

Tjeerd Kuipers

**The principles of Abraham
Kuyper in the work of
Tjeerd Kuipers**



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Abstract

Tjeerd Kuipers (1857-1942) was a renowned architect, constructing over 50 churches. His churches were mainly for the Dutch denomination *Gereformeerde Kerken*. Abraham Kuyper, a theologian from these churches, published his ideas on church interiors from 1897. The main idea was to construct the church in an amphitheatre-shape, with a large platform or stage in front. On that platform, the liturgical furniture had to be placed. Tjeerd Kuipers incorporated most of these ideas in the Wilhelminakerk in Dordrecht (1899). In earlier work, these principles were not yet visible, and Kuipers' churches had a very traditional setup. The churches after the Wilhelminakerk feature some aspects of the ideas of Kuyper, such as a platform, a lectern-type pulpit, or the removal of the baptismal fence. However, the full vision of Kuyper did not return anymore in the work of Tjeerd Kuipers. Kuipers himself gives the reason for this: lots of aspects from Kuyper's ideas did not work properly in practice. Therefore, it can be concluded that the ideas inspired Kuipers, but they had only minor influence on most of the churches he designed.

Front page picture: Koepelkerk Leeuwarden; From: "*Historisch centrum Leeuwarden*"

<https://historischcentrumleeuwarden.nl/onderzoek/beeldbank/zoeken-in-de-beeldbank/detail/fc607bc6-aea9-11e3-baea-b78e372a04c1/media/23f790a3-5c1a-636e-43d6-23b4dd58b90f?mode=detail&view=horizontal&q=koepelkerk&rows=1&page=29>

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Please note this report has a separate appendix, which includes a spreadsheet with all gathered materials. This document was a working document, and it is therefore not part of this paper.

1. Introduction

Designing over 50 churches, the architect Tjeerd Kuipers (1857-1942) was a leading figure in the design of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, a Dutch church domination which came up in the 19th century. His work was situated all over the Netherlands, often featuring large-scale city churches with high towers, giving space hundreds of members, sometimes even more than two thousand. Although much of his work has been demolished in the 1960's and 70's, or heavily altered, some churches are still intact until this day.

During the life of Tjeerd Kuipers, the leading theologian of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, Abraham Kuyper, published his view on church architecture, mainly focussing on the setup of the interior. Which furniture should go where, what is the shape of the building, etcetera. First, he stated his viewpoints in a series of columns, which he later merged in a book called "*Onze Eeredienst*". At least one of the churches of Tjeerd Kuipers, the Wilhelminakerk in Dordrecht (1899), was designed according to Kuyper's principles.

1.1 Research question

In this paper, the implementation of the ideas of Abraham Kuyper in the work of Tjeerd Kuipers is researched. Much of Tjeerd Kuipers is unknown till this day. There is only few literature available on his life and work, and archival material is hard to find. However, much of his work is well-documented in historic photographs, which gives material for a thorough, systematic investigation in his work.

The main research question for this paper is:

How did the ideas on interior church architecture of Abraham Kuyper influence the work of Tjeerd Kuipers?

This question implicates both research into the ideas of Abraham Kuyper and into the work of Tjeerd Kuipers. Therefore, the research has been split into three parts, with the first two having an introductory character and the third filling the main purpose of this research:

- 1) The historical context of protestant churches in the Netherlands
- 2) The ideas of Abraham Kuyper on church architecture
- 3) The oeuvre of Tjeerd Kuipers

The main objective for this study is to carefully map all the work of Tjeerd Kuipers in a frame of his time, while using the historical context and features which might have been derived from the ideas of Abraham Kuyper. In this way, the significance of the work of Kuipers for the *Gereformeerde Kerken* might be further enhanced, emphasizing a precious care for the leftover examples of his work. Currently, it is important to focus on his work, because only 2 of his interiors are still (almost) intact, namely in Axel and Leeuwarden. Some others are partly intact, but most of his churches are either demolished or interiorly altered.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology for this research has been derived from the three focal points stated in the previous section: The historical context, Abraham Kuyper and the work of Tjeerd Kuipers.

For the first section, trends and customs are discussed based on literature research. An important role in this part plays the work *Een huis voor het Woord* (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984). A more extensive overview of the history of protestant churches in the Netherlands is given in their book. Furthermore, illustrative examples are used explaining typical features in church architecture.

For the second section, the original book *Onze Eeredienst* (Kuyper, 1911) has been studied and compared with literature on this book. An extensive overview of his work is also given in *Honderdvijftig jaar Gereformeerde Kerkbouw* (Steensma & Swigchem, 1986) and *Een eeuw rondom het Woord* (Dillingh, 1999). The book covers a series of columns which were published in the 1890's in magazine *De Heraut*.

The oeuvre of Tjeerd Kuipers has been researched systematically from historical sources, including original drawings by the architect, renovation drawings by later architects, historical photographs and historical drawings. Historical photographs play the main role in this research. Historical footage has been retrieved from municipal archives and church archives. Furthermore, historic photographs were retrieved from specialized websites, mainly *gereformeerdekerken.info* and *reliwiki.nl*. Although material from all churches was sought, not everything was publicly available within the given amount of time for research. Therefore, in the discussion of the results a selection of churches has been made based on the availability of material, the significance of architecture (e.g. if there is a big deviation from earlier work), the size of the church (since bigger churches seem to have a more distinct architecture) and the time period (Kuipers built the one year more churches than the other). When it comes to size, Abraham Kuyper also has a specific focus on large-scale churches when presenting his ideas. That is also a reason to have an overall focus in this report on bigger (city) churches.

With these three main aspects, the research has been conducted implementing literature research during the process. The main goal of the three methods is to place the work of Tjeerd Kuipers in the context of this time, while looking at features which he might have derived from theologian Abraham Kuyper.

1.3 Scope and limits of the research

This paper comes with a certain scope and various limits in the research. In this section, the boundaries of this paper will be discussed, and possible further ways of research.

This paper is based on a selection of the work of Tjeerd Kuipers, namely the new-built churches for the denomination *Gereformeerde Kerken*. Kuipers also led a few renovations of historic churches, which are left out of this paper. That is because Abraham Kuyper displays his ideas on church architecture specifically on new churches built for his own denomination. Researching the correlation between Kuipers and Kuyper, the most important items are therefore the completely new churches by Tjeerd Kuipers.

The research method, comparing historical footage with the ideas projected by Kuyper, is only done based on drawings and pictures. Preferably, thorough research in all the archives of these churches would be carried out, not only to find more drawings and pictures (because for various churches they are not available), but also to find correspondence between Kuipers and the church council or building committee. Instructions to the architect might be found, or discussions between the architect and his client. Therefore, it remains unclear in this paper what the role of the individual churches themselves is. Did they play an active role in incorporating the latest ideas of Abraham Kuyper, or did they have a more conservative approach? In this paper, only a little of this footage is present for the Wilhelminakerk Dordrecht, mainly via literature. Furthermore, some footage was found in the archive

of the Wilhelminakerk Bussum, but that was hard to find because the archive was poorly structured. For this research, such an approach was too time-consuming. Future research might select various churches and dive deeper into (perhaps messy) church archives, to explore the role of the church councils and building committees in the design process.

Because of the research question, this paper is only limited to the interiors of the churches of Kuipers. Although there is some advice from Abraham Kuyper on the exterior architecture of the churches, he mainly focuses on the interior, connecting the liturgy to the interior setup or liturgical disposition. Therefore, the beautiful external architecture is left out of this research. Additional research to the exteriors could be done later, which would be rather easy because most exteriors are still largely intact, while interiors are often heavily altered.

1.4 Structure of the paper

The paper is structured according to the three research objectives stated in section 1.1. First, the historical context of church architecture in the Netherlands will be discussed, including the origins of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* and their wish to return to the core of the Dutch Reformed tradition. Secondly, an overview is given of the ideas of Abraham Kuyper and his vision as projected in his book.

Third, the work of Tjeerd Kuipers is discussed in four parts. After an introduction about who he was, his career and important designs, the first section deals with his early churches before 1899, which was the year when Kuipers designed his first church according to the principles of Abraham Kuyper. This specific church, the earlier mentioned Wilhelminakerk in Dordrecht, is discussed in the second section. Third, Kuipers' churches until 1920 are discussed, which are characterized by a return to traditional principles in a more functionalist style. Lastly, the churches designed after 1920 are discussed, which are characterized by a strict, more rationalist style.

Finally, a conclusion is drawn from these main sections, valuing the work of Tjeerd Kuipers in the given historical context and the relation to the ideas of Abraham Kuyper.

In this paper, the Dutch names and terminology will be used when dealing with ecclesiastical furniture, names of church denominations and names of churches. Therefore, terms such as *preekstoel* (pulpit) will be given in Dutch. At the end of chapter 2, after the discussion of the historical context of Protestantism in the Netherlands and the elements used in the interior space, an overview of all Dutch terms and a translation will be given.

2. Historical context of protestant churches in the Netherlands

When Tjeerd Kuipers started to design churches for the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, there was already a long tradition of Protestantism and Protestant churches in the Netherlands. In this chapter, a short overview will be given of the origins of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, with a focus on the ecclesiastical history. Then, the trends in church interiors will be discussed using illustrative examples. A more elaborate overview can already be found in existing literature. In the last section, the most important furniture in the protestant churches will be discussed, with an emphasis on the elements which are important for the ideas of Abraham Kuyper (see chapter 3).

2.1 The *Gereformeerde Kerken*

When the reformation entered the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church lost its place in the Netherlands, and the *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church) was instituted. The former, medieval Roman Catholic churches were taken over by the protestants. This resulted in the iconoclasm, when statues, altars and icons removed, and paintings plastered over. The churches were altered to house the protestant liturgy, although various pieces of furniture were left intact, which could still be used in the protestant liturgy. The *Hervormde Kerk* was the main protestant denomination for centuries from then. There were also some smaller groups, such as the Lutheran churches and the so-called *doopsgezinden*, who practiced believer's baptism instead of infant baptism. However, the *Hervormde Kerk*, acting as a state-church in the Dutch Republic, had a strong position in the religious landscape.

However, separations started in the 19th century. This had two main causes. The first was the upcoming of modern, liberal theology in the *Hervormde Kerk*. The second were renewals on the ecclesiastical structure imposed by the government in the *Algemeen Reglement voor het bestuur der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, a royal decree. The interference of the king was considered wholly misguided and inappropriate. The first separation movement was the *Afscheiding* (secession) in 1834, which led to the institution of the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk*. The second movement was the *Doleantie* in 1886 (*doleantie* means something like mourning). One of the leading figures in this movement was dr. Abraham Kuyper. The *Doleantie*-group was initially a strongly opposed to separation. Therefore, the word *afscheiding*, meaning secession or separation, was not used by this group, since their movement focussed on the purification of the national church. Most of the two groups united in 1892 into the *Gereformeerde Kerken*¹ (Steensma & Swigchem, 1986).

The idea of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* was to go back to the reformed confession and to have a church structured according to the *Dordtse Kerkorde*, the church regulation from 1619. The *Gereformeerde Kerken* saw themselves as the continuation of the original Dutch protestant churches, and therefore there was often some rivalry with the *Hervormde Kerk* (Steensma & Swigchem, 1986). An example can

¹ The Dutch words *Hervormd* and *Gereformeerd* both translate to Reformed in English, making it hard to distinguish between the two. Before the separations in the 19th century, both words were used for the same church. In 1816, the word *Hervormd* became official name, together with other royal decrees. Currently, both names refer to different church denominations. Both are protestant denominations, distinguishing them from the Roman Catholic Church. In 2004, the *Hervormde Kerk* and the *Gereformeerde Kerk* merged with the Lutheran Church into the *Protestantse Kerk in Nederland*. However, there are still various church denominations left in the Netherlands, having the word *gereformeerd* in their name.

be found in the name of the Nieuwe Westerkerk in Rotterdam, built for the *Gereformeerde Kerk*. This church was called to be the 'new' one, while the 'old' Westerkerk was a slightly older church belonging to the *Hervormde Kerk*. This rivalry was not uncommon.

