, for example, John Calvin, Zwingli and Bucer. Regarding this, James Cook evaluates Calvin’s stance on infant communion.

Interestingly, Calvin’s argument here follows closely that of the Lateran Council, which was also concerned that the table not be profaned, that those admitted to

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\(^8^2\) Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiiis* in Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 23.


\(^8^5\) Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 25. See, also J. Hartzheim, *Concilia Germaniae* (Cologne, 1759-63) iv. 73.
communion be able to discern the body and blood of the Lord, that consciences be examined, and that the role of the Cross and Christ’s sacrifice in the sacrament be primary.86

Dalby evaluates the Reformers as follows: “The Reformers thought themselves biblical. In reality, as far as infant communion was concerned, they were simply ‘late medieval’ defending the status quo.”87 Also, Dalby says,

Historically, both sides knew that infant communion had been practiced by Cyprian and Augustine and was still practiced by the Boheminas and the Greeks. But they showed no awareness that it had ended in the west only in the thirteenth century, and that its ending was linked with that extreme reverence for the consecrated elements which also manifested itself in the withholding of the chalice from the laity. The reformers deplored both of these, yet their dismissal of infant communion and their insistence on prior instruction supports the claim that at many points they were much more children of their times than they realized.88

Dalby is right in pointing out that even though the Reformers intended to reform the remnant of the Medieval Catholic Church, they also were sons of the times by following the Lateran Council and Aquinas’s opinion even though they knew of the history of infant communion.

In conclusion, infant communion disappeared by the effect of various thoughts, dogma, and praxis of the church. However, the fact that it disappeared after the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the Western Church does not mean it is unbiblical or in error, contrary to our belief. Rather, as Maxwell Johnson concludes: “lack of frequent communion participation on the part of the laity in general, the growing clericalization of the Eucharist due, in part, to developments in the theology of priestly ordination, a


87 Mark Dalby, “The End of Infant Communion,” 68.

88 Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 38.
growing and increasing scrupulosity about the Eucharistic elements themselves, and especially withdrawal of the cup from the laity, and the concomitant development of a Eucharistic piety centered almost exclusively on devotion to the Host.”

Therefore, even though the most important factor in deciding the validity of infant communion is in the Bible, we can conclude that the decline of infant communion does not mean its futileness or invalidity.

B. Infant Communion and Systematic Theology

The Reformed Catechism and the Reformers’ Thoughts on Infant Communion

What do the Reformed Confessions say about infant communion? Before we examine the possibility of infant communion in respect to systematic theology, we should check the Reformed Catechism and Reformed tradition. Cornelis Venema summarizes the Reformed Confession’s character as follows: “In the classic confessions of the Reformed churches, which were written during the period of the Reformation in the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century, there is compelling evidence that the Reformed churches believe that the Lord’s Supper ought to be administered only to professing believers.”

As Venema points out, there is no evangelical creed that supports decisively infant or child participation in the Lord’s Supper. The Westminster Confession of Faith

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89 Maxwell E. Johnson, 264.


91 The only Reformed theologian who supported the validity of infant communion was Musculus. Herman Bavinck summarizes his opinion as follows: “(1) Those who possess the thing signified also have a right to the sign. (2) Children who can receive the grace of regeneration can also be nurtured in their spiritual lives without their knowledge. (3) Christ is the Savior of the whole Church, including the children, and feeds and refreshes all of its members with his body and blood. (4) The demand for self-examination (1
and the *Larger Catechism* (29:1; 29:7; Q.’s 170, 171, 172, 174, 175, and 177)\(^2\) state that faith and the ability to examine one’s faith and life are a prerequisite for those who receive the Lord’s Supper. The Geneva Confession of 1536 (Art. 16), the Scottish Confession of Faith of 1560 (Ch. 22), the Belgic Confession of 1561 (Art.35)\(^3\), and the “Second Helvetic Confession” of 1566 are all in agreement with our standard of faith that the Lord’s Supper should be administered to those who are of discernment and who have declared their faith in Christ.

What, then, do Reformers say about infant communion? The Reformer, John Calvin, says, “The Supper is intended for those of riper years, who, having passed the tender period of infancy, are fit to bear solid food.”\(^4\) Also, while mentioning 1 Corinthians 11:28, 29, he emphasizes, “If they cannot partake worthily without being able duly to discern the sanctity of the Lord’s body, why should we stretch out poison to our young children instead of edifying food?”\(^5\) In the mean time, Heinlich Bullinger says, “And although infants are reputed to be of the church and in the number of faithful, yet

\(^{92}\) The Westminster larger confession says, “The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord’s Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves (Q. & A. 177).

\(^{93}\) The Belgic Confession says, “We receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God, with humility and reverence, keeping up among us a holy remembrance of the faith and of the Christian Religion. Therefore no one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself, hest by eating of this bread and drinking of this cup he eat and drink judgment to himself. In a word, we are moved by the use of this holy sacrament to a fervent love towards God and our neighbor (Article 35).

\(^{94}\) Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.16.30.

\(^{95}\) Ibid.
are they not capable of the Supper. In this point the ancient fathers shamefully erred:

which I have also noted in the sermon of Baptism.⁹⁶ Along the same line, Ursinus says,

Infants are not capable of coming to the Lord’s Supper, because they do not possess faith. Actually, but only potentially and by inclination. But here actual faith is required, which includes a certain knowledge of what God has revealed, and an assured confidence in Christ; it also requires the commencement of a new obedience, and purpose to live Godly; and also an examination of ourselves, with a commemoration of the Lord’s death. . . The infant children of the church are, therefore, not admitted to the use of the Lord’s Supper, even though they are included among the number of the faithful.⁹⁷

However, he thought that an infant’s duty was exempt in the case of infant baptism. He says,

The major proposition is true of adults, who are capable of being taught, from which class of persons the first members of the church were gathered. These Christ command first to be taught, and then to be baptized, so as to be distinguished from the world. But it is false if applied to infants who are born in the church, or who become connected with it when their parents believe and make a profession of their faith; because, Christ does not speak of infants, but of adults, who are capable of being taught, and who ought not to be received into the church unless they are first taught. Infants are included in the covenant, because God says, “I will be a God unto thee and thy seed,” even before they were capable of being instructed. Therefore, they are also to be baptized.⁹⁸

In the 20th century, Calvinist Louis Berkhof explains why children cannot participate in the Lord’s Supper:

Children cannot meet the requirements for worthy participation. Paul insists on the necessity of self-examination previous to the celebration…and children are not able to examine themselves…It is necessary to discern the body, 1 Cor. 11:29, that is, to distinguish properly between the elements as symbols of the body and blood of Christ. And this, too, is beyond the capacity of children. It is only after

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⁹⁸ Ursinus, 368-9.
they have come to years of discretion that they can be permitted to join in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.\textsuperscript{99}

Until now we have examined what Reformed catechism and representative Reformed theologians say about the possibility of infant communion. According to the contents above, we can summarize their foundation of prohibiting a child’s participation for two reasons: First, they thought children could not do the prerequisite of 1 Corinthians 11, and second, they believed that children could not have true faith.

So then, are there any reasons to inspect the validity of infant communion? As Venema well points out, if the Eucharist cannot add another grace besides God’s promised Word, and not for a child’s sacramental regeneration, how on earth can communion benefit an infant or a child?\textsuperscript{100}

We need to honor our confession and our Reformed tradition. However, as we will see in the chapter of biblical theology, 1 Corinthians 11’s emphasis is on considering the community, not on instruction of the people.\textsuperscript{101} Also, the premise that infants and children do not have faith has been reputed by many modern scholars and educators. Therefore, in this chapter we will study the following themes: the relationship between infant communion and infant baptism, objectivity or subjectivity, God’s grace or


\textsuperscript{100} Venema says, “The confessions consistently teach that the power and efficacy of the sacraments require that they be received by faith. Since the sacraments do not add anything new to the grace of Christ promised in the gospel, and since the sacramental elements are not to be confused with the spiritual reality to which they refer, the sacraments require the same response as the Word.” See C. Venema, “Paedocommunion and the Reformed Confession (I).” \textit{The Outlook} Vol. 1 No. 1 (Jan. 2006): 22. Also, he says, “The reformed confessions consistently oppose any doctrine for sacramental regeneration apart from the Spirit’s working faith through the Word.” See Venema, 22.

believer’s faith, the tension between remembrance and eschatology, and the Reformer’s understanding of Jesus’ Presence in the Lord’s Supper.

The Relationship between Infant Communion and Infant Baptism

One of the most important arguments in deciding the validity of infant communion is the relationship between infant communion and infant baptism. Many writers, including Tim Gallant, Paul K. Jewett, and K. A. Mathison, argue that if infant baptism can be exercised, then the church should also permit infant communion. The Reformed tradition has emphasized the necessity of infant baptism by using the concept of covenant. Calvin says,

For if they are to be accounted sons of Adam, they are left in death, since, in Adam, we can do nothing but die. On the contrary, Christ bids them be brought to him. Why so? Because he is life. Therefore, that he may quicken them, he makes them partners with himself.102

Calvin emphasized that children should receive regeneration by baptism. Also, against the Anabaptists, while reminding us of God’s commandment of circumcision for infants, he insisted that people cannot forbid infant baptism.103 Calvin insists, though it is difficult for people to understand, “the Lord is able to furnish them (children) with the knowledge of Himself in any way He pleases.”104 However, Calvin did not apply this concept to infant communion. He says,

It is a kind of entrance, and as it were initiation into the Church, by which we are ranked among the people of God, a sign of our spiritual regeneration, by which we are again born to be children of God, whereas on the contrary the Supper is

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102 *Institutes*, 4.16.17.

103 *Institutes*, 4.16.20.

104 *Institutes*, 4.16.18. Calvin says, “Infants are baptized into future repentance and faith, and even though these have not yet been formed in them, the seed of both lies hidden within them by the secret working of the Spirit.” See *Institutes*, 4.16.20.
intended for those of riper years, who, having passed the tender period of infancy, are fit to bear solid food.\textsuperscript{105}

When we review his commentary on First Corinthians and Matthew, we find that for accepting people to the Lord’s Supper, Calvin emphasizes people’s confession, self-examination, and repentance.\textsuperscript{106} According to Calvin’s opinion, anti-paedocommunionism emphasizes that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are evidently a different sort of sacrament. In a similar manner, Ursinus insisted that “baptism is the testimony of our regeneration, of the covenant made with God, and of our reception into the church; the Lord’s supper testifies that we are to be perpetually nourished by Christ dwelling in us, and that the covenant once entered into between God and us shall ever be ratified in regard to us, so that we shall forever remain united with the church and body of Christ.”\textsuperscript{107}

However, paedocommunionists argue that both sacraments are the same ceremony that belongs to Christians.\textsuperscript{108} Their core argument is as follows: If infants who have a weak belief can receive baptism, in the same context, why cannot infants receive the Lord’s Supper?\textsuperscript{109} Similarly, David Pearcy says,

\textsuperscript{105} *Institutes*, 4.16.30.

\textsuperscript{106} See *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 348-395; see *Calvin’s Commentaries* Vol. XVII, 210. Also, concerning the emphasis of faith in the Lord’s Supper, see *Belgic Confession* art. 35. In addition to this, see B. Kumphuis, “Daddy, May I take Communion?” *Lux Mundi* (September 1995); 9-11.

\textsuperscript{107} Ursinus, 434.

\textsuperscript{108} Frank Senn says, “The Baptist, like the Orthodox, see an essential unity between Baptism and Eucharist so that the two should not be separated in time.” See Frank C. Senn, “Issues in Infant Communion,” *Dialog* 22 No. 3 (Summer 1983): 224.

If the grace of baptism can be received proleptically, why cannot the grace of the Eucharist be received proleptically? And if reception of the Eucharist requires a degree of understanding and verbal commitment, why does baptism not?¹¹⁰

In addition to this, Holeton says,¹¹¹

In his *Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying* (1648), Jeremy Taylor gave the most extensive examination it was to have during the century...Taylor’s theological conclusions are that infants ought to receive either both sacraments or neither.

These writers point out that there is no consistency in the realm of application of baptism and the Lord’s Supper among anti-paedobaptists. Regarding this, Gallant says that proponents of paedocommunion show that many verses in the Bible (e.g., Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; Rom. 4:11) show that baptism also requires repentance and faith and Reformed theologians appeal to these verses for adult baptism.¹¹² He concludes, “If covenant children may be baptized before showing outward signs of repentance and faith, then so may they enjoy the Lord’s Table.”¹¹³

Against this opinion, anti-paedocommunionists emphasize that the Lord’s Supper and baptism are different in essence, and the Lord’s Supper requires responsibility by the participants.¹¹⁴ B. Kamphuis says, “It is not only a sign and seal from God’s side, but also


¹¹² See Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs*, 96. In fact, Ursinus thought that when infants were baptized, their duty was exempted. See Ursinus, 386.

¹¹³ Tim Gallant, 96.

¹¹⁴ Eric Gritsch insists that the New Testament says that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are evidently different and not derived from each other. See Eric W. Gritsch, “Infant Communion: What Shapes Tradition? *Academy* Vol. 36 No. 3 (1979): 85-108. See Todd W. Nichol. “Infant Communion in the Light of the Lutheran Confessions,” *Lutheran Quarterly* Vol. 10 (Autumn 1996): 44. “The confessors recognize that these two events, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, are distinct and directed toward different stages in the life of the individual Christian.” In addition to this, see Bernhard Lohse, *A Short History of*
a confession from the side of the believer. It is at that point that the Lord’s Supper differs from baptism.\textsuperscript{115}

To prove their opinion that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are different, people argue that baptism is for the initiation of the believers and the Eucharist is for continuous nurture.\textsuperscript{116} A CRC report says,

Baptism is a mark of initiation into the covenant community, a once-for-all activity, a mark of birth as we are buried and raised with Christ in baptism, something which is not repeated. The Lord’s Supper, however, is a nourishing event, intended by our Lord to be a repeated source of sustenance.\textsuperscript{117}

C. Venema also says, “Unlike the sacrament of baptism, which is a sign and seal of incorporation into Christ and his church, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is a sign and seal of God’s grace in Christ that continually nourishes and strengthens the faith of its recipient.”\textsuperscript{118}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[115] See B. Kamphuis, “Daddy, May I Take Communion?” \textit{Lux Mundi}, (September 1995): 9. Stookey says, “Baptism and the Eucharist are thus complementary signs; the former reveals most clearly God’s initiative, the latter our responsible participation in transforming what God provides in the natural order.” See Laurence Hull Stookey, \textit{Baptism: Christ’s Act in the Church} (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 80.
\item[116] Regarding the similarity and difference of communion and baptism, see Orthodox Presbyterian Church, “Report of the Committee on Paedocommunion,” in \textit{Minutes of the Fifty-Fourth General Assembly} (Philadelphia: The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1987), 230-231. Westminster Larger Catechism 177 says, “The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that Baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and engraving into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.”
\item[117] CRC Committee to Study the Issue of Covenant Children Partaking of the Lord’s Supper, Report 34, 351.
\end{footnotes}
Going one step forward, people who refute infant communion deal with the invalidity of infant communion by using the attributes of active and passive among the sacraments. Bavinck says, “Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, a sacrament in which a human is passive; the Lord’s Supper is the sacrament of maturation in communion with Christ, the formation of the spiritual life, and presupposes conscious and active conduct on the part of those who receive it.”

A CRC Report says,

As additional difference between baptism and the Lord’s Supper lies in the degree of involvement of the recipient of the sacrament. The very nature of the Supper demands that communicants be physically active in their eating and drinking, whereas those receiving baptism are physically passive in the event.

The foundation and premise of Reformed belief—because baptism’s character is passive, children can participate in it, the Lord’s Supper requires active participation, children cannot—lies in that “spiritual maturity was equated with physical maturity” as DeMolen points out. However, as we will see in the chapter on Church Education, even though spiritual maturity has some relationship with body maturity to some extent, it cannot be absolute criteria. Also, the distinction that baptism is passive and the Eucharist is active, is too uniform. Koopmans shows that Passover and the Lord’s Supper have both active and passive aspects.

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That is the emphasis of the primacy of God’s action in history. And the believer’s new identity in Christ demands a response. Old Testament Israel was never intended to be simply a passive recipient of covenantal blessing. The covenant made demands upon the life of the believer, not least of which included the response of devotional worship. So too, the celebration of religious identity in the new covenant demands response in worship, proclamation, and the full expression of the new life that one has in Christ.  

This analogy resists the notion that it is possible to participate in the Lord’s Supper passively. Also, David Pearcy evaluates that the initiative of the Lord’s Supper lies in the grace of God; the Western Church dilutes the character of God’s grace. He says,

The New Testament, however, always speaks of baptism as God’s work; and in the Eucharist, too, it is God who is active—he is the sole subject. The Western Church has placed such great stress on being worthy before receiving communion that the idea of the sacrament as a free gift has become clouded and occasionally lost.

Tim Gallant also powerfully supports this view. “The primary element in both the Lord’s Supper and in baptism is the objective promise of God. We simply may not say that baptism is about promise, and the Supper about demand.

In short, in the Lord’s Supper and Baptism, we can know that both came from God’s initiative institution, and God’s covenantal promise is first. In fact, not only baptism, but also the Lord’s Supper is related to the covenant promise. In the New Testament, we can see that Jesus Christ built a new covenant by his blood. In this respect, Van Genderen says, “Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are signs and seals of the

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122 See Koopmans, *Memorializing Covenant Identity: A Study of Old Testament Memorial and Monuments*, 191. Also Tim Gallant says, “Since both sacraments are ordered by an imperative, there is an active element in both in any case.” See Tim Gallant, 137.


124 Tim Gallant, 138.

125 Reformers admit to the position and privilege of infants in the Old Testament. See L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 632. Also, they emphasized that infants are people of God’s covenant. See Berkhof, 638.
We should, then, observe the Lord’s Supper in regard to covenant and its membership because covenant in the Bible has the attribute of representative which contains its members and all family. In this respect, Lewis Smedes says, “Union with Christ through the sacrament is not an individual piety, but a communal reality.” Also, the Bad Segeberg Report emphasizes, “If children are incorporated into the body of Christ through baptism, then they belong to the whole body of Christ. As there is no partial belonging to the body of Christ, children must also have a part in the Eucharist.” K. Mathison insists that children should get the benefit of covenantal blessing as the child in the Old Testament:

Children of believers, it is argued, were included under the terms of the old covenant (cf. Deut. 29:9-13). Since the new covenant is more inclusive and since there is no clear biblical statement to the effect that children are no longer included in the covenant, the conclusion that should be drawn is that children of believers continue to be included in the covenant of grace.

Mathison draws specifically on the Westminster Confession, arguing that the visible church “consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion and of their children (25.2); and the aim of the institution of sacraments is to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world” (27.1).

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129 See Mathison, *Given for You*, 319. Also see *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q. 166; *Heidelberg Catechism*, Q. 74; *Canons of the Synod of Dort*, 1:17. In fact, Reformers insist that children are members who belong to the church community. See e.g., Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 640, John Murray, *Christian Baptism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962), 70-71. Tim Gallant says, “The covenant always has content. It promises life and salvation, so much so that our covenant little ones are presented as those who typify the kingdom. And the tight link between covenant and salvation is especially so in connection with the new covenant. Moreover, it is interesting that it is not baptism, but the Lord’s Supper that is explicitly indentified as a covenant rite in the New Testament.” See Tim Gallant, 136.
He concludes, then, that the ban of an infant’s participation in the Lord’s Supper has serious problems:

Proponents of paedocommunion argue that if the church consists of believers and their children, and if one of the purposes of the sacraments is to put a visible difference between the Church and the world, then, believers and their children should both be visibly differentiated from the world by receiving these sacraments.130

Likewise, Frederick Reisz points out the most important factor in the Lord’s Supper by saying, “not on the elements as such, the edification of an individual, nor the discernment by the individual concerning the meaning of the elements...What is theologically crucial is the unity of the body.” Reisz goes on to say, “All the baptized must be what they are—the body of Christ.”131 That is to say, a child’s participation in the Lord’s Supper shows that he or she is fully accepted as a person of God, and it also will give great benefit to the covenant child and his or her family. In addition to this, Gerard Austin says, “Just as in a natural family infants are fed lovingly right from the beginning, so in the church this care should be carried out through the entire process of growth, with the child moving progressively into a deeper and deeper understanding of just what is taking place when it is fed at the Lord’s Table.”132

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130 See Mathison, Given for You, 319.

