

Musically Expressed Theology, and
the Golden Age of Martin Luther's Reformation

by

Adam Hough
BA, Trent University, 2009

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of History

© Adam Hough, 2011
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

Musically Expressed Theology, and
the Golden Age of Martin Luther's Reformation

by

Adam Hough
BA, Trent University, 2009

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Mitchell Lewis-Hammond (Department of History)
Supervisor

Dr. Andrea McKenzie (Department of History)
Departmental Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Mitchell Lewis-Hammond (Department of History)
Supervisor

Dr. Andrea McKenzie (Department of History)
Departmental Member

This thesis seeks a reappraisal of Martin Luther's complex understanding of theology's place in the social and political reformation of sixteenth century Germany. Here I seek to reintroduce an element of that theology that has been largely absent from mainstream scholarship: music. Building on Robin Leaver's influential 2007 work, *Luther's Liturgical music*, wherein he argues that Luther's liturgical song-writing ought to be understood theologically, I will demonstrate how the reformer sought to use a musically expressed theology to build a foundation of faith among the German laity- a prerequisite, he believed, to a successful reformation of Christian religion and society. I will place the genesis of this idea both in Luther's participation in the Indulgence Controversy, and in the failed 'Leisnig Experiment', in which he promoted the adoption of a congregationalist model of spiritual self-regulation. Luther's answer to the failures of Leisnig was an educational program centered on teaching a theology of the Psalms through music. In his teachings, we will see that Luther saw theology as not only a path to salvation, but as a practical remedy to broader social problems arising from greed and false teaching. This discussion will conclude with an explanation of why this educational program of teaching theology through music did not feature prominently in Lutheran pedagogy once the process of confessionalization was begun in the late 1520's.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Dedication	vi
Introduction: Luther between Confessions	1
Structure of Arguments	10
Song in Luther's Reformation	14
Chapter One: Invented Doctrine and the Creation of Luther the Reformer	21
The redefinition of spiritual authority towards a model of congregational self-regulation	25
Luther's shift to a constructive reformation	32
The Leisnig Experiment	35
Chapter Two: Luther's Development of a Musical Theology	42
The Secular Musical Mythology	50
Music next to Theology	58
The Psalms and the path to Godliness	64
The Leisnig experiment and its influence on Luther's musical reform	71
Chapter Three: The Liturgical Service as a Place of Theological Education	77
The German Mass and Order of Service	87
The educational function of Luther's hymns in and out of the service	92
Conclusion: The Path to Confessionalization	101
Luther's acquiescence to the catechism as a spiritually normative device	104
The catechism as the cornerstone of the Lutheran education	110
Bibliography	116

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Mitchell Lewis-Hammond, for his support, insight, and patience throughout the writing process. I consider myself very fortunate to have had the benefit of his supervision. I would also like to extend that thanks to the members of my thesis committee- Dr. Andrea McKenzie and Dr. Gary Kuchar- who generously donated their time and experience to ensure that this thesis was everything it could be.

Another heartfelt thank-you to Dr. Paul Bramadat and all the wonderful staff and fellows at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria. I was exceedingly fortunate to have received the Centre's Winnifred Lonsdale Fellowship, which in addition to funding and office-space, provided me with daily intellectual stimulation, and more coffee than my body could at times safely handle. I cannot imagine having written this work without your support!

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to thank those who have helped me along the way. To my friends and family: thank you for putting up with me. Thanks to all the wonderful faculty and staff here for making the university into a second home. Thanks to Claudio Sanchez for the inspiration. Thanks to my amazing housemates for getting me out of the house every so often and keeping me sane.

A final thanks to everyone at the University of Arizona's Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies for giving me a reason to finish!

And if you're reading this now, then thanks for that too.

Dedication

*To Dr. Martin Luther: for all your hard work, your brave ideas, and your humanity,
thank you.*

Introduction: Luther between Confessions

For the right church must surely be the one which holds God's Word and suffers for it, as we do, praise God, and murders no one or leads no one away from God's Word. You should, therefore, not say to us so much, "Church, church, church." You should rather make us certain that you are the church. That is the crux of the matter! The devil can also say, "I am God, worship me," Matthew 4 [:9]. The wolf can also say, "I am a shepherd," Matthew 7 [:15], John 10[:1]. We know that we ought to obey the church, but we ask, who and where is it?

-Martin Luther¹

Historians looking back over the last few decades of reformation historiography almost invariably come to a common observation: the Reformation as a concept, as a field of study, is expanding. A greater number of historical actors and events have been and continue to be brought into the light of academic discourse. As early as the 1960's and 1970's, secular, social histories of the Reformation began to emerge, replacing what had previously been a field largely dominated by biographical treatments of political and religious actors, and by religiously motivated narrative.² Bernd Moeller's essays on urban reformations complicated those comfortable grand narratives surrounding the great reformers by showing the agency of burghers

¹ *Luther's Works* American Ed. General editors Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann Vol. 34 (Fortress: Philadelphia, 1966), 39-40. {*Luther's Works* to be hereafter referred to as *LW*, followed by volume item and page number. In this case, it would read *LW* 34:39-40}.

² Trends within Reformation historiography have received much attention over the last decade, as have projections for the field's future. For a thematic discussion of how these trends have emerged and evolved in the literature of the German Reformation, see Susan Karant-Nunn, "Changing One's Mind: Transformations in Reformation History from a Germanist's Perspective" *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 no. 4 (Winter, 2005), pp. 1101-1127. For histories coming from English-speaking historians specifically, see Tom Brady Jr., "From Revolution to Long Reformation: Writings in English on the German Reformation, 1970-2005" *Archive for Reformation History* 100 (2009), pp. 48-64. For a discussion of the role of social histories of the Reformation- past and future- see Mack Holt, "The Social History of the Reformation: Recent Trends and Future Agendas" *Journal of Social History* 37 no. 1 special issue (Autumn, 2003), pp. 133-144.

in the conversion process.³ In the late 1970's, both English and German scholars examined the political and social dynamics driving relations between the city-dwelling elite and middle classes and the old nobility. At this time, peasants- the poor and rural dwelling, were still largely underrepresented. In due course though, Robert Scribner, Peter Burke, and Gerald Strauss would all in their own ways open academia up to new ways of understanding the Reformation's 'simple folk'. Lyndal Roper, Susan Karant-Nunn and Ulrike Strasser likewise, without exhausting the list, significantly advanced the field of gender history within Reformation historiography. Regional and local studies have also always had a special place in this scholarship, from the early works of Natalie Zemon Davis and Tom Brady Jr. to the more recent scholarship of Johannes Wolfart and Christopher Boyd Brown.⁴ As this scholarship moved further and further from the old Luther biographies of E. G. Schweibert, Ewald Plass, and Roland H. Bainton, there came to be a diversification of interests. Within each of these new fields of inquiry though, we find new tools with which to reinterpret old subjects.

As Tom Brady Jr. put it, "Without the Wittenberg prophet's iconic power, *the Reformation* became a great many reformations."⁵ As social, and more recently cultural histories of the reformation peeled back new layers of meaning, new histories began to emerge. In 2003, for example, Mack Holt wrote that historians still have a great deal of work to do on deciphering what it meant for people to hear hymns and sermons.⁶ To an extent, we have begun to move beyond questioning why Luther wrote what he wrote to wondering about the effect of this work on everyday people. Lines between popular and elite cultural studies have become increasingly

³ See, for example, Bernd Moeller, *Reichstadt und Reformation* (Gutersloh, 1962), translated into English as *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, trans. H. C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972). Cited in Brady, p. 50, n. 9-10.

⁴ For lists of these studies by author and place, see Holt, 134 and Karant-Nunn, 1111.

⁵ Brady, 64.

⁶Holt, 140-1.

blurry in recent early modern scholarship. This trend, argues Holt, is in part an effort to continue to explore the ways in which confessional identities were delineated.⁷ We have gone from trying to understand the reformers to exploring how people's lives were impacted by them. A perfect example here is Alex Fisher's work on the role of music in constructing and perpetuating confessional identities in late sixteenth century Augsburg.⁸

Luther-centric scholarship never really went away, though. In the late 1980's, biographies of Luther by Martin Brecht, Heiko Obermann and James Kittelson - again, among others- set out Luther's story in such intricate detail and elegant prose that subsequent biographies have had to justify themselves against the standards set by those great works and to explain how their work somehow added to or challenged these orthodox Luther narratives.⁹ The popular narratives of Martin Marty, for example, focussed on Luther the man, rather than Luther the Reformer.¹⁰ Richard Marius' well known and much criticized *Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death*, attempted to recast Luther as a troubled, frustrated character- a man who doubted God's ability to resurrect the dead, even doubting the existence of God.¹¹ In 2004, Michael Mullett reprised his earlier biography on Luther, in which the central theme was Luther's role as

⁷ Ibid, 140.

⁸ Alexander J. Fisher, *Music and Religious Identity in Counter-Reformation Augsburg, 1580-1630* (Ashgate: Burlington, 2004).

⁹The 'great works' to which I refer are offer considered to include the following: Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*. Tr. James L. Schaaf. 3 Volumes (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985-1993); Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil* (New York: Doubleday, 1989); James M. Kittelson, *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986).

¹⁰ Martin Marty, *Martin Luther* (Penguin: Toronto, 2004).

¹¹ Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (Cambridge: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1999). This book has notably been reviewed by, among others, Martin Brecht and Heiko Oberman: Martin Brecht, "Martin Luther, (Book Review)" *Church History* 69 no. 1 (March, 2000), pp. 143; and Heiko Oberman, "Martin Luther, (Book Review)" *The Historian* 62 no. 4 (Summer, 2000), pp. 926-7. While Brecht criticizes the selection and treatment of sources, Oberman clearly takes issue with Marius' motivations for writing the book, citing the author's attempt to draw the character of Luther into a modern debate between the secular and the religious.

a ‘liberator’.¹² More recently, two of the Reformation’s leading historians- Robert Kolb and Scott Hendrix- have each published well-received biographies of the Reformer, incorporating the latest in Luther scholarship in their works. While Kolb’s work places a greater focus on Luther’s earlier intellectual and theological development, Hendrix’ work- as the title declares- is a very short, yet well-rounded introduction to Luther.¹³

However, as Robin Leaver’s 2007 *Luther’s Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications* demonstrated, there remains much work to be done- work which has yet to be addressed in biographical treatments of Luther.¹⁴ Just as reformation scholarship is always looking for new stories to tell from the fringes of the grand reformation narratives, so too must young scholars of Luther get their fingers dusty with his lesser known works, just as they would his better known treatises. Luther’s liturgical orders, for example, take on subtle and significant new dimensions when read in the context of his *Brief Instruction on What To Look for and Expect in The Gospels*. In this short work, Luther introduces an alternative understanding of theology, one accessible to all Christians.¹⁵ “When you open the book containing the gospel,” writes Luther,

¹² Michael Mullett, *Martin Luther* (Taylor & Francis e-library ed.) (New York: Routledge, 2005). See also Robin B. Barnes, “Martin Luther, (Book Review)” *European History Quarterly* 37 (2007), pp. 162-4. While Barnes is critical of the ‘liberator’ narrative that he argues Mullett constructs, as well as of the book’s focus on Anglo, rather than North American of German scholarship, he does concede that Mullett’s biography is not without redeeming qualities. He argues though, that for its flaws, it should not be used as an introduction to the study of Luther.

¹³ Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith* (New York: OUP, 2009); and Scott H. Hendrix, *Luther* (Abingdon Pillars of Theology series), (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009). For sample reviews of each, see Susan Karant-Nunn, “Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith, (Book Review)” *The Catholic Historical Review* 96 no. 2 (April, 2010), pp. 349-50; and Kathryn Kleinhans, “Luther, (Book Review)” *Lutheran Quarterly* 24 no. 4 (Winter, 2010), pp. 488-90.

¹⁴ Robin Leaver, *Luther’s Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. House, 2007). Leaver’s work will feature more prominently later in this paper. For the moment, it would be useful to point out the first chapter of this work, wherein Leaver identifies areas of Luther-study that have either been neglected, or are overdue for revision. His interests revolve particularly around conceptions and misconceptions relating to Luther’s broader theology and his writings on music and the liturgy. He adds, moreover, that the early Lutheran hymns, “were thus clearly and self-consciously the Word of God in song that would allow the people to learn and experience fundamental theology as they sang.” Leaver, 107-8.

¹⁵ This work can be found in *LW* 35:117-29.

...and see how [Christ] works, and how he helps everyone to whom he comes or who is brought to him, then rest assured that faith is accomplishing this in you and that he is offering your soul exactly the same sort of help and favour through the gospel. If you pause here and let him do you good, that is, if you believe that he benefits and helps you, then you really have it. Then Christ is yours, presented to you as a gift.¹⁶

Theology, in its purest form, is a striving towards God; it is an effort to understand the story of Christ, and to understand how one should live according to the Gospel. The purpose of this kind of theology, which he calls ‘true theology’,¹⁷ was to bring a person to faith, whereas the task of the scholarly theologian was to ensure that the teaching of true theology was not contaminated by human innovation. “A simple preacher,” explains Luther,

...has so many clear passages and texts available through translations that he can know and teach Christ, lead a holy life, and preach to others. But when it comes to interpreting Scripture, and working with it on your own, and disputing with those who cite it incorrectly, he is unequal to the task...Now there must always be such prophets in the Christian church who can dig into Scripture, expound it, and carry on disputations.”¹⁸

Viewing Luther’s liturgies with this distinction in mind, we can see congregational worship as a pure theological endeavour, protected from the outside world by scholarly theology. While the work of those theologians called to the vocation of professional theology benefits the spiritual kingdom, in working in their vocation, the theologian’s duty to theology is as much temporal as spiritual.

With respect to the role of music in Luther’s reforms- a ubiquitous feature of Luther’s liturgies- many studies have focussed on the *proportion* of musical references in the Reformer’s voluminous writings. Compared to his scriptural interpretation or his treatises concerning secular authority- which each themselves can easily span several volumes- the entirety of his writings on

¹⁶ LW 35:121.

¹⁷ LW 54:22.

¹⁸ LW 45:361-3.

music would not likely fill even one.¹⁹ This approach, however, is problematic. For Luther, music was not simply a by-product of his ostensibly more theologically substantial reforms. His attitude towards music in the early 1520's is exemplary of what he was trying to accomplish with his overall theological and, by extension, political and social reformation. He was setting out to excise all pretences to temporal authority from the governance of the spiritual kingdom.²⁰ This exercise, however, was a corollary of a more fundamentally important concern for Luther. Not only was Luther trying to develop a comprehensive evangelical theology- an essential character of which was the separation of Law and Gospel, of temporal and spiritual authority- but he was also developing a concurrent philosophy related to the meaning and forms of theological expression. His experimentation with musically expressed theology was therefore informed by the same concerns that drove Luther to develop his ideas about the Two Kingdoms and to articulate his Christian hermeneutics in light of an often hostile political-religious context. Theologically, he had the tricky task of transferring Christian authority from the Church to the Gospel, a task made trickier still by the fact that the exercise would be in vain should the facilitation of that transference ever become dependent on human authority to sustain it. In other words, the Word of God would become meaningless if, through secular influences, it took on the character of Law. So, while works like *On Temporal Authority* and *Avoiding the Doctrines of Men* do not explicitly promote the idea of musically expressed theology, these works- in criticizing the inherently legal, and therefore secular, nature of man-made doctrines and decrees- were important antecedents to Luther's development of musically expressed theology as a remedy to faithlessness and greed, the worldly impediments to spiritual reform. Where music is not explicitly referenced, the desire for a reappraisal of Christian authority- and perhaps more

¹⁹ Excepting his exposition of the psalms, which will be addressed shortly.

²⁰ Recalling Estes' article (p.5n. 15) this seems to have been Luther's goal at least until the outbreak of the Peasants' War.

importantly the expression thereof- is nonetheless ubiquitous. The role Luther developed for music was born from his desire to create educational and liturgical reforms consonant with his evangelical theology; without, of course, compromising the fundamentally spiritual message through subordination to human laws or doctrines. We therefore ought to view Luther's references to the role and nature of music as an ongoing organic development within Luther's broader theology- neither external to it nor simply a watered-down reflection of it.

If our task in this is to separate the man from the myth, then we need to be prepared to recognize that he took great care in what he wrote. Dismissing elements of his work as sentimental or idiosyncratic, particularly where music and devotional texts are concerned, will no longer be tolerated. In the case of Luther's hymns, Leaver argues that scholars too often examine these songs outside of their intended liturgical context, thereby producing an incomplete picture of how they were intended to be used.²¹ As this thesis will argue, re-examining these ostensibly less influential works and ideas in the context of Luther's better known treatises can help us better understand important moments in the development of his career. Here I am referring particularly to the period from roughly 1518-1525, in which Luther leaves one church and lays the groundwork for another. I have two principal concerns, both having to do with the way Luther is contextualized. The period between the 1518 Diet of Augsburg and the Peasants' War surely fostered a strong millenarian awareness in many of those who lived through it. In historical narratives, this is often treated as the point where medieval philosophy and theology collide with what we would call modern ideas (e.g. the separation of Church and state) in the thought of Luther and his colleagues. What I see as problematic is that narratives often situate this moment in time as either the end of one story, or else the beginning of another. I am

²¹ Leaver, 107.

especially concerned with the teleology of the latter narrative. The study of this period is too often conscious of what happens next. Too often we find lines being drawn directly between Luther and Lutheranism. By way of example, in James Estes' 2000 article on Luther's first appeals to secular authority, he writes, "If one cannot possibly tell the whole story of Luther's contribution to the emergence of the territorial church in one brief essay, one can at least hope to make clear how much of the end was already present in the beginning."²² There has been a tendency to impose on Luther the values and theology of Lutheranism, as often seen through the lens of the Augsburg Confession.²³ We must not assume, as some have, that Luther was working towards this kind of a confessional arrangement. In fact, as I will demonstrate, such an arrangement was precisely what Luther was afraid of in the early twenties.

Of course, the idea of separating Luther and Lutheranism is by no means new. Nearly a century ago, W. H. T. Dau commented that Lutheranism is not an "accommodation of the peculiar views of Luther"; nor is it "the universalization of the spiritual development of an individual."²⁴ Robert Kolb, writing in 1997, likewise recognized the necessity of distinguishing between Lutheran theology and Luther's theology, though he adds that "the former is unthinkable without the latter."²⁵ Michael Mullett, in his 2004 biography of Luther's life and work, takes a step back from theology to place the origins of Lutheranism in Luther's 'forms of worship', both within and outside the church service. He argues the promotion of standardized

²² James Estes, "Luther's First Appeal to Secular Authorities for help with Church Reform," in *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late-Medieval and Reformation History. Essays Presented to Heiko A. Oberman on his 70th Birthday* Ed. Robert J. Bast and Andrew Gow (Boston: Brill, 2000), pp. 48-76.

²³ See David Mark Whitford's, *Tyranny and Resistance: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 53; wherein he writes, "For Luther, using the Bible for building a society is a quixotic dream. Instead, Luther argued that reason ought to guide the state in its action."

²⁴ W. H. T. Dau, "Luther's Relationship to Lutheranism and the American Lutheran Church" *The American Journal of Theology* Vol. 21 No. 4 (Oct., 1917), 516.

²⁵ Robert Kolb, "Lutheranism" *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*. Ed. Hans J. Hillebrand. 1996, 2005 by Oxford University Press, Inc. The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation: (e-reference edition).

forms of devotional expression created, “a kind of applied Lutheranism conducive to the neighbourliness, docility and respectability of the Christian in society;” in other words, “a clear code of Lutheran civics and morality.”²⁶ Luther’s influence on the evangelical movements- commonly referred to in reformation historiography as ‘Luther’s legacy’- ought not, therefore, to be inferred solely on the basis of Luther’s theological influence. Political and social considerations were every bit as important to the Lutheran movement as Luther’s theology.

What distinguished Luther from Lutheranism, moreover, was not the theology itself, rather the application of theology. Kolb makes this clear in an earlier work. In it, he observes that later reformers- Luther’s implied heirs- faced the difficult task of trying to reconcile Luther’s theology with “the changing circumstances of their world;” they could not simply “reproduce what Luther had done in the 1520’s and 1530’s,”²⁷ nor does it seem as if there were necessarily a conscious desire to do so.²⁸ Keeping with Luther’s cause- in this case Lutheranism- should not be taken to mean the complete acceptance of Luther’s theology; rather, it implied an acceptance of the prevailing ecclesiology emerging from that theology towards the end of the 1520’s. Maintaining continuity with Luther came to mean more than the adoption of certain theological subtleties; in fact these were often marginalized. The Lutheran movement became a reconciliation of Luther’s core evangelical precepts with the exigencies of defending what were widely believed to be heretical beliefs. Graham Tomlin argues, for example, that Luther’s political and sacramental ideas had only a limited role in the wider reformation, noting instead

²⁶ Mullett, 188.

²⁷ *Luther’s Heirs*, p. xi.

²⁸ It should be remembered that through much of the 1520’s, the Emperor was not in any position to quash the growing evangelical movement due to hostilities on the eastern border. Once he had consolidated his power towards the end of the decade, however, Lutherans were under increasing pressure to unite under a common identity. While Luther attempted to implement his early reforms in a time of relative peace and security, later Lutherans often had survival foremost in their thoughts.

that “Luther stands as a reminder of the distinctive and polemical nature of theology.”²⁹ It was in challenging and greatly redefining the construction of Christian religious identity that Luther left his mark on future generations. Similarly to Mullett, Tomlin is concerned with Luther’s application of theology, rather than his specific theological interpretations. Unlike Mullett, however, Tomlin interprets Luther’s use of theology as a check against the power and authority of the Church. Rather than letting theology justify and affirm papal authority, Luther viewed theology as a defence of the Gospel, and not a derivative tool of legitimation. Both of these interpretations, however, seek to understand Luther in the context of a fledgling confessional arrangement. I ask though, can we consider a Lutheran church independent of secular interference? As I intend to demonstrate, not only did Luther at one time believe we could, but for a time this was his most important objective: a church of faith and love, rather than law and order.

Structure of Arguments

My principal contention here is that Luther not only understood music to be a powerful medium for theological instruction- by virtue both of its divine nature and emotional profundity- but he came to see it also as an integral foundation of the evangelical church. Beyond simply being a devotional aide- significant though that may be in and of itself- music offered Luther a remedy to the two greatest threats facing Christian reform: greed and false teaching.³⁰ Building on Leaver’s argument that Luther understood music as an important medium for theological expression, this thesis will demonstrate how musical theology was intended to have a practical social-religious application. In doing so, it will allow the theological interpretation of music to more readily enter

²⁹ Graham Tomlin, “Shapers of Protestantism: Martin Luther,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Protestantism* edited by Alison E. McGrath and Darren c. Marks (Blackwell publishing: Malden, 2004), 51.

³⁰ Greed and false teaching are frequently referred to as such in Luther’s lectures on the psalms (particularly Ps. 112, 120, and 127, which can be found in *LW* 13:392, 11:538, and 45:317).

into discourses on the social dimension of Luther's reforms, particularly with respect to congregational singing and the vernacular liturgy. It will, moreover, help to explain Luther's interest in the congregation as a centre of spiritual organization and education.

I have structured this discussion primarily around four questions. First, how did Luther's participation in the indulgence controversy (1517-1521) influence his evangelical ecclesiology in the first half of the 1520's? Second, following his break with the papacy, how did Luther come to understand the foundation and the institution of the evangelical church, and what were the obstacles to realizing this vision? Third, how did Luther's theological understanding of music provide a solution to the problems he faced implementing his reforms? Finally, why did Luther's educational curriculum of musically expressed theology not feature prominently in the confessionalization of Lutheranism?

Chapter one will address the first two questions. In it, I will briefly walk the well-beaten track of Luther's first years as a reformer, beginning with the posting of the 95 Theses in 1517 up to the conclusion of the Leipzig debate in 1519. A formative period in Luther's life and career, these few years have received a tremendous amount of scholarly attention. The themes that I will emphasize through my narrative, such as Luther's growing aversion to orthodoxy, however, have often been undervalued in the retelling of Luther's burgeoning struggle with the papacy and its champions. In order to understand why Luther turned his pen against the Roman Church, we need to be conscious of precisely what it was he was rejecting: that the authority of the Church was supported and perpetuated by laws masquerading as interpretations of scripture. The corollary of this rejection that we will encounter is Luther's growing disavowal of orthodoxy and centralization as religious imperatives. If we acknowledge that coming out of the indulgence controversy, Luther set out to delegitimize the legal foundations of the Church's coercive

authority, then we also need to realize that he had a vision for the redistribution of those ecclesiastical responsibilities, as this chapter will demonstrate. I will argue that the best representation of that vision was what historians have come to call the ‘Leisnig experiment’.

The Leisnig experiment refers to Luther’s participation in the evangelical reformation of the parish and town of Leisnig in Saxony between 1522-4. With Luther’s consultation and support, the town reformed itself into a self-regulating spiritual authority, organised as a board of trustees elected annually from the town and its environ. For its emphasis on the congregation as the heart and soul of the community, this model is most often described as ‘congregationalist’, and I will use the term frequently hereafter. Not only did Luther have a hand in devising this model, but he was a vocal proponent of it. He had numerous copies of what was effectively the town’s congregationalist charter published and disseminated, along with a preface which he himself supplied.³¹ Luther came to recognize two problems with this model, though, both stemming from what, as I mentioned earlier, he viewed as the two greatest threats to Christianity: greed and false teaching. As we will see, Luther blamed the apparent failure of the Leisnig experiment squarely on the former. On the matter of distributing resources, the congregational assembly proved incapable of achieving any consensus, and Luther had to eventually go over their heads to the elector.³² If they could not agree on even these largely temporal issues, how could they be trusted to give their members- especially their children- a proper Christian education? While ecclesiastic decentralization was a necessary component of the congregationalist model, it opened the door to false teaching. Luther, therefore, began to worry over the unity and doctrinal homogeneity of the Christian church, broadly speaking.

³¹ The work’s proper title is the *Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly at Leisnig*, and can be found, along with Luther’s preface, in *LW* 45:169-194. More will be said on this in chapter one.

³² In a letter written to Frederick August 11, 1523, Luther refers to the situation at Leisnig as ‘our present disgrace’. He then asks the elector to temporarily intervene and restore the congregation’s ability to regulate itself in spiritual affairs. *LW* 49: 45-7.

After he developed and began to promote his new ecclesiastical program, the next few years (1523-8) saw Luther dedicate significant effort to the development of aides to a proper Christian education. After all, what good was doctrine if it was unintelligible to all but the learned elite? To this end, Luther's liturgical orders, his catechisms, and his growing corpus of devotional songs in the vernacular created what Mullett describes as "forms of worship consistent with his doctrines."³³ What Luther came to realize following the failure of the Leisnig experiment was that before you can rebuild the church, you have to reform the *people*. The congregationalist model presupposed that its members would consciously desire to behave in a Christian manner. When that did not appear to happen at Leisnig, Luther's social and political engagement gave way to educational and pastoral reforms. Here we come to the heart of the matter. Piece by piece, request by request, Luther became the *de facto* architect of the new evangelical religion. In rebuilding the church, though, he had to find some way to avoid the mistakes of his Roman counterparts; he had to find a way to maintain the all-important distinctions between doctrine and law, and spiritual and temporal authority. In Leisnig, he saw how easily man's instinct to control could pervert the administration of the Word of God. Luther's answer to the failures of Leisnig was an educational program centered on teaching theology through music. All the songs and liturgical orders that Luther wrote between 1523 and 1525 were part of a single project, the goal of which was to reintroduce faith and Christian understanding into the congregation, thereby empowering it to manage its own spiritual affairs.

