The Scientific Calling of the Church: Herman Bavinck's Exhortation for the Churches in Mainland China

Abstract: Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) describes the twofold scientific calling of the Church. First, the Church needs to read the historic Reformed confessions contextually and distill the Reformed principles to meet its contemporary needs. Second, the Church should pursue a scientific (*wetenschappelijke*) life, particularly in the university. Bavinck's two theological insights can be applied to the churches in mainland China. The first reminds Chinese Reformed churches of the necessity of composing a Sino-Reformed confession. The second insight exhorts churches to develop scientific life publicly. In this sense, the scientific calling of the church, which Bavinck has envisaged more than one century before, can be fulfilled in the twenty-first-century mainland China.

Key Words: Herman Bavinck; Chinese Reformed theology; Reformed confession; state-church relations; theology and university; public theology

I. Introduction

Over the past decades, Reformed churches proliferated in mainland China. Concomitantly, many Western Reformed theologians became well-known in the circle of Sino-Christianity. Amongst these theologians, the Dutch neo-Calvinist Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) is prominent. His *Our Reasonable Faith* was translated by Charles Chao and published in 1989 in Taiwan. Due to the scarcity of theological literature in mainland China of the 1990s, Bavinck's work became a prescribed textbook of systematic theology in many seminaries. Moreover, the Chinese translation of *The Philosophy of Revelation* and the abridged volume of *Reformed Dogmatics* came out successively in 2014 and 2016 in mainland China.

Bavinck's reputation in the Chinese churches is, nonetheless, out of proportion to the studies on his theology therein. Other than the three Chinese publications, the majority of Chinese Christians have no access to Bavinck's other writings. This paper is intended to remedy the Chinese Christian unfamiliarity with Bavinck's theology by exploring his early journal article "The Scientific Calling of Our Church" (*De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk*) (1882).[1] Furthermore, my intention is to demonstrate that Bavinck's theology, which was developed one hundred plus years ago, can lend support to the Chinese (Reformed) churches—particularly Chinese Reformed churches—in contemporary mainland China.

The rise of the Reformed faith in mainland China entailed two pressing issues. The first is Reformed confessionalism, which exclusively upholds Reformed confessions. It is not rare

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that the Chinese Reformed churches do not have a healthy connection to other denominational and traditional churches in mainland China.[2] The second is concerned with the role that the Church plays in public affairs. Many Reformed churches energetically engage in legal and political activities, which is explicitly contrary to the sacred-secular separation held by the majority of traditional Chinese churches.

In this paper, I will demonstrate that Bavinck's "The Scientific Calling of Our Church" provides a significant response to the twofold issue in mainland China. At this point, a clarification needs to be made on the Dutch noun *wetenschap* or the adjective *wetenschappelijke*. As the cognate of the German word *wissenschaftlich*, *wetenschappelijke* can be translated "scholarly", "academic" and "scientific". Since Bavinck entertains a broader definition of *wetenschap*, which is not limited to the natural sciences, I use "scientific" as the English equivalent of *wetenschappelijke* throughout this paper.[3]

According to Bavinck, on the one hand, the Chinese Reformed church has its calling to take a scientific study on the word of God, which repudiates any sort of Reformed hegemony and seeks to contextualize Reformed theology by composing a Sino-Reformed confession. On the other hand, the Chinese churches, not only the Reformed, have the responsibility to bear witness to the Christian faith in public spheres, particularly in the academy. In what follows, I will first spell out Bavinck's view of the scientific calling of the Church in reference to Reformed confessions and the Church's public mission. Second, I will describe two issues pertinent to the Reformed churches in mainland China. Third, I will reflect on how Bavinck's "The Scientific Calling of Our Church" offers a heuristic approach to the development of the Chinese churches in mainland China.

II. The Church's Scientific Calling

The intended readership of "De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk" was the members of the Christian Reformed Church (*Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk*), that is, his own denomination. The Christian Reformed Church is known by its secession (*Afsheiding*) from the Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*) in 1834. This secession was resonant with the revival of piety in the early nineteenth century in the Netherlands.[4] According to Bavinck, the Christian Reformed Church was established to combat the "[spirit] of the cold, lukewarm, indifferent supernaturalism, which, mingled with rationalistic elements, predominated outside and in our national church in the beginning of this century."[5] This early nineteenth-century Dutch supernaturalism, as described by Bavinck elsewhere,

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> maintained revelation, asserting its necessity, possibility, and validity on a variety of rational and historical grounds. *It sought to be biblical but was anticonfessional, antiphilosophical, and anti-Calvinistic*. It produced a dogmatics that was deistic in its doctrine of God (theology proper), Pelagian in anthropology, moralistic in Christology, collegialist in ecclesiology, and eudaemonist in eschatology.[6]

As will be seen, with this supernaturalism in mind, Bavinck's viewpoint of the scientific calling of the Church should be Calvinistic and confessional.

The Groningen school, the Leiden school and the ethical school, which were three theological movements in the nineteenth-century Netherlands, arose to respond to this supernaturalism.[7] However, in contrast with them, Bavinck asserts, the Christian Reformed Church "has been proved to be much scientific in the following years and to have a much profounder theological outlook than all who then bore the name of theologian." This is because his denomination has discovered earlier than the three theological movements the inadequacy of the theology and preaching characterized by the indifferent supernaturalism.[8]

What does Bavinck mean by judging the prevailing theology of his time as inadequate? Bavinck explains this point immediately. He writes:

> [The Christian Reformed Church] had taken with the Reformed confession and then sat "in a small corner with a booklet." …the Reformed confession is maintained and defended [by the Christian Reformed Church] as a holy property. While the schools of thought superseded one another in the *Hervormde Kerk* because none could captivate the spirits for a few years, the Christian Reformed Church has remained the same and satisfied many people's heart and mind with the same principle. In any case, this proves that the more sustainable energy of life is in its principle than in all the other together.[9]

