

**Gérard Roussel: An Irenic Religious Change Agent**

By

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B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 1976

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### **ABSTRACT**

Gérard Roussel was a prominent French ecclesiastical leader in the sixteenth century and yet is little known. The Catholic, Protestant and Enlightenment historical narratives have all ignored him. A member of the renewal-minded Circle of Meaux from 1521 to 1525, he collaborated with the famous humanist, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, to produce an evangelical preaching manual. This study examines its emphases. When this Circle was crushed, Roussel fled to Strasbourg and admired the Reformation taking place there. Marguerite de Navarre recalled him to France and became his patron in various ways. He translated into French a children's catechism originally published by the German reformer Johann Brenz. The translation puzzles readers today, because it is too complicated for children. This study suggests it was targeted at the royal children to influence their future rule. Roussel became the Lenten preacher in Paris in 1533, experiencing great success. John Calvin was one of his admirers. While traditionalists reacted with tumult, the crowds flocking to hear Roussel suggest that the French evangelicals were more significant in the first third of the century than is commonly understood. They offered a "third option" in France, in addition to the traditionalists and the rising Protestants. Consistently, these evangelicals sought reform of the French church and society through gospel

preaching and irenic living. They strongly rejected church schism. Roussel accepted the Bishopric of Oloron in 1536, where he diligently taught, preached and modeled his irenic evangelical emphases. Calvin viciously turned on him as one practising dissimulation. Roussel prepared both a guide for episcopal visitation of a diocese and an extensive catechism for theological students that had the same goal as the preaching manual produced in Meaux. Traditionalist opposition ensured they would not be published, but we have a manuscript available. This study examines them, finding that Roussel was intent on building bridges between all reformers, both Protestant and Catholic. He avoids, as a key example, embracing any of the hotly contested positions on the Lord's Supper that surrounded him. He instead constructed a simplified biblical Mass, consistent with much traditional piety, but clearly emphasizing gospel preaching as well. Killed in an attack by a Catholic traditionalist in 1555, his life points to the French evangelical embrace of both gospel preaching and irenic living. Recent scholarship has discovered that such irenic impulses had a greater impact on Christian society in this era than has often been recognized. This study deepens that awareness.

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It is essential to cite the role of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria. In naming me as the Winnifred Lonsdale Fellow for the year beginning in September, 2006, they provided me the environment in which I began to ask questions about the paucity of references to irenicism during the religious changes of sixteenth century Europe. I gratefully acknowledge the stimulation and support of the Centre in launching me on this research track.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Gérard Roussel mounted the elevated pulpit to preach. He had come to Mauléon as bishop of the Diocese of Oloron, in what is now south-western France. Long known for sympathy to themes emphasized by Protestants, he proposed a reduction in (not elimination of) the number of saints' days that should be observed. The people could use the time for more productive pursuits.<sup>1</sup> Suddenly, a man rushed forward with an axe to shatter the supports for the pulpit, and Roussel came crashing down amid the splintering wood. He was picked up "half-dead"<sup>2</sup> and carried back by his friends to Oloron for treatment. The physicians there prescribed a treatment of "taking the waters," but he never made it to his destination. Roussel died en route to the hot springs from injuries suffered in the fall. The year was 1555. His attacker—Arnauld de Maytie, a country gentleman—was tried before the Parlement in Bordeaux and acquitted on account of his "pious and beautiful action."<sup>3</sup> A Catholic bishop is murdered by a devoted Catholic layman, who is acquitted by a largely Catholic court because they found his action "pious and beautiful" . . . De Maytie's actions were affirmed by many Catholic activists, an activism mirrored and countered by zealous Protestants in the 1550s. In contrast, Roussel embodied an attempt at an irenic approach to renewal.

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<sup>1</sup> The concern for increased economic productivity is not new with the business pages of twentieth- and twenty-first century newspapers.

<sup>2</sup> This account is found in Charles Schmidt, *Gérard Roussel, Prédicateur de la Reine Marguerite de Navarre: Mémoire, servant à l'histoire des premières tentatives faites pour introduire la reformation en France* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970; originally published in Strasbourg, 1845), pp. 163-164.

<sup>3</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 164.