³³ Mullett, 159.

Song in Luther's Reformation

Although conscious and respectful of the movement's academic roots, Luther was repeatedly quite explicit that the reformation could not survive as an academic exercise alone.³⁴ As such,

Luther dedicated a considerable amount of time writing for the benefit of the 'common man'.

Foremost among these writings were Luther's hymns and his liturgical orders. Leaver's

Principles and Implications addresses itself to the lacuna of reformation scholarship around the intercourse of Luther's theology and his music. While in recent years excellent work has been done on the cultural, social, and even political importance of music in the early reformation, Leaver provides the most comprehensive, nuanced study to date of its theological dimensions.³⁵

Where Leaver provides thorough argumentation for a theological interpretation of Luther's

music, in chapters two and three I will extend that argument to illustrate how that musical

theology was intended to provide nothing less than a panacea for the spiritual ailments afflicting

Christian society. I will demonstrate that for Luther, music was more than simply a pedagogical

instrument; it could inspire faith, and in doing so, lead Christians away from the vices and sins

that were standing in the way of reform. Luther writes, "For whether you wish to comfort the

³⁴ LW 51: 71; 54: 71, 406.

³⁵ One of Leaver's greatest contributions to the study of Luther's music is the recognition of how music- both the practice of singing and the technical aspects of song-crafting and music making- were integrated into Luther's theological formulation and exegesis. According to Leaver, music provided Luther with a hermeneutic "by which fundamental theology was to be expounded" (101). By way of example, Luther frequently used musical metaphors to explain the difference between Law and Gospel. One passage that Leaver cites from the Table-talk reads, "That *lex iram operator* [the Law works wrath] is evidenced by the fact that Goerg Planck [organist in Zeitz] plays better when he plays for himself than when he plays for others; for what he does to please others sounds *ex lege* [from obedience to the law] and where there is *lex* [Law] there is lack of joy; where there is *gratia* [Grace] there is joy." WA TR no. 5391, cited in Leaver, 101. This metaphor was a frequent device used by Luther to explain the Law-Gospel dialectic. The differences between written notation and its actual performance, observes Leaver, were exactly analogous to the theological differentiation between Law and Gospel (102-3). More than simply as a metaphor though, Luther, who ascribed music divine origins, recognized that it "possessed dimensions of meaning, power, and effectiveness that far exceed any human art or science" (89). Leaver carefully notes the parallel here with the doctrine of justification. Just as Grace came from God for humanity- rather than being something sought for God- so too was music a divine gift. Where we see musical talent emerge, this was evidence of God's gifts, and not human achievement. Leaver cites Oskar Söhngen's interpretation of Luther's poem "Frau Musica" wherein he argues that Lady Music was "no mere allegory but rather the expression of the ontological reality that from the beginning of the world music has been an essential element within God's creation." Oskar Söhngen, *Theologie der Musik* (Kassel: Stauda, 1967), 84-5; cited in Leaver, 89.

sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate...what more effective means than music could you find?”³⁶ Luther believed the problems harrowing German society- namely those stemming from greed and ignorance- could be remedied by genuine understanding and faith in Christian theology. Such a remedy, though, required the successful implementation of an educational program of musically expressed theology. That is, the instruction of a theology comprehensible to the laity- founded specifically in the psalms, but in the theological context of Luther’s doctrine of justification. When I say comprehensible, I do not mean to say necessarily simplified or condensed. Rather, what made this theology of the psalms comprehensible was in fact the medium of song through which it was taught, learned, and expressed.

These ideas require further explication, but we can begin with what we know for certain. There can be no mistaking Luther’s deep-seated interest in music. In 1523, for example, Luther wrote *An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg*. Its principal concern was the purification of the traditional Latin mass; in other words, the excision of Catholic innovation and the returned primacy of the Gospel in the service. Luther adds, however, “I also wish that we had as many songs as possible in the vernacular which the people could sing during mass...For who doubts that originally all the people sang these which now only the choir sings or responds to while the bishop is consecrating?”³⁷ This passage on music coincides with Luther’s growing participation in the composition of hymns. In 1523 alone, Luther wrote at least seven hymns, four of which were included in the widely distributed hymnal, the *Achtliederbuch*.³⁸ By the end of 1524, Luther had already written twenty four songs- more than two thirds of what he would

³⁶ LW 53:323.

³⁷ LW 54: 36.

³⁸ Ibid., 91.

write in his entire career.³⁹ In his 1526 *German Mass and Order of Service*, Luther undertook to describe a comprehensive order of service in the vernacular. Significantly, the role of music in the liturgy becomes much more pronounced. Though we should heed Joseph Herl's warning about underestimating the distance between ideal and practice, the *German Mass* set out to considerably expand the place of congregational singing.⁴⁰

Considering the centrality of scriptural education in Luther's thought, the expanded integration of music in the liturgy should not surprise. For Luther, nothing being taught in the reformed service was fundamentally new; however, we cannot assume the same for early Lutheran parishioners. For a people largely illiterate- who had until only recently ever attended the traditional Latin service, if that- we should not assume widespread familiarity with scripture. Luther attempted to bridge this impasse with hymns and congregational singing. One of his aims was to create extra-textual media through which the illiterate could begin to engage with and learn from the Gospel. It is no coincidence that many Protestant pamphlets, and often those containing songs, were accompanied by symbolically rich woodcut images. Like song, these images offered a paraphrase of scriptural text. Interpreting the paraphrase required an active intellectual exercise, one that was expected to have more lasting results. In the *German Mass*, Luther reflects that "Many a man listens to sermons for three or four years and does not retain enough to give a single answer concerning his faith- as I experience daily."⁴¹ As a medium, song not only made the fundamentals of evangelical theology accessible and intelligible to the illiterate, but it also liberated scripture from the four walls of the church. But what did these songs teach about being a Christian in a worldly context?

³⁹ Ulrich S. Leupold, *LW* 53:193.

⁴⁰ Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1-3.

⁴¹ *LW* 53:67.

In the earliest years of the reformation, Luther, wary of institutionalization, turned to the family to share the burden of religious education. Fathers ought to become “bishops in their own homes.”⁴² The problem with this intended arrangement, however, was that it was contingent on being able to affect the beliefs of the adults. Because it was easier to inculcate a belief than change one, Luther and his reformers quickly realized that the education of the young was key to the reformation’s survival. In *Luther’s House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation*, Gerald Strauss argues that Lutheran education took form as religious indoctrination, particularly of the young. In this respect, he argues, song possessed an “imprinting device of uncommon potency.”⁴³ The notion of *einbilden*, which Strauss interprets as ‘to impress, imprint, and incise deeply and lastingly’, became a crucial aspect of Lutheran educational strategy.⁴⁴ In nurturing the faith of the young, Luther hoped to encourage them to pursue spiritual study on their own accord. He wanted them to *want* to learn. The problem with this strategy, however, was that it depended on the reformation surviving long enough for the newly indoctrinated youth to reach maturity and take over. Lutheran pedagogy intended to form and shape a new (or rather, classical) generation of Christians. We should not forget, however, that in the 1520’s, the spiritual re-formation of the adult population was of much greater urgency.

If we look at the hymns Luther wrote for church service between 1523 and 1524 we can identify some key messages:

1. that only through faith, and not works, can one be justified,⁴⁵

⁴² LW 51:137.

⁴³Gerald Strauss, *Luther’s house of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 231.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 153. He elaborates this point further: “Since truth and error were perceived as opposites, and the well-being of society was understood to demand the annihilation of false opinions, indoctrinating the young required that they be so deeply imbued with right ideas as to determine their thoughts and actions for the rest of their lives.”

⁴⁵ “A New Song Shall Here Be Begun”; “From Trouble Deep I Cry to Thee”; “Dear Christians, Let Us Now Rejoice” LW Vol. 53

2. that the truth of justification by faith has been suppressed by the laws of the Church⁴⁶
3. that through love and Christian neighbourliness the Word of God will prosper⁴⁷
4. and that the Word of God through Christ will liberate the Christian nation (the German Holy Roman Empire).⁴⁸

These songs were a manifestation of the trials and tribulations through which Luther had laboured for the last decade. While they shared and made known the divine promise of *sola fide* and the gospel, these songs also carefully articulated the danger of misinterpreting this promise as an imperative. Luther did not intend to make the same mistakes as his predecessors in the Roman Church. Instead- through his songs- he taught that spiritual authority ought not to lay with its ability to compel, but to convince and inspire. This was an important theme in Luther's songs, one that develops unsurprisingly alongside his endowment to the congregation of ecclesiastical responsibilities.

In addition his versifications of the psalms, it should be noted that Luther also wrote two hymns on the Ten Commandments, one on the Trinity, and one on the Christian Creed.⁴⁹ So, while some have suggested that Luther's repertoire of hymns only became a fundamental part of Luther's pedagogy after the publication of his catechism in 1529- where they took on a popularized form of catechistic instruction-⁵⁰ we can already see the foundation of Luther's catechism being taught through song in the early and mid twenties. Luther clearly was not

⁴⁶ "Although the Fools Say with Their Mouth"; "Would that the Lord Would Grant Us Grace"; "Were God Not with Us at This Time; In the Midst of Life We Are." Ibid.

⁴⁷ "Jesus Christ, Our God and Saviour"; "Let God Be Blest"; "Now Let Us Pray to the Holy Ghost" Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Happy who in God's Fear Doth Stay"; "Although the Fools Say with Their Mouth; "Ah God, from Heaven Look Down"; "From Trouble Deep I Cry to Thee" Ibid.

⁴⁹ "These Are the Holy Ten Commands" and "Man, Wouldst thou Live All Blissfully"; "God the Father with Us Be" and "In One True God We All believe" Ibid.

⁵⁰ In an otherwise brilliant work on the Reformation and cultural persuasion, Andrew Pettegree gives little more than a few sentences to the pedagogical use of Luther's songs before 1529. Instead, following the recent trend in Reformation musicology advanced by Rebecca Wagner Oettinger in 2001, he considers the cultural effect of these songs in a broader reformation narrative, rather than their originally intended purpose, as I will argue it. Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005); Rebecca Wagner Oettinger, *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001).

neglecting the education of the adult population in favour of the young. He realized, however, that not having had the benefit of time in which to inculcate these values in the adult population, he needed to compensate by allowing the Lutheran message to permeate their culture. We can view this effort as an environmental habituation that, if successful, would help incubate and protect the all-important next generation of Lutherans. Luther's reform strategy sought to convince by way of good arguments and scriptural justification; the responsibility for this education fell as heavily on the individual Christian as it did the preachers and pastors. Song, the principal medium of this kind of education, provided a familiar language with which to learn and propagate Luther's message. As we shall see, however, though the content of that message is in many ways identical to later catechistic instruction, the growing importance of the catechism in Lutheran practice was illustrative of the changing character of the Lutheran movement from a spiritual to a confessional reformation.

Chapter two will examine the formation and foundation of Luther's theological understanding of music. Chapter three will demonstrate how Luther intended to teach his theology of music in the liturgical service, and how this instruction could be used to address the failures encountered in implementing evangelical reform. Finally, in my conclusion, I will set out to explain why this educational program of teaching theology through music did not feature prominently in Lutheran pedagogy once the process of confessionalization was begun in the late 1520's. Here we will encounter the exigent circumstances that drove Luther to embrace what we have come to know as Lutheranism- that is, a spiritual institution in line with Lutheran teaching yet regulated by, and ultimately subject to, temporal authority. At the heart of this discussion is how Luther envisioned rebuilding the Christian church and community, and how music and theological instruction fit in to this vision. My intention throughout the next few chapters is to

explain the motivations that led Luther to his innovative ideas about liturgical and doctrinal orthodoxy that, I will argue, ought to feature more prominently in our understanding of Luther's early career as a reformer.

Chapter One: Invented Doctrine and the Creation of Luther the Reformer

St. Paul says in I Corinthians 14 [:30], “If something better is revealed to anyone, though he is already sitting and listening to another in God’s word, then the one who is speaking shall hold his peace and give place.”...

If we are all priests, as was said above...why should we not also have the power to test and judge what is right or wrong in matters of faith?...

We must compel the Romanists to follow not their own interpretation, but the better one.

-Luther, *To the Christian Nobility*, 1520¹

Furthermore, I acknowledge no fixed rules for the interpretation of the Word of God, since the Word of God, which teaches freedom in all other matters, must not be bound.

-Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, 1520²

Between 1517 and 1522, Luther found himself embroiled in a series of events and disputations now collectively referred to as ‘the indulgence controversy’. Notable among these were the Heidelberg disputation, the 1518 diet of Augsburg, and the Leipzig debate. Beginning as an academic interrogation of the theological principles underlying the Church’s sale of indulgences, the controversy was quickly politicized around the issue of papal primacy. Because of this politicization, Luther would develop a deep-seated aversion to the legal doctrinal structure which the Catholic Church used to defend its orthodoxy. By the end of the Leipzig debate, Luther would come to believe that not only *could* this orthodoxy be brought into question, but that it *ought* to be questioned, even opposed. We will see Luther’s attempt to redefine spiritual authority and orthodoxy in the so-called ‘Leisnig experiment’ of 1522-4.

* * *

When Martin Luther wrote against the sale of indulgences in 1517, he did so as a dutiful son of the Church, one whose doctorate of theology obligated him to use his training to correct a grievous wrong in the administration of the Word. He saw a problem, and he endeavoured to correct that problem using the tools and training acquired by long years of study and reflection.

The preamble to the *Ninety-Five Theses* begins:

¹ LW 44:134-5.

² LW 31: 374.

Out of love and zeal for truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following theses will be publicly discussed at Wittenberg under the chairmanship of the reverend father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology and regularly appointed lecturer on those subjects at that place. He requests that those who cannot be present to debate orally with us will do so by letter.³

Today, as in the sixteenth century, calls for debate such as the one Luther posted are part of the daily life of students and academics. Conferences, colloquiums and debates offer arenas for testing new ideas. They also offer a setting to challenge old ones. In setting out his credentials as an academic, Luther spelled out the terms and conventions which he hoped would facilitate intellectual discourse on his theses. He invited his colleagues to challenge and question his assertions- to engage in a scholarly dialogue. Certainly, although the debate was to be held under the auspice of theology, Luther's theological conclusions were designed to have real social consequences- the discontinuation or curtailing of the exploitative practice of selling indulgences. Calls for reform like this were not in and of themselves particularly unusual. What was unusual was that Luther never actually got his debate; or at least, not in the manner he expected.⁴

Sometimes- given the right confluence of circumstance, imagination, and chance- ideas take on a life of their own. This was the case with Luther's *Theses*. It is unclear if Luther appreciated the broader theological implications of his theses when he wrote them, but they

³ Ibid, 25.

⁴ As James R. Payton Jr. argues in *Getting the Reformation Wrong*, because of the far-reaching implications of his theses, interest in Luther's ideas as often as not came from outside the academy. By his supporters, detractors and the simply curious alike, Luther was forced onto the public stage to present his ideas and attitudes almost as soon as he had discerned them. According to Payton, this resulted in a growing disconnect between the public presentations Luther had to hastily throw together and the carefully crafted, revised treatises Luther published later on. It was the public presentations though, continues Payton, that reached the greatest audience. As such, the early Reformation was as much driven by misunderstanding of Luther's half-formed or otherwise awkwardly expressed ideas as it was by his carefully published treatises. James R. Payton Jr., *Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010), pp. 72-88.

would soon become clear to all.⁵ By word of mouth and in print, news of Luther's arguments spread beyond the borders of Saxony.⁶ News that an upstart German monk was trying to cut off one of the Church's most effective sources of revenue quickly spread through religious channels. Those that stood to gain from the sale of indulgences moved just as quickly to protect their income. Thus what should have been conversation quickly transformed into conflict. It is important to remember, though, that schism was not inevitable, nor did Luther even consider schism a possibility at this point. Luther was a *Catholic* reformer.⁷ That said, the debate between Luther and the Church would quickly expand beyond the issues of indulgences and penance. The reasons for this expansion demand explanation, as they themselves are representative of the larger issues Luther would come to reject- not only papal primacy, but the high regard paid to doctrinal orthodoxy, and the legal, ecclesiastical norms that defended it.

Luther was no German Gracchi, nor did he hold any allusions of becoming a champion of the common man; instead, the reformer sought to understand the truth of his own relationship with God. The more he delved into scripture for answers, the more questions he dug up. Who am I to God, and what do I owe him? How do I live according to his will? How do I please Him? Luther's great revelation came in his understanding of the meaning of the Gospel. First, that the Gospel was a story about Christ and the gift of his sacrifice. It was a story that had been told by numerous people, in numerous ways, but always with the same import: "Christ himself, with his

⁵Scott Hendrix writes that rather than attacking papal primacy at this early stage, Luther was protesting the indulgence preachers and testing the intentions of the pope. Scott H. Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 31. Markus Wriedt, on the other hand, suggests that what became apparent to Luther was not that the Pope did not have the authority to interpret scripture, but that popes could not introduce new doctrines, only comment on old ones. Therefore, if indulgences could not be shown to have roots in scripture, then they should not have been given papal endorsement in the first place. Markus Wriedt, "Luther's Theology," trans. Katharina Gustavs in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), (pp. 86-119), 93.

⁶ Robert Kolb estimates that by 1520, as many as thirty tracts or books of Luther's had been published, in as many as 600,000 copies. Kolb, 25 n.38.

⁷This theme is stressed by Mullett, p. 77.

deeds and sufferings, belongs to you.”⁸ One revelation lead to another, and Luther quickly came to understand that the Gospel was a book of promises. God had already given the greatest gift of all to man, and all man had to do was accept that gift. With Christ’s death, man’s sins were remitted. One had only to believe in this divine gift to enjoy its benefits, namely grace and justification. As Luther often reported, this realization delivered him from a state of deep personal turmoil.⁹ It was as if a weight had been lifted. Previously, Luther despaired over whether or not he had been doing enough good works, or if the penance for his sins was genuine enough to earn Grace. Luther’s revelation opened his eyes to the inherent selfishness, and therefore uselessness, of these good works. He had been doing good works for the sake of his own soul, and not for the benefit of his Christian neighbours, which meant they had no worth in the eyes of God.

One of the consequences of his participation in the Indulgence Controversy was that Luther became convinced that the effort to maintain doctrinal order was not justification in and of itself for the continuance of doctrine not based directly in scripture. True, Luther was ardently against the notion that each theologian could espouse his own theologies. This was certainly in part due to his academic background and the emphasis which it engendered on scholastic accountability, but also because he believed that the doctrinal foundations of the Christian faith were non-negotiable. At the same time, though, Luther also believed that these core tenets could only be found in scripture. So, while Luther believed that some degree of orthodoxy was required to maintain the homogeneity of the universal Christian church, defending orthodoxy by entrenching theological arguments in church law presupposed that man could and did understand fully the meaning and import of God’s word, which to Luther’s thinking would have been

⁸ LW 35:119.

⁹ LW 48:53-4.

destructively naive. How then, could one maintain the homogeneity of the Christian faith without making spiritual laws of its core tenets?

In his *Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospel, 1521*, Luther explains, “Now when you have Christ as the foundation and chief blessing of your salvation, then the other part follows: that you take him as your example, giving yourself in service to your neighbour just as you see that Christ has given himself for you.”¹⁰ Already we can see in Luther’s growing understanding of justification a move away from finding ways to regulate morality and behaviour through spiritual authority to finding a way to inspire faith. Through faith, Christians would *want* to be good subjects and neighbours. Luther was faced with two equally important tasks: finding a way to inspire faith, and finding a way to ensure that that faith was in Christ and the Word of God, and not in human doctrine or belief.

The redefinition of spiritual authority towards a model of congregational self-regulation

The issue of real-world consequences that underlay the indulgence controversy and the debate over papal primacy had an enduring influence on Luther’s thought going into the 1520’s. As we have seen, and as we will continue to see, many of Luther’s works come about in response to requests from other reformers for guidance or clarification. Luther’s influential *Sermon on Good Works*, for example, was written by way of response to George Spalatin’s request that Luther direct his energies away from attacking Catholicism to producing something of value for the evangelicals.¹¹ *The Freedom of a Christian* and the accompanying letter Luther wrote to the pope were likewise concessions made to Miltitz and Staupitz in the face of the papal bull of excommunication. This happened frequently. Someone would write to Luther asking him to

¹⁰ LW 35: 120.

¹¹ WA “Briefe” II, 48-9. Cited in Schweibert, 463, n. 125.

reinterpret a law, custom or belief with respect to sola fide, and Luther would- often quite quickly- respond in a letter or dedicated treatise. Remembering that he never intended to overthrow and replace the old Church, it only makes sense that when that was what his followers began to call for, Luther did not have all the answers already thought out. The theology that would come to define the early evangelical movement, however- justification by faith alone, the separation of temporal and spiritual authority, the priesthood of the believer, the law-spirit dialectic, the theology of the cross- would all be presented as ideas before the end of 1520. These were Luther's attempts to make sense of and respond to the 'winds and waves' that were pushing him down the path to reformation.¹²

To be clear, I am not proposing that all of Luther's writings should be taken as part of a single conscious whole. Rather than advancing a program of reform, many of Luther's writings ought to be understood as exercises in Luther's pastoral duties, which he took very seriously. Saying that, a number of ideas do recur time and again in Luther's work around this time, and these should be taken seriously as developments towards Luther's ideal conception of the church-reborn. I align my understanding of Luther's developing theology in very much the same way Robert Kolb does with respect to Luther's writings in 1520:

In the course of these writings [Luther] formulated five treatises¹³ that summarized his program of reform, his way of applying his interpretive framework to the whole of theology and the life of both church and society. Though not planned or organized as a comprehensive overview of his reform, they indicated how his message was taking concrete shape.¹⁴

¹² The metaphor of the 'winds and waves' first appears and is a prominent theme of *Luther's Sermon on the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, Matt. 8:23-27, February 1, 1517* (LW 51:23-6). "The storm and the winds," writes Luther, "are the rulers of this present darkness...The ship is the church and as many of us as are in the true faith; indeed, faith itself is the ship in which Christ is seated, which is constantly being tossed about by perils." Ibid, 23.

¹³ In addition to Luther's *Address to the Nobility, Babylonian Captivity, and Freedom of a Christian*, Kolb here also cites Luther's *Sermon on Good Works* and his *Judgement on Monastic Vows*.

¹⁴ Kolb (2009), 76.

One specific feature of his development that will be addressed here is Luther's division and definition of Christian authority, particularly towards the development of 'congregationalism' as a model for socially organized spiritual authority.

Authority, of course, has only one true source in Luther's thought- God and His word. To forget this truth and give authority to individual men is to take something from God which is not man's to take. This was the mistake Luther charged the Roman Church with making. The papacy had used its custody of the Word and sacraments to justify its assumption of worldly authority. It declared that temporal authority was derived from the spiritual authority of the pope. The spiritual was privileged over the secular. One of the best examples of this in medieval culture was the protection clergy enjoyed from secular law. The spiritual, ecclesiastical laws to which clergy were subject held greater authority than those of princes and kings.¹⁵

In his landmark work *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, Luther challenged these traditional notions of the Church's spiritual authority. Whereas medieval Catholicism described the Church as the head of the Christian nation, Luther replied that Christ was in fact the head, and that all men and women were equal members of the Christian body. Authority did not flow through the Roman Church; it flowed from God to each individual through the office of their vocation. Thus, Leo had certain responsibilities as a pope just as Hans Sachs did as a shoemaker. As Christians, however, they were all equal in the eyes of God. It was only as temporal actors, through the circumstances of one's vocation, that anyone had influence over their neighbours.¹⁶

¹⁵ The concept of temporal and spiritual estates was already well-known in medieval theology. In this relationship, the spiritual estate could, and often did, intervene in temporal affairs. The temporal was not allowed to interfere with the spiritual. The priestly exemption from temporal law was but one manifestation of this relationship. McGrath, 141.

¹⁶ Lewis Spitz breaks Luther's understanding of *vocatio*, or *Beruf*, into three parts. First, as a call to faith; second, as a call to service to one's neighbour; and only in a tertiary sense as a call to a specific trade or profession.

Where does this leave us then? James Estes writes that, “Luther realized that the Roman Church was only one manifestation of the true church; that papal authority was of human rather than divine origins... and that ultimate authority rested not with popes and councils, but with Scripture.”¹⁷ But in a community of human actors, how does scripture exercise its singular authority and inform human interactions and worship? In the early 1520’s, Luther and his colleagues were concerned with laying the foundation of a reformed Christianity- one that could accommodate the idea of a ‘priesthood of the believer’ in the absence of a unifying human authority. Were Luther to start promulgating laws and Christian norms based on his own readings of Scripture, though, then the authority of those laws would be rooted in *his* interpretation, not Christ or the Word of God. To his credit, Luther was largely conscious of this problem. This was the lesson he had learned throughout the indulgence controversy- even the best men interpreting scripture were still sinners. They could receive the Word of God, but they could not replicate it without it being contaminated by their earthly bodies.

If we think of Christianity as it was imagined by late medieval papal proponents as having been supported by two pillars- the spiritual and temporal estates- then Luther’s address to the nobility quite effectively knocked the supports out from under the spiritual pillar.¹⁸ As Estes describes it, Luther’s budding movement found itself in an emergency situation.¹⁹ The reformers needed time to consider the consequences of rejecting the pope. They also needed resources to maintain their preaching offices and to put their reforms into effect. These reformers, moreover, were in a highly vulnerable position, and desperately needed protection and legitimation. For all

Accordingly, one is called not *to* an occupation, but to work *in* one. See Lewis Spitz, *The Reformation: Education and History* (Brookfield: Variorum, 1997), 259-62.

¹⁷ Estes, 51-2.

¹⁸ McGrath addresses the influence of the doctrine of two estates on Luther’s own two kingdoms doctrine in McGrath, 141-7.

¹⁹ This theme of emergency recurs throughout the article. See *Ibid*, 53-4, 59, 74-6.

this, they turned to the German nobility. As Estes contends, however, this was only supposed to be an emergency measure; the temporal estate was only to shoulder the burdens of Christian society until the new church could build itself back up. Luther argued that the pope had been leading Christendom to ‘wreck and ruin’, and that, “It would be best- in fact it is the only way- if kings, princes, nobles, cities, and communities *made a start*, so that bishops and clergy (who are now afraid) would have reason to follow.”²⁰ (emphasis added) Luther thus empowered secular authority to make their realms safe for clergy to choose to embrace the new faith. Once the priestly needs of the new church were satisfied, reform could proceed under the care and guidance of the theologians and preachers.

Alister McGrath argues that for Luther, the end justified the means. “Luther,” he writes, “appeals to a specific power group [the German princes]; had a different group held political power, he would almost certainly have appealed to it instead, and justified its existence...Thus Luther is clearly a monarchist.”²¹ Insofar as this was the case with respect to the temporal kingdom, I would not disagree. McGrath notes that Luther was willing to *lend* the German princes religious dignity in return for their support of the reformation. While Luther held German princes in high regard- his patron especially- a degree of trepidation ought to be read in his call for help. Of all the reformers, argues Estes, Luther was the least comfortable with the idea of giving secular governments authority over ecclesiastical and spiritual matters.²² Though the pope had been a tyrannical usurper of God’s authority, the princes would likewise be usurpers, if benevolent ones. For this reason, Luther appeals to them as Christians exercising a particular vocation, not as Christian princes. Even appealing to the Christian nature of the nobility though,

²⁰ LW 44:87-91.

²¹ McGrath, 146.

²² Estes, 50. Oberman makes similar observations about Luther with respect to the Augsburg Confession. Oberman (1994) 155-8.