It is clear that the Christian Reformed Church has the more scientific theology on the ground that it always holds fast to the Reformed confessions. Although Bavinck does not clarify the relationship between the ecclesial confessions and the scientificity of the Church's calling in this article, he has explicated it one year earlier. In 1881, Bavinck argued that dogmatics is a science that is the Church's undertaking.[10] Hence, "[d]ogmatics is nothing other than the scientific description of the confession of the church."[11]

It does not mean that Bavinck makes dogmatics determined by the ecclesial confession. Instead, he contends that scientific dogmatics has three requirements. First, Holy Scripture is the source from which all dogmatic statements "has sprung forth and continues to spring forth." Second, dogmatics is ecclesiastical that embodies in the confession of the Church. Third, dogmatics is "relevant, taking into consideration and corresponding to the needs of this generation, being progressive and striving for perfection."[12] Accordingly, Scripture has a higher authority than the ecclesial confession, and thus is foundational to dogmatics.[13]

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In "De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk", Bavinck's concern is about the latter two requirements. Having pointed out the Christian Reformed Church's insistence on the Reformed confession, Bavinck locates the issue about the scientific calling of the Church in the third requirement. He raises the question: "Do we have a theology, a divinity, which to some extent meets the need and stands on the height of this time?"[14] In retrospect of the founding of the Theological School in Kampen by the Christian Reformed Church, Bavinck recognizes that the School's initial task was to respond the challenges timely and train ministers to meet the needs of that generation. However, it has been proved that the task failed to be fulfilled. He concedes that until his time no scientific work was produced out of the Christian Reformed Church, whereas multiple theological writings have been authored by other theologians who hold differing principles other than the Reformed. The *status quo* of the Christian Reformed Church at Bavinck's time is reflective of the dearth of the scientific study of and reflection on Reformed theology.[15] To put it another way, Bavinck regards the calling of the Church and scientific theology as correlative.

Bavinck's fundamental concern here is about how the Christian Reformed Church sufficiently fulfils the needs of his contemporaries via a scientific study of theology.

> Now a church without a theology is a body without a head. A theology without church dies. A church without theology languishes. The Christian Church has felt that from the beginning. Therefore, there is already the school of catechism in the ancient Christian time. Therefore, there is the scholasticism in the Middle age. And the Protestant churches were conscious of it equally well and much better. Protestantism and science belong together. A university was Calvin's ideal. And his example was followed in the Reformed churches everywhere.[16]

Two observations are worth noting with respect to the statement above. First, Bavinck stresses that the scientific study of theology is central to the life of the Church. The history of Christianity sees the rise and development of theology that is sitting at the heart of the Church. Hence, Bavinck strongly argues that the Reformed church does aim not only to cultivate religious and moral life but also to develop "a flourishing scientific life" insofar as the treasures of Reformed (*Gereformeerde*) theology cannot be exhaustible.[17] Considering his theological and ecclesial milieu, Bavinck's calling for scientific life targeted his own denomination, the Christian Reformed Church. Since its secession from the Dutch Reformed Church, the Christian Reformed Church upheld Pietism and conservatism and thus did not strive for a scientific approach to knowing God by making an effective use of the past abundant Reformed theologies. This also explains why Bavinck's "De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk" was published in *De Vrije Kerk*, which was founded by the progressives of the Christian

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Reformed Church to propel the Church to respond to its contemporary cultural and scientific issues. On this score, "a flourishing scientific life" that is grounded in Reformed theology is to deploy Reformed tradition *via* scientific studies to tackle the issues that the Church confronts both inside and outside.

Second, Bavinck explicitly locates the scientific study of theology in the university. On the one hand, Bavinck's intent is to repudiate the Higher Education Act of 1876, which aimed to substitute the faculty of religious science for the theological faculty in Dutch universities.[18] By arguing for the scientific study of theology in the university, Bavinck painstakingly retains the due place of theology in the sphere of science. On the other hand, Bavinck's argument was historically corresponding to the founding of the Free University in Amsterdam in 1880, two years earlier than Bavinck's publication of "De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk". The Free University in Amsterdam was founded with two purposes. "In the first place, it was meant to practice pure christian scholarship based on the foundation of reformed, or calvinist, principles. Second, it was meant to be the training school that could produce leaders for all the organizations of the nation's *gereformeerde* pillar."[19] This does not mean that Bavinck's argument was contingent on the founding of the Free University. Early on 6 January1880, the time before the founding of the University, Bavinck has said in his letter to Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) that there would be no "purely scientific theology" at the Theological School in Kampen.[20] With this in mind, it can be inferred that Bavinck's purpose seemed to draw his Church's attention to the scientific studies of theology in the university rather than in the seminary.

A question would arise: What does it mean that theology is central to the Church but located in the university? Bavinck offers a pneumatological account of the three correlatives. The Church and theology, he writes,

> form one whole, an organism; they belong together closely. Both are the fruits of the activity of the Holy Spirit. Or more preferably, the Church, with everything belongs to it, is wholly a creation of the Spirit. So is theology in it. The Church reveals itself in confession, government, institution, life. Yet the richest, the holiest, and the most conscious, is in theology. This is its finest, noblest blossom. … The theologian is thus … by the Spirit the finest and richest instrument to shine forth the Church, its life and treasures in the world.[21]

This statement could explain the nature of the triad of the Church, theology and the university, though it does not explicitly make mention of university. For Bavinck, it is theology that sheds light on the treasures of the Church in the world. Of course, as a science, theology should bring the ecclesial treasures into the spheres of science, the university *par excellence*. Bavinck's

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argument is resonant with Jürgen Moltmann's defense of theology in the university. Moltmann contends that "[a]cademic theology has to achieve the master stroke of linking *church theology* in the training of clergy and teachers with the offer of a *general theology* for interested people from other faculties, whether they are Christians or not."[22] On this basis, the scientific calling of the Church is fulfilled in the Church's action in transmitting its treasures to the public through theology, particularly the theology undertaken in the university.