Gérard Roussel was famous in his day. A persistent leader in church reform over more than three decades, he was widely known in church, government and legal circles in France and beyond. He had friendships (not all lasted) with a number of leading church reformers: Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, Guillaume Briçonnet, Martin Bucer, William Farel, John Calvin and Philip Melancthon. Read the history or the theology of this era and you will encounter Roussel's friends, but not likely Roussel's name. He was equal in stature in his time to those just named (except Lefèvre d'Étaples and Calvin). Why has he almost disappeared from the history books? This study will suggest an answer. It will also introduce the reader to the life and thought of Gérard Roussel, a man fascinating and controversial, sympathetic and difficult to categorize.

The study will also suggest that allowing Roussel to drop out of our historical vision has meant that we have too easily missed a significant swath of early sixteenth century life, thought and piety. Large numbers desired religious change, but by peaceful means. They approached renewal with an irenic spirit. There is no doubt that the aggressive and bloody headlines of the period loom large in the historical imagination. Religious motivations were part and parcel of these events, but then so were economic considerations, diplomacy, state-building and raw power politics. However, we may do well to remind ourselves that very few of us today live any part of the headlines we read daily in newspapers. Our stories are quite different. Could it not be so in other eras as well? Roussel will open for us a window into the motivations and beliefs of those who may not have dominated the headlines, but whose worldview was nonetheless also significant. They were more numerous than most now realize.

How should we understand the irenicism practised by these people?<sup>4</sup> It was a form of Christian neighbourliness that took seriously Jesus' call to "love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) The general nature of this command means there are a considerable variety of ways to put it into practice. According to need and circumstances, it manifest itself in the sixteenth century through many pragmatic choices, a reality noted by many scholars recently, as we shall see. Difficult to define precisely, non-violence and a measure of doctrinal flexibility were generally characteristic of this neighbourly mindset. Flexibility over beliefs could take the form of resisting pressure to be overly precise in clarifying dogmas or it could manifest in a conscious refusal to distance oneself from those whose doctrines were known to be different. For Catholics like Roussel, it meant a rejection of schism, while still regarding most Protestants as companions in the faith. For Protestants—who had chosen schism— it meant an openness to pursuing reunion of the churches or, at least, to cooperating with Catholics and other Protestants (though usually the Anabaptists were not regarded kindly, even by such irenicists). Preachers and theologians, whatever their ecclesiastical affiliation would emphasize peaceable behaviour, seeking the welfare of others including opponents, and forgiveness for wrongs inflicted. Roussel's teaching and story will illustrate such an approach to life.

In this study, we will also find ourselves asking larger historiographical questions.

Roussel's story invites us to raise these issues, even if our answers may only be provisional.

First, was there a viable third option available in the early period of the French Reformation?

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<sup>4</sup> The term "irenic" has been used before: Howard Paul Louthan, *A via media in Central Europe: Irenicism in Habsburg Vienna, 1555-1585* (Princeton University, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 1994); Robertus van de Schoor, *The Irenical Theology of Theophile Brachet de la Milletière*, tr. J. Grayson (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Joris van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum Tolerantia: irenicism and toleration in the Netherlands: the Stinstra affair: 1740-1745* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1998); Brian Lugioyo, *Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification: Reformation Theology and Early Modern Irenicism* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2010).

Did the combined attacks, on the one hand, of traditionalist Catholicism<sup>5</sup>—represented by Arnould de Maytie, the Parlements,<sup>6</sup> and the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, commonly called the Sorbonne<sup>7</sup>—and, on the other hand, of the aggressive form of Protestantism radiating from the Geneva of Farel and Calvin, eliminate a rival vision of Christian life and faith that had a genuine chance at thriving? Second, should we even call the sixteenth century “early” in terms of reform? Reform movements had abounded for several centuries already.<sup>8</sup> Why do we privilege the Protestant Reformation(s)<sup>9</sup> when reform movements long predated the sixteenth century? Could we not view the Protestant Reformation(s) as a tributary (or tributaries) of a much wider stream of reform movements? Third, were there actually more Catholic reformers than Protestant ones? These are big questions to ponder, and this study will attempt to demonstrate that they are indeed valid to raise.