Luther realized that the princes could not be expected to separate their worldly responsibilities from the spiritual responsibilities he was investing them with. Estes is right to note the contradictions inherent in Luther's cry for help. Luther's thought was leading, "On the one hand," writes Estes, "toward a church free to regulate its own internal affairs without governmental interference...and on the other hand towards a church established under the patronage and protection of secular rulers, something that he needed but with which he was not really comfortable."²³ Perhaps as early as 1525, though certainly by 1530, Luther had all but made up his mind in favour of the latter. In 1520 however, even up to the middle of the decade, Luther was far from convinced that secular authority should have a permanent role to play in spiritual affairs. How, then, did Luther envision spiritual authority?

By way of an introduction to the Wartburg Postil- a collection of sermons written at this time- Luther wrote *A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels*. Here, Luther writes that "the gospel is really not a book of laws and commandments which requires deeds of us, but a book of divine promises."²⁴ He develops this idea into the 'double kindness of Christ'. Christ must be taken first as a gift, a promise of God's unconditional love. Only then can he be taken as an example to be emulated. Unlike Moses, Christ does not "horribly force and drive us. Rather he teaches us in a loving and friendly way. He simply tells us what we are to do and what to avoid...Christ drives and compels no one."²⁵ Luther continues,

When you see how [Christ] works, however, and how he helps everyone to whom he comes or who is brought to him, then rest assured that faith is accomplishing this in you and that he is offering your soul exactly the same sort of help and favour through the gospel. If you pause here and let him do you good, that is, if you believe that he benefits and helps you, then you really have it. Then Christ is yours, presented to you as a

²³ Ibid, 74.

²⁴ LW 35:120.

²⁵ LW 35:121

gift...After that it is necessary that you turn this into an example and deal with your neighbour in the very same way, be given also to him as a gift and an example.²⁶

What he is saying, essentially, is that there is no authority in the spiritual kingdom to parallel the authority of a prince. The authority of scripture cannot be translated into normative laws and doctrines as could the will of a temporal leader. Where Moses- the paragon of Law- commanded and forbade, Christ admonishes and requests.²⁷ This coercion-persuasion dynamic is a defining feature of Luther's construction of the relationship of the Old and New Testaments. This relationship, moreover, is analogous to the relationship between the temporal and spiritual kingdoms. The Old Testament alone bears the name of Holy Scripture. These are the holy words of God, captured and codified in writing. The gospel, on the other hand, "should not be something written, but a spoken word which brought forth the Scripture as Christ and the apostles have done."²⁸ Luther reminds his readers that Christ taught not with the pen, but by word of mouth. In short, since Christ died to liberate Christians from their responsibility to Old Testament Law, we should not turn around and make laws of Christ's teachings. This idea is perhaps best reflected in the themes espoused in *The Freedom of a Christian* the year previous: "A Christian is lord of all, completely free of everything. A Christian is a servant, completely attentive to the needs of all."²⁹ Because Christ took the sins of man unto himself, man was free from his obligations to the Law. Humbled in appreciation of Christ's gift though, the Christian would then devote himself to the needs of his neighbours, as Christ would have done. Law, both in the sense of man-made laws and the Law of the Old Testament, only has power to control and

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Karant-Nunn notes that admonishment was often interpreted by Lutheran pastors and clergy as theological instruction. Since all manner of maladies derived from being in a state of sin, pastors would be called to admonish the sick and dying and, through that Christian instruction, attempt alleviate their distress through faith in Christ. Christ, unlike Moses, does not demand that his teachings be obeyed, but offers them instead as a sort of panacea. Susan Karant-Nun, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 152-5, 168.

²⁸ Ibid, 123.

²⁹ LW 31:344.

regulate sin. In the new ecclesiastical institution, there would be no spiritual *authority*, per se. There would be only an imperative to inspire faith, so that Christians could begin to live harmoniously in social covenant, bound by Christ's love and protected from sin and temptation by the sword of law.

Luther's shift to a constructive reformation

Unfortunately, by the time *Brief Instruction* went into print, Luther was deeply embroiled in another crisis. Beginning late in 1521, Andreas Karlstadt had taken over leadership of the Wittenberg reformation and was pushing an aggressive program of reform, at the expense of old Catholic culture and practice. Karlstadt couched his reform in a series of commands: the Eucharist must be administered in both kinds; icons and images must not be used as aids to worship, and so forth. Learning of this, Luther was prompted to return to Wittenberg and set things straight, which he does in a lecture series now commonly referred to as the *Invocavit Sermons*.³⁰ On his first day of lecturing, he admonishes the congregation:

We must also have love and through love we must do to one another as God has done to us through faith...And here, dear friends, have you not grievously failed? I see no signs of love among you, and I observe very well that you have not been grateful to God for his rich gifts and treasures.³¹

He pleads patience. While Luther was pleased that many people in Wittenberg had embraced the reformation, their haste to reform the church did a disservice to their neighbours, who as of then had not.³² With regard to the abolition of the mass that Karlstadt had instituted, Luther adds,

³⁰ The earliest printed version of these sermons is titled *Eight Sermons by Dr. M. Luther, preached by him at Wittenberg in Lent, dealing briefly with the masses, images, both kinds in the sacrament, eating [of meats], and private confession, etc.* LW 51:69. Luther gave the first of these sermons on *Invocavit* Sunday, March 9, 1522. They can be found in LW 51:70-100 and WA 10(3), 1-64. Citations here are from the American edition.

³¹ LW 51:71.

³² Karlstadt's reforms at times reached an iconoclastic fervour, and riots and vandalism often accompanied his fast-paced reform. For a thorough overview and contextualization of Luther and Karlstadt's theological disputes, see

“Therefore all those have erred who have helped and consented to abolish the mass; not that it was not a good thing, but that it was not done in an orderly way.”³³ The first point to take from this passage is that Luther ascribes a collective agency to the parishioners. Responsibility for church reform fell on all Christians alike, not just Karlstadt. He continues, “You say it was right according to the Scriptures. I agree, but what becomes of order? For it was done in wantonness, with no regard to proper order and with offense to your neighbour.” This emphasis on order is interesting. Luther allows the people their interpretation of scripture, but in acting on that interpretation, though, he accuses them of disrupting order. What was the proper order that they had ignored? To this Luther answers, “If, beforehand, you had called upon God in earnest prayer, *and had obtained the aid of the authorities*, one could be certain that it had come from God” (emphasis added). While this could be interpreted to mean secular authorities, this does not seem to be the case. On the second day of preaching, on the abolition of private masses, Luther states,

Here we are entirely agreed: the private masses should be abolished everywhere and only the evangelical mass should be retained. Yet Christian love should not employ harshness here *nor force the matter*. However, *it should be preached and taught with tongue and pen that to hold mass in such a manner is sinful, and yet no one should be dragged away from it by the hair; for it should be left to God, and his Word should be allowed to work alone, without our work or interference*. Why? Because it is not in my power or hand to fashion the hearts of men as the potter molds the clay and fashion them at my pleasure...We should give free course to the Word and not add our works to it. We have the *jus verbi* [right to speak] but not the *executio* [power to accomplish]. *We should preach the Word, but the results must be left solely to God’s good pleasure.*³⁴ (emphasis added)

What Luther is saying is that man does not have the power to wield God’s authority. The authorities to whom he referred earlier were the preachers and ministers of the word, those called to exercise the *jus verbi*. It was *their* responsibility-as ministers of the Word- to preach what was

Ronald J. Sider, *Karlstadt’s Battle with Luther: Documents in a Liberal-Radical Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

³³ LW 51:73.

³⁴ Ibid, 75-6.

good and right, but even then no one must be forced to go along with their preaching.³⁵ It is only once God's Word has achieved a consensus that reforms can be implemented. "And if the hearts and minds of all are agreed and united, abolish [the mass]. But if all are not heart and soul for its abolishment- leave it in God's hands, I beseech you, otherwise the result will not be good."³⁶

Citing his actions in the indulgence controversy, Luther writes, "I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force, I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word."³⁷ This is not to say that evangelical theology did not have anything to say about how the mass should be interpreted, however. For example, Luther stated that the mass *must not* be interpreted as a sacrifice. This interpretation, though, did not necessarily affect the liturgical practice of mass, only how participants should understand it. Where temporal authority comes from the power to *compel*, spiritual authority rests in the power to *convince*. In *The Freedom of A Christian*, Luther writes,

We must spare the timid multitude whom those impious tyrants hold captive by means of these laws until they are set free...This you will do if you inveigh against the laws and lawgivers and at the same time observe the laws with the weak so that they will not be offended, *until they recognize tyranny and understand their freedom*.³⁸ (emphasis added)

The freedom of a Christian is freedom from the fear of sin incurred by not being able to follow the demands of the Law. In *Avoiding the Doctrines of Men*- a sort of handbook for exercising this freedom in a disciplined and Christian way- Luther appeals to *sola fide* to demonstrate how spiritual matters must not be dictated by man-made doctrine. Whatever one chooses to eat or wear, and however one chooses to worship, these in and of themselves are inconsequential. As

³⁵ For Luther's understanding of the nature and vocation of a preacher, see Kolb (2009), 157-62.

³⁶ Ibid. 76.

³⁷ Ibid, 77.

³⁸ LW 31:374.

works they do no service to God, but at the same time they are not sinful. Spiritual matters, therefore, ought to be left to the consciences of men.³⁹

The Leisnig Experiment

Luther decentralized spiritual authority into two parts: those who proposed change through good arguments, and those who actualized change through acceptance of the argument.⁴⁰ In this way, at least in theory, the spiritual kingdom would be able to rebuild and manage its own affairs without being drawn into or ruled by the temporal kingdom. The best example of this arrangement is the Leisnig ‘experiment’, in which Luther participated between 1522-4.

Having embraced Luther’s theology at an early date, in 1522 the villagers of Leisnig banded together and assumed many of the social and ecclesiastical responsibilities previously held by local Roman Catholic authorities. Not only did this leave the villagers pondering what to do with the resources held by the now vulnerable church and monastery holdings, but it also raised the question of how to regulate church affairs in a reformed context. Naturally, the town council appealed to Luther for help, and Luther paid them a number of visits over the next year and a half. The fruits of this collaboration were three documents which Luther had published in 1523 at Wittenberg. One of these documents was the *Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly at Leisnig*. By way of a preface to this document, Luther wrote his own piece, *Ordinance of a Common Chest*. What is interesting about these documents for our

³⁹ LW 35:140-4.

⁴⁰ In his second *Invocavit* sermon, Luther preaches that, “I can get no further than their ears; their hearts I cannot reach.” (LW 51:76.). Engendering consensus through preaching is a major theme of this sermon. Those who preached the Gospel, like Luther had the *jus verbi*, but not the *executio*- the power to put reform into practice. This *executio* only came about through collective agreement- an eventual result of hearing the gospel and accepting its divine promise.

purposes is the emphasis therein on the decentralization of spiritual authority.⁴¹ Those matters which were held to be traditional responsibilities of the old church institution- the appointment of priests and preachers, the provision for and regulation of Christian education and morality, the collection of tithes and the distribution of alms- were all to be conducted under the auspice of a general assembly. The Fraternal Agreement begins,

The nobles, council, craft supervisors, gentry, and commoners, of the assembly and parish of Leisnig...upon the considered and mature counsel of men learned in the divine Scriptures, have drawn up and adopted the following fraternal agreement among ourselves as a community, and that both now and for the future it is to be held true and inviolable...⁴²

At least in the spirit of the document, we can clearly see the influence of Luther's notion of the priesthood of the believer.⁴³ Each year, the general assembly would elect a number of trustees to fulfill the obligations of this agreement. The council was required to represent all members of the parish, and so members had to be elected from all walks of life- three trustees had to be elected from the 'common class', for example.⁴⁴ Spiritual authority would be distributed throughout a parish council, exactly as Luther preached in his *Invocavit* sermons, and in keeping with the themes of the *Brief Instruction* and the *Freedom of a Christian*. Moreover, we see that the authority of this council was to be aided by the learned interpretation of the village's priest and

⁴¹ As will be shown, not only did the congregation's newly endowed authority include the right to issue taxes, to select and appoint pastors and priests, to establish and maintain schools, and to administer over the wealth and resources acquired from the monastery, but it also included the authority to make changes to its liturgical service, so long as they remained in keeping with the core tenets of the Christian faith. In 1523, Luther wrote a short work to the Leisnig congregation regarding public worship. Though Luther specifies a few practices to avoid- namely that mass should not be practiced and taught as a form of 'sacrifice' and the use of 'un-Christian' fables and lies, he leaves all other matters up to the congregation.

⁴² *LW* 45:177.

⁴³ While the advice of the 'learned men' is still an essential component of this congregational assembly, the implication is that it remains incumbent on these priests and pastors to convince the rest of the assembly of the scriptural justification or validation of any proposed reform. See *LW* 39:305-14. See also Pettegree's argument that Luther's interest in congregationalism was a by-product of his inherently anti-clerical theology. Pettegree, 4-8.

⁴⁴ Ten members would be elected annually to serve as trustees or directors to the common chest. Of those, two would come from the nobility, two from the incumbent city council, three from the common citizenry, and three from the rural peasantry. *LW* 45:182.

preacher.⁴⁵ While the ability to judge doctrine lay with the people, preachers skilled in scriptural study would be a bulwark against false teaching.⁴⁶ By consensus and according to the priests' knowledge of scripture, these trustees would see that the Word was preached in accordance with reformed teaching, that Christian schools would be created and maintained- for both boys and girls- and that the wealth of the monasteries would be put to Christian uses. "In these matters," writes Luther, "Christian love must judge and act; it cannot be handled by laws and regulations."⁴⁷

Thus we see that by 1523, Luther held a strongly formed belief in congregationalism.⁴⁸ This idea reaches its fullest articulation in Luther's work bearing the cumbersome title, *That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture, 1523*. Temporal authority is centralized. It judges and compels. Spiritual authority, on the other hand, is the aggregate of individual consciences set free by the Word of God. Authority in spiritual matters arises from communal understanding and acceptance of an evangelical interpretation of scripture. According to Andrew Pettegree, for a time- which he characterises as brief and rash- the reformer saw the laity as the 'major springboard of evangelical renewal'. "[Luther] seemed even

⁴⁵ While decision-making resided with the 'will and call' of the congregation, Luther is careful to stress that there will always be a paramount role for the theologian to play in these proceedings. "In the Christian Church," he writes, "all teaching must be judged." *LW* 39:306-8.

⁴⁶ Luther cites various passages from John 10 to support this idea, including 10 [:4]: "My sheep know my voice." *Ibid*, 306-7. He goes on to add that, "Bishops, popes, scholars, and everyone else have the power to teach, but it is the sheep who are to judge whether they teach the voice [i.e., The words] of Christ or the voice of strangers." *Ibid*. 307. If these passages were not clear enough, Luther then writes, "You see here, [Christ] does not want any teaching of decree obeyed unless it is examined and recognized as good *by the congregation hearing it*" (emphasis added). *Ibid*, 307-8.

⁴⁷ *LW* 45:173.

⁴⁸ *LW* 39:304, 305-14. It should be noted that this was not the only model for spiritual authority that Luther advocated. Martin Brecht, for example, cites a separate model Luther proposed for the Bohemians in light of the fact that they had maintained the ritual of ordination. The Leisnig model, however, was one better suited for those cities and towns looking to emulate what was supposedly the Wittenberg model. Brecht, 72-7. Even in the German context though, many towns and cities developed their own processes for appointing and maintaining pastors, and Luther, "recognized that the Holy Spirit had placed pastors in office through different methods throughout church history." Kolb, 159 (see *LW* 26:17-8).

prepared,” Pettegree continues, “to argue that an uncorrupted laity possessed a superior access to wisdom [as compared to the clergy].”⁴⁹ Luther makes the argument that even the apostles were subject to the ‘knowledge, will, and call of the congregation in their time.’⁵⁰ By virtue of their baptism, all Christians have an equal right to exercise the office of the keys.⁵¹ Priests and preachers do not have the authority to compel particular beliefs and practices in their parishioners; rather, they are obliged by brotherly love to educate and inspire their charges to the right understanding of the gospel and its social and liturgical implications.

In addition to *That a Christian Assembly and Ordinance of a Common Chest*, Luther wrote to the Leisnig congregation a third work, *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*. While the two former works address the responsibilities and scriptural justifications of a congregationalist model of spiritual authority, they have little to say of its most important role—the administration of the Word of God in a liturgical setting. Kolb reminds us that according to Luther, “Congregational life took place in the use of God’s Word.”⁵² Published and broadly disseminated in the spring of 1523, this brief document was Luther’s first attempt at a model liturgical order. In it, Luther is interested in reintroducing the Word of God into Christian worship, and in excising all the ‘un-Christian fables and lies’ of the old service. He also stresses two important functions of the service: to restore faith to the congregants, and to educate its members, especially the youth who would form the next generation of evangelical teachers.⁵³

⁴⁹ Andrew Pettegree, “The Clergy and the Reformation: from ‘devilish priesthood’ to new professional elite” in *The Reformation of the Parishes* ed. Andrew Pettegree (Manchester: Manchest UP, 1993), [pp. 1-21], 5-8.

⁵⁰ *LW* 39:312.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 304.

⁵² Kolb (2009), 159. It was for this reason, he continues, that Luther in the 1520’s made it his priority to create and revise “measures and instruments that encouraged evangelical practice in the Word by fostering good preaching, liturgy, devotional life, instruction of the young, and pastoral care,”

⁵³ Luther uses the word *Seelsorger* to describe the role he sees for these youth, meaning- those who care for the soul. *LW* 53:13. This could suggest that he sees these youth becoming preachers or pastors. It could also suggest a more general responsibility on the part of those who have received a reformed education to share that education with their neighbours and families. This would be in keeping with other of Luther’s writings wherein he assigns a

One feature of this order that facilitates both of these functions- inspiring faith and teaching Christian education- is the call for congregants to actually participate in the rituals of the service, namely, through the singing of hymns and the recitation of responsories and antiphons.⁵⁴

Ultimately, Leisnig's experiment in social covenanting, as Stewart Herman calls it, was unsuccessful.⁵⁵ From Luther's reports, it would appear that members of the council consistently either withheld funds, or through their bureaucratic ineptitude, mishandled those funds so that resources were slow to get where they needed to be. Luther became particularly livid upon learning that the council had mucked things up to the extent that even their preacher was starving.⁵⁶ At this point, to address disputes within the council, Luther and representatives of the elector had to enter the fray to mediate.⁵⁷ Herman presents a number of reasons for the failure of the experiment. First, he argues that Luther's ideas of social covenant and ethics of self-obligation were more self-expressive than socially instrumental.⁵⁸ Herman argues that the sacrifice and individual passivity that Luther tried to teach to the average German was unrealistic in the face of economic depravity and legal oppression. His main argument, however, is that Luther's conception of Law was limited to its punitive, criminal aspects. Luther had no

responsibility to spread the Word to non-church officials. "Worship," in Robert Kolb's understanding of Luther's thought, "should flow from church into small groups of dedicated believers, gathered for meditation, mutual encouragement and prayer, or into households where parents teach children and servants the fundamentals of the faith." Kolb (2009), 160. In Luther's writing, see, for example, his *An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for Simple Laymen, 1519* (LW 42:15-82); *Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels, 1521*, (LW 35:113-124); *To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany that they should Establish and Maintain Christian Schools, 1524* (LW 45:341-78); and his *Ten Sermons on the Catechism, 1528* (LW 51:133-94).

⁵⁴ LW 53:12.

⁵⁵ Stewart J. Herman, "Luther, Law, and Social Covenants: Cooperative Self-Obligation in the Reconstruction of Lutheran Social Ethics" *Journal of Religious Ethics* 25 no. 2 (Fall, 1997) [pp. 257-75], 257.

⁵⁶ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521-1532*. Trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 69-71; LW 45: 161-7.

⁵⁷ LW 49:45-7. Here, contrary to Herman's assertion that this arrangement contradicted Luther's dualistic conception of Christian authority, we see temporal authority stepping in to fulfill its duty just as Luther prescribed. When the covenant charged with spiritual authority failed due to greed, pride and other vices, this ill behaviour necessitated the involvement of a princely authority that could try to control these vices through compulsion and threat of reprimand.

⁵⁸ Herman, 272.

conception of law as a way of facilitating what he calls ‘cooperative self-obligation’ - the organization of society through a kind of contract law. Luther advocated commitment to one’s neighbour, argues Herman, not in order to elicit a reciprocal commitment- an understanding required to build and sustain social-covenant- but for religious and moral reasons. I remain unconvinced by this latter argument, as I would any such argument that appears to underestimate the religiosity of sixteenth century peoples.

Luther’s *Freedom of a Christian*, which does not feature in Herman’s article, espouses in a highly accessible theology many of the very principles of cooperative self-obligation Herman finds wanting in Luther’s more social and political texts. Herman seems to argue that this concept of social covenant requires a recognized legal framework to sustain it, rather than a supposedly unenforced moral or theological one. What Herman fails to appreciate is the high regard in which Luther held the principle of voluntarism. Luther deeply cherished the idea that it was better to want to be good than to be brought to goodness through coercion.⁵⁹ Herman’s first argument, therefore, makes more sense to me. It seems more likely that Luther’s expectations for Leisnig presupposed a social and theological awareness that was simply lacking in many of these towns. As Alister McGrath writes, “Luther’s vision of the church possessed the great virtue of simplicity. Simplicity, however, frequently amounts to inadequacy.”⁶⁰ Robert Kolb, in a veiled reference to Leisnig, likewise argues that Luther’s enthusiasm for congregationalism was tempered when,

First, he discovered that the savvy and wisdom of the peasants regarding weather, crops, livestock, and other matters did not mean that they understood the biblical message, and they had no way of attaining sufficient knowledge for congregational leadership...and second, that the dedication to learning God’s Word and living the Christian life was rarer,

⁵⁹ Strauss, 251.

⁶⁰ McGrath, 133.

and Christian maturity harder to cultivate, than he had initially anticipated when he began proclaiming the Gospel.⁶¹

Pettegree offers another explanation for both the popular interest in, and failure of, congregationalism. He argues that villagers were likely more interested in the implications of Luther's pastoral reforms, rather than his soteriological message. He writes, "If countryfolk thirsted equally after the *Rein Evangelium*, they also sought freedom from a wide range of customary impositions with which they were burdened."⁶² He then goes on to trace the ideal of congregational reform to similar widespread efforts in 1525.

At Leisnig, the administration of the common chest seems to have been the principal obstacle to implementing this model, requiring the intervention of state and religious parties throughout the remainder of the 1520's. The social and ecclesiastical reforms that empowered the congregation with spiritual authority presupposed that its members would serve 'the honour of God and the love of the fellow-Christian neighbour'. In other words, Luther supported a social construct to facilitate the teaching of evangelical theology, and to teach its members how to live according to that theology. The ideas espoused in Luther's landmark works of 1520 were given an ecclesiological form in these three responses to the reformation of Leisnig. As Luther came to realize, however, the reform of the congregation and its spiritual authority out-paced the restoration of faith central to his vision of reformation. As the next chapters will demonstrate, Luther would go to great lengths over the next few years attempting to redress this miscalculation and rebuild that missing foundation of faith.

⁶¹ Kolb (2009), 157.

⁶² Pettegree, 6.

Chapter Two: Luther's Development of a Musical Theology

And this which has been begun during my lifetime will be completed after my death. St. John Huss prophesied of me when he wrote from his prison in Bohemia, "They will roast a goose now (for 'Huss' means 'a goose'), but after a hundred years they will hear a swan sing, and him they will endure.

-Martin Luther, 1530¹

I know and bear true witness that the holy man of God, Luther, the Prophet and Apostle to the German nation, had a great love for music in plainsong and polyphony. Many precious hours have I sung with him, and have often seen how the dear man became so merry and joyful in spirit from singing, that he could hardly become tired and weary of singing and speaking so splendidly about music."

-Johann Walter, (1533?)²

[Luther] gathered the principal and most necessary points of doctrine and comfort in beautiful German psalms and hymns, so that the simple too might make continual use of them- as has manifestly (praise God) come to pass, and no one can truthfully deny.

-Johann Gerhard, 1619³

Between 1523 and 1526, Luther was heavily invested in two endeavours: 1) reforming the liturgical service, and 2) developing evangelical educational curricula, both for adults and children, the latter being perhaps more clearly and formally outlined. In both these pursuits, music, particularly singing, is given a prominent role. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how Luther understood the singing of hymns as a theological exercise. The theology from which they were derived- the psalms- was made intelligible and profound, Luther argued, by the musical expression of that theology. In the following chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate that Luther developed this program of musically expressed theology as a remedy to the greed and false teaching that was hindering reform in many places throughout central Europe, Leisnig included.

* * *

¹ LW 34:104.

² Walter's reflections on Luther were included in Praetorius' 1612 *Leiturgodia Sionia Latina*. This above quotation is believed to have been originally written by Walter in the early 1530's. For greater detail see Robin Leaver's appended analysis, "Johann Walter on Luther" in *Leaver*, [325-337], 333.

³ Cited in Christopher Boyd-Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation*. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005), 201 fn.2.

Historians and scholars of the Reformation are generally in agreement that Martin Luther was favourably disposed towards music. Countless examples can be found to evidence the great comfort and solace he found in the art. “It is the function of music,” he writes, “to arouse the sad, sluggish and dull spirit.”⁴ In his poem dedicated to “Frau Musica” he opens,

Of all the joys upon this earth
None has for men a greater worth
Than what I give with my ringing
And with voices sweetly singing⁵

Where academic consensus founders, though, is in Luther’s attitudes towards music with respect to reformation. The prevailing historiographical tradition pays little attention to music as anything more than a devotional aid. Within this tradition, we typically find music lumped together with Luther’s liturgical reforms. Even here, however, the liturgical function of music is viewed as somewhat superficial and undefined. In both the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (1996)⁶ and the *Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (2003),⁷ Luther’s hymnody is treated as no more than a devotional product of his theology. In many treatments, the theological meaning and significance of Luther’s music is overshadowed- if not entirely overlooked. In these works, the social-cultural impact of Luther’s music, particularly his interest in congregational singing, tends to garner the most academic attention. In other words, the effect of Luther’s reforms often seems to be of greater interest than Luther’s intentions. In favouring the social-cultural approach, for example, it can easily be forgotten that Luther recognized a distinctly divine metaphysical quality in the medium of music- an insight which had, at least for

⁴ LW 10:43.

⁵ LW 53:319.

⁶ See Bartlett R. Butler, "Hymns" *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*. Ed. Hans J. Hillebrand. © 1996, 2005 by Oxford University Press.

⁷ *The Cambridge Companion* has been reviewed by both Leaver and Timothy J. Wengert. With respect to attention to Luther’s music, both have criticised its unevenness and oversimplification. Leaver criticisms can be found in Leaver, 2007, 1-2; Wengert’s can be found in Timothy J. Wengert, “Review Essay: The Cambridge Luther, an Unreliable Companion,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 19 (2005): 79-84.

him, profound implications. However, given the immense influence of Robert Scribner and Peter Burke on Reformation historiography over the past forty years, the popularity of social and cultural interpretations is not altogether surprising. As they demonstrated, the ability to mobilize a variety of media in service to the evangelical cause was undoubtedly central to the quick spread of Protestant thought and culture in the first half of the sixteenth century. Along with illustrative woodcuts and vernacular *Flugschriften*, music has often as not found itself more at home in the cultural history of the Reformation. With respect to his music as a *tool* of the Reformation, therefore, there has been much to say about Luther and music.