In the case of the Christian Reformed Church, Bavinck needs to explicate what its treasures are. At bottom, he should spell out the meaning of "Reformed". Etymologically, Bavinck points out, the Reformed faith is not a new religion but refers to the purification of errors and corruption incurred by the Roman Catholic. Historically, the term "Reformed" indicates a group of people that purified the mistakes in the Church in a certain time so that the Christian truth shined again. The etymological and historical senses are correlated.[23] It is evident that Bavinck does not think of Reformed theology as something that has been accomplished. Rather, he defines it as the church's continuous undertaking.

The twofold sense of the Reformed, for Bavinck, is crucial to one's Reformed identity. On the one hand, etymologically, what the Reformed is can be defined by Reformed confessions. On the other hand, historically, the essence of the Reformed cannot be explicated simply in reference to the Reformed confessions.[24] Bavinck contends:

> Then, we must put [the Forms of Unity] in the framework of their time, explain, clarify and comment on them through historical circumstances where they exist. Then, we have to consider and compare them in relation with the confessions of other Reformed churches, to trace and elucidate their peculiarity, and to penetrate the spirit that animates them.[25]

This historical concern is determined by the function of the Reformed confessions. Inasmuch as these confessions were symbols and served to unite churches, they often fall short of characteristics, "theological-scientific definiteness and sharpness", and "do not contain the whole concept of teaching."[26] In this light, Bavinck never suggests a mechanic way to apply the historic Reformed confessions to the churches of the different ages and in different cultures. It is pivotal for one to distill the principles and quintessence of those confessions and then apply them to specific contexts.

Having laid down the basic rationale of the appropriation of the Reformed confessions, Bavinck asserts that in a broader sense these confessions cannot always define the term "Reformed". This is because the Reformed confessions do not cover the entire life, though they do involve with the main part of life. The powerful principles enacted by the confessions

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remain to be developed and applied in specific contexts.[27] This means that for Bavinck the scientific calling of the Christian Reformed Church is to develop, translate and apply the historic Reformed confessions to its contemporary churches and society. As noted earlier, Holy Scripture is the sole *principium* of dogmatics. Hence, this scientific calling should be carried out under the guidance of the Word of God. By such doing, the essence of the Reformed sketched by Bavinck is comprehensive and far-reaching.

> The Reformed is an entire world- and life-view. It places human beings in a particular relation to God, and thus also in a peculiar relation to all things, to family household, city, society, art, science and so forth. Except for dogmatics, there are thus also moral, political, social, scientific and artistic contemplative principles. There is nothing on which the Reformed principles do not press their peculiar stamp.[28]

The analysis hitherto leads to two conclusions. First, by arguing for the scientific calling of the Church, Bavinck registers a critical and contextual reading of historic Reformed confessions. The critical and the contextual are correlative. Inasmuch as the historic Reformed confessions were authored in specific historical contexts, the proper understanding of these confessions cannot overlook the contextual import. This means that the recipient of the Reformed confessions should not draw on and implement them rigidly. A critical study is indispensable to grasping the essentials of the confessions. This critical and contextual gesture toward the historic confessions is reflective of the belief in Holy Scripture as the sole *principium* and God's continuous work in the Church's construction of theology, which is further clarified in Bavinck's other writings. To name one example.

> Thus, theology is essentially conservative. It accepts the legacies of former generations, not to throw them away but to augment them as soon as possible and pass them to the ensuing generations much more Reformed. It receives the acquired treasures not to throw them over and over again into the melting pot of criticism, but to present them to us if we can find in our soul their truth and beauty as strong as in the previous centuries. … But at the same time, it is a progressive science. Respecting the past, it builds on the laid foundation until it is completed and reaches the final goal. … Theology is penetrated by the conviction that God is willing to ignite in this and following ages more lights about what was hitherto still hidden in Holy Scripture and wrapped in mystery. As long as theology has not fulfilled its task, it does not reach its final end. Meanwhile, the history of this dispensation does not yet have an end, which is consecrated to the interpretation of the Word.[29]

On the one hand, Bavinck holds fast to the Reformed confessions and articulates theology in a confessional way. For Bavinck, there is no such a theological approach that is separated from the past. To receive something from the past means to *confess* the validity of predecessors' achievements. On the other hand, Bavinck identifies the critical reception of the tradition of

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the Church as essential to the progress of theology. In any case, no theology can fathom the Word of God. Furthermore, Bavinck describes the interpretation of the Word, which is the core of theology, as an ongoing enterprise in "the history of this dispensation". That is, this dispensation involves the work of the Holy Spirit.

> After Jesus completed his work, he sent forth the Holy Spirit who, while adding nothing new to the revelation, still guides the church into the truth (John 16:12–15) until it passes through all its diversity and arrives at the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 3:18, 19; 4:13). In this sense there is a good, true, and glorious tradition. It is the method by which the Holy Spirit causes the truth of Scripture to pass into the consciousness and life of the church.[30]

On this basis, the critical and contextual reading of the Reformed confessions is the human response to the work of the Spirit. Moreover, Bavinck relates the work of the Spirit to the theological diversity embedded in the Church. Not only the Reformed but also the other theologies are the fruits of the work of the Spirit. Accordingly, the *rigid* and *autocratic* application of the historic Reformed confessions to a specific context nowadays is, in essence, the denial of the abiding activity of the Spirit in the Church. The true Reformed theology should respect the theological diversity in such a way that it needs to listen attentively to what God has conferred to other theological traditions. In fact, Bavinck has implied this point in "De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk." Given the insufficiency of the scientific study on theology in the circle of the Christian Reformed Church, Bavinck says, "So we honour and practice an eclecticism, which cannot work detrimentally to our Church and its principle in the long run."[31] It is clear that to hold fast to the Reformed confessions is not to take an egotistic or myopic stance to engage with other theological traditions. Instead, the Church's calling to undertake a scientific study on Reformed theology should pay attention to what benefits it can obtain from others.