2.2 Church interiors after the Reformation

As mentioned earlier, the protestants took over the catholic churches to make them their own, corresponding to their own demands, fitting them to their own services. This meant a major change in church interiors. In this section, a brief overview will be given of an illustrative Gothic city church, two newly built protestant churches (Greek cross and cupola) in the seventeenth century, and one built in the late 19th century, during the time Tjeerd Kuipers was active as an architect. The churches will be presented as type, briefly discussing various aspects occurring across the Netherlands. The selection for these three periods has been made based on the ideology of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, which is returning to the early church of the reformation, and to give some context to the period when Kuipers started designing. Smaller churches, such as village churches, have been left out of the scope of this discussion, because the paper focuses on large-scale churches. In this section, the main layout of the types will be discussed. Specific interior elements will be discussed in section 2.3.

2.2.1 Gothic city church

The painting in figure 1 shows a church service in the Nieuwezijds Kapel, a church in Amsterdam, in the 17th century. On the *preekstoel* (pulpit) we see the preacher, high above the congregation. People gathered around this spot, seated on various sorts of benches and chairs. Around the pillars of the church, special seats are placed, reserved for the elite and governing bodies of the city. Often, they had a lot of influence in the churches, also when it came to the appointment of the church council and pastors (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984).

This interior was common in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. All elements representing the Catholic liturgy were removed, the *preekstoel* became the central spot, and the rest of the church was rather empty, featuring some benches and a lot of white plaster. This interior setup was also present in the former Grote Kerk in Hoorn. Figure 3, left hand, shows the *preekstoel* on one of the columns, surrounded by a *doophek* (baptismal fence). Opposite to the *preekstoel*, there are

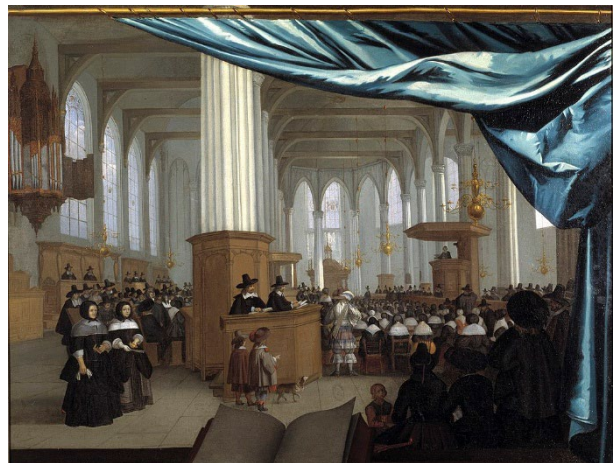
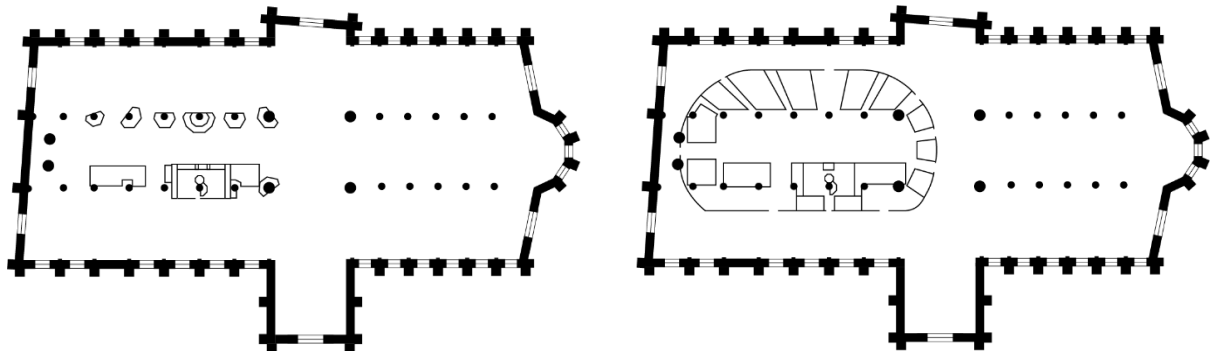


Figure 1 Church service in the Nieuwezijds Kapel, Amsterdam, by Hans Jurriaensz van Baden. From: "Wikimedia Commons" (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=117475423>)



Figure 2 St. Janskerk Gouda. From: "Kerkfotografie." (<https://kerkfotografie.nl/sint-jan-gouda/>)



benches surrounding the pillars, which are the places of the mayors and notables of the city, and there are some benches next to the *preekstoel*.

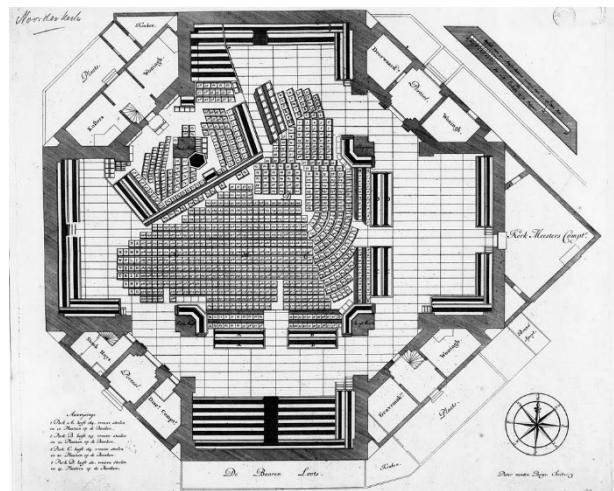
This setup of the church lasted usually at least until the 19th century, while some examples are still present today, such as the interiors of the Oude Kerk and Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. In Hoorn, the church was heavily altered in the early 19th century. All the honourable places were removed, and one massive amphitheatre-like construction was built in the church. Almost neglecting the church architecture, a half-round plan was designed with a lot of fixed places. Since burials in the church were forbidden, the floor could be covered by furniture (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984).

Such a reconstruction also took place in Gouda (figure 2). This situation is very common for large, gothic churches in the Netherlands, although there may be lots of little differences.

2.2.2 Greek Cross church

As can be seen in figure 3, lots of space in the gothic churches was lost. Furthermore, the churches were often way too big, since a preacher's voice could usually not fill the whole building. Therefore, it's not surprising that the protestants started to build a new type of church.

Meanwhile, the Renaissance had entered the Netherlands, and this became the new style of the churches. Amsterdam was one of the first cities to build medium-large city churches. A famous one is the Noorderkerk, designed by Hendrick de Keyser and built in 1623. It became a model for more churches, such as the Nieuwe Kerk in Groningen.



In the Nieuwe Kerk in Groningen, balconies were used to house even more people. Figure 5 shows the interior of this church, with later added seating.

2.2.3 17th century circular church

Another common shape of a church became the circular or cupola shape. In this setup, no pillars were needed, and everyone had a clear sight of the *preekstoel*, placed at one of the sides.

In figure 6, the floorplan of the Ronde Lutherse Kerk in Amsterdam (1668) is projected, which features a circular church with 2 levels of balconies. This church could house many hundreds of people, who were all very close to the *preekstoel*, which was located at the edge of the circle. Above this *preekstoel*, the organ was located, making maximum use of the church space to house as many people as possible.

In figure 7, the interior of the Oostkerk in Middelburg (1648), is shown. This church is built in a similar layout, although on a slightly smaller scale. Around the walls, seating has been installed for the church council. They were facing the congregation instead of the *preekstoel*. Everyone in the church, though, had a perfect sightline to the center of the liturgy: the *preekstoel* under the organ.

Both these 17th century church types evolved further through time. The Grote Kerk in Harlingen (1775) is a Greek-cross shape, but with the *preekstoel* in the middle of one of the walls instead of in a corner. This gives the space a more natural layout. The Koepelkerk in Arnhem (1838) was a clear interpretation of the cupola-shape, with a double balcony all along the sides. Furthermore, there was not much development in the protestant church interior, which can also be seen in the selection made for the book *Kerkinterieurs in Nederland* (de Beyer, Verhoeven, & Reinstra, 2016).



Figure 5 Nieuwe Kerk Groningen. From: "Nieuwe Kerk Groningen" (<https://nieuwekerkgroningen.nl/concerten/>)

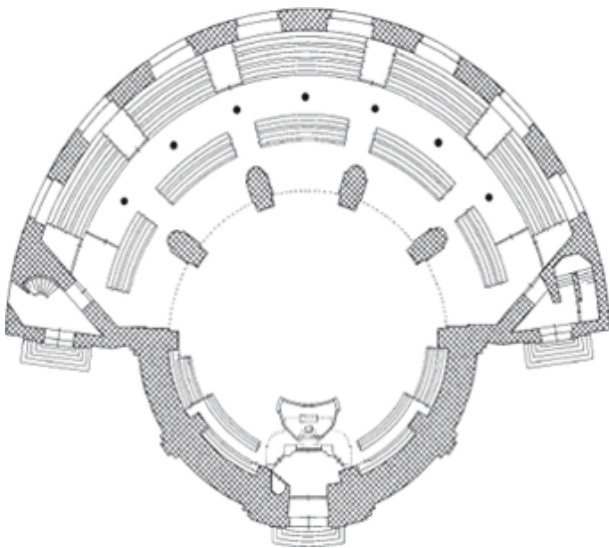


Figure 6 Floorplan of the Ronde Lutherse Kerk Amsterdam. (Monumentenzorg Nederland, 1990, p.59)



Figure 7 Oostkerk Middelburg. From: "Kerkfotografie" (<https://kerkfotografie.nl/oostkerk-middelburg/>)

2.2.4 19th century protestant church

In the 19th century, two large, modern, new protestant churches were built by the Hervormde Kerk, one in Katwijk (Nieuwe Kerk, 1887) and Apeldoorn (Loolaankerk, 1892). Tjeerd Kuipers also made a design for these churches but lost the competition. However, the churches, which are strikingly similar, depict the type of churches built in the *Hervormde Kerk at the time*.

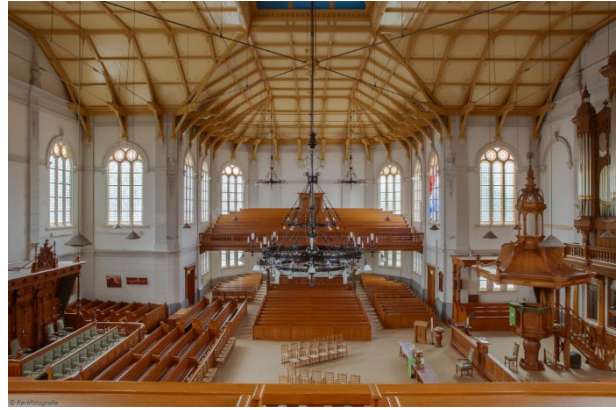


Figure 8 Loolaankerk Apeldoorn, From: "Kerkfotografie." (<https://kerkfotografie.nl/grote-kerk-of-koninginnekerk-apeldoorn/>)

Figure 8 depicts the Loolaankerk in Apeldoorn. The church is rather wide, filled with seating and two balconies. The *preekstoel* is a free-standing but classical model, with a *doophek* in front. Although seating for notables was not common anymore in this period, the Loolaankerk was near to the Royal palace and had a place reserved for the king (left hand in the figure).