As I will demonstrate, music was an integral part of Luther's efforts to reform Christian society. In using music to provide a comprehensible education in Christian theology to the laity, Luther sought to overcome many of the obstacles hindering his social and ecclesiastical reforms. Many scholars, however, have not shared this view. In studying the effects of Luther's works, rather than his intentions in writing them, it has been argued that there was actually very little originality in his reforms, and he is often charged with being a 'cut-and-paste' reformer.⁸ Bartlett Butler, for example, writes in an entry to the *Oxford Encyclopedia* that, "Luther was unconcerned with innovation or originality...On the contrary, his work was extraordinarily conservative, borrowing from the past and adapting it to the present."⁹ Joyce Irwin suggests further that, as far as advancing the liturgical function of music was concerned, Luther was no more than a prelude to Thomas Müntzer.¹⁰

⁸ See Leaver's chapter entitled "Musical Hermeneutics in Luther's Liturgical Reforms," for a critical historiography of Luther's reform efforts, as well as Leaver's refutation of them. Leaver, 173-190.

⁹ Butler, "Hymns" *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*.

¹⁰ Joyce Irwin, *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone: German Lutheran Theology of Music in the Age of the Baroque* (New York: Lang, 1993), 1-7.

A study of the transformation of the Lutheran church service was taken up by Joseph Herl in his 2004 work, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir Congregation and Three Centuries of Conflict*. Here, Herl provides a revisionist account of Luther's success in reforming the Lutheran service, particularly with respect to the role of congregational singing and the extent to which German was integrated into the liturgy. He argues that historians have exaggerated the efficacy of Luther's early reforms on the character of the reformed service. The transition to a German service in which the congregation had an active role, he adds, was still in some regions several centuries distant.¹¹

Much of what Herl argues is based on careful study of visitation records, particularly those surveying the faculties of the preachers and educators, rather than those which interrogated parishioners. While there are particular challenges involved with the use of such sources, Herl is nonetheless able to demonstrate that it was not uncommon for preachers to complain about their congregations.¹² A common theme Herl highlights is that "congregations sang poorly". This would suggest that even where parishes followed the Wittenberg practice, congregations either were not familiar with Luther's hymns, or else were unenthusiastic about singing them. The number of similar complaints compiled by Herl suggest a repeat problem; Herl, however, takes that to indicate a widespread systemic problem. This is a much more difficult claim to sustain, particularly since the sources represent largely a rural rather than urban experience. Herl himself acknowledges contradictory studies- notably Christopher Brown's examination of Joachimsthal- wherein congregations were found to have sung well and eagerly, though he suggests that these

¹¹ Herl, preface: v

¹² Ibid., 67-83

were the exception, rather than the rule.¹³ But in much the same way that James Kittelson's intensive local study of Strasburg conflicted with Gerald Strauss' much more regionally diverse use of visitation records, Brown's examination flies in the face of what Stephen Rose calls Herl's "broad-brush approach."¹⁴

For our purposes, the point to take from this debate is not whether congregations sang poorly or well, but rather that the quality of this singing was of particular interest to those conducting the visitations. His conclusions notwithstanding, Herl's research demonstrates that singing was understood to have an important role to play in the religious practice of Lutheran congregations. From the perspective of those conducting the visitations, how well a congregation sang seems to have been a measure of how well that congregation had integrated into a Lutheran culture. Song, after all, was an inseparable aspect of Luther's reformation of the laity. This culture of music, however- insofar as it was and largely continues to be understood simply as a devotional feature of the Lutheran identity- fails to do justice to its role in Luther's theology.

Interestingly, one of the central themes in Brown's studies of Joachimsthal is this very emphasis on the theological dimension of music. According to Brown, more than any other medium, song was able to inculcate piety, understanding of Lutheran doctrine, and Lutheran identity in the people of Joachimsthal. In his conclusion, he writes, "The Lutheran music of Joachimsthal sounds forth success both in transforming the institutions of sixteenth-century society and in shaping the piety of ordinary sixteenth-century men and women."¹⁵ This success

¹³ Herl is self-conscious of the limits to the reliability of these sources, though he offers a succinct defence of their use. Herl, 68, 83-6. For a critique of his use of visitation records, see Christopher Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation in Joachimsthal*. PhD diss. Harvard, 2001; also Boyd-Brown, 2005.

¹⁴ Stephen Rose, "Performance and Popular Culture in the German Reformation" *Early Music* 33 no. 2 (May 2005), 297.

¹⁵ Boyd-Brown, (2005), 169.

owed in large part to the perception that hymns- insofar as they were based in the doctrine of the Holy Scripture- “participated in the divine power that Lutherans attributed to the Word.”¹⁶ This traffic in the Word of God, moreover, remained the recognized domain of the laity, “a primary means whereby they exercised their universal priesthood.”¹⁷ That these songs ‘belonged’ to the laity and yet were written by the clerics Brown takes as evidence of a fundamental social unity based in the cultivation of piety through music. While I have serious misgivings that this was a common effect of musical education throughout early modern Germany, Brown does make a compelling case for such an understanding of Joachimsthal. While he recognizes the theological quality of Luther’s music- at least its ability to express and make intelligible the essential features of Lutheran doctrine- the role of music within Luther’s broader corpus of theology is not treated in great detail here. Working within a success/failure paradigm consciously reminiscent of Gerald Strauss, Brown invests greater energy investigating the affects and praxis of Lutheran musical education than in the genesis and broader theological implications of Luther’s understanding of music. Interestingly, though they are both greatly interested in the practice of congregational singing, neither Brown nor Herl make the connection between Luther’s interest in congregational singing and his promotion of the congregation as a centre of spiritual authority.

A second criticism of those who would argue that music was an integral part of Luther’s reforms arises from the presence of apparently contradictory statements in Luther’s works. Joseph Herl, for example, cites Luther on a number of occasions apparently complaining about music, and he is not entirely wrong to do so. In fact, in the introduction to *Luther’s Liturgical Music*, Robin Leaver collects no less than eight significant passages that show Luther to be

¹⁶ Ibid, 15.

¹⁷ Ibid, 171.

critical of music,¹⁸ and still more could be added to that list.¹⁹ As Leaver is quick to point out, however, Luther is not necessarily critical of music itself, but rather of the way music had been and continued to be used in the Christian service. In one instance Luther writes, “Therefore let the works go, no matter how great they may be, prayers, chants, yammering, and yapping; for it is certain that nobody will ever get to God through all these things.”²⁰ In this case, Luther is railing against the notion that singing hymns and songs is interpreted as a good work, and therefore pleasing to God. In another passage, this time from the *Formula Missae*, Luther warns, “But we must take care- as I have elsewhere explained-²¹ lest the people sing only with their lips, like sounding pipes or harps [I Cor. 14:7].”²² As with the previous example, this passage demonstrates that Luther did not want the singing of religious songs to be a chore. He did not want parishioners singing his songs as if they were simply going through the prescribed motions. Where Herl uses these passages to cast doubt on the reformers’ use of music, Christopher Boyd Brown suggests quite the opposite, arguing that, “Much of what Herl takes as criticism of congregational singing—repeated admonitions to cantors and choirs to teach the hymns to

¹⁸ Leaver, 6-8.

¹⁹ In the preface to George Rhau’s *Symphoniae iucundae*, Luther expresses his frustration that music continues to be used impiously: “Take special care to shun perverted minds who prostitute this lovely gift of nature and art [music] with their erotic rantings; and be quite assured that none but the devil goads them on to defy their very nature which would and should praise God its maker with this gift, so that these bastards purloin the gift of God, the enemy of nature and of this lovely art.” *LW* 53:324.

²⁰ *LW* 51:47.

²¹ Here Luther is referencing *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*, wherein he writes, “Let everything be done so that the Word may have free course instead of the prattling and rattling that has been the rule up to now. We can spare everything but the Word.” *LW* 53:14. Concerning music, this early work (written at the beginning of 1523) is important because it ascribes an equal importance to singing and the reading of scripture within the church service. Both practices, Luther argues, are meaningless unless they are understood to be unconditional, undeserved gifts from God, rather than as a means of pleasing Him. “First, God’s Word has been silenced, and only reading and singing remain in the churches. This is the worst abuse.” *Ibid.*, 11

²² *Ibid.*, 38.

congregations, for example—are the conditions of a successful oral culture rather than marks of ongoing failure.”²³

Luther’s ambivalence towards music is perfectly understandable in the context of his Augustinian background and education. In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine himself struggled with the question of music’s place in Christian worship. He writes:

Notwithstanding, when I call to mind the tears I shed at the songs of Your Church, at the outset of my recovered faith, and how even now I am moved not by the singing but by what is sung, when they are sung with a clear and skilfully modulated voice, I then acknowledge the great utility of this custom. Thus vacillate I between dangerous pleasure and tried soundness; being inclined rather (though I pronounce no irrevocable opinion upon the subject) to approve of the use of singing in the church, that so by the delights of the ear the weaker minds may be stimulated to a devotional frame. Yet when it happens to me to be more moved by the singing than by what is sung, I confess myself to have sinned criminally, and then I would rather not have heard the singing.²⁴

Like Luther, Augustine recognized the affective potential of music, though he remained suspicious of man’s ability to appreciate the difference between music as a form of worship and as a form of indulgence. Nonetheless, Luther- optimistic as he was in the early twenties- was increasingly convinced that music was a gift from God.²⁵ Though he would not develop this notion theologically until sometime later, we see this idea already in his preface to the 1524 *Walter Hymnal*, wherein he exhorts Christians to compose Christian songs “if God has given him like or greater gifts”.²⁶ We will return to this notion of music’s divine origin in short order, but what ought to be noted at present is that although Luther recognized and was indeed concerned about the possibility that his hymns could be used impiously, the rewards to be had from pairing theology with music far outweighed the dangers.

²³ Christopher Boyd-Brown, “Worship Wars [Review]” *Journal of Religion* 87 no. 1 (Jan., 2007) [pp. 99-101], 100.

²⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, 10:33 no. 50.

²⁵ In his lectures on Isaiah (*LW* 16:62), Luther writes “Musica donum dei est”- *music is a gift from God*. See also *WA TR* no.3815.

²⁶ *LW* 53:316.

Regardless of whether one recited scripture right from the Gospel or sang Luther's hymns aloud, they were still proclaiming the same Word of God.²⁷ How and why songs were sung within the liturgy, therefore, was of great interest to Luther. So, while Luther recognized the possibility that song alone could not make a Christian of a heathen, we should in no way allow these specific criticisms of song's use to undermine our understanding of his enthusiasm for and appreciation of the medium.

The Secular Musical Mythology

So far we have identified two trends in the scholarship of early Lutheran hymnody. One tradition argues that while Luther enthusiastically supported music as part of his reformation, he understood it to have little or no theological meaning or value; the other challenges the extent to which Luther's interest in music has been misrepresented by a careless reading of his works, and that music was only ever peripheral to Luther's more serious theological, and later political, concerns. We can add to this a third, more recent trend. Particularly in the last decade, a number of studies have advanced what Robin Leaver refers to as the 'secular' musical mythology.²⁸ Notable among these is Rebecca Wagner Oettinger's *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation*, wherein she states, "For Luther and his followers, even the most worldly ballad could offer up a melody that would spread the Word."²⁹ Influenced by Oettinger, Andrew Pettegree in 2005 likewise wrote that, "This merging of the traditions of sacred and secular

²⁷ This can be seen in Luther's 1521 *A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospel*. LW 35:117-124.

²⁸ Leaver, 12-18.

²⁹ Oettinger 2007; other works that could be added to this list- without exhausting it- include Harold J. Berman, "The Spiritualization of Secular Law: The Impact of the Lutheran Reformation" *Journal of Law and Religion* 14 no. 2 (1999-2000), pp. 313-349, and Gertrud Tönsing, "'There Must be Mouse Dirt With The Pepper': A Lutheran approach to choosing songs" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 48 no. 4 (Winter 2009), pp. 320-328.

music is rightly seen as the distinctive contribution of Lutheran hymnody.”³⁰ The actual extent to which secular and sacred music ‘merged’, however, is suspect. The distinction here between these two ‘genres’ of music is important. Luther was concerned with popularizing an evangelical message, not an identity. Songs that denounced Catholics and Anabaptists, for example, were not, as far as Luther was concerned, spiritual. I use the word secular for these songs in the sense that, while they could still have religious themes, they motivated and were motivated by political and cultural interests. Spiritual songs, on the other hand, were, by virtue of their faithful versification of the Psalms, an extension of Scripture. Lecturing on Psalm 33, Luther explains that there are three types of songs: ‘old’, ‘new’, and neutral. ‘Old’ and ‘new’, rather than referring to time, refer to the origin of the song; ‘old’ songs were sinful, and ‘new’ songs were holy.³¹ “Old songs,” writes Luther, “are shameful, scurrilous, carnal and worldly songs, even if they should be sung or composed today. New songs, however, are all psalms, honourable, holy, godly, and spiritual songs, even if they dated back to the time of the first man; indeed these are the newest songs.”³² The third type of song, “The songs that are neutral in character, in congregations or in figural music, can be drawn to either, as a good or an evil situation exists.”³³

In addition to the lyrics, the associations evoked by these tunes were not something Luther took lightly. As Leaver demonstrates, in only one instance did Luther actually borrow a secular melody for one of his compositions.³⁴ Instead, Luther typically used melodies from either existing plainchant or traditional *Leisen*. *Leisen*, not dissimilar from the modern Christmas carol, were well-known popular religious songs that could be sung in the vernacular around particular

³⁰Pettegree, 45. Pettegree discusses Oettinger’s influences on p.50, note 22.

³¹ In Rev. 12:9 the Devil is referred to as the ‘old serpent’, while in Jer. 31:22 Christ is described as “a new thing which the Lord created on the earth.” *LW* 10:154.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Leaver, 12-18; see also Herl, 21-2.

holidays. Because of their well-known associations with worship and devotion, it was from many of these songs that Luther initially derived his melodies. Many of Luther's earlier hymns were a sort of ballad, often narrative songs in the style of the secular *Hofweise*, or court song. Here, at least, we do see the secular influence; however, it has more to do with rhyming scheme than content. Leaver describes it as more textual than actually musical.³⁵ Using the simple German Bar Form (AAB), the well known *Hofweise* style was predictably repetitive. This familiar rhyming scheme would have made it easier to memorize a greater number of verses, which increased the potential within Luther's songs for longer narratives.³⁶

The adoption of the *Hofweise* musical structure for religious hymns, however, hardly justifies Oettinger and Pettegree's observation that Luther's hymnody was greatly influenced by secular song. Again, as Leaver argues, this "[secular musical mythology] is a construct drawn mostly, by analogy, from the activities of his colleagues rather than Luther himself."³⁷ Here, Leaver is referring largely to the works of the Nuremberg shoe-maker poet Hans Sachs. Sachs, who after joining the reformation became a close friend of Luther's, did in fact liberally employ secular melodies and lyrics in his music. Countless songs, poems, fables and other creative works can be attributed to Sachs. He was particularly well known for composing contrafacta based on popular Marian devotional songs. Marian devotion, which Oettinger describes as, "one of the most distressing folk practices in Protestant eyes," was to a large extent Catholicism's foothold in the popular culture of sixteenth century Europe. According to Oettinger, of eighty one extant sacred songs published in broadsides between 1480 and 1523, more than half (43) were Marian-centric, as opposed to the only eight songs published in the same period that were

³⁵ Leaver, 13-14.

³⁶ See Oettinger's chapter, "The Making of a Contrafactum: Music and Mockery in the Reformation" in *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation*, pp. 89-136.

³⁷ Leaver, 18.

explicitly Christo-centric.³⁸ What Sachs and his contemporaries set out to do was rescue these widely popular Marian songs and rewrite them to fall in line with Lutheran teachings. The songs were subjected to a process Sachs and others referred to as *Christian correction*. Take, for example, the popular medieval devotional song, “Maria zart”. A 1524 contrafactum by Sachs bears the title “Das Liedt Maria zart/ verendert und Chrißtlich Corrigiert.”- *changed and Christianly corrected*. Rather than begin each strophe with ‘Maria’, as was the case in the original text, the new text begins “O Jesu zart”, and in the second strophe, “O Christi milt”- alternating between “O Jesu” and “O Christi” until the seventh and final strophe, where they are used together. In his preface to the burial hymns, Luther explains, “We are concerned with changing the text, not the music.”³⁹ Music had a powerful formative ability, but what was being formed was dictated by the meaning of the text. No mention whatsoever is made of Mary in Sachs’ Maria zart contrafactum, save to indicate in the title where the melody came from. While Mary was always a very important source of comfort for Luther, worship of her on the same level as Jesus demonstrated a gross misunderstanding of Gospel. Devotion to Mary was one thing, but when that devotion became worship and superseded devotion to Christ, then it became blasphemous. Because Marian devotion was not inherently offensive, rather misguided, reformers used the soft term ‘corrected’ when titling their contrafacta. While these contrafacta avoided the more vehement attacks on the Catholic tradition and papacy that characterized later Lutheran contrafacta, the revision of these texts went beyond simply changing a few words. They were, in fact, often intended to be understood as entirely new songs, reoriented towards worship

³⁸ Oettinger, 108. Luther himself often complained about the popularity of devotion to Mary over Christ. In one instance he is quoted lamenting that, “the dear mother of God, Mary, has had more songs and lovelier ones than her child Jesus has.” WA TR No. 5603, cited in Oettinger, 108.

³⁹ LW 53:328.

of God through Christ.⁴⁰ Christ, God, and the Gospel were increasingly brought in to replace the allegedly idolatrous imagery prevalent in popular Catholic song, especially where Mary, the saints and the pope were concerned.

“A thing,” argued Luther, “must be distinguished from its abuse.”⁴¹ This project of reclaiming and reusing Catholic culture and traditions had clear antecedents in Luther’s sermons and liturgical publications. Particularly in his *Invocavit* sermons, Luther is quite clear that not everything touched by Catholicism needed to be rejected.⁴² Catholicism, after all, had represented the Christian norm in Europe for over a thousand years. Catholic culture and history offered a tangible link to Christianity’s founding days, and to reject outright its accumulated heritage because of theological incompatibilities would sever that tie to the past. It is clear from his reaction to the emerging popularity of iconoclasm within strands of early and later protestant movements that Luther found the idea of such a severance abhorrent.⁴³ The continuation of Christian culture was of great importance to Luther and Lutherans insofar as they were preserving a sense of cultural continuity with Christianity’s founding traditions. Not only did this

⁴⁰ Oettinger, 111.

⁴¹ “A thing must be distinguished from its abuse. Job distinguished thus when he said, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women would speak’ [Job 2:10]. This text has always pleased me on account of its proper distinction between the creature and its abuse.” *LW* 54:71.

⁴² See especially his second, third and fourth *Invocavit* sermons (March 10-12, 1522). *LW* 51:75-87. Further evidence of Luther’s tolerance of elements of Catholic culture can be found in the *Deutsche Messe*, where Luther writes, “Here we retain the vestments, altar, and candles until they are used up or we are pleased to make a change.” *LW* 53:69.

⁴³ In addition to the abovementioned *Invocavit* sermons, Luther’s hymnal prefaces typically express a strong affection for the arts, and music in particular. Luther’s preface to the *Walter Hymnal* (1524) reads, “Nor am I of the opinion that the gospel should destroy and blight all the arts, as some of the pseudo-religious claim [likely referring here to Karlstadt and/ or Müntzer]. But I would like to see all the arts, especially music, used in the service of Him who gave and made them.” *LW* 53:316. Also notable are Luther’s comments in his *Preface to the Burial Hymns* (1542). Here, on making Lutheran contrafacta of Catholic burial melodies he writes, “The melodies and notes are precious. It would be a pity to let them perish. But the texts and words are non-Christian and absurd. They deserve to perish.” *Ibid.*, 327. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the catalogue of practices and customs within Catholicism that Luther cites in his *Exhortation To All Clergy Assembled at Augsburg* (1530). The catalogue lists all the practices within Catholicism that Luther found to be unsupported by scripture. Luther admits that in fact he enjoyed and took a measure of comfort in many of these practices. Understood as articles of faith, however, he felt they were dangerous and unchristian. *BC* 52-61.

preservation lend their cause a measure of legitimacy in the eyes of the European Christian political community, but- for a time- it kept the door open for negotiations and dialogue with the Catholic Church. Hans Sachs' reformation of the Marian hymnody in the early 1520's bears a microcosmic symmetry to Luther's concurrent liturgical projects. In this sense, by purifying rather than replacing, the reformation of Marian song mirrored in many ways Lutheran reform efforts writ large.

How does Sachs fit into the secular musical mythology? Did the sacral quality of his contrafacta 'merge' with secular culture? With respect to his Marian contrafacta, while their meaning changed, their devotional function did not. Worship of Mary was reoriented towards worship of Christ. Within the context of Luther's evangelical proselytizing though, these Christianly corrected religious 'pop hits' - insofar as they promulgated the centrality of Christ and the Gospel in the Christian religion- did in fact possess a theologically proclamatory function. If anything, these contrafacta merged religious-devotional songs with a musical expression of theology. As with Luther's hymns, Sachs used a musical style popular in the prevailing secular musical culture- the *Hofweise* narrative. One of the pitfalls of the secular musical mythology interpretation is that it ascribes a secular quality to this style of song by virtue of its being popular in a secular culture. I see this as no more valid a conclusion than asserting that early modern fiction was sacralised because it used a medium- the printed word- made popular because of its use in religious proselytizing.

So, at least with respect to the Marian songs, the spiritual character of Sachs' contrafacta does not appear to have been overly compromised by secular influences. In 1524 though, his

most productive year, these songs only accounted for a quarter of his total song output.⁴⁴ If we look at Sachs' broader corpus from the early 1520's, we see that he did use secular songs quite frequently for the basis of his contrafacta. Moreover, while these contrafacta of secular songs were unequivocally critical of the Catholic Church, they strayed little from their original text and structure. This can be said of many later contrafacta composers as well, upon whom Sachs no doubt had great influence.⁴⁵ These songs, however, were denunciatory rather than proclamatory: they attacked false traditions and religious wrongdoing rather than spreading the Gospel. While they were nonetheless critical in promoting Lutheran culture and identity, they did not teach evangelical theology. As we will see, Luther's song composition differed from that of Sachs' not only with respect to melodic and textual sources, but also with respect to the place of these songs within Christian worship and education. I will argue that Luther's songs provided a theologically evangelical education, whereas Sachs' song helped strengthen the communal bonds within Lutheran communities by denouncing the 'otherness' of Catholics and heretics.

Notably, Luther's hymns and choral songs were almost exclusively translations and re-versions of the Psalms. Luther certainly found a place in these works for criticism of Catholicism, but that criticism was ancillary to the evangelical message. These songs had a positive, rather than negative, function. They were more concerned with teaching what was right and good, than denouncing what was foolish and sinful. They proclaimed the 'good news' of the Gospel. Even Luther's most militant hymn- *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*- is more concerned with faith and glory in Christ than attacking any particular evils of Lutheranism's detractors. As

⁴⁴ Oettinger, 108.

⁴⁵ Alex Fisher provides an excellent analysis of popular contrafacta composition in Augsburg towards the end of the 16c. Using criminal interrogation records from Augsburg - *die Urgichtensammlung*- Fisher reconstructs the processes that went into rewriting and distributing new contrafacta in the context of confessional tension and censorship in the Catholic dominated city. See generally his chapter "Protestant Song and Criminality" in Fisher, 24-70. See also Oettinger's chapter referenced in note 184 above.

he writes in his lectures on the Psalms, “To sing psalms is to preach the Gospel and the spirit.”⁴⁶ As Luther notes, this idea follows from Psalms 101:2, which he interprets as, “I will sing and I will understand.”⁴⁷ Luther takes this to mean that there is no spirit- no divine quality to the message being sung- unless the message is understood.⁴⁸ Again, as he often does, Luther calls on I Cor. 14:15- “I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.” According to Luther, “To sing with the spirit is to sing with spiritual devotion and *emotion*...To sing with the mind is to sing with spiritual *understanding*.”⁴⁹ (emphasis added) What Luther is saying is that a proper religious song will not only evoke an emotional response conducive to pious Christian devotion, but it will impart understanding of the Gospel. It was the ability of song to perform both these functions that made it such an important feature of Luther’s reformation. By Luther’s estimation, the secularly derived contrafacta of Sachs and others generally failed to accomplish one or both of these tasks.

In the context of contemporary contrafacta production, it is understandable that the function and character of Luther’s hymns could be confused with that of its more propagandistically minded counterparts. That said, we need to draw a line between Luther’s body of inherently theological songs and the religiously polemical contrafacta that prefaced the later confessionalization of Lutheranism. While the debate over the secularity of Luther’s music provides interesting fodder for academic debate, one might question whether or not it was actually important to Luther. We have to remember that Luther makes a clear distinction between music and lyrics. On the question of lyrics, Luther was careful to be faithful to the meaning of the psalms he versified. With respect to music, Luther allows greater flexibility.

⁴⁶ LW 2:284.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 3.

Music was something that adorned the living Word of God, not the Word itself.⁵⁰ The *associations* music invoked, however, were of great importance. Luther writes, “I myself do not like to hear the notes in a responsory or other song changed from what I was accustomed to in my youth.”⁵¹ Because non-religious popular melodies were well known to have worldly associations, both in their content and composition, pairing these melodies with the psalms would distract the listener from the theological component of the hymn. As will be shown, the music itself served as a conduit of the Holy Spirit, which transformed the scriptural lyrics of Luther’s versifications into the Word of God. It seems only reasonable to conclude that Luther would have taken great care in selecting which melodic vessels he used to transform the Word. The application of familiar religious melodies to new evangelical hymns, moreover, reminded listeners that Luther was not advocating a break with the Catholic Church, only the parts that had gone bad.

Music next to Theology

In perhaps Lutheranism’s most formative year- 1530 and the diet of Augsburg- Luther found himself in Cobourg castle in Saxony. Because he was still under the threat of the ban, Luther was prevented from being present at the Augsburg deliberations. He was, however, still able to work, and in fact his time at Cobourg was one of his most productive. Among the projects Luther set out for himself during this period was a comprehensive treatise on music. Along with his promised treatise on the doctrine of justification, this treatise was never actually written; unlike the promised work on justification though, Luther did at least work out an outline of what this treatise would look like. Robin Leaver translates the outline as follows:

⁵⁰ LW 53:328.

⁵¹ Ibid.

I love music.
Its censure by fanatics does not please me
For

1. [Music] is a gift of God and not of man
2. For it creates joyful hearts
3. For it drives away the devil
4. For it creates innocent delights, destroying wrath, unchastity, and other excesses.

I place music next to theology.

This is well known from the example of David and all the prophets, who all produced poetry and songs.

5. For [music] reigns in times of peace.

It will be difficult to keep this delightful skill after us.
The Dukes of Bavaria are to be praised in this, that they honor music.
Among our Saxon [Dukes] weapons and cannons are esteemed.⁵²

The first point to take from this outline is that Luther considered music a gift from God, which meant it therefore had divine origins. In 1528, in his sermon on Isaiah 5:11, Luther writes, “Musica donum dei est”- *music is a gift from God*.⁵³ This idea though, was actually not in and of itself new. The anonymous author of the medieval treatise on the *quadrivium*- the *Scholia enchiridiadis*- wrote sometime in the ninth or tenth century that:

These four disciplines [arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy] *are not of human devising, but are investigations, such as they are, of divine works*; and they lead noble minds, by wonderful arguments, to a better understanding of the work of creation.⁵⁴ [emphasis added]

⁵² English translation in Leaver, 86; German translation in WA 30 (II) :695; original Latin/Greek version in WA 30(II): 696.