The analysis of Bavinck's "De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk" above leads to the second conclusion: Bavinck's account of the scientific calling of the Christian Reformed Church unveils the fact that all churches, not merely Reformed churches, are responsible to undertake scientific theology and then fulfill their scientific calling. Although Bavinck highlights that Reformed theology presses its stamp on every aspect of human life, his sentiment betrays the sense that not only the Reformed church but also all churches should exert their impacts on all spheres of human life. It is perceptible that underlying Bavinck's stance here is his notion of common grace. Whilst explicating the theology of common grace, Bavinck brings to the fore natural gifts and virtues, which embody God's good purpose in creation.[32] If God's good purpose in creation is still maintained *via* common grace after the fall,

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human life that can manifest the good and the true must be traced back to God. In this light, the church's engagement in all spheres of human life is indicative of its positive response to God's grace and continuing work in creation.

It is the Christian duty to glorify God in every sphere of human life that gives rise to truth, beauty and good. This is intrinsic to one's Christian identity, which is established by God's special grace. Hence, Bavinck contends:

> [s]pecial grace is encircled by common grace; the vocation which comes to us in faith is connected and connects us with the vocation presented to us in our earthly calling; the election revealed to us in faith through this faith communicates its power to our entire life; the God of creation and of regeneration is one.[33]

This statement conveys a collective significance. That is, all Christians should actualize their earthly calling in ordinary life so as to substantiate their heavenly calling. Thereby, "ordinary human life … is also made serviceable to the thoughts of God."[34] To take it further, the individual actualization of earthly calling is part of the collective calling of the Church.[35] In this light, the pervasive influence of Reformed theology upon human life is established as a model of the Church's public testimony to the God who creates and recreates. Therefore, the scientific calling of the Church consists crucially in the Church's proactive action in all areas of human life.

How are these two conclusions pertinent to contemporary churches in mainland China? Before answering the question, we need first to explore the current situation of Chinese churches, particularly Reformed churches, in mainland China.

III. The Urgent Need of Chinese *Reforming* Churches

The Reformed faith plays a crucial role in the revival of Christianity in the past four decades in mainland China. Yet Reformed theology was introduced much earlier. The theological faculty of Cheeloo University (*Qilu Daxue*), for example, was presbyterian. In September 1919, the American presbyterian missionary Watson McMillan Hayes (1857-1944), who once studied theology with B. B. Warfield (1851-1921) at Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, founded North China Theological Seminary (*Huabei shenxueyuan*), which was later called the sister school of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.[36]

1. Non-Indigenized Reformed Theology

Despite the long history of Chinese Reformed theology, China's modern history did not see the rise and thriving of Reformed theology. Not until the occurrence of the reform and

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opening-up policy, which was registered by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 but comprehensively implemented after the middle of the 1980s, Reformed theology obtained a historic opportunity to expand its influence significantly.[37] Against this historical context, it became easier than before for Chinese Christians to access to theological resources, the Reformed *par excellence*. More importantly, initiated by Jonathan Chao (1938-2004) and advanced by Stephen Tong, the movement of the lay lectures of Reformed theology that started in the 1980s swept across Chinese churches.[38] Then, Reformed theology grew rapidly.

It is worth noting that both Chao and Tong are closely connected to Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. This turns out that the expansion of the Reformed faith after the 1980s was largely characterized by theological unicity. For many Chinese Reformed Christians, there are no Reformed *theologies* but *the* Reformed theology, whose nickname is Westminster. This narrow understanding has been improved in recent years owing to a large number of diverse theological publications.

However, another issue remains to be unsettled radically. In assaying the situation of Reformed theology in China, Paul Wang observes that "many who regard themselves as 'Reformed' in China have little regard, understanding, or respect for fellow Christians from other confessional backgrounds. They censure others as lacking legitimacy and authority as Christians."[39] Clearly, despite that the notion of "Reformed" was somewhat broadened, the Reformed movement exhibits the mindset of theological hegemony. Hence, the Reformed groups are often in conflict with traditional local churches in some regions of mainland China. On the one hand, in some cities, young church leaders strive to push ahead the Reformed theologization of churches by enforcing all church ministers to subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity without compromise. Those who refuse to accept are not allowed to preach at churches any more. Evidently, the Reformed unicity remains to be influential. Needless to say, such a Reformed theologization incurs disharmony and even schism within churches. On the other hand, many Reformed pastors and Christians choose to build new Reformed presbyterian churches. Most of them are well-educated and some have received theological training in Western countries. Many of these emerging churches (新兴教会) have a characteristic feature that they virtually import theological and ecclesiastical resources from American presbyterian churches without indigenization. In my estimation, they are not Chinese churches but *Western presbyterian churches in China*. To a great degree, these churches are preconditioned by the fact that only those who prioritize Western Reformed theology can settle down themselves in these communities.

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The cause of the two issues above is twofold at least. First, the Reformed unicity still has latent influence. The work of collected creeds and confessions, which is primarily edited by Jonathan Chao, partly evidences such an unsound situation. On its copyright page, Jonathan used the English title *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions and Catechisms*. However, the English title is not the equivalent translation of the Chinese. The Chinese title is 历代教会教条精选, which should have been translated *The Select Creeds, Confessions and Catechisms of the Church Through the Centuries*. This differing translation matters in that the book consists of four ecumenical creeds and six Reformed confessions and catechisms.[40] The Chinese title and the content of the book together may induce Chinese Christians to arrive at a conclusion that Chinese churches should be built according to the Reformed faith alone.

The second cause of the non-indigenized Reformed theology consists in the general mindset that was being shaped in the course of the modern history of China. During 1840-60, the two Opium wars turned China to be a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. In 1886, some officials of the Qing dynasty registered the Self-Strengthening Movement (洋务运动), the slogan of which was "Chinese learning as essence, Western learning as tool" (中学为体，西学为用). This largely paved the way for the massive influx of Western civilization and scientific technologies into China. In the 1910s, Chinese traditional culture was under serious and critical scrutiny due to the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement, which drove Chinese intellectuals to admire the Western culture. Some intellectuals even argued for entirely national Westernization. Despite that the ten-year Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) to a great extent suppressed the thirst for Westernization, the reform and opening-up policy in the 1980s led to the resurgence of xenophilia. The ethos of Westernization and xenophilia exerts an impact on churches. The contemporary Chinese Christians seem not to realize the importance and necessity of the indigenization of the Christian faith. Instead, they are not reluctant to employ and apply Western theologies, particularly Reformed theology, in the contexts of mainland China.

