

‘Colony of Heaven’: Abraham Kuyper’s Ecclesiology in the Twenty-First Century

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This article offers a concise exposition of the ecclesiology of Abraham Kuyper. Focusing extensively on Kuyper’s doctrines of the church as both institute and organism as well as on ecclesiological pluriformity, the enduring relevance of Kuyper’s vision is shown for our present context, both in the Netherlands and the United States. Contrary to neo-Calvinist critiques of the twentieth century, the term *institute* is just as contextually bound as *organism*—yet this does not negate the usefulness of either concept. Rather, it is the task of the church to adapt itself to the concrete circumstances of each place and age, even employing ideas from each context as appropriate. With reservations regarding his neglect of the liturgical character of the church, Kuyper’s distinctions are expounded and set forward as helpful ecclesiological guidelines for modern Christian social witness today.

Introduction: Kuyper’s Ecclesiology Today?

What could the meaning of the ecclesiology of Abraham Kuyper be in the twenty-first century? Most of Kuyper’s writings about the church originate in the nineteenth century and mark important moments in the development of Kuyper’s ecclesial thought. Kuyper’s ecclesiology was closely related to its own context. For example, the most comprehensive of these writings, the *Tractaat*, does not consist of a balanced discourse on the nature of the church but primarily offers a theological justification of the *Doleantie*, a church secession that Kuyper would initiate only a few years later. Its final section even offers a similar plan of action.¹ Does an ecclesiology as contextually colored as Kuyper’s have meaning for today?

To find an answer to that question, I will take the following steps. First, I will elaborate on the problem a little further by giving an impression of our present context and by raising questions about the usual interpretations of Kuyper's work. Second, I will concentrate on Kuyper's writings themselves, especially on *Twofold Fatherland*, to expose some basic lines of Kuyper's vision. My point of entrance lies with his intriguing characterization of the church as a "colony of heaven." Third, I will uncover the background of this expression and explain that according to Kuyper different contexts should lead to different applications of his basic views. This paves the way to show that Kuyper's interpreters have sometimes neglected the importance of the church as "institute" or "institution," which for him matches the importance of the church as "organism." Then, a discussion of Kuyper's doctrine of the pluriformity of the church follows. Finally, I will return to the question of the meaning of Kuyper's ecclesiology for today.

Kuyper's Turn to the Church

In order to find an answer to the question of whether Kuyper's ecclesiology could be of importance within the context of current ecclesiological reflection, at least two traits of that current context have to be considered.² The first consists of the opinion of a growing group of theologians who, in the face of the postmodern and post-Christian era in Western society, hold that traditional church forms have had their day. Traditional churches are judged too institutionally limited and belong to an age during which the church possessed a natural, dominant, and widely acknowledged status in society and culture. Instead, today new church forms are needed—forms that are open, small, and flexible or "liquid." A variety of emerging churches have turned up. They do not rely on the structures and practices of the past but experiment with new forms for a changed age. Meanwhile, some more traditional churches have also adopted some of their features.

The second trait is formed by the renewed reflection on the relationship between church and society that arose during recent decades.³ The contrast between secularists and those who advocate the public significance of religion invigorates contemporary debate. The rise of Islam, a new flourishing of religion among non-Western immigrants, and the popularity of alternative forms of spirituality among once-secularized citizens contribute to this. Within the parameters of this debate, most Christians opt for an approach that emphasizes the public relevance of religion as a binder or moral compass for society. This is done to the cost of a certain adaptation to the public domain, which requires churches themselves with their more pronounced religious messages and habits to keep some distance

from the public sphere. Instead, individual believers or faith-based organizations represent the public meaning of religion.

Explicitly contrasted with this view, however, another approach has recently gained some ground. It stresses the public identity of churches and warns them not to adjust themselves to the preconditions of the postmodern surroundings. Stanley Hauerwas, for example, sees the church as an alternative, contrasting society that precisely as such will be important for society.⁴ Within the post-Christian context, the church should not aspire to retain as much power or influence as possible. Such a strategy would spoil it and does not reflect the fact that, for followers of Jesus as the Lamb, a minority status, even a martyr position, should be considered as normal. The church on earth repeats in its own manner the way of Christ. Only after it has carried the cross will glory follow. This reconfiguration of the church's public calling easily converges with the aforementioned movement toward new small-scale church forms. The influence in question can be detected among other traditions that usually take a positive stance on the legitimacy of public responsibilities for Christians, including contemporary Kuyperians or neo-Calvinists.⁵

At first sight, these two accents seem to be at odds with Kuyper's ecclesiology. Kuyper approaches the church from two perspectives: as an organism and as an institution. The first is usually understood as referring to the community of Christians being active within a multitude of creational and societal spheres, often through the formation of Christian organizations. The second denotes the church in the usual sense of the word. It finds its center in the ministry of the Word, is led by office bearers, and refrains from exercising direct influence on the public domain. As a matter of fact, the latter would be difficult as this institutional church, according to Kuyper, by definition is divided and pluriform. To which of the many denominations, for example, should a government lend its ears? Kuyper's stress on the church as the organism manifesting as the vehicle of public action seems to leave the church as institution in no other place than the private sphere. Simultaneously, Kuyper's acceptance of the institutional character of the church in fact remains traditional in orientation and therefore conflicts with contemporary demands for deinstitutionalization.

At first sight, these impressions are reinforced by criticisms of Kuyper's ecclesiology that arose within mid-twentieth-century Dutch neo-Calvinism itself. Adherents of the theological visions provided by Klaas Schilder denounced Kuyper's distinction between the terms *organism* and *institution*.⁶ Especially the idea of organism in their view originated from philosophy and did not suit the ecclesiology of the Bible and the Reformed confessions. They also abhorred his doctrine of pluriformity, which they considered to be incompatible with the

biblical emphasis on the unity of the church. According to these earlier critics, Kuyper also undervalued the institutional church, especially in its public societal role. These critics remained faithful to the Kuyperian body of Christian organizations but at the same time connected these tightly to the church as institution. They even considered one of these institutional churches to be the “true church.” This true church presented itself as public in character through a range of church-based organizations.⁷ It turns out that this earlier accent on the church as an institution within Dutch neo-Calvinism in some ways parallels the aforementioned contemporary twist to the church. This is not surprising given the fact that Barth’s dialectical theology plays a role in the background of both. Contemporary post-liberal theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas rely directly on him, while Schilder, being a harsh critic of Barth, nonetheless shared central structural features of his theology. These comprise an exclusive approach from God’s verbal revelation and an antithetical relation to modern secularizing and weakened Christian culture.

Interestingly, some contemporary American neo-Calvinists currently display a movement similar to that which Schilder shows, emphasizing the church as institution. For example, Richard J. Mouw relativizes the distance between organism and institution.⁸ He recalls that the spheres in which the church as organism is supposed to act sometimes fail. Christians then do not succeed in creating an independent form of organic life. In such circumstances, the church as an institution could jump in and take over this responsibility. Mouw notes the example of Redeemer Church in New York, which supports a community of Christian artists in this way. Mouw presents this idea as a step beyond Kuyper, who according to him, more or less confined the church as institution to the private sphere.⁹ This interpretation of Kuyper’s ecclesiology, however, is questionable. One of the contentions of this article is that such a movement to the church as institution is already implied in Kuyper’s own views.¹⁰ This, at the same time, challenges the criticisms of Schilder and his school. Moreover, if it proves true, the relevance of Kuyper’s ecclesiology for today could become apparent in a new way.

My interpretation of Kuyper’s ecclesiology finds its point of departure in an intriguing characterization of the church from his lecture *Twofold Fatherland*, in which he refers to the church on earth as “a colony of heaven.”¹¹ This characterization returns in a passage from *E Voto Dordraceno*.¹² It suggests a greater proximity between Kuyper and contemporary ecclesiologies than is generally assumed. Exactly the same typification of the church happens to be central to Hauerwas.¹³ Considering this expression in its context will guide us toward a particular theological interpretation of Kuyper’s ecclesiology. Today, such theological interpretations of Kuyper have to be defended. The interpretation of

Kuyper has been largely dominated by historians since the thorough systematic study of Van Leeuwen.¹⁴ This yielded valuable insights, including the fact that Kuyper's thought developed through many changing circumstances and should not be approached as a monolithic system. Historians are justified in criticizing systematic studies of Kuyper that collect and connect separate data from very different periods of his life while neglecting their contextuality.¹⁵ Meanwhile the opposing danger became imminent, namely, that Kuyper's basic theological structure of thought is undervalued. This could be reinforced when his views are one-sidedly considered to be strategically motivated or serving rhetorical purposes.¹⁶ His later great systematic works such as *Common Grace*¹⁷ and *Lectures on Calvinism*¹⁸ then are insufficiently used as interpretative keys that uncover implicit theological structures within the previous work. This is all the more the case when we also include Kuyper's late work *Pro Rege*¹⁹ within these key publications. *Pro Rege* has sometimes been undervalued within Kuyper's oeuvre.²⁰ It is thought to contain no new insights, to deviate from his earlier work, and to reflect a rather pessimistic mood of an aging and disappointed man.²¹ Nevertheless, Kuyper himself had already announced this work in *Common Grace*. He notes the fact that questions about the relationship between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ are still insufficiently clarified and expresses the desirability of a separate study on these matters.²² *Pro Rege* proves to be important precisely in the contexts of Kuyper's ecclesiology, the relationships between church and kingdom, and church and public domain. At the same time, the interpretation of Kuyper in the present article confirms the contextual character of Kuyper's ecclesiology that the historians have uncovered and even builds on it. Kuyper himself deliberately reflected on possible applications of his theological ideas in different contexts. He was aware of the impending post-Christian world and even hints at different conclusions that such a new context would ask for. Again, I conclude that a fruitful exchange between Kuyper's ecclesiology and the current debates seems to be possible.

Twofold Fatherland

In his lecture *Twofold Fatherland*, Kuyper states: "God Almighty and only he had a right to the glory from the earthly fatherland as well as the church, which, as a colony of the heavenly fatherland, now lives in a strange land, far from her Lord."²³ Combining elements of biblical utterances from Paul's letters to the Philippians (3:20) and to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:6), Kuyper considers a Christian to be a citizen of two homelands, in both of which he has to deal with God. The earthly homeland originated from God's common grace. As king of

creation and history, God remained faithful to the execution of his eternal counsel. In the world after the fall he encounters evil and facilitates the development of creational potentials. According to Kuyper, the original creation would have been one entity under God as its unifying king. Within the framework of that unity, created life would have grown gradually into a rich multiplicity of different spheres of life, each with its own character.²⁴ This multiplicity of creation, with each sphere directly depending on God's sovereignty, would have reflected the rich and profound diversity of God's own Trinitarian life. When he created the world, God communicated this life to creation through his Son, the eternal Word, who occupied the position of mediator of creation.²⁵

In order to make the unfolding of this life possible even after the fall, God in his grace broke the overall unity of humankind and created separate peoples, governments, and states. Without such a measure, mankind would have united in the wrong way, namely, in evil. Since the fall, creation has become "world" with the devil as its "ruler." Without divine intervention this state of affairs would have led to a devastating manifestation of sin and evil and to—as Kuyper says—a "curse of uniformity."²⁶ This would render God's intended multiform development impossible. Therefore, God responded to sin with an action of common grace. Thereof the existence of an earthly fatherland is a fruit. This makes clear that this earthly homeland as such does not fit God's original creational intentions nor does it belong to his kingdom for the "age to come." It is fundamentally temporary in character. Nevertheless, the reason for its existence is the task it has to fulfill during history in service of this coming kingdom in which creational possibilities will return in a restored and consummated form.²⁷

The heavenly homeland, on the other hand, has a different background, namely God's particular grace in Christ. God's eternal counsel works in fallen humanity and creation in a second way. Through his Son Jesus Christ, reconciliation of sin is established and new life from heaven enters creation. Christ is not only mediator of creation but also of salvation. All the elect may participate in Christ's heavenly life. Their first birth from an earthly father is followed by a second birth—a regeneration—from the heavenly Father. Kuyper calls this regeneration the "invisible commencement" of a heavenly country.²⁸ In the life of the coming age it will be full grown to become the new earthly reality of the kingdom of God.