131 H. Frederick Reisz, Jr. “Infant Communion: A Matter of Christian Unity.” Word and World 8 (Winter 1988): 63. Also see Tim Gallant, 165, Westminster Larger Catechism 177, Heidelberg Catechism Lord’s Day 30 Q. 80. Gallant also concedes, “When the table of the Lord is provided to covenant children, it confirms the corporate solidarity between them and the rest of the body” (66). However, Velema says as follows: “This is a too-idealistic representation of the church, which in turn is related to the view that baptism brings about or presumes regeneration.” See J. Van Genderen & W.H. Velema, Concise Reformed Dogmatics, translated by Gerrit Bilkes and ed. by M. van der Maas (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, c2008), 814.

According to this perspective, if a child is a real member of the family, he or she could participate at the family table. Also, by participating at the table, a child comes to understand community more deeply. However, Herman Bavinck maintains that prohibiting the participation of infants does not mean to eradicate the benefit of covenantal grace.\footnote{Herman Bavinck, \textit{Reformed Dogmatics}, vol. IV, 584.} Regarding this, Tim Gallant says,

> We can grant that, in a sense, withholding the Supper does not automatically and necessarily cause loss, because it is the sacrament, rather than the reality itself. Yet the sacraments are means of grace, and not empty signs. They are channels of divine activity. We should not be so ready to separate the sacrament from the reality.\footnote{Tim Gallant, 161.}

Gallant goes on to argue,

> The notion that infants and small children can derive no benefits from the sacrament is quite directly contradicted by scripture. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, Paul argues that Israel in the wilderness ate and drank spiritual food and drink. In fact, he says, they drank from the rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Now it is no secret that there were small children that ate the manna and drank from the Rock. Paul is saying this was not mere physical eating: this was a communication of Christ, and the apostle stresses that all Israel partook (thus including children).\footnote{Tim Gallant, 164. See Smedes, \textit{Union}, 181.}

The mention of Gallant is necessary to study more deeply the relationship between the signs and reality in the sacraments. However, it is certain, as Gallant and Smedes say, that 1 Corinthians 10 shows all Israelites, including children, profit from physical and spiritual blessings in the wilderness.

In conclusion, the Lord’s Supper and Baptism have common features in that both are sacraments of the Church and methods of grace; however, there exist differences based on their attributes and institutional aim. It is evident that Reformers did not apply
the criteria used in infant baptism to the infant communion consistently.\textsuperscript{136} If we concede that the Lord’s Supper and Baptism are based on the covenant of God and that covenant embraces promise and contents, but then deprive our children of participating in the Lord’s Supper, isn’t it cutting off their opportunity to receive the covenant blessing?

Objectivity or Subjectivity

Do the sacraments have grace in themselves? Or, is it differentiated according to a person’s status of faith? Traditionally, the Roman Catholics insist on \textit{ex opere operato}, however, the Reformers emphasize the importance of a person’s confession and faith.

The reason we should study objectivity and subjectivity in the Lord’s Supper is as follows: If the Lord’s Supper itself has grace, it can be concluded that children should participate in the Lord’s Supper to receive grace, otherwise, if the Lord’s Supper’s grace depends on the situation of receivers, children would be better not to participate in it in that they are not fully mature in the realm of emotions, intelligence, and spiritually. Therefore, it is important to study the essence of the Eucharist’s grace while researching debates between Roman Catholic and Reformed theology on subjectivity and objectivity.

Thomas Aquinas says, “We must need to say that in some way the sacraments of the New Law cause grace.”\textsuperscript{137} In this context, traditionally, the Roman Catholics

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{136} At last, some people say if we deny infant communion, it will be showing the imperfection of infant baptism. Paul Jewett says, “But to do this is to grip the sword of circumcision—with which they have sought to vanquish the threat of believer baptism—by the point” See Paul K. Jewett, \textit{Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 205. K. A. Mathison points out, “According to Beckwith’s opinion, the sacrament of baptism is not ‘completed’ until the infant grows to the age at which he can repent and believe.” K.A. Mathison, \textit{Given for You}, 321: cf. Beckwith, 130. He emphasizes, “The idea of a two-stage baptism to be completed at a later date by the act of professing one’s faith seems to be nothing more than another version of the sacrament of confirmation.”
\end{itemize}
emphasize that sacraments are *ex opere operato*. Ballarmine defines the theory as follows: “The sacraments convey grace by the virtue of the sacramental action itself instituted by God for this end and not through the merit of either the agent or the receiver.”\(^{138}\) The Catholic Church taught that the Lord’s Supper was not damaged by human deficiency.\(^{139}\) Also, the Lord’s Supper has *Opus Operatum* after the priest says the word of institution. After that, according to the Council of Trent, Catholics insist, “It should be taught that it is a sensible object which possesses, by divine institution, the power not only of signifying, but also of accomplishing holiness and righteousness.”\(^{140}\) Regarding this, Bavinck explains in more detail: “Since in the view of Rome the visible sign has absorbed the visible grace, the sacrament works ‘by the act performed’ (*ex opere operato*) without requiring the recipient anything more or different than not posing any obstacle to its operation, a purely negative requirement.”\(^{141}\)

Luther insists that the efficacy of the Lord’s Supper is located in the faith of participants.\(^{142}\) Based on Augustine’s opinion, he says, “Let the Word be joined to the element, and it becomes a sacrament.”\(^{143}\) However, after that, he refuted the *opus* itself because he considered that they emphasized the deeds of humans instead of God’s


\(^{140}\) Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (Rizal, Philippines: Sinag-Tala, 1974), 146. The Council of Trent damned people who do not believe the sacrament automatically produces grace.

\(^{141}\) See The Council of Trent, sess. VII, can. 6-8 in Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. IV, 484.


grace.\textsuperscript{144} Therefore, Luther, in understanding the Lord’s Supper, emphasized God’s promise and grace. That is to say, according to Luther, the Lord’s Supper is not a deed of the priests, nor a deed of the participants; the Lord’s Supper is originally a gift of God.

Consequently, Luther permitted what he called “eating by the impious” \textit{(manducatio impiorum)} and “eating by the unworthy” \textit{(manducatio indignorum)}.\textsuperscript{145} However, at the same time, Luther says, “But he who does not believe has it not, because he allows it to be offered to him in vain and refuses to enjoy this gracious blessing.”\textsuperscript{146}

We need to understand the \textit{sitz im leben} of Luther. According to Paul Althaus, Luther’s \textit{manducation indignorum} applied to the people who belong to the church. That is to say, Luther’s intention was to allow the Eucharist for the people who knew the Eucharist, but did not possess firm faith, and to not allow the Eucharist for the people who do not belong to the church and do not know at all about faith or the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{147}

John Calvin strongly criticized the Roman Catholic’s \textit{ex opere operato}.\textsuperscript{148} He says, “The thing, therefore, which was frequently done, under the tyranny of the Pope, was not free from great profanation of the mystery, for they deemed it sufficient if the priest

\textsuperscript{144} See P. Althaus, \textit{The Theology of Martin Luther}, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 392. Paul Althaus says, “Luther’s primary concern is always that which he maintained against Rome: The sacrament is really to be understood as God’s gift. As a gift it is indeed present for faith, but it also exists independently of and prior to faith. Human activity adds nothing to it.”

\textsuperscript{145} Luther’s idea of consubstantiation lies in the background of this opinion.

\textsuperscript{146} See Martin Luther, \textit{Luther’s Large Catechism}, 145.

\textsuperscript{147} See Paul Althaus, \textit{Die Christliche Warheit: Lehrbuch Der Dogmatik} (Gutersloh : C. Bertelsmann, 1952), 590.

muttered the formula of consecration, while the people, without understanding looked stupidly on.”149

Instead of automatically receiving grace, Calvin emphasizes the relation between faith and sacrament, and he holds that the sacrament gives benefits to the person who receives it with real faith; however, its efficaciousness does not depend on the status of person or the person’s choice. The sacraments are not so useful for a wicked and godless man.150 Berkouwer says, ‘misuse of the Supper entails perdition, and that the sacrament changes into harmful poison for the unbeliever (Inst., 1536 ed.). That does not mean that for Calvin the signs themselves become poisonous.”151

Bavinck explains the opinion of the Reformation as follows: “Scripture clearly teaches that the sacraments are signs and seals of the covenant of grace, that they are meant for believers and therefore always presuppose faith.”152 Also, the Reformation interpreted that Augustine did not speak about the essential transformation of material. For example, Augustine said, “The word comes to the elements and it becomes sacrament itself also, as it were, a visible word.”153 Here he uses the word ‘becomes.’ According to

149 Institutes, 4.14.4.


the interpretation of R. Seeberg, it does not mean essential transformation of bread and wine, but rather, the subjective understanding of believers.\footnote{Reinhold Seeberg, \textit{Text Book of the History of Doctrines} Vol. 1, (Philadelphia, Pa., Lutheran publication society), 322.} On this point, Calvin says, “The bond of that connection, therefore, is the Spirit of Christ, who unites us to him and is a kind of channel by which everything that Christ has and is, is derived to us.”\footnote{Institutes, 4, 17, 12.} That is to say, the most important factor of the Eucharist is not the matter of materials, but the work of the Holy Spirit.\footnote{Regarding the texts which emphasize the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit, “All the energy of operation belongs to the Spirit, and the sacraments are mere instruments which without his agency are vain and useless, but with it, are fraught with surprising efficacy” (Institutes, 4,14,9); “The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments is not conferred by any power in them; neither does the efficacy of sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that does administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit.” (Westminster Confession 27.3); “The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, but only by the working of the Holy Spirit” (Westminster Larger Catechism 161).} According to Calvin, material itself does not contain grace, but by the work of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Jesus Christ, the sacraments give grace to the people. In this respect, the objectivity of the sacraments can be maintained.\footnote{We need to heed this statement. “It is faith that determines whether the sacrament is efficacious for grace or judgment, but faith does not determine whether the Lord will be present.” See Christian Reformed Church in North America, “Clarification of Public Profession of Faith for Covenant Children, Report B,” in \textit{Agenda for Synod 1995} (Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Church in North America, 1995), 288.} Also, the sacraments have objectivity in that the sacraments are not harmed by people. Calvin says, “Man’s unworthiness does not rob the sacraments of their significance. Baptism remains the bath of regeneration even though the whole world was faithless; the Lord’s Supper remains the distribution of Christ’s body and blood, even though there was not the slightest sparkle of belief left.”\footnote{See John Calvin, \textit{Commentary on Ezekiel} 20:20.} Similarly, Herman Bavinck says, “Reformers asserted that, though Christ is in fact objectively, truly, and seriously offered to all
participants in the sacrament, as he is in the Word to all who hear it, still, subjectively, a working of the Holy Spirit is needed for them to enjoy the true power of the sacrament.”\textsuperscript{159}

Is it valid, then, to give communion to infants and children? When considering the objectivity of the sacraments, we can cautiously say that the participation of covenant children will not damage the sacraments. However, in regards to the subjectivity of the sacraments, we cannot know how much they will benefit from communion. Merely, in that there is a union with the Holy Spirit, and presence of Jesus Christ, the participation of covenant children with their parents can have the significance of actual unity in Christ. At this point, infant communion or child communion is not based on the confession of children, but on the parent’s confession that they will help the covenant children grow rightly in the presence of God.\textsuperscript{160}

\textit{God’s Grace or Believer’s Faith?}

In the previous pages, we saw that the sacrament is efficacious when it is connected to God’s Word and its main aim. Also, we noticed that this sacrament has objective grace in that it is not harmed by human errors. At the same time, we confirmed


\textsuperscript{160} Berkouwer says, “The efficacy of the sacraments has often been misinterpreted, either by making them objective, or by making them dependent upon the subject. The mystery of the sacrament can be understood, however, only if both of these concepts are rejected. For God’s acting differs from the objectivity of things in this world, and faith is something other than a subjective disposition which can be investigated as to its presence or absence. That is why Calvin can write that, apart from faith, the sacrament is nothing but a certain ruin for the church. That is not subjectivizing of the sacrament, but a reference to the mystery of the sacrament, which can be understood only in the way of belief, and which in that way displays its full power. Those who expect more from the efficacy of the sacrament do not understand that thus they do not esteem the sacrament more highly, nor do they really strive after more reality, for this striving must alienate them from the one reality that the sacraments are designed to secure: the reality of salvation.” See G. C. Berkouwer, \textit{The Sacraments}, 89.
the subjectivity of the sacrament in that it requires faithful confession of participants.

People can then naturally cast one more question: Is God’s grace conditional? If grace is given to us according to our status of spirituality, how can it be unconditional? As Torrance says, “we need to understand the relationship between the ‘nature of the gospel of grace’ and faith of people.”161 In other words, by studying the doctrine of grace, we can get a helpful clue in studying the possibility of infant communion.

Quoting Michael Polanyi, Torrance says, “Our belonging to Christ is not conditional on our believing and repenting...We believe that we belong...Faith is our response to the gospel, our acknowledgement that we are not our own but are bought at a price and bought long before we were born.”162 He emphasizes that faith is God’s gracious gift, and belonging to God is an important factor in having faith. He also emphasizes that God called us not due to our worth, but by His grace. He says,

God’s covenant love (held out in baptism and the Lord’s Supper) is unconditioned by any considerations of worth or merit or good works—even by faith and repentance. This was the Reformation insight in the interpretation of *sola gratia* and the reinterpretation of the sacraments.163

In fact, the Reformed tradition emphasizes repentance and to check one’s worth before participating in the Lord’s Supper, according to 1 Corinthians 11:29. In this respect, they wonder over the possibility of infants’ and young children’s participation in the Eucharist. However, while mentioning the concept of Calvin’s evangelical repentance, Torrance says,

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162 Ibid.

163 Ibid., 201.
On this New Testament and Reformed understanding, faith and repentance are not conditions of grace, but our response to grace. The fact that Christ died to take away our sins and restore us to communion with God, means that we are summoned unconditionally to renounce those sins for which Christ died, and to seek that communion for which we were reconciled.\textsuperscript{164}

Torrance emphasizes that God’s unconditional grace is very important in our understanding of baptism and the Eucharist. His opinion has great value in helping us consider the aspect of grace in the arguments on infant communion. However, his emphasis also has the possible danger of turning God’s grace into cheap grace.\textsuperscript{165} This is because, even though salvation and faith is God’s gracious gift, it is natural that the people who receive salvation give the proper confession of faith. Though people cannot know whether others receive God’s salvation or not, even so, by professing their faith, people come to know how great our received grace is and confirm that our community is a real faith based community. Even though we acknowledge the priority of God’s grace, we should consider that grace requires the people’s profession of faith, which depends upon the work of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{166} However, Torrance points out that the excessive requirement of participation in communion would deny the essence of God’s grace and, even worse, would present the possibility of the “danger of legalism.” Therefore, Torrance criticizes the Western Church’s propensity about communion. “So our Highland tradition can in practice turn the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper into something like the

\textsuperscript{164} James B. Torrance, “Some Theological Grounds for Admitting Children to the Lord’s Table,” 201.


sacrament of penance, by demanding evidences of grace as a condition for acceptance at the Table.”

However, Dutch Theologian, Kamphuis, argues the relationship between the sacraments and God’s grace with the help of the concept of covenant. He says,

He does not treat us as senseless stock and blocks (Cannos of Dort, III/IV, 16), but as people with full responsibility. That is why the Bible is filled with public professions of faith. Many times did Israel profess its faith, on crucial moments in history (Ex. 24, 3; Joshua 24, 16-18; 21 24; Neh. 10; etc.). The Lord’s Supper is first and foremost an activity on God’s part. But our God does not remain the only One in the history of the covenant. In the Lord’s Supper His people give their response.

Kamphuis emphasizes our response to God, even though the Lord’s Supper is given by God’s self-giving grace. How, then, can we reveal the relationship between our faith and God’s grace? John Murray’s study on “Definitive Sanctification” and “Justification” offers insight into the relationship between Baptism and the Eucharist. Murray says,

It is biblical to apply the term ‘sanctification’ to this process of transformation and conformation. But it is a fact too frequently overlooked that in the New Testament the most characteristic terms used with reference to sanctification are used not of a process but of a once-for-all definitive act.

While dealing with the theme of sanctification, he emphasizes that sanctification contains not only process, but also definitive transition of the believer. The concept of definitive

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167 Torrance, 202. Also see David Pearcy, “Infant Communion. Part III: Reasons for its Restoration,” Currents in Theology and Mission 8 no. 3 (June 1981): 162. David Pearcy says “The New Testament, however, always speaks of baptism as God’s work; and in the Eucharist, too, it is God who is active—he is the sole subject. The Western Church has placed such great stress on being worthy before receiving communion that the idea of the sacrament as a free gift has become clouded and occasionally lost.”


169 Ibid., 6.

sanctification reveals that by receiving justification, God’s grace works in us and our status definitely transformed from sin. Though we cannot permit the concept of baptismal regeneration, however, doesn’t God’s grace and fellowship begin with the baptized child who belongs to the covenant family upon making profession of faith? Also, doesn’t a baptized child need God’s continuous grace and nursing?

A CRC Report says the following: “Children need this means of grace. If the sacraments are a means to strengthen faith, who but children need that strengthening most. Children are most in need of the ‘visual’ to remind them of what Christ has done for them.”\(^{171}\)

The Lord’s Supper is God’s gift which shows His grace. However, it also requires our faithful profession and the discerning of the Spirit. The reason why Reformers emphasized the confession was not from disregarding the character of God’s grace, but from enthusiasm and by pursuing the purity of Church. Wallace says, “Eating the bread cannot ensure a generating faith.”\(^{172}\) In this sense, we cannot permit the adult’s participation without confession and baptism. However, we need to reconsider the participation of baptized children while considering the character of God’s grace. God’s grace has been given to the baptized child who belongs to the covenant family. Even though we cannot know whether a child has faith or not, we believe and anticipate God’s sovereign grace for that child. If we acknowledge the objective character of sacrament, children cannot taint or deteriorate the value of the Eucharist. Rather, a child’s

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\(^{171}\) Christian Reformed Church in North America, *Acts of Synod 84, Overtures* (Grand Rapids: Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church), 421

participation in the Lord’s Supper can be a beautiful moment for the covenant family in the presence of God. Infant communion will be a symbolic profession of the covenant family that they will feed and rear God’s gracious child with God’s Word and faith.

The Presence of Jesus Christ in the Lord’s Supper

Is Jesus Christ present in the Lord’s Supper? If He is, by what method does He make His presence? Is He present physically or spiritually?

Traditionally, the argument over the Lord’s Supper has focused on the method of Jesus’ presence. There were many interpretations about the phrase, “This is my body” among Zwingli, Calvin, Luther, and Roman Catholics.173 In this chapter, I will first research several opinions of Christ’s presence and substance in the Lord’s Supper. This will, evidently, raise the question: What is the relationship between infant communion and the presence of Jesus Christ? If, as is the opinion of Lutherans and Roman Catholics, we emphasize that Jesus Christ is present in the material, it would conclude that infants can receive communion.174 On the other hand, among the Reformers, because there is a difference of opinion among Zwingli, Bullinger, and Calvin, the study on the possibility of infant communion will require more delicate research.175 While researching these theologians’ opinions, I will show how we can understand the presence of Jesus Christ.


174 Of course they also emphasize “belief” of the participants at the same time.

Then I will inspect the validity of the opinion: If Jesus Christ is present in the Lord’s Supper by the power of the Holy Spirit, would it be beneficial for a covenant child to participate in the presence of the Triune God, even though people cannot understand how God works in child’s mind?