2.2.5 Conclusion

Since the reformation, the church interior of the protestant churches has been consistent. Main alterations are the addition of permanent seating, also in amphitheatre form, in the gothic churches. The new protestant types, Greek-cross and cupola, have been used through the centuries. In the end of the 19th century, large churches on a new plan have been built, but featuring a traditional interior.

2.3 Protestant interiors

In this section, the elements in the interiors are discussed. A regular Dutch church included the following liturgical furniture: A *preekstoel*, *doophek*, *kerkenraadsbanken*, and optional furniture for the sacraments. They will now be discussed more in-depth.

2.3.1 Preekstoel

The most important element in a protestant church is the ***preekstoel*** (pulpit). From this stand, the sermon is held during the church service. Therefore, it is important that everybody in the church could hear what is said from there and see the person standing on the pulpit.

The *preekstoel* was already in the Dutch churches before the reformation. After the reformation, it was most often kept at the same place, while the congregation now gathered around it (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984). The *preekstoel* usually consisted of a pedestal, a core and a sounding board. On top of the sounding board, there could be decorations. Since the *preekstoel* had to be the most



Figure 9 Highly decorated *Preekstoel* in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. By: Erik & Petra Hesmerg. From: "De Nieuwe Kerk" (<https://www.nieuwekerk.nl/persberichten/beeldmateriaal-de-nieuwe-kerk/>)

important element in the church, it could have a height of several metres, with the Nieuwe Kerk of Amsterdam (figure 9) having the highest *preekstoel* of the Netherlands, being more than 13 metres tall (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984).

2.3.2 Lessenaar and dooptuin

Before the pulpit, usually lower, was the *lessenaar* (lectern). From this place, the reading of the Bible takes place, and a singer would lead the congregation in singing the psalms. The *lessenaar* was often undecorated and simple, in contrast to the more elaborate *preekstoel* behind it. Usually in protestant churches, the *lessenaar* was incorporated in the *doophek*, a low fence separating the area around the *preekstoel*, which is called the *dooptuin*, from the rest of the church.

The *dooptuin* was situated around the *preekstoel*, usually in a rectangular shape. The origins of the *dooptuin* are from before the reformation. There are suggestions that the Dutch protestants took inspiration from foreign examples (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984).

The sacrament of the *Heilige Doop* (Holy Baptism) was distributed in the *dooptuin*. Having a separate space for this sacrament is a tradition which goes back to the earliest period of Christianity, when there was a separate building for baptism. In medieval times, there was a separate chapel for this purpose at the side of the church.

Further purposes of the *dooptuin* are marriages, public confessions of faith and the installation of a new pastor. Furthermore, there was often seating for the church council. Later, when seating space in churches was rented out, additional chairs in the *dooptuin* were also rented out, especially to women (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984).

2.3.3 Banken

Near this lectern, often in the *dooptuin*, are the *kerkenraadsbanken* (pews for the church council). They are usually separated from the *kerkbanken* (pews) or *kerkstoelen* (chairs) used by ordinary believers. Sometimes those places were on a balcony to optimally use every squared meter.

Kerkbanken only became common in the 19th century, when there came an end to burials in the church by Dutch law. Before that period, everyone brought his own seating or rented a chair. There were a few *herenbanken*, pews for notables, usually against the pillars of the church or at the walls. The rest of the church remained empty.



Figure 10 *Preekstoel* and *Dooptuin* in the Grote Kerk, Naarden. By: Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, From: "Wikimedia Commons" (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=23690783>)

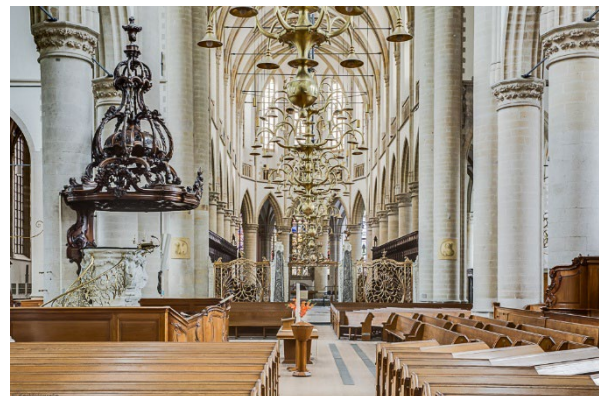


Figure 11 Grote Kerk Dordrecht with 20th century *kerkbanken*. From: "Kerkfotografie." (<https://kerkfotografie.nl/grote-kerk-dordrecht/>)

When *kerkbanken* became common in the 19th century, massive ensembles were realised in the large city churches, giving space to hundreds of people. Although much of them were later removed, good examples can be found in Gouda (figure 2), Dordrecht (figure 11), Sneek and more places.

2.3.4 Sacraments

During some special service, additional furniture would be needed. This is mainly the case for the two protestant Holy Sacraments. The first and most frequent is the *Heilige Doop*, the baptism of children. During this ritual, children are baptized with a little bit of water. In the Catholic times, a church had often a highly decorated *doopvont*, a font, which had a pedestal and covering. After the reformation, only a little *doopbekken* was used, a little bowl made of copper or silver, which was occasionally attached to the stairs of the pulpit (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984). In this way, there was no permanent furniture in the church for this sacrament. However, in the 19th century, the *doopvont* slowly came back into some churches and got a place in the *dooptuin*.

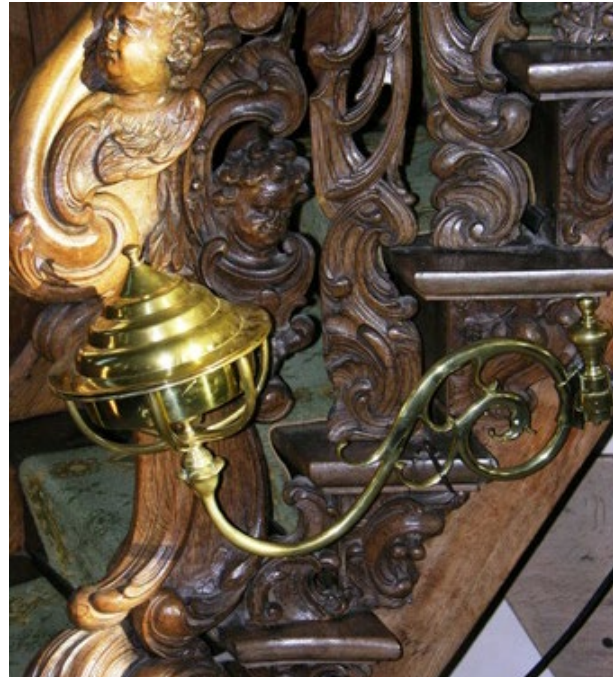


Figure 12 Doopbekken in Waspik. From: "*Hervormde gemeente Waspik*" (<https://www.hervormdegemeentewaspik.nl/historie/interieur>)

The second Holy sacrament is the *Heilig Avondmaal* (The Lord's Supper, often called eucharist in non-protestant churches), for which was needed a large table, the *Avondmaalstafel*. Believers would sit at this table and pass bread and wine onto each other. There were three common places to set up this table in the medieval churches: In the choir, in the transept before the choir or before the pulpit in the nave. Especially in the last two situation, the table was not permanently present, but only put up when the sacrament was distributed, which happened approximately 4-6 times a year (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984).

2.3.5 Organ

Organs were already present in the catholic churches. Since they played originally no role in the Calvinist church service, they could have been removed. However, city councils prevented this destruction and commanded the organs to stay in place. Later they were used again to accompany the singing of the congregation.

The most common place for the organ was the west wall of the gothic church, such as in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, which is discussed earlier in this chapter. In churches specifically built for the protestant service, organs started to occur above the *preekstoel*, such as in the Grote



Figure 13 Grote Kerk Harlingen. From: "*Kerkfotografie*." (<https://kerkfotografie.nl/grote-kerk-harlingen/>)

Kerk in the Frysian town Harlingen (figure 13). In such a way, all important elements in the church were focused at one wall.

2.3.6 Other elements

There are a lot of elements in the churches which did not play a role in the liturgy. An example is the choir screen, separating the choir from the nave. Smaller versions were used to fence off chapels, which were for example used as burial chapels.

There were usually also various sorts of panels in the churches. Some had a painting with Bible verses on them and hung in the church space as a decoration. Another common version was the mourning panel, remembering someone buried in the church. Furthermore, there were panels with lists of pastors, the Apostolic Confession, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and so on.

2.3.7 Conclusion

To sum up, in the time when Tjeerd Kuipers started his work, most regular protestant church interior had a *preekstoel* with *dooptuin*, a vast amount of *kerkbanken* spread around this, optionally on different levels, and an organ. There sometimes was a *doopvont* or a permanent *avondmaalstafel*, but that is not widespread over the country. Most church interiors had long histories of development, showing different time layers in the same building.

2.4 Overview of Dutch terms

Dutch term	English translation or explanation
(Nederlands) Hervormde Kerk	Oldest Dutch church denomination
Gereformeerde Kerk	New Dutch church denomination after the separations
Preekstoel	Pulpit
Lessenaar	Lectern
Doophek	Baptismal fence
Dooptuin	Area behind the baptismal fence
Doopvont	Font
Doopbekken	Bowl used for baptisms
(kerk)banken	Pews
Kerkenraadsbanken	Pews for the church council
Herenbanken	Pews for notables
Bankenblok	Massive construction with <i>kerkbanken</i> usually in amphitheatre shape
Galerij	Inside balcony with more seating
Avondmaalstafel	Table for the Holy Supper

3. Abraham Kuyper on church architecture

In this chapter, the principles of Abraham Kuyper on church architecture and interiors are discussed. First is a short introduction given on Abraham Kuyper, his position in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* and his book *Onze Eeredienst*. Then, his concept of the gathering of the congregation as a *vergadering der gelovigen*, an assembly of the believers, will be explained. After that, his ideal plan for the churches will be discussed, and finally the placing of the furniture. For this discussion, the book by Kuyper is used together by a more extensive review by J. Vrieze in the work of Steensma & Swigchem (1986).

3.1 Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)

Abraham Kuyper was born on October 29, 1837, in the Dutch town Maassluis. His father was pastor of the Hervormde Kerk in that town. Abraham Kuyper studied theology at the University of Leiden and got his first job as pastor of the Hervormde Kerk in Beesd (1863). Although more liberal in the faith at first, in this place he became an orthodox pastor. Later he served the congregations in Utrecht (1867) and Amsterdam (1870).

Kuyper was hardworking and eager to organize the orthodox, conservative part of the Hervormde Kerk. He initiated a weekly magazine called *De Heraut*, from 1871 and onwards, and a year later he started a daily newspaper, called *De Standaard*. Kuyper was editor-in-chief for both. Also, Kuyper became a member of parliament between 1874 and 1877. In 1879, the Anti-Revolutionnaire Partij was established, a political party of which Kuyper would later be the leader and for which he became prime minister from 1901 until 1905. After this period, he remained a member of parliament and of the senate, and was appointed Minister of State, but the peak of his success was over (de Gaay Fortman, 1956).

From 1886 onwards, Kuyper was the leader of the *Doleantie* and of the *Vereniging* in 1892 (see also chapter 2), out of which the *Gereformeerde Kerken* came forth. Kuyper was for a long time the main figure in this group of churches. His *De Heraut* would have an important place in organizing these churches. His religious followers held him in high honour for a long time after his life, but for the rest of the Netherlands his identity was not so famous anymore (de Gaay Fortman, 1956).