At this point, it is important to highlight emphatically that Kuyper speaks of God's kingdom and kingship in a double sense.²⁹ In the first place, he refers to God's general kingship as a reality since the creation of the world. In his providence, God continues his omnipotent reign over all creatures. Second, however, through Christ, God started a quest to recapture the fallen world and take it away from the "ruler of this world," in order to ultimately implement

the one pluriform world society under his authority that had been his objective from the beginning.³⁰ This coming reality is meant when the Bible speaks about the “kingdom of God.”³¹ Its character is basically future, but, at the same time, it is already advancing during history. For Kuyper, the “heavenly fatherland” denotes the same reality as this coming kingdom of God. Interpreters of Kuyper sometimes neglect this distinction within the concept of kingdom by wrongly considering God’s general kingship over creation as synonymous with the kingdom that Christ brings and that he as mediator will hand over to his Father.³² In this kingdom of the future, according to Kuyper, the division of the nations will have been overcome. He quotes the old Dutch translation of Revelation 11, where it says that then all the kingdoms will have become the Lord’s.³³ Earthly homelands will no longer exist; only the heavenly fatherland will remain but then also as an earthly reality.³⁴

In order to understand the nature of this heavenly homeland, the preparatory function of the Old Testament people of Israel should come into view.³⁵ God chose one of the earthly nations to prepare and model the coming state of affairs. In Israel, he established a theocratic political entity under his direct rule. Through Israel the new heavenly life of Christ could enter this fallen world from above and conquer a place to become a recreating force. God brought him into this world as king of the heavenly fatherland. From him as the head, the members of his body would derive new life.³⁶ His birth, death, resurrection, and ascension mark his inauguration as king of the age to come. Since Jesus’ ascension, this preparatory function for Israel has ended, the new fatherland in principle having been erected already in heaven. From there, it influences the occupied earth in order to reconquer it for the kingdom. The first fruit of this influence is the church, born at Pentecost. It forms the earthly bridgehead of the heavenly homeland. In the church, the new humanity for the coming kingdom begins.³⁷ It is called to participate in the conquest of its king Christ. It is striking how emphatically Kuyper compares the church with an army and displays a certain preference for military imagery as he discusses its vocation.³⁸ Through the church, the king of the heavenly fatherland recaptures the earth and ultimately recreates it as the kingdom of God. By means of the church, according to Kuyper, the new life penetrates into the world’s joints (literally from the Dutch: “wrestles” itself through the “seams” of fallen creation).³⁹ At the same time, the church must acknowledge that God placed it on earth, with the consequence that it also has to do with his general ruling power and with the common grace with which he has acted on earth since the fall. Therefore, Christians are not only citizens of a heavenly homeland but also of an earthly fatherland. The latter should be respected as an ordinance of God in which they are called to bear responsibility.

Now Kuyper's expression "colony of heaven" can be understood. The church consists of people who are at home in heaven where their Father lives and where their Head reigns as king. Their destination lies with the kingdom of the "age to come," and yet they are called to live on earth in service of God the creator and as instruments of Jesus' renewing work.

Background

This brief sketch, derived from Kuyper's lecture *Twofold Fatherland*, contains some of the main lines of Kuyper's theology. They all return—albeit in more explicit form—in his later works and belong to the basic structure of his thought.⁴⁰ Yet, this structure is not timeless, being influenced not only by the successive contextual circumstances during the different stages of Kuyper's career, as historians have shown, but also because Kuyper himself explicitly differentiated between contexts. Different contexts in his judgment require varying theological accents. Kuyper's elaboration of his own basic thought structure was closely related to the picture he had formed of the period in which he lived. With his characterization of the church as "colony of heaven," Kuyper makes an emphatic choice in view of the situation of his own time.

This expression for him comprises two simultaneous accents associated with the two front lines on which he operates in this lecture and in many of his other works. He contrasts his own Calvinist position with the Anabaptists and the Moderates. Interestingly enough, his sympathy for the Anabaptist position stands out.⁴¹ The Anabaptists are right to consider the heavenly homeland as the most fundamental one and the church as sojourning on earth. Christians are pilgrims with a "poignant homesickness," singing the chorus: "Come, Lord, come quickly."⁴² Yet Kuyper criticizes the Anabaptists for their dualistic basic position in which the kingdom of God is not only antithetical to sin but to creation as such. They expect no re-creation but an entirely new creation without relation to the first world. Therefore, they highly praise the heavenly homeland, while shunning the responsibilities of the earthly life, often despite themselves because in their personal lives they prove to be vulnerable to secularizing influences. Several times Kuyper counters their position by first admitting that Christians are indeed pilgrims but afterward adding that this is not the only biblical image for Christians and that these pilgrims nonetheless have a formidable task to perform on earth.⁴³ His lecture *Twofold Fatherland* was meant precisely to motivate his fellow Christians for an aspect of that formidable task.

The lecture was Kuyper's contribution during the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Free University, which he himself had founded. How important the earthly

homeland is for Kuyper becomes clear when we hear him saying that it includes a multitude of spheres of life, including science. The university he founded was meant to help recapture this life sphere of science for Christ's kingdom. During those years, the Free University still was laughably small and stood exposed to ridicule in the homeland. In addition, it was threatened from within by pride, lack of readiness for sacrifice, and a tendency to adapt to the world. Kuyper saw the risk that some Calvinists let themselves be tempted by the Anabaptist position and hence their commitment to the university would diminish. Implicit and yet clear in his lecture is the claim that the work at and around the university also belongs to the "immense task" that the colony of heaven yet has to perform in the earthly homeland.⁴⁴

Kuyper refers to Moderates as those who in the nineteenth century continued the claim of the Netherlands as a Christian nation and focused on the national church as being tightly connected to the earthly homeland. As long as the heavenly future was still waiting to come, according to them, this Christian nation provided the framework for the development of human life. By consequence, they accepted that the government of the earthly homeland could exert authority within the church. This church had to include all citizens as much as was possible. The spiritual dilution that this entails was to be countered only through "medical" means of gradual change and improvement. They rejected any form of reformation possibly leading to church division—including the *Doleantie* that Kuyper had led a year earlier. Science and the arts, in their view, were also at home in the general framework of the earthly fatherland. This vision thus ruled out a separate Calvinist university like Kuyper's.⁴⁵ With these Moderates, Kuyper shared the involvement in the earthly homeland and the commitment to the development of creational life, but at the same time for his societal ambitions and for the Free University their position implied an even greater threat than the Anabaptist view. They did no justice to the distinct character of the heavenly fatherland and forgot, in fact, that the church is a colony of heaven that only sojourns on earth. This means that with the characterization "colony of heaven" Kuyper, to a certain extent, sides with the Anabaptists against the Moderates of his day.

This reservation toward the Moderate position and this relative proximity to what today would be called an "Anabaptist option"⁴⁶ is confirmed by the manifold critical references Kuyper makes to Constantine the Great in his works. They cover almost all periods of his development. His judgment about Constantine and the Constantinian arrangement is nearly always outspokenly critical because of the intermingling of church and state that in more than one way resulted from it. Whoever is acquainted with present-day discussions about Christendom and Constantinianism, related for example to the work of Yoder and Hauerwas to the

context of the emerging churches, cannot help but see a certain affinity between them and Kuyper.⁴⁷ Notwithstanding this similarity, however, Kuyper rejects the dualism of such “Anabaptist options.” Without reservation, he accepts a public calling of the church in a very Augustinian manner. Viewed in contemporary terms, we should not consider Kuyper to be a full ally of positions like that of Hauerwas, but better we could compare him, as Peter Heslam once hinted, with a contemporary Augustinian like the English political theologian Oliver O’Donovan.⁴⁸

Kuyper’s Vision of His Own Times

Although we now have positioned Kuyper against two fronts, the contextual character of his theological choices is still not sufficiently clarified. To that aim we have to evaluate his utterances about possible times and circumstances during which the respective strategies of both Moderates and Anabaptists would be more adequate than he judges them to be in his time. According to Kuyper, the basic concepts of his Calvinism could lead to diverse applications, depending on the conditions that exist in God’s providence within a society.

In an ideal constellation, harmonious relationships would develop between the heavenly fatherland (with the church as its colony) and the earthly homeland. That ideal situation is typified by Kuyper as a form of *theocracy*—using this term in a different sense than is usually given. He imagines a “New Testament theocracy” in contrast to the theocracy in Israel.⁴⁹ This would be conceivable when a nation as a whole commits itself to the kingdom of the Lord, not in the form of a superficial outward Christian culture but by real personal faith and confession of its citizens. Such a people, with its rulers, then would actually be part of the church. Even then, earthly and heavenly homelands were to be distinguished, but within both God’s rule would be acknowledged and his glory would be served. The earthly homeland would recognize its origin in God’s general government and common grace for fallen creation along with its task to control evil and to provide the conditions for the development of creation that God desires. That would make it ready to serve the kingdom of God and God’s special grace that he administers through the church. This would imply making room for the gospel, for publicly acknowledging God’s authority, and for drawing on the wisdom of God’s revelation for the fulfillment of its task and the content of its legislation as much as possible.⁵⁰ Yet such a state would have to respect the freedom of conscience of its citizens and not press the population beyond its moral potential. Kuyper refers to this ideal not only in *Twofold Fatherland* but also in many other parts of his work. Sometimes he even allows for a cer-

tain governmental influence in the church, arguing that authorities as church members will be honored specially due to their office in the earthly homeland. Also astonishing is the possibility of financial support from the government to the church that he on certain conditions appears to accept, a practice he fiercely opposed in the actual nineteenth-century Dutch circumstances.⁵¹ The church, in turn, would realize that it possesses no fixed place on earth but yet is called to fight there for God's kingdom. It would acknowledge the function of the earthly homeland that, in its own manner, also serves Christ's kingdom. In no way should the church strive for political authority. Rather, it would influence and instruct its members as individuals and so help ensure that these persons would draw on the wisdom of the Word while executing their public duties. At the same time, it would educate its members to honor the earthly homeland and its institutions and train them in public virtues and in the willingness to take on public responsibilities. In such circumstances, separate Christian communities and organizations would be unnecessary because the earthly homeland as a whole would offer a platform for influencing fallen created life with the new life of regeneration.⁵² The distinction between earthly and heavenly homeland would still be in force, and such a state of affairs could not be characterized as a theocracy in the proper sense of the word. Nevertheless, without coercion and stemming from spiritual regeneration, both nation and church would be in accord to acknowledge God's authority and glory. This opens up a new possibility for speaking about theocracy. We would have a free church and a free nation, each independently fulfilling its task under God's sovereignty, with the result that God's authority defines the whole of their earthly homeland.

With these considerations, Kuyper not only engages in a thought experiment but also refers to a few periods of history in which a nation came close to this ideal situation.⁵³ Admittedly, at the same time he sharply criticized the church in those contexts for not actually stopping at the aforesaid model but instead going further to repeat the error of Rome at the national level by intermingling the two homelands.⁵⁴ This, however, only confirms that a better constellation would have been possible. Also noteworthy is that he believes himself to recognize examples of the ideal in his own times. He explicitly recalls the situations in various states within the United States where he sees the accomplishment of his ideal of a free church in a free nation publicly acknowledging God. Until the end of his life, Kuyper maintained this idealized image of America, as becomes clear in *AR-Staatkunde*.⁵⁵

For the Dutch context of his own day, however, Kuyper judges such a constellation to be no longer possible. The Netherlands is "not or no longer purely Christian."⁵⁶ Only a part of its population consists of believers. Governmental

positions no longer are occupied by Reformed confessors honoring the Reformed church. Kuyper notices a secularization that results in a situation where faith no longer provides direction for public life. Therefore, the structures and institutions of the nation no longer offer the platform for the advance of the new life into fallen creation. Instead, even the church itself has been affected by the secularization of the earthly homeland, so that secularism unfortunately also penetrated the colony of heaven. For the earthly homeland, it is no longer possible to function as a vehicle for the battle of the heavenly fatherland or church. These new circumstances should be accepted as a given under God's providence. They lead Kuyper to the two accents that have characterized his life's struggle. In the first place, the now corroded church had to be reformed again, and, in the second place, under the influence of this church, new community forms had to be created within the different areas of life to facilitate a newly modified way of influencing fallen creation with the new life of Christ. Against this background, and contra Augustijn, we should interpret Kuyper's famous system of Christian organizations, including the Free University, for which he presents a legitimation in passing with this argument.⁵⁷

Set against this background, it has become clear that this famous Kuyperian model by itself was never intended as the only justified application of his basic ideas for all contexts. It was the concretization that followed from his analysis of his nineteenth-century context. Typical of the tentative character of his applications is the self-correction that we encountered above. Kuyper interrupts himself when characterizing Dutch society as "no longer Christian." He nuances this remark with "no longer purely Christian." Kuyper senses the direction of the cultural movements around him and knows that a no longer publicly Christian society will eventually develop, but at the same time, he forces himself to acknowledge the fact that the final phase of this development has not yet been reached. Therefore, a very specific context comes into view to which his public theology becomes tailored. His thought responds specifically to such a time of transition. From his ecclesiology, he develops a public theology for a situation of "halfway" secularization or dechristianization.