2. The Public Mission of Theology

My analysis of the non-indigenization of Reformed theology does not attempt to deny the blessing of the Reformed faith to Chinese churches. Reformed churches in mainland China blow some fresh air of theology's public mission into today's traditional churches.

The rise of the Reformed faith in China after the 1980s reminds traditional churches in mainland China of public theology. In this paper, I follow Duncan Forrester's notion of public

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theology. Forrester argues that "public theology is rather a theology, talk about God, which claims to point to publicly accessible truth, to contribute to public discussion by witnessing to a truth which is relevant to what is going on in the world and to the pressing issues facing people and societies today."[41]

It does not say that the Chinese Church in mainland China never has public theology. Nor does it say that the churches there have no bearing on the public sphere. Alexander Chow's recent research has showed that there are three generations of public theologians in the history of Chinese Christianity. The public theologians of the first generation are primarily those from the three-self churches, who strove to build a sound state-church relationship.[42] The second generation refers to cultural Christians (*wenhua jidutu*) whose academic study pertains to Christianity. These intellectuals usually distance themselves from the Church but keen on bringing the Christian faith into academia and public discourse.[43] According to Chow, the contribution of the Reformed Chinese churches to public theology is primarily of the third generation, which consists of urban intellectual Christians who are largely under the influence of Calvinism, especially Dutch neo-Calvinism.[44] These urban intellectual church leaders are representative of Reformed public theologians in mainland China and are preoccupied with legal and political issues, such as constitutional reform, rights defense and religious freedom––primarily the religious freedom and rights of house church—and so forth.[45]

These Reformed public theologians have a significant bearing on China's society and churches, which, as Chow describes, "make[s] the Chinese government quite uncomfortable."[46] Traditional Chinese churches focus on, individual salvation, personal piety and building up household according to the word of God. However, they rarely teach Christians to bear testimony to their faith through their engagement with public affairs. In this light, the ecclesial milieu in mainland China is similar to that of Bavinck's denomination in the nineteenth-century Netherlands. The revival of Reformed theology to a certain extent changes such a situation.[47] Granted, the Reformed public theology in mainland China is largely political theology. The state-dominant religious policy seems to catch contemporary public theologians' whole attention.[48] Nonetheless, a large number of traditional churches has been reminded of their responsibility to engage with public affairs. This can be evidenced by some popular slogans in Chinese churches, such as cultural mandate and the Christianization of culture.

3. Summary

The analysis of Chinese Reformed churches thus far suffices to prove the need for Chinese *Reforming* churches. The term "Reforming" has twofold connotation. First, Chinese Reformed

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theologians need to be reforming the Reformed faith by indigenization. Second, traditional churches in mainland China need to be reforming themselves to develop their own public theology, which must go beyond political theology and make testimony to the Christian faith in every corner of human life.

On these two points, Bavinck's view of the scientific calling of the Church affords pretty valuable guidance. The value of Bavinck's viewpoint can be manifested in answering two questions. (1) What is Bavinck's approach to the indigenization of Reformed theology? Granted, the argument that the Reformed Church must contextualize or indigenize its historical confessions is not novel. As will be seen, Bavinck's stance is going beyond a mere contextualization or indigenization of Western Reformed confessions. (2) In order to construct a Chinese public theology, what should contemporary Chinese churches prioritize? Now, we are turning to wrestle with these two questions by applying Bavinck's view of the scientific calling of the Church to the contexts of mainland China.

IV. Bavinck on the Scientific Calling of the Chinese Churches

As soon as Bavinck's "De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk" is related to the situation of the churches in mainland China, one can perceive quite apparent appropriateness to use Bavinck's theological insights in this journal article as the antidote to the Chinese Reformed and traditional churches.

First, Bavinck's stance on the Reformed confessions is rather supportive of and meanwhile going beyond the indigenization of the Western Reformed faith in mainland China. As has been illustrated, although Bavinck insists on the considerable significance of ecclesial confessions, he never regards them as equivalent to the Reformed *per se*. The historic significance of the Reformed confessions is reflective of the necessity to perceive the spirit of the Reformed and then contextualize it in a new age. In this light, the exclusively normative practice of the Reformed confessions (especially the Three Forms of Unity) in mainland China is in essence anti-Reformed. Instead, Bavinck's Reformed eclecticism points the Chinese Reformed churches to the theological conversation with other theologies. This sentiment is underpinned by Bavinck's concluding remarks in the journal article. There, he highlights that diversity is characteristic of the Reformed; simultaneously, the diverse Reformed theologies share "a common fundamental character" (*een gemeenschappelijk grondkarakter*).[49] Moreover, he underscores that no attempt should be taken to eradicate the diversity in that it evidences the universality of the Reformed principles, which can be applied to all living conditions.[50]

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"No identity, but rich, variegated diversity is precisely the characteristic feature of the unity of the Spirit."[51]

Following Bavinck's view of the Reformed diversity, it could be inferred that he *de facto* advocates a sort of Reformed indigenization. In some sense, he sees it as the future of Calvinism, as proved by the following lengthy quotation.