Along the way, one more topic must be addressed. Most historians know that the concept of a Christian commonwealth or society was central in the mental universe of early modern Europeans. Yet many could appreciate more how this concept was crucial in shaping both violent and peaceable inclinations in this period. It formed a narrative that strongly influenced behaviour in early modern Europe.

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<sup>5</sup> In this study, I will use the term “traditionalist” to refer to those who defended a piety centered on the Mass and the supervision of this piety by the established organs of governance in church and state, which included the episcopate, Faculty, King of France and Parlements.

<sup>6</sup> William Monter, *Judging the French Reformation: Heresy Trials by Sixteenth-Century Parlements* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> The theologians were, in fact, connected to more colleges than just the Sorbonne. See James K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation France: The Faculty of Theology of Paris, 1500-1543* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), pp. 3-4, 38.

<sup>8</sup> See Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

<sup>9</sup> See Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 9, who suggests that using the singular implies something unified about Protestantism that was not true. There were multiple Protestant Reformations, which influenced one another.

We all live with narratives. They help us make sense of the world and provide us with some meaning or purpose that gives shape to our choices, our lives. Narratives can give us a sense of participating in something greater than ourselves. They can also encounter opposition and elicit counter-narratives. Some of the most memorable social cleavages within societies have centered on contested narratives: Whig-Tory, Shiite-Sunni, republican-monarchist, communist-capitalist, to name a few. Narratives are above all selective in their representation of reality. They emphasize some historical occurrences, threaded together, and offer an interpretive key to understand these events, intending to invite us into specified exertions in our own era. Our understanding of sixteenth century French religious history has been shaped by three narratives, a Catholic, a Protestant, and an Enlightenment perspective. We will examine them below.

Some narratives are widespread in a culture, society or nation. They seem simply to be a given. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”<sup>10</sup> While these assertions seemed “self-evident” to leaders in Revolutionary America, influenced by conceptions of human rights based in Enlightenment thinking and the tides of revivalist Christianity that optimistically posited social improvement and affirmed the individual,<sup>11</sup> they clearly have not always been self-evident. Human inequality has often been the dominant narrative. Some would react with disgust to the notion that their

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<sup>10</sup> Declaration of Independence, The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America, adopted by Congress, July 4, 1776, found online at <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/freedom/doi/text.html>.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Jonathan Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience and the Origin of Modern Culture: France, 1570-1715* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), especially chap. 3; Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

rights are tied to the existence of a Creator. Certain philosophies and religious perspectives would deny that the pursuit of happiness is a human good, much less a right, and some very significant political polities have denied the validity of individual liberty. Feminists would object to being excluded from the ranks of equal beings. So, in historical perspective, we find these truths not to be self-evident after all. It took a commitment to a common narrative to make them seem so. Similarly, the desirability of Christian society was self-evident in sixteenth century Europe.

Other narratives, not so widely disseminated, nonetheless can have a powerful hold on their adherents, forging a resolute resistance to dominant narratives. Sixteenth century Anabaptists died in their thousands at the hands of professed Christian rulers, both Protestant and Catholic, who found their vision of a believers' church and of the separation of church and state both heretical and treasonous.<sup>12</sup> Cadres and activists, intent on bringing more nations into the fold of international communism, often endured enormous hardships in pursuit of their goal, which sometimes was attained. So, narratives do not require broad consensus to be influential. Even individuals can make a big impact as they pursue a narrative to which they are committed. Irenicists challenged the more aggressive confessional narratives that were forming in the sixteenth century and, as we shall see, had more success than many today realize.

Narratives, engaged doggedly enough, can function in a self-fulfilling manner. Compared to the Treaty of Brest-Litovk, by which Germany eliminated Russia from World War I, the Treaty of Versailles, though punitive, was not harsh. It was not the national humiliation that many German politicians portrayed it to be. Still, the persistent cry of injustice opened the door to

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<sup>12</sup> Monter, *Judging*, chap. 2.

Adolf Hitler's nationalism—and another major military defeat.<sup>13</sup> As many Germans initially accepted the narrative of national humiliation, their subsequent support for a very aggressive response diplomatically and militarily produced the devastation of unconditional surrender and international opprobrium—a self-fulfilling narrative. In the sixteenth century, cries for purification of society (in its various Christian manifestations) led not to the peace and well being that justified the campaigns, but to aggression, sometimes deadly, that seemed, as we shall see, the antithesis of Christian society.