This is confirmed by other statements in which Kuyper prophesies that things will become much worse but that this future is "not yet" imminent. For those worse days to come, he reserves different inferences from his theologically basic lines that actually come close to the previously mentioned Anabaptist position. Hints of these are spread throughout Kuyper's entire oeuvre but thus far have not been very influential in interpreting Kuyper.⁵⁸ In *Twofold Fatherland*, they can be detected at two moments. The first of these comes into sight when Kuyper describes that there is a persistent inclination for earthly homelands to become

instruments of Satan and sin. Then they no longer conceive of themselves as a temporary means of God's common grace that is meant to serve the coming kingdom of Christ but instead they absolutize themselves and serve the kingdom of this world. Wherever this happens, the church should prepare for suffering and martyrdom. As a colony of the heavenly fatherland, the church must then take up its cross and bear witness to the government about the coming kingdom that is not of this world. To Kuyper, such an attitude is not restricted to situations of direct state idolatry or persecution, for states can also take up such an attitude in a more covert way, even under the banner of Christian pretensions. Even Christians can glorify the state power as the highest, or proclaim the "common interest" as binding for everyone. Christians, too, sometimes limit religion to the private sphere or allow it in the public domain only in a modified form, for example, one controlled by the prevailing public morality. Kuyper does not depict such a situation as only a remote theoretical possibility with which Christians in his own days have no contact. Instead, he states that his own days are the time of the "release" of the demons and therefore a "hard time," in which struggle is inevitable.⁵⁹

This creates the transition to the second moment in *Twofold Fatherland* where Kuyper considers a deteriorating situation for Christians. Between the earthly and the heavenly homelands an insoluble conflict could arise. Such a situation leaves the church as a colony of heaven with no other option than to withdraw from the public life of the earthly homeland. Kuyper then presents an assessment of his own time when he says that "for such a choice, nowadays we are not placed." He illustrates this with a few observations, all of which strike us as being contextual. Despite secularization and pressure to adjust, he says, the church is still granted freedom of speech and confession. We have *not yet* been confronted with direct persecution. We have to *see* the good that God still gives.⁶⁰ At the end of his lecture, he returns to these accents. Thanks to the courage that God gave us, he says, we have *not yet* renounced the hope of a better (earthly) future.⁶¹ These statements are so contextually colored that they make it clear that Kuyper could imagine a moment that this better future for the Dutch nation was not to be expected and pursued anymore, but rather that other priorities would appear at the forefront. Kuyper even believes that such courage for residents of Belgium, Italy, or Spain would be inappropriate. Only the fact that the Netherlands received a very particular history from God in which more grace was granted than to other nations justifies these expectations. In the Netherlands there was a strong and lasting aftereffect of the Reformed tradition. The combination of the special position of the Dutch in the family of nations and Kuyper's observations on his own time cause him to persist a little longer with

his public strivings. Although the time has come to break with the traditional national embedded deployment of the colony of heaven, it is still too early for a more or less “Anabaptist” retreat into a Christian colony. Apparently, Kuyper has reasons to believe that the movement of secularism can be slowed down or even temporarily reversed.

What are those reasons? In this lecture he offers no further clarification besides the few remarks at the end. In his later writings, however, he fully makes up for this.⁶² Kuyper distinguished between *general* common grace and *progressive* common grace. The first applies to all nations. With it, God restricts the consequences of sin and keeps life livable. With progressive common grace, however, God guarantees that even under the conditions of the fall the unfolding and development of creation will persist. It is similar to a relay race during which other nations take the baton of progress. After Christ’s ascension, this movement received an extra boost. From then on, the new life, originating in the particular grace and the service of the church, is present on earth and exerts a sideways stimulating effect on the course of this progressive common grace. Kuyper notices how different cultures and peoples have successively acted as bearers of this development. After Southern European Catholicism came Nordic European Lutheranism, which in turn was followed by the Calvinism of the Netherlands, England, and Scotland that in Kuyper’s own days crossed the ocean to reach its climax in America. Kuyper’s frequent jubilant comments about America should be seen in this framework. In the United States, especially, he saw Calvinism’s basic ideas almost perfectly realized in the form of a free church and a free nation. Without dominating the state, the church is generally honored and society is permeated with faith. After reaching its summit in America, however, Kuyper expects progressive common grace to collapse again as soon as the great eschatological crisis, about which the Bible speaks, commences. The Antichrist will appear on the stage. Christian America will collide, he says, with the emerging Islamic and Asian nations.⁶³ In an eschatological battle at first sight, the whole historical outcome of common grace will be lost again. The church will endure severe persecution, even to the extent that temporarily Christ will have to take up his earthly colony into heaven.⁶⁴ Then the final judgment will come through which Christ judges the world and the devil, its “superior.” At that time, according to Kuyper, the end of the existing states and governments will also have come. In the last days, they will have sided completely with the “superior” of this world. Then Jesus will found his one global kingdom over which he alone will execute authority. In that one kingdom, he brings back creation in a re-created form in which the complete and seemingly lost fruit of God’s progressive common grace

will be preserved. Within the setting of the unity of his rule the pluriformity and variety will flourish, as had been God's original purpose for creation.⁶⁵

This grand narrative about world history provides the background for Kuyper's evaluation of his own time. It explains why we see him wrestle several times with the question of whether the Enlightenment could, perhaps, already indicate the beginning of this end and herald the coming of the Antichrist.⁶⁶ He does not rule out this possibility immediately, and this implies that his public theology might have developed into a very different arrangement. Nevertheless, he has reasons to conclude that the Enlightenment does not usher in the eschatological future, so that a continuing Christian public struggle remains meaningful. The Enlightenment, in his view, is a parasite reliant on Christian truth and is not in itself religious. According to the Bible, however, the final battle will be directly religious in nature. Moreover, he notices how the Calvinist inheritance, granted by God to the world through the Netherlands, enters a period of great flourishing in the United States that, in turn, summons his expectation that the time of the great struggle has *not yet* come and that the era of Calvinism by conclusion *cannot yet* be over. This leads to his faith that God, in the wake of America, perhaps even in the Netherlands will *still* grant Calvinism an extended period of flourishing through to the renewed commitment of its Calvinist "colony of heaven."⁶⁷ Kuyper therefore urges Christians that they should *not yet* take to the catacombs but choose an application of his basic ideas that suits such an interim situation where both directions are still possible. Therefore, his strategy clearly responds to a context of halfway dechristianization. His new form of Calvinism, with an ecclesiology that opens up a third way between a national church model and an Anabaptist church model, is perfectly suited to this specific context.

However, this implies that whoever endeavors to apply Kuyper's model today cannot confine his efforts to an adoption and repetition of Kuyper's strategies. Like Kuyper himself, he will need a theological evaluation of his own context. Only then could it become clear what Kuyper's thoughts would imply today.

Institute and Organism

The preceding text has shown that Kuyper imagines a context in which the church will be forced to abandon much of its public struggle for the kingdom and retreat into the colony. That puts us in the middle of one of the central themes of his ecclesiology, namely, the distinction between the church as an organism and as an institution. Should the church renounce its public struggle and retreat into the colony, then in Kuyper's terms this would imply a concentration on the institute.

Remarkably, however, this distinction does not seem to be prominent in *Twofold Fatherland*. Contrary to most of the major themes of Kuyper's thought, the two central elements of his church doctrine seem to be absent: the distinction between organism and institute and the doctrine of pluriformity. The first was developed in *Geworteld en Gegron*d, his inaugural sermon to the congregation of Amsterdam, but after that disappeared from his writings for many years.⁶⁸ Its omission from the *Tractaat* is particularly striking because according to Kuyper himself this publication offered a compendium of his ecclesiology.⁶⁹ Yet these observations could also encourage us to reconsider the usual interpretation of Kuyper's distinction between organism and institution. Usually his stress on the church as organism is considered to be primary. That the church is also an institution is taken for granted because no one would doubt it, but the theory about its organic character is judged to be Kuyper's innovative contribution to ecclesiology. Through this distinction, Kuyper would grant to modernity that the church as an institution should be kept in the private sphere, but, at the same time, he more than compensates for this loss by finding new ways for the organic Christian community to be publicly present and influential. This interpretation easily leads to deconstructive remarks about utterances in which Kuyper seems to hold high views on the church as institute. For example, his opening speech at a synod after the *Vereniging*, in which Kuyper stressed the all-important character of the church as institute, is considered by some as being merely tactical.⁷⁰ In those days, he was involved in collective Christian public action for which his view on the church as organism provided a strong foothold. However, within former *Afgescheiden* circles, worries arose that Kuyper's church doctrine downplayed the importance of the institute. His address to the synod, indeed, contained a remarkably pronounced stress on the importance of the latter. Yet, this should not be judged as merely tactical or rhetorical. It just points to an aspect of Kuyper's doctrine of the church that really was as important to him as were his thoughts about the church as organism, which in those days received more attention because of his practical involvements.

This is reflected in the *Tractaat*. In itself, it is not strange that this book pays less attention to the church as organism. It is all about the reformation of the church, which regards its institutional dimension. That could explain the absence of the distinction itself. However, we will discover that although the term *organism* is absent, the matter itself is not. The point is that, more than some interpretations allow for, it is closely connected to the institutional dimension. For Kuyper, the institute really was the actual church.

The recent edition of Kuyper's *Commentatio*, a work he wrote as a student, has made clear that from the beginning Kuyper adopted the concept of "organ-

ism.” In fact, despite his youth, he seems to be the first Dutch theologian who borrowed this from German idealism, especially from Schleiermacher.⁷¹ In the *Commentatio*, it functions as a reinforcement of Kuyper’s then existing preference for the ecclesiology of Johannes a Lasco above that of Calvin. It helped him conceive of the church as a local community of free people in whom Christ indwells and with whom he shares his new life. This life will unfold itself freely and spontaneously and therefore should not be controlled from above by a foreign structure.⁷² Kuyper then considered the institutional dimension of the church to be nonessential and even destined to disappear. The young Kuyper took over the modern Hegelian concept of the community of a free people within the context of the modern state as the major goal of history. The destination of the church and the fulfillment of its existence would lie in this community. As soon as it appears—and many thought this to be happening in the nineteenth century!—the church as a separate institute could vanish.⁷³

Kuyper always remained true to several of these views even after the radical change in the vision of Calvin that he underwent as a pastor in the village of Beesd. At that time, Kuyper learned to understand Calvin’s emphasis on God’s counsel and sovereignty as being precisely the condition of the free church that he kept searching for.⁷⁴ In this light, it is certainly justified that most Kuyper interpreters stress the importance of his notion of “organism.” The basic identity of the church lies in the fact that it forms the nucleus of the new humanity that grows from the indwelling Christ and the life that he administers and is therefore “organic” in character. In fact, to Kuyper the first humanity, originating in Adam and in the life God invested in him, formed such an organism. Many dimensions cooperate in this concept of organism.⁷⁵ Typical for an organism are, among other things, its free development that results in the emergence of the multiplicity of created life. At the same time, an organism remains a special form of unity and community that does not exclude but rather includes this multiplicity. The church as an organism consists of all those who are connected to Christ in a hidden or mystical way. This union with Christ also binds them to each other like a body (which is an organism). Later, Kuyper combined his early Schleiermacherian appreciation of spontaneous spiritual life from within and his Lascian emphasis on the local community of free believers with Calvin’s stress on God’s counsel and sovereignty. Then he considered the unfolding of this life as stemming from God’s eternal counsel and thus bound to God’s eternal thoughts (which he saw embodied in creation in the form of ordinances). In God’s eternal counsel, Christ was appointed as the source of this life, both in the function of mediator of creation and mediator of redemption. Freedom and spontaneity of life are not weakened by God’s sovereignty but rather are truly made possible by it. All different

life-forms, in all their creational multiplicity, exist in direct dependence on God's sovereignty, so that no foreign powers may intervene. The deepest roots of Kuyper's famous doctrine of sphere sovereignty are found here.⁷⁶ In addition to this, his idea that the church as an institution would at some point have its day, remained in Kuyper's thought after his conversion to Calvinism. However, unlike its former version, this no longer involved a time within the framework of history, let alone modernity. Only God's kingdom of the age to come would bring that moment. For Kuyper, this means that as long as history continues the church as institute remains indispensable.