The Roman Catholics insist on transubstantiation. However, we cannot receive it. This is because, as Pöhlmann points out, 1 Corinthians 10:16 does not reveal the transformation of the substance of bread and wine, but represents union with them. On the other hand, Martin Luther emphasized consubstantiation. He interprets literally Jesus’ institution words, “This is my body.” However, we cannot concede Luther’s opinion. Calvin criticized Luther’s opinion as Roman Catholic and scholastic.

Pannenberg says that the deficiency of understanding metaphors and symbols produces transubstantiation and consubstantiation. He says:

This could happen because it was forgotten that the word over the bread in its putative Aramic original form (guph) did not refer to the body of Jesus in its material quality as such, but to Jesus himself, and that the word over the cup in the form transmitted by Paul points to the new covenant founded by the death of

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177 See Heiko A. Oberman, *Die Kirche im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Neukirche: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 151. Luther did not say that substance of material changes. Regarding Luther’s Eucharistic doctrine, see Hermann Sasse, *This is My Body: Luther’s Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959).

178 WA 23, 71, 29-35.

Jesus and not directly to the drinking of the blood of Jesus, a procedure that would have been unacceptable to Jews.\textsuperscript{180}

We see that the perspective of Catholics and Lutherans located in the mystic union with Jesus Christ overemphasizes substance. However, what about the opinions of the Reformed tradition?

Zwingli proposed a symbolic or representational approach to the Lord’s Supper.\textsuperscript{181} His main points are, according to the exegesis of John 6:63, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.” In other words, it is meaningless to eat Jesus’ body in regards to the physical; also, because Jesus Christ sits at the right side of God, He cannot be in two places with one body.\textsuperscript{182} So, he emphasizes that spiritual eating repudiates the omnipresence of Jesus’ human nature.\textsuperscript{183} Van Dyk says that Zwingli’s sacramental theology necessarily comes to be a “separation of sign and reality.”\textsuperscript{184} Zwingli’s emphasis states, “The sovereignty and freedom of God is not bound to the sacramental elements.”\textsuperscript{185} Therefore, he tried to explain how Jesus is actively present in Spirit.\textsuperscript{186}

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185 Ibid. However, it is hard to consider Zwingli’s thought as mere memorialism. Van Dyk says, “For Zwingli, the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper is a representational memorial by which the community publicly gives thanksgiving for the saving death of Christ, confesses faith in Christ, and pledges obedience and service to Christ.” See Leanne Van Dyk, “The Reformed View” in \textit{The Lord’s Supper}, 71.

186 Ibid., 70. Zwingli said, “Inasmuch as he is man, Christ is not to be expected in the world with a natural, essential and corporal presence, but only with spiritual and sacramental.” See Zwingi, “An Exposition of the Faith,” in G. W. Bromiley, \textit{Zwingli and Bullinger}, 257.
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Let us now look at the ideas of another Reformer, Henry Bullinger. Van Dyk appraises the trait of Bullinger’s opinion as “parallelism.” He says, “For Bullinger, like Zwingli, the sacramental signs are not connected to the things signified. The sign is a sign, not an instrument or channel of grace.” In addition to this, he says, “The eating of sacramental elements does not in itself confer grace, but the eating of the sacramental elements parallels the analogous divine action. For Bullinger, the bread and wine are a testimony to divine grace, not an instrument of divine grace.”

Calvin emphasizes the Lord’s Supper as an instrument of God’s grace. He says, “The sacraments of the Lord should not and cannot be at all separated from their reality and substance.” He does not deny the body of Christ present in the Lord’s Supper. However, to him, it is important how Jesus is present in the Eucharist. He answers that it is possible by the work of Holy Spirit. Calvin states,

It seems an incredible thing that the flesh of Christ, while at such a distance from us in respect of place, should be food to us, let us remember how far the secret virtue of the Holy Spirit surpasses all our conceptions, and how foolish it is to wish to measure its immensity by our feeble capacity. Therefore, what our mind does not comprehend let faith conceive, viz., that the Spirit truly unites things separated by space.

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187 See L. Van Dyk, “The Reformed View,” 72. He says, “Like Zwingli, Bullinger understood the sacrament as symbolic and representational. However, like Calvin, Bullinger affirmed the active role of Jesus Christ in self-giving grace at the Table.”

188 Ibid., 73.

189 L. Van Dyk, 74. Regarding the difference between Calvin’s and Bullinger’s opinion, see Rorem, Calvin and Bullinger, 54-55.


192 Institutes, 4.17.10.
However, Calvin did not say that Jesus Christ is present in the dimension of space. That is to say, according to him, Christ is among us by His Spirit.\footnote{Institutes, 4.17.12. Also see Institutes, 4.17.31.} But, at the same time, Calvin emphasizes the real presence of Christ. He says,

Hence the bread is Christ’s body, because it assuredly testifies, that the body which it represents is held forth to us, or because the Lord, by holding out to us that symbol, gives us at the same time his own body . . . the reality is here conjoined with the sign; or, in other words, that we do not less truly become participants in Christ’s body in respect of spiritual efficacy, than we partake of the bread.\footnote{See Calvin, Commentary 20, 378. Mathison says, “The great Calvin scholar Henry Beveridge claims that Calvin distinctly asserts the true presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper.” See “Translator’s Preface,” in Selected Works of John Calvin, ed. Beveridge and Bonnet, 2:xx. in K.A. Mathison, Given for You (Phillipsburg: P& R. Publishing, 2002), 25.} In his Sacred Supper he bids me take, eat, and drink his body and blood under the symbols of bread and wine. I do not doubt that he himself truly presents them, and that I receive them.\footnote{Institutes, 4.17.32.}

However, we should be cautious about Calvin’s understanding of real presence. While quoting Joseph Tylenda’s opinion, Mathison says, “Joseph Tylenda observes that Calvin does not use the term \textit{adesse}, ‘because this word indicates a real, physical presence.’”\footnote{Tylenda, “Ecumenical Intention,” 31-32 in K.A. Mathison, 23.} “Instead, the term that Calvin uses most frequently is \textit{exhibere}, a word that ‘presupposes a presence and manifests it.’”\footnote{See Tylenda, 31 in K.A. Mathison, 23.} As to why Calvin opposed local presence, Paul Rorem says it was due to “the danger of superstitious idolatry of the bread, a correct and Catholic Christology of Christ’s human and divine natures, the proper and essential role of the Holy Spirit, and the very definition of a sacrament.”\footnote{See Paul E. Rorem, “The Consensus Tigurinus: Did Calvin Compromise?” in \textit{Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor: Calvin as Confessor of Holy Scripture}, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 74.}
So then, how can we unite with Jesus who is present spiritually? Calvin emphasizes union with Jesus Christ in the Lord’s Supper. He says, “Christ attests himself to be the life-giving bread, upon which our souls feed unto true and blessed immortality (John 6:51).”\textsuperscript{199} Calvin explains we have union with Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{200} According to him, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the grace of Jesus Christ is present to us.\textsuperscript{201}

Wallace further explains this when he says, “Communion with the body of Christ is effected through the descent of the Holy Spirit, by whom our souls are lifted up to heaven there to partake of the life transfused into us from the flesh of Christ.”\textsuperscript{202}

Therefore, by participating in the Lord’s Supper, we are confirmed in and increase our faith. Calvin says,

Wherefore, with regard to the increase and confirmation of faith, I would remind the reader, that in assigning this office to the sacraments, it is not as if I thought that there is a kind of secret efficacy perpetually inherent in them, by which they can of themselves promote or strengthen faith, but because our Lord has instituted them for the express purpose of helping to establish and increase our faith.\textsuperscript{203}

\textsuperscript{199} See \textit{Institutes}, 4. 17. 1.

\textsuperscript{200} Calvin emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in the Lord’s Supper. See \textit{Institutes}, 4. 14. 10. He says, “the Spirit also confirms our faith when by engraving that assurance on our minds, he renders it effectual.” See also 4.17.2; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.18; 4.17.31.

\textsuperscript{201} Calvin said that Christ’s coming down to us was in order to nourish us in the Supper. He says, “in order that he may be present with us, he does not change his place, but communicates to us from heaven the virtue of his flesh, as though it were present.” See Calvin, Comm. XX, 382. Calvin also says, “We say that Christ descends to us, as well by the external symbol as by his Spirit, that he may truly quicken our souls by the substance of his flesh and blood.” See \textit{Institutes}, 4. 17. 24.

\textsuperscript{202} See Wallace, 206.

\textsuperscript{203} \textit{Institutes}, 4. 14. 9.
Consequently, Wendel notes, “While rejecting the material presence of the body of Christ in the bread, he (Calvin) proclaims that the whole of Christ is truly present, in his humanity and his divinity.”

Wallace also epitomizes Calvin’s opinion as follows:

The presence of the body of Christ in the Supper, though it may be called a real presence and a descent of Christ by the Spirit, is nevertheless also a ‘celestial mode of presence’ and leads to no localization of the body of Christ on earth, no inclusion of it in the elements, no attachment of it to the elements.

We have researched the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformer’s opinions of the presence of Jesus Christ and substance in the Lord’s Supper. Historically, arguments over the Lord’s Supper were concentrated on the elements; the aspect of fellowship with a Triune God in Christ did not stand in the center. Regardless of various opinions on the Lord’s Supper, the most important thing is that Christ is present.

Above all, we need to notice John Calvin’s opinion. We can state his opinion as follows: by the work of the Holy Spirit, we have union with Jesus Christ and we receive the grace of the Eucharist. His opinion, however, is not as spiritual or symbolic as Zwingli’s, and is not parallel with Bullinger’s. It does not mean that Jesus was present in the material as Roman Catholics and Lutherans say. The most important factor of Calvin’s opinion is the role of the Holy Spirit. By the work of the Holy Spirit, we were

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206 Käsemann says, “it is not just by a something, not even by the sacramental act of eating and drinking, but only by the self-manifesting and present Christ himself that we can be made partakers in the death of Jesus and in the new diathetheke grounded upon it. But while it is the corporeality of the risen one which makes it possible for him to give himself to us in the sacrament, the real content of this sacramental self-giving of Christ is invariably described by Paul as the imparting of the pneuma” See Ernst Käsemann, “The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper,” *Essays on New Testament Themes*. Trans W. J. Montague (London: SCM Press, 1964), 33.

207 W. Joest, *Dogmatik II*, 587.
raised and Jesus Christ’s grace poured out on us. On the basis of this analysis, the following two summary statements offer a balanced way forward. First, by seeing several opinions, we should consider that the material itself in the Lord’s Supper does not automatically give grace and benefit to the people. So, material itself does not guarantee grace for infants and children. Second, according to Calvin, we have union with Jesus Christ by faith which was given by the Holy Spirit. So then, based on this opinion, are there any possibilities for a child to have faith by the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit? Calvin indeed shows the possibility of a child’s faith in his Institutes. Of course, even though we cannot ensure the possibility of an infant’s faith, it would be possible in the case of a young child. We acknowledge that the Lord’s Supper is not for regeneration, but for the nurturing and confirming of people’s faith. If so, is there any possibility that infant’s or child’s participation in communion would give the effect of the fortifying of faith to the child that has already received the seed of faith?

_Tension between Remembrance and Eschatology_

What is the essence of the Lord’s Supper? Which is the more important factor between the remembrance of Jesus’ sacrificial death and eschatology in the Lord’s Supper? Does the phrase, “remembrance of me” mean just a memorial service or does it have a deeper meaning? To inspect the validity of infant communion, we should consider the attributes of “Remembrance” and “Eschatology” in the Lord’s Supper. If we focus on the memory, God’s past works and the participants’ comprehensive ability

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208 _Institutes_, 4.16.20.

209 See J. Behm, “anamnhesij” in TDNT I, 349. The Lord’s Supper is not a farewell meal, but a meal of communion. Therefore remembrance of Christ (anamnhesij, I Cor. 11:24, 25; Lk. 22:19) cannot be just a memorial service which remembers Christ of the past.
would be important, but it would produce a negative conclusion, not permitting a child’s participation in the Lord’s Supper. However, if we focus on eschatology, a reminder of the image of the Messianic Banquet, it would give a theological basis for the participation of infants and children in the Lord’s Supper. The former was supported by the Reformed tradition, and the latter was emphasized by modern German theologians. Geoffrey Wainwright’s book, and the Lima Document support the importance of eschatology in the Lord’s Supper.210 Traditionally, Christianity has understood the Lord’s Supper as an act of recall or commemoration.211 By commemoration, the difference of past and present, and here and there, are overcome. However, the remembrance of Christ cannot merely be a commemorative ceremony of Jesus’ past deeds.212

Koopmans suggests that the term “remembrance” in the New Testament should be understood with the help of usage in the Old Testament. He says, “Christ designated the Lord’s Supper as a memorial until He returns. Christ coined neither the term “memorial” nor the practice of using memorials to reflect and preserve one’s religious identity; for the background of the term and the practice alike, one must turn to the Old Testament.”213 According to the opinion of Koopmans, John Suk says, “Old Testament memorials (for example, Ex 12:14 and Jos 4:7) were intended, at least in part, to serve as


211 Zwingli developed this theme in his writings. See Ulich Zwingli, Zwingli and Bullinger, ed. G.W. Bromiley (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1953), 176-244.

212 The Roman Catholic mass became a memorial service while emphasizing Christ’s crucifixion, rather than the presence of God during the Lord’s Supper. Transubstantiation makes an error to separate presence of Christ from the faith of participants. See E. Schlink, Ökumenische Dogmatik (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 499-509.

occasions for the instructions of the covenant people.”

In other words, the usage of memorials in the Old Testament meant not just intelligence ability, but opportunity for education and experience as it did in the past. As Koopmans concludes, “As the fathers tell the accounts of the redemptive acts performed by their covenant LORD, the children experience themselves to be part of that people of God.” So then, the emphasis of remembrance in the Bible is in making past events present by experiencing it in the present. That is to say, remembering (anamnhesi) connects the past and present.

Secondly, we need to check the eschatological aspect of the Lord’s Supper. Pannenberg insists that the debate of origin of the Lord’s Supper and its theology needs to contain not only its origin from Jesus’ last supper, but also the life of the living Christ and his unity with the disciples, tax collectors and sinners. Also, Moltmann, while mentioning various texts, for example, Isaiah 25:6-8, Matthew 8:11, Luke 14:14, Luke 15:2, and Mark 14:25, emphasizes that many texts support the importance of an eschatological aspect in the Lord’s Supper. According to him, through the four Gospels

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215 See Koopmans, 57.


217 Frank Senn says, “Geoffrey Wainwright, in Eucharist and Eschatology (Oxford, 1971, 1981), developed a theology of the Eucharist in terms of the images of the messianic feast, the advent of Christ, and the first-fruit of the kingdom of God. Since the Eucharist has the form of a meal, it belongs to that universally known realm of spoken and acted images which describes and embodies the most intimate form of relation between God and humanity in the acts of eating and drinking.” See Frank C. Senn, “Issues in Infant Communion” Dialog 22, No. 3. (Summer 1983): 226.


especially, the image of the Messianic banquet is central to the theology of the Lord’s Supper. According to Pannenberg and Moltmann, the Lord’s Supper of Jesus Christ was not a mere Passover meal, but a foretaste of the upcoming Messianic Banquet, and deeply connected with Jesus’ other meals with the people. Also, Moltmann insists on the importance of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. He says, “It is not the historical remembrance as such which provides the foundation for the Lord’s Supper, but the crucified one in the Spirit of the resurrection.”

Jesus Christ who gave Himself as a sacrificial lamb brought forth the kingdom of God by the resurrection. Therefore, the Lord’s Supper makes Jesus Christ, who was dead on the cross and resurrected, present. Jesus Christ is present in the power of His resurrection. Also, He promised that He will come again. The kingdom of God rushes into the present in the dimension of eschatology. Therefore the Lord’s Supper has a duplicated structure. That is to say, it commemorates the past salvific work of Jesus Christ, and anticipates the revisiting of Jesus Christ who conquered the power of death. In the early church, the Lord’s Supper anticipates Jesus’ second coming in the prayer of Marana Tha. Especially, Marana Tha in Didache 10:6 is closely related with the Lord’s Supper. Therefore, the Lord’s Supper is an eschatological symbol of God’s universal

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220 Ibid., 250. I cannot fully agree with their opinion because the Bible says that Jesus commanded the Lord’s Supper in a special context, and that Passover was an important background of its institution (Isa. 52:13-15, 53:1-12; Jn. 1:29; Rom 3:25; Heb. 9:26; Rev. 5:12). See J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words (London: Scribner, 1966); I. Howard Marshall, Last Supper and Lord’s Supper (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Publishing, 1980). The tendency to evaluate Jesus’ Last Supper as an ordinary meal is commonly emphasized by liberation theologians. This approach has helped to recover the eschatological emphasis in the text, though it sometimes moves beyond the text and ignores the link with Passover.

221 K.G. Kuhn, ‘marana qa’ in TDNT IV, 471.
kingdom. So, remembrance and anticipation cannot be separated. How, then, can we use the theological foundations for studying the validity of infant communion?

A traditional emphasis on the remembrance of Christ is an important factor in the Lord’s Supper. By remembering Jesus’ death and resurrection, we receive grace by His presence. The important factor is anamnesis. Even though we cannot ensure whether infants can understand the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, as is the meaning of anamnesis, a young child comes to know the essence of the Lord’s Supper by participating in the Eucharist with the help of their parents and church members. At the same time, if we can accept the eschatological factor in communion, we can include children as the Messianic Banquet shows us. Also, if we can include covenant children, it will show the corporate character of the Lord’s Supper based on the covenantal theology.

The arguments of Moltmann, Pannenberg, and Wainwright establish that there should be a balance between remembrance and eschatology. It is evident that the meaning of the Lord’s Supper was founded by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Also, by the presence of Jesus Christ, the Lord’s Supper can be called a means of Grace. At the same time, in regards to eschatology, the communion with Jesus Christ has already started, and will be accomplished when He comes again. The most important factor is that the image of the Messianic Banquet cannot justify the indiscreeet participants and open table. Only covenant people of God can participate. In this sense, infant communion

222 Frederick Reisz says, “If the Lord’s Supper prefigures the community that will eventually be gathered around the throne of God, shouldn’t it be inclusive of all members, including infants?” See H. Frederick Reisz, Jr., “Infant Communion: A Matter of Christian Unity,” Word & World 8 (1988), 63, 65.

223 Reisz says, “We have made questions of personal piety primary while neglecting the corporate character of the meal.” See H. Frederick Reisz, Jr., 65.
would be a good opportunity among the covenant family to enjoy real fellowship in the presence of a Triune God.

C. Biblical Arguments For and Against Infant Communion

There is no clear and unequivocal biblical statement as to whether or not children can receive the Lord’s Supper. Therefore, in this chapter, I will examine important texts which can be keys to deciding the propriety of infant communion. The main issues which were debated by scholars can be summarized as follows: a) Does the Lord’s Supper replace the Passover meal and does it mean the same thing?, b) the meaning of “recognizing the body” in I Corinthians 11:29, and c) the concept of the covenant.

Does the Lord’s Supper Replace the Passover Meal and Does It Mean the Same Thing?

Some scholars emphasize that the Passover in the Old Testament succeeds the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament. Therefore, they insist that children can participate in the Lord’s Supper according to the analogy between the Passover and the Lord’s Supper.224

Keidel insists that Exodus 12:3, 4, 16, 18, and 21 support children participating in the Passover.225 In verse 3, the Lord says that a lamb should be taken for each household. In verse 4, a lamb should be taken “according to the number of persons” in each

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225 Keidel, “Is The Lord’s Supper for Children?” 304-305.
household. Verse 4 becomes even more precise: “according to what each can eat.” This implies, according to Paul Jewett, “sufficient maturity to eat solid food was the only prerequisite a Jewish child had to bring to the Passover meal.”

To proceed more, Keidel says, “The identical phrase, ‘each one according to the mouth of his eating,’ appears in the Old Testament in only one other context, Exodus 16, where it is used three times to refer to the apportioning of the manna to each household (v 16, 18, 21).” Therefore, the insistence that Hebrew children could participate in the Passover meal is persuasive. In this respect, Keidel says, “And so why should not the same phrase, used by the same writer, have the same meaning when referring to the same act of apportioning food to households, that is, to mean the mere physical capability of eating?”