Deconstructionists have alerted us to the reality that “truth-claims” can simply be masks for assertions of power over others.<sup>14</sup> There are times when narratives are propagated, less out of the desire objectively to correct untruth or injustice, than out of an ideological commitment to achieve some specified purpose. They are less concerned with righting past wrongs than with achieving victory for their preferred vision of the present and future. David Blight demonstrated that the priority in American national memory of the Civil War was not to finish the task of redressing wrongs done to former slaves, but to achieve reconciliation between North and South. Reunion became more important than racial justice. Emphasis was placed on the valiant soldiers from both sides rather than the noble cause that had begun to triumph.<sup>15</sup> This narrative allowed the majority white population to assert the welfare of its political institutions as more important than the welfare of the oppressed black population. It was a “truth-claim” that masked an assertion of power and continuing injustice.

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<sup>13</sup> See A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961), chap. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault, for example, in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, tr. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977; originally published in French, 1975), p. 307, alludes to the “ruthless war of all against all.” (Quoting from *La Phalange* newspaper, August 10, 1836)

<sup>15</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

For some, this salutary warning from the deconstructionists has turned into hostility to the word “truth.”<sup>16</sup> Those who say they would like to investigate a controversy in order to “find out the truth,” far from being regarded with admiration for their noble determination, are dismissed as probable polemicists. Often enough, the notion that truth exists is laughed at. It is true that history is always written with a perspective or narrative in mind. The impact of a perspective can influence the interpretation of evidence, possibly leading to blind spots. However, I would argue that *there is evidence*. Historians have tools to do new original research to uncover new historical evidence; they also can use those tools to re-evaluate sources that have already been investigated. Some new interpretations will prove untenable; others will carry such weight that older narratives must be revised—or even overturned.

The reader might guess that this study is about narratives, specifically as we seek to understand the momentous religious changes that swept sixteenth century Europe. By the mid-sixteenth century, confessionalization had begun in earnest. One of several forms of social disciplining operative in this era, the dominant Christian confession in each region sought—usually with governmental assistance and/or enforcement—to mould the populace into living its vision of Christian faith and life consistently. The aim was often polemical: to assert the superiority of their perspective against the vision of their rivals. In order to buttress their claims to supremacy, each confession developed narratives to demonstrate that their stream of Christianity represented the “true stream”—a type of truth-claim that the deconstructionists warn us about. Martyrologies in particular “figured importantly in the formation of confessional

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<sup>16</sup> F. R. Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford University Press, 2001), chap. 1.

identities”<sup>17</sup>—prominent among them Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* (for English Protestantism), Jean Crespin’s *Histoires des Martyrs* (for French Protestantism), and van Bracht’s *Martyrs’ Mirror* (for Anabaptists). Rival narratives—Protestant versus Catholic, Protestant versus Protestant—in their inevitable selectivity stressed parts of the story and left out others. Soon, a narrative that ran counter to them all, the Enlightenment polemic against all religion founded in divine revelation, made its contribution to selective historical memory. All these narratives stressed the violence done in the name of religion. Each confession, of course, emphasized its own beneficence, but the rhetoric inevitably played up aggressive and heroic actions. The Enlightenment thinkers emphasized the aggression, but denied that much was heroic. All narratives overlooked—in effect, denied—irenic impulses. The headlines were taken to characterize the faith of virtually all Europeans. Recent historical work offers a bold revision of these assumptions.<sup>18</sup> Motives for peacemaking, as with most human endeavour, could be mixed.<sup>19</sup> Yet, there were many who would gladly affirm and practise Christian behaviour toward their neighbour over confessional allegiance, if they could. Wanegffelen maintains that, even in France—which was profoundly scarred by the Wars of Religion later in the sixteenth century—many would have preferred to be simply “Christian” as opposed to either Catholic or

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<sup>17</sup> Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 137-138; see too chaps. 1, 5-7; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490-1700* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 671.

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 2 for a review of these scholarly contributions.