Therefore, in the context of this new Calvinist emphasis on God's ordinances, as the natural embedding for Kuyper's Schleiermacherian concept of "life," a new appreciation for the institutional character of the church also finds its place. Kuyper's own theological development then requires that we not only stress the concept of "organism" that was already typical for him from the beginning but also the concept of institute. We could even argue that when seen against the background of his own theological career and his low estimate of the concept in the *Commentatio*, the more striking feature of his ecclesiology lies here.⁷⁷ That is confirmed when Kuyper seeks to explain Calvin's influence throughout the ages. Calvin's secret was, Kuyper states, that he "founded a church."⁷⁸ Kuyper also complains that the attention to the church as institute in recent Dutch history had disappeared. He criticizes movements such as the *Reveil* and Darbyism for their lack of commitment to restore the church as institute.⁷⁹ In contrast, he praises the *Afgescheidenen* from 1834 as inaugurating the first movement in modern Holland to once again honor the church as institute, although he also displays some reservations.⁸⁰ Of course, from a standard, contemporary context in which the church has been considered an institute, we notice Kuyper's concept of organism as special. However, within his nineteenth-century surroundings, we could equally well argue that Kuyper's main point was a rediscovery of the church as institute. Only this (and not hidden strategies to serve his public ambitions) explains his authentic, systematic, and tireless commitment to the reformation of the church as institute.⁸¹ Even in contexts within his works in which he does not explicitly distinguish both dimensions of church, both are implied, not as covertly competitive with each other but in a harmonious unity.

With this in mind, we can detect the distinction between institute and organism in *Twofold Fatherland* even though the terms are absent. Both are implied in the expression "colony of the heavenly fatherland." Given a society in which everyone in this population would actually be a member of this colony, as we saw, the national existence itself would form the vehicle for the extension of Christ's kingdom. It would include the different creational spheres, so that living

the new heavenly life at those levels would automatically imply the penetration of this life into the fallen world. Even then, of course, the church would, to a certain extent, remain a separate institution, but this would be actually interwoven with the national structures. In Kuyper's own plural context, it appeared to be necessary to conceive of the church as a separate institution within the life of a people and at the same time to organize separate Christian subcommunities for the varying creational spheres in order to influence the nation. This means that we should not conclude that the church as organism coincides with this system of Christian organizations, the latter being merely a temporal shaping of the way the new life of the church as institute can penetrate creation. Indeed, in earlier times the community structures of the nation as a whole sufficed. Moreover, the church, as institute itself, also becomes more profiled in this new context than in the traditional situation, and it contains an organic reality itself. Now, we saw Kuyper expected that in the future circumstances in which the possibilities for public Christian community formation within the different spheres of life would be drastically reduced. This means that the institutional dimension of the church as a colony of heaven would become even more sharply defined. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the church as organism would then fade. In such a context, the organism and institute would coincide again, not after the traditional manner of a national church but in new ways.⁸²

Even the metaphor "fatherland" itself points to the organic aspect of the institute. As we saw, for Kuyper, the church forms the beginning of the new humanity that, through regeneration, shares in the life of the heavenly Father, and that, through Christ, is invested on earth. It would be a mistake to imagine two different realities when thinking about institute and organism, the former as the church of services, office bearers, meetings, administrative realities, confessions, and liturgical forms, and the latter as the Christian community that upholds Christ's authority in all areas of life. This common interpretation forgets that the church as institute itself forms the first context of the organism.⁸³ The inner dimension of Kuyper's institute consists of the shared organic life from Christ. This is evident from the fact that Kuyper treats the administration of the Word as pivotal for the institute.⁸⁴ Precisely that Word is God's instrument of regeneration. It gives birth to and nurtures new spiritual life. The community that arises around this Word is by definition organic in nature. The organism cannot be conceived of outside the institute, but it is the life of the institute that is intended to be lived beyond its boundaries and to grow into the occupied territories of created life while approaching the future of God's kingdom. The fact that the characterization "colony of heaven" comprises the institutional and organic dimensions also becomes apparent from the organic images through which Kuyper discusses the

best method to reform the institute. When picturing a deformed institute, he uses the metaphor of disease in the body of the church. Many seek a medical way and expect the body to overcome the bad forces itself. According to Kuyper, however, we cannot always escape a surgical method. Sometimes a body only is healed when the diseased area is cut away.⁸⁵ This organic metaphor for the institute returns in a passage where Kuyper defends the necessity of prolonged patience with an institution in decline. We should sometimes even try to revive an institute where all life seems to have vanished. If others then ask us why we waste so much energy on a corpse, Kuyper's answer would be: "It is my mother."⁸⁶

Kuyper's vision of the church as an institution, therefore, does not allow for an instrumental interpretation. Kuyper's reformation, the *Doleantie*, was more than a strategic step toward the renewed public significance of the Calvinism he sought. We had already found that this new public significance for him was, in a sense, relative and not an apparent aim to be pursued in every era. However, in such times, the importance of the church as institute would be as great as ever because it would still form God's bridgehead to recapture the earth by administering, by nurturing, and by spreading the new life in Christ. In such circumstances, the church as institute would remain as the last stronghold for the community formation that identifies the church as organism. If the institute should end up in spiritual decline in those days, then a reformation would most certainly be necessary. Therefore, Kuyper's reformation of the institute should be valued independently of any public ambitions he had. It was not instrumental.⁸⁷

Similarly, we cannot interpret Kuyper's view of the church as institute as privatization. If necessary, the institute itself could become the vehicle for Christian public action or what is left of that. Moreover, the ideal situation of Kuyper's free Christian nation with a Christian government presented us with a church as institute, which would be openly acknowledged and supported in its vocation by the government. Besides, the distinction between private and public itself does not fit the basic structure of Kuyper's theology. He recognizes but one life that gradually unfolds in a multitude of spheres, all placed under the direct authority of God. In his later work, Kuyper explains that he considers the family structure as basic.⁸⁸ Here this family itself could not automatically be interpreted in terms of a modern private sphere, since at the same time it forms the nucleus and source of all human societal structures. From the family, according to God's original purposes, life would differentiate further and further into a plurality of structures that ultimately would reach the level of one world society. The decisive difference with the modern liberal distinction between private and public lies with the fact that, according to Kuyper, personal life also should be considered as a later differentiation from the original family structure and therefore as one

of many spheres of life under God's direct authority.⁸⁹ For Kuyper, and unlike in the liberal model, the individual does not represent the private sphere, on which (in a secondary move) public life is built. Personal life forms one of many other areas. Additionally, the church as institute forms such a sphere, admittedly not originating in God's first creation but, nevertheless, within the context of God's providential rule since the fall, and therefore occupying its own place among other spheres and institutions. Thus it cannot be reduced to the private sphere or even to the family sphere and be deprived of its public features.⁹⁰

In addition to this, I propose yet another consideration that may help to discover the importance of the church as institute for Kuyper. Perhaps we should reckon more with the possibility that not only his notion of organism but also his choice for institution bears the marks of his nineteenth-century context. Admittedly, Kuyper refers his ecclesiology to the classics of Reformed theology, for example, Voetius. This is also true for his concept of institute. Yet Voetius uses a different Latin word than *institutional*.⁹¹ Could there be additional background for Kuyper's thought? This possibility forces itself on us, as soon as we hear him using general philosophical arguments. According to Kuyper, human responsibility is involved in all social human life. Humans use the created possibilities God provides them with and at the same time add something to them. Once they have interacted with created life, according to Kuyper, institutions gradually arise. These shape this undifferentiated life. Revealing in this context is the fact that Kuyper, in *Geworteld en Gegrond*, relates the distinction between organism and institute with the classical polarity between essence and form.⁹² The term *institution* is a specific modern concept, whose roots lie in the nineteenth-century emergence of civil society. Modern institutions, such as civil marriage, the family, the labor union, the political party, the nation-state and the like, find their origin there. By choosing precisely this notion for the church in a post-Constantinian era, perhaps Kuyper already claims for it a possible place within modern differentiated society. That would confirm that we should not interpret Kuyper's church as institute as a sort of privatization.

On the other hand, this raises the question of how such an appreciation of the church as institute can be reconciled with Kuyper's well-known claim that the church as institute has a mechanical and artificial character, compared with natural and organic features of created life. For Kuyper, the church as institute, like the state, exists because of sin. In the light of the preceding this cannot mean that Kuyper considers institutionality as such to be an unnatural consequence of sin, which is at odds with the spontaneous and organic character of life itself. That would be a romantic vision that Kuyper rejects, especially with his continuing stress on the God-given normative ordinances for life. In addition, original creation

would have seen the development of many institutions but not of a state or a church.⁹³ In an unfallen world, the church (anachronistically said) would fully coincide with humanity in its organic created spheres of community building with their corresponding creational ordinances and institutions. There would be no necessity for a separate church existing independently from general human life. In the same manner, the new humanity, being the consummated church as organism, will need many institutions that suit created life, but an institutional church will have disappeared. Such a bridgehead to fallen creation with new life will have become superfluous.⁹⁴

This also implies a specific interpretation of a special category that occurs in Kuyper's development, namely the possibility of "visible organic church life," which is not yet institutional. Kuyper indeed acknowledges this intermediate form of organic life,⁹⁵ but according to the line pursued in this article, it cannot be meant as a lasting possibility, thereby justifying Christian organizations as being forms of church life, as some commentators on Kuyper stress.⁹⁶ Sooner or later even such organic life will require institutional embedding.⁹⁷ The only question is whether, with respect to that, the regular institutions of created life are sufficient or the exceptional institution of the church is needed.

Pluriformity

Having reached a more precise understanding of Kuyper's vision of the church as institute, we also gain better insights into his much discussed doctrine of the pluriformity of the church. The more his vision of the church as institute is understood as an attempt to locate the church in the private sphere, the greater the risk that this doctrine, too, will be considered to be a strategic adjustment. Kuyper's notion that church institutions should more or less coexist as equals would then be seen as a step toward the possibility that one forgets institutional differences when uniting for the public tasks of the church as organism. However, such an interpretation contradicts Kuyper's basic theological structures. His doctrine of pluriformity is closely connected with the unnatural and yet indispensable character of the church as a contemporary institution in a fallen world. Drawing a parallel at this point with the character of the state and its relation to the multitude of peoples and nations could be useful.

As has been seen, Kuyper explicitly argued that the plurality of peoples, languages, and states must be seen as God's countermeasure against sin. Since the time of the Tower of Babel, God prevents an accumulation of evil and the emergence of one united world empire that would challenge his authority. At first sight, it is puzzling that Kuyper's writings also contain statements that consider

the plurality of nations and even states as natural phenomena that will last into the future of the coming kingdom.⁹⁸ Perhaps we should consider both sets of statements as irreconcilable and even exemplary of Kuyper's rhetorical ways of reasoning, in which inner contradictions are inevitable. However, the tension also could be resolved when we suppose that plurality in Kuyper's thought could indeed fulfill a double function. On the one hand, it is natural, and on the other, it amounts to a temporary measure for a fallen world. The reason that God divided the earth after the fall, as we saw, was that he still wanted to facilitate the original outgrowth of created life with the variety he had in mind in his eternal council. Under the conditions of an unfallen world, one global society under God's authority would have resulted. Precisely in this united global society under God's direct sovereignty all organic variation and multiformity that God intended would develop. Since the fall, however, such a unified world society would have had exactly the opposite effect. While deprived of obedience to God's direct sovereignty, it would develop an enforced unity, the already mentioned "curse of uniformity," that would contradict the inner dynamic of created life. The ambitions of the Enlightenment in particular with its cosmopolitan ideals remind Kuyper of this threat.⁹⁹ By way of enforcing an artificial variety of peoples, languages, and political entities, God protects humanity against this danger. We should conclude that God creates an *unnatural* plural framework in order to protect and further the *natural* unfolding of his pluriform creation.

Given the parallel between the state and the institutional church, both being unnatural structures necessary because of sin, it seems justified that one applies the same lines of thought to interpret Kuyper's doctrine of the pluriformity of the church. The church as institute participates in the imposed unnatural pluralism of all organic human social life since the fall. Precisely this fact, however, prevents one religious institution from enforcing a form of uniformity on the organic new life in Christ, through which the development of the desired multiplicity of God's new humanity would be prohibited. The form of pluralism that is inescapable in the sinful world thus serves the development of the God-intended natural diversity of the organic life of the church. Without sinful conditions this diversity would be possible within a united church under Christ, like it will be in the world of the coming age. Within the framework of a sinful world, however, the existence of one churchly institution would be threatening to such diversity. Kuyper confirms this interpretation in a remark that at first sounds paradoxical but on closer inspection fits his thought structure: "The unity of the church has broken the unity of the spirit—only by the multitude of churches, the unity in Christ returns."¹⁰⁰ The church in its essential character of an organism, according to the Bible, forms a body with many gifts. All possible differences and varieties

between people that contribute to the multicoloredness of humanity are at home within this body. In an unbroken unity under Christ as the one Head, there is room for different peoples with their own national character, varying cultures, characters, gifts, and the like. However, already at the level of this church as organism—Christ’s mystical body being essentially one—Kuyper notices inescapable forms of dividedness. Believers of the Old Covenant possess a different relationship to Christ as their head than that of New Testament children of God. Likewise, the church on earth, still longing for the bridegroom, differs in position from the church above that already entered into marriage with him.¹⁰¹ If this lack of unity during history is already displayed at the level of the organism, then certainly the institute cannot overcome dividedness.