But, John Murray opposes this opinion, and says, “The fallacy of this kind of argument, as far as Passover is concerned, resides in the assumption that little infants

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226 Paul K. Jewett, Infant Baptism & The Covenant of Grace (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 204. Paul Jewett says, “It was according to what each can eat that the count was to be made, not according to what each believed.” See. Jewett., 204.

227 Keidel, “Is The Lord’s Supper for Children?” 308.

228 Stuart says, “The gathering of an entire family of Israelites (or group of families eating one animal though in separate houses) together at a dinner table helped symbolize the general pattern throughout the nation, that is, the whole nation eating together, though of course at individual locations in accordance with the feast nature of the Passover, Moses was told that the whole nation must be instructed to eat the meal as households, not as individuals. Thus great emphasis is placed on sharing the meat of a single animal. The goal is to have one goat kid or lamb for each full family, ‘one for each household.’” See Douglas K. Stuart, Exodus (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 273.

229 Keidel, 308.
partook of the Passover. There is no evidence that this was the case.”

Also, Venema says,

While newly weaned infants and younger children might possibly be able to eat the unleavened bread, it is implausible that they could digest the roast lamb and particularly the bitter herbs. All of the stipulated elements of the Passover meal, even on the occasion of its first celebration by the households of Israel in Egypt, were not likely to have been eaten by infants and the younger children of the household.” … “Whether infants and very young children were able to consume the elements of the Passover meal, it should also be noted that subsequent Passovers included an additional element, namely, the cup of blessing. This cup of blessing added wine to the elements that typically belonged to the traditional Passover meal.” … “Since wine is an intoxicant and not suited to consumption by infants and very young children, it hardly seems to be an element of the Passover meal that they would be permitted to consume.”

However, against John Murray and Venema’s opinion, Keidel says,

Infants in later infancy are quite capable of eating and drinking more than just milk. Thus we read in Lamentations of Jeremiah’s grief: Because child (ילא) and suckling (קנינ) faint in the city’s open places. To their mothers they say, "Where is corn and wine?" as they faint like those wounded in the city’s open places, as their life is poured out on the bosom of their mothers (Lam. 2:11-12).

Also, he concludes, “this passage uses child (ילא) and suckling (קנינ) synonymously… they both ask for corn and wine in verse 12, which indicates that sucklings ate solids before they were weaned and thus would have also been able to eat a portion of the Passover lamb.”

These two opinions have values to be reconsidered. However, these are speculative, not based on the specific and clear evidence. So, it is very hard to prove young child’s participation based on the matter of physical eating ability.


232 Keidel, 309-310.
Second, scholars debate over the cognition ability to examine the propriety of analogy between the Lord’s Supper and Passover. A.A. Hodge says, “Infants were never admitted to the Passover until they were capable of comprehending the nature of the service.”

Also Calvin says that “The Passover, the place of which has been taken by the Supper, did not admit all guests indiscriminately, but was duly eaten only by those who were old enough to be able to inquire into its meaning” (Ex. 12: 26).

Paul Jewett, on the other hand, emphasizes that a child’s inquiry concerning the meaning of the Passover meal was never meant to be taken as a requirement for participation, but as an opportunity for instruction.

Douglas Stuart also argues this position:

Each generation of parents also was expected to teach each generation of children the meaning of the ceremony that memorialized the deliverance from Egypt (vv. 26-27)…Instead, the instruction to teach the upcoming generations the Passover tradition and law by responding to a child’s question is simply a wording of one instance of how the teaching might occur; but occur it must. And the entire matter certainly was perceived as a command—not just the keeping of the Passover ceremony but the immediate instruction of children—as indicated by the observation in v. 27 that “the people bowed down and worshiped” as well as by the summation in v. 28 that “the Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.”

Terence Fretheim says,

The Passover is the “Lord’s Passover” (12:11, 27, 42). As such, it is a sacramental vehicle for making the exodus redemption real and effective for both present and subsequent generation. When Israel reenacts the Passover, it is not a fiction, as if nothing really happens in the ritual, or all that happens is a recollection of the happenedness of an original event. The reenactment is as much salvific event as the original enactment. The memory language (12:14; cf. 13:3, 9; Deut. 16:3) is

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233 A. A. Hodge, *Outline of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Ermans, 1928), 624. He opposed infant communion. He gives four reasons why infant communion cannot be performed. See also Keidel, 311.


not a soft matter, recalling to mind some story of the past. It is an entering into the reality of that event in such a way as to be reconstituted as the people of God thereby.\textsuperscript{236}

In summary, Passover is not merely given for checking the child’s memory, but to get the chance to explain God’s Exodus. So, Keidel concludes that “Infants were allowed to eat the Passover before reaching an age of discernment (Ex. 12:3, 4, 47). When they did reach that age and began asking questions about the Passover (Ex. 12:26, 27), opportunity was given to instruct them in the spiritual meaning of that which they had eaten in previous years.”\textsuperscript{237}

Third, we need to notice the opinion that the first and continuing Passover is different, so we cannot say much about the analogy between the Lord’s Supper and Passover.\textsuperscript{238} Keidel summarizes the core of this stance.

Infants and children partook of the first Passover meal in Egypt; they would be less willing to acknowledge that they also partook of subsequent Passover meals. One line of reasoning might be that on the basis of Deuteronomy 16:16, only male adults were later required to celebrate the Passover at the place of God’s choosing. Also, Christ himself, it would be argued, did not go up to the Passover until he was twelve (Lk. 2:42).\textsuperscript{239}

That is to say, even though they admit that children participated in the Exodus from Egypt, however there is no mention about child’s participation in continuing Passover based on Deut. 16:16. Against this opinion, Keidel says,

\textit{The word for male in Deuteronomy 16:16 is (רֶוְקֶז). It is closely related to the word (רֶקֶז), the more generally used word for male, which applies to children as

\textsuperscript{236} Terence E. Fretheim, \textit{Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching} (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 138.

\textsuperscript{237} Keidel, 312.


\textsuperscript{239} Keidel, 312.
well as adults. Kingdon implies that when Moses speaks of all males in verse 16, he speaks of children as well as adults. This interpretation would certainly strengthen the argument in favor of continued inclusion of infants and children in the subsequent Passover feasts. But when Deuteronomy 20:13 speaks of all the males, it refers only to the adult males (cf. vs. 14). Calvin interprets רָבָיקָז in this context to mean adult males of twenty years and older. (cf. Numbers 1: 2, 3, Commentaries On the Four Last Books of Moses, vol. II. Eerdmans, 47). 240

Regarding this, we need to hear from Eugene Merrill. He says,

In summary of the entire section, Moses reiterated that all the males of Israel were to appear before the Lord at his dwelling, the central sanctuary, three times a year, namely, at the time of the three annual great festivals. This is the only time in Deuteronomy that males (Heb. Zekur, as opposed to the normal zakar) are specified, but elsewhere this is clearly spelled out (Exodus 23:17; 34:23). The lack of such distinction in gender in the longer festival passages and, indeed, direct reference to female participation (cf. e.g., Deut 16:11, 14) make clear that only the males were required to attend but that females were welcome and, indeed, encouraged to do so. 241

In the same line Weinfeld says, “The author of Deuteronomy certainly did not mean to imply that all the members of the Israelite household were expected to make the festal pilgrimage and that the wife alone was to remain at home and not participate in the celebration of the festival.” 242

These passages illustrate how difficult it is to establish a definite rule for contemporary practices on the basis of these texts. Considering this difficult situation, Keidel emphasizes, “It was the result rather of making the Passover feast conform to the new form of worship centering around the Tabernacle (Deut. 12: 5-7). 243 That is to say,

240 Ibid.

241 Eugene H. Merrill, Deuteronomy (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 255.

242 Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 291. While quoting Craigie, John Currid says, “The stipulation may possibly be a minimum requirement, although others certainly could attend the festivities (Craigie, Deuteronomy, 246). In fact, Deuteronomy encourages others to attend.” See John D. Currid, A Study Commentary on Deuteronomy (New York: Evangelical Press, 2006), 300.

243 Keidel, 313.
after entering Canaan, it was hard to gather in one place to worship because it was difficult for the poor, the weak, or the pregnant to make a journey. Its transition originated to centralize the worship place, but dispelled women and children from the Passover. If Keidel’s opinion is correct, we can see that even though there are some differences between the first and second Passover, it cannot be a crucial factor in breaking the relationship between the Lord’s Supper and the Passover. Deuteronomy 16:11, 14 says, “your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the Lord chooses to establish his name.”\(^\text{244}\) In this sense, Keidel concludes, “Only male adults were required to eat the Passover was a temporary modification of its original institution because of geographical limitations.”\(^\text{245}\)

Fourth, there is another debate. Some people say that the first Passover and following ones are essentially different in significance. That is to say, one is redemptive and the others are memorials of that redemption.\(^\text{246}\) Regarding this opinion, Keidel says, “The propitiation for sins accomplished through a sacrifice of atonement is the key to understanding this underlying unity between the first Passover meal, the later Passover meals, and the Lord’s Supper. This propitiation was always accomplished prior to the Passover meals through the sacrifice of the lamb.”\(^\text{247}\) That is to say, Keidel, by using the

\(^{244}\) Cf. In Deuteronomy 16:16, Moses said that all male adults appear each year not only for the Passover feast, but also for the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths. See Cornelis Venema, “The Old Testament Evidence Regarding the Participation of Children in Covenant Observances (Part Three)” The Outlook, Vol. 56, No. 7 (July/August 2006): 20.

\(^{245}\) Keidel, 316.

\(^{246}\) Ibid.

\(^{247}\) Keidel, 317.
concept of sacrifice and atonement proposed by Hengstenberg, tries to connect the first and continuing Passovers.\textsuperscript{248} He says,

It may therefore be called a sacrificial meal because participants consume the bread and wine which signify Christ’s sacrificed body and blood... This annual slaughter of a lamb is expressly termed a sacrifice (Ex. 12:27; 23:18; 34:25). Thus the continued Passover feasts were sacrificial as well as memorial ones... This Passover sacrifice of lambs, in the original as well as subsequent Passovers, was essentially a sacrifice of atonement for the forgiveness of sins.\textsuperscript{249}

In this way, the people confess sin and experience the grace of atonement in both the first Passover and continuing Passovers, including the Lord's Supper today. The Lord’s Supper is analogous to the Passover as a feast of redemptive history, which expresses and conveys the atoning grace of God.

This message becomes even more complete, given the full range of biblical meanings for the Lord’s Supper. James White, while quoting Brilioth’s classification, categorizes the theological meaning of the Lord’s Supper as follows: The Eucharist or thanksgiving, communion fellowship, commemoration or the historical, sacrifice, and mystery or presence.\textsuperscript{250} Here, two factors can be added; they are “the Eucharist as the work of the Holy Spirit”\textsuperscript{251} and eschatological event, that is to say the Lord’s Supper as


\textsuperscript{250} James F. White, \textit{Introduction to Christian Worship} (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 249.

\textsuperscript{251} “The Holy Spirit unites the church in the Eucharist with the Father and the Son, for the Spirit is the very bond of unity and love, and therefore of the deepest communion, of union with the Holy Trinity in the church on earth and in heaven. Horton Davies, \textit{Bread of Life and Cup of Joy: Newer Ecumenical Perspectives on the Eucharist} (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 78.
participating in God’s banquet. One especially important theme is the theme of eschatological anticipation. Horton Davies says,

“It not only refers to the future banquet in eternity, but actually anticipates its fulfillment and joy.”…“His [Jesus] mind was travelling forward to the kingdom, and to the feast that he would share with his disciples then. Here lies in the background the thought of the Messianic banquet which indeed is specifically mentioned a little later in Luke’s account of the Last Supper (22:30)...It is clear, then, that the Last Supper was itself an eschatological meal, which manifestly already anticipates the end.”

Meeks says, “The Aramaic phrase that Paul quotes in the closing of this letter, Mara na vqa, (I Cor. 16:22), very likely also belongs to the setting of the Lord’s Supper, as it does in the Didache (10:6).” That is to say, while repeating this phrase in the Lord’s Supper, Corinthians proclaimed the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and anticipated the second coming. Geoffrey Wainwright notes, “When the Mystery of God has been completed (Rev.10:7), sacraments will cease and the Eucharist will give way to vision of God in his incontestable kingdom.” In this respect, we should notice not only the continuity, but also the transcendence of the Lord’s Supper compared to the Passover.

Fifth, Keidel proposes three reasons that the Lord’s Supper has replaced the Passover meal: “First, the Passover meal was directly transformed by Christ into a celebration of the Lord’s Supper; second, Jesus identifies both the Passover and the Lord’s Supper with the messianic banquet (see Lk. 22:15-16); and third, Christ’s sacrifice

252 Ibid., 80.
on the cross fulfilled the Passover sacrifices, for Paul says, ‘Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed’ (I Cor. 5:7).”

Jeremias emphasizes that St. Mark, like the other synoptic gospels, appears to say that the Last Supper was the actual Passover meal (Mk. 14:12-16). Howard Marshall, based on the detailed study by Jeremias, gives some foundations to support the continuity between the Passover and the Lord’s Supper:

(1) Mark 14:12 tells us that the disciples made their preparations for the meal of the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb.
(2) The meal was held in Jerusalem. At this time Jesus and his disciples were staying outside Jerusalem at Bethany, and returning there each night. One would have expected them to return to their lodging for their evening meal. But the Passover lamb could be eaten only in Jerusalem itself.
(3) The meal was held in the evening (Mark 14:17; John 13:30; 1 Cor. 11:23). The normal mealtimes for the Jews were in the morning and the afternoon.
(4) He is specifically said to have gathered with the Twelve, a number which corresponds with the requirement that the Passover should be celebrated in groups of at least the persons.
(5) The quests are specifically said to have reclined at the meal (Mark 14:18; John 13:22, 28). To recline was a mark of freedom and was therefore customary at the Passover. Otherwise, sitting was the normal posture at meals. However, it should be noted that reclining was a feature of festive meals in general and was not confined to the Passover meal.
(6) Jeremias argues from John 13:10 that the guests were in a state of Levitical purity such as was required for the eating of the Passover lamb.
(7) Both Mark and Luke place the eating of bread by Jesus and the disciples in the middle of the meal and not at the beginning. This was unusual, and it corresponds with the order of the Passover meal which has been described earlier.

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257 Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York: Scribner, 1966). However, we need to note the difference between the synoptic Gospel and the book of John. See John 13:1-4; John 18:28; John 19:31. Even though there are many explanations to solve the discrepancy between the synoptic and John, as Howard Marshall says, we need to consider that this discrepancy came from using a different calendar among them. See I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper Lord’s Supper*, 75.

(8) The drinking of wine was not customary at ordinary meals, but was normal at festal meals and required at the Passover.

(9) During the meal Judas went out, and the disciples thought that he was going to buy something for the feast or to give something to the poor (John 13:29).

(10) Mark tells us that the meal ended with singing. This refers to the second part of the Passover hallel. There seems to be no evidence for a similar occurrence at the end of any other kind of Jewish meal.

(11) After the meal Jesus stayed close to Jerusalem and did not return to Bethany, since the night of the Passover had to be spent in Jerusalem or its immediate neighborhood.

(12) Jeremias attaches supreme importance to the fact that Jesus interpreted the significance of the bread and wine to the disciples at the meal and argues that Jesus was following the normal practice at the Passover meal.

He says that opinion points (3), (7), (9), (10) and (12) offer the evidence on which most weight can be placed, and it should be observed that point (12) belongs to the central core of the tradition about the meal.

An additional consideration involves the interpretation of Exodus 24:8-11, and the question of the role of the elders and children in the covenant meal. According to Gallant, anti-paedocommunionists say that elders were in the presence of God, and children could not participate in “the covenant-initiating meal.” Against this opinion, Gallant proposes two explanations. First, “the text nowhere suggests what was eaten in verse 11.”

Second, “the fact that only 70 elders participated in the meal cannot be the cause to exclude children from the Lord’s Supper.” Instead of that, he proposes, “it was a covenant initiation ceremony as the Lord’s Supper.”

He points out, “no subsequent covenant meals could be described in this fashion,” and also, “the covenant renewal in

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259 Gallant, 87.

Joshua chapter 8 shows that all congregations participated.” So, he concludes that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11, intended universal participation, but still “a participation carried out in a faithful manner.”

We have seen the arguments on whether or not the Lord’s Supper replaces the Passover while examining the opinions appraised by paedocommunionist and anti-paedocommunionist. Even though we respect the exegesis proposed by the two counterparts, we can conclude that the Lord’s Supper did succeed the Passover. In this sense, we can consider the participation of infant and children just as they participated in the Passover.

**The Meaning of “Recognizing the Body” in I Corinthians 11:29**

Venema says, “It is no exaggeration to say that I Corinthians 11:23-29 is the most extensive and comprehensive New Testament passage on the subject of the Lord’s Supper.” His statement reveals the importance of this passage. Traditionally, this passage was used to prove that participation in the Lord’s Supper requires the faithful confession of its recipients. Thus, many scholars consider the context of this passage as a universal teaching about the Lord’s Supper.

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263 See Venema, New Testament Evidence Regarding Paedocommunion (V) *The Outlook* Vol 57. No. 5 (May 2007): 26. See also Gallant, 75. Many scholars note the importance of the phrase, “In remembrance of me.” Throughout history, this phrase contributes to prohibiting the participation of children in the Lord’s Supper. Also, the CRC reports, “Or again, ‘apart from remembrance there can be no meaningful participation.’” See Christian Reformed Church, Report 34, 355. Wallace says, “A sacrament can never be celebrated without at least a clear repetition of the command promise of Christ in the hope of which the church fulfils this ordinance…Calvin approves of the saying of Augustine that the elements only become sacraments when the word is added, and himself adds the comments, ‘Certainly if a man only brings his eyes and shuts his ears they will differ in no respect from the profane rites of the heathen.’” See
While pointing out “whoever eats” in verse 27, “let a person” in verse 28, “for anyone” in verse 29, Venema emphasizes, “This language clearly shows that Paul’s instructions regarding participation in the sacraments are intended to apply in a general way to all believers whenever they commune with Christ and each other by means of the sacrament.”

His foundation is as follows:

The shift that occurs in this section of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is evident from the change in language that Paul uses. Whereas the earlier section, which described the problem in the church in Corinth, uses primarily the second person plural you (vv 17-20, 22), this section shifts to the third person singular. The change in this section to the (27-29) of such third person forms has a significant bearing upon how the instructions of this section are to be understood. Though the apostle began his treatment of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 with a description of the inappropriate behavior of some members of the Corinthian church, he now moves to a series of general instruction that apply to all members of the covenant community. “The language in this transitional verse underscores the seriousness of an unworthy reception of the body and blood of Christ.”

The intention of Venema is to insist that those commands apply to every participant, and thus function as a general or universal rule about all participation in the Lord’s Supper. This automatically means that children would not be permitted to partake in the Lord’s Supper. Thus, he insists that all people who participate in the Lord’s Supper should be “professing members” of the church who are in good standing.

Ronalds Wallace, *Word and Sacrament*, 135. Against this trend, Heron says, “Paul’s warnings about unworthy reception have had the most unfortunate results where they have been misunderstood, as in the Scottish highlands, to mean that only those who are sure of their own worthiness can dare to receive the Eucharistic bread and wine.” Alasdair I. Heron, *Table and Tradition: Toward an Ecumenical Understanding of the Eucharist* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 42.

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266 A CRC Report says, “Apart from such remembrance there really can be no meaningful participation.” The Christian Reformed Church, Report 34, p. 355. Calvin says, “If they cannot partake
Against this, Keidel emphasizes, “The crucial thing to understand about 1 Corinthians 11 in regard to infant and child participation in the supper is not the meaning of such word as “remembrance” (vv. 24, 25), or examine (v. 28) or to judge (v. 29), but “the important thing to determine is to whom these statements and warnings are specifically addressed.”