Kuyper was writing a lot during his lifetime. One of the most important things he wrote when it comes to this research is a series of articles in his magazine *De Heraut* dealing with all kinds of topics related to church services, church buildings and much more. He paused the series when he became prime minister but finished it into a book published under the title *Onze Eeredienst*. It's a thorough analysis of practical issues, which he explains with both orthodox and surprising renewing insights (Steensma & Swigchem, 1986). Tjeerd Kuipers knew *De Heraut* and was aware of the ideas of Kuyper, as he writes to C. van Son in Dordrecht when explaining his design for the Wilhelminakerk (Kuipers, 1899). For the analysis of this paper, the book *Onze Eeredienst* has been used, because it contains the same information, but it was much easier to access.

3.2 Vergadering der Gelovigen

The main concept behind Kuyper's ideas on the church, as presented in *Onze Eeredienst*, is the *Vergadering der Gelovigen*, an assembly of faithful which comes together as a community in an official

way. The people gather under the responsibility of a board, the *kerkenraad* (church council consisting of the pastors, elders and deacons). In this gathering, the faithful could have an encounter with God and be in His presence. The building (the church) should accommodate this meeting or assembly, specifically designed for this purpose. That is the reason why Kuyper thinks the structure of the church so important, to have everything orderly in place in all the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. Everyone entering the church should immediately see its purpose.

That purpose includes the regular assembly, with the sermon as centrepiece, but also the services with one of the Holy Sacraments. For that purpose, the *doopvont* and *avondmaalstafel* were important in the setup of the church as a meeting place.

3.3 The church plan

According to Kuyper, a church should be designed in response to the number of members. For congregations up to 500 people, he suggests that a simple, rectangular church is sufficient. In the rest of his book, he mostly leaves those smaller churches out, because he thinks most problems occur in larger churches, with congregations up to 2000 people or more.

Besides general instructions about usability (safety, fresh air, natural light and temperature), the most important feature of a good church is that everyone can see and hear the pastor properly. Otherwise, parts of the sermon could not be heard, and the speaker would soon be tired out (these kinds of presumptions are often exaggerated by Kuyper, he is even stating that the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam made victims because of its bad conditions). According to Kuyper, the best acoustics could be achieved in a half-circular shape, like a Greek or Roman amphitheatre. The congregation would then sit in half a circle around the *preekstoel* so that everyone could see and hear everything. The *kerkbanken* were to be constructed on a slight slope, so that the places in the back were higher than the places in front. Furthermore, additional places could be found on a *galerij*, an inside balcony with additional places. Even multiple layers Kuyper thought possible.

3.3.1 Possible historic references

Abraham Kuyper might have thought about the developments given in chapter 2 of this paper, such as the invention of the *bankenblok* in the older churches. These had a beneficial effect for the acoustics and views for the congregation and would therefore fit in Kuyper's idea. Kuyper might also have thought of the circular plans of the domed churches. Since he was a preacher in Amsterdam, he might have known the Ronde Lutherse Kerk, as shown in figure 6. This church seems to feature a lot of Kuyper's ideas, although it did not belong to the *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk* or *Gereformeerde Kerk*.

3.3.2 The platform

In front of the amphitheatre, Kuyper envisaged a platform. This would stretch all along the further side of the amphitheatre, and it had to give place to all the liturgical elements. Such platforms were radically new in the reformed tradition, although they are rather common in more contemporary, large churches in the Netherlands. To showcase the principle, figure 14 shows the Adullamkerk in Barneveld. This church belongs to another denomination than Kuyper, and therefore it would be going far to state

that the church is inspired by the ideas of Abraham Kuyper. However, the platform and the arrangement of the seating features a lot of references to the ideas of Kuyper.

A platform would enable the congregation to see everything properly, not only the pastor, but also the church council and the sacraments. More on the furniture needed for that is given in the next section.



Figure 14 The modern Adullamkerk Barneveld, with a platform in front of the church. From: "gergeminfo." (<https://www.gergeminfo.nl/gemeenten/barneveld-zuid>)

3.3 Church furniture

The most used piece of furniture in the reformed tradition, is the *preekstoel* (van Swigchem, Brouwer, & van Os, 1984). The rather small traditional model which had been common for centuries already, was rejected by Kuyper. He thought it to small and unsuitable for the leader of the *Vergadering der Gelovigen*. Therefore, he proposed more of a lectern, a small plateau being on the larger platform, a few steps higher. In that way, the preacher would have a freer space to move and still be perfectly visible for the audience.

Behind this new type of *preekstoel*, the *kerkenraadsbanken* should be placed, facing the audience. This resembles the setup of the cupola-model described in chapter 2. The church council would face the congregation as the official board of the assembly.

This meant a break with the *dooptuin*, which had been a common feature for such a long time. Kuyper regards this secluded space unsuitable for the *Vergadering der Gelovigen*, because the board of the assembly was not able to oversee the assembly. Furthermore, Kuyper condemns the habit that the space in the *dooptuin* was filled up with women. He states that the central space in the church is reserved for the board of the assembly, and only for them. They should not be fenced off, but just seated on the platform, visible for the congregation.

Besides the *dooptuin* being replaced by a platform, Kuyper also suggest a permanent *doopvont*, preferably made from stone, placed on that platform. As discussed in chapter 2, this was not common in the protestant churches of the early reformation. Such a heavy *doopvont* was a catholic thing, not a Dutch protestant invention. Only halfway in the 19th century, the *doopvont* became popular again. Therefore, Kuyper joint the movements in his time for this object.

For the second sacrament, Kuyper also wants to place the *avondmaalstafel* permanently on the platform, with the communion set displayed. Kuyper thinks the platform large enough to give place to the full table, with often dozens of places. He suggests that it should be made extendable, so that it will be smaller during the regular service.

Only after this, Kuyper explains his vision on the *lessenaar*. He strongly opposes the fact that it is usually lower than the *preekstoel*, suggesting that the reading from the Bible is of lower importance than the sermon by the preacher. Rejecting this concept, he suggests a similar position for the *preekstoel* and the *lessenaar*, both on the platform, symmetrically to each other.

At this point in the book *Onze Eeredienst* (Kuyper, 1911), the reader might get slightly confused. Kuyper seems to have a certain vision, but because of the lack of images, all suggestions seem to be separated from each other, without a possible combination of them all. A symmetrical *preekstoel* and *lessenaar*, with behind that the *kerkenraadsbanken*, and a place for the *doopvont* and *avondmaalstafel*, that will

be a lot of furniture on a relatively small spot. However, Kuyper also suggests that there is freedom for the architect, giving them some space for their design.

After these major points, Kuyper still discusses the *herenbanken*, which he thinks unsuitable, because he states that the government should have not authority in the church. Then he discusses the adjacent spaces, used for small meetings, education of the youth, etcetera. He envisions those spaces behind the platform, between the amphitheatre and the street. He even thinks of details as suggesting a green tablecloth on the table of the consistory!

4. Tjeerd Kuipers; architect in a changing time

In the following chapters, the newbuilt churches designed by Tjeerd Kuipers will be discussed systematically, considering the background sketched in the previous chapters. However, this chapter will give a short overview of who he was, his life and the importance of his work.

Tjeerd Egbert Kuipers was born in Gorredijk, december 21, 1857. His father was a carpenter. Two of his brothers, Roelof (1885) and Foeke (1871) would also be architects (Karstkarel, Kuipers, Tjeerd (1857-1942), 2013). After his HBS-graduate, Kuipers was a pupil architect at the office of J.P.J. de Rooy in Leeuwarden. This is remarkable, for he was a Roman Catholic, while Kuiper was a protestant (Karstkarel & Terpstra, *De gebroeders Kuipers, architectuur in een overgangstijd*, 1976). De Rooy moved to Rotterdam, and Kuipers' family moved to Amsterdam in 1880, where Kuipers also took a new job at the office of architect Salm. Later, he would work for Sanders and Berlage. Although Kuipers won several prizes for agricultural architecture, he did not specialize in this sort of farm architecture.

Kuipers became well-known as architect of churches, mostly for the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. He designed over 50 new churches and led several renovations of existing churches. The first churches of Kuipers were characterized by a strict neo-renaissance style, which were the earliest churches in this style in the Netherlands (Karstkarel, Kuipers, Tjeerd (1857-1942), 2013). Later, his work developed via some sort of eclecticism or functionalism, to a strict rationalism at the end of his life.

However, Kuiper also designed housing, shops and offices. These clients were also mostly related to the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, typical for the time in which Kuipers operated. Famous are a row of houses in Amsterdam called *De Zeven Landen* (The Seven Countries), representing architecture from across the world. Another notable work is his synagogue in Groningen, designed in an orientalist style.



Figure 15 Tjeerd Egbert Kuipers. From: "Amsterdamse School" (<https://items.amsterdamse-school.nl/details/persons/131>)

Kuipers passed away in 1942 in Laren, after a productive life, leaving a large oeuvre of buildings for the future. At his funeral, he was remembered as a Christian, who used his talents for the service of the new *Gereformeerde Kerken* (Dillingh, 1999).

5. Kuiper's first, traditional churches in a Neo-Renaissance style

In this chapter, the first churches of Tjeerd Kuipers will be discussed chronologically. This period spans from 1887-1889, from the very first church Kuipers has built, till the Wilhelminakerk in Dordrecht, which was the first church built according to the principles of Abraham Kuyper. The latter will be discussed in the next chapter.

As explained in chapter 1, a selection has been made of the churches based on the availability of material, the significance of architecture, the size of the church and the time period. In the discussion, churches are categorized as type, seeking to find some pattern in the work of Kuipers.

5.1 Gereformeerde Kerk Makkum (1887)

The first church built by Tjeerd Kuipers was the Gereformeerde Kerk in the village Makkum, Friesland. This church was built in a neo-renaissance style, featuring round-top windows, decorative natural stone elements and a strong reference to the style of Hendrick de Keyser.

The floorplan of this church is a typical Greek-cross, with the *preekstoel* at one of the longer sides. The *preekstoel* is traditional, with a pedestal and sounding board, although it is slightly higher than usual, because of the sightlines from the balconies. In front of the *preekstoel*, we find the *dooptuin*, in a regular rectangular shape. It is closed off by a *doopthek* with the *lessenaar*.

Vaguely, there seems to be a *dooptont* before the *preekstoel*, but there is no better image available, and the architectural drawings show no information on this.



Figure 16 Gereformeerde Kerk Makkum. Gielstra, O. (2003). *Gereformeerde Kerk Makkum 125 jaar*. Aldmakkum.nl. https://aldrmakkum.nl/upload_artikelen/Gerefkerk2.pdf

In the church are no *herenbanken*, or panels remembering the death, or tombs, etcetera. There is no relation visible between the government and the church. Since the *Gereformeerde Kerken* mainly had ordinary citizens as members, and because this time is after the equality movement by the French influence, the absence of these elements is no surprise (Steensma & Swigchem, 1986).

We find the organ above the *preekstoel*, maximizing the seating capacity in other areas of the church. The disposition of this church is largely like the Grote Kerk in Harlingen or other churches across the Netherlands, as can be seen in chapter 2. Therefore, Kuipers was not inventing a new interior when starting with his churches. A note is, that the ideas of Abraham Kuyper were not yet published.

Concluding, Kuipers followed examples he knew and designed a traditional church. The setup of the church of Makkum can be defined as Type A, as presented in figure 17. The setup was used both in a Greek-cross floorplan and a Latin-cross floorplan.