Behind this state of affairs lie other features of the church as a historical phenomenon. It cannot escape history and therefore has to fit into the temporal structures of human life under God’s providence. Of course, the organization of the institute should do justice to its organic secret—the free development of new life in direct dependence on Christ as king. Already from his *Commentatio* onward this led Kuyper, referring to a Lasco, to an emphasis on the autonomy of each local church and on the central role of the churchly office as an organ of Christ’s kingship arising from the ministry of the Word as the central ecclesial activity.¹⁰² On the other hand, the fact that a church is local and thus bound up with the existence of towns and villages indicates that as an institute it must conform to the given structures of human society after the fall. Christ inaugurated not a new or second creation but brought new life into the existing creation. Once the church organizes itself into a separate earthly body it has to deal with the aforementioned ordinances of God’s providence. These meant that he keeps the powers of the existing world small and divided and so prevents arbitrary and premature uniformity.

As for society, the church as an institute will only experience the true unity at the parousia of Christ.¹⁰³ Now societal structures begin at the level of towns and villages and then expand through larger units like regions to the greatest possible unity of countries, nations, and states. The church, as an institute, has to adapt to these structures.¹⁰⁴ Kuyper sees this confirmed in Scripture, which always refers to the church as a local reality.¹⁰⁵ How strictly Kuyper upholds this principle is evident when he explains that one local civil entity can only host one local church. For example, the fact that a large city like London consists of more than thirty independent municipalities also implies that more than thirty local churches are needed. On the other hand, for Amsterdam, as one civil entity, one local church is appropriate, even though it contains over 100,000 church members.¹⁰⁶ Because of the fact that in God’s providence the national level is, for the duration of his-

tory, the most comprehensive societal structure, the church should also form no international superstructures. The ambition of Rome to form one united world church does not fit God's aims for history.¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, Kuyper advocated that the various churches should strive toward forms of communion with each other across national boundaries. The church in one country always has to be aware of the fact that only together with the churches in other countries does it form the church of Christ. Kuyper supports international relations between nationally confined churches and proposes to organize a global ecumenical synod. In this respect, he even proves to be ahead of the later ecumenical movement. He rejects, however, an organizational unity of different institutions that are spread over different countries. International relations, according to Kuyper, always remain "temporary" and "extremely loose and elastic."¹⁰⁸ Therefore, the division of the church as an institute, in the first place, refers to this reality of post-lapsarian human life. The church has to comply with the structures of human existence and therefore exhibits divisions of countries, peoples, languages, and cultures. It is precisely these divisions that guarantee the development of the multiformity of regenerated human life.

He adds to this element a more doctrinal reason why the institute must be pluriform. No institution is able to reflect completely the light of Christ and to cover the full range of the new life.¹⁰⁹ Kuyper uses the image of one light shining into the same house through different windows in different rooms. That one light he calls the "organized life of Christ" coming out in different institutions.¹¹⁰ As a result, many churches contain good fruits originating in the development of the new life. No institution encompasses everything and impure institutions sometimes keep worthy elements that elsewhere remained out of view. Kuyper is reluctant to apply the confessional qualification "false church" even to the Roman Catholic Church. He prefers the continuum of "more or less pure." Even true churches according to Kuyper are never completely pure and differ in their degree of purity. For this reason, a permanent duty of reformation is inevitable.¹¹¹

All this should not be considered to be a relativization of the problematic character of the dividedness of the church, something of which Kuyper has been accused. He expressly states that churches with the same confession ought to unite and considers a remaining lack of unity as contradictory to the fact that in one village or city only one church should exist. He personally made great efforts to unite the *Afgescheidenen* and the *Dolerenden*.¹¹² On the other hand, even for such situations he stresses the fact that a reunion may only result from free choice, although according to some, Kuyper's own attitude during the *Vereniging* displayed too much haste and impatience with those who still hesitated. Weaknesses, differences of opinion, and specific historical and cultural

factors, as he says, could cause divisions to remain and—in a fallen world to a certain extent—would have to be accepted. Here, as in many parts of his work, Kuyper uses a more or less empirical argumentation. We cannot but deal with the “defective and imperfect character of our situations.”¹¹³

Kuyper’s Church Doctrine Today

After the exploration of some aspects of Kuyper’s ecclesiology, with *Twofold Fatherland* as our point of entrance, we now return to the issue with which we began. Does this ecclesiology contain meaning for the twenty-first century? The answer to that can be affirmed without reservation. The previous paragraphs resulted in many points of contact with contemporary discussions on the church and on the relationship of church and society. I will elaborate a little on some of them.

Organism—Institute—Deinstitutionalization

A first point of contact arises with Kuyper’s simultaneous emphasis on the organic and institutional character of the church. In today’s Western society, we experience a crisis of institutions or even a tendency toward deinstitutionalization.¹¹⁴ Christian organizations and church institutions participate in this tendency. In part, this development marks secularization and tells the story of a real decline of the Christian character of modern societies. For another part, however, it originates with an inner-Christian reorientation and even a new impetus. Institutions are considered to be typical tools of modernity. They are geographically and otherwise restricted, they impose a fixed order on spontaneous human life, and they are interwoven with mechanisms of control and monitoring, which belong to churches in an established position. According to some, these structures no longer fit with the changed postmodern and post-Christian context. They argue for flexible communities with a more fluid character: smaller, more temporary, less clearly defined, and accompanied by less determined formulations and habits.¹¹⁵

Those who, in such a context, can only conceive of the church in terms of an institution will almost automatically end up with a negative stance toward these developments. A Kuyperian concept of organism, on the other hand, could be of help in more deeply understanding what is happening here. Already in his nineteenth-century context, Romanticism reacted with the concept of the organic against the one-sided rational and control-oriented aspirations of modernity. In contemporary postmodernism, besides other influences, we notice a similar repetition of this nineteenth-century movement. The celebration of free, creative, spontaneous, anti-institutional church forms originating in the authentic movements of the heart can be seen as a romantic reaction to late twentieth-century

modernity and its imposition of outward rules, procedures, and structures.¹¹⁶ Kuyper acknowledges the value of forms of common Christian life, visible but not yet institutionally embedded. His concept of the organic essence of the Christian life can justify a positive basic attitude toward these contemporary ambitions. They can be honored and welcomed in their specific character.

At the same time, Kuyper's ecclesiology could be helpful in finding more balance for these new church forms. At least two points stand out. First, in a contemporary, postmodern context, new ways of being church are at risk of unconsciously building on a typically modernist kind of individualism. These new church forms often circle around the individual and his preferences. Romanticist organic thought sets apart from the inner life of the individual. Kuyper's view of individuality, as not basic to communal life but rather one of its spheres, is different and could be beneficial. Being derived from God's Trinitarian life, which is distributed by Christ, Kuyper's organic life form lacks any tendency toward individualism.

Second, Kuyper's accompanying emphasis on the institutional aspect of the church could provide present-day organic ideals with more realism. Granted that the concept of institution has nineteenth-century roots and sometimes takes on a specifically time-bound form, it can still uncover an important aspect of the human condition, the disclosure of which cannot be undone. Philosophical, sociological, as well as biological reasons can be put forward to argue that no life form or society can do without institutionality.¹¹⁷ Even if institutionality is not explicitly identified or recognized (as is the case in the postmodern quest for spontaneity), on closer inspection and after some analysis it comes to the surface. There is no life without some form of organization, and all organization requires limitation in space and continuity in time. With these accents the contours defining institutionality are drawn. Kuyper certainly allows for forms of preinstitutional visible organic life, but to him this cannot be a lasting state of affairs. Sooner or later, institutionality turns out to be inevitable. A one-sidedly organic-oriented worldview, moreover, betrays an idealistic attitude, one in which the power of sin and its deteriorating effects on communal life are denied. Institutions offer a mitigating counterweight against this tendency. Kuyper's concept could function as a mirror to the development of contemporary church forms. To the extent that they really claim the possibility of postinstitutional life, they pursue a romantic illusion. In many ways, they already exhibit institutional features, although these go unrecognized because of their critical obsession with the prevailing institutions of the modern age. The longer new church forms exist, the more the phenomenon of institutionality will come to the fore.

It is not strange to suppose that today's society experiences a transition on the level of communal life forms, one that is similar to the changes that marked the passage from the Middle Ages to early modernity. In those days, classical and medieval corporate societal models gave way to the developing independent cities, regions, and nations. This transition influenced the organization of social life within the church and the accompanying ecclesiological reflection. Perhaps today, the then-established geographical and institutional structures are supplanted by new small scale and at the same time global, even partially digital, network structures. In that case, this change will also be reflected in ecclesiastical forms and reflection. Kuyper's simultaneous emphasis on the organic and the institutional dimensions of Christian communal life offers a lasting challenge to find a new balance between both in a new context.

These remarks imply a dismissal of the inner neo-Calvinist criticisms of Kuyper's theory, to which I referred earlier in this article. In particular, his concept of the organic was judged to be foreign to Scripture and the confessions and to be wrongly derived from nineteenth-century philosophy.¹¹⁸ These critics, coming mostly from my own Dutch *Vrijgemaakte* church tradition, forget that their own preference for the term *institute* not only is no less foreign to Scripture and the confessions than is Kuyper's but also stems from the nineteenth-century context. This, for example, is the case when Schilder emphatically interprets the ecclesiology of the Heidelberg Catechism as denoting Christ's "continuing work of institutionalizing" (*institueren*). The same happens in the emphasis on "historical concreteness" when it comes to the church. This was advocated so much that thoughts about the church were seen as referring, in the first place, to an organized community with more or less bureaucratic features such as an "address," or a "secretary" (*scriba*). While rightly trying to stress the reality of the church as a specific visible community, these critics were inclined to associate it primarily with registers of members, church orders, buildings, property, documents, meetings, and legal status. Their criticism of Kuyper, in fact, reveals a lack of adequate hermeneutical consciousness. Without realizing it, they use the modern concept of institution as a key in processing the biblical revelation about the church. Such connections are inevitable, and they occurred earlier in history when the biblical images of a new people or society were directly connected to the then prevailing concepts of empire (e.g., Rome) or nation-state (e.g., Protestant national churches). Painful, however, is the fact that Kuyper's view is rejected for doing this, while not admitting that everyone does more or less the same thing. It would be better to realize that no theologian can develop his thoughts without the use of such concepts from his own context.¹¹⁹ If we grant that the early church was justified in acting like this with the terms that contrib-

uted to the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas, we cannot blame Kuyper for exploiting the possibilities of his own time. On the contrary, he should be praised for finding a sound balance within that context by adding a parallel accent on the concept of institution after his already existing preference for the term *organism*.

Moreover, as he shows in *Geworteld en Gegronde*, there is some biblical support for his use of the concept organism. Kuyper relies on Ephesians 3 where, according to him, Paul's expression "rooted and grounded" indicates both the organic and the institutional sides of the church.¹²⁰ The metaphor of a root is indeed organic in character. Even more convincing is the dominant biblical metaphor of a body. Kuyper himself frequently connected the phrase "church as organism" with the expression "mystical body of Christ."¹²¹ Besides, the Bible demonstrates organic language when speaking about Christian growth from and toward Christ. Kuyper notes that the designation of Jesus as head of this body sometimes refers to his authority but other times to his position as life source for the church. From him life is derived, while at the same time this life should activate a movement of growth in his direction (Eph. 4).¹²² In addition to this, the biblical metaphor "regeneration" implies an organic image and indicates that believers become part of the body of Christ, the new man, as a collective reality in which all members are enclosed (Col. 3).