⁵³ WA TR no. 3815; LW 16:62. Other references to the divinity of song in Luther’s writing include: “Music is God’s greatest gift” (“Musica optimum Dei donum” WA TR no. 4441); “Music is an endowment and gift of God, not a gift of men” (“Musica ist ein Gabe und Geschencke Gottes, nicht ein Menschen-Geschenk” WA TR No. 7034); and “Music, or the notes...are a wonderful creation and gift of God” (LW 1:274). English translation of the first two passages are Leaver’s, and can be found in Leaver, 70.

⁵⁴ Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds., *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (New York: Schirmer, 1984), 39; Martin Gerbert, ed., *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra potissimum* (St. Blaise: Typis San-Blasianis, 1784; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1963), 1:193. Cited in Leaver, 373, note 5.

Where Luther parted from this idea is in the relative importance of each discipline. Music, for Luther, far surpassed its counterparts within the *quadrivium*. While all four could be considered divine gifts, only one- music- had been used by the prophets and apostles to spread the Word of God. By way of proof, Luther writes,

The devil, the creator of saddening cares and disquieting worries, takes flight at the sound of music almost as he takes flight at the word of theology. This is the reason why the prophets did not make use of any art except music.⁵⁵

The idea that music was a divine gift and not a human invention is developed further in Luther's lectures on Genesis. Lecturing on Genesis 2:24, Luther comments,

If Adam had continued in his innocence, the children that were born would have married. Then, after leaving the table and dwelling place of their parents, they would have had their own trees under which they would have lived separately from their parents. At times they would have come to their father Adam and sing a hymn and praise God, and then they would have returned to their own homes.⁵⁶

Among the descendants of Abel, singing remained a pure form of worship to God. The descendants of Cain, wishing to imitate their cousins' worship of God, created musical instruments. Though the Cainites' worship was misguided, the effort to mimic their cousins' worship demonstrated a heartfelt desire to return to the true church. Accordingly, Luther writes, "Nevertheless, I believe that there were some among [the children of Cain] who went over to the true church and adopted Adam's faith."⁵⁷ This tells us that not only was song a pure form of worship that could be traced back to before the Fall, but elements of human creativity- in this case musical accompaniment- could actually be integrated into the worship of the true church.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Letter to Ludwig Senfl, October 1530. *LW* 49:428.

⁵⁶ *LW* 1:138. Genesis 2:24 reads, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 317-8; See Leaver's comments on the relationship between biblical song and music, Leaver, 66-70.

⁵⁸ In his lectures on the Psalms, Luther separates song and music into associated categories of Gospel and Law. "I will sing and I will understand. For there is no spirit unless it is understood, while the harp, even when it is not understood, is nevertheless the letter by itself." (*LW* 11:286). So, while music was nonetheless divine in origin,

As with music itself, so too was the discipline of music making considered a divine gift. This conclusion is supported by Dietrich Bartel, who writes, “Luther was not willing to abstract the art from the material. Both music and its associated discipline were God-given gifts.”⁵⁹ What these reclaimed Cainites brought with them was not the music itself, but their fervent desire to find a way to embrace and celebrate the Holy Spirit. By virtue of this desire, the music they brought with them to the church- the instruments and the concept of musically accompanied song- itself took on a spiritual quality.⁶⁰ “The tongue,” explained Luther, “as a tongue, doesn’t contribute to faith, and yet it serves faith when the heart is illuminated.”⁶¹

The divine origins of song can also be seen in Luther’s lectures on David. David called his psalms the ‘psalms of Israel’. Though he composed them, they did not belong to him. The songs of Ambrose, Gregory and Prudentius are likewise to be considered ‘of the church’. “In that sense,” explains Luther, “David wishes to call his psalms the psalms of Israel, that is, the psalms of the church, which has the same Spirit who inspired them in David and which will continue to sing them also after David’s death.”⁶² In commenting on the titles given David’s fourth psalm, Luther notes that David’s name is always preceded by the article of the dative case. This means, therefore, rather than ascribing these titles a genitive meaning- as was the Jewish interpretation- these titles are inherently dative. In other words, “the psalm is not properly ‘of David’ but ‘for

without the accompaniment of the Gospel, it did not serve a spiritual purpose, much like the Law. When the psalms are sung together with ‘artistic music, they kindle the mind more intensely and sharply.” LW 10:34.

⁵⁹ Bartel here cites a number of hymnal prefaces Luther wrote wherein he exhorts readers to compose their own Christian hymns if God has given them the talent. The first he cites is the Walter, or Wittenberg Hymnal, and the second is the preface to George Rhau’s *Symphoniae iucundae*: LW 53: 316, 321; in Dietrich Bartel, *Musica Poetica: musical-rhetorical figures in German Baroque music* (University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 3-4.

⁶⁰ It would be interesting to consider further the relationship here between Luther’s interpretations of Genesis 4:22 and the Reformer’s attitudes towards contrafacta composition. By analogy, one could reasonably argue that Luther regarded Catholic religious songs like the Marian hymns in very much the same way he did the children of Cain. Like the Cainites, Marian devotees deeply desired to worship God, but they did not know how to do it properly. It was possible for these contrafacta to be welcomed back into the fold of pure worship, but the best, truest worship songs would always be those that stuck closest to scripture, the Psalms, and the story of Christ.

⁶¹ LW 54:71.

⁶² LW 15:274-5.

David’ or to ‘David’. This gives expression to the motion of the Holy Spirit, who produced the psalm and revealed it for David or to David.”⁶³ Beyond simply having divine origins, Luther interprets David to have understood song as having a deeper purpose:

When David uses the word ‘sweet’ he is not thinking only of the sweetness and the charm of the Psalms from a grammatical and musical point of view, or artistic and euphonious words, of melodious song and notes, of beautiful text and beautiful tune; but he is referring much more to *the theology they contain, to the spiritual meaning...*[To saddened and wretched consciences], the Book of Psalms is a sweet and delightful song because it sings of and proclaims the Messiah even when a person does not sing the notes but merely recites and pronounces the words. *And yet the music, or the notes, which are a wonderful creation and gift of God, help materially in this, especially when the people sing along and reverently participate.*⁶⁴ (emphasis added)

A second concept central to Luther’s musical theology, then, was the idea that music was ‘next to theology’. What does this mean? In the *Tischreden*, Luther writes, “Ich gebe nach der Theologia der Musica den nächsten Locum und höchste Ehre;”⁶⁵ and in the preface to the *Symphoniae iucundae*, “Experience confirms, namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise.”⁶⁶ Is music a close second to theology, or is it of equal importance in Luther’s valuation? The preposition *nach* at first seems to place theology and music in a descending hierarchy, however close the space between may be. In Wilhelm Wackernagel’s *Altdeutsches Handwörterbuch* though, *nach*, in the dative sense, can also mean either near or nearest. Again in the *Tischreden*, Luther states, “*Musica est insigne donum Dei et theologiae*

⁶³ LW 10:44.

⁶⁴ LW 15:273-4.

⁶⁵ WA TR no. 7034. Leaver translates this as, “I place music next to theology and give it the highest praise.” Robin Leaver, “Luther on Music” in *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther’s Practical Theology* ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009) [271-91].

⁶⁶ “*Experience confirms, namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise...the Holy Ghost himself honours [music] as an instrument for his proper work when in his Holy Scriptures he asserts that through [music] his gifts were instilled in the prophets, namely, the inclination to all virtues, as can be seen in Elisha [II Kings 3:15]. On the other hand, she serves to cast out Satan, the instigator of all sins, as is shown in Saul, the king of Israel [I Sam. 16:23].*” LW 53:323. In WA 50:370-1, this passage beings: “*Experientia testis est, Musicam esse unam, quae post verbum Dei merito clebeat.*”

proxima.”⁶⁷ As with *nach*, *proxima* here be can translated as near or nearest. Consider the following passage from a letter written by Luther to Ludwig Senfl in 1530:

Indeed I plainly judge, and do not hesitate to affirm, that except for theology there is no art that could be put on the same level *with* music, since except for theology [music] alone produces what otherwise only theology can do, namely, a calm and joyful disposition. (emphasis added)

So far, this seems to affirm the conclusion that music and theology are on the same level. Both pursuits have a similar spiritual effect, if not also function. The passage continues, however:

Manifest proof [of this is the fact] that the devil, the creator of saddening cares and disquieting worries, takes flight at the sound of music *almost* as he takes flight at the word of theology. This is the reason why the prophets did not make use of any art except music; when setting forth their theology they did it not as geometry, not as arithmetic, not as astronomy, but as music, so that they held theology and music most tightly connected, and proclaimed truth through Psalms and songs.⁶⁸ (emphasis added)

The use of the word ‘almost’ seems to support the earlier interpretation of music as a close second to theology in Luther’s Christian hermeneutics. What we can take from this is that Luther maintained the distinction between music and theology, but was nonetheless insistent that they were both fundamental to understanding and teaching the Gospel. Music was the central medium of this instruction. Not only was it able to proclaim the Word of God in a form consistent with spiritual, rather than legal norms, but it was also able to inspire the emotional profundity and sincerity required to both understand and appreciate the meaning of the Gospel, of Christ, and of God’s gift to humanity. Leaver argues that Luther’s frequent reference to music’s proximity to theology “was not just a pithy saying but was essential to his theological methodology.”⁶⁹ Luther writes,

⁶⁷ WA TR No. 3815. Leaver translates this as, “Music is an outstanding gift of God and next to theology.” Leaver, 70.

⁶⁸ LW 49:428.

⁶⁹ Leaver, 101.

We want the beautiful art of music to be properly used to serve her dear Creator and his Christians. He is thereby praised and honoured and we are made better and stronger in faith when his holy Word is impressed on our hearts by sweet music.⁷⁰

The Psalms and the path to Godliness

Luther began his academic career lecturing on the psalms (1513-5). He would return to the subject of the psalms in 1518, and by 1519 wrote that, “There is no book in the Bible to which I have devoted as much labour as to the Psalter.” This would remain true throughout Luther’s career. He worked on exposition of the psalms throughout the 1520’s, and then returned to them with a renewed vigour in the early 1530’s which lasted well into the middle of the decade. But why were the psalms of such special interest to Luther?

For one, the psalms fully encapsulated what Luther took to be the fundamental tenets of Christianity. It was in psalm 22, for example, that Luther discovered the theology of the cross.⁷¹ He uses psalm 51, likewise, in order to expound the doctrine of justification as it relates to repentance.⁷² As much as the content of the psalms was precious to Luther, so too was their form of expression. In the 1519 preface to psalms 1 and 2, Luther writes,

There is, in my opinion, one difference of content between this book of the Bible [the Psalter] and the others. In the other books we are taught by both precept and example what we ought to do. *This book not only teaches but also gives the means and method by which we may keep the precept and follow the example...* And what is the Psalter but prayer and praise to God, that is, a book of *hymns*?⁷³ (Emphasis added)

The *means and method* referenced here is the medium of song, which we can safely infer from the fact that Luther takes the time to point out that the Psalter is a book of hymns. Teaching the theology of the psalms presupposed more than an intellectual, scholastic exercise. This is obvious in another passage of the 1519 preface: “Even the most holy and learned theologians

⁷⁰ LW 53:328.

⁷¹ Mark Tranvik, *The Freedom of a Christian* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 14.

⁷² LW 12:407.

⁷³ LW 14:285.

failed to understand and teach the meaning of the psalms.”⁷⁴ It was not the words of the psalms that mattered, but the meaning behind them. We can see this in the Table Talk, where Luther states that, “A theologian cannot be a theologian without trust and faith in Christ”;⁷⁵ and in his lectures on Galatians, “In theology, therefore, ‘doing’ necessarily requires faith itself as a precondition.”⁷⁶

Leaver writes that according to Luther, “A purely intellectual appreciation of the doctrine [of justification]...is not enough; justifying faith is both practical and personal.” With reference to music, he continues,

Similarly, an intellectual appreciation of music, its forms and structures as expressed in written notation on the page, is insufficient, for it cannot be experienced as music until its vibrations have excited the air and entered the outer ear. But even that is not enough, *for the outward sound needs to be perceived within and move the inner heart.*⁷⁷ (Emphasis added)

The idea that the heart is a centre of perception and understanding- the affective compliment to the cognitive function of the brain- is expressed throughout Luther’s exposition of the psalms. Most often we find this separation expressed as ‘to sing with the mind or lips’ and ‘to sing with the heart or spirit’, as is the case in Luther’s preface to the Glosses of his early lectures on the Psalms.⁷⁸ Luther’s interpretation of psalm 119 articulates this concept much more clearly. Acquiring understanding of the Gospel- as a means to becoming righteous- proceeds in six phases, derived from the ‘gifts’ of the Holy Spirit:⁷⁹

Wisdom (*sapientia*)

⁷⁴ Ibid, 284.

⁷⁵ LW 54:157.

⁷⁶ LW 26:260-4.

⁷⁷ Leaver, 87. For support, he cites four passages on the psalms (ps. 68, 45, 9, 101) which can be found in LW 10:344, 208, 92, and 11:294. Even more convincing though is Luther’s exposition of Ps. 119:18, LW 11:425-6.

⁷⁸ LW 10:3-4. See also LW 11:294 (Ps. 101), 10:72-4 (Ps. 4), and 10:92-3 (Ps. 9).

⁷⁹ He derives this path from the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The seventh gift- fear of God (*timor*)- he understands to bring all the other gifts together in perfection. LW 11:444-6.

Understanding	(<i>intellectus</i>)
Counsel	(<i>consilium</i>)
Strength	(<i>fortitudo</i>)
Knowledge	(<i>scientia</i>)
Godliness	(<i>pietas</i>)

“Wisdom is most properly the first step also of the beginners, when someone is newly given the knowledge and enlightenment of Christian truth and spiritual grace.” In this sense, wisdom is used interchangeably with ‘faith’.⁸⁰ In one instance, Luther writes, “Therefore ‘wisdom’ -the gift of the Holy Spirit- is simply, by faith in Christ, to know both eternal and spiritual things.”⁸¹ If wisdom was the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have to remember that so too was music. Music allowed listeners to ‘hear and sing with their hearts’. On psalm 101, Luther explains, “One who does not truly understand [the Gospel] cannot sing, because the Gospel cannot be known without understanding and faith.”⁸² He writes in psalm 119, moreover, that, “Faith is wisdom, and it causes us to be wise and know all things...Therefore the learner must believe, and so he will become wise and knowing.”⁸³ Singing spiritual songs, then, inspired faith in the fundamental theological tenets of the Gospel (encapsulated in the psalms themselves) that was a prerequisite to deeper comprehension of scripture.

Once someone was moved to faith, the next step was to acquire understanding. Here Luther refers to “the understanding of those things which he would not have been able to understand without a teacher.”⁸⁴ Lecturing on psalm 111, Luther writes, “Therefore I have undertaken to interpret this psalm for the sake of those who do not know it very well, *in order that we might intelligently sing this hymn* at mass or at the sacrament.”⁸⁵ (Emphasis added) In

⁸⁰ LW 11:461-2.

⁸¹ Ibid, 461.

⁸² LW 11:286.

⁸³ Ibid, 461.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 445.

⁸⁵ LW 13:356.

these two steps, therefore- the acquisition of wisdom, and later understanding- we see that a cognitive understanding of Gospel could not be achieved without first an affective understanding of it. This wisdom- or faith- could be acquired by singing spiritual songs, as the singing of such was a sort of communion with the Holy Spirit, who both gave music its divine quality and who authored the psalms in the first place.

Luther goes on to explain that a person needs four of these gifts for himself. The first two he needs so that he might ‘know correctly’. The third step, or gift, is counsel, and here I would identify the seed of Luther’s notion of congregationalism. “For no matter how much you are enlightened by wisdom and shrewd and a disciple through understanding, and vigorous through strength, unless you have directed your ears, eyes, and person into the right way by counsel, you will be at fault in everything.”⁸⁶ The gift of strength, or moral fortitude, rounds out the four gifts for the self. These latter gifts are required of a man, “rightly and constantly to do what he has come to know, lest he badly apply what he knows or badly neglects what has been well-applied.”⁸⁷ Of the final two gifts, knowledge refers to the ability to teach moral doctrine, with the implication that the teacher will have a deeper comprehension of scripture through both experience and study;⁸⁸ godliness, on the other hand, moves a person to perform good works for his or her neighbour.

This outline of how one acquires and puts to use knowledge of scripture is useful in trying to understand Luther’s conception of theology itself. To Luther, ‘theology’ represented the effort to divine the Word of God through study of scripture; however, “True theology,”

⁸⁶ *LW* 11:446. Notice the similarity between this statement written in 1515 and his treatise to Leisnig written 1523: “You see, Christ does not want to have any teaching or decree obeyed unless it is examined and recognized as good by the congregation hearing it. *LW* 39:307-8.

⁸⁷ *LW* 11:447.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 444-6, 460-3.

explained Luther, “is practical, and its foundation is Christ, whose death is appropriated to us through faith.”⁸⁹ To this he adds, “There is only one article and one rule of theology, and this is true faith or trust in Christ.”⁹⁰ Luther ascribed to his hymns two functions. First, Luther’s hymns attempted to capture, explain, and proclaim the meaning of the Psalms. Robert Kolb, although not commenting on music, noted nonetheless that for Luther, it was of vital importance that the Word- however it might be expressed- deliver God’s divine promise to save.⁹¹ According to Luther, the entirety of Christian theology presupposed this postulate. Like theology, the hymns we are discussing here interrogated scripture to understand this fundamental truth of the Christian faith. Whereas Christian theology, more broadly speaking, encompassed the entirety of scripture- including both Old and New Testaments- Luther’s hymns generally focussed on a specific selection- namely the Psalms.⁹² With respect to the versification of Psalms, song was an integral part of their theological instruction.

Luther’s hymns were both proselytic and exegetical. Here, the acts of understanding and proclaiming scripture unite with music’s powerful affective quality. This overlap accomplishes the primary goal of Luther’s hymns: to move a person to an emotional state conducive to truly appreciating the Gospel, as interpreted through the psalms. Understanding the Gospel was, after all, a two-dimensional process. Recall that one had to sing ‘with both the spirit and the mind.’ Unlocking the gift of the Word required both an intellectual and emotional investment.

⁸⁹ LW 54:22.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 157.

⁹¹ Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 206.

⁹² While the majority of Luther’s hymns were derived from the Psalms, Luther also wrote two hymns on the Ten Commandments, one on the Trinity, and one on the Christian Creed. As will be argued in the following chapter, the subject material of Luther’s Small Catechism had already earlier been expressed in his hymns. In fact, in the way they were taught, they were essentially already in a catechetical form. Probably the best recent analysis of Luther’s musical catechesis belongs to Leaver in Part II of *Luther’s Liturgical Music*- “Musical Catechesism,” pp. 106-169.

Dietrich Bartel refers to Luther's understanding of music as a "theocentric philosophy of music."⁹³ Music, writes Bartel, was "theology's handmaid...tasked with the role of praising God and edifying humanity."⁹⁴ To this he also adds a didactic quality, whereby Luther used music to teach theology. Referring to Luther's many comments on the metaphysical properties of music, Bartel recognizes that Luther believed music could make the invisible visible- in this case, that music could be recognized as a manifestation of God's benevolent nature. Bartel, however, still refers to music as theology's handmaid. As we have seen, though, theology- in its truest form- can be interpreted as simply a profound effort to get to know God. Bartel's interpretation seems to presuppose that theology is a strictly intellectual enterprise. But, as Luther consistently points out, and as even Bartel recognizes, song and music interrogated and made known not only the textual presence of God on earth, but also the spiritual presence.

Consider Luther's interpretation of the sacraments. His entry on baptism in the small catechism reads:

What is Baptism?

Answer: Baptism is not merely water, but it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's Word.

...

How can water produce such effects?

Answer: It is not the water that produces these effects, but the Word of God connected with the water, and our faith which relies on the Word of God connected with the water. For without the Word of God the water is merely water and no Baptism.⁹⁵

Likewise on the sacrament of the altar, Luther writes:

⁹³ Bartel, 3.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 6-9

⁹⁵ BC 348-9.

How can bodily eating and drinking produce such great effects? (forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation)

Answer: The eating and drinking do not in themselves produce them, but the words “for you” and “for the forgiveness of sin.” These words, when accompanied by the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the sacrament, and he who believes these words has what they say and declare: the forgiveness of sins.⁹⁶

In both these rituals, the action itself is nothing. It is only when the significance of the action is understood with respect to the Gospel that the action takes on a spiritual quality. Luther explains, “Baptism is no more than water, but the water has been surrounded by the Word.”⁹⁷ The only way to obtain an understanding of the Word is through Faith; Faith of course being only attainable as a gift from God. In the *Exhortation*, Luther writes of the sacrament of baptism, “The Word...merits more regard than the whole sacrament with all that it is and can do, for the Word is the chief thing.”⁹⁸ As with the sacraments, so with scripture. Scripture contained the words of God, but only when it was infused with the Holy Spirit did it become the *Word* of God—the truth conveyed by the words, made clear by faith. How did one engender this union of Spirit and word? One sang the Gospel. As noted above, music itself was a gift from God, as Christ had been—different only in proportion rather than character. Not only was song an inherently divine medium in the sense that it conveyed a message, but it acted also as a conduit to the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid., 351-2.

⁹⁷ LW 54:55. One should note as well that the Word of God affects the baptismal water only in the context of the sacrament of baptism. The sacrament is truly spiritual only when the act of baptism is attended by faith in the Word and faith in the Word’s ability to instil in the water a spiritual quality. The act, the water, Faith, and the Word all have to be present for the sacrament to have meaning. This is why Luther rejected the idea that water itself could be blessed independent of the sacrament. Understanding the spiritual quality of baptismal water as a gift from God was one thing; believing that one could instil the word of God in otherwise regular water and make it something more than natural was sorcery. Ibid, 244.

⁹⁸ BC 82

⁹⁹ This theme is discussed particularly in Luther’s exegesis of Psalm four, wherein he describes the psalms as ‘invitatory’, both in the sense that the psalms invited the singer and listeners to praise God, but also in that they invited the Holy Spirit. LW 10:43-4.

The Leisnig experiment and its influence on Luther's musical reform

The link between Leisnig and Luther's musical reform is not immediately apparent. To understand how I have interpreted this connection, we will need to return to the psalms. In chapter one, it was demonstrated that Luther blamed the failure of congregationalist reform in Leisnig on the greed and covetousness of the parishioners and, more specifically, of the congregation's general council. As we saw in chapter two, Luther learned from psalm 120 that one of the two most dangerous and corrupting forces in Christendom was greed.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, in psalm 119 he writes that covetousness "is the root of ungodliness and evil."¹⁰¹ In the same work, as we have seen, Luther lays out a path to 'godliness'. Godliness, in his interpretation, was directed specifically 'against covetousness'; it was the will to work 'for' one's neighbour, rather than against. As we have also seen, the first step on the path to godliness was the acquisition of faith, or wisdom, which could be accomplished by singing spiritual songs.

In his short 1521 work *Comfort When Facing Grave Temptations*, Luther explains that temptation is an assault from the devil- a spiritual affliction.¹⁰² This understanding is consonant with Luther's exposition of psalm 112, wherein he writes, "The greedy are severely tormented, only they refuse to see it."¹⁰³ Likewise, in his *Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount*, Luther states that, "Greed is a plague from the devil himself," and that the greedy, "never get what they want, but must eternally be the victim's of the devil's torture besides."¹⁰⁴ Returning to his 1521 work, Luther tells his readers that there is no better 'medicine' for this kind of spiritual affliction than the psalms.¹⁰⁵ Proof that this idea was an enduring feature of Luther's theology can be seen

¹⁰⁰ LW 11:538.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 444.

¹⁰² LW 42:183.

¹⁰³ LW 13:396.

¹⁰⁴ LW 21: 16, 167.

¹⁰⁵ Here he prescribes psalm 118. LW 42:183-6.

in the opening lines of his commentary on psalm 112, written in 1526. He writes, “This psalm was composed for the comfort of the pious over against the greed, temporal fame, and pleasure-madness of this earth, and thus it is to be used.”¹⁰⁶ Again in 1530, in his outlined treatise of music, Luther wrote that music banishes the devil and his influence, creating instead innocent delights.

From these commentaries on the psalms, therefore, we see that Luther believed throughout his career that spiritual music was a cure for greed, covetousness, and other spiritual ailments sent by the devil. We have also seen that theology accomplished the same goal, and was at least equally effective at the task.¹⁰⁷ Recall the earlier passage from Luther’s letter to Senfl:

Manifest proof [of this is the fact] that the devil, the creator of saddening cares and disquieting worries, takes flight at the sound of music almost as he takes flight at the word of theology. This is the reason why the prophets did not make use of any art except music; when setting forth their theology they did it not as geometry, not as arithmetic, not as astronomy, but as music, so that they held theology and music most tightly connected, and proclaimed truth through Psalms and songs.¹⁰⁸

We also ought to recall Susan Karant-Nunn’s interpretation of the Lutherans’ use of the word admonishment. When Luther and his colleagues instructed preachers to admonish the sick and dying, admonishment implied theological instruction. Since all manner of maladies were a result of being in a state of sin, if theology could restore faith to the sick, they would be cured, at least spiritually, if not physically.¹⁰⁹ When it came to banishing sin and restoring faith, therefore, both music and theological instruction performed the same function. As Luther came to realize, the combination of the two- a musically expressed theology- could be accomplished by singing the theology of the psalms in hymns. But what does this have to do with Leisnig?

¹⁰⁶ LW 13:392.

¹⁰⁷ See note 55 above.

¹⁰⁸ LW 49:428.

¹⁰⁹ *Reformation of Ritual*, 152-5, 168.

In 1522, Johann Lohmüller, a secretary of the Wolmar Landtag, wrote to Luther informing him that his writings were being well received throughout Livonia.¹¹⁰ He requested that Luther send either a letter of encouragement or a dedicated treatise to help their cause. When Luther finally sends them a treatise in the closing months of 1524, he explains, “Some time ago, dear friends, I was asked to write you something in a Christian vein. I would gladly have done so, as was my duty, but all manner of distractions prevented me.”¹¹¹ The first point to take from this introduction is that the subject and content of the requested treatise was left entirely up to Luther, so long as it provided encouragement to the supporters of evangelical reform. The second interesting point has to do with the distractions that had been delaying Luther’s response over the last two years.

What had kept Luther so busy between 1522-4? There was Luther’s engagement with the Leisnig experiment, for starters- his work on the *Ordinance of a Common Chest* and *That a Christian Assembly*, not to mention his visits and correspondence with the Leisnig parish. There was also, arising from these interactions, his work on reforming the liturgy.¹¹² It was over this period that he wrote *An Order of Mass and Communion*, along with over twenty German hymns which could be incorporated into the service. When it became apparent to Luther that a lack of funding for pastors and educators was not confined to Leisnig, but was a much wider problem, Luther wrote a number of works to address this. As with Leisnig, Luther understood this problem to be a question of greed, which he sought to address by promoting Christian education. In his letter to Frederick written August 11, 1523, he charges the elector with the responsibility to support the creation and maintenance of Christian schools, and to help secure funding for

¹¹⁰ See the introduction to Luther’s *Exposition of Psalm 127*, LW 45:313-6.

¹¹¹ LW 45:317.

¹¹² Remember that Luther’s first liturgical order, though rudimentary, was written for the Leisnig congregation. See *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*, LW 53:7-14.

evangelical pastors and preachers. He extends this plea further in his *To the Councilmen of All Cities That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*, (1524).¹¹³ Take all these works together, and we see three distinct yet closely connected projects occupying Luther's attention between 1522-4: reforming the congregation as a place of spiritual authority; reforming the liturgy and giving it a distinctly musical quality; and promoting the maintenance of and accessibility to Christian education. All three of these efforts were initially addressed in Luther's work with the Leisnig experiment.