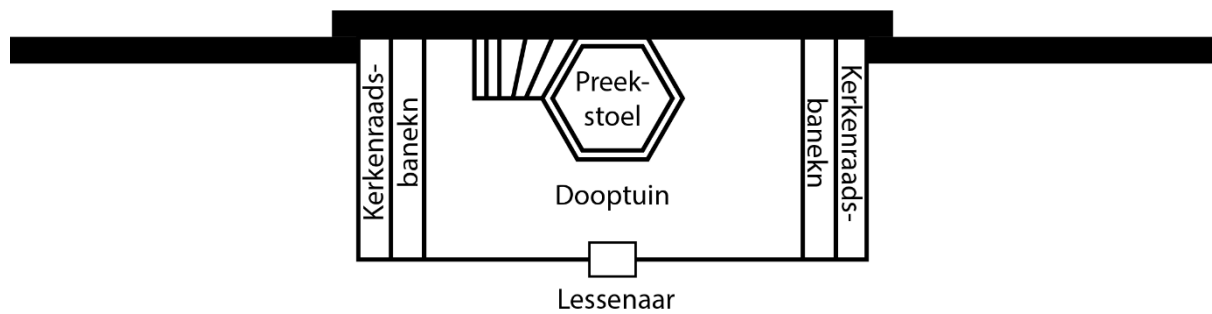


Figure 17 Type A. Traditional Dutch, protestant church setup.

5.2 Funenkerk Amsterdam (1889)

The second church built by Kuipers was the Funenkerk in Amsterdam, an enormous building which could house more than 2000 people, and which had 2 balconies atop each other. This is typical for Amsterdam and not common in the rest of the Netherlands (Steensma & Swigchem, 1986). Because of these balconies, this church got a high *preekstoel* without a sounding board, which enables the people on the balconies to see and hear the sermon. What is also typical about this *preekstoel*, is its place in a small niche, which would later be default for Tjeerd Kuipers. The Funenkerk might be his first try-out with this idea.

Hoever, this church is still a Type A layout. Although Kuipers uses his own architectural style and ornamentation, the setup of the church is similar to most Dutch churches. There is still no special identity by the *Gereformeerde Kerken* visible.



Figure 18 Funenkerk Amsterdam. By: Jansen, C.F. (1938). From: "Archief Amsterdam" (<https://archief.amsterdam/beeldbank/detail/cc85ed37-b281-3ce1-23b5-b12c930e97af/media/2e855d4d-6c6b-c90e-ffbf-c8c8eaab7a03?mode=detail&view=horizontal&q=funenkerk&rows=1&page=4>)

5.3 Nieuwe Westerkerk Rotterdam (1890)

In Rotterdam, the *Hervormde Kerk* had built a church Westerkerk in 1870. When the *Gereformeerde Kerk* built another church at the west of the city, two decades later, it was called Nieuwe Westerkerk, a new version of the



Figure 19 Nieuwe Westerkerk Rotterdam. By Lengkeek, W.J. (1940). *Interieur Nieuwe Westerkerk aan de Ammanstraat, gezien naar preekstoel en orgel.* [drawing] Stadsarchief Rotterdam, no. XVIII-205-02-01

Hervormde Kerk. This corresponds with the ideology of the *Gereformeerde Kerk*, and a certain rivalry cannot be neglected.

The Nieuwe Westerkerk was one of the most expensive churches of the *Doleantie*-movement at the time (Steensma & Swigchem, 1986). It was a monumental building with two towers and a massive interior space. The liturgical setup was still a Type A, although a slight difference is the double staircase leading to the *preekstoel*. However, this was a common option, which had been used over time in the Netherlands.

5.4 Other churches and conclusions

Other churches from this period have no major deviations from the earlier examples. About the Oosterkerk in The Hague (1896), can still be said that the *preekstoel* was placed in the middle of the long side of the rectangular shape, instead of at the short side as in the earlier mentioned example. Furthermore, Kuipers differed in his use of sounding boards above the *preekstoel*, which might be because of acoustic reasons.

Concluding, Kuipers built churches in his own style, but using the classical Dutch protestant church layout. Although there are local differences and small accents, most churches feature a similar, straightforward setup.

6. A church according to Abraham Kuyper's principles

Built in 1899, the Wilhelminakerk in Dordrecht is the most corresponding with the ideas of Abraham Kuyper of all the churches of Tjeerd Kuipers. That's the reason why it is discussed singularly in a chapter. First, a short description of the building will be given. After that, there will be a more thorough review of the interior of this church.

6.1 A church with a dome

The *gereformeerde kerk* in the city of Dordrecht had a smaller building on a street called Kromhout. However, as in many places, the congregation grew, and a new building was necessary. During a meeting of the church council, 3 designs by Tjeerd Kuipers were discussed. According to the records, 'the round one' was chosen (Dillingh, 1999). Why it was this one, remains unclear. However, the result was a stunning domed church with a tower. The location was a former estate which was sold for housing. Thus, the new church was built in a housing project (Dillingh, 1999).



Figure 20 Wilhelminakerk Dordrecht. From: *Regionaal archief Dordrecht*, 309_100513.

The church is situated on the corner of two minor streets in a 19th century neighbourhood. On one side, there is a large entrance with both Romanesque and Gothic features, having on both sides a tower. The one on the street corner is a full city tower with a clock and bell, but the other one is only half its height. Above the entrance, a large rose window was installed (figure 20). This setup, of an entrance with a rose window and two different towers, would be a standard design for a lot of following churches of Tjeerd Kuipers.

The exterior of the building is no longer designed in a neo-renaissance style. This is also what Kuipers himself wrote to Cas van Son, who published an art column in the *Dordrechtse Nieuwsblad*. According to the architect, the building has not been designed in a specific style, like neo-gothic or neo-romanesque. This building showed a new idea, a style called by some 'economy-style', but Kuipers preferred to call it 'early-renaissance of the 20th century.' (Kuipers, 1899).

When entering the building, a visitor finds himself right under the dome. According to the *Dordrechtse Courant*, the 10-corner shape is a symbol of the congregation, which concentrates itself around the Word of God. The dome above it is a symbol of the power of Christ, which rises above the wordly authorities (DordrechtseCourant, 1899). The *preekstoel* was in line with the entrance, on the other side of the circle. On one side of this circular church shape, there were meeting rooms. On the other side, there was a consistory with its own entrance. See also figure 21.

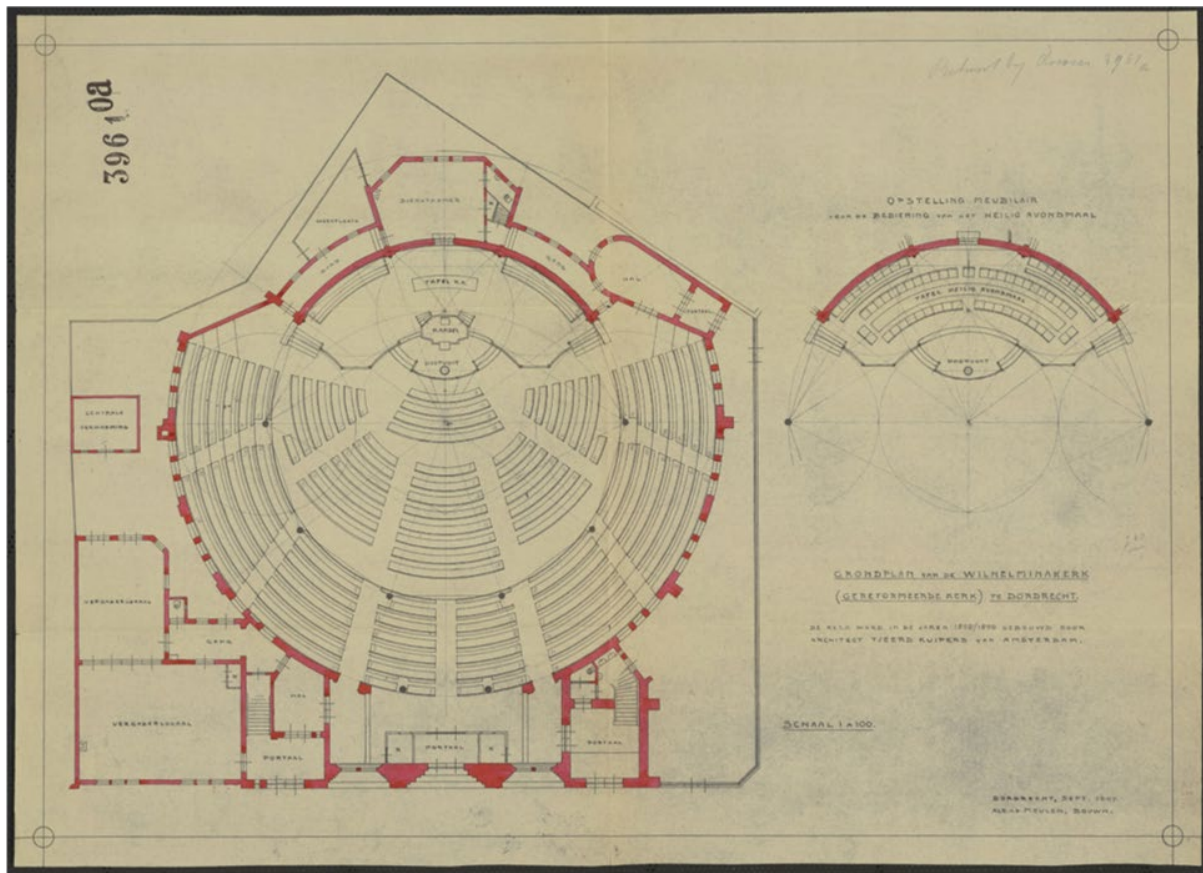


Figure 21 Plattegrond Wilhelminakerk Dordrecht. From: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Bouwdossier 6247*

This church was revolutionary in its time, but not in a longer historical context. The almost circular shape did not come out of the blue but was already used in the 17th century in various churches, as discussed in chapter 2. The Wilhelminakerk brought this shape back to the 19th/20th century.

Interior

The interior of the church was completely based on the ideas of Abraham Kuyper on church architecture. This is also what Kuipers declares himself. Although people even suggested that Kuyper had helped the architect, Tjeerd Kuipers strongly resents this idea. It was his own outburst of trying to incorporate the ideas of Kuyper (Kuipers, 1899). A thorough analysis of this church regarding Kuyper's principles is given in *Een eeuw rondom het Woord* (Dillingh, 1999).

The *preekstoel* was no longer constructed in the classical Dutch way, but indeed as a platform, looking more like a big lectern. In this way, the person speaking had a freer space to move. Before the *preekstoel*, there was a lower platform with the *doopvont*. Although Kuyper would argue for a stone version, the Wilhelminakerk got a wooden one. Behind the *preekstoel*, there was a large platform which could be used for the *Heilig Avondmaal*. The table to use for this sacrament, was always on display behind the *preekstoel*. The *preekstoel* itself could be moved away to ensure better views or to open up the stage for a concert.



Figure 22 Wilhelminakerk Dordrecht, interior after the later construction of the balcony by Tjeerd Kuipers. From: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, 552_409234*

The seating for the church council, the *kerkenraadsbanken*, are situated on the platform behind the *preekstoel*. In this way, the council was clearly visible to all the people in the church. The *kerkbanken* followed the circular shape of the building, so that the people are literally gathered around the Word of God, displayed on the *preekstoel*.

On the left side was the *lessenaar*. Currently, it is the only part of the furniture still in use in this church today, since all other elements have been removed. The *lessenaar* is not attached to the *doophek*, but a separate element which could be moved over the platform.

Also, the use of the floor incline and the *kerkbanken* in the back standing higher, is an idea of Kuyper. It improved the sightlines for both the minister on the *preekstoel* and the people seated in the back. Kuyper also approved of balconies to host more people with better sightlines.

The complete layout resembles closely the principles of Abraham Kuyper. However, there are some missing things. Firstly, the *preekstoel* and *lessenaar* are not symmetrically organised, while Kuyper argued for that. Although they are both at the same height, the *preekstoel* takes the central and most important spot, while the *lessenaar* seems to be placed a bit sideways. Also, there is still a *doophek*, although it has been made in a more transparent design. Furthermore, the alignment of the secondary spaces is not according to Kuyper's plan, between the street and the amphitheatre, but at the side.