The Institute and Society

Notwithstanding the defense of Kuyper's ecclesiology given in the preceding paragraph, there is one important respect in which the criticisms are justified. When it goes into further detail, Kuyper's ecclesiology does less justice to biblical teachings about the church. Kuyper is prepared for any kind of visible common Christian life to be characterized as church. On that point, the Bible gives a different picture. For Kuyper, the unifying mystery of the church is the hidden mystical communion with Christ, while in Scripture a liturgical center seems indispensable in order to name a community as church. Moreover, this also seems to be related to the preservation of the content of the apostolic tradition (1 Cor. 15:1–2) and also appears to concur with tradition. The church is the new global community of all who call upon the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21; 1 Cor. 1:2). They have approached the heavenly throne and they participate in the heavenly liturgy with angels and with preceding generations (those who have already died—Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1–5). Augustine contended rightly that each human community overtly or covertly gathers around the common worship of a transcendent reality, be it God or demon.¹²³ This insight somewhat concurs with Kuyper's own view that the ministry of the Word characterizes the church as institute. However, the broader liturgical embedding that the Bible itself uncovers

is lacking in Kuyper's view.¹²⁴ On this point, other more recent ecclesiologies confirm the criticism of Kuyper found in Schilderian neo-Calvinism. They match Kuyper's emphasis on the organic metaphor by stressing the identity of the church as Christ's body. Where Kuyper says, "Christ is in the church," or, "Not a moment we can think about the church, as if Jesus remains outside her,"¹²⁵ Bonhoeffer and his followers such as McClendon speak about "Christ existing as church" or stress a certain continuity between the life of Christ and that of the church, as do the likes of Jenson, Zizioulas, and Van de Beek (albeit in different ways).¹²⁶ Contrary to Kuyper, however, they consider the liturgy as the place where this community is not only born but also finds its lasting center of existence. Even in the age to come, according to the book of Revelation, this will remain the core of the new humanity, which will be the fulfillment of the church. This center requires—like Kuyper's service of the word—a fitting liturgical institutionality. This means that we should improve on Kuyper not only by emphasizing with him both the organic and the institutional but also by departing from him in order to contend that no lasting organic church life is ever conceivable without this specific liturgical institutional element. In turn, this implies that contrary to Kuyper, this liturgical institutional aspect cannot be reduced to an unnatural phenomenon for the duration of history. Kuyper could have been right when only the temporary task of the ministry of the Word would count as the center, but as soon as we choose for the liturgical worship of God that will last in the coming kingdom, there is no reason to terminate its existence.

Of course, this improvement on Kuyper has consequences for the actions in society carried out by the church as organism. For Kuyper, it is sufficient that Christian communal life acts within the spheres of human social life. These offer the institutionality that all communal life needs. For the new position to be justified in characterizing such Christian communities as church, their participation in the liturgy around the heavenly throne would also be necessary. Therefore, Kuyper's church as organism, while acting in society, cannot do without his church as institute. As soon as a Christian community would want to act independently, it would not be justified to characterize it as church. The result would be that the public significance of the church, contrary to Kuyper's deepest ambitions, would be greatly reduced.

When we connect this with the recent post-institutional organic church forms mentioned in the introduction of this article, those combining a post-institutional drive with a simultaneous aspiration of involvement in society, new possibilities arise. It would be unfair to measure these forms with the criteria of nineteenth-century institutionality or even of earlier imperial or national church models, but, at the very least, they need a liturgical center and some form of continuity

with the church that existed before them. However, if these conditions have been met, such forms, despite all their experimental features and diversity, could be regarded justly as new forms of church.

Inevitable Pluralism

The move made in the preceding paragraph also sheds new light on the present-day potential of Kuyper's doctrine of pluriformity. When in principle we can denote any form of organic communal life in Christ that organizes itself round the participation in the heavenly liturgy as a church, it will be inevitable that in a plural cultural context like that of postmodernism a wide variety of church forms will develop. Within the current emergent movement, we encounter, for example, missionary communities that explicitly focus on artists. At first sight, this could be evaluated as being too biased and narrow in the light of the catholicity of the church. Indeed, acknowledging the church's catholicity must mean that we always aim at forms of more institutional unity provided that the creational possibilities that were disclosed in such communities to serve God's kingdom would not disappear again. In the coming kingdom such plurality will be possible within the unified global community under the rule of God. However, if this proves too difficult during history and on the condition that such communities do not absolutize themselves but rather consciously exist alongside other Christian communities with a different character, such separate communities with a particular character could be justified. Under the conditions of sin and in the light of the plural features of contemporary culture, institutional unity between the two is not always obvious and could easily cause tensions and affect the specific character of the creational marks that flourish in each of them. If, however, they may complement each other in the one body of the global and age-old church, such variations are not to be deplored. In fact, they can be welcomed. Kuyper's doctrine of pluriformity could then be of help in finding a nuanced way of dealing with some of the forthcoming new church forms.

Again, this requires a revision of the inner neo-Calvinist criticism of Kuyper's doctrine of pluriformity, which arose in the school of Schilder. It operated from the belief that the church is one and should exhibit this unity in its organized—institutional—form. Within that one church, a maximum of creational diversity should be allowed for, but multiformity that ignores unity conflicts with the Bible. According to these critics, Kuyper is wrong because he builds his doctrine of the church—not exclusively on God's revelation but also on experience. They neglect, however, the obvious fact that Kuyper himself also ultimately aims at such a diversity within one church. In his opinion, such was the intention of God with the original creation, and that state of affairs will become true in the kingdom

of the age to come for which the church forms the preparation. However, more than his critics, Kuypers reckons with the limitations of this age, the course of God's providence, and the consequences of sin that will burden and constrain all human societal life until the return of the king.

Besides this, Kuypers is ready to find these biblical doctrines echoed in the real, one might say empirical, world. This, for example, causes his apprehension toward the paradoxical fact that the desired diversity within a truly united church is, in fact, served more by temporarily allowing for a kind of pluriformity of the church, than by enforcing institutional unity. The critics' theological method runs the risk of keeping God's revelation too detached from reality and human observations of reality. Both Scripture and confession, however, require a model in which not only the Word is read but also reality, namely in the light of this Word. The empirical moment in Kuypers's theology should not be suffocated but welcomed and elaborated on today.¹²⁷ Even Christ's prayer in John 17, itself a much-cited passage to support the necessity of institutional unity, confirms that the church, throughout history, will exist under the conditions of sin. It is speculative to state, like some of Kuypers's critics do, that this prayer certainly is and will be answered by God, so that since then the organized church on earth by definition has to be considered as one. The point of this prayer, which could be overheard by the disciples and thus by the church of all ages, is to supply the church with an image of the heavenly reality of its praying Shepherd during its earthly course with all the accompanying attacks, tensions, and disunities. Kuypers is right to expect the final, divine answer to this prayer only in the eschatological consummation. Separations and conflicts, of course, must be combated and if possible overcome in this world: Hence, Kuypers's insistence on the obligation to unite churches with the same confession. At the same time, however, efforts to enforce unity as something that can naturally be expected during history, neglect the fact that the church also participates in the conditions of this world. It could even cause damage to the development of the new life in Christ in all its creational multiformity.

Kuypers's Public Theology Revisited

One of the results of my analysis consists in the fact that Kuypers's own application of his basic, ecclesiological structures was strongly determined by his evaluation of his own context. In other contexts, other instantiations would fit, including a more outspoken emphasis on the public relevance of the church as institute and diminished expectations of Christian organization formation within the different areas of life. This raises the question of how Kuypers's ecclesiology

should be applied today. With respect to that, it will be appropriate to distinguish between the Dutch and the American contexts.

Regarding the Dutch context, we—with the benefit of hindsight—can conclude that Kuyper has been proven right. While North America took over the leadership of Western culture, Dutch Calvinism was granted a period of prolonged flourishing. The Reformed section of the Dutch people experienced emancipation and exerted a strong influence on society. Kuyper's church as organism really conquered parts of creational reality for Christ's kingdom. Many spheres witnessed the foundation of Christian organizations and activities. Kuyper's Christian university grew up to a size comparable to others. Christian schools emerged and were publicly recognized. A Calvinist philosophy developed and steps were made toward a Calvinist psychology and pedagogy. The Netherlands experienced the rise of Christian hospitals, housing associations, and trade unions. Kuyper and several of his fellow Calvinists even became Prime Minister, while the Christian Democratic Movement, being partly Kuyper's heir, has occupied a position in the center of political power for more than a century. New legislation developed in which more than once Kuyper's ideals were cited, for example regarding public rest on Sunday, blasphemy, prostitution, and welfare.¹²⁸

After World War II, and especially after the 1960s, however, this neo-Calvinist building collapsed.¹²⁹ Numerical ratios within the Dutch people changed as a result of secularization, leaving professing Christians as a small minority. Kuyperian legislation was gradually reversed. Dutch society even displayed a degree of resentment against orthodox Christians and their longstanding public dominance in the wake of Kuyper. Moreover, the character of public institutions changed. People no longer organize themselves along ideological lines as the result of a confessional pluralism. Now a postmodern, individualistic version of pluralism has come to the fore, in which social patterns constantly change with the fluid preferences of individuals as their axis. Meanwhile, orthodox Christians themselves were also influenced by the surrounding postmodern relativist climate with the result that they are less self-confident and less unanimous on various public and practical interferences from their principles. They differ on issues such as civil marriage, homosexual relations, Sunday rest, development aid, the free market and the economy, the treatment of asylum seekers, Israel, war and peace, and many other topics. This raises the question of whether joint public efforts around such themes can honestly be presented as genuinely Christian in character. Given the discord among Christians themselves, such a claim could bring the Christian faith into disgrace.

This outline of the Dutch context leads to the conclusion that the usual application of Kuyper's model in the Netherlands perhaps has had its time. As we

saw, such a conclusion would fit Kuyper's own speculations about the future because he expected a time when the movement of God's progressive common grace would eventually also leave the Netherlands. In those days, the model of the Christian community acting as organism, in all spheres of life and so being involved in an offensive struggle to conquer fallen creation for the coming kingdom of Christ, would no longer be fitting. Actually, we concluded earlier that this Kuyperian strategy was tailored to the specific situation of halfway dechristianization. Today dechristianization has gone much further.

However, we should notice that the situation in the American context is different.¹³⁰ Such a decisive difference between the American context and the Dutch one lies with the fact that in America Kuyper's model has not yet been tried. In the context of the United States, it offers a powerful alternative to the two dominant positions of a forced separation of church and state on the one side, keeping religion outside the public sphere, and on the other a social or civil role of religion in connection with the interests of the nation but at the price of bigger or smaller adjustments to societal trends. Besides, secularization in the United States is less overwhelming than in Europe, and this difference is likely to remain during the coming decades.¹³¹ Again referring to Kuyper's speculation about the future, we could suppose that within their framework today the conclusion would fit that America now experiences a similar struggle to that of the Netherlands in the nineteenth century. The American context could be characterized as "halfway secularization," thus being a candidate for the application of Kuyper's model.

On the one hand, this would mean that American Calvinism now must have almost completed its course and that within Kuyper's perspective the end of history has appeared on the verges of the horizon. Kuyper would probably point to the growing importance of China and India on the world stage and to the recent tensions between the West and the Islamic world. This would confirm his expectations of more than a century ago about an upcoming final battle in which Asia and Islam would be prominent. At the same time, however, like in nineteenth-century Holland, in the United States of today much latent religious potential still waits to be mobilized for the public battle. This makes it probable that Kuyper would once more advocate the public struggle of Calvinism. He would remind today's world of the two dangers he had already combated in his lecture *Twofold Fatherland*, namely both an Anabaptist renunciation of Christian public aspirations and a tendency to mix the struggle of the church with the interests and structures of a no-longer Christian nation. Although he would reject the dualism implicit in a position like that of Hauerwas's, he would express sympathy for his repeated warnings against Constantinianism and against a church that conceives of itself as only private in character or that accepts being relegated to one of the societal

spheres.¹³² To the contrary, the church should be acknowledged as the “colony of the heavenly fatherland,” that one day will take the form of the kingdom of God on earth. In contrast to Hauerwas, however, Kuyper would stress that this church has to fulfill an immense task on earth.

Necessarily for the Netherlands and advisably for America, present-day Christian public appearance should be kept closer to the church as institute. As has been seen, faith-based initiatives do not automatically count as church as organism, provided we reserve the denominator “church” for communities that exist around a liturgical core. To continue Kuyper’s ambition and uphold the public character of the church in modern times, more will be needed than founding Christian organizations in all areas of life. The task of the church as an earthly colony of heaven requires the deliberate mobilization of that specific kind of organic life that finds its form in the context of the church as institute. Even if Christian organizations, today or otherwise within some decades, would be granted fewer possibilities in society, this underlying reality of the institutional church—whatever its form—will still be able to provide a context for Christian public responsibility. That would bring us yet closer to the above-mentioned later variant of Dutch neo-Calvinism with Schilder as its main representative. His views resulted in a similar echo of the Kuyperian system of Christian organizations but now closely connected to the institutional church.¹³³ In the present day, this Dutch variant has also ended up in a crisis, but one of the main reasons for this was its accompanying criticism of Kuyper’s doctrine of the pluriformity of the church, while a second reason lies in the old-fashioned, static, nineteenth-century, independent organizational model. When we would omit its ideological connection to “one true church” and replace this with the model of an ecumenical network of churches working together for the public domain, and at the same time allow for more flexible forms of Christian community to execute these public responsibilities, perhaps it could be revived.