That is to say, he thinks that these phrases are not universal instruction. While researching the exegesis of Romans 10:13, Acts 2:21, John 3:16, Romans 3:28 and 2 Thessalonians 3:10, he insists, “This text cannot be applied universally.”

Therefore, when we see the literary context of 1 Corinthians 11, Paul is repeatedly concerned about divisions in the Corinthian community. Weima says, “Although we cannot know with certainty what led to divisions over the Lord’s Supper at Corinth, it is clear that the problem involved social discrimination: the wealthy Christians celebrated the Lord’s Supper in a way that despised and humiliated their poorer fellow believers.”

The idea that the Corinthians thought that partaking of the Supper automatically exempted them from judgment was widely recognized. In this respect, Paul stressed the necessity of examining oneself and discerning the body. Therefore, as Craig Koester

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worthily without being able duly to discern the sanctity of the Lord’s body, why should we stretch out poison to our young children instead of vivifying food?” See John Calvin, Institutes, 4.16.30.

267 Keidel, 323.

268 Ibid.


says, we can think that “Paul’s reference to ‘discerning the body’ (11:29) is another way of speaking about one’s relationship to Christ and to other people.”

Weima concludes, When children today are excluded from the Lord’s Supper, there is the very real danger of committing the same sin for which Paul criticized the Corinthians: humiliating fellow believers. But, this interpretation does not automatically mean, however, that children ought to take part fully at the communion table, nor does it remove the need for some form of self-examination.

By seeing the context of 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, Weima concludes that the main intention of the author of Corinthians is not giving the universal instruction to the Lord’s Supper, but firsthand to give instruction to the Corinthian church who had no concern over the poor and weak members in the church.

A related concern is the meaning of the term “body” in the text. The importance of this word has been discussed among many New Testament theologians. Craig Koester well summarizes the representative exegesis regarding this. He says, “For example, Barrett concludes that ‘the body’ refers primarily to Jesus, since 11:27 mentions the body and blood of the Lord. Fee argues that ‘body’ refers to the community as in 10:17, although this interpretation ignores 10:16, which, as he rightly says, has to do with the worshiper’s relationship to Jesus and to the community.”

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272 Jeffrey A. D. Weima, “Children at the Lord’s Supper and the Key Text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34,” 8. Berkouwer says “We do not come to the Lord’s Supper to testify there to our worthiness, but with the acknowledgement that we seek our life in Jesus Christ and that without him we lie in the midst of death.” G. C. Berkouwer, The Sacrament, trans. Hogo Bekker (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969), 257.

273 Craig R. Koester, “Infant Communion in Light of the New Testament,” 239. W. D. Davies agrees with Moffat and others that the expression “body” in 11:29 refers to the body of the community in union with Christ. W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970, 3rd. ed.), 55-56. Howard Marshall says, “Paul may here mean the church as the body of Christ rather than the crucified body of Jesus. Earlier Paul had said that those who take part in the Supper are ‘one body’ (1 Cor. 10:16). However, it is very doubtful whether the understanding of body in chapter 11 should be governed by chapter 10. Verse 29 is so close in thought to verse 27 that the term body should surely be understood in the same way in both verses, and in verse 27 the
In addition, it is important to evaluate various views about the specific commands in the text regarding “self-examination,” “remembrance,” and “proclaim the Lord’s death” and whether they prohibit the participation of infants and children in the Lord’s Supper. Let us first look at “self-discerning.” Gallant offers a good perspective:

All the disciples fled from Him (v. 56), and Peter verbally denied Him, accompanied by oaths (vv. 69-74). Shall we say that the disciples thus partook of the Supper falsely? Not at all. It is precisely for such weakness that the Supper is made necessary. It is sustenance to the weak, a divine proof of grace. (We also wonder if our churches would have denied the Supper to the Philippians jailer, who heard one sermon and was baptized. Was he really self-reflective or highly sanctified, or any of the things which theologians often claim are prerequisites for partaking in the sacrament?) In 10:1-13, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the story of Israel in the wilderness, how the whole covenant community ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink when they partook of the manna and the water from the rock. He reminds them of this in order to warn them, for look how many fell in the wilderness! But when we consider the event of the exodus and the wilderness wanderings, what do we discover? It was the mature generation that all fell in the wilderness, while the next generation entered Canaan. The fact is that it is we who are mature who are in much greater danger of polluting the sacrament, and thereby eating and drinking judgment to ourselves, than those who are young.274

Gallant well reveals that adults also sometimes do not have self-discernment and so have a danger of polluting the sacrament. So, people cannot prohibit children’s participation based on the phrase “self-discerning.”

Second, we need to see the meaning of avna,mnhsij in verse 25. Anti-paedocommunionists assert that children and infants cannot participate because they cannot fully understand Jesus’ Word and ministry. Regarding this, John Suk, while quoting Koopmans, insists that we can understand the meaning of remembrance only in the light of the Old Testament antecedent for remembrance, zikkaron.

linking of body and blood as counter parts to the bread and the cup makes it quite certain that we are to think of the elements as representing the crucified Lord.” See Howard Marshall, 114.

274 See Gallant, 95-96.
According to the explanation of Suk and Koopmans, we can conclude that “anamnesis” in verse 25 cannot be used for prohibiting the participation of infants and children, rather than be used for the opportunity for instruction about God’s salvational work for us.\(^\text{275}\)

Third, regarding “you” proclaimed in verse 26, Fee explains that this means a word of explanation that goes with the bread and the wine, “a verbal proclamation of Christ’s death.” He also notes that “\text{kata\,gge,\,llw}” appears in 1 Corinthians 2:1; 9:14; Romans 1:8; Phillipians 1:17, 18; Colossians 1:28 plus eleven times in Acts. According to him, in every case it means to preach Christ or the gospel.\(^\text{276}\) However, Beverly Gaventa explains that when the Corinthian members ate bread and drank wine, they started the ceremony to proclaim the death of Jesus Christ.\(^\text{277}\) According to him, it is the ritual as a whole which proclaims. This does not depend on each participant having an...

\(^{275}\) Anthony Thiselton says, “Remembrance denotes neither the exclusively subjective mental or psychological process of recollection characteristic of Cartesian or modern thought, nor the often exaggerated, overly objectified claims about ‘reenactment’ associated with the so called myth-and-ritual school of A. Bentzen, S. H. Hooke, and S. Mowinckel.” Anthony C. Thiselton, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A commentary on the Greek text} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 879. To proceed more, he gives a detailed explanation about the trait of anamnesis in the Bible. He says, “Remembrance of Christ and of Christ’s death (i) retains the biblical aspect of a self-involving remembering in gratitude, worship, trust, acknowledgment, and obedience. (ii) It also carries with it the experience of being ‘there’ in identification with the crucified Christ who is also here in his raised presence. However, still further, it embraces (iii) a self-transforming retrieval of the founding event of the personal identity of the believer and the corporate identity of the church (as the Christian church of God) as well as (iv) a looking forward to the new possibility for transformed identity opened up by the eschatological consummation (v. 25). All of this is gathered together in Paul’s point that such remembrance constitutes a self-involving proclamation of Christ’s death through a life and a lifestyle which derives from understanding our identity as Christians in terms of sharing the identity of Christ who is for the other.” See Ibid., 880.


\(^{277}\) See Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “‘You Proclaim the Lord’s Death:’ 1 Corinthians 11:26 and Paul’s Understanding of Worship,” \textit{Review and Expositor} 80 no. 3 (1983), 380-383. Gaventa notes that several other scholars support this position, including Walter Bauer, Johannes Weiss, W. G. Kummel, Margaret Thrall, and William Baird.
intentional act at proclamation.\textsuperscript{278} Therefore, we can conclude that this verse cannot justify prohibiting children at the Lord’s Table.

In this view, the warnings in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 apply to unrepentant adults. They are not intended to prohibit children’s participation. From this perspective, it is not prudent to prohibit infant communion based on this passage. We need to consider the literary background and historical context of the Corinthian church. This text tells us that we should consider our relationship with the Lord and the community. We should also inspect our hearts and minds before partaking at the table. Rather than prohibiting infant communion, we need to use it as an opportunity of instruction about Jesus’ sacrificial atonement and God’s gracious deed for us.

\textit{Concept of the Covenant}

The Reformed tradition has always stressed, “God’s special relationship with believers and their children, rooted in the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17, is essentially the same in both the Old and New Testament.”\textsuperscript{279} Therefore in their arguments about infant baptism and infant communion, scholars in general admit the continuity of covenant in infant baptism. However, in the case of infant communion, people focused

\textsuperscript{278} Anthony Thiselton says, “It is no accident that katagge,llete means you are proclaiming or you are preaching. By eating this bread and drinking the cup the whole assembled congregation stands in a witness box and pulpit to proclaim their ‘part’ (cf. koinwni,a in 10:16, objective sharing with a stake; and mete,comen in 10:17, being an involved participant; see on communal participation under 10: 16 and 17).” Also he says, “The discussion above of this aspect (esp. on 10: 16-17) under communal participation in the blood of Christ is extensive, and necessarily supplements the exegesis of 11: 26. See Anthony C. Thiselton, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 887.

\textsuperscript{279} Lyle D. Bierma, “Children at the Lord’s Supper and Reformed Theology,” \textit{Calvin Theological Seminary Forum} (Spring 2007): 3.
more on understanding and discernment rather than covenant theology. Therefore, the question arises, if infant baptism would be allowable based on the covenant, why not infant communion?

Bierma says, “Exclusion of children from the Lord’s Table suggests a discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments that seems to undermine the very continuity on which the case for ‘infant baptism’ is built.” So, we should see the concept of covenant in more detail to solve the problem of the validity of infant communion.

We need to first research Calvin’s opinion on the concept of covenant. He emphasizes that God’s redemptive history continually proceeds from the Old Testament to the New Testament. He says, “This similarity, in general, reveals both covenants truly one, though differently administered.” At the same time, Calvin points out the difference between the Old and New Testament. He says that the Old represented the content of covenant indirectly with images; however, the New Testament directly reveals the contents of the covenant. Despite mentioning this, Calvin emphasizes the

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280 After introducing the concept of covenant theology by Zwingli, covenant theology has been a major theology among the Reformed. See Jack Warren Cottrell, “Covenant and Baptism in the Theology of Huldreich Zwingli” (Th. D. diss.: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1971), 374. Against the Anabaptists who oppose infant baptism, Zwingli insisted on the validity of infant baptism. David Zaret says, “Zwingli defended infant baptism by defining it as a Bundeszeichen, an outward sign and seal of the covenant between God and humanity.” Also, Zwingli insisted that infants are included because of their parents’ covenant with God. To prove this, he emphasizes the continuity between the Old and New Testament. In addition to this, he says that the concept of covenant and circumcision are fundamentally continued in the time of the New Testament. See Ulrich Zwingli, “Antwort über Balthasa Hubmaiers Taufbuchlein” (1525), in Corpus Reformatorum 91 (Leipzig, 1915), 633; 637-39; 641, in David Zaret, The Heavenly Contract: Ideology and Organization in Pre-Revolutionary Puritanism (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 130-131.

281 Lyle D. Bierma, “Children at the Lord’s Supper and Reformed Theology”: 4.

282 Institutes, 2.10.2.

283 Institutes, 2.11.1, 4, 6.
continuity between the Old and New Testament in the thought of covenant, and this contributes to confirm the sovereignty and grace of God. He considers infant baptism and circumcision as the same, and its core as a gracious covenant of God (Gen. 17:2, 7). If then, how should we understand the “new covenant” in the book of Jeremiah? Calvin says, “God has never made any other covenant than that which he made formerly with Abraham…the covenant which God made at first is perpetual.” Then, why did God give a new covenant? Calvin explains that it is not a changing of essence and content of the covenant, but a changing of the form and manner. By attending the Lord’s Supper, through the New Covenant which was made by Christ’s blood, this covenant can be ratified to us. While attending the Lord’s Supper, we spiritually eat and drink Jesus’s body and blood.

Calvin emphasizes, “It is evident how much better our condition is than that of our fathers, since, in consequence of the sacrifice which was completed on the cross, we

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285 See Institutes, 4.16.3; 4.16.6. Lillback says, “There is no consensus on the place of the covenant in Calvin’s theology.” He categorizes four stances of scholars on Calvin’s covenant theology. First, Perry Miller and the dispensationalists Fred Lincoln and Charles Ryrie, Heinrich Heppe, Charles McCoy, and James Orr insisted that Calvin’s system had no room for the covenant idea. Second, Everett Emerson, George Marsden, and Jens G. Moller insisted that Calvin develops an incomplete form of covenant theology. Third, as Leonard J. Trincher, J. Wayne Baker, and Joseph C. McLelland say, “Calvin’s theological system is in tension with covenant theology.” Fourth, Anthony Hoekema, Vanden Bergh, and Peter Lillback insisted that Calvin’s covenant theology was highly developed though incomplete. See Peter A. Lillback, The Binding of God: Calvin’s Role in the Development of Covenant Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 13-28. Among these, I uphold the fourth stance. From this, I will explain the concept of the covenant in this extended line.

possess the truth in perfection.”

Calvin says that the Lord’s Supper, which was made by Christ, is the sacrament which confirms God’s covenant. That is to say, Christ shed his blood for us, and we participate in the Lord’s Supper and drink his blood spiritually. Thus, in the Lord’s Supper, as Calvin says, “we have both a covenant, and a confirmatory pledge of the covenant.”

In this respect, we can see the importance of participating in the Lord’s Supper. The Reformers, including Calvin, admit the continuity of the covenant, important to the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, and that children belong to the covenant community.

However, based on 1 Corinthians 11, they postpone a child’s participation in the Lord’s Supper until adolescence or adulthood. Considering this situation, Keidel says,

If in the Lord’s Supper there is one bread, and if those who partake of this one bread show that they are one body (1 Cor. 10:17), baptized infants and children, therefore, who are physically capable, should be allowed to eat the Lord’s Supper, for to exclude them from it would be unnecessarily to deny them the privilege of showing their unity with the visible church into which they were baptized.

Why then do the Reformers who accept the validity of infant baptism, deny the propriety of infant communion? John Murray says,

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288 John Calvin, Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 383. C. K. Barrett says, “The Paschal framework of the Last Supper and of the crucification (cf. v. 7) provides, however, a new context into which the idea of the covenant sacrifice is inserted; in particular it provides a new means by which the sacrificial blood may be applied to those who are to benefit from it. The cup of blessing, drunk by all the participants in the meal, becomes the means by which the covenant is entered. To drink the cup is to enter into the covenant, the covenant established in Christ’s blood.” See C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 269.

289 While dealing with the theme of infant baptism, Charles Hodge explains about an infant’s status in the Bible. He says that infants were members of the church under the Old Testament, and there is nothing in the New Testament which justifies the exclusion of the children of believers from membership in the church; children need, and are capable of receiving the benefits of redemption. See Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology Vol III (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 547-557.

290 Keidel, 337.
The two central significations of the Lord’s Super are commemoration and communion…The notions associated with the Lord’s Supper, such as remembrance, communion, discerning of the Lord’s Body, are of such a nature that they involve conscious intelligent understanding. It is surely reasonable to infer that such intelligent exercise of hearing and mind belongs to the essence of that which the Lord’s Supper contemplates.  

This mention represents the opinion of the Calvinists. Keidel says, “Now if baptism represents union with Christ, why wouldn’t Murray’s line of reasoning call in baptism for personal acceptance of Christ as one’s representative as well?” “If the actual possession of repentance and faith is not required for baptizing infants of believers, why should it be required of these same infants and children for their participation in the Lord’s Supper? In this respect, we can find that there is no consistency in Calvin’s application between infant communion and infant baptism.

In the Old Testament, 1h 'q' (assembly, Deut. 9:10; 23:1) originally means worship community. For example, when receiving the Ten Commandments in Sinai, Ezra read the book of the law and refered to Israelites as a congregation (Deut. 5:22; I Kgs. 8:22; Neh. 8:2). Like this, congregation is a crowd formed by God’s calling (ekklhsia kuriou, Num.16:3; Deut. 23:2; 1Ch. 28:8; Ne. 13:1; Mic. 2:5 sunagwgh kuriou, Num. 27:17; 31:16; Ps. 74:2). When a congregation that follows God’s calling is gathered, God is among them (Num. 16:3). God meets his people, and reveals himself by his Word. Then, congregations gradually are sanctified by the sacrifice. The Old Testament calls Israelites as people (~ [;), and separate from Gentiles.

291 Murray, Christian Baptism, 78.

292 Keidel, 339.

293 H. P. Muller, 1h 'q', in THAT II, 617; H. J. Kraus, Theologie der Psalmen (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979), 83. On the theme of this paragraph, I am indebted to the work of Dr. Haemoo Yoo. See Reformed Dogmatics in Outline (Seoul: Christian Digest, 1997).
“People” is not a social name, but a special relationship with God (Ex. 19:5; Dt. 14:2; 26:19). God elected the Israelites and made a covenant; the Israelites became a covenant people. John Witvliet says, “They gathered again several times to renew that covenant (see Josh. 24; Neh. 8-10).”

God’s redemptive deed is prior to our belief. This can only be by the grace of the Trinity. Philip Butin says, “For Calvin, God’s Trinitarian grace comes to human beings where we are—in the midst of the specific human structures and institutions of life. And God has ordained a specific, corporeal human community to be the normative context within and through which to communicate divine grace to the world.”

In this respect, we need to notice the priority of God’s redemptive deed and grace prior to our belief. Even though we make a covenant with God, however, God himself became the offering for atonement. As a result of that atonement, we could be covenant

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295 Klaus Baltzer gives a common pattern for covenant ratification: an account of a history of any previous relationship between covenant partners, a summary of the intended future relationship, further details about that relationship, an invocation of gods to witness the covenant, and a pronouncement of curse and blessing. Accompanying such a covenant statement may be a ritual meal (Gen. 31:54; Ex. 24). Related, the covenant is also frequently ritually renewed in a pattern resembling covenant ratification (Ex. 34; Deut. 31:9-13; Josh. 24; Neh.9-10; Ezra 9-10). See Paul Kalluveettil, C.M.I., Declaration and Covenant: A Comprehensive Renewal of Covenant Formule from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982).


297 Philip Walker Butin, Reformed Ecclesiology: Trinitarian Grace according to Calvin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1994), 16. Also, Van Dyk says, “We don’t deserve to worship God. But God graciously invites us to worship and then provides us with the means to receive communion with revelation from God—the very presence of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is Trinitarian mystery, hospitality, and gift.” See Leanne Van Dyk, “Revelation, Christology” ed. Leanne Van Dyk, A More Profound Alleluia (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 62.
members of his community. We, then, need to consider our infants and children as covenental offspring, so they can enjoy their membership under the guidance of parents and the church community based on God’s Word.

D. Infant Communion, Faith Formation, and Church Education

Can children have faith? At what age can children understand the basics of the Catechism? What is the difference between the cognitive ability of children and that of adults? Traditionally, the Reformers did not permit infant communion based on the phrase “recognizing the body of the Lord” in 1 Corinthians 11. They insisted that children do not have the cognitive ability to understand the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. However, after Piaget’s research, there was a re-examination about the cognitive ability of children, and many scholars published studies which argued that children have strong capacity for knowledge and understanding.

To what extent can we use and recognize the outcome of developmental psychology in examining the possibility of infant communion? If we consider


developmental psychology as a tool which was given by God as an expression of common grace, might it be a tool in which the church can decide the criteria on an infant’s cognitive development and permit children’s participation in the Lord’s Supper?\(^{301}\)

In this chapter, I will examine the traditional Reformed stance on children partaking of the Lord’s Table. Then, researching child development, I will examine a child’s ability to understand faith. Lastly, I will argue that even though children are sinners, they have religious potential, and the Church needs to nurture its covenant children.

Are Children and Infants Sinners or Righteous Persons? Theological Stances on Children

From the Old Testament until today, views on children have varied greatly. In the Old Testament, pregnancy and children are seen as God’s good gifts.\(^{302}\) One of the important parts in the Old Testament is that children are understood to be a part of the covenant.\(^{303}\) They participated in many important religious practices.\(^{304}\) However, at the

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301 I will evaluate child development not from a sociological aspect, but from a theological stance.