The complete setup of this church is hard to fit into a type. However, it is a prototype of a Kuyper-church, perhaps even the best one ever constructed.

7. To a functionalist approach

After the Wilhelminakerk Dordrecht, Tjeerd Kuipers developed his style even further away from traditionalism and neo-renaissance. Like the architects of his time, such as H.P. Berlage (for whom Kuipers had worked back in the days), Kuipers started to develop his churches from a functionalist perspective, leaving out more and more ornaments. In this chapter, the period roughly between 1900 and 1920 will be discussed. This is based on the stylistic change in the work of Kuipers, with the Wilhelminakerk from 1899 being the first non-traditional church, and the Koepelkerk Leeuwarden the first to come close to a rationalist or Amsterdam School style. More on those last churches can be found in the next chapter.

7.1 Gereformeerde Kerk Axel (1899)

The church in Axel was again a rather traditional one. The church is built on a dike and has smaller rooms beneath the church. Therefore, the main space is lower than usual.

The interior of this church, which is very well preserved till today, is again rather traditional. There is a *doophek* with a *dooptuin*, separating this part from the rest of the church. The *doopvont* is behind this, in front of the *preekstoel*. The *kerkenraadsbanken* are on the edges of the *dooptuin* and all the *kerkbanken* in front, which makes this church almost a type A.

Figure 25 shows the plan of the *dooptuin*, although the drawing was made for a later renovation. Figure 26 shows the current situation, which is largely original, although the *kerkenraadsbanken* are gone.

However, this interior can be classified as a new type, a type B (figure 27). That is because of the form of the *preekstoel*. Instead of a regular form with a pedestal, it is constructed as a platform, giving more free space to the speaker. This corresponds with the principles of dr. A. Kuyper, who stated that this was the best shape for a *preekstoel*.

A place for the *Heilig Avondmaal* has not been implemented in this church. Probably this took place in front of the *dooptuin*, or some *kerkbanken* were removed but there is no information about this.



Figure 23 Gereformeerde Kerk Axel around 1918 . By: Piet van Hoogdalem, From: "Standaard orgels" (<https://www.standaard-orgels.nl/axel-gereformeerde-kerk-1918.html>.)

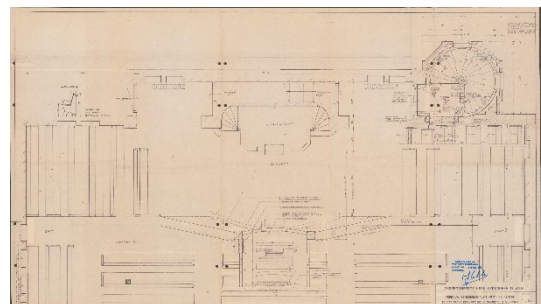


Figure 24 Floorplan of the liturgical disposition of the Gereformeerde Kerk Axel. From: *Bouwdossiers Archief Terneuzen, Kerkdreef 21*.



Figure 25 Gereformeerde Kerk Axel, current situation. From: "GKV Axel" (<https://www.gkvaxel.nl/activiteiten/fotoalbum/1/het-kerkgebouw.html?page=3>)

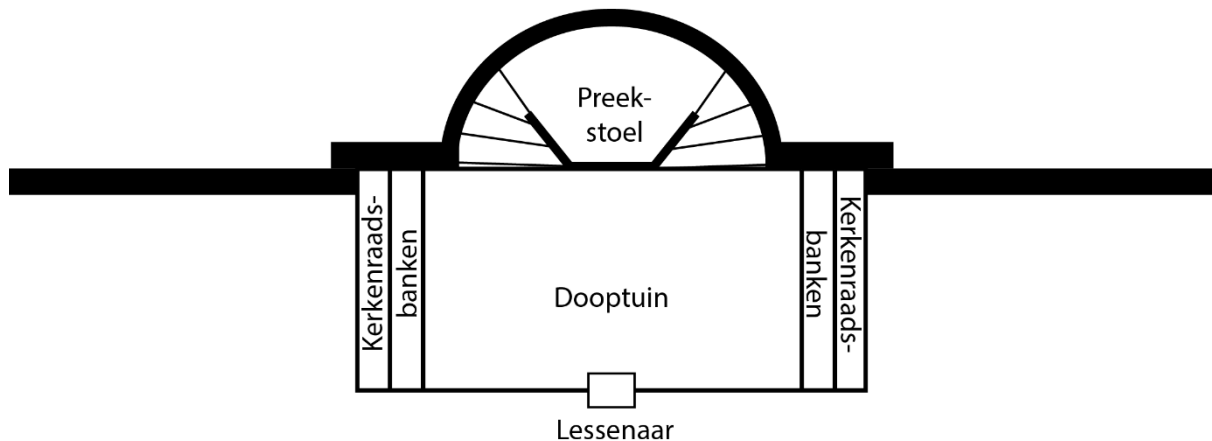


Figure 26 Type B

7.2 No continuation of the Wilhelminakerk-type

As can be seen in Axel, but also in the next churches, Kuipers went back to his original interiors, although with a slightly difference *preekstoel*. This suggests that there were some significant objections to the setup in the Wilhelminakerk. Kuipers himself described his struggles when dealing with the Nieuwe Zuiderkerk in Rotterdam, built in 1916, also a type B. He states that the *kerkenraadsbanken*, behind the *preekstoel*, where very unpractical because of the bad sidelines for the church council. They would only see the preacher's back and therefore not his facial expressions. Furthermore, it was uncomfortable to face all the congregation all the time. On the *avondmaalstafel*, Kuipers writes that he did not find the space to have it installed permanently in a church (Dillingh, 1999). Since most of his churches are packed with *kerkbanken*, this is imaginable. The only element which can be seen later which might have been derived from the Wilhelminakerk-setup, is the platform for the *dooptont*. That will be described in 7.4.

7.3 Zuiderkerk, Groningen (1901)

This major city church features the same interior setup as the church in Axel, but has a major difference compared to other churches: The organ is in the back, above the *galerij*, instead of in front above the *preekstoel*. A floorplan is given in figure 28.

This might have its reason in the location of the secondary rooms, which are underneath and behind the organ, between the main hall of the church and the street. That is an idea of Kuiper, who suggested in his ideas to place the secondary rooms between the church and the street. This is one of the few examples where it has been realized, since secondary room are most often behind the *preekstoel*. However, because of the two homes which are realised together with the church, and which obviously need to be at the street side, there was more space in front of the main hall, giving room for the secondary rooms.



Figure 27 Zuiderkerk Groningen. From: "Gereformeerderken.info" (<https://gereformeerdekerken.info/2016/02/01/bouwen-en-breken-4-in-de-gereformeerde-kerk-te-groningen-deel-1/>)

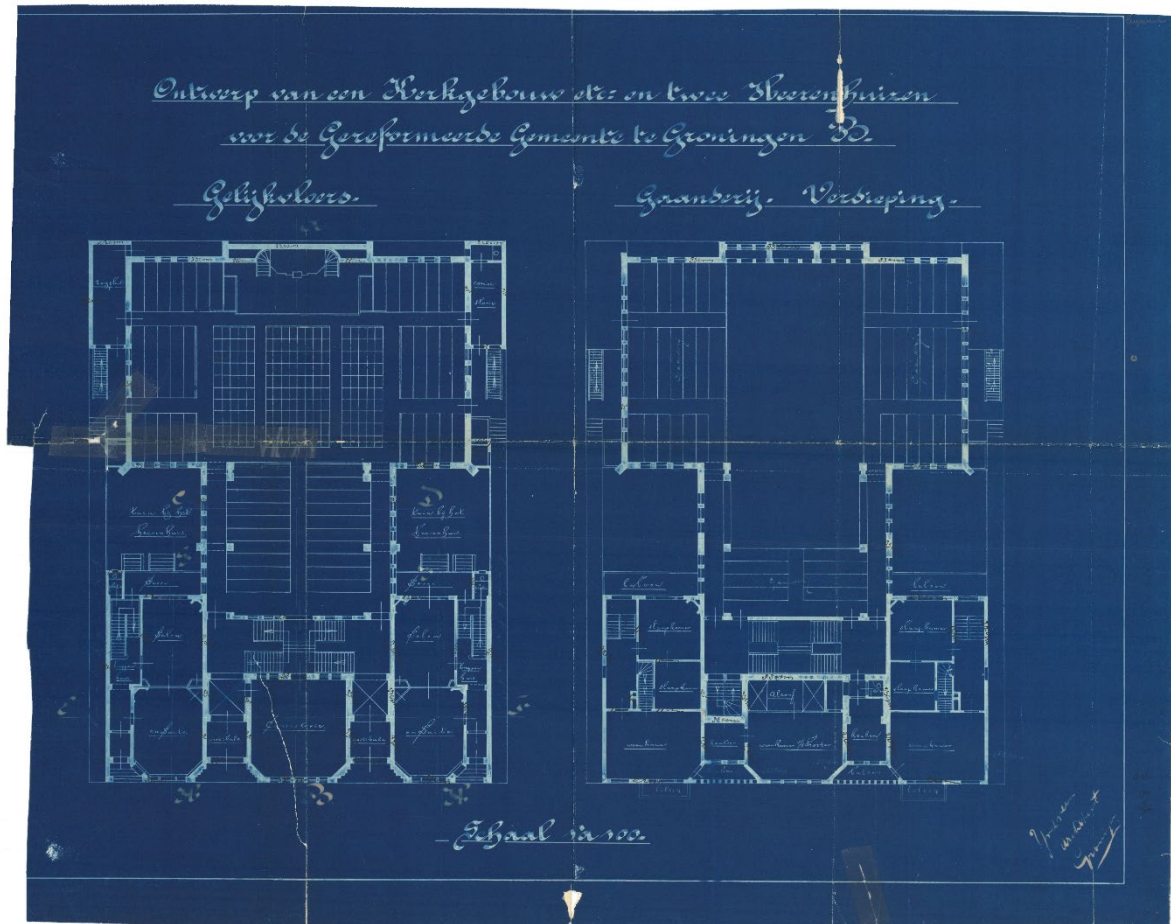


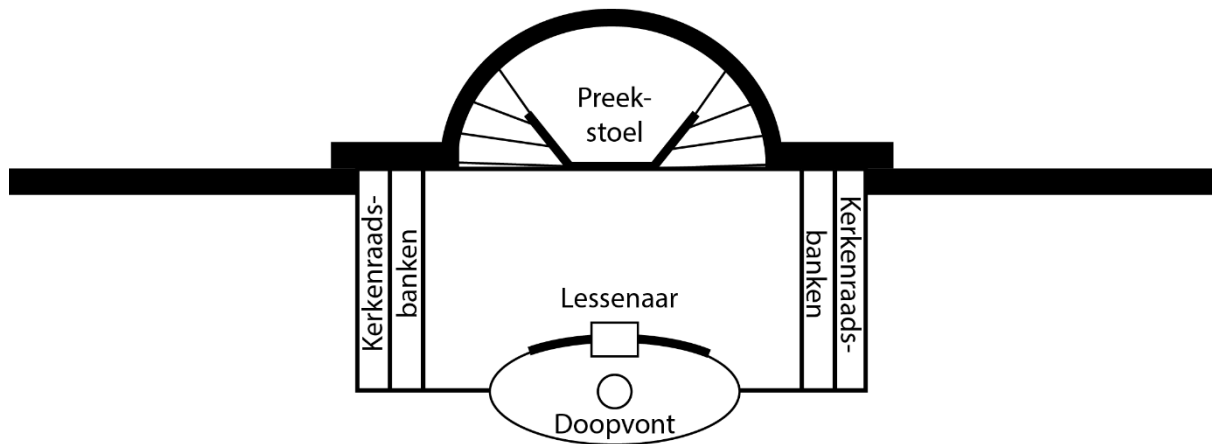
Figure 28 Floor plans of the Zuiderkerk in Groningen. From: *Bouwdossiers Groninger Archieven, Stationsstraat 12*

7.4 Westerkerk, Groningen (1906)

After some smaller churches and a few type B churches, the first new element is seen in the Westerkerk, in Groningen. Besides the Kuipers-type *preekstoel*, an organ above the *preekstoel*, *kerkenraadsbanken* at the sides, a small platform is seen before the *lessenaar* with the *doopvont*. This platform is like the platform in the Wilhelminakerk, where it was fenced off. In this church, the *doopvont* is free-standing and clearly visible for everyone. In this setup, Kuipers found a way to incorporate Abraham Kuiper's vision on the visibility of the sacraments. Therefore, this type can be referred to as type C, with a *doopvont*-platform before the bigger platform. See also figure 31.