This could result in a fourfold public role for the church as institute. First, it should spread the light of the gospel on the whole of creational reality, while addressing all levels of human communal and personal existence, including public spheres and even authorities. In so doing, the church primarily aims at faith and repentance but at the same time publicly offers a possibility for human society to discover the ways to God’s kingdom through the practical realities of earthly existence. This requires wisdom and modesty, and especially reticence where specific applications are concerned that could be debatable. Yet this prophetic task of the church deserves boldness, balanced by the fact that in New Testament contexts prophecy may not claim immunity and is always to be tested. Mistakes

are inevitable and self-correction will be needed constantly, but for a church living in grace, that is exactly what justifies courage and frankness.

Second, the church should publicly be a loving community in which the good of others is pursued. Its diaconal character, originating in the organic sharing of Christ's love with each other should, according to the New Testament, be open to the society across its borders. Not primarily Christian organizations, but, rather, churches themselves should help the poor; should care for the elderly, the sick, and the disabled; should visit prisoners; and should welcome strangers. This publicly demonstrated love not only would be of direct benefit of people and institutions within society but also could influence and even persuade others and (like in the past) indirectly and temporarily change the atmosphere in society as a whole.¹³⁴

Third, churches should be places of reflection, not only on theological or spiritual questions but also on the many items that arise in public life. It is a risk to outsource such reflection to specialists and organizations without acknowledging that they are embedded within the context of the church. It is the task of the church to instruct Christians about their responsibilities in public life and to support them while executing these. Christian vision always derives from learning to observe reality from the perspective of the gospel that is preached within the church.

Fourth, with their liturgical foundation, churches should present the formative context that is urgently needed for Christians' being active in a secularizing and multireligious public domain. For them, a Christian style and attitude, and a Christlike character (with the accompanying Christian virtues) will be even more decisive than specific opinions or actions. More and more, it is realized that the different spheres of post-Christian public life also contain their formative liturgies and practices, which influence all who participate.¹³⁵ This could threaten the specific calling of Christians who bear public responsibilities in such surroundings. Instead of spreading the influence of the gospel, they could, in turn, be influenced by the world. Such inner secularizing tendencies have taken place within the history of Dutch Christian organizations. They pose a particular danger to political callings because—as Kuyper explained and O'Donovan confirms with explicit references to Augustine¹³⁶—politics is not directly connected to the coming kingdom of Christ but primarily deals with God's rule for the world of this age. For Christians who are active in those spheres today, it becomes more urgent than ever to experience the counterweight of Christ's formative work through the Christian liturgical community and its practices. Precisely in its liturgy, which connects its earthly existence with God's heavenly throne, the church displays its deepest identity as the colony of heaven.

Notes

1. Abraham Kuyper, *Tractaat van de reformatie der kerken: aan de zonen der reformatie hier te lande op Luthers vierde eeuwfeest* (Amsterdam: Höveker, 1884), 200–204.
2. For the following see, for example, Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), 251–85; an impression of recent developments in ecclesiology in G. van den Brink and C. van der Kooi, *Christelijke Dogmatiek* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2012), 517–76; see further Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in our Time* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007); and Paul Myring Collins, *Christian Community Now: Ecclesiological Investigations* (London: T&T Clark, 2008).
3. See for the following: Ad de Bruijne, *Levend in Leviatan. Een onderzoek naar de theorie over 'christendom' in de politieke theologie van Oliver O'Donovan* (Kampen: Kok, 2006), 9–30, 202–50; Ad de Bruijne, “A Banner That Flies Across This Land: An Interpretation and Evaluation of Dutch Evangelical Political Awareness Since the End of the 20th Century,” in *Evangelical Theology in Transition*, ed. C. van der Kooi, E. van Staalduine-Sulman, and A. W. Zwiep (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2012), 86–130; and Pieter Dronkers, *Faithful Citizens: Civic Allegiance and Religious Loyalty in a Globalized Society: A Dutch Case Study* (Amsterdam; Groningen: Protestantse Theologische Universiteit, 2012).
4. Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989); a comparison between Kuyper and Hauerwas is to be found in Kwang-Duk Chung, *Ecclesiology and Social Ethics: A Comparative Study of the Social and Ethical Life of the Church in the Views of Abraham Kuyper and Stanley Hauerwas* (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1999). Chung, however, pays less attention to the possible connections between their concepts.
5. David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).
6. K. Schilder, *Dictaat Christelijke Religie. Over de Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis* (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1977), 87–99; K. Schilder, *De Kerk I* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1960), 303–445; K. Schilder, *De Kerk III* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1965), 141–52, 251–86; H. J. D. Smit, “Gehoorzamen: achter Christus aan! Schilder over de kerk,” in *K. Schilder. Aspecten van zijn werk*, ed. J. Douma, C. Trimp, and K. Veling (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 1990), 66–89; and C. Trimp, “De kerk bij A. Kuyper en K. Schilder,” in *De Kerk. Wezen, weg en werk van de kerk naar reformatorische opvatting*, ed. W. van 't Spijker, W. Balke, K. Exalto, and L. van Driel (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1990). For a more balanced account,

- see J. M. Batteau, “De theologie van Abraham Kuyper: Een beoordeling,” *Radix* 13, no. 4 (1987): 188–218.
7. G. J. Schutte, “Schilder en Kuyper,” in *Geen duimbreed! Facetten van leven en werk van Prof. Dr. K. Schilder 1890–1952*, ed. J. de Bruijn and G. Harinck (Baarn: Ten Have, 1990), 21–31; and Ewout Klei, ‘*Klein maar krachtig, dat maakt ons uniek*’: *Een geschiedenis van het Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond, 1948–2003* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2011), 29–32, 37, 40, 56, 62, 143.
 8. Richard J. Mouw, *Abraham Kuyper: A Short and Personal Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 99–104.
 9. Mouw, *Abraham Kuyper*, 55.
 10. *Tractaat*, 81.
 11. Abraham Kuyper, *Tweeë rlei vaderland: ter inleiding van de zevende jaarvergadering der Vrije Universiteit* (Amsterdam: J. A. Wormser, 1887), 32.
 12. Abraham Kuyper, *E voto Dordraceno: toelichting op den Heidelbergschen Catechismus* (Amsterdam: J. A. Wormser, 1892–1895) 2:112: “Uw kerk is dan een kolonie die uit den hemel in deze aarde inleeft.”
 13. See the previously mentioned subtitle of Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*.
 14. P. A. van Leeuwen, *Het kerkbegrip in de theologie van Abraham Kuyper* (Franeker: Wever, 1946); C. Augustijn, J. H. Prins, and H. E. S. Woldring, eds., *Abraham Kuyper: Zijn volksdeel, zijn invloed* (Delft: Meinema, 1987); C. Augustijn and J. Vree, *Abraham Kuyper: vast en veranderlijk. De ontwikkeling van zijn denken* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1998); and Jeroen Koch, *Abraham Kuyper: Een biografie* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2006), see especially 13–24; for theological attention to Kuyper’s ecclesiology see, for example, Martien E. Brinkman, “Kuyper’s Concept of the Pluriformity of the Church,” in *Kuiper Reconsidered: Aspects of His Life and Work*, ed. Cornelis van der Kooi and Jan de Bruijn (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1999), 111–22.
 15. Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 53.
 16. John Bolt, *A Free Church, A Holy Nation: Abraham Kuyper’s American Public Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Koch, *Abraham Kuyper*, 246, 576; even the outstanding recent analysis of Kuyper’s ecclesiology by the historical theologian John Wood does not fully escape this tendency (John Halsey Wood Jr., *Going Dutch in the Modern Age: Abraham Kuyper’s Struggle for a Free Church in the Netherlands* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013]).
 17. Abraham Kuyper, *De Gemeene Gratie*, 3 vols., 3rd ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1931–1932); ET: Abraham Kuyper, *Common Grace*, 3 vols., trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman and Ed M. van der Maas, ed. Jordan J. Ballor and Stephen J. Grabill (Grand Rapids: CLP Academic, 2013–).

18. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931).
19. Abraham Kuyper, *Pro Rege of het koningschap van Christus*, 3 vols. (Kampen: Kok, 1911–1912).
20. Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 52.
21. Koch (*Abraham Kuyper*, 525, 547) even omits *Pro Rege* from his analysis.
22. *Gemeene Gratie* 3:280, where he states that “the kingship of the Savior belongs to those difficult doctrines that have not yet been analyzed satisfactorily”; *Pro Rege* 3:588.
23. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 32: “als van *de Kerk*, die, als kolonie van het hemelsche Vaderland, nu nog op onze erve uitwoonde van haar Heere.”
24. *Gemeene Gratie* 1:243; *Pro Rege* 3:57–62.
25. *Gemeene Gratie* 1:412; 2:363, 645, 650, 653; *Pro Rege* 1:337; Batteau, *Theologie*, 208.
26. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 11: “Door deze daad Gods was de vloek der eenvormigheid gebroken”; Abraham Kuyper, “Uniformity: The Curse of Modern Life,” in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 19–44; Abraham Kuyper, *Het Calvinisme. Zes Stonelezingen in October 1898 te Princeton (N.J.) gehouden Tweede Druk* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1900), 178; ET: Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University Under the Auspices of the L. P. Stone Foundation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), 194; *Pro Rege* 3:233, 250.
27. *Pro Rege* 3:229; Mouw, *Abraham Kuyper*, 51.
28. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 16; *Gemeene Gratie* 3:128.
29. *Pro Rege* 1:113–117, 142, 162, 205, 226; 2:355, 281.
30. Abraham Kuyper, *Eenheid* (Amsterdam: De Hoogh, 1873), 8; Abraham Kuyper, *Vrijheid* (Amsterdam: De Hoogh, 1873), 8; *E Voto* 2:128.
31. Abraham Kuyper, “*Bekeert U, want het Koninkrijk Gods is nabij!*” (Amsterdam: De Hoogh, 1872), 7.12; *Tractaat*, 14; *E Voto* 2:128.
32. So Mouw, *Abraham Kuyper*, 57. Mouw here seems to read Kuyper too much through the lens of his later heir Dooyeweerd; Kuyper characterizes the church as prefiguration of the coming kingdom in Abraham Kuyper, *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde I (De beginselen)* (Kampen: Kok, 1916), 418; *Gemeene Gratie* 1:493; *Pro Rege* 1:468.
33. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 14.

34. *Tractaat*, 13; *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 15 (“alle deeling en gedeeldheid der volken houdt in dat betere Vaderland op.”); *AR Staatskunde*, 418; *Pro Rege* 3:259.
35. *Eenheid*, 23; *Tractaat*, 3v. 5; *Pro Rege* 1:395, 470.
36. This notion appears already in the *Commentatio*. See Jasper Vree and Johan Zwaan, *Abraham Kuyper’s Commentatio (1860): The Young Kuyper about Calvin, a Lasco, and the Church, I: Introduction, Annotations, Bibliography, and Indices* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2005), 61; Jasper Vree and Johan Zwaan, *Abraham Kuyper’s Commentatio (1860): The Young Kuyper about Calvin, a Lasco, and the Church, II: Commentatio* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2005), par. 206 (363).
37. *Eenheid*, 8; *Geworteld en Gegronde*, 18; ET: Kuyper, *Rooted & Grounded: The Church as Organism and Institution*, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2013), 18; *Tractaat*, 2, 57; *E Voto* 2:111, 113.
38. Kuyper, *Vrijheid*, 8; *E Voto* 2:113, 115, 118: “In den krijg dien ze met de wereld te voeren heeft, ligt dan ook heel het leven der kerk” (131); *Pro Rege* 2:58–60; 3:76; Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 17.
39. Abraham Kuyper, *Conservatisme en Orthodoxie. Afscheidsrede Utrecht* (Amsterdam: De Hoogh, 1870), 19; *Geworteld en Gegronde*, 12; ET: *Rooted*, 10; *E Voto* 2:115.
40. See, for example, *Calvinisme*, 68, 81; ET: *Lectures*, 79–81, 92–94.
41. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 27: “Er was in hun standpunt zoo machtig veel dat bekoort,” 29: “zongen de *Moderaten* aller eeuwen hun Sirenenzang”; *Gemeene Gratie* 3:17.
42. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 27.
43. *E Voto* 2:124; *Pro Rege* 2:105; the same phrase in *Calvinisme*, 116; ET: *Lectures*, 129.
44. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 38.
45. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 29: “Voor dit leven de Kerk van Christus *ondergeschikt* gemaakt aan den Vaderlandsche eenheid.”
46. Mouw, *Abraham Kuyper*, 115.
47. *Eenheid*, 20; Abraham Kuyper, *Bekeert U, want het Koninkrijk Gods is nabij!*: leerrede op den laatsten dag van 1871 gehouden (Amsterdam: De Hoogh, 1872, 12; *E Voto* 2:125; *Gemeene Gratie* 2:261; 3:207; *Calvinisme*, 87; ET: *Lectures*, 99–101; *Pro Rege* 1:262, 266; *AR Staatskunde*, 475; Nigel Goring Wright, *Disavowing Constantine: Mission, Church and the Social Order in the Theologies of John Howard Yoder and Jürgen Moltmann—A Radical Baptist Perspective on Church, Society and State* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000); also interesting is the parallel between Kuyper’s view that the church in principle forms a “small flock” (see *Gemeene Gratie* 2:247; *Pro Rege* 3:170) and Hauerwas’s stress on the minority status of the church.