> Calvinism wishes no cessation of progress and promotes multiformity. … It does not demand for itself the same development in America and England which it has found in Holland. This only must be insisted upon, *that in each country and in every Reformed Church it should develop itself in accordance with its own nature*, and should not permit itself to be supplanted or corrupted by foreign ideas. … *As of every nation that honors its independence, so it is the calling of every Church to guard and preserve its individual character, and, instructed by the teachings of history, to labor for the Church and theology of the future*.[52]

Bavinck's view of the Reformed diversity is explicitly predicated upon the reality of the individual character of each church on its own right around the world. Of course, the Chinese Reformed church must be humbly instructed by the history of Reformed theology as well as historic Christian theologies. Nevertheless, it does not mean the Chinese Reformed church should give up its independence and peculiarity based in specific Chinese culture. Bavinck's stance is reminiscent of Andrew Walls' argument of the twofold principle of Christianity's engagement with culture. First, the indigenizing principle means that God redeems us "as we are" and thus a Christian is still formed by "his own culture and history". Second, the pilgrim principle is indicative of God's purpose of transforming one "into what He wants them to be", which means to lead one outside of the particular culture and to have communion with the people of God throughout centuries.[53]

Combined Bavinck's and Walls' viewpoints together, it can be argued that the Chinese Reformed church should indigenize the Western Reformed theology into the Chinese context and simultaneously have communion with the universal Reformed faith. For example, the Westminster Confession does not regulate women ordination. However, women church leadership has a long history in China.[54] Nowadays, many female leaders are of those churches that accept Reformed theology. They regularly preach on Sunday, but the majority of them are not ordained to be permitted to administer sacraments. In this instance, the church implicitly grants the visible word of God (sacraments) with greater significance than the audible word of God (preaching).[55] However, Reformed tradition does not teach such hierarchy. Based on the pilgrim principle, the Chinese Reformed church should be instructed by Reformed tradition concerning the audible and visible forms of the word of God, which would result in the

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recognition of the equal status of preaching and the administration of sacraments. Grounded on the indigenizing principle, it should give respect to the specific tradition and history of the Chinese church, which was and is guided by God's hands and approves the women's eligibility to preach. The two principles finally turn out to approve women ordination.[56]

The two principles can also be applied to the state-church relation in mainland China. Western Reformed confessions seems to agree in the teaching that the magistrate should protect the church and sacred ministry.[57] In my view, it is unrealistic to appeal to this confessional teaching in mainland China. What is more, those similar confessional statements would worsen the state-church relation in mainland China.[58] If these confessional statements are strictly applied in the Chinese church, it is in fact to place the church under the control of the government. The price the church needs to pay for such a rigid application is the deprival of the church's independence and religious freedom. By and large, the religious policy in mainland China is to control the church and bring the church to the knees of communism and atheism.

These historic Reformed confessions hardly offer any far-reaching Reformed principles that guide the Chinese church to deal with the state-church relation in mainland China. How could one expect the Chinese Christian in the context of atheistic ideology to understand and adopt the idea of the state-church relation as described by Reformed confessions that were formulated in Christendom hundred years ago? In China, a Reformed confession should engage with the relation between the Christian faith and communism and atheism.

The above two instances substantiate the necessity to articulate a Sino-Reformed confession, which is essential to Bavinck's view of the development of the Reformed faith. I would like to argue that Bavinck's innovation in the indigenization of the Reformed faith consists in his insistence on the composition of confessions according to specific contexts. For him, this is characteristic of Calvinism.

> Another feature which serves to commend Calvinism consists in this—that it allows of various minor shades, and in the application of its theological and ecclesiastical principles avoids all mechanical uniformity. Lutheranism, strictly speaking, has produced but a single Church and a single Confession. Calvinism on the other hand has found entrance into many nations and founded many and multiform Churches. *It created not one but a number of Confessions.*[59]

Combining this argument with Bavinck's view of the scientific calling of the Church, it could be argued that one calling of the Church is to study on the Word of God and the Reformed treasures scientifically in order to work out new confessions that meet the demand of people in specific contexts around the world.

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A question can be anticipated at this point: If Bavinck advocates the formulation of new contextually-based confessions, why did neo-Calvinists not work out their own confession? Despite that Bavinck does not shed light on this point, it can be inferred that inasmuch as Bavinck recognizes the continuity of Western culture, he believes that the historic Reformed confessions can still satisfy the needs of his contemporaries. In "Revelation and Culture" of *Philosophy of Revelation*, Bavinck contends: "Thought has often to a great extent emancipated itself from Christianity; but life goes quietly on and is continually fed from the sources of the past. Modern culture would like to be absolutely modern, but it is not and cannot be so; it is a product of, and thus also a moment in, history."[60] To be sure, Bavinck's Stone Lectures aims for articulating a philosophy of revelation in relation to the early twentieth-century Western culture. In Bavinck's system, thus, the historic Reformed confessions that were composed several centuries ago could still settle his contemporary issues, which the neo-Calvinist movement wrestled with. Of course, it is inevitable for neo-Calvinists to take a subtle and nuanced reading of these confessions by focusing on their historical contexts.

In the case of mainland China, however, there is no such essentially cultural or contextual continuity with the Western. Nonetheless, Chinese Christians should not discard all historic Reformed confessions. Note that Bavinck's insistence on a common fundamental character of the Reformed is indicative of the oneness of the Reformed faith throughout the centuries and around the world. Chinese Christians must appreciate and probe into these Reformed confessions inasmuch as they are part of the treasures of the Church. The point of gravity here is that personal appreciation is not necessary to be upgraded to ecclesial commitment because of the necessity of the indigenization of the Reformed faith. Hence, Chinese Reformed churches should not merely draw on Western Reformed confessions. Based in Chinese context, they need to work out their own Reformed confessions, which in turn multiply and enrich Reformed tradition throughout the centuries. In so doing, the scientific calling can be fulfilled in the Chinese Reformed church's effort to reflect on the word of God in a scientific way in the context of mainland China.

Bavinck's second exhortation for the Chinese churches in mainland China is their scientific calling to make public testimony to the Christian faith. This exhortation is twofold. On the one hand, Bavinck's 'De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk' reminds the Chinese Reformed theologians of a broader conception of the public character of the Christian faith. Theology does not only deal with the state-church relation, but also engage extensively with every aspect of human life. On the other hand, concomitantly, Bavinck who is widely respected in the circle of Sino-Christianity exhorts the traditional churches to have social and cultural

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engagement. This is not unfamiliar to Chinese churches. T. C. Chao (1888-1979), the most prominent Chinese theologian in the twentieth century, has argued in 1937 that '[f]or Christians . . . religion is not merely a matter of relationship between the individual and his God, but also a matter of ethical concern and social consequence.'[61] Bavinck's and Chao's viewpoint sharply challenges the sacred-secular dualism that is influential in house churches. The early house churches leaders, including the likes of Wang Mingdao (1900-1991) and Yuan Xiangchen (1914-2015), robustly emphasized the holiness of Christian life, which led to the argument that Christians can never dispense with a world-flight stance. By and large, this dualism hinders the Chinese churches from bearing full-scale witness to the Christian faith in human life.