<sup>19</sup> See Alex Ryrie, Luc Racaut, *Moderate Voices in the European Reformation* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 5-12, for their list of various motives.

Reformed.<sup>20</sup> His study points to the fact that “we have too easily missed a significant swath of early sixteenth century life, thought and piety”—as I have already suggested.<sup>21</sup>

This study of Gérard Roussel helps to illuminate a part of that swath. Neither a failed Protestant (according to the Protestant narrative<sup>22</sup>) nor a failed Catholic (according to the Catholic narrative<sup>23</sup>) nor inconsequential (as his non-appearance in the Enlightenment narrative would suggest), Roussel represents a stream in Gallican church life in the early sixteenth century that might have been majoritarian.<sup>24</sup> So, we add to the list of big questions that our study will raise a fourth: would the majority of professing Christian folk—at least in France, perhaps more widely—have preferred to live out their faith in a peaceable day-to-day manner without being pressed into a confessional straightjacket?

Gérard Roussel was one of those who wished to balance the pursuit of church reform with the conviction that this renewal must be sought in an irenic, non-schismatic way. We will examine his life and his thought as a case study in how precarious this balancing act could be. Roussel and his fellow reformers saw themselves as building on a venerable tradition of efforts to renew Christ’s church—all the while avoiding schism. I will add to the recent literature which argues that peace seeking was more widespread in this period than has often been portrayed.

What documents are available to us? In addition to several letters by Roussel and the judgments of the Faculty of Theology against Roussel, we have four principal sources:

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<sup>20</sup> Thierry Wanegffelen, *Ni Rom, Ni Genève: Des fidèles entre deux chaires en France au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> See p. 2 above.

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*. See chapter 2 for more examples of history written from this Protestant perspective.

<sup>23</sup> Already evident in the judgments of the Sorbonne against Roussel and his colleagues. See chapter 2 for more.

<sup>24</sup> In addition to Wanegffelen, *Ni Rom, Ni Genève*, see Francis Higman, *Lire et Découvrir: La circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1998), pp. 199-200.

1. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples "and his disciples" published a preaching manual, *Épistres et Évangiles pour les cinquante et deux semaines de l'an*, aimed at helping priests who may not have had training in preparing sermons to do so in a manner that would reinvigorate their parishes in an evangelical direction. The case will be made that the manual had to be written at Meaux—a diocese in northern France where Roussel, early in his career, was an active leader—to further the work of reform there, and, since Roussel was a leading disciple of the famous humanist, that we can see some of Roussel's early emphases here.
2. We have a children's catechism, most probably written by Roussel, entitled *Initiatoire instruction en la religion chrestienne pour les enfants*. Again, a case for authorship will have to be made. It is very interesting that Roussel, a Catholic reformer, could work to teach the faith to French-speaking children with a catechism already published by the Lutheran Johann Brenz, translated from German (via Latin).
3. We have a *Forme de visite de diocese*, written by Roussel as a bishop.
4. We have, joined to *Forme de visite*, an extensive catechism for theological students, *Familière Exposition du simbole, de la loy et oraison dominicale en forme de colloque*, which had the same aim as *Épistres et Évangiles*. The bishop wished to help them bring the gospel to their parishioners in their preaching and teaching.

We also have, from Roussel's student days, two treatises: one is a translation, with notes, of Aristotle's *Magna Moralia*, which is of some help; the other is a mathematical treatise that will be of little use for our purposes.

Chapter two will be a review of pertinent literature, addressing problems in the periodization of the Reformation, particularly in regard to France; an under-appreciation of the impact on early modern Europeans of the concept of Christian society; the recent work on irenic tendencies in the sixteenth century; various narratives and the way they have assessed Roussel and his allies in the Navarrian Network;<sup>25</sup> and the meager historiography that investigates Roussel's impact. Chapter three will examine, in its historical context, the preaching manual that Roussel helped to produce. Chapter four will study the children's catechism, again contextually. Chapter five will contrast the gospel-centered, peaceable model of episcopal oversight as articulated in Roussel's *Forme de visite* with the tumultuous events surrounding his leadership of church renewal during the 1530s. Chapter six will examine his catechism for theological students. It will outline Roussel's mature theology, noting both its openness to doctrines emphasized by Protestants and its embrace of a simple Catholic view of the Eucharist. Roussel's peaceful, non-schismatic intent will again be evident. Chapter seven, the conclusion, will suggest possibilities for further investigation on topics touched on in this study.