The treatise Luther wrote to the reformers in Riga, moreover, encapsulates all three of these projects. He writes, "I have stolen enough time to quicken my own spirit and yours with a spiritual, godly song, and have undertaken an exposition of the 127th Psalm."¹¹⁴ Walther Brandt astutely prefaces his translation of this work by noting that,

The selection of [Psalm 127] probably was not dictated by anything connected with the situation in Riga...but by Luther's general concern about the covetousness which was everywhere manifesting itself in the inadequate support being given to schools and pastors, about which Luther was constantly complaining about this time.¹¹⁵

Luther notes how Solomon, who wrote this psalm with the help of the Holy Spirit, had learned from experience 'how vainly unbelief burdens itself with worries about feeding the belly'. If one could replace unbelief with belief, then greed could be banished. "For this reason," Luther explains, "I want yet to sing one little song for the benefit of such covetousness."¹¹⁶

The Leisnig experiment was an important event in the development of Luther's pastoral reforms. It was here that he attempted to work out, in practical terms, a way to liberate the

¹¹³ This work was likely written shortly after Luther received the second request from the Livonians for a dedicated treatise. *LW* 45:318 n.3.

¹¹⁴ *LW* 45:317.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 315-6.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 320-1. Later editions of this work, from 1534 on, concluded with a hymn based on psalm 127, complete with musical notation. *Ibid*, 337 n. 34.

evangelical movement from the shortcomings of its Catholic predecessor. As early as December 1523 though, Luther began to feel that he was pushing ecclesiastical reform too quickly. In a sermon wherein he discusses the role of the parish in organizing poor relief, he comments, “But we do not have the personnel for this, therefore I do not think we can put it into effect until God makes Christians.”¹¹⁷ A few years prior Luther had chastised the Parisians along similar lines, writing “Whoever hears [the words of Christ] and does not [follow] them will be like the man who builds upon sand [Matt 7:26].”¹¹⁸ The Parisians, in only paying lip-service to Christ’s instruction, were ‘no better than sinners and tax collectors’. What the church needed more than anything was a solid foundation of faith and Christian morality. Where the Leisnig experiment had been a sort of blueprint for the Christian church, Luther turned to music and song as a blueprint for Christian education. Educate first, and then through that education Christians would come to build their own churches- out of love and neighbourliness rather than exigency.

As the recent scholarship of Leaver and Brown increasingly demonstrates, and as I will continue to demonstrate in chapter three, Luther’s theology of music, as it pertained to both the musical expression of the psalms and to music itself as an instrument of teaching theology and communing with God, was no idle diversion. If we think of Luther’s theology as a body, with *sola scriptura* its heart, then music coursed through its veins. Music was an omnipresent feature of Luther’s thought, though rarely is it substantively central to any feature of that theology. The exception here, of course, being Luther’s hymns and liturgical orders, and his commentary on the psalms. As we have seen, in intelligible exegesis, this musical curriculum was capable of delivering a Christian education that could teach theology just as it taught morality and

¹¹⁷ WA 12:63; cited in LW 45:167.

¹¹⁸ LW 36:208.

inculcated an evangelical identity. Next we will need to consider the form and place of this education.

Chapter Three: The Liturgical Service as a Place of Theological Education

[Our] plan is to follow the example of the prophets and the ancient fathers of the church, and to compose psalms for the people [in the] vernacular, that is, spiritual songs, so that the Word of God may be among the people also in the form of music.

-Luther to George Spalatin, 1523¹

That it is good and God pleasing to sing hymns is, I think, known to every Christian; for everyone is aware not only of the example of the prophets and kings in the Old Testament who praised God with song and sound, with poetry and psalter, but also of the common and ancient custom of the Christian church to sing Psalms. St Paul himself instituted this in I Corinthians 14 [:15] and exhorted the Colossians [3:16] to sing spiritual songs and Psalms heartily unto the Lord so that God's Word and Christian teaching might be instilled and implanted in many ways.

-Luther, *Preface to the Wittenberg Hymnal*, 1524²

Wherever it took root, the reformation, even in its early years, had a profound impact on the form, rites and traditions of worship. Early Lutheran church settings could vary from the austere and nearly iconoclastic, to the lavish and symbolically rich. As many Lutheran churches were simply repurposed Catholic ones, depending on local and regional attitudes, their structure and trappings as often as not maintained their outward Catholic appearance. What would have been immediately apparent to any Catholic observer, however, would be the dramatically altered dynamic between the minister and the congregation. For one, the preacher would not only be facing, but also addressing the congregation throughout. Moreover, he would be communicating in a language the congregation could understand. The second significant change was that the congregation would participate in the service. At the direction of the minister, for example, they

¹ LW 49:68.

² LW 53:315-6.

would pray aloud and they would sing. As far as this singing was concerned, although the chorus retained responsibility for the majority of singing during the service for some time to come, the fact that the congregation was regularly expected to participate in the singing was quite novel.³ These new responsibilities- both for the preacher and the congregation- would eventually create a liturgical atmosphere entirely unfamiliar to adherents of the traditional Catholic service.

Congregational singing within the service would take on a number of roles in the decades and centuries to come, but none so important for Luther as in the early and mid 1520's. Luther's early work with music was an experiment intended to (re)discover a new way of celebrating old ideas. Among the questions facing Luther was the nature of Christianity. If one scraped away much of a thousand years of Christian cultural accretions, as Luther intended to do, what remained? More importantly, how long would it take before Christianity once again began to accumulate and internalize human innovation through doctrine and legal-traditional norms?

As we have seen previously, the problem that plagued Christianity was in how it related to the world around it. Tracing organized Christianity back to its Caesaro-papist roots in the fourth century, the formation of Catholicism was inextricably linked to political concerns. The Nicean councils were called to create an official Christian religion for all imperial subjects. The version of Christianity finally adopted as 'official' was given the protection of being codified in the language of the Roman legal tradition. It held Latin Christendom together in a rigid system of relationships, governing everything from everyday marketplace transactions to the most intimate details of man's relationship with God. More than a thousand years later, that legal tradition was still alive and well in the institution and bureaucracy of the sixteenth century Catholic Church.

³ I say *regularly* because previously it was not unheard of for congregations to sing vernacular *Leisen* during special services, particularly those around holidays and feast days. This was neither a regular nor standard practice though, nor was it a universal custom. See Herl, 27-8.

Doctrine and canon law gave Christianity its form and shape. More than anything else, it was the legalization of his religion that drove Luther to reform. As far as Luther was concerned, Catholicism- its laws and pretensions- was a parasite wearing the skin of its Christian host.

Imagine then, only a few short years after beginning his reformation, Luther's consternation when hounded by his colleagues to share with them the 'right' evangelical liturgical order.⁴ Who was he to define the right way of celebrating Christ and the Word of God? Was there a wrong way? What kind of precedent would his promotion of a specific liturgical order set within the larger evangelical movement? These questions haunted Luther late into his life, not only with respect to the meaning and practice of Christian worship- these being the needs of the spiritual kingdom- but also with respect to political and social demands made of him.⁵ Because he represented such a powerful, moving symbol- even in the early twenties- Luther's endorsement carried great weight. Nonetheless, the circumstances that compelled Luther to leave the Wartburg in 1522- the need to combat the destructive catharsis of Karlstadt and his followers- also convinced him that if nothing else, a good example needed to be set. It was in these terms that Luther exercised power as the Reformation's figurehead.⁶ As many of his writings demonstrate, Luther had a complicated relationship with law, both in the context of secular authority and organization, and in his theological understanding of Law and the Old

⁴ Luther's Formula Missae, for example, was written in response to urgings from his friend and fellow reformer Nicholas Haussmann, who was active in Zwickau (1521) and Dessau (1522). As Ulrich Leupold writes, Practical advice was urgently needed in Zwickau, where the enthusiasts (the Zwickau prophets) were particularly strong." *LW* 53:17. See also references to Leisnig and Luther's writing of *Concerning the Order of Public Worship* cited in chapter two, p. 23-4.

⁵ Perhaps the most significant of these demands was Lutheranism's need for a consciously "Lutheran" theory of resistance to secular authority in the 1530's. The development of Lutheran resistance theory has been carefully examined by both Cynthia Grant Schoenberger and David Mark Whitford. See generally: Cynthia Grant Schoenberger, "The Development of the Lutheran Theory of Resistance: 1523-1530." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 8, no. 1 (Apr. 1977): 61-76; and David Mark Whitford, "Curia Religionis or *Two Kingdoms: The Late Luther on Religion and the State in the Lectures on Genesis.*" *Church History* 73, no. 1 (Mar. 2004): 41-62.

⁶ In his *Sincere Admonition to All Christians* (1522), Luther is quite clear that he neither wants the evangelical movement to take his name, nor does he want to be seen as its leader. *LW* 45:79-81. See also *Receiving Both Kinds in the Sacrament* (1522), *LW* 36:265.

Testament.⁷ Although at times Luther was called to pass judgement and make hard decisions on behalf of the movement, there is plentiful evidence in Luther's writings that he would have preferred to see himself as a guide, not a leader, someone who could inspire, rather than coerce. Though he felt responsible for those who followed him back to the Word, Luther did not see himself as possessing any special authority, save what rights and privileges were afforded him by his doctorate of theology and by his vocation as a preacher, significant though they were.⁸

This hesitation to accept the mantle of leadership can be seen in the following passages, taken from Luther's best-known liturgical orders:

Formula Missae (1523): "If this example pleases you and others, you may imitate it. If not, we will gladly yield to your inspiration and are prepared to accept corrections from you or from others."⁹

Deutsche Messe (1526): "In the first place, I would kindly and for God's sake request all those who see this order of service or desire to follow it: Do not make it a rigid law to bind or entangle anyone's conscience, but use it in Christian liberty as long, when, where, and how you find it to be practical and useful."¹⁰

⁷ As argued in the previous discussion, what characterized Luther's vision for the Christian religion was adherence to the Word of God, found in the gospel of the New Testament. As we have seen though, the gospel is inextricably connected to the books of the Old Testament. This dichotomous Law-Spirit relationship has an enormous impact on the whole of Luther's theology. Old Testament Law without the Spirit of the New Testament was cruel and capricious. The Spirit without the Law was superficial and meaningless. Unsurprisingly, we find Luther recommending that preachers use the Old Testament in their services alongside scripture. When he called on Christians to read the bible, Luther intended for them to read both Testaments as part of a single religious foundation. His hymns, furthermore, are rife with allusions to the Old Testament. This can be seen in his catechisms as well, where the Decalogue plays an important role. Interestingly, in Luther's work *How Christians Should Regard Moses*, he writes, "We will neither observe nor accept Moses. Moses is dead. His rule ended when Christ came. He is of no further service." Or, "I dismiss the commandments given to the people of Israel. They neither urge nor compel me." At the same time though, he declares that if he were emperor, he would take from Moses a model for his statutes. When it comes to ordering the temporal world, Moses provides a wonderful example of leadership. See, "How Christians Should Regard Moses," *LW* 35:155-174. The best explication of the relationship between the New and Old Testament can be found in Luther's preface to the Old Testament *LW* 35:235-251.

⁸ See Payton's discussion of Luther's rights and responsibilities as a doctor of theology in the context of the Reformation, pp. 136-8.

⁹ *LW* 53:39.

¹⁰ Luther continues, "For this is being published not as though we meant to lord it over anyone else, or to legislate for him, but because of the widespread demand for German masses and services and the general dissatisfaction and

In the same way that Luther's musical catechism taught Christian doctrine without making spiritual laws of it, Luther wanted to avoid endorsing an 'official' evangelical liturgy. In fact, he was self-conscious about lending his name to any attempts at standardizing the Lutheran movement. Though in both the above-mentioned cases Luther was happy to give advice, he stresses the point that his was neither the only nor the best interpretation. Truth be told, scripture itself had little to say about the 'true' or 'proper' Christian liturgy.¹¹ In many instances throughout the *Formula Missae*, Luther suggests what form particular rituals ought to take, but often leaves the question more or less to interpretation. In summing up his thoughts on the mass, he writes, "Thus we think about the mass. But in all these matters we will want to beware lest we make binding what should be free."¹² Wine may or may not be watered. Communion could be administered in both kinds, or not. The bread and cup could be elevated according to the customary rite, if not doing so would offend those of weak faith in the congregation. In other words, and especially in the *Deutsche Messe*, Luther was willing to describe Wittenberg's adopted liturgical order as an imitable example; he was nevertheless quite explicit that these practices did not reflect the finished product of Lutheran theology, but a step in the right direction. Luther recognized that the evangelical movement was still in its infancy, and his orders reflect his constant concern for the weak of faith who would be rattled or even offended by sudden change.¹³

offense that has been caused by the great variety of new masses, for everyone makes his own order of service. Some have the best intentions, but others have no more than an itch to produce something novel so that they might shine before men as leading lights..." Ibid. 61.

¹¹ "Liberty must prevail in these matters and Christian consciences must not be bound by laws and ordinances. That is why the Scriptures prescribe nothing in these matters, but allow freedom for the Spirit to act according to his own understanding as the respective place, time, and persons, may require it." *LW* 53:37.

¹² See *LW*: 53:26-32.

¹³ This concern for the weak and respect for tradition, if only in the cultural, rather than religious sense, is explicit in both the *Formula Missae* and his *Invocavit* sermons. *LW* 53:19-40 and 51:67-97, respectively.

One of the ways in which Luther attempted to mitigate the trauma and anxiety that accompanied the reformation of the Lutheran liturgy was to assign a greater role for the congregation in the service. In doing so, he hoped to strengthen the bonds of community amongst the congregants and give them a sense of agency, at least in the sense that participating in the rituals of service made the celebration a personal one for each participant. We saw this to some extent in the administration of the sacrament of the altar. By giving both bread *and* wine to communicants, the inherent spiritual equality of all Christians was affirmed before the entire community. While receiving communion in both kinds was an important act of remembrance and Christian solidarity, it was not in any theological sense ‘Lutheran’. Lutheranism- evangelical Christianity- was centred on the Word of God. How the sacrament of the altar was administered- whether in one or both kinds- was in Luther’s view somewhat adiaphoristic.¹⁴ What increasingly came to matter for Luther in the 1520’s was the place and use of God’s Word in the service.

As mentioned, Luther’s earliest work on the evangelical liturgy was his 1523 *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*. In this short piece, Luther explains that after the first half hour or so of preaching in the morning service wraps up, “the congregation shall unite in giving thanks to God, in praising him, and in praying for the fruits of the Word, etc. For this,” he continues, “the Psalms should be used.”¹⁵ Robin Leaver, in one of his earlier works, describes this passage as evidence of Luther’s wish that congregational vernacular singing would become the norm in

¹⁴ I use the term adiaphoristic in the sense that Luther did not believe there was one right or proper way to perform the ritual. To this he was somewhat indifferent. I do not intend to imply, however, that Luther did not think this a matter of serious consideration. One need only look at his relationship with Zwingli to see that while Luther did not pretend to know the right way to practice the Sacrament of the Altar, he was stalwartly opposed to attempts to legalize or otherwise force any one particular practice on the people. Because scripture did not clearly describe any one version of this sacrament, Luther was not going to allow any man to make a spiritual law of his own unsupported scriptural interpretation. Moreover, while he allowed some flexibility as to the actual practice of the ritual, we should note that *his* theological understanding of the sacrament was no longer up for debate.

¹⁵ LW 53:12.

the Lutheran service.¹⁶ He goes as far as to describe this passage as somewhat revolutionary. First off, what are the implications of this? As we have read earlier, not only was music the highest form of thanksgiving and celebration of God's benevolence, but it was also perhaps the earliest. Recall that Luther envisioned children singing hymns in the Garden of Eden were it not for the Fall. Where Luther calls for the congregation to "unite in giving thanks to God, in praising him, and in praying for the fruits of the Word," he is almost certainly implying that the congregation should sing hymns. His reference to the Psalms in particular seems to support this interpretation. As we have seen, Luther derived most of his hymns from the Psalms, as would later reformers.¹⁷ It should be noted also that even at this time, several German hymns based on the Psalms were already known to Luther.¹⁸ Given his spiritual understanding of music, it seems highly unlikely that Luther would have called for the congregation to come together and praise God using the Psalms without *singing* them.

Later in the same year, Luther, in the *Formula Missae*, explicitly makes clear his desire to incorporate congregational singing into the liturgy. He writes,

I also wish that we had as many songs as possible in the vernacular which the people could sing during mass, immediately after the Sanctus and after the Agnus Dei. For who doubts that originally all the people now sang these which now only the choir sings or responds to while the bishop is consecrating?...But poets are wanting among us, or not

¹⁶ Robin Leaver, "Lutheran Vespers as a Context for Music," in *Church, Stage, and Studio: Music and Its Contexts in Seventeenth-Century Germany*, ed. Paul Walker. *Studies in Music*, no. 107 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990) [143-61], 145.

¹⁷ The best example here is Calvin's Genevan Psalter, though several important differences should be noted. As with Augustine and Luther, Calvin had reservations about using music in worship. Along with the others, he recognized music's powerful affective quality. Calvin was very conscious of the fact that music could corrupt just as easily as it could inspire. It was because of the inherent neutrality of the medium that Calvin forbade the use of songs that were not directly translated from the Psalms or scripture in Reformed services. Unlike Luther, who thought the message was more important than the words themselves, Calvin was careful to versify scripture as closely as he could in his songs. With respect to music's function in the service, Calvin's Psalms were more strictly devotional than theological. Calvin differed from Luther with respect to musical accompaniment as well. While Luther would eventually endorse musical accompaniment, Calvin saw this as human corruption which had no place in the service.

¹⁸ Two such references are to "Nun bitten wir den heyligen geyst," and "Ein Kindelein so löblich." Both of these songs were short Leisen with medieval roots. *LW* 53:37. Luther would expand the first of these songs in 1524 by adding three stanzas. *Ibid.*, 263-4.

yet known, who could compose evangelical and spiritual songs, as Paul calls them [Col. 3:16],¹⁹ worthy to be used in the Church of God.²⁰

This request would also seem to affirm Luther's interest in congregational singing. Josef Herl, however, argues that this conclusion is 'without foundation'.²¹ His argument is based on his interpretation of sixteenth and seventeenth century Lutheran church orders, with particular attention paid to what they have to say about attendance at services. Many of these sources seem to indicate that most services were generally only attended by clergy and schoolboys-especially those involved in the choir. The exception here being the Sunday service; however, even here only the sermon itself seems to have been well attended by a large portion of the communities cited. The relevance of church attendance to the argument that Luther did not want to normalize congregational singing seems to me though to be quite weak. Throughout his life, Luther was notoriously stubborn when it came to making concessions regarding theology and liturgy. Herl's argument here seems to be that Luther did not initially promote congregational singing because people were not attending services. One might be inclined, in fact, to argue the opposite: it was because of this poor attendance that Luther wanted the people to play a larger role in the liturgy. For Luther to have written his liturgical orders for the benefit of those few who actually attended regular service, and not for Christians as a whole, seems remarkably pessimistic. As I have argued, Luther was, if anything, overly optimistic in the period between 1521 and 1524.²²

As Rebecca Wagner Oettinger points out, song was a ubiquitous part of early modern European culture. Vernacular songs of German cultural origin, she notes, were not limited to any

¹⁹ "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." [Col. 3:16].

²⁰ *LW* 53:36.

²¹ Herl, 6.

²² Luther's optimism can be seen, for example, in the *Invocavit* sermons: "And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip [Melanchthon] and [Nicholas von] Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it." *LW* 51:77.

particular social strata. She divides Reformation song into a number of categories. The first deals with religious or Christian songs. Notable among these are those based on translations of the Psalms. The second category deals with the many ballads that chronicled and reported on the great events of the age- battles, religious diets, high-profile deaths and weddings. The third category describes the confessional satires and polemics that proliferated throughout the Reformation, though especially in the sixteenth century. Finally, the fourth category comprised the everyday songs that the people would sing in the home and at work. Oettinger and others have a tendency to call these folksongs, though because of its ambiguity and associated connotations, it is perhaps better to describe these songs as simply 'everyday'. To this category belong songs about love, folklore, legends, nursery rhymes and songs of identity and fraternity like those used by members of particular guilds.

Some points can be taken from this. In many places before and during Luther's reformation, attendance at service was often sparse, or involved only a small portion of the community. Also, song and singing were everywhere- in the fields, the workshops, the home, and the beer halls. There was also songs in the churches. Luther's contribution to the liturgical reformation was that he redefined the role and nature of the singer. Back to Oettinger- "singing was a universal part of German culture at this time."²³ Luther took this element of popular culture and, in increasing its presence and participation in the liturgy, attempted to create a service more accessible and intelligible to the common man.

In *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*, Luther can easily be interpreted as advocating congregational singing, if only to a limited degree. In the *Formula Missae* of the same year, Luther explicitly makes known his desire for songs that could be sung by the

²³Oettinger, 20

congregation during service. Herl calls this passage an afterthought, but as will be seen, his interpretation ignores a multitude of other references to spiritual song and congregational singing in Luther's writings between 1523-4. At about the same time as the Order's publication, Luther wrote a letter to fellow reformer and long-time friend George Spalatin, asking his help in adapting Psalms for use as hymns. He writes, "It is my plan, following the example of the prophets and ancient fathers of the church, to compose vernacular psalms for the masses."²⁴ As to the intended purpose of these hymns, Luther here seems to offer little clarification, except to express his desire that "the Word of God may be among the people also in the form of music."²⁵ Joseph Herl argues that this composition was to benefit the singers of these hymns, and not the listeners. For Herl, that meant the choir rather than the congregants.²⁶ If we recall Gerald Strauss, however, the place of the congregation and chorus need not be as dichotomous as Herl would make it. Strauss writes, "Lutheran pupils played a fixed role in the musical part of the service. Their function, however, was a new one: to lead the congregation in the singing of chorales."²⁷ While Herl's main argument- that the chorus dominated singing in Lutheran services until well into the seventeenth century- may in fact be valid, it does not preclude the notion that Luther set out to create the opportunity for Lutherans to *sing along with the chorus*. Congregational and choral singing need not be mutually exclusive. As Oettinger notes, there are precedents of this going back to the twelfth century.²⁸ In any case, by 1526 and the publication of Luther's German Mass and Order of Service (referred to herein as the *Deutsche Messe*), Luther's views on the place of song in the liturgy become much clearer.

²⁴ LW 49:68.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Herl, 7.

²⁷ Strauss, 232-3.

²⁸ Oettinger, 21.

The German Mass and Order of Service

Though its execution took some time and effort, the first step towards intelligible expression of Christian theology became apparent to Luther early in his career as a reformer. In order for scripture to inspire and affect the common man, the common man had to be able to understand the words, which meant an increased emphasis on a vernacular religious experience. Luther and his colleagues therefore stepped up efforts to translate and make accessible German scripture. Of course, in an overwhelmingly illiterate population, German bibles could only do so much. Because of this illiteracy, Luther invested heavily in the promotion of evangelical preaching. As he would shortly realize, though, few preachers were competent enough to inspire belief in parishioners. Either they did not understand enough of scripture themselves, or else they were simply ineffective public speakers. Worse, attendance at church often did not meet the expectations of reformers. This was especially the case in rural settings, where preaching tended to be even worse. What the reformation needed was a medium for the Gospel that was both accessible and appealing to the common man, yet could inspire the requisite faith in God and Christ. This necessitated that the medium be of divine, rather than human provenance.

While Luther's German Order was by no means the first of its kind- ie. vernacular-²⁹ Luther was petitioned to write the *Deutsche Messe* in order to describe *his* vision for a German mass. As noted earlier, Luther did not intend it to become the Lutheran standard; rather, he was concerned with the proliferation of local orders. In some villages services could differ from church to church. Some degree of liturgical homogeneity was needed for the solidarity of the evangelical movement. Moreover, Luther- being the musician he was- was greatly concerned for the quality of translation and composition in some of the existing services. This is evident in his

²⁹ For a list of earlier German liturgies, see Leupold's introduction to the German Order in *LW* 53:53-4.

recruiting German composers Johann Walter and Conrad Rupsch to help give the translated mass a “genuine style.”³⁰ The *Deutsche Messe* purported to describe actual services in Wittenberg at the time of its publication. While the accuracy of this claim is to some extent suspect, Luther’s intentions are not.³¹

The German mass that Luther describes is extensively musical. As Robin Leaver notes, of the Order’s original 49 pages, 27 were filled with musical notation, while the remaining pages contained frequent references to the musical aspects of the liturgy.³² Consider first the regular service throughout the week. Because these services were generally attended by schoolboys, clergy, and only a handful of congregants, these gatherings were heavily interested in the education of the schoolboys. Because Lutheranism was and continued to face a dearth of educated, talented preachers, the training of young men was of great importance. After the introduction of the *Deutsche Messe* in Saxony, it is interesting to see that weekday service was still to a large extent conducted in Latin. Luther describes the daily Matins:

This is what we do to train schoolboys in the Bible. Every day of the week they chant a few Psalms in Latin before the lesson, as has been customary at Matins hitherto. For as we stated above, we want to keep the youth well versed in the Latin Bible. After the Psalms, two or three boys in turn read a chapter from the Latin New Testament, depending on the length. Another boy then reads the same chapter in German to familiarize them with it and for the benefit of any layman who might be present and listening. Thereupon they proceed with an antiphon to the German lesson³³ mentioned

³⁰ Ibid., 53-5.

³¹ Herl argues it was unlikely that Wittenberg had already fully adopted the German Order at the time of its publication. The order was introduced on a trial basis in Wittenberg on October 29th (1525), and only printed and distributed elsewhere as late as January, 1526. That would have only given the Wittenbergers a few months to adjust to the new Order. Given his pessimistic analysis of congregational performances over the following centuries, it is not surprising that Herl would be sceptical of Luther’s claim to be describing the order currently in practice. Herl concludes that “At the time of its publication, the German Mass in Wittenberg was still for the most part a choral mass.” Perhaps, but given Luther’s stated interest in promoting congregational singing, it seems more likely that the chorus lead the congregation at least as often as it sang independently of them. See Herl’s arguments in Herl, 8-10.

³² Leaver, 181.

³³ The selection of the Gospel was tied to one of the principal lessons Luther discusses earlier in the Order. These lessons- the Ten Commandments, the Creed, Lord’s Prayer, and the sacraments- formed what Luther already considered the evangelical catechism. *LW* 53:68.

above. After the lesson the whole congregation sings a German hymn, the Lord's Prayer is said silently, and the pastor or chaplain reads a collect and closes with the *Benedicamus Domino* as usual.³⁴

In many ways it seems that Luther could just as easily be describing a classroom than a religious service. The boys take turns reading from the Bible- in both languages, and then are quizzed on the material. Note the musical quality of this exercise, however: the service opens first by chanting the Psalms in Latin. Because the boys could understand Latin, or were at least working towards an understanding of Latin- that being the whole point of retaining the language- they could understand the words of the Psalms. As with Luther's vernacular hymns, singing the Latin Psalms was intended to provoke an emotional state in those singing and listening to the songs. It was no accident that services here and elsewhere in Lutheran territories almost always opened with singing. In one sense, singing before reading scripture was like stretching before a run. It got the boys engaged in the material and stimulated them intellectually. On a more profound level, if the boys 'sang with their hearts, and not their lips'³⁵- as the famous phrase of Luther's goes- then the reading exercise becomes an investigation of God and his works, rather than simply a Latin lesson. Next we have the antiphon, which in all respects is essentially catechistic, except that it is sung, rather than spoken. It is a summary of the lesson which had previously been read aloud in German. The antiphon takes the textual message of the lesson and reiterates it through the medium of song. Remembering that Luther wrote, "To sing with the spirit is to sing with spiritual devotion and emotion...To sing with the mind is to sing with spiritual understanding,"³⁶ the ordering of the day's lessons exemplify Luther's conception of the ideal Christian education. First one 'sings with the spirit' to get in the right emotional state- here, the

³⁴ LW 53:69.