Figuur 30 Westerkerk Groningen. From: "Beeldbank Groningen" (<https://www.beeldbankgroningen.nl/beelden/detail/e-b711b57-68fe-c832-4ad6-1c550b624824/media/743eff93-cd04-76a9-bb88-5b62d09782bb?mode=detail&view=horizontal&q=westerkerk&rows=1&page=35>)



Figuur 31 Type C

7.5 Rehobothkerk Watergraafsmeer (1907)

The church of Watergraafsmeer was another Type C, with an extra platform for the font. Here, the font was placed on the *doophek*. This configuration is later visible in the work of architect Boeyinga (de Beyer, Verhoeven, & Reinstra, 2016). However, this is the first and possibly only time it occurs in the work of Kuipers. Therefore, it can not be presented as a new type. However, it shows the attention given to this sacrament. Furthermore, the dooptuin, although it does not have that function anymore, is still visible, but as a platform. This platform aspect was also a Kuiper-idea. In all other aspects, the setup is similar to earlier examples. There is also no place for the *avondmaalstafel*.



Figuur 32 Setup of the Rehobothkerk, Watergraafsmeer. By: van Breugel, from: "*vrienden van Watergraafsmeer*" (<https://www.vriendenvanwatergraafsmeer.nl/honderd-jaar-gereformeerde-kerk-van-watergraafsmeer/>)

7.6 Grote Kerk Wildervank (1910)

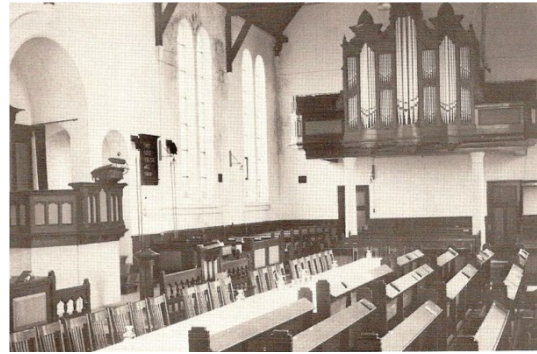
Kuipers was not consistent in his use of types. In the church in Wildervank, there is again a perfect example visible of a type B setup, here with a stone *doopvont*. There are small differences, and constant swaps which are visible in this period of the oeuvre of Kuipers. This might be because Kuipers worked simultaneously on his designs, or because church councils had special wishes. To find out more on this aspect of Kuipers, more extensive research should be done in church archives and other sources. That is out of the scope of this research, though.



Figuur 33 Grote Kerk Wildervank. From: Church archive of the Grote Kerk Wildervank.

7.7 Opstandingskerk Dieren (1911)

Although this church has no interesting new elements in the liturgical setup, this church is included in the overview because of the photo in figure 34. There is a type B setup, with the half-circular *preekstoel* and a traditional *dooptuin*. However, the photo shows the long table for the second sacrament, the *avondmaalstafel*. In this church, it is clearly not a permanent feature, but a temporary table which is only placed in the church when it is needed. It visibly takes up a lot of space, which makes it credible that Kuipers left the permanent table out of his designs because of the space it would consume.



Figuur 34 Opstandingskerk Dieren. From: "Gereformeerdekerken.info" (<https://gereformeerdekerken.info/2021/03/02/de-gereformeerde-kerk-te-dieren-2/>)

7.8 Nieuwe Kerk Kampen (1912)

The Nieuwe Kerk in Kampen is a massive church which is preserved well until this day, although the organ is replaced. Remarkable are the circularly placed chairs, corresponding to the vision of Abraham Kuyper, when dealing with his amphitheater. However, that is not translated into the architecture of this church, since the floorplan is based on a Latin-cross shape.

Another remarkable element is the *preekstoel*, which has been carved deeper into the wall, with two separate arches covering the stairs. This gives extra weight to the platform, ensuring its central function. Although it is a minor architectural detail, it shows that Kuipers is experimenting with his type of *preekstoel*. Since there are no implications on the rest of the setup (which is a type B), this *preekstoel* does not call for a new typology. However, Kuyper would use it often in the future, together with his earlier version with the half-circular *preekstoel*.



Figuur 35 Nieuwe Kerk kampen. From: "Pels Nijse Orgel" (<https://pelsnijseorgel.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Proper-Orgel.jpg>)

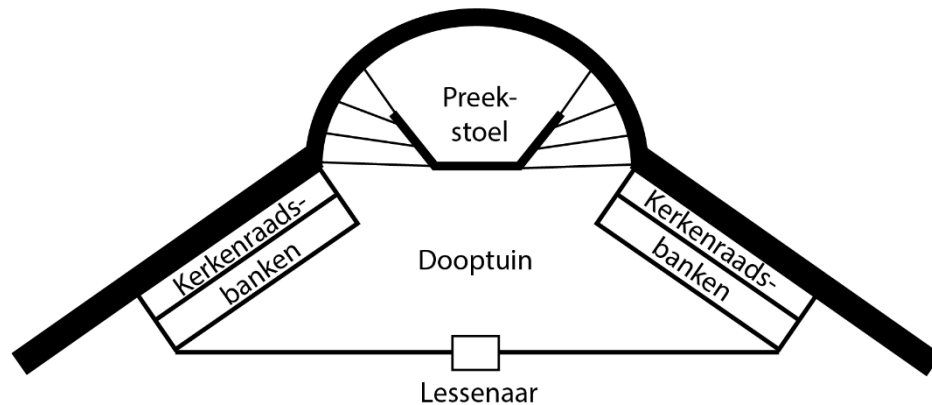
7.9 Gereformeerde Kerk Hallum (1912)

The relatively small church of Hallum shows an interesting feature. The *kerkenraadsbanken* stand at an angle to the *preekstoel*, creating the 'board of a



Figuur 36 Gereformeerde Kerk Hallum. From: "Reliwiki" (https://reliwiki.nl/index.php/Hallum,_Langebuorren_4_-_De_Hoeksteen)

meeting' type Abraham Kuyper had envisioned. Although there is no more information on the other elements of the setup, such as if there was a *doophek* or not, the placement of these *kerkenraadsbanken* show a (singular) return to Kuyper's ideas. This same setup is later used in Leeuwarden, as will be discussed in the next chapter. This type will therefore be characterized as type D, as shown in figure 37.



Figuur 37 Type D

This type is not seen any more until 1923. That might have its cause in the bad sightlines from the *kerkenraadsbanken*, as mentioned earlier.

7.10 Bergsingelkerk Rotterdam 1915

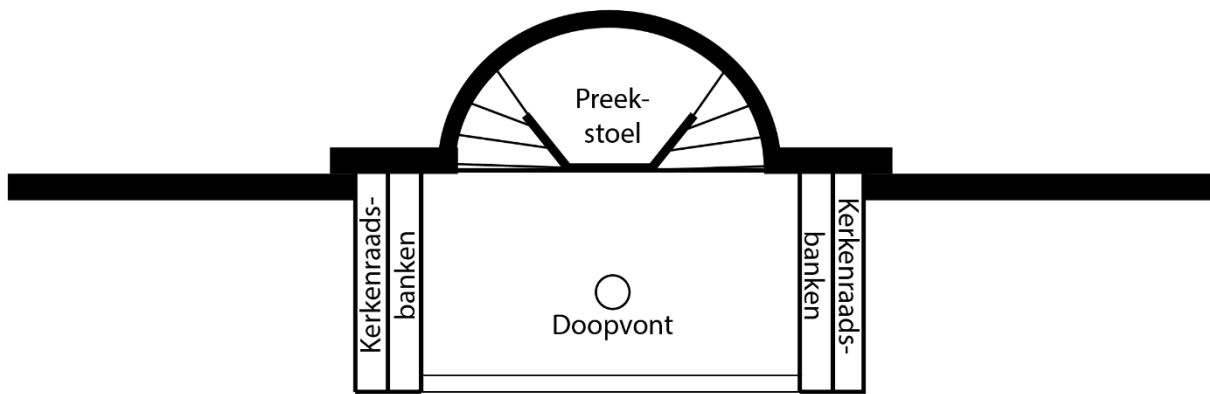
This massive church in Rotterdam has a different interior setup. The platform principle has been fully used, and the *doophek* has been largely left out. The *lessenaar* is placed more at the side, creating an open look to the stage-like *platform*. The *doopvont* is placed centrally before the *preekstoel*, emphasizing the importance of the sacrament. This is not the first church without *doophek*, but it is the first large-scale one.

This opening of the *doophek* is again radically new, in the Netherlands and in the work of Kuipers. However, it is part of a larger trend, as also in gothic city churches the *doophek* was sometimes partly dismantled or removed. Various historical overviews show the removal of the *doophek* in these times (Steensma & Swigchem, 1986), (de Beyer, Verhoeven, & Reinstra, 2016).

This type is therefore defined as type E (figure 39). It is largely similar to type B, but the *doophek* is left out, creating a more open space.



Figuur 38 Bergsingelkerk Rotterdam. From: "Gereformeerdekerken.info" (<https://gereformeerdekerken.info/2020/09/05/de-bergsingelkerk-te-rotterdam-1/>)



Figuur 39 Type E

7.11 Nieuwe Zuiderkerk Rotterdam, 1916

This exorbitant church in Rotterdam was one of the most detailed in Kuipers' work. Detailed all over, the church has a lot of architectural expression. However, the interior is a type B setup, although decorated in a later style with the influence of the functionalist movement, not in a particular style. A slight difference is the placing of the *lessenaar* sideways at the *doophek*. The area behind the *doophek* is raised by a few steps, creating a platform.

Kuipers corresponded that, for this church, he deliberately left the ideas of Abraham Kuyper because of practical reasons (Dillingh, 1999). However, the overview shows that he also did that in earlier work. The *avondmaalstafel* is not permanent, the *kerkenraadsbanken* are placed sideways and there is no special place for the *dooptont*.



Figuur 40 Nieuwe Zuiderkerk Rotterdam. From: "Reliwiki" ([https://reliwiki.nl/index.php/Rotterdam,_Westzeedijk_7_-_Nieuwe_Zuiderkerk_\(1916_-_1968\)](https://reliwiki.nl/index.php/Rotterdam,_Westzeedijk_7_-_Nieuwe_Zuiderkerk_(1916_-_1968)))

7.12 Conclusions

The churches of Tjeerd Kuipers are largely based on a traditional layout with a new type of *preekstoel*, which is given in this paper as type B. The size and shape of the *preekstoel* is an outflow of the ideas of Abraham Kuyper, while the traditional setup of the rest of the liturgical disposition is contradicting his ideas. However, some churches deviate from the original setup, featuring a platform for the *dooptont* (type C), *kerkenraadsbanken* facing the congregation (type D), or not having a *doophek* (type E), which is only a trend later in this period.