Bavinck's appeal to the church to hold fast to its scientific calling negates such a view of world-flight.[62] The Chinese church undertakes a scientific study of theology provided that it communicates the results of study in public spheres. By doing so, God's grace is confessed, and the word of God is proclaimed. As has been demonstrated earlier, the idea of university features in Bavinck's view of the church's scientific calling to take public engagement. For him, the university is, as it were, the hallway via which the treasures of the church can be brought into public spheres. In this regard, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) argues with Bavinck that 'our duty is that we who confess Jesus Christ take hold of science as an instrument for propagating our faith-conviction.'[63] By doing this, Christianity can exert influences on public opinion and general mentality. Otherwise, Christians would be enchanted with the life-and-world view produced by the unbelieving science. Moreover, Kuyper maintains that these influences can be entailed via university education, which 'manifest[s] a different mode of perceiving and thinking, reproducing it among people who pursue these university studies.'[64] At this point, one can perceive a feature of neo-Calvinism—that is, neo-Calvinism strives to have the Christian faith exert its influence on human intellectual life.

Bavinck's vista of the church's engagement with science in the university is of particular significance to Chinese churches. As mentioned earlier, it is the cultural Christian who is the primary practitioner of an academic or scientific study of theology in the academy. Note that cultural Christians distance themselves from churches. Apparently, this scientific theology contradicts Bavinck's statement: 'A theology without church dies.'[65] Hence, Bavinck's idea of theology in the context of university reminds Chinese churches of their calling to undertake the scientific study of the word of God in the academy. The church's voice should resound in the Chinese academia. Although some urban intellectual church leaders are academics, their

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proportion in Chinese churches of mainland China is low. A crucial development in this regard is in demand.

V. Conclusion

What is the scientific calling of the Chinese church? Bavinck offers the answer in the twofold aspect: scientific study and scientific life. Of course, Bavinck's point of departure is his own Reformed tradition. However, he does not insist on this tradition exclusively. Rather, he stresses the indigenization of Reformed theology in differing specific contexts in such a way that the composition of new confessions in new contexts is methodologically the *par excellence*. This theological mindset is critical of the Reformed theological hegemony.

For Bavinck, the scientific study of theology should turn out to the scientific life of the Church—that is, the church's public engagement. Given the particular religious policy of mainland China, most public theologians are preoccupied with the state-religion relation, especially the state-church relation. However, Bavinck's view of the scientific calling of the church exhibits more than political engagement. In particular, the church has the mission to import its treasures into the academy.

The analysis thus far demonstrates that Bavinck offers, so to speak, an earnest exhortation for the churches in mainland China. He seems to have insights into the issues of the Chinese churches a hundred-plus years ago. Indeed, the contemporary Chinese churches can learn significant lessons from Bavinck who they highly respect. The scientific calling of the church, which Bavinck has envisaged more than one century before, can be fulfilled in the twenty-first-century mainland China.

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[1] Herman Bavinck, "De Wetenschappelijke Roeping Onzer Kerk," *De Vrije Kerk* 8, no. 2-3 (1882): 88-93, 97-106.

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[3] Bavinck is critical of the French and English use of the word "science" as limited to the natural sciences. Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation: A New Annotated Edition*, ed. Cory Brock and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2018), 71.

[4] On this secession and Bavinck's denomination, see James Eglinton, *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 3-39.

[5] *DWROK*, 89. Unless otherwise noted, the translations in this paper are my own.

[6] Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 1: Prolegomena*, trans. John Vriend, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 192; emphasis added.

[7] On Bavinck's theological milieu, see James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 1-26.

[8] *DWROK*, 89.

[9] *DWROK*, 89-90.

[10] Herman Bavinck, "The Pros and Cons of a Dogmatic System," trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman, *The Bavinck Review* 5 (2014): 94.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] *Ibid.*, 97.

[13] Cf. Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, 452-453; Herman Bavinck, "Confessie en Dogmatiek," *Theologische Studiën* 3 (1891): 264.

[14] *DWROK*, 97.

[15] *DWROK*, 98.

[16] *DWROK*, 98.

[17] *DWROK*, 99.

[18] Further on the Act, see Arie L. Molendijk, *The Emergence of the Science of Religion in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 71-79; Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 18-19.

[19] Arie Theodorus Van Deursen, *The Distinctive Character of the Free University in Amsterdam, 1880-2005*, trans. Herbert Donald Morton (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), xiii.

[20] "Bavinck aan Snouck Hurgronje, Kampen, 6 januari 1880", in *Een Leidse Vriendschap. De briefwisseling tussen Herman Bavinck en Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje 1875-1921*, ed. J. De Bruijn and George Harinck (Baarn: Ten Have, 1999), 63.

[21] *DWROK*, 100.

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[22] Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2000), 9; emphasis original.

[23] *DWROK*, 102.

[24] *DWROK*, 103.

[25] *DWROK*, 103.

[26] *DWROK*, 103-104.

[27] *DWROK*,104.

[28] *DWROK*, 104.

[29] Herman Bavinck, *De Wetenschap der Heilige Godgeleerdheid* (Kampen: Zalsman, 1883), 47.

[30] Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, 493-494.

[31] *DWROK*, 98. Cory Brock and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck's Reformed Eclecticism: On Catholicity, Consciousness and Theological Epistemology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70, no. 3 (2017): 310-32. However, Brock and Sutanto neglect Bavinck's own use of the term "eclecticism" in this early article, which may be indicative of one of the historical causes of Bavinck's eclecticism.

[32] Herman Bavinck, "Common Grace," trans. Raymond VanLeeuwen, *Calvin Theological Journal* 24, no. 1 (1989): 51.