³⁵ Ibid. 53:38.

³⁶ LW 10:3

boys begin with the Psalms.³⁷ Next, the boys sing with the mind; that is to say, they read aloud from the Gospel. With the antiphon, they bring together in song the fruit of both their previous spiritual and intellectual exercises. The whole congregation then sings a closing hymn together in German, before the pastor closes with the *Benedicamus Domino*. Luther's description of Vespers follows a very similar pattern. The only differences here being more singing at the opening of the service- perhaps to account for the lateness of the day and the need to wake up participants- and then readings from the Old Testament, rather than the New. Otherwise, the order of singing, reading, antiphon responsory, and more hymn singing remains intact.

On Sundays- the heading to which Luther writes as "On Sunday for the laity"- the service proceeds as follows:³⁸

1. A German Psalm is sung. Luther here writes "we sing a hymn or German Psalm". We can therefore take the use of the inclusive pronoun "we" to mean that the whole congregation sings along.
2. Next the *Kyrie eleison* is sung, although it is not clear by whom.
3. The priest chants the collect and the epistle.
4. After the epistle, a German hymn is sung. Luther recommends "Now Let Us Pray to the Holy Ghost". Interestingly, Luther indicates that the hymn is to be sung "with the whole choir"³⁹ and not *by* the choir.⁴⁰ This again seems to suggest that the congregation is at least given the opportunity to join the choir in singing the hymn.
5. The priest chants the Gospel.⁴¹

³⁷ In his lecture on Psalm 4, Luther explains, "And therefore we learn from these words that whoever wants to arouse himself to devotion should take up the Psalms," *LW* 10:43. Likewise, on the 49th Psalm he writes, "Therefore to open on the psaltery means to bring forth the spirit and the mystical sense in parable and shadow (such as the letter is)." *Ibid.*, 229.

³⁸ *LW* 53: 69-90. Herl's analysis can be found in Herl, 8-21.

³⁹ *LW* 53:74.

⁴⁰ Herl reservedly acknowledges that this could be interpreted as an invitation for the congregation to sing along *with* the choir, but argues that this would have been highly irregular, as the choir did not normally sing polyphonic settings of hymns. Again though, he concedes that there is an insufficiency of data to know for sure. Herl 13-4.

⁴¹ These chants were intended to be sung in what came to be known as 'the fifth tone'. Luther used designated accents and tones when setting the Gospel to music in order to indicate the identity of the speaker. The words of the evangelist would be sung at [a], Christ at [f], and all other persons (ie. John the Baptist) at [c']. Leaver examines this technique at length in *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 180-190.

6. The entire congregation sings the Creed in German, “Wyr gleuben all an eyenen Gott”.
7. Following the Creed, the sermon is given. Herl notes, however, that it was quite common for a hymn to be sung before, and sometimes also after the sermon. In consideration of how Luther thought to instruct the schoolboys during the week, it makes sense that the priest would get the congregation ‘in the mood’ before he began the sermon proper.
8. Then the priest delivers a paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer and exhortation to the communicants. The host is consecrated and distributed, during which time the German Sanctus or another hymn is sung.
9. The cup is then consecrated, distributed, and another hymn is sung.
10. The mass is then brought to a close with the Thanksgiving collect and the Aaronic benediction in German.

It seems clear then from this order that Luther assigned a fundamentally important role to music and singing within the liturgy. Not only was it a devotional exercise- as in the singing of the Thanksgiving at the end of the service- but it also clearly had an educational purpose closely tied to the Gospel. That singing always preceded the sermon supports the argument that Luther used music to ‘unlock’ the meaning of scripture. The service begins with the people- the choir and the congregation- singing a number of hymns and Psalms. The priest then chants the Gospel. Once that union of the spirit and mind is engendered, everyone joins together in singing the Creed. The singing of the Creed indicates to the priest that the people are now ready to receive the Word, which the priest delivers to them first in the sermon, and then through the sacrament of the altar. Finally, in recognition of God’s gifts, the Thanksgiving collect and the benediction are sung.

With respect to the practice of congregational singing within this liturgy, Joseph Herl does an admirable job of demonstrating that in many places, and for quite some time thereafter, congregations did not seem enthusiastic about all this singing; or, that at least that they did not sing well, which would seem to suggest a lack of enthusiasm, but could also have other causes.

While several local studies have cast doubt on Herl's broad-ranging conclusions,⁴² as a general commentary on early modern Lutheran services, his findings certainly deserve consideration.

Regardless of whether or not we accept his comments on the 'success' or 'failure' of Lutheranism's liturgical reformation, however, Herl's interpretation that *Luther* never envisioned more than a limited- though admittedly significant- role for the congregation in liturgical singing is not altogether convincing.⁴³

The educational function of Luther's hymns in and out of the service

By now it will be clear that Luther intended that his songs would take on a theological function. What aspects of Christian theology were represented in these songs? To treat each of his songs in turn is beyond the scope of this discussion. What I offer instead is a concise summary and analysis of his hymns. I should clarify that I use the term 'hymn' here in its broader sense to mean a song of praise or worship, regardless of whether it was to be sung by choir or congregation, or some combination thereof.

In Ulrich Leupold's introduction to Luther's hymns, in the translated collection of *Luther's Works*, he divides the Reformer's songs into a number of liturgical and topical categories. First, there are those that have a clear role to play in the regular liturgical round. "Now Let Us Pray to the Holy Ghost" is clearly intended to be sung during the introit, just as "In One True God We All Believe" is obviously Luther's rendition of the Creed. The place of these songs is not novel. In most cases Luther's songs here were vernacular versifications of existing Latin songs. As we have seen though, what changed was that the songs could be understood now by all. I do not mean they could be understood simply by virtue of the fact that they were sung in

⁴² See Brown (2005), 206-7.

⁴³ Herl, 14.

German rather than Latin, though this is important. Instead, I have argued that singing the songs themselves helped parishioners access the meaning of the lyrics in a way that previously had been impossible. Singing was supposed to facilitate an emotional investment that deciphered the textual message.

Within Luther's liturgical orders, it was not always explicitly stated which song was to be sung at which occasion, though often Luther makes recommendations. During the administration of the Host, for example, Luther suggests that the hymn "Let God Be Blest" could be sung, or perhaps John Huss' "Jesus Christ, Our God and Savior."⁴⁴ According to regional preferences, different liturgical orders could vary on which of Luther's songs best captured the needs of each liturgical rite, though in these as well there was always room for variation. As indicated earlier, quite often songs would be sung at intervals within the order where Luther does not actually call for singing, most notably immediately before and after the sermon. This gave adventurous ministers the opportunity for greater versatility when it came to meeting the various and changing needs of the congregation. What is clear, though, is that within each liturgical order, a set of core songs are set aside for regular use in the service.

Likewise, many of Luther's other songs also came to be associated with specific Christian rites and traditions outside the Sunday service. Take Luther's deeply personal early hymn, "From Deep Trouble I Cry to Thee", which quickly became a popular standard in Lutheran funeral services. It begins with a desperate plea to God for aid, and then describes how the petitioner finds comfort and hope in God and his Word. The third stanza demonstrates especially well why this song was likely such a great source of solace:

Hope therefore in my God will I,

⁴⁴ LW 53:81-2

On my deserts not founding;
 Upon him shall my heart rely,
 All on his goodness grounding.
 What his true Word doth promise me,
 My comfort shall and refuge be;
 That will I always wait for.⁴⁵

Rather than relying on platitudes to comfort the grief stricken, this song consciously reminds listeners of the theological tenets of Lutheranism that make the passage from life to death such an important and necessary occurrence. The preceding stanza, which deals specifically with the doctrine of justification, seems out of place until we remember the centrality of justification throughout Lutheran theology. It begins, “With thee counts nothing but thy grace/ To cover all our failing.” If one understood the doctrine of justification, then one would not be plagued with doubts over whether or not their loved one had satisfied their quota of good works in their lifetime. The comfort here comes not solely from the communal act of worship, but from the theological message imbedded in the worship. The more gentle funeral hymn, “In Peace and Joy I Now Depart” seems to prefer platitude to this kind of outright theology; however even here comfort necessitates understanding the sacrifice of Christ and the meaning of the Gospel. The soul of the departed is welcomed into heaven “Through thy precious wholesome word.”⁴⁶

Like those songs which fell into use at funerals and weddings, so too did Luther write many other hymns with particular Christian celebrations and feasts in mind. Again, most of these hymns were patterned on existing Latin chants. It should be noted though that the theology Luther taught in these hymns was not necessarily evangelical theology, but quite often more general Christian theology.⁴⁷ For Christmas, Luther’s songs tend to concern themselves with the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 223-4.

⁴⁶ *LW* 53:248.

⁴⁷ By which I mean theology that was largely shared with their Catholic counterparts, such as the story of the Virgin birth, the Christian creed, and so forth.

virgin birth and the Trinitarian nature of the Christ-child. The Easter hymn, “Death Held Our Lord in Prison”, not only explains the resurrection, but the significance and reasons for the Easter feast.⁴⁸ While the generality of this theological teaching may have contributed to the charge that there was very little originality in Luther’s reforms, we should not be quick to assume that sixteenth century Europeans possessed religious understanding in any great depth. Illiteracy at this time was near enough to universal in all but the aristocratic or otherwise educated urban middle class. Church services were still predominantly delivered in Latin, and formal religious education was still in many places decades if not centuries away. Understanding of this basic theology then may in fact have been new to many parishioners, who hitherto had not understood the mysteries of Christianity, although we have no way of knowing for sure.

So here we see that many of Luther’s songs had a clear role to play in the ritual culture of Christianity. There were songs designed for the holidays, and then there were the songs designed for everyday use in the liturgy. External to these liturgical songs, we also have a third category- Luther’s musical catechism- which will feature more prominently in the next chapter. If we divide Luther’s small catechism into its six principal parts, we see that Luther prepared a simple and eloquent versification of each.

Small Catechism (1529)

Luther’s Hymns

Part 1: The Ten Commandments	(1524) “These are the Holy Ten Commandments” ⁴⁹
Part 2: The Creed	(1524) “In One True God We All Believe”
Part 3: The Lord’s Prayer	(1539) “Our Father in the Heaven Who Art”
Part 4: Baptism	(1541) “To Jordan When Our Lord Had Gone”

⁴⁸ Ibid., 256-7.

⁴⁹ While in this hymn Luther allows a stanza for each commandment, along with an introductory and concluding stanza, he also wrote a much shorter five stanza hymn on the Decalogue, “Man, Wouldst Thou live All Blissfully” LW 53:281.

Part 5: Confession and Absolution	(1523) “From Deep Trouble I Cry To Thee” ⁵⁰
Part 6: Sacrament of the Altar	(1524) “Jesus Christ, Our God and Savior”

Excepting his hymns on baptism and the Lord’s Prayer, we see that Luther was clearly invested in the development of an intelligible catechism for the young and uneducated early in his career as a reformer. While there was certainly some functional overlap in the abovementioned songs- as with “From Deep Trouble”- they clearly had an educational function. These songs essentially provide the core of Luther’s small catechism. The problem with classifying these songs as ‘educational’ though, is that it implies that his other songs were not, which is certainly not the case. Again, as these songs here correspond to the articles of Luther’s small catechism, we can label them ‘catechistic’; this, however, perhaps misrepresents Luther’s traditional understanding and usage of the word ‘catechism’. As Luther defines it, “Catechism means the instruction in which the heathens who want to be Christians are taught and guided in what they should believe, know, do, and leave undone, according to the Christian faith.”⁵¹ The three most important elements of this education should be the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Our Father. “These three,” he writes, “plainly and briefly contain everything that a Christian needs to know.”⁵² Luther understood catechism as a basic understanding of the core

⁵⁰ In Leupold’s organization of the hymns in their topical and liturgical parts, he makes no mention of confession and absolution or its musical counterpart in his catechism sub-section. In the original edition of the Small Catechism, Luther did not clearly articulate confession and absolution as one of the sacraments, though he would later. My pairing of “From Deep Trouble I Cry to Thee” with this sacrament is based on Robin Leaver’s analysis of the hymn. Paraphrasing Luther, he writes, “The Commandments must be allowed to condemn the sinner, and the confessor should pronounce God’s promise of forgiveness and declare God’s Word from Scripture... All this is paralleled in Luther’s *Aus tiefer Not*.” Leaver, 151.

⁵¹ *LW* 53:64.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 65. Given this emphasis on the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer, it seems unusual that Luther waited so long to write his hymn on the Lord’s prayer. It could be the case, as Leaver argues, that because there were already quite a few musical renditions of the Prayer in the vernacular as early as the 1520’s, Luther did not feel pressured to write his own. (Leaver , 128-34). In the case of “Were God Not With Us At This Time” though, Luther wrote his own versification of Psalm 120 knowing full well that Spalatin had produced a vernacular version of the hymn only months before. See *LW* 53: 245-6.

tenets of Christianity. With respect to its instruction, he cautioned that learning the catechism must not be a passive activity. Pupils ought to not only understand these articles, but also be able to explain and articulate these beliefs to others. Children had to be prepared thusly so that one day they could instruct their own children properly. Luther stresses, however, that it was not enough for students to simply learn the words by rote. It was the meaning that mattered. Where Luther writes that the basic catechism contains everything a Christian needs to know, acquisition of that knowledge presupposes spiritual understanding. In this context, we have to consider his catechism hymns as a part of Luther's musically expressed theological education, and not the whole.

It is to this purpose that we now turn to the fourth category of Luther's hymns. Leupold calls his final category 'The Gospel of the Reformation'. A number of these songs here seem to have been written by Luther as a response to current events of great import. The first of these, for example, "A New Song Shall Be Begun", is a lengthy narrative of the martyrdom of two reformed Augustinian monks in Holland. Rather than lamenting their deaths, Luther celebrates their conviction and heralds their deaths as Christian victories. "Oh! [the Catholics] sang sweet, and they sang sour;/ Oh! they tried every double?/ The boys they stood firm as a tower".⁵³

Two huge great fires they kindled then,
 The boys they carried to them;
 Great wonder seized on every man,
 For with contempt they view them.
 To all with joy they yielded quite,
 With singing and God-praising;
 The sophs had little appetite
 For these new things so dazing
 Which God was thus revealing.⁵⁴

⁵³ LW 53:214-6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 215-6.

Shortly after he wrote this song, Luther wrote a second hymn following the same theme- that God's hand could once again be seen in unfolding events. In this song, "Dear Christians, Let Us Now Rejoice," Luther reflects on the circumstances of his own conversion. As with "From Deep Trouble I Cry To Thee", this is a deeply personal hymn. Luther writes, "Forlorn and lost in death lay I,/ A captive to the Devil." The song tells how God sent Christ to relieve Luther of his burdens so that he might spread God's Word. It seems appropriate then to categorize these songs as Gospel- the "good news" of the Reformation. The third song in this set, "Ah God, from Heaven Look Down" likewise evidences a great deal of Luther's confidence in the evangelical movement. This song, in fact, is a clear attack on Catholicism. He writes, "They teach a cunning false and fine;" and later "And let us dwell in thee, secure/ From error's infiltration./ The godless rout is all around/ Where these rude wanton ones are found/ Against thy folk exalted."⁵⁵

The final two songs here though, "Our God He Is a Castle Strong" and "Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word" betray Luther's early confidence. The former, written probably around 1527/8,⁵⁶ seems to suggest that the evangelicals' victory will no longer be on earth- as he had earlier forecasted- but will be in the afterlife. "If they take our life,/ Wealth, name, child and wife-/ Let everything go:/ They have no profit so;/ The kingdom ours remaineth."⁵⁷ Similarly, "Lord Keep Us Steadfast" is a petition to God for help in staving off Christendom's enemies- the Pope and the Turk. As Leupold suggests, this song was likely a reaction to a series of Ottoman victories over the Empire in both the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The song ends, "Stand by us breathing our last breath,/ Lead us to life straight out of death."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ LW 53:227-8.

⁵⁶ See Leupold's introduction to the song for more on its dating. Ibid., 283-4.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 284-5.

⁵⁸ LW 53:305.

In considering the arrangement and classification of these five hymns, which truth be told do not comfortably fit in any of the earlier categories, my first instinct was to abandon Leupold's notion of them as Gospel. It seemed more appropriate to treat them for what they were—evangelical polemics. The texts of these songs, for instance, reveal the 'otherness' of Catholicism with respect to Christianity. Whether they describe Lutheran victories over persecution and false doctrine, or else call for militant resolve and determination against seemingly overwhelming adversity, these particular songs seem to reinforce Lutheran conviction and identity as *antithetical* to their Catholic counterpart.

While it is important to acknowledge the polemical character of these hymns, we must not ignore the explicitly theological nature of even these songs. At the heart of each we find the doctrine of justification and its promise of salvation through faith. All five present this central tenet in the context of great trial and tribulation. As Luther taught, understanding of the Word required a form of spiritual awakening, which typically came about as a reaction to a profoundly emotional and spiritual experience. In his case, Luther was brought closer to God through a series of near-death experiences. In pairing the affective poignancy of music with the trials that faced the Lutheran community, Luther thought to reproduce that catalytic experience in those who sang these hymns. The message in each case is simple but powerful: in times of trouble, put your faith in Christ and the Word of God and everything will turn out alright. In this sense, they can justifiably be understood as an expression and extension of the Gospel.

In all, Luther wrote over forty songs. By 1524 he had already written two thirds of these, and, by 1529, three quarters. Before Luther ever put pen to paper to write his catechisms, Lutheran theology was already being taught to the young and to the simple folk through song. In the church service, Luther's hymns attempted to uncover the mystery behind the liturgical

expressions of Christian worship. In times of communal celebration, his hymns were supposed to exhort celebrants to recognize the hand of God in all things good and holy. In times of mourning, there were songs that would comfort the heartsick with the reminder that it was a benevolent God to whom their loved ones departed. In a schoolboy's education, readings from scripture were prefaced, summarized, and analyzed through song. In the Sunday service for the laity, the theological lesson of the day's sermon was likewise intended to be framed and made intelligible through the accompaniment and singing of hymns. Finally, in the public sphere as elsewhere, Luther's 'Gospel' hymns were a constant reminder to keep the doctrine of justification close at all times like a shield or armour. The message here was clear: no matter what transpired on earth, faith in God was the surest defence.

Conclusion: The Path to Confessionalization

You see how the whole world is being afflicted with dangerous dissension. And, too, the contest is almost solely about ceremonies and human traditions in which, if the princes were to permit some sane counsels, peace could be restored. Sometimes both sides are being irritated by seditious demagogues. Indeed, those who patronize the pope only embitter the souls of men by their wicked discourses and pamphlets. And some pseudo-Lutherans, while otherwise gratifying the desire of the masses for new things, are everywhere exciting seditions by their profane and seditious outcries. For it can never be but that the name of the Gospel is assigned as a pretext for personal cupidities.

-Philip Melanchthon to Philip of Hesse, 1524¹

[Preachers] know nothing about politics except what they read in books, and they have no idea what is necessary for the proper governance of a commune.

-Bernhard Besserer to Philip of Hesse, 1530²

Münzer, Zwingli, and the others thought they would achieve the objective they had in mind. They thought they would like to finish the song the way they began it, but before they had really begun, they perished. The same thing will happen to our princes and bishops who sing the asses' song, beginning high and ending low.

-Luther, *Psalm 45:5*, 1532³

During his early controversies with the Roman Church, Luther came to a realization. For a Christian Church to thrive, it must be free to manage its own affairs. Temporal authority, likewise, must not be prevented from fulfilling its responsibilities by the intervention of spiritual authority. When the split with the Church became all but irrevocable, the reformers found themselves in an unprecedented situation. They were being given the space to reconceptualise

¹ Melanchthon, *Summary of Doctrine*, 100.

² Cited in Robert J. Bast, "From Two Kingdoms to Two Tables: The Ten Commandments and the Christian Magistrate," *Archive for Reformation History* 89 (1998) [79-95], 90 f. 30.

³ LW 12:223.

the entirety of Christian life and worship. Luther had done such a thorough job of casting doubt on the Church's authority and theological praxis that, with few exceptions, nothing was off limits to the attention of the reformers. To be sure, much of Catholicism's culture, theology, and ritual persisted in the Lutheran milieu. That said, there was a marked difference between what was being reaffirmed and what was simply being tolerated. Candles and icons, for example, remained in use in many Lutheran parishes for some time, following Luther's admonition not to deprive the weak of faith of their devotional aids. The spiritual kingdom was experiencing a period of rebirth. As it grew in the womb of the new evangelical preaching and education, it would gradually cast off all the useless trappings of its old spirituality, coming out pure and Christian on the other end. Another element of this transition period that Luther had to tolerate, however, was the intervention of magisterial authority in the ecclesiastical affairs of the evangelical church. One of the profound ironies of the reformation was that Luther and company did such a great job abolishing private masses and the sale of indulgences in their territories that they effectively bankrupted themselves in the process. Money, they discovered, did not grow on trees. This was a growing problem, as preaching offices needed to be maintained- and ideally expanded- schools needed to be built and staffed, and a new generation of pastors would need to be trained.

Earlier, we saw how Luther and Lutherans tried to deal with these realities. What Luther proposed and what was attempted at Leisnig was a model of social governance and self-regulation with the congregation at its centre. On the one hand, this congregationalist model satisfied Luther's theological imperative of the priesthood of the believer and his scepticism of liturgical and cultural orthodoxy. On the other hand, it clearly laid out how the congregation might access, collect, and distribute resources in accordance with its newly won ecclesiastical

responsibilities. In addition to gaining access to the wealth of its monasteries, the assembly was also given authorization to levy a tax on congregants. Because the authority of the assembly stemmed from consensus and good faith, its word did not carry the weight of law- just as Luther wanted it. Unsurprisingly, many parishioners were apparently choosing not to pay these taxes.⁴ This, in addition to the petty squabbling that Luther railed against, contributed to the failure of the Leisnig congregational experiment. The problem as Luther saw it, however, was not this model of local ecclesiastical governance itself; rather, it was the people in the congregations. It was like trying to build a house on top of sand.⁵ In his lectures on Romans, Luther writes,

For before all the good works which make up the building, it is necessary to have the sure and faithful foundation upon which one may cause his heart to stand and to trust for eternity, so that, even if he builds nothing on it, yet he may have a building site (so to speak) ready for it.⁶

Thus far I have been writing largely of intentions. This was what *Luther* thought, intended- this was his vision for the Reformation. One reason for this undertaking was to illuminate an aspect of Luther that we perhaps have yet to fully appreciate. It is one thing to say that Luther believed in God and the Devil and the coming apocalypse. It is another to show how belief in these forces influenced his reform. We can- as some historians will- point to Luther's political naivety. We can say he was a theologian proverbially biting off more than he could chew. We could also take another tack, arguing that for Luther, these things did not matter. Luther was preoccupied by ultimate affairs of the afterlife, rather than the penultimate ones of this life. This too, though, would be naive. Instead, I would argue that Luther's field of political awareness was broader than our own. He saw and appreciated forces that we as politically

⁴ LW 49:135.

⁵ In his lecture on Romans, Luther preached that the true foundation of the church was Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). This was the rock upon which the wise man built (Matt 7:24). The foolish man, however, builds on a foundation of sand- in other words, on his own righteousness and merit (Matt 7:26).

⁶LW 25:104f 1. This theme reappears often during Luther's early reform years. See for example *Sacrament of Penance* (1519), LW 35:15, and *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles* (1521) LW 32:83.

inundated creatures too often marginalize: love and faith, for example. Luther saw how these could be made to operate within human systems of organization like the church and government. The love and faith of a Christian was a bulwark against the sin and avarice of man. In his division of the Two Kingdoms, the church was protected by this bulwark against secular meddling.

Luther's acquiescence to the catechism as a spiritually normative device

For Martin Luther, the revelation of the Gospel was a cherished gift. It delivered him from a state of deep despair and confusion, liberating him with the promise of God's love. In his teaching, especially early on in his career as a reformer, Luther ardently held to the principle of voluntarism. He would force no one to adopt the Word as he had, though he felt a responsibility to make the revelation of scripture known to his fellow man. Musical theology, as we have seen, was intended to inspire Christians to want to return to the Gospel. It made no laws of Luther's teaching. Instead, it allowed the laity access to God's Word. Upon hearing God's Word, it stood to follow in Luther's thinking that the Christian elect would eagerly embrace the evangelical religion. Towards the end of the twenties, however, Luther's catechism increasingly began to replace song as the most prominent educational tool supported by Lutherans; prominent, that is, in the sense that modern historiography has tended to regard the catechisms as largely synonymous with Lutheran education in reformation discourse.⁷ It follows from this notion that Luther's catechisms seemed to represent a kind of confessional orthodoxy. Because this is what Luther teaches, these are the beliefs that define us as Lutherans. This was the premise underlying

⁷ Brown (2005), 4.

Gerald Strauss' use of visitation records as a measure of the efficacy of Lutheran pedagogy.⁸ In using catechistic examinations in this way though, Strauss ascribed them a greater importance than perhaps they merit- at least, in the sense that they were one measure of Lutheran education among many, albeit one that is perhaps better documented.

In Timothy J. Wengert's 2009 publication, *Catechisms: Forming the Faith*, he reminds us that once upon a time Luther called his small catechism 'Enchiridion', the Greek expression for 'handbook'. "The Catechism," writes Wengert, "expressed the heart of Luther's ethical revolution," which he offers in sum as:

Common work is good and pleasing to God. Believers stand before God free by faith alone in the coming kingdom, free to serve the neighbour. The order in society, when it serves the neighbour, is good and comes from God. When that order is broken on any side, then all hell breaks loose.⁹

Regarded simply as an educational tool, the catechisms do take on the appearance of ethical handbooks, or otherwise a spiritual almanac. The problem with this interpretation though, and here we find one of the limits of Wengert's analysis, is that it ignores the social and political apparatuses that were required to implement and monitor the use of the catechism as the foundation of formal Lutheran education. In fairness to Wengert, his research was intended to recover Luther's original purpose in writing the catechism for the benefit of modern readers. In doing so, I believe Wengert has actually come quite close to capturing Luther's interest in catechism more generally, whether in its musical or spoken form. Catechism was simply a tool lay Christians could use to understand the Gospel. In this respect, Wengert's analysis of the catechisms is useful insofar as it supports Luther's adherence to the principle of voluntarism. As

⁸ See Strauss, 249-99. For a thoughtful response to Strauss' conclusions on the failure of the Reformation, See Geoffrey Parker, "Success and Failure during the First Century of the Reformation," *Past and Present* 136 (Aug, 1992) [43-82].

⁹ Timothy J. Wengert, *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2009), 163.

a devotional exercise for example, the small catechism employs the language of the spiritual kingdom- love, trust and faith in God. Viewed in light of the catechism's relationship with the electoral state, however, we have to acknowledge the encroachment of the temporal kingdom on the character of the catechism. The language of temporal authority was law. An educational curriculum supported and implemented by magistrates, therefore, inherently takes on the character of law.