8. A rationalist predecessor for the 1930's

In this chapter, the last three churches of Tjeerd Kuipers are discussed. Those churches feature a sober and strict architecture, which will later characterize the work of other architects who designed buildings for the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, mainly Reitsma and Boeyinga.

8.1 Koepelkerk Leeuwarden (1923)

For the second and last time, Kuipers designed another domed church. The layout of this church strongly resembles the earlier mentioned cupola churches from the Renaissance in chapter 2. However, the style of this church is more strict and sober, coming close to the Amsterdam School style.

The setup of this church is another Type E. The *kerkenraadsbanken* are at an angle, but the rest of the liturgical disposition is rather traditional. Kuipers falls back on his earlier model for the *preekstoel*, without the separate arches above the stairs. In front of the *preekstoel*, there is a *doophek* with the *lessenaar* in the middle, behind which we find a stone *doopvont* on a platform.

However, the floor plan of the complete church is according to the principles of Abraham Kuyper. The *kerkbanken* are set up as half a circle, with a layer of balconies above. The congregation is again meeting around the Word of God.

This interior is, like the church of Axel, very well preserved until this day. Although the *doophek* is moved to another spot, the rest of the church is still intact, though it is used as a theatre nowadays.



Figure 41 Koepelkerk Leeuwarden. From: "Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden" (<https://historischcentrumleeuwarden.nl/onderzoek/beeldbank/zoeken-in-de-beeldbank/detail/fc607bc6-aea9-11e3-baea-b78e372a04c1/media/23f790a3-5c1a-636e-43d6-23b4dd58b90f?mode=detail&view=horizontal&q=koepelkerk&rows=1&page=29>)

8.2 Westerkerk Delft (1924)

This church features a type E layout, with an opened *doophek*. The *lessenaar* is not included in the building anymore. The *kerkenraad* is sitting at the sides of the opened *doophek* at the traditional places. The floorplan of the church features a renewing concept, though. The floorplan is based on a triangle-shape, as is systematically shown in figure 42.

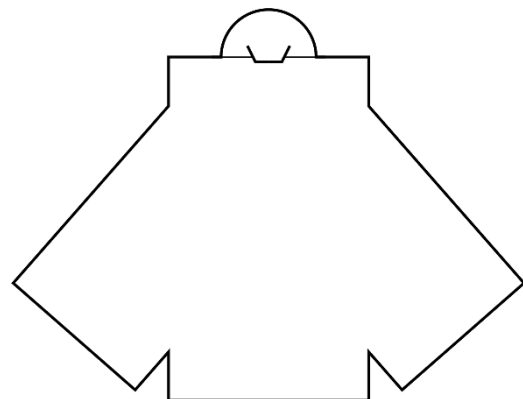


Figure 42 Schematic floorplan of the Westerkerk, Delft

The interior of the church is decorated similar to the exterior, with few ornamentations and no references to the neo-renaissance anymore, which characterized the early work of Kuipers. One could argue that this contradicts the ideas of Abraham Kuyper, who suggested a neo-renaissance style for the church as the perfect style. However, a better argument might be that styles evolve over time, and that the stylistic choice of Abraham Kuyper, by this time approximately 25 years ago, has become old fashioned.

8.3 Wilhelminakerk Bussum (1926)

The last church of Tjeerd Kuipers is the Wilhelminakerk in Bussum, where the interior strongly resembles the previously discussed Westerkerk in Delft. The church has the same ornamentation and decoration and the same liturgical setup (type E), although this can only be derived from material from the 1950's.

The church is based on a regular, rectangular floor plan. That is understandable because it is built on a smaller scale.

Remarkable is the *doopvont* of this church. As can be seen in figures 41 and 43, those churches had a smaller, light-feeling stone *doopvont*, while Bussum has a rather big, marble *doopvont*, which is the only original interior element which is still present in the church today.

8.4 Conclusions

Although the style of Tjeerd Kuipers changes in the last period of his career, there is no large renewal in the setup anymore. The three churches in this period are all very different, though, featuring their own layout, floor plan and interior organization. However, the liturgical disposition remains largely similar to what can be seen earlier in Kuipers' work.



Figure 43 Westerkerk Delft. From: "Reliwiki" (https://reliwiki.nl/index.php/Bestand:Delft_Geref.Westerkerk-Int._op_01-12-1977_2.jpg)



Figure 44 Wilhelminakerk Bussum. From: Church archive Wilhelminakerk Bussum

9. Conclusions

In this chapter, an answer will be given to the research question of this paper:

How did the ideas on interior church architecture of Abraham Kuyper influence the work of Tjeerd Kuipers?

The ideas of Abraham Kuyper became publicly known because of his articles published in the magazine *De Heraut* in the late 1890's. The main aspect of the ideas for the interior is the following:

- The church is made for one purpose, which should be visible: the assembly of the congregation, as the *Vergadering der Gelovigen* (assembly of believers)
- Cupola is the best shape for a church, with the best view and acoustic qualities
- Amphitheatre shape of the *kerkbanken* (pews)
- A platform in front of the church instead of the *dooptuin* (area behind the baptismal fence)
- The *preekstoel* (pulpit) and *lessenaar* (lectern) should be on this platform, symmetrically placed
- The *preekstoel* should have the shape of a lectern, instead of the small model on a pedestal
- The *kerkenraadsbanken* (pews for the church council) should be placed on the back of the platform, facing the congregation, as a board of a meeting
- There should be a permanent *doopvont* (font) and *avondmaalstafel* (table for the Lord's Supper) on the platform

The first churches of Tjeerd Kuipers, in the period 1887-1898, were built in a pure neo-renaissance style, usually featuring a traditional Dutch liturgical disposition, referred to in this paper as type A. There are no signs of any of the ideas of Kuyper, which were not yet published in this period.

The Wilhelminakerk in Dordrecht (1889) was largely designed after the ideas of Abraham Kuyper, as Tjeerd Kuipers publishes himself. The church features an amphitheater-shaped interior under its dome, with a large platform in front. On the platform is the *preekstoel* and *lessenaar*, although not symmetrically organized. Behind the *preekstoel*, there are the *kerkenraadsbanken*, and there is place for the *avondmaalstafel*. Before the *preekstoel*, on a lower platform, is the *doopvont*.

In the rest of the oeuvre of Kuipers, this setup is never used so explicitly anymore. He returns to rectangular and Latin-cross floorplans, including a traditional *dooptuin* in front of the *preekstoel*. However, Kuipers invented a new type of *preekstoel* in his work, placing a platform in a deep niche (type B).

Later deviations include the incorporation of a platform in the *dooptuin*, although a traditional *doophek* remains in place. In a few churches, Kuipers designed a small platform before the *doophek*, giving space to the *doopvont* and making the sacrament visible (type C).

Another option, which is only used twice, is the placing of the *kerkenraadsbanken* at an angle next to the *preekstoel* (type D). This resembles the idea of Kuyper, since the church council is facing the congregation.

A last type, which is seen in the last few churches, is the removal of the *doophek* before the platform (type E). This openness is also coherent with the ideas of Kuyper, who stressed the importance of the visibility of the sacraments.

As can be seen, Kuipers only designed one church fully according to the principles of Abraham Kuyper. Although some aspects of those ideas come back in other churches, none of them is so explicit as the

Wilhelminakerk in Dordrecht. Therefore, the influence of the ideas of Abraham Kuyper on the work of Tjeerd Kuipers is rather minimal.

This small influence might be due to the non-practicality of the design of Kuyper, who was a theologian and not an architect. The placing of the *kerkenraadsbanken*, behind the *preekstoel*, gave the church council no view of the preacher, while they were constantly facing hundreds of people in front of them. Furthermore, the permanent *avondmaalstafel* took up a lot of room, which was a waste of space before it was only used a few times a year.

Concluding, the ideas of Abraham Kuyper did inspire the work of Tjeerd Kuipers. However, Kuipers saw that they often had unpractical aspects, which is the reason why he did not incorporate them in every design. Smaller aspects of the ideas come back rather often in his churches, but Kuipers developed his own setups in his own style, mostly referring to the classical Dutch church organization.

10. Complete overview of the work of Tjeerd Kuipers and typology

Name	Town	Construction	Current state	Type
Gereformeerde Kerk	Makkum	1887	Demolished 1964	A
Funenkerk	Amsterdam	1889	Demolished 1974	A
Ichtuskerk	Heeg	1891	Housing	A
Nieuwe Westerkerk	Rotterdam	1890	Destroyed 1940	A
Schinkelkerk	Amsterdam	1890	Gym	A
Oosterkerk	Den Haag	1896	Destroyed 1988	A
Bethlehemkerk	Rotterdam Overschie	1896	Jehovah's Witnesses	*
Gereformeerde Kerk	Hillegom	1897	Demolished 1928	A
Gereformeerde Kerk	Leerdam	1898	Church	*
Pauluskerk	Hendrik-Ido- Ambacht	1898	Demolished 1963	*
Wilhelminakerk	Dordrecht	1899	Church, interior altered	Kuyper-ideal
Gereformeerde Kerk	Axel	1899	Church, well-preserved	B
Zuiderkerk	Groningen	1901	Housing	B (organ in the back)
Barbesteinkerk	Heinkenszand	1903	Vacancy, probably housing	*
Haarlemmerpoortkerk	Amsterdam	1904	Demolished 1967	*
Gereformeerde Kerk	IJmuiden	1904	Destroyed 1944	A
Morgensterkerk	Berkel en Rodenrijs	1906	Demolished 1971	*
Zonnebrinkkerk	Winterswijk	1906	Church, interior altered	B
Westerkerk	Groningen	1906	Demolished 1995	C
Gereformeerde Kerk	Schiermonnikoog	1906	Demolished 1962	B (probably)
Gereformeerde Kerk	Schoondijke	1907	Destroyed 1944	*
Rehobothkerk	Watergraafsmeer	1907	Demolished 1973	C
Gereformeerde Kerk	Tinte	1908	Vacancy, probably housing	B
Rehobothkerk	Gorinchem	1909	Church, interior altered	B
Gereformeerde Kerk	Wijnjewoude	1909	Church, interior altered	B
Gereformeerde Kerk	Oude Wetering	1909	Social function	B (probably)
Bethelkerk	Rotterdam Charlois	1910	Church, interior altered	E
Grote Kerk	Wildervank	1910	Church, interior partly preserved	B
Molenkampkerk	Almelo	1910	Demolished 1973	*
Oosterkerk	Leeuwarden	1910	Demolished 1981	B
Opstandingskerk	Dieren	1911	Church, interior altered	B
Gereformeerde Kerk	Venlo	1911	Demolished 1970	E (probably)
Oosterkerk	Eindhoven	1911	Vacancy, probably housing	E
Nieuwe Kerk	Kampen	1912	Church, interior partly preserved	B

Gereformeerde Kerk	Hallum	1912	Church, interior altered	D
Noorderkerk	Nijmegen	1912	Demolished 1973	*
Gereformeerde Kerk	Rinsumageest	1913	Holiday house	B
Bergsingelkerk	Rotterdam	1915	Church, interior partly preserved	E
Parkstraatkerk	Velp	1915	Fire, 1964	E
Nieuwe Zuiderkerk	Rotterdam	1916	Demolished 1969	B
Grote Kerk	Halfweg	1919	Demolished 2011	*
Gereformeerde Kerk	Dirkshorn	1919	Unknown, for sale in 2018	*
Gereformeerde Kerk	Oudkerk a/d Amstel	1920	Demolished 2012, except tower	*
Koepelkerk	Leeuwarden	1923	Theatre, interior well preserved	D
Westerkerk	Delft	1924	Demolished 1981	E
Wilhelminakerk	Bussum	1926	Church, interior altered	E

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