302 See Gen. 20:18, 30:2; 1 Sam. 1:11, 27; 2:20; Is. 66:9; Hos. 9:14; Job 10:18; Ps. 22:9; Ps. 71:6; Job 31:15; Mal. 2:10.

303 Hoekema says, “That gracious arrangement which God establishes with believers and their children in which God promises them salvation through faith in Christ.” See Anthony Hoekema, “The Christian Reformed Church and the Covenant” in Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church: Studies in its History, Theology and Ecumenicity: Presented in Honor of John Henry Krominga at His Retirement as President of Calvin Theological Seminary. Ed. by Peter De Klerk and Richard R. De Ridder (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 185. Also while quoting the mention of M. J. Bosma, he says, “The contention that all children of believers are in the covenant of grace in some sense, calling this grouping of believers and their children the circle of the covenant.” See Hoekema, 190.

304 See Lev. 23:42; Dt. 12:12; 2 Chr. 31. In the Old Testament, 1h ’q’ (assembly, Deuteronomy 9:10; 23:1), and ḫd’ [e (congregation) originally means worship community. See H. P. Muller, ‘1h ’q’’, in THAT II, 617; H. J. Kraus, Theologie der Psalmen (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979), 83.
same time, the Old Testament mentions that children are contaminated by the effect of sin just as adults are.  

In the first century, early Christians considered children to be heirs of the covenant. Safrai says, “Both boys and girls began to participate in social life and observe the Law as soon as they were mature enough to be able to perform and understand these activities.” In the Gospels, we read that Jesus sees children as recipients of the reign of God. However, when we see the Greco-Roman context, there were customs of relics of children and severe punishment. This shows that children were in a low position, and considered fundamentally deficient.

Throughout the centuries, children have not received the proper status and recognition from adults. They are merely considered to be miniature adults. Also, they

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306 Hoekema says, “The covenant of grace has as its material substratum the organization of the Christian society in terms of family groups. When an adult is converted, his or her family immediately becomes a covenant family (cf. 1 Cor. 7:14). When a child is born to or adopted by believing parents, such a child becomes a member of a covenant family. Since God promises to be the God of believers and their children, the Christian home is ordinarily the seed bed of true faith.” See Anthony Hoekema, “The Christian Reformed Church and the Covenant” in Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church: Studies in its History, Theology and Ecumenicy: Presented in Honor of John Henry Krominga at His Retirement as President of Calvin Theological Seminary. Ed. by Peter De Klerk and Richard R. De Ridder (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 200.


309 See Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, Adults and Children in the Roman Empire (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 36.


311 See Plato (Republic 460 b), Aristotle (Politics 7. 14. 10), Barclay (1993, 316-317), and Wright (2002, 28).
were continuously excluded in the world of adults and their personality was despised.\textsuperscript{312} Phillipe Aries says that the understanding about the uniqueness of children did not form until the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in the West.\textsuperscript{313} As a foundation, he suggests two things: First, while observing the paintings which were made at that time, people can find that children’s appearances were portrayed as miniature adults, not of the children themselves.\textsuperscript{314} Second, in the documents which were made in the medieval age, there were no birth date records. Aries considers these as a foundation that there were no distinct criteria to categorize the children’s age in the time of the Medieval Age.\textsuperscript{315}

In the time of the Reformation, however, Calvin, in spite of his emphasis on human sin, described children in a positive light.\textsuperscript{316} Barbara Pitkin emphasizes that Calvin did not merely consider children as sinners.\textsuperscript{317} Calvin suggests that infants may receive, by the work of the Holy Spirit, some part of the knowledge of God in advance


\textsuperscript{314} Phillipe Aries, 33-49.

\textsuperscript{315} See Phillipe Aries, 15-29. Barbara Pitkin assays Aries’ premise is as follows: “Philippe Aries generally assumes a gradual evolution in attitudes toward children in Europe, from indifference and neglect in the Middle Ages to a fuller appreciation of children and an awareness of childhood as a distinct stage of life sometime in the seventeenth to nineteenth century.” See Barbara Pitkin, “The Heritage of the Lord: Children in the Theology of John Calvin” in \textit{The Child in Christian Thought} ed. by Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 162.

\textsuperscript{316} Calvin says, “Even infants bear their condemnation from their mother’s womb; for, though they have not yet brought forth the fruits of their own iniquity, they have the seed enclosed within themselves. Indeed, their whole nature is a seed of sin; thus it cannot be but hateful and abominable to God.” See \textit{Institutes}, 4.15.10.

experiencing full measure and a “seed” of future repentance and faith. So then, we can assume that Calvin affirmed children, regardless of his emphasis on the human nature of sin. In the case of Luther, while arguing against Anabaptists’ insistence that children cannot believe, he suggested that no one can prove it. Instead, he emphasized, by the work of the Holy Spirit, children were being enlightened and strengthened. According to Ozment, Lutheran insisted, “Infants not only can have faith, but infant faith is declared to be the most effective kind.”

While experiencing the Enlightenment Era in the 18th century, children newly came to be recognized. Horace Bushnell, through his famous book entitled Christian Nurture (1847), considers the presence of children as an affirmative. He considers a baptized child as a member of the church. He admits to a child’s participation in the “exercise of a regular church discipline” based on “sublime anticipation” of a child’s faith. Margaret Bendroth says, “Bushnell did not believe that sin was in any sense imputed from one generation to the next, but his organic view of humanity and of the

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318 Institutes, 4.16.18-20.

319 Barbara Pitkin, 164.


family meant that children simply could not avoid the effects of sin within the lives of their parents.”\textsuperscript{324} That is to say, he emphasized the importance of an educational atmosphere of Christian home and parent’s teaching for children in the child’s faith formation.

According to William Werpehowski, Barth rejects outright hereditary transmission of sin as an “extremely unfortunate and mistaken one.” He explains that this doctrine rules out every man’s “voluntary and responsible life” against evil.\textsuperscript{325} In other words, Barth emphasizes each person’s decision and liberation. However, while mentioning John chapter 3, Barth recognizes that infants and small children who have not yet reached the “age of discretion” live in the light of Jesus. Also, he says, “Before they can hear, they are already recipients of the word of God.” This emphasizes the \textit{gratia praeviens} of God during childhood. However, he warns, “The beginning of their Christian life, and hence their baptism, cannot belong to the first chapter.”\textsuperscript{326} Therefore, Barth emphasizes that after childhood, people have a duty of obedience in response to God. In conclusion, Barth emphasizes that even children who have not yet reached the ‘age of discretion’ might do ‘more than they intend or know.’ He says, “It might still be stronger than the movements of many who have reached years of discretion and decision. It might put these to shame.”\textsuperscript{327}


\textsuperscript{327} Ibid., 184; 181, 182.
While synthesizing the opinions above, we can see that the church, from the era of the Old Testament to the present, have understood children as sons of the covenant having been made in the image of God. However, at the same time, people have pointed out that children are not mature in regards to development and are sinners like adults. Of course, we need to admit the effect of sin even though people were created according to the image of God. However, at the same time, we should notice that God’s covenant was given for fallen human beings. So, covenant is important not only for adults, but also for children. Therefore covenant children also are members of the church community and also have the right to participate at the Lord’s Table. In sum, children are sinners but righteous at the same time. Also, when compared to adults, they have similarities and differences at the same time. In this respect, Issler states,

Children are different from adults and form a special class before God. Regarding matters of salvation and the Kingdom of God, children under the age of moral discernment are a unique class. Due to God’s design for human development, children prior to becoming fully adults are given a measure of divine grace and blessing, and are regarded as being within some kind of safe zone until they arrive at the age of discernment. Children are similar to adults in that they are persons

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328 Can we call humans who were degenerated by sin as in the image of God? We can suggest Genesis 5:1; 9:6 and James 3:9 as a foundation. However, these texts do not tell how humans after committing sins are seen as an image of God. These verses point out the historical fact that God created mankind. That is to say, the mention of the image of God in these texts can be said as pointing out humans’ past. The New Testament tells us that Christ, not people, is the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4). We need to understand the texts, which mention the image of God, in regards to God’s creation of humans in the past, and the possibility of retrieving in the future while seeing Jesus’ work for us. See Institutes, 1.15.4. The Bible respects that human beings were created according to God’s image. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, Systematic Theology II translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 202-231. In this respect, Douma says, “The image of God is restored in man when God shows His grace in Jesus Christ, already in Paradise. The outworking of the mother promise (Gen 3:15) is effectual immediately.” See Jochem Douma, The Ten Commandments: Manual for the Christian Life, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Pub., 1996), 51-52. In conclusion, we can say that people can be said to be the image of God in the restrictive meaning of remembering the past and aiming at the future. Torrance says, “It (i.e. the imago dei) is not that which God has put into us by nature, but that he has put into us by grace.” See T.F. Torrance, Theology in Reconstruction (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1965), 105. Cf. K. Barth insisted the lost image of God was by the effect of human’s fall in his early stage (KD I/1, 251). However, he later cancelled this stance (III/1, 225). On this large theme, I am especially indebted to the work of Dr. Haemoo Yoo, who is my teacher at Korea Theological Seminary. See Reformed Dogmatics in Outline (Seoul: Christian Digest, 1997).
created in the image of God and thus welcomed into experiencing a genuine relationship with God appropriate to their developmental abilities. These two important foundational parameters can offer church leaders, teachers and parents a balanced perspective for ministry with children. 329

Issler does not precisely give the definition of the “age of moral discernment.” Also, we cannot concede that children are within some kind of safe zone. However, we need to heed his emphasis that children have peculiarity compared to adults and are also heirs of the covenant.

What Can We Learn From the Modern Developmental Theory? 330

At the end of the nineteenth century, H. W. Brown (1892) and E. Barnes (1892) tried to reveal the character of childhood while studying their cognitive activity and

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religious thought. Later, with the work of Jean Piaget, who studied cognitive developmental stages and structures by using a sociological approach and genetic epistemology (1926, 1932), the cognitive developmental theory had a historic turning point. He tried to reveal that a child’s thoughts are different from an adult’s, not only in quantity, but also in quality. After Piaget’s study, developmental psychologists revealed the cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and religious traits of childhood. By these contributions, we have been able to notice the peculiarity of childhood, and the possibilities of a child’s cognitive abilities.

R. Goldman, in his thesis (1962) and two books (1964, 1965a), attempts to research children’s and adolescents’ cognitive capacity to understand religious concepts according to their age. Based on Piaget’s theory, Goldman reveals how cognitive thinking affects the structure of religious thinking. Also, he demonstrates the developmental stages which were proposed by Piaget through the child’s understanding of a Bible story. James W. Fowler, in his book, Stages of Faith (1981), based on interviews with four hundred people and an analysis about the content, attempts to reveal psychologically how faith develops according to age. He particularly focuses on

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334 Ibid., 3.

335 James Fowler, while quoting Smith, defines faith with the help of studying the Latin term, Credo. In classical Latin, credo means, “to entrust,” “to commit,” “to trust something or someone.” He says this term meant, in the worship or baptism, “I set my heart on,” “I give my heart to,” or more generally “I
“how people believe rather than what people believe.”337

Fritz Oser’s, Religious Judgment (1984, 1991),338 was planned to grasp a person’s attitude about an Ultimate Being in a specific situation. In other words, he focuses on how a person, according to their age, understands a relationship with an Ultimate Being. He insists that religion has an intimate relationship with cognitive or moral understanding. In addition, K. Tamminen’s (1988, 1991) study, which used 1558 Finnish children (789 girls, 769 boys) in 1974 and 1176 students (582 girls, 594 boys) in 1986 as specimen, showed the traits of children’s religious experiences, beliefs, concepts, development and spirituality neglected by the adults.339


339 Kalevi Tamminen, Religious Development in Childhood and Youth: An Empirical Study, (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1991); Kalevi Tamminen, Existential Questions in Early Youth and Adolescence (Helsinki: Institute of Practical Theology, University of Helsinki, 1988). Developmental Theory is being accepted not only because it suggests a more humane and interactive way of understanding
Although the scholars’ opinions do not coincide throughout their studies, people have come to be concerned about the development of a child’s cognition and peculiarity of the childhood. Also, people have begun to notice that a child has cognitive ability and religious attitude.

Among the reasons why people do not permit infant communion is because they believe infants and children do not fully understand the Christian faith or the meaning of communion. Of course, there was Jonathan Edwards who experienced a “remarkable sense of awakening” when he was only nine years old. However, most adult believers have doubts about the belief of infants and children. Although cognitive structure is different between adults and children, people have a tendency to understand children based on their own criteria. While researching the representative scholars on developmental theory, we benefit greatly by seeing the cognitive and religious potential of children.

Piaget insists that at an early age infants cannot think, and their reactions are only related to behavior. Similarly, Edward Robinson observes, “The starting point of all teaching and learning in the cognitive sense, but it seems to offer a better way to understand spiritual development as well. See James C. Wilhoit & John M. Dettoni, editors, *Nurture that is Christian: Developmental Perspectives on Christian Education* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 12. The author says, “Developmentalism helps us to understand human learning and action by making a distinction between the content of our thinking and the process of our thinking. At many points, developmentalism supports the truth of Jesus that where changes most deeply occur are not merely by learning certain phrases but by having our deep structures of thinking altered.” See James C. Wilhoit & John M. Dettoni, 30.


341 Trying to understand children through the eyes of a 30-year old person seems to be similar to 80-year old parents judging their 60-year old son’s behaviors and thoughts.

Piaget’s thought is the incapacity of children to see the world as adults see it.”343 If we adopt this opinion, infant communion would be impossible. However, Stern insists that infants at an early age can recognize objects. He says, “At about eight weeks, infants undergo a qualitative change: they begin to make direct eye-to-eye contact.”344 In addition to this, Stern explains the developmental leaps and shift in this period. He insists, from an early stage, children have enough cognitive ability. Therefore, George Brown emphasizes, “One of the ways younger children learn to be a Christian is by observing and imitating the things Christians say and do.”345 According to him, if we admit children have cognitive ability to some extent, we should notice the importance of early Christian education.

Piaget categorizes the intellectual development into four periods.346 Among them, infants and children who are in the preoperational period are characterized by “egocentrism, animism, moral heteronomy, a view of dreams as external events, a lack of classification, a lack of conservation.”347 According to him, the preoperational child is always failing. As William Crain explains, “preoperational thought is pre-logical,


346 Piaget categorizes intellectual development as four periods: Sensorimotor period (birth to 2 years); preoperational period (2-7 years); concrete operational period (7-11 years); formal operational period (11 years and above). See Herbert P. Ginsburg & Sylvia Opper, *Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 26.

irreversible, static and perception-bound, full of contradictions and errors, and so forth."  

Piaget suggests the idea that infants develop with interaction within the environment; however, he emphasizes that cognitive structures develop on their own without the teacher’s help. In other words, children think differently from adults, and process out of active discovery. According to Piaget’s opinion, if we leave children alone, they would naturally develop interaction with the environment. However, Crain points out that many psychologists and learning theorists oppose Piaget’s genetic epistemology. He says, “Numerous researchers have designed ‘training studies,’ most of which have tried to teach conservation to four-and five-year-olds.” Piaget’s suggestion is important in that it notices the child’s cognition is different from the adult’s.

Wright and W. A. Koppe tried to discern children’s understanding of God in Europe. According to them, children’s concept of God reflects their cognitive and emotional development. To explain in more detail, children whose ages are 2-3 understand that God is an existence who lives in heaven or church, and exercises magical power, and cares about them. However, what was understood by children ages 4-5 is that God is the existence who knows children’s deeds even though nobody is there. Wright and Koppe say, “There was much evidence that these children wanted to please God.”

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348 Ibid., 102.
349 Friedrich Schweitzer, Lebensgeschichte und Religion, 110.
350 William C. Crain, 100.
351 Ibid.
According to Wright and Koppe, the transition of the concept of God is found again among children whose ages are 6-7. Most of them understand God as the method of anthropomorphism, but unlike their previous concept, they understand God as a Being who acts in a certain regularity or system. They explain that among 12-13 year olds, most children totally depart from the concept of God which was understood by anthropomorphism. We especially need to notice their conclusion that the concept of God in the 12-13 year range is not their original concept, but reflects their faith community’s education and confession. Their opinions also support the importance of church education among children.

The representative study about children’s concept of God was performed by Ronald Goldman. In 1964, he studied the concept of religion among 200 people (ages six, nine, fourteen, and seventeen) who were similar in intelligence, religion, and social background based on Piaget’s theory of intelligence. Based on his clinical study, Goldman explains that the religious thinking and development process constitutes pre-operational intuitive thought (up to about 7-8 years), concrete operational thought (about 7-8 to 13-14 years), and abstract operational thought (13-14 years onward). According to him, the term ‘understanding,’ such as the concept of God, starts from the early part of

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355 W. D. Wright and W. A. Koppe, op.cit., pp. 86.


childhood, and the abstract concept of God can be specified at the end period of childhood.\textsuperscript{358} Therefore, he emphasizes the following: “What it reveals is that the Bible is not a children’s book, that the teaching of large areas of it may do more damage than good to a child’s religious understanding and that too much biblical material is used too soon and too frequently.”\textsuperscript{359} However, the opinion of Goldman was repudiated by the study of various scholars.

Fagerlind’s study on religious thinking of Swedish children shows, “Children were able to understand and use symbolic expressions about problems they had already met, even though they were not yet able to analyze them in logical term.”\textsuperscript{360} That is to say, understanding the parables of the Bible, familiarity and previous experience helps the understanding of children.\textsuperscript{361} Therefore, we can conclude that religious education in childhood is important and it can facilitate a child’s understanding of the Christian faith. However, while considering their attributes of the developmental periods, we need to prepare proper teaching methods rather than intellect and cramming education.

Erikson, based on epigenetic principle\textsuperscript{362} and interactionism,\textsuperscript{363} categorizes the stages of life as eight: “Trust vs. Mistrust,” “Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt,” “Initiative vs.  

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\textsuperscript{358} Ibid., 51-67. He says, “It is obvious that children will be limited in understanding religion at a spiritual level until they have achieved methods of thinking at the formal operational level, when the limitations of concretizing experience are left behind and propositional thinking emerges.” See Goldman, 88.

\textsuperscript{359} See Goldman, \textit{Readiness for Religion}, 7. Also he says faith is not a matter of intellect but of the emotion. In this sense he thinks children are “ready for religion.” See Goldman, \textit{Readiness for Religion}, 50.


\textsuperscript{361} Ibid., 118-119. Peterson (1960) found that “the educable could remember Bible stories and remember the moral of a story after it had been explained.” See Hyde, 119.

\textsuperscript{362} L. Steele says, “Epigenesist means that the human personality has a ground plan that gives direction and a general pattern to human becoming. This does not, however, imply any sort of genetic
Guilt,” “Industry vs. Inferiority,” “Identity vs. Role Confusion,” “Intimacy vs. Isolation,” “Generativity vs. Stagnation,” and “Ego Integrity vs. Despair.”

At the first stage, Erickson emphasizes that the most important thing is interaction with the caretaker, and through this relationship, babies find some consistency, predictability, and reliability.

So, according to Erickson, babies develop a sense of basic trust and this can be the foundation for mature faith. “He observes that three- to six-year old children are, more than at any other time, ready to learn quickly and avidly, and they are willing to find ways of changing their ambition into socially useful pursuit (1950, 258).”

This well reflects on the importance of religious education and role of parents and church community for the children.


363 Steele says, “Interactionism asserts that the human personality is the result of a variety of factors and influences and the personality is never simply the result of past experiences or single influences.” See Les L. Steele, 95.


365 Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1950), 247. Crain says, “Piaget and Erickson seem to be writing about different areas of experience: Piaget focuses on intellectual development and the child’s understanding of the physical world; Erickson concentrates on emotional development and the child’s interactions with people.” See William C. Crain, 164.