As early as the mid-twenties, Luther and other reformers turned to secular authority to help establish, support and regulate what would become regionally integrated, confessionally Lutheran school systems. Already in 1523 we saw Luther appealing to the parish assembly of Leisnig to set up schools, and then again in 1524 Luther widened this appeal with *To the Councilmen of All Cities That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*. In letters to John Frederick and his predecessor Duke John ranging between 1524-7, Luther makes frequent appeals to magisterial authority for aid in setting up and maintaining school systems.¹⁰ Considering Luther's previously established aversion to secular intervention in spiritual affairs, these appeals need to be put in the context of the mid 1520's.

As alluded to throughout this discussion, the year 1525 marks an important caesura in Luther's life. Though it would be superficial to speak of this as a transition from a young to old Luther, this was nonetheless the beginning of great change both in Luther's life and throughout central Europe more broadly. The first and most obvious consideration here must be the Peasant's War (1524-6). Without delving too deeply into this complex event, we can identify two of its most profound influences on Luther. First, whereas previously Luther showed great faith in the 'common man' as an educator and social actor, the peasants' rebellion was, as far as Luther

¹⁰ See, for example, *LW* 49:75-6, 133-7, and 137-9.

was concerned, a betrayal of that faith. Not only was the violent nature of the uprising contrary to Luther's admonishments to peacefully reform, but it evinced the peasants' lack of faith in the ability of the Word to spread of its own momentum.¹¹ If they could not believe in the Word, then they did not believe in Christ. This betrayal was made all the more dastardly by the appropriation of Luther's ideas as a justification for what were largely non-religious protests. The second influence of the rebellion on Luther can be seen in his response. Luther was unequivocally opposed to the uprising.¹² In no uncertain terms did he condemn the peasants and call for secular authorities to wield the sword of Law and cut them down. While this condemnation alienated many who saw potential for significant social reform in Luther's theology, from that point on it greatly entwined the future of the movement with the custody of secular authority. After years of contending with dissension from within the evangelical movement, Luther was quickly losing patience with those who used his work for their own purposes. His partnership with the authorities in crushing the rebellion sent the message loud and clear that he would not abide anyone doing evil in his name, and he had the power of the state behind him to back up his threats.

Luther's reform efforts- the Leisnig interventions and his liturgical orders- had been in effect several years by this point. Though at least in Wittenberg they seemed to be having some

¹¹ On Luther's faith in the ability of the Word to spread itself, see the *Invocavit* sermons, particularly the second sermon in *LW* 51:75-8.

¹² While initially sympathetic to the peasants' protests (see his *Admonition to Peace*), once the rebellion turned violent, Luther was moved to write his famous treatise *Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants*. For more on their context and reception, see Tom Scott and Robert Scribner, *The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents* (New Jersey: Humanity Press, 1991). Michael Mullett also gives a descriptive account of Luther's involvement with the revolt; Mullett, 163-70. He writes, and I would agree, that, "Luther underwent no substantive ideological conversion in the year of the Peasants' Revolt" (169). I would add though, that while Luther's ideology remained intact, by making room for the magistracy in the movement's leadership, he paved the way for his own ideology to eventually become marginalized. So while his ideology remained unchanged, it ceased to be necessarily representative of the Lutheran movement's. This leads to Mullett's conclusion that "[Luther] emerged as [Lutheranism's] alternate voice, if not its internal opposition, to the evident, if temporary, ascendancy of Melancthon" (201). Robert Bast shares a similar opinion, writing that after 1530, "Luther did not lead this movement, but he followed it, despite misgivings he would voice until very nearly the end of his life." Bast, 80.

effect- at least as far as Luther reports, these reforms were still quite young. Then, in May of 1525, Frederick the Wise died and was succeeded by his brother, Johann the Steadfast. Much to Luther's consternation, one of John's first actions was to disband Wittenberg's two most prominent musical schools- the *Hofkapelle* and the *Allerheiligenstift*, citing cost as the reason. In a letter to John dated June 20th, 1526, Luther writes,

I request that Your Electoral Grace will not permit the [Hofkapelle] to pass out of existence...the art [of music] is worthy of being supported and maintained by princes and lords, much more so than many other endeavours and enterprises for which there is not nearly so much need...¹³

In a later letter, in a much more caustic tone, Luther wrote that "Kings and princes must support music."¹⁴ Here, he observes that not only are other evangelical princes supporting music, but so too are their Catholic counterparts, and even the Emperor. Melancthon also added his appeal to Luther's, writing, "Why should the noble art of music not remain active now for God's sake, since it is used for the service and glory of God?"¹⁵

The withdrawal of funding and the disbanding of the musical establishments, however, only spurred Luther to promote musical education with greater urgency. As Leaver demonstrates, this loss- of not only the establishments, but also of stipends for students of music- caused Luther and his colleagues to "accelerate their educational programs for schools to become centers for learning as well as for music leadership in the churches."¹⁶ In this new curriculum, Leaver observes a shifting emphasis from *musica speculativa* to *musica practica*.¹⁷ Luther needed trained singers and musicians to lead congregations in the liturgy. Unfortunately, when Luther's

¹³Cited in Leaver 38, f. 129.

¹⁴ Cited *ibid*, 39 f. 131.

¹⁵ Cited *ibid*, 38 f. 130.

¹⁶ Leaver, 39-3.

¹⁷ *Ibid*. 42.

repeated attempts to get a chair of music endowed at the university where not only rejected, but thwarted by John, musical instruction largely moved into the private sphere.¹⁸

It was around this time that reformers and government officials began to think about surveying their assets, both financial and human. This started a conversation about state facilitated ‘visitations’. The idea had been brought up earlier in 1524, at which point Luther opposed the idea. As Strauss writes, “[Luther] could not overcome his deep-seated distaste for bureaucratic measures imposed uniformly from above.”¹⁹ He did not want temporal authority interpreting or in any way enforcing evangelical ‘orthodoxy’. His reformer colleagues, though, did not share his recalcitrance. Nicholas Hausmann, a long-time supporter of visitations, called them a ‘noble effort’, writing to that duke that Luther was the best man to plan and oversee them.²⁰ Gradually, Luther came around, at least insofar as he cooperated with his colleagues. In 1525 he wrote a letter to the duke calling for visitations on the grounds that no one was paying their dues or fulfilling their obligations, and that “the common man shows so little respect for his preacher and pastor that, unless your Electoral Grace will agree to undertake a great housecleaning...God’s word and divine service will soon have vanished from the earth.”²¹ Frustrated with the Leisnig debacle- which is to say largely with his own expectations thereof- and appalled by the ignorance of the laity- of which he was increasingly becoming aware through local visitations- Luther became sympathetic to Hausmann’s warning to the elector that

¹⁸ Ibid, 42-3.

¹⁹ Strauss, 250.

²⁰ Cited *ibid*, f. 5.

²¹ *LW* 49:135

congregations- if only for the time being- should be restrained in their ability to choose their own preachers.²²

The accuracy of the documents eventually coming out of the visitations have provided verdant ground for scholarly debate. Whether or not *we* chose to believe, though, that things were as dismal as the documents portrayed them to be, Luther did. Without indulging in a speculative psychological analysis of Luther's writing at this time, we can say with some assuredness that this period was for him an emotional nadir. To quote Susan Karant-Nunn, by 1526, "Luther was no longer in a compromising mood."²³ The result of these consecutive setbacks was that Luther began to reconsider the extent to which the normalization of a certain educational curriculum could correct some of the ignorance and apathy revealed by the visitations. Strauss neatly describes Luther's situation at the time of his writing the preface to the 1528 *Instruction of the Visitors*: "Luther was still not prepared to abandon his cherished principle of voluntarism. But events had already made an anachronism of this reluctance."²⁴ Luther's catechisms went into print the following year.

The catechism as the cornerstone of the Lutheran education

The experience with the visitations taught reformers the need for clarity and simplicity. If they were to re-educate their flock, they needed that education to be intelligible and hegemonic. It would be a lot easier to learn and to teach the basics of the evangelical faith if everyone shared a

²² Hausmann's letter to the duke advocated giving congregations the *privilege* of appointing their own pastors, not the right. Both he and Luther eventually agreed that during especially difficult times, like those they were going through at this point- where the congregation could not adequately satisfy these responsibilities themselves- magistrates should be permitted to *temporarily* take on the role of an emergency bishop, or *Notbischof*. LW 49:135 f. 23.

²³ Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, 52.

²⁴ He goes on to add that, "Shaken by the sheer enormousness of the job of re-education they were taking on, the reformers came to realize, still with regrets but no longer with any doubts, that they would be able to accomplish their objectives only by employing the legal authority and power of compulsion wielded by the state." Strauss, 251.

common understanding of them. This was the principal concern of Lutheran educators from the late 1520's on. In his article on the social function of schools in the Lutheran reformation, Strauss argues that within the curricula of these schools, the catechism became the pupils' authoritative source of theological knowledge and reference, so much so in fact that "The Bible itself became an adjunct to the catechism."²⁵ Carefully combing through regional and municipal school ordinances in Lutheran territories, covering a period from about the mid 1530's to the middle of the seventeenth century, Strauss finds no more than a handful of orders that actually encourage individual bible study.²⁶ According to these ordinances, Bible study ought to be an oral, group experience. The implication being that scriptural study required a learned, approved translator.²⁷

It is understandable that educators, working within a joint confessional-state institutional framework, would want to discourage individual engagement with scripture. The bible's ambiguity could easily produce undesirable interpretations, and the spectre of the Peasants' War remained an enduring feature of the Lutheran cultural consciousness. The central role assigned to the catechism in formal Lutheran curricula remained, furthermore, consonant with the humanist influence of Melanchthon and most other reformers. It operated as a set of normalized questions and responses, the habitual study of which served vital grammatical and linguistic functions. At the same time, this curriculum performed what Strauss argues were the essential functions of reformation education: the purveyance of certainty and the perpetuation of the status quo.²⁸

²⁵ Strauss adds, "Why this was so is not difficult to understand. Established religion requires experienced, informed guidance: the catechism gave it. The Bible is complex and far from unambiguous: the catechism offered reliable interpretation. It asked all the necessary questions and supplied the correct answers. It made first-hand occupation with Scripture practically unnecessary." Gerald Strauss, "The Social Function of Schools in the Lutheran Reformation in Germany" *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 28, No. 2 (Summer, 1988), 202.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 202

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 204

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 201

Immediately following this however, Strauss adds, “Notions of a conflict between learning and piety never occurred to Reformation educators, who saw no need to raise again the humanists’ question of whether arts and erudition hinder the progress of religion.” This statement cuts to the heart of this discussion of Luther and Lutheranism. For Luther, the greatest threat to Christianity, past and present, was the usurpation of God’s Word by human innovation. Best intentions aside, already in these curricula we see, as Strauss points out, scripture being subordinated by Luther’s own catechism.

Why, then, did Luther allow the reformation to move in this direction? The place of the catechism in formal Lutheran education represented an accommodation of confessionalization. It addressed the needs of not only the spiritual and secular kingdoms, but also of Luther’s own evangelical interests. For the Lutheran confession, it provided a uniform, generally intelligible code of beliefs that served both as a statement of confessional identity, and as a powerful educational tool. For the secular authorities, catechistic indoctrination aimed to produce civic rectitude and respect for secular authority. By placing limits on legitimate interpretation of scripture, catechistic habituation would hamstring the ability of evangelical radicals to mobilize grassroots support through biblical justification. According to Robert Bast, Lutheran princes recognized this usefulness of Lutheran religion early on. Lutheran magistrates, and Duke John especially, had no intentions of accepting limits to their jurisdiction proposed by their own theologians.²⁹ He cites Karl Holl, who demonstrated how this intention to appropriate the evangelical religion became apparent already by John’s directives for the Saxon visitations of 1527.³⁰

²⁹ Bast, 80.

³⁰ Karl Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* 1(6th edition. Tübingen, 1948), 372f; cited in Bast, 80 f.2.

Luther himself viewed the catechism from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it encouraged civic order by regulating relationships within a community. By way of example, in 1529, Thomas Löscher wrote to Luther asking his advice on how to deal with blasphemers in his parish (Mylau). Luther replied that he would force no one to recant their beliefs, but for the sake of public order, blasphemers should keep their beliefs to themselves. Furthermore, they ought to be compelled to attend sermons on the catechism- not for the sake of religion- but to,

...learn secular obedience and the [proper way] of managing a household- regardless of whether they believe the Gospel or not- so that they are not a cause of offence to others...For if they want to live as part of the community, they should learn and listen to the law of this community.³¹

On the other hand, we ought to recall Wengert's interpretation of the small catechism as scriptural paraphrase. Luther wrote the catechism as a summary of the core elements of Christianity- principal among which was the belief that "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things."³² The people had to be indoctrinated in this first belief before they could ever come to understand and appreciate the other tenets of Lutheran faith. Where song was intended to inspire this belief and trust in God, catechism indoctrinated it. Where Luther and Lutheranism diverge in this respect is that beyond the rote memorization of the small catechism, Lutheran educators neglected the spiritual, i.e. scriptural, education of the young. Unless they were selected to advance to higher education, young students would still only have access to scripture through the sermon.

In closing, this discussion offers three conclusions. First, that there ought to be a distinction between the fundamental theologies and values of Luther and confessional Lutheranism, as codified in the Augsburg Confession under the leadership of Philip Melancthon

³¹ *LW* 49:233-4.

³² *BC* 342.

and magistrates like John the Steadfast and Philip of Hesse. Luther argued that faith alone was the path to redemption, and the only avenue to that faith was through the Word of God. To have knowledge and to understand were two very different things in Luther's thought. Lutheranism taught its students to have knowledge of the catechism, whereas Luther saw this as a hollow enterprise, in and of itself. It was only in understanding the Gospel - an understanding predicated on the possession of faith- that one would come to, "fear, love, and trust in God above all things." This was the preeminent theme in Luther's songs and psalm commentary, and a common trope in his catechisms. According to Luther, one who embraced this understanding of faith would, at least in theory, naturally accept and try to abide by the other articles of Christian morality and theology. Lutheranism, however, through its normalized educational curricula, made equally weighed spiritual imperatives of all catechistic instructional articles, marginalizing the role of faith in favour of confessional uniformity and civic order. This elicits my second conclusion; namely, that Luther developed vernacular hymns in accordance with the first article of faith- fear, love and trust in God. Song allowed the illiterate and uneducated access to scripture by three means. First, in that it could be learned and taught orally, with all the recognizable benefits that entailed; second, that the content of the message was inherently theological; and finally third, through the marriage of God's word (scripture) with the divine medium of music, the Gospel message was unlocked, and the meaning of God's *Word* could be accessed. Because it failed to inculcate normative civic values, though, and because it could not be controlled- even exacerbating civil disorder on various occasions- song, as an instrument of religious education, did not feature prominently in the process of confessionalization. This brings me to a third conclusion. Just as Luther and his peers earlier translated psalms into hymns, Luther later translated his core evangelical theology from his hymns into the catechisms. The

literal normalization of his core theology had an unexpected result though. Where Luther's sermons on the catechism demonstrate that he intended them to provide a core, *introductory* scriptural understanding, Lutheran educators taught the catechism as if it were a math equation.³³ Question A must always produce answer A. So much effort was expended trying to get students to memorize these complex, and often lengthy responses that learning the *meaning* of the answers was peripheral to the act of memorizing them. Learning the catechism, rather than being a sign that one had returned to the Word of God, became similar to taking an oath of allegiance. In the eyes of confessional authority, it became a good work. This is not to say that catechistic learning did not inspire faith- for surely in some it did, but rather the influence of the secular magistracy altered the educational process so that the act of learning the answers became more important than understanding them. Lutheran education became a creature of control, rather than liberation.

³³ See Luther's sermons on the catechisms, November 30 to December 18, 1528. *LW* Vol. 51:135-93.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Martin Luther

WA Luther, Martin. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1997.

Tischreden (TR) *D. Martin Luther's Tischreden oder Colloquia, so er in vielen Jahren gegen gelahrten Leuten, auch fremden Gästen und seinen Tischgesellen geführt, nach den Hauptstücken unserer christlichen Lehre zusammen getragen, 1531-1546* (Volume supp. 02 pt. 1-6) 1846-8.

Briefe (Br) *Dr. Martin Luthers Saemmtliche Schriften*, band 21, "Briefe" Teil 2 von 1533 bis 1546 incl., von Joh. Georg Walch.

LW Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works* American Ed. General Editors Jaroslav Pelican and Helmut T. Lehmann. 55 Volumes. St Louis: Concordia Publishing House; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-1986.

Vol. 1 *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5*

Vol. 2 *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 6-14*

Vol. 10 *First Lectures on the Psalms I: Psalms 1-75*

Vol. 11 *First Lectures on the Psalms II: Psalms 76-126*

Vol. 12 *Selected Psalms I*

Vol. 13 *Selected Psalms II*

Vol. 14 *Selected Psalms III*

Vol. 15 *Notes on Ecclesiastes, Lectures on the Song of Solomon, and Treatise on the Last Words of David*

-Treatise on the last Words of David (2 Sam. 23:1-7)

Vol. 16 *Commentary on Isaiah I*

Vol. 21 *The Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat*

-The Sermon on the Mount

Vol. 25 *Lectures on Romans*

Vol. 26 *Lectures on Galatians, 1535: Chapters 1-4*

Vol. 31 *Career of the Reformer I*

-The Freedom of A Christian, 1520

Vol. 32 *Career of the Reformer II*

-Defense and Explanation of All the Articles, 1521

Vol. 34 *Career of the Reformer IV*

-Exhortation to All Clergy Assembled at Augsburg, 1530

-Commentary on the Alleged Imperial Edict, 1531

- Vol. 35 *Word and Sacrament I*
- The Sacrament of Penance, 1519
 - A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels, 1521
 - Avoiding the Doctrines of Men and A Reply to the Texts Cited in Defense of the Doctrines of Men, 1522
 - How Christians Should Regard Moses, 1525
 - Preface to the Old Testament, 1545 (1523)
- Vol. 36 *Word and Sacrament II*
- The Misuse of the Mass, 1521
 - Receiving Both Kinds in the Sacrament, 1522
- Vol. 39 *Church and Ministry I*
- That A Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture, 1523
- Vol. 42 *Devotional Writings I*
- An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for Simple Laymen, 1519
 - Comfort When Facing Grave Temptations, 1521
- Vol. 44 *The Christian in Society I*
- Treatise on Good Works, 1520
 - To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate, 1520
- Vol. 45 *The Christian in Society II*
- Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed, 1523
 - Ordinance of A Common Chest, preface, 1523
 - Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly at Leisnig, 1523
 - Exposition of Psalm 127, For the Christians at Riga and Livonia, 1524
 - To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools, 1524
- Vol. 48 *Letters I*
- Vol. 49 *Letters II*
- Vol. 51 *Sermons I*
- Sermon on the Raising of Lazarus, John 11:1-45, Preached on the Friday after Laetare, March 19, 1518
 - Eight Sermons at Wittenberg, 1522
 - Ten Sermons on the catechism, 1528
- Vol. 53 *Liturgy and Hymns*
- Concerning the Order of Public Worship, 1523
 - An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg, 1523
 - The German Mass and Order of Service, 1526
 - Preface to the Wittenberg Hymnal, 1524
 - Preface to the Weiss Hymnal, 1528
 - A Preface for All Good Hymnals, 1538
 - Preface to George Rhau's Symphoniae iucundae, 1538
 - Preface to the Burial Hymns, 1542
- Vol. 54 *Table Talk*

Others

The Book of Concord: Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert; trans. by Charles Arand...[et al.]. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000.

The Book of Concord: Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Translated and Edited by Theodore G. Tappert, with Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, Arthur C. Piepkorn. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.

Karlstadt's Battle with Luther: Documents in a Liberal-Radical Debate. Ed. Ronald J. Sider. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978.

Melanchthon, Philip. *Philip Melancthon, Selected Writings.* Trans. Charles Leander Hill ed. Elmer Ellsworth Flack and Lowell J. Satre. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962.

Secondary Sources

Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation. Ed. Hans J. Hillebrand. 1996, 2005 by Oxford University Press, Inc. The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation: (e-reference edition).

Arand, Charles P. and Robert Kolb. *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

Barnes, Robin B. "Martin Luther, (Book Review)." *European History Quarterly* 37 (2007): 162-4.

Bartel, Dietrich. *Musica Poetica: musical-rhetorical figures in German Baroque music.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Bast, Robert J. "From Two Kingdoms to Two Tables: The Ten Commandments and the Christian Magistrate." *Archive for Reformation History* 89 (1998): 79-95.

Berman, Harold J. "The Spiritualization of Secular Law: The Impact of the Lutheran Reformation" *Journal of Law and Religion* 14 no. 2 (1999-2000): 313-349.

Beutel, Albrecht. "Luther's Life." Trans. Katharina Gustavs in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* ed. Donald K. McKim. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. [3-19].

- Brady Jr., Tom. "From Revolution to Long Reformation: Writings in English on the German Reformation, 1970-2005." *Archive for Reformation History* 100 (2009): 48-64.
- Brecht, Martin. *Martin Luther*. Trans. James L. Schaaf. Vols. 1-2 of 3. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985-1993.
- Brecht, Martin. "Martin Luther, (Book Review)." *Church History* 69, no. 1 (March, 2000), 143.
- Boyd-Brown, Christopher. "Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation in Joachimsthal." PhD diss., Harvard, 2001.
- Boyd-Brown, Christopher. *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005.
- Boyd-Brown, Christopher. "Worship Wars [Review]." *Journal of Religion* 87, no. 1 (Jan., 2007): 99-101.
- Dau, W. H. T. "Luther's Relationship to Lutheranism and the American Lutheran Church." *The American Journal of Theology* 21, no. 4 (Oct., 1917): 512-28.
- Estes, James. "Luther's First Appeal to Secular Authorities for help with Church Reform," in *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late-Medieval and Reformation History. Essays Presented to Heiko A. Oberman on his 70th Birthday* Ed. Robert J. Bast and Andrew Gow. Boston: Brill, 2000. [48-76].
- Fisher, Alexander J. *Music and Religious Identity in Counter-Reformation Augsburg, 1580-1630*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2004.
- Grant Shoenberger, Cynthia. "The Development of the Lutheran Theory of Resistance: 1523-1530." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 8, no. 1 (Apr. 1977): 61-76.
- Helmer, Christine. "Introduction to Luther's Theology in Global Context." *Religion Compass* 3, no. 3 (April, 2009): 417-29.
- Hendrix, Scott H, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981.
- Hendrix, Scott H. *Luther*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009.
- Herl, Joseph. *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

- Herman, Stewart J. "Luther, Law, and Social Covenants: Cooperative Self-Obligation in the Reconstruction of Lutheran Social Ethics." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 25, no. 2 (Fall, 1997): 257-75.
- Holl, Karl. *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* Vol. 1, 6th edition. Tübingen, 1948.
- Holt, Mack. "The Social History of the Reformation: Recent Trends and Future Agendas." *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 special issue (Autumn, 2003): 133-144.
- Irwin, Joyce. *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone: German Lutheran Theology of Music in the Age of the Baroque*. New York: Lang, 1993.
- Karant-Nunn, Susan. *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Karant-Nunn, Susan. "Changing One's Mind: Transformations in Reformation History from a Germanist's Perspective." *Renaissance Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (Winter, 2005): 1101-1127.
- Karant-Nunn, Susan "Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith, (Book Review)." *The Catholic Historical Review* 96, no. 2 (April, 2010): 349-50.
- Kittelson, James M. *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986.
- Kleinhans, Kathryn. "Luther, (Book Review)." *Lutheran Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (Winter, 2010): 488-90.
- Kolb, Robert. *Luther's Heirs Define His Legacy: Studies on Lutheran Confessionalization*. Brookfield: Variorum, 1996.
- Kolb, Robert. *Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith*. New York: OUP, 2009. [4]
- Leaver, Robin. "Lutheran Vespers as a Context for Music," in *Church, Stage, and Studio: Music and Its Contexts in Seventeenth-Century Germany*, ed. Paul Walker. *Studies in Music*, no. 107. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990. [143-61].
- Leaver, Robin. *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. House, 2007.
- Lebow, Richard Ned. "What's So Different about a Counterfactual?" *World Politics* 52, no. 4 (Jul, 2000): 550-85.

- Lindberg, Carter. "Prierias and his Significance for Luther's Development." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 3, no. 2 (Oct., 1972): 4-64.
- Lindberg, Carter. "Luther's Struggle with social-ethical issues," in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* ed. Donald K. McKim. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. [165-78].
- Marius, Richard. *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death*. Cambridge: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Marty, Martin. *Martin Luther*. Penguin: Toronto, 2004.
- McGrath, Alister. *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- Moeller, Bernd. *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, trans. H. C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972.
- Mullett, Michael. *Martin Luther* (Taylor & Francis e-library ed.). New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Oberman, Heiko A. *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought*. Liverpool: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1986.
- Oberman, Heiko A. *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*. New York: Doubleday, 1989.
- Oberman, Heiko. "Martin Luther, (Book Review)." *The Historian* 62, no. 4 (Summer, 2000): 926-7.
- Oettinger, Rebecca Wagner. *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2001.
- Olson, Oliver K. "Theology of Revolution: Magdeburg, 1550-1551." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 3, no. 1 (April 1972): 56-79.
- Parker, Geoffrey. "Success and Failure during the First Century of the Reformation." *Past and Present* 136 (Aug, 1992): 43-82.
- Payton Jr., James R. *Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010.
- Pettegree, Andrew (Ed). *The Reformation of the Parishes*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993.

- Pettegree, Andrew. *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.
- Rein, Nathan. *Chancery of God: Protestant Print, Polemic and Propaganda against the Empire, Magdeburg 1546-1551*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2008.
- Rose, Stephen. "Performance and Popular Culture in the German Reformation." *Early Music* 33, no. 2 (May 2005): 295-303.
- Schweibert, E.G. *Luther and His Times: The Reformation From A New Perspective*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950.
- Söhngen, Oskar. *Theologie der Musik*. Kassel: Stauda, 1967.
- Spitz, Lewis. *The Reformation: Education and History*. Brookfield: Variorum, 1997.
- Strauss, Gerald. *Luther's house of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.
- Strauss, Gerald. "The Social Function of Schools in the Lutheran Reformation in Germany." *History of Education Quarterly* 28, No. 2 (Summer, 1988): 191-206.
- Strohl, Jane. "Luther's Spiritual Journey," in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* ed. Donald K. McKim. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. [149-64].
- Tavuzzi, Michael. *Prierias: The Life and Works of Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio, 1456-1527*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Tomlin, Graham. "Shapers of Protestantism: Martin Luther," in *The Blackwell Companion to Protestantism*. Edited by Alison E. McGrath and Darren C. Marks. Malden: Blackwell publishing, 2004. [40-52]
- Tönsing, Gertrud. "'There Must be Mouse Dirt With The Pepper': A Lutheran approach to choosing songs." *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 48, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 320-328.
- Wengert, Timothy J. "Review Essay: The Cambridge Luther, an Unreliable Companion." *Lutheran Quarterly* 19 (2005): 79-84.
- Wengert, Timothy J. *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.

- Wengert Timothy J. (Ed.). *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009.
- Whitford, David Mark. *Tyranny and Resistance: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition*. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001.
- Whitford, David Mark. "Curia Religionis or *Two Kingdoms: The Late Luther on Religion and the State in the Lectures on Genesis*." *Church History* 73, no. 1 (Mar. 2004): 41-62.
- Whitford, David Mark. "The Papal Antichrist: Luther and the Underappreciated Influence of Lorenzo Valla." *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (Spring, 2008): 26-52.
- Wicks, Jared. "Roman Reactions to Luther: The First Year (1518)." *The Catholic Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (Oct. 1983): 521-62.
- Wriedt, Markus. "Luther's Theology." Trans. Katharina Gustavs in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* ed. Donald K. McKim. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. [86-119].