48. Peter S. Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1998), iv, 8; Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
49. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 31: "Wel dus een *Theocratie* (o, hoe konden ze dat eenig ware denkbeeld hebben prijsgegeven) maar ... geen Theocratie als onder Israël"; *Gemeene Gratie* 3:211–17.
50. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 33; Abraham Kuyper, *Ons Program: Vierde door den auteur herziene druk* (Amsterdam: Höveker & Wormser, 1900), 52–56; ET: Kuyper, *Guidance for Christian Engagement in Government*, trans. and ed. Harry Van Dyke (Grand Rapids: CLP Academic, 2013), 30–34.
51. *Geworteld en Gegronnd*, 27; ET: *Rooted*, 28; *Tractaat*, 57; *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 31.
52. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 34: "wanneer het volksgeheel als zoodanig niet langer orgaan van uw belijden en beleven kan zijn, schep dan voor uw Christelijk leven een eigen orgaan."
53. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 33; *Ons Program*, 81; ET: *Guidance*, 59.
54. *Vrijheid*, 21; *Gemeene Gratie* 3:269, 274; *Calvinisme*, 23; ET: *Lectures*, 28–30.
55. Kuyper, *AR Staatkunde*, vii–xii; the idealized image of America is already present in *Vrijheid*, 8.
56. *Tractaat*, 188; *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 34: "als het Hem belieft, Christus zuivere Kerk te doen wonen en wandelen in een niet meer Christelijk of althans niet meer zuiver Christelijk Vaderland."
57. Augustijn claims that for Kuyper Christian organizations had nothing to do with the church as organism and received a new and independent justification in the light of Christ's kingship in *Pro Rege*. See Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 52.
58. *Gemeene Gratie* 1:504; *Gemeene Gratie* 2:183; *Pro Rege* 2:255, 313; 3:76, 225, 272.
59. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 20–23.
60. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 24.
61. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 37.
62. *Gemeene Gratie* 1:503; 2:604–14, 619–23, 634, 668–71; *Calvinisme*, 5, 27–29; ET: *Lectures*, 9, 32–35; *Pro Rege* 1:565; 3:310–13, 350–53.

63. Luis E. Lugo, *Religion, Pluralism, and Public Life: Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 248; Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview*, 63, 73, 79, 87; Koch, *Abraham Kuyper*, 519.
64. *Gemeene Gratie* 1:254.
65. *Pro Rege* 1:489.
66. *Bekeert*, 7; *Gemeene Gratie* 1:426, 504; *Pro Rege* 1:32.
67. *Calvinisme*, 6, 35, 62, 156–59, 161, 171, 181; ET: *Lectures*, 10–12, 40, 72, 171–75, 177–79, 186–88, 197–99; *Pro Rege* 2:44–49; 3:225, 311, 350–53.
68. *Gemeene Gratie* 3:36; Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 93.
69. Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 12.
70. Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 99–101. The wrong idea that the church as institute for Kuyper was less important already circulated within the churches during his own days. See Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 214.
71. Vree and Zwaan, *Commentatio I*, 2, 4, 14, 49, 56; Vree and Zwaan, *Commentatio II*, par. 167 (293): “in christianorum mutua in Christo consociatione et conglutinatione arctissima vim insitam ecclesiae retexit,” par. 188–91 (334–41).
72. *Eenheid*, 6.
73. Vree and Zwaan, *Commentatio I*, 39, 49, 53, 56; Vree and Zwaan, *Commentatio II*, par. 200 (352), par. 205 (362); *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 7; ET: *Rooted*, 3.
74. *Vrijheid*, 6, 12; *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 26; ET: *Rooted*, 25; *Calvinisme*, 101; ET: *Lectures*, 114.
75. *Gemeene Gratie* 2:253; Van Leeuwen, *Kerkgrip*, 118; Trimp, *Kerk*, 189; Batteau, *Theologie*, 209.
76. *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 26; ET: *Rooted*, 27; *Gemeene Gratie* 1:412; 2:254, 304, 496; *Calvinisme*, 40, 60, 68, 80; ET: *Lectures*, 46, 69–72, 79, 92; *Pro Rege* 3:418.
77. *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 6, 18, 21; ET: *Rooted*, 7, 17, 22.
78. Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 14.
79. *Eenheid*, 31, 35; *E Voto* 2:109, 136.
80. *Tractaat*, 135, 195.
81. *Conservatisme*, 5, 24; *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 5, 28, 32; ET: *Rooted*, 3, 27–29, 31–33; *Tractaat*, 14, 16, 178.

82. For example, his stress on the constant Christian life in the “sanctuary” set off against the changing life in the “forecourt” in *Pro Rege* 1:44, 70, 82.
83. *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 30; ET: *Rooted*, 29; *Tractaat*, 16, 21; *Gemeene Gratie* 2:673, 689; *Pro Rege* 2:122.
84. *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 15; ET: *Rooted*, 14.
85. *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 21; ET: *Rooted*, 21–23; *Tractaat*, 127, 179.
86. *Tractaat*, 127, 178–81; *Geworteld en gegrond*, 16, 21; ET: *Rooted*, 15, 21. This runs counter to Augustijn, who states that in Kuyper the idea of the church as mother is missing. See Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 198.
87. *Tractaat*, 141. This is contrary to the position in Koch, *Abraham Kuyper*, 22.
88. Abraham Kuyper, *Ons Huis* (Amsterdam: De Hoogh, 1873), 24; *Pro Rege* 2:377.
89. *Gemeene Gratie* 2:626, 642.
90. *Tractaat*, 57.
91. *E Voto* 2:148.
92. *Conservatisme*, 16; *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 3, 18. ET: *Rooted*, xxiv, 17.
93. *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 12, 16; ET: *Rooted*, 13, 15 (institutionality is always there as soon as human intervention in creation is involved); *Gemeene Gratie* 3:102.
94. *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 9, 19; ET: *Rooted*, 9, 18; Van Leeuwen, *Kerkgrip*, 168.
95. *Tractaat*, 7.
96. Augustijn and Vree, *Vast en veranderlijk*, 98; cf. his criticisms of the Salvation Army (as well as Methodism) in *Gemeene* 1:316.
97. *Conservatisme*, 21: “If somewhere [there] is life, it creates for itself a form”; *E Voto* 2:145, 147, 150.
98. *Eenheid*, 25; *Geworteld en Gegrond*, 10; ET: *Rooted*, 8; *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 15, 20.
99. *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 12.
100. *Vrijheid*, 17.
101. *Tractaat*, 5, 32.
102. *Tractaat*, 10, 12, 27–29; *E Voto* 2:134.
103. *Eenheid*, 10.

104. *Tractaat*, 13, 33, 45. Therefore, he can also state that the church as institute is “bound to be imperfect,” as an ordinance of God. See *E Voto* 2:140.
105. *Tractaat*, 34.
106. *Tractaat*, 36.
107. *Eenheid*, 21–24; *Tractaat*, 13, 45.
108. *Tractaat*, 7, 33.
109. *Eenheid*, 42.
110. *Tractaat*, 147; *Gemeene Gratie* 2:272; 3:231–38; *Calvinisme*, 89; ET: *Lectures*, 101–3.
111. *Tractaat*, 8, 112–15, 161, 170–76; *E Voto* 2:140: “Juist daarom echter mag dit Instituut der zichtbare kerk nooit gedacht afgescheiden van den heiligen plicht tot bestendige *Reformatie*.”
112. J. Kamphuis, “‘Geen klauw mag achterblijven!’: Enkele opmerkingen over A. Kuypers begeerte naar de éénheid der gereformeerde belijders,” in *Vereniging in wederkeer: Opstellen over de vereniging van 1892*, ed. D. Deddens and M. te Velde (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 1992), 31–44.
113. *Tractaat*, 37.
114. Anton C. Zijderveld, *The Institutional Imperative: The Interface of Institutions and Networks* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), 13–15; Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion Is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005); Holger Ludwig, *Von der Institution zur Organisation: einer grundbegrifflichen Untersuchung zur Beschreibung der Sozialgestalt der Kirche in der neueren evangelischen Ecclesiologie* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2010).
115. For example, Tim Mather, *Escaping Church: A Guide to Life Outside the Institution* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2009); see also the materials at www.simplechurch.com.
116. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 473–535.
117. Zijderveld, *Institutional*, 174–75.
118. For example, Johannes Francke, *Varia de ecclesia: allerlei over de kerk* (Enschede: Boersma, 1980), 13, 18.
119. Mouw, *Abraham Kuypers*, 48; Oliver O’Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (Leicester: Apollos, 1994), vii–viii; and O’Donovan, *Desire of the Nations*, 12–21.

120. *Geworteld en gegrond*, 7; ET: *Rooted*, 5.
121. *Tractaat*, x, 32.
122. *Pro Rege* 1:338.
123. Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11.1, 19.24.
124. Mouw, *Abraham Kuyper*, 96.
125. *Tractaat*, 9, 15.
126. Bonhoeffer, *Akt und Sein. Transzendentalphilosophie und Ontologie in der systematischen Theologie* (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1988), 108; ET: Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology*, ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd Jr., trans. H. Martin Rumscheidt (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 111; James Wm. McClendon Jr., *Ethics: Systematic Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 84, 193; John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 126–34; Robert W. Jenson, *The Works of God*, vol. 2, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 167, 173, 220; A. Van de Beek, *Lichaam en Geest van Christus: De theologie van de kerk en de Heilige Geest* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2012), 22.
127. Kuyper stresses this “empirical” element as innovation compared to older theologians. See *Gemeene Gratie* 2:655.
128. This is against the account of Koch, *Abraham Kuyper*, 578.
129. Cf. Rolf van der Woude, “Taming the Beast: The Long and Hard Road to the Christian Social Conference of 1952,” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 419–44.
130. Many authors show the ambition to connect Kuyper’s thoughts with the present-day American context; for example, James Edward McGoldrick, *God’s Renaissance Man: The Life and Work of Abraham Kuyper* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2000); Lugo, *Religion, Pluralism, and Public Life*; Bolt, *A Free Church, a Holy Nation*; Vincent E. Bacote, *The Spirit in Public Theology: Appropriating the Legacy of Abraham Kuyper* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); John Bolt, “Abraham Kuyper and the Search for an Evangelical Public Theology,” in *Evangelicals in the Public Square: Four Formative Voices on Political Thought and Action*, ed. J. Budziszewski (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 141–62; Gordon Graham, *Politics, Religion and Sphere-Sovereignty* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Richard J. Mouw, *The Challenge of Cultural Discipleship: Essays in the Line of Abraham Kuyper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011); and John Bowlin, *Revelation and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

131. Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
132. *Tractaat*, 57; *Tweeërlei Vaderland*, 29; *Gemeene Gratie* 3:262; *AR Staatskunde*, 419.
133. C. Trimp, “Gemeente en samenleving in de eeuw van Kuyper,” *Radix* 15, no. 1 (1989): 3–10.
134. Govert Buijs, *Publieke Liefde: Agapè als bron voor maatschappelijke vernieuwing in tijden van crisis* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2012).
135. William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (London: T&T Clark, 2002); Bernd Wannewetsch, *Political Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2009).
136. Oliver O’Donovan and Joan Lockwood O’Donovan, *Bonds of Imperfection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 72.