366 William C. Crain, 153.

367 According to Erikson, in a person’s life cycle, there are crucial turning points which are important when considering one’s whole life. Therefore, Erikson refuses the method which adheres to some factors appearing in childhood. See Friedrich Schweitzer, 75.

368 See Friedrich Schweitzer, 138. We need to hear about the critics on Fowler’s opinion. The categorization of scholar’s critic are as follows: 1) lack of God’s grace in this concept of faith (C. Dykstra, J. Harry Fernhout, Gabriel Moran, J. Loder); 2) non-clear relationship between faith development and ego-development (J.H. Fernhout); 3) lack of static factor in faith (C.E. Nelson, J.D. Bann, Walter Conn); 4)
stages.\textsuperscript{369} The first stage is intuitive-projective faith, approximately ages 3-4 to 6-7; the second stage is mythic-literal faith, ages 7-8 to 11-12.

In the first stage, “Children attend to and imitate the moods, gesture, and visible practices of such primal persons,” writes Fowler.\textsuperscript{370} Then, in “mythic-literal faith,”\textsuperscript{371} children begin concrete operational thought. He says, “this stage in which the person begins to take on for him or herself the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to this or her community…they can be affected deeply and powerfully by symbolic and dramatic materials and can describe in endlessly detailed narrative what has occurred.”\textsuperscript{372}

While seeing Fowler’s point, George Brown emphasizes, “Experience, rather than verbal input is the medium for knowing. Developmentally, the movement from childhood to adulthood is the movement from the visual to the verbal.”\textsuperscript{373} Therefore, children can understand the meaning of the Lord’s Supper consistent with their development.

To this point, while researching modern developmental theories, we come to know important information about the character of a child’s cognitive ability and


\textsuperscript{371} See \textit{Life Maps}, 48-60.


\textsuperscript{373} George Brown, “Children’s Faith,” 220.
relationship between cognitive development and religious concepts. Then, how can a child understand the meaning of communion?

Fowler says, “The young child does not, of course, develop conceptual mastery of these things. Rather, he or she encounters images which awaken and form the faith imagination of the child, providing affective, volitional, and conceptional directions by which to grow in faith.” According to Fowler and developmental psychologists, infants or children do not grasp deep and abstract meaning. However, by researching developmental theories, we see that a child also has cognitive ability different from adults.

We say that the sacraments are the visible Word. Therefore, Christians need to recognize that infant communion would be a good educational media for infants and children. It would be manifested not as an abstraction but as an intuitive, experiential practice which embodies visual and sentimental concepts. What, then, are the merits and demerits of developmental theory on deciding the propriety of infant communion?

**Merits: Emphasizing the Importance of Church Education in Childhood**

First, the developmental theory categorized the childhood detail, and proposed the child’s traits of thought and cognition according to the developmental stages. Therefore, it provides fundamental resources for a religious educational program. By forecasting the faith developmental stage among children, it can help for church educators to understand children according to their ages.375

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375 Dykstra says, “They provide significant help on the issue of readiness. What capacities for thinking and imaging will people at various ages be likely to have? What fundamental issues are they likely to be concerned with? What can they assimilate, and how is this assimilation most likely to take place?” See Craig R. Dykstra, “Faith Development Issues and Religious Nurture,” *Changing Patterns of Religious*
Second, with the help of the developmental theory, we can see the traits of children’s thoughts. For example, scholars reveal that some children whose ages are 5-6 to 11-12 do not have “formal-operational power” but understand God, not by abstract attribute, but by concrete and experimental appearance. Therefore, children in this period have a tendency to have ego-centric and anthropomorphic thoughts. That is to say, their thoughts usually depend on emotions and attitude rather than intellect and abstract reasoning. In this respect, by using developmental theory, we can get useful information about children’s thoughts.

Third, the developmental theory awakens our concern to the importance of faith education in childhood. John Westerhoff emphasizes the importance of experience in forming faith. It reveals the importance of seeing and hearing during childhood. So, faith developmental theory explains that the attitude of the caregiver makes a great impact on the religious education of the child. With the help of a relationship, infants and children come to interact with others, and can get the ability to accept other people’s

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perspectives.\textsuperscript{379} The reason childhood is important is that a formed pattern of thinking and living is very hard to change in subsequent years.\textsuperscript{380} Therefore, through the study about the developmental theory, we can understand the importance of religious education throughout childhood.

\textit{Some Negative Considerations}

We also need to consider some negative aspects of developmental theory. First, the developmental theory has a tendency to neglect the impact of sin among humans. It is too optimistic and sometimes looks down on humans’ regression, degeneration, and failure. As Dykstra points out, sin always distorts people’s reason, role taking, social perspective taking and ego development. So, without considering the effect of sin, we cannot set a proper theory. People cannot be mature in their own power.\textsuperscript{381} In regards to theology, human qualities to do God’s calling were degenerated. Human beings cannot escape from the responsibility of sin because original sin was transcended from Adam.\textsuperscript{382} Human beings are understood to be totally depraved,\textsuperscript{383} and therefore, every belief


\textsuperscript{383} Hoekema says, “Pervasive depravity means that (1) the corruption of original sin extends to every aspect of human nature: to one’s reason and will as well as to one’s appetites and impulses; and (2) there is not present in man by nature love for God as the motivating principle of his life.” See Anthony A. Hoekema, \textit{Created in God’s Image} (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986), 150.
attitude and action is affected by sin. This reveals human’s spiritual inability.  

There needs to be a balance between the concept of sin and an optimistic developmental theory.

Second, as Vianello & Taminnenn’s study shows, the developmental theory usually develops their survey by adding the age, however, comparatively gives few concerns about transforming religious concepts which can be generated by socio-environmental difference; for example, region, culture, religion, environment of family, gender, and education.

Third, in the case of a faith developmental theory, there is a tendency to emphasize “the structure” in development. So, sometimes, the importance of content in faith is lost. Also, we need to notice that the meaning of faith which was proposed by developmental psychologists and church education is different. In addition to this, it is

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384 See Hoekema, 143-154. Hoekema says, “Spiritual inability means (1) the unregenerate person cannot do, say, or think that which totally meets with God’s approval, and therefore totally fulfills God’s law; and (2) the unregenerate person is unable apart from the special working of the Holy Spirit to change the basic direction of his or her life from sinful self-love to love for God.” See Hoekema, 152.

385 F. P. and David Heller argue that the concept of God varies according to the denomination or religion of the child. See F. P. White, *The God of Childhood* (Ph.D. thesis. Duquesne University, 1970), and David Heller, *The Children's God* (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1986). Heller portrays a different understanding of God’s image between boys and girls with the fact that children are given different roles in family or society.


387 Nowadays, there are numerous modification proposals in structure-developmental theory. Streib says, “development may not proceed in a coherent and invariant series of stages, but that there may be domain-specific progress (Cartwright, 2001), addition, and integration rather than abandonment and acquisition (Clare & Fitzgerald, 2002), regression (Nelson, 2002), or replication of earlier stages (Streib, 2001a, 2001c) and even multiple paths in development” (Streib, 2003). See Heinz Streib, “Faith Development Research Revisited: Accounting for Diversity in Structure, Content, and Narrativity of Faith,” *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 2005, Vol. 15, No. 2, 103. He suggests three points of revision in the faith development research design: (a) to attend to across-domain differences and to structural diversity within one stage or style of faith; (b) to explicitly account for content and content diversity; and (c) to include the dimensions of life history and narrative dynamic. See Heinz Streib, 104.
hard to say that a person moves through one stage of faith to get to the next.\textsuperscript{388} So, as an alternative, we need to notice the “Religious Style” proposed by Streib. He says, “Religious styles are distinct modes of practical-interactive (ritual), psychodynamic (symbolic), and cognitive (narrative) reconstruction and appropriation of religion, that originate in relation to life history and life world and that, in accumulative deposition, constitute the variations and transformations of religion over a life time, corresponding to the styles of interpersonal relations.”\textsuperscript{389} According to Strieb’s opinion, we can see the developmental theories as a whole, including regression.

Fourth, development in the cognitive-structural theory means an increase of constancy ability and obtaining of the behavior possibility. In this respect, people frequently consider a child as being incompetent. So, infancy is downgraded as a pre-stage of adult life. F. Schweitzer asks the question, “does becoming an adult mean increasing the possibility of doing and obtaining?”\textsuperscript{390}

Fifth, even though the developmental theory does not intend for human perfection, according to the theory, people can have dignity in life in the last stage. Schweitzer points out that a human’s dignity lies in the praxis of human life.\textsuperscript{391}

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\textsuperscript{390} See Friedrich Schweitzer, \textit{Lebensgeschichte und Religion} (Munchen: Gutersloher Verlagshaus, 2007), 248. (Translation Mine)

\textsuperscript{391} Ibid., 249.
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Sixth, the cognitive-developmental theory mainly studies religious development in the respect of individualism. Even though it considers the impact of the environment in faith formation, this theory is lacking in considering the importance of community in faith formation.\textsuperscript{392}

To this point, while considering the developmental theory in the respect of God’s common grace, we can get a precious perspective which can be used in church education and permitting children into the Lord’s Table. In Piaget’s study, we see that a child thinks differently from adults. Although Goldman repudiates early education of a child, by the work of W. A. Koppe, Fagerlind, Beard, and Martin, we see the importance of religious education to give children familiarity and experience in upgrading their understanding. Also, through Erickson, we see the importance of the role of parents and Christian ethos in faith formation. In addition to this, through the study of Fowler, we notice that a child is familiar with symbols and visuals rather than verbal. Therefore, even though it has some faults, the developmental theory gives important information about the nature of children, and gives a foundation for welcoming children to the Lord’s Table.

\textit{Religious Potential of Children and the Work of the Holy Spirit}

In his \textit{Institutes}, Calvin says that God gave humans a “sense of deity,” or a “sense of religion.”\textsuperscript{393} In this respect, we can say that all people have religious minds and potential. However, we should keep in mind that real faith comes from the Triune God

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\textsuperscript{392} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{393} \textit{Institutes}, 1.3.1.
and the gift of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{394} If the formation of faith depends on the work of the Holy Spirit, we can know God not by observing the universe, but by God’s opening our eyes to see Him.\textsuperscript{395} In this dimension, we can know that God gave religious potential to the children who are the descendents of the covenant.\textsuperscript{396}

Cavalletti points out that while adults tend to talk down to children and to present God in childish terms, children themselves have a profound sense of the majesty of God, reflected in the language they use to speak of God.\textsuperscript{397} Also, she has noted that children from three to six years of age have demonstrated particular sensitivity to the following points, among others: Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, Baptism and the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{398}

We should recognize children as religious beings. The faith between children and

\textsuperscript{394} Pazmino points out that Christian education cannot expedite the experience of conversion. Also, he emphasizes that conversion depends on the work of the Holy Spirit, teachers cannot generate it. See Robert W. Pazmino, \textit{Principles & Practices of Christian Education: An Evangelical Perspective} (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 10, 47. Calvin said, “For although God is still pleased in many ways to manifest his paternal favour towards us, we cannot, from a mere survey of the world, infer that he is a Father.” \textit{Institutes}, 2.6.1. Gunton also says, “Our knowledge of general revelation is the fruit of the gospel, Christologically centered as that is. Without that, we do not see the world for what it truly is.” C. E. Gunton, \textit{A Brief Theology of Revelation: The 1993 Warfield Lectures} (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 55.

\textsuperscript{395} Institutes, 2.6.4.

\textsuperscript{396} Klaus Issler gives some foundations to support this opinion. He says, “The Hebrew Scriptures support the idea that God has a special place in His heart for orphans (Deut. 10:18; Ps. 10:14; Hosea 14:3; also Jas. 1:27). From the case of children, both Jewish and non-Jewish, a child can (a) be consecrated by God from the womb (e.g., Samson, Judg. 13:5; Isaiah, Isa. 49:1; Jeremiah, Jer. 1:5; John the Baptist, Luke 1:15; (b) hear God speaking (e.g., Samuel, 1 Sam 3:1-14); (c) receive God’s intervention by healing (daughter of a Gentile woman, Matt 15:21-28) and being raised from the dead (son of a Gentile widow, 1 Kings 17:8-14, cf. Luke 4:26), and (d) become a king in God’s theocratic economy for Israel (e.g., Joash at age seven, 2 Chron. 24:1-2). In the Gospels, the classic passage indicating children’s status within the Kingdom of God and God’s blessing on children is when Jesus permitted the children to come to him (Mark 10:14 and 16; parallel Matt. 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17).” Klaus Issler, “Biblical Perspectives on Developmental Grace for Nurturing Children’s Spirituality,” in D. Ratcliff (ed.) \textit{Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications} (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2004), 63.


\textsuperscript{398} Ibid., 15; 171.
adults is the same in essence. However, adults have a tendency to see faith only in the dimension of intellect. But then, what is the faith? By observing the essence of faith, we can appraise whether or not our children have faith.

Faith is a gift of God. Irenaeus says, “The Lord taught us that no man is capable of knowing God, unless he be taught of God: that is, that God cannot be known without God: but that this is the express will of the Father, that God should be known. For they shall know Him to whomever the Son has revealed Him.” Jesus gave revelations, however, revelations which make known the Son are given by the Holy Spirit. In this respect, the knowledge of God and faith are closely related. Therefore, Calvin defines faith as knowledge. Calvin says, “We call faith a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.”

399 Regarding the essence of faith, and the meaning of faith growth, John Westerhoff explains them by comparing to the growth of the trees. That is to say, as time goes, a tree adds an annual ring. However, the tree is same in essence. John Westerhoff III, Bringing up Children in the Christian Faith (Minneapolis: Wiston Press, 1980), 34.

400 C. Smith points out that by the 16th century the term “belief” came to be substituted by the term “faith.” While quoting the Oxford English Dictionary, he says, “Faith almost superseded belief, especially in theological language, leaving belief in great measure to the merely intellectual process or state in sense. Thus, belief in God no longer means as much as faith in God.” See Wilfred C. Smith, Faith and Belief (Princeton University Press, 1979), 116-118.

401 Loder and Neidhardt explain the work of the Holy Spirit as a Knight’s move, that is to say, the creative act raised to the nth power by Spiritus Creator. James E. Loder, W. Jim Neidhardt, The Knight’s Move: The Relational Logic of the Spirit in Theology and Science (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1992), 2. “Knowledge of God” is not the knowledge which makes God as objectivity, but personal knowledge which lies in the relationship of covenant. Therefore revelation is not the object of epistemology, but God’s self revelation who wants to be a subject in the fellowship. Calvin says, “He alone is a fit witness to himself who is known only by himself.” See Institutes, 1.13.21.

402 Irenaeus, Adversus haereses, IV, vi, 4, in ANF 1, 468.

403 I Corinthians 12:3; John 6:69.

404 Institutes. III, ii, 7.
consists in the knowledge of God and Christ” (John 17:3).\footnote{Institutes, III, ii, 3.} However, we should know that knowledge comes from a relationship with God.\footnote{In the Old Testament, the meaning of knowing firstly can be known in the book of Hosea. See H. Walter Wolff, “Wissen um Gott bei Hosea als Urform von Theologie” (1953), in *dem Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (München, Chr. Keiser Verlag, 1964), 182. The Holy Spirit does not neglect the work of intellect activity. However, Calvin did not put himself in intellectualism. According to Bouwsma, Calvin accepted with humility the limitation of the human’s reason, and human’s experiences are enclosed by contradictory realities. See W. J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 161.} Knowledge which is given through revelation is personal knowledge.\footnote{“In brief, the knowledge given in revelation is not simply knowledge that, or knowledge about, but knowledge of,” J. Ballie, *The idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 47.} Also, the faithful response of humans is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

So then, can children participate in the Lord’s Supper without knowing the meaning of it? The Lord’s Supper has a variety of theological meanings. In the regards to rationalism, children cannot understand the meaning of the Lord’s Supper as an adult can. However, sometimes, the recognition of humans transcends human reason. We need to look at James F. White’s assertion.

To exclude baptized children from the Lord’s Table on the grounds that they do not fully understand it would, if we followed such an argument out, exclude us all. One does not understand a mystery, one experiences it. And children reared in the community of faith can experience it as well as anyone, perhaps better than some of their adult associates.\footnote{James White, *Sacraments as God’s Self-Giving* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 66.}

While synthesizing the above opinions, we can conclude that children have religious potential by the work of the Holy Spirit. Even though the intellect of a child cannot meet the expectation of an adult, faith is not only a gift, but also a mystery of the Holy Spirit. So then, it would be better to give children the opportunity to participate in the Lord’s
Supper while depending on the work of the Holy Spirit, who surpasses our intellect, and hoping that the Triune God opens the eyes of children for understanding.

_The Church’s Educational Mission to the Covenant Children: Consideration of the Present State of the Korea Church_

Through the study of scholars who emphasize the importance of cognitive development, we have seen the importance of education in the early stages of development of children. Also, we see the fact that children have a religious mind, a seed of religion. In this respect, to participate in the Lord’s Supper and worship from the early stages can powerfully impact a child’s life. It forms the core factors of faith. T. H. Groome says, "Liturgy can be powerfully effective in informing, forming, and transforming its community of participants in the Christian faith if it is sacramentally adequate to enable them to express their lives in faith to God and to experience God’s life in love to them for the life of the world.”

When considering the developmental stages of children, evidently, their cognitive

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410 Holmes says, “an infant does not merely absorb the date of his senses, letting the field of his existence impose its categories, or lack of them. Rather, by his doing, the child of less than a year is, in a presemiotic stage, “making sense of” or “structuring” his world.” See Holmes, 21.

411 C. E. Nelson, _Where Faith Begins_ (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1967), 102. He also says, “Prior to formalized, intellectual statements about God are experiences with God, either those which are uniquely one’s own, or participation in the experiences that have been recorded in the Bible.” See Nelson, 88.

ability is different from that of the adult.\textsuperscript{413} However, it does not mean that children cannot recognize God’s existence.\textsuperscript{414} Therefore, rather than neglecting the children’s religious ability based on the adult’s criteria, we need to consider the infant’s or children’s communion as a good opportunity to grow the child’s faith and be accustomed to the church community.\textsuperscript{415}

God calls us as a covenant community. Therefore, we should see children as members of the church community.\textsuperscript{416} At the same time, we have a duty to teach our covenant children who are in God’s promise.\textsuperscript{417} Calvin stresses paternal obligation to fulfill God’s command and to diligently instruct the children in the family.\textsuperscript{418} We need to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[413] Holmes says, “A person, therefore, first learns Christ not as a theological principle (e.g., that he is one person with two natures), but emotionally, as an effective confrontation that stimulates his imagination.” See Urban T. Holmes, 18.

\item[414] Holmes, 30.

\item[415] Cully gives a good example by using the understanding of the concept of the Trinity. She says, “If the threefold elements of this understanding are kept rigidly separated until a child is twelve or fourteen then the attempt to put it together can be made only intellectually.” See Iris V. Cully, \textit{Children in the Church} (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 65. Cully says, “Anyone who participates in a service of worship is learning about God and at the same time expressing relationship to God. This makes worship an important way through which children grow in faith.” See Iris V. Cully, \textit{Christian Child Development} (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 117.

\item[416] Allen says, “God’s directives for the Israelites included many opportunities for families and the community to celebrate together, to worship together, to discuss theological matters. In the religion of Israel, children were not just included, they were drawn in, and absorbed into the whole community. They had a deep sense of belonging.” See H. C. Allen, “Nurturing Children’s Spirituality in Intergenerational Christian Settings in D. Ratcliff (Ed.) Children’s Spirituality: \textit{Christian Perspectives, Research and Applications} (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2004), 270.

\item[417] Smart says, “It is the Church, then, that has the responsibility for education—the whole church, not just a few specially chosen teachers.” James D. Smart, \textit{The Teaching Ministry of the Church: An Examination of the Basic Principles of Christian Education} (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 113. Also, Holmes emphasizes the importance of faith education not only in the church, but also in the family. See Urban T. Holmes, 18.

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make good use of this duty in leading our children. In this respect, we need to notice the profit of intergenerational worship which is currently debated in the United States.