[33] Herman Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," trans. Geerhardus Vos, *The Princeton Theological Review* 7, no. 3 (1909): 462. In this light, it is inaccurate to argue that common grace undermines special grace, which is held by Louis Berkhof to critique Kuyper; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1938), 437. Skaff argues that '[f]or both Kuyper and Bavinck, common grace *maintains and preserves* humankind for special grace'; Jeffrey R. Skaff, "Common Grace and the Ends of Creation in Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 9, no. 1 (2015): 13.

[34] Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, 443.

[35] Cf. Skaff, "Common Grace and the Ends of Creation in Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck," 5; emphasis added.

[36] Further on Cheeloo University and North China Theological Seminary, see Yue-bei Zhao, *North China Theological Seminary in Light and Shadow of History* (Edinburgh: Handsel, 2017); A. Donald. MacLeod, 'Watson Hayes and the North China Theological Seminary,'

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accessed by 11 July 2019. http://adonaldmacleod.com/china/watson-hayes-and-the-north-china-theological-seminary/.

[37] On some historic events happened during the 1980s-2000s that directly or indirectly promoted the development of the Reformed faith, see Alexander Chow, *Chinese Public Theology: Generational Shifts and Confucian Imagination in Chinese Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 48-55, 70-80. Jonathan Chao [Tianen Zhao] and Rosanna Chong [Wanfang Zhuang], *Dangdai zhongguo jidujiao fazhanshi* [A History of Christianity in Socialist China: 1949-1997] (Taipei: CMI Publishing, 1997).

[38] Stephen Tong [Chongrong Tang], 'Wo suo renshi de Zhao Tianen mushi' [The Pastor Who I Know: Jonathan Chao], *China Ministries International*, accessed by 1 March 2019. http://cmiusca.org/page/2894894:Page:5094

[39] Paul Wang, "Reformed Theology in China: Some Theological and Cultural Reflections," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 15, no. 4 (2015): 366.

[40] The former includes the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian Creed and the Creed and St. Athanasius. The latter encompasses the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt, the Westminster Confession, the Shorter Westminster Catechism, and G. H. Kersten's *A Compendium of the Christian Religion*.

[41] Duncan B. Forrester, *Truthful Action: Explorations in Practical Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 127-128.

[42] Chow, *Chinese Public Theology*, 48-69.

[43] *Ibid.*, 70.

[44] *Ibid.*, 92-114; Alexander Chow, "Calvinist Public Theology in Urban China Today," *International Journal of Public Theology* 8, no. 2 (2014): 158-175.

[45] On this point, see Chow, *Chinese Public Theology*, 101-105; Gerda Wielander, *Christian Values in Communist* (London: Routledge, 2013), 135-141; Yi Wang, "The Possibility of Political Theology: Christianity and Liberalism," *Chinese Law and Religion Monitor* 8, no. 1 (2012): 96-124. Interestingly, such a kind of public theology is concurrent with the rise of human right studies. With reference to the latter, see Zhang Wei, "The Rise of a Human Rights Studies and Education Movement in China," in *Christianity in Chinese Public Life: Religion, Society, and the Rule of Law*, ed. Joel A. Carpenter and Kevin R. den Dulk (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 45-56..

[46] Chow, *Chinese Public Theology*, 112.

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[47] Cf. Wielander, *Christian Values in Communist*, 42, 93-95, 113, 155.

[48] Max Stackhouse argues that public theology is pertinent to civil society, whereas political theology engages with the relationship between politics and religion. Max L. Stackhouse, "Civil Religion, Political Theology and Public Theology: What's the Difference?," *Political Theology* 5, no. 3 (2004): 275-293. However, Duncan Forrester's definition of public theology, as set forth above, indicates that political theology is one branch of public theology.

[49] Bavinck does not explicate what the common fundamental character is. He seems to recognize that the character is continually developing, as the diversity of Reformed theology never ends. One can argue that this notion of diversity of the Reformed is reflective of Bavinck's organic thinking, which highlights unity-in-diversity and unity preceding diversity; on Bavinck's theological organicism, see Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 51-80.

[50] *DWROK*, 105.

[51] *DWROK*, 105.

[52] Herman Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism," trans. Geerhardus Vos, *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5, no. 17 (1894): 23; emphasis added.

[53] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (New York: Orbis, 1996), 7-9.

[54] On this point, see Alexander Chow, "The Remarkable Story of China's 'Bible Women'", *Christianity Today*, accessed by 18 March 2019, https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2018/march/christian-china-bible-women.html

[55] The visible and audible forms of the word of God are clearly taught in Reformed theology. see "Zwingli, Fidei Ratio (1530)," in James T. Dennison, ed. *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation, Volume 1:1523-1552* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), 125; "Calvin's Catechism (1537)," in Dennison, *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation, Volume 1:1523-1552*, article 26; "The Second Helvetic Confession (1566)," in James T. Dennison, ed. *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation, Volume 2: 1552-1566* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 811.

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[57] For example, see "The Belgic Confession (1561)," in Dennison, *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation, Volume 2: 1552-1566*, article 36.

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[58] For example, see "The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)," in James T. Dennison, ed. *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation, Volume 4:1600-1693* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), chapter 23, article 3.

[59] Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism," 22. Emphasis added. The multiple confessions are grounded in the fact that "[t]o no individual man or individual Church has it been given to assimilate truth in all its fullness. Truth is too rich and manifold for this. Only in company with all the saints can we understand the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ."

[60] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 200.

[61] T. C. Chao, "Christianity and the National Crisis," in *The Collected English Writings of Tsu Chen Chao*, ed. Wang Xiaochao (Peking: Religion and Culture Press, 2009), 399

[62] Bavinck asserts that neither world-flight nor world-conformity is fitting into the teaching of Christianity; Herman Bavinck, "The Kingdom of God, the Highest Good," trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman, *The Bavinck Review* 2 (2011): 167.

[63] Abraham Kuyper, *Wisdom and Wonder: Common Grace in Science and Art*, trans. Nelson Kloosterman, ed. Jordan J. Ballor and Stephen J. Grabill (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian's Library Press, 2011), 94.

[64] *Ibid.*, 95.

[65] *DWROK*, 98.

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