In the case of the Korean Presbyterian Church, the law designates the participation age of the adult worship from the middle school ages. However, after entering a university or college, parents recommend that they participate in Sunday morning worship. Therefore, we can say that many covenant children and adolescents do not experience God’s grace in worship which should be enjoyed from an early age. So, even though they return after entering a university, they might feel the heterogeneity of the worship and liturgy. Therefore, they seek contemporary or frontier worship and neglect the importance of the sacraments. In this respect, the Korean Presbyterian Church has lost the attributes of Catholicity and the benefits of liturgy. The Korean Church needs

419 Patricia Boone and Robert Boone emphasize that faith community can give great impact on infant and children by the help of worship, narrative, ministry, and hope. See Patricia J. Boone and Robert A. Boone, “Inviting Children into the Faith Community,” Faith Development in Early Childhood, ed. Doris A. Blazer (Kansas City, Mo: Sheed and Ward, 1989), 120.

420 What is meant by the term intergenerational? White (1988) says that “characteristically intergenerational is meant to involve adult-with-children” (21). Prest’s (1993) definition of intergenerational Christian experience is “the socializing of two or more different age groups, interacting in learning, growing, and developing in the faith, through common experiences of fellowship, worship, sharing, and relationships” (15). The term “intergenerational” is not typically used to describe the adult-as-teacher/children as-learners model of education, nor a one-on-one mentoring relationship. See H.C. Allen, 267.


422 Korean Presbyterian Church, Constitution (Seoul: Kosin Presbyterian Church, 1992), 253.

423 This is related to the system of the Korean SAT. Many Christian parents send their children to private institutes to prepare for the SAT or school exams on a Sunday. Regarding this, see http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/view.htm?id=196283 (accessed on 26 Oct, 2008). In the case of the Korean Presbyterian Church (Tonghap), preschool children reduced in number to 10,000, and middle and high school students reduced to 50,000 compared to 10 years ago.
to remind them of their baptismal vow at their child’s baptism. Issler emphasizes the profit of participating in the Lord’s Supper as follows:

Participation in Holy Communion is a powerful symbol of welcome for children as well as adults. In traditions that practice adult baptism, how might children be welcomed at the Lord’s Table? Consideration might be given to permit the child’s participation in Communion once an initial profession of faith has been made and assessed.

Smith (2001) also suggests:

In the traditions that baptize adult believers, an open approach to the Table would acknowledge that children are members of the covenant community even though they cannot yet assume adult responsibility for their lives, evidenced in baptism. For now they come to the Table under the spiritual authority and identity of their parents.

In Korea, with an enthusiasm for early education, many parents have spent a tremendous amount of money on their children’s education; however, in the case of Christian parents, there is a tendency to have non-interest about church education. Marianne Sawicki says the following: “The foundation of liturgical life is laid by participation in the assembly, from at least the point when the baptized child understands the sentence,

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424 Berkhof reminds us of the importance of the concept of the covenant in Christian education. While quoting the CRC’s third question on infant baptism, he appeals that parents should have concern about education while remembering their vow at their child’s baptism. See Louis Berkhof & Cornelius Van Til, *Foundations of Christian Education: Addresses to Christian Teachers*. Ed. Dennis E. Johnson (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing 1990), 53. Also, the third question to parents on infant baptism states: “Do you promise and intend to instruct these children, as soon as they are able to understand, in the aforesaid doctrine, and cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power?” See Christian Reformed Church, *Psalter Hymnal: Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy* (Grand Rapids: Publication Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, 1959), 86.


427 According to the Korea National Statistical Office’s survey on the amount of private education, the total amount of Korean private educational fees was 24 billion dollars in 2007. This shows that a parent who has one student had to pay about 200 dollars in a month. See http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/economy/economy_general/271404.html (accessed on 26 Oct. 2008).
‘Jesus is here’ (about 30 months of age). The reverent attitude of family and friends is the best lesson that something very special is going on.” 428

Of course, we should consider the peculiarity and situation of each denomination and church. However, it is sure that we should teach not only God’s Word, but also the sacraments at the same time. Because, as Calvin said, the sacrament is the visible Word. 429 In other words, to fulfill the duty of rearing covenant children, parents and church should have the mind of duty and make an effort to rear the faith development not only for children, but also themselves. In this respect, we need to hear the assertion of Donald Miller: “Much of the learning of infants comes from imitation of the parents and others. Many of the infant’s basic attitudes come from immediate awareness of the basic attitudes of the parents. Therefore the infant’s sense of basic trust will reflect that of the mother.” 430 In the long run, this means that the faith of infants and children can be formed through the faith experience of the parents.

We should remember that infant communion is not ex opere operato. However, from the early period of life, children can be accustomed to worship and liturgy, which will benefit the integrity of each church generation and their maturity of faith.

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CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: PROSPECTS FOR INFANT COMMUNION IN THE KOREAN CHURCH

The prospects for infant communion in Korean Presbyterian Churches can only be assessed by examining several different topics: the unique context of Korean Presbyterianism, the broader development of church history, the proper use of biblical texts, and an understanding of the capacity of children. The following paragraphs will summarize our learning about each of these.

A. Summary of Interdisciplinary Learning

First, we saw the great impact of early missionaries in the formation of Korean Presbyterian worship, and learned about how liturgy was simplified in the context of ecumenism and mission. We also saw how early missionaries were faithful to the Westminster Confession and Puritanism, so that they emphasized preaching and Bible study, rather than liturgy and the sacraments. Also, we have seen the influence of Frontier worship in the formation of Korean Presbyterian worship. In addition, we saw the effect of the Sunday school movement and noticed how, until a child enters a university, most children are separated from adults during worship, a practice which results in a generational gap in worship. Above all, by the system of Korean Confirmation (Ipkyo), we saw that until a child becomes an adult, they are separated from many ceremonies and worship in the church. When we consider the history and context of the Korean Presbyterian Church, infant communion would generate severe opposition; however, if its validity and benefit for a child can be explained well to the Korean church, when we
consider the enthusiasm of education in Korea, we can cautiously expect the possibility of its practice.

Second, in regards to church history, we found that there is no decisive record about infant communion before the third century. While researching the records of Justin Martyr, Origen, Cyprian, and Augustine, even though we respect the interpretation of paedocommunionists and antipaedocommunionists, infant communion had been practiced gradually in the East and West church. Also, after Augustine until the fourth Lateran Council, infant communion was practiced throughout Europe. After that time, its practice declined. The reasons why infant communion declined include the development of the doctrines of transubstantiation and concomitance, the separation of confirmation and baptism, the pervasive thought that infant communion had no relationship with salvation, separation between chalice and laity, and scholars’ emphasis on “power of discernment” in receiving communion. While dealing deeply with these reasons, we found that infant communion did not disappear from its invalidity or futility. Also, in conclusion, because there is no decisive record of mentioning the validity of infant communion in early Christianity, the historical arguments for infant communion are inconclusive.

Third, there is no Reformed teaching or catechism which upholds infant communion. This was because in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a powerful theological assurance that the Lord’s Supper was “only to professing believers.” Calvin and Reformed theologians insisted, based on their exegesis on 1 Corinthians 11: 28-29, that the Lord’s Supper was instituted for mature believers, and would be poison
for children.¹ So here there are two presuppositions: first, a child cannot do the prerequisite of 1 Corinthians 11; second, a child cannot have faith. However, even though they emphasized a child’s possibility of having faith and continuity of covenant, they did not consistently apply it to infant communion.² Then, I studied the relationship between infant communion and infant baptism. The Reformed tradition emphasized the difference between communion and baptism. The Reformers explained that baptism was a ceremony for becoming a member of the church, communion was for continuous nurture. Also, they state that communion is active, and baptism is passive. However, Gallant and Pearcy argue that these two sacraments have a common theme in that they started from God’s grace and are based on God’s objective promise. Also, we find that these two sacraments are “signs and seals of the covenant.” So, we can conclude, even though there is a difference between baptism and communion, at the same time, they have similarity. Next, we also saw, based on 1 Corinthians 10, Frank Senn and Smedes emphasized that in the Lord’s Supper, “communal reality” is more important than “individual piety.” Therefore, as Mathison points out, in the Westminster Confession, by acting sacrament, the church is separate from the world and to prohibit the children would be a severe matter. That is to say, we saw that the matter of infant communion can proceed to the matter of unity of the body. In this respect, we confirmed, by participation of worship of covenant, children can be more well-raised and developed. Of course, I agree with Herman Bavinck that prohibiting the children from the Lord’s Supper is not eradicating the covenantal grace. However, we need to admit that the Reformers did not consistently use the foundations

¹ Institutes, 4.16.30.

² Lyle D. Bierma, “Children at the Lord’s Supper and Reformed Theology,” 4.
which were used to uphold infant baptism in dealing with the theme, infant communion; however, I cautiously surmise that this would be a lost opportunity to receive God’s covenant grace. I also researched the character of the objectivity and subjectivity of communion. Against the opinion of Roman Catholics and Lutherans who emphasized the objectivity of communion, the Reformed churches insisted on both the objectivity of the Lord’s Supper in that humanity’s unworthiness cannot rob grace in the sacrament, and its subjectivity in that the work of the Holy Spirit is required. In this respect, we cannot know how much profit infant communion gives to the infant; however, based on the work of the Holy Spirit, we can think that infant communion can be a profession of the parents that they will raise their covenant children in the presence of God. Regarding the relation of divine and human activity, we see that God’s grace is always first, but also that a subsequent confession is important. Because the sacrament does not generate faith automatically, without confession an adult cannot participate in communion, however, in the case of children, as the concept of covenant, we conclude that a child’s participation in the Lord’s Supper does not taint the grace of communion in the respect of objectivity; at the same time infant communion can be a symbolical confession that the covenant family will raise God’s covenant child in God’s Word and Christian faith. Earlier, we saw that, above all, the fact that Christ is present in the Lord’s Supper is most important, and material itself cannot contain God’s grace. Also, we thought that if a seed of faith is implanted by infant baptism, as Reformers admit to the possibility of faith in infants, by attending the Lord’s Supper, they can be nurtured and fortified. At last, while considering the remembrance and eschatology in the Lord’s Supper, we can conclude that anamnesis does not merely refer to the memory of past events, but also to how those past events
affect present reality. Also, in the respect of eschatology, communion has the attributes of a messianic banquet. Therefore, we saw that infant communion could be acted upon based on anamnesis and messianic banquet.

Fourth, drawing on the study of biblical theology, we concluded that there is no text which explicitly prohibits or supports the participation of infants in the Lord’s Supper. We studied the relationship between Passover and the Lord’s Supper. On this matter, Christian Keidel and Paul Jewett insist that it is likely that children participated in the Passover, while John Murray and Cornelis Venema, like A. Hodge and John Calvin, believe that there is no conclusive evidence that children participated in the Passover. In each case, there is no conclusive evidence to argue for or against young children at the table.

A related concern regarding biblical interpretation focuses on the phrase “recognizing [or discerning] the body” in 1 Corinthians 11:29. Based on this text, the Reformers restricted children’s participation in the Lord’s Supper only to the “professing members.” However, Christian Keidel, Jeff Weima, and Gordon Fee argue that the larger context of I Cor. 11:29 calls for a different approach, arguing that the text is designed to prevent unrepentant adults from partaking rather than to prevent believing children from partaking.

The deeper context for this is the concept of the covenant. Calvin considers infant baptism and circumcision as analogous with each one serving as a sign and seal of God’s gracious covenant. However, even though Calvin used the concept of covenant to support the validity of infant baptism, he did not consistently apply this same logic to welcome children to the Lord’s Supper. Regarding this, Bierma points out that to exclude a child
from the Lord’s Supper undermines the continuity between the New Testament and Old Testament. Regarding this, while studying the meaning and character of ἐνθ'q' and ~[; in the Old Testament, and εὐκλησία, Κύριος and συνάγωγο. Κύριος in the New Testament, we saw that God first calls his covenant people, and gave them grace. While renewing the covenant, God makes the people His people. Here we see the priority of God’s grace and sovereignty. When we become members of the covenant, it is by God’s grace, not by our own effort. In the case of a child who is born into a covenant family and baptized in the church, their entire life, including their childhood, can be an experience of covenant participation, including training and formation from the church and their parents, and age-appropriate participation at the table.

Fifth, we studied the validity of infant communion from the perspective of church education. Even though the Reformers emphasized human sin they also believed that children can have faith as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. Although the Reformers refused to welcome children to the table because of their perceptions about children’s cognitive ability, many scholars today have deeper appreciation for the capacity of children to recognize and embrace the truths of the Bible. According to James Fowler, T.H. Groome, and several other contemporary experts, children can enter deeply into the symbolic meaning of ritual actions such as the Lord’s Supper. In addition, their act of participation can, in turn, strengthen and deepen their faith, as well as serve as an inspiration and encouragement for their parents.
B. Discerning Prospects for Korean Congregations

_A Mediating Theological Position_

After reviewing each of these arguments, it is difficult to arrive at a simple solution. Part of the complexity is the fact that there are at least two outcomes that advocates of infant communion advise. Some advocate for the Eastern Orthodox practice of infant communion, with no expectation of their active participation. Others advocate welcoming young covenant children to the table to participate actively in an age-appropriate way. These two possible outcomes are frequently mingled in many of the sources cited in this thesis.

My own view is that young covenant children should be invited to participate in an age-appropriate way. In contrast to those who argue that only older covenant children or younger adults should be welcomed after making a formal, public profession of faith, I would argue that young children should be welcomed after an age-appropriate expression of faith. This could be worked out as follows. The church would invite parents of young children, perhaps ages 3-7, to consider bringing their children to the table. The church would offer age-appropriate instruction to these young children about the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, would talk with the children about their questions, and would hear the faith expressions of these children. When the Lord’s Supper is celebrated, these young children, like all participants, would be invited to express their faith as participants in the liturgy, through the songs, prayers, and acclamations of the entire congregation.

This position rests on the following convictions: First, faith is given by the work of Holy Spirit, and, as Calvin and Reformers emphasize, even little ones can have faith. Second, because young children’s thoughts and expressions are not mature, we should
not impose on them adult expectations. Third, while I Corinthians 11 does call for active engagement at the table, there is no biblical text which mandates a formal public profession of faith.

In contrast to those who would argue for welcoming all infants to the table, without any expectation of their age-appropriate participation, I would argue that it is important to insist on age-appropriate participation. This position rests on the following convictions: First, according to reformed tradition and reformers’ thoughts, the sacrament is not *ex opere operato*: the meaning and significance of the Lord’s Supper arises out of the Holy Spirit’s work in and through the participation of the people. Second, I Corinthians 11 specifically calls for the active participation of each participant by the use of first person singular imperatives (e.g, “let each of you examine yourselves”). Third, age-appropriate participation affirms the point that even young children have a cognitive ability and religious potential, and it challenges the church to teach Christian doctrine to children in an accessible way. In summary, age appropriate participation can be a wise approach for both who emphasize the profession of faith and early education for children.

**Terminology**

Given this view, I do not recommend the use of the term “infant communion.” First, this term almost inevitably implies an Orthodox sacramental theology, and it suggests that some participants, namely infants, should come to the table passively.

Second, the Korean and English terminology for infants and young children can easily create confusion. The Korean term for infants, “YoungA or Yua,” refers to
unweaned children, up to age perhaps 3 and it connotes extreme passivity, whereas “infant” in English generally refers to a baby, under 1 year of age. In contrast, the Korean term for children, (“Eerinyee”어린이), typically refers to children between 4 and 13 years old. This term connotes children with the capacity for more active engagement, though it does not yet convey a level of engagement expected of adults. I would, then, call for the use of the term “Eerinyee”(어린이) communion to convey the importance of welcoming young children to active participation at the table.

Pastoral Strategies

However, arriving at this theological conclusion is not sufficient, for we must also take into account the situation in the Korean context. In particular, we need to consider the history and the inclination of Korean Presbyterian Worship and its current situation. In order for the Korean Presbyterian Church to consider welcoming very young covenant children to the table, several processes would need to be in place.

Before the Korean Church would ever consider the possibility of infant communion, the Korean approach to liturgy and sacrament would need to be deepened. Compared to its strong emphasis on preaching and Bible study, Korea’s Presbyterian Church has placed less emphasis on sacraments. Many people have a tendency to consider liturgy as a remnant of Roman Catholicism. Before any significant discussions of infants at communion can take place, the church must learn the importance of the sacraments, understand them more deeply, and consider ways to make the Lord’s Supper both more frequent and more robust. The Korean Presbyterian Church, which honors Reformed tradition, needs to notice that Calvin insisted on the practice of weekly
communion in Geneva. Also, his writings on sacraments and his Strasbourg liturgy, shows how Calvin gives weight on not only God’s Word, but also His visible Word: sacraments. If communion remains both relatively unimportant and infrequent, discussions about infant communion will likely not be viewed as important or necessary.

In addition, the Korean Presbyterian Church should enlarge the breadth of its understanding about sacramental theology. For example, in the Lord’s Supper, there are various meanings. However, in case of the Korean Presbyterian Church, in fact by the impact of Zwingli’s symbolism and excessive pietism, people focused on Jesus’ passion in the Lord’s Supper. Of course, Jesus’ passion and death is an important factor in the Lord’s Supper. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, the Lord’s Supper has deep meaning: anamnesis and eschatology, messianic banquet, covenant meal, forgiveness of sin, and remission of sin. These multiple meanings are necessary for the discussion of infant communion. If the focus remains on remembering Jesus’ death, people will too quickly assume that infants cannot participate.

Even if the Korean Presbyterian Church does not implement infant communion, there are still several things that it could learn from this discussion. For one, the Korean Presbyterian Church can learn from the importance of sacrament, especially from the Christian initiation in a child’s formation of faith. The chapter on church education discussed the importance of seeing and hearing from the early period. Also considering Jewish customs in the Old Testament can show that participating in the worship and sacraments as a childhood can be a great opportunity for faith education. By giving more attention to these themes, the Korean Presbyterian Church could be challenged to give more consideration to church education for children.
Also, reviewing debates on the infant communion can teach of the importance of parents’ and the church community’s role in the child’s faith formation as the Reformers emphasized. Infant communion is not *ex-opere operato*. It is a sort of confession of parents and church community that they will teach their covenant posterity in the presence of God’s Word. Even though many parents make vows when their child receives infant baptism, sometimes they forget their educational duty for developing their child’s faith. This discussion can remind of parents’ and the church community of faithful teaching for the covenant children.

In addition, while reviewing debates about infant communion, the Korean Presbyterian Church could learn about the importance of intergenerational worship. In fact, in the core of the debate about infant communion, the concept of covenants is very important. According to the opinion of paedo-communionists, through the concept of continuity of covenant, children can receive baptism and participate in the church’s ceremony. Discussing infant communion highlights the importance of God’s covenants among His people. This promises to serve as an appeal for intergenerational worship which emphasizes and focuses on covenant members of families.

For all of this to happen, some additional studies will also be necessary. It will be necessary to study the practices and the theological reflections of early church fathers and Reformers regarding Christian initiation. The Korean Presbyterian Church honors the church fathers’ thoughts and Reformed tradition. By seeing that in the early church Christian initiation includes infant baptism, infant communion, and confirmation at the same time, church leaders and members can gain a wider understanding about sacramental theology.
Relatedly, in the respect to systematic theology, scholars should study the similarities and differences between infant baptism and infant communion while considering the concept of covenant theology. Scholars especially need to prove why reformers did repudiate children’s participation in communion, even though they admit to the practice of infant baptism based on the concept of covenants. At the same time, it is required to study a child’s membership in the church.

Finally, the Korean Presbyterian Church needs to prove the necessity and validity of intergeneration worship in respect to theology. The Korean Presbyterian Church especially needs to reconsider the present Korean Ipkyo system. According to the present system, it is natural that a child be separate from congregational worship and sacrament. Also, it is required for one to study how to include several generations in the worship while honoring children’s cognitive development and their Sunday school. In addition, developing a detailed program and instructions for diminishing the generational gap is important.

However, all things need to proceed in a way in which everyone respects each other so together they can build the virtue of the church. Because of this, there is no compulsory law about this issue.
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