This thesis is both focused as a biography of one man and broad in its implications for our understanding of what is often called the French Reformation. It both brings forward an important historical player who has been too long neglected and sets his story into the context of recent historiographical work on irenicism in the early modern church.

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<sup>25</sup> A phrase recently coined by Jonathan A. Reid in his admirable work, *King's Sister—Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549) and her Evangelical Network* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009). See, for example, v. 1, p. 84.

## Chapter 2

### The Case of the Missing Bishop: A Review of Pertinent Literature

Gérard Roussel was famous and influential in France during his tenure as a church reformer—a period covering over three decades, from the 1520s through the first half of the 1550s.<sup>26</sup> He was internationally well known, not as renowned as Philip Melanchthon in Germany, but close. Yet, he has virtually disappeared from historical writings about the era. Why do the majority of historians find they have no need to consider the importance of someone who was as important in his time as Roussel? To answer this question, I will begin by assessing the role that the historiographical periodization of “the Reformation” has played in the “disappearance” of Roussel.<sup>27</sup>

#### Why privilege the Protestant Reformation(s)?

Any student of the origins of Protestantism “knows” that Martin Luther “started” the movement by nailing his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Saxony, on October 31, 1517. It is “common knowledge,” therefore, that “the Reformation” began on this date,<sup>28</sup> even if using the definite article in the term “*the* Reformation” is problematic and misleading. However, this terminology is so common the two phrases “the Reformation period” and “sixteenth century European history” are virtually synonymous. Based

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<sup>26</sup>Catholic polemicist, Florimond de Raemond, who denied that Roussel’s conformity to the Catholic Church was meaningful, felt that he was second only to Lefèvre d’Étaples in destructive influence and actually named a type of spirituality after him: “Rousseliste.” See Barbara Sher Tinsley, *History and Polemics in the French Reformation, Florimond de Raemond: Defender of the Church* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1992), p. 106.

<sup>27</sup> He is left out of Jo Eldridge Carney, *Renaissance & Reformation, 1500-1620: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: George Bell, 1931), pp. 50-53, already noted the tendency of what I will call the Enlightenment narrative to “over-dramatize” certain historical events and people, including Luther and his *Ninety-Five Theses*.

on this periodization, the historian's task is to probe the causes of the Protestant disruption and then explain its unfolding dynamic—including the Catholic “Counter-Reformation,” a term fully consonant with the perspective that such periodization produces.<sup>29</sup> Put another way, this choice of periodization creates a narrative which excludes historical movements that really occurred and which are relevant if we want to understand the 1520s and 1530s in the way contemporaries would themselves have understood events.<sup>30</sup> We would do well “to control” (to use the verbal form as it is used in scientific experimentation) our interpretations of events by taking into account the perceptions of active participants. They would not have viewed “the Reformation” as unprecedented, but rather as a continuation of a venerable tradition (though its anchoring in doctrinal challenge would have surprised many).<sup>31</sup>

Carter Lindberg has challenged the monolithic understanding of Protestantism implied in using the term “the Reformation.” He entitles his text *The European Reformations* stating what is now obvious: “there was a plurality of Reformations which interacted with each other: Lutheran, Catholic, Reformed and dissident movements.”<sup>32</sup> The movements influenced one another and so we are not surprised by similarities. Still, Lindberg has a point. The origins of Anglicanism, Lutheranism and Tridentine Catholicism differ considerably. The importance of the

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<sup>29</sup> See, for example, H. O. Evennett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), who thought, however, that the movement was more than just a reaction to the emergence of Protestantism, pp. 9, 125.

<sup>30</sup> See Alister Chapman, John Coffey, Brad S. Gregory, ed., *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), pp. 11, 13: “For a century and more Western Europe had sought for reform of the Church ‘in head and members’ and had failed to find it. . . . When churchmen spoke of reformation, they were almost always thinking of administrative, legal, or moral reformation; hardly ever of doctrinal reformation.” See too Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005). Thierry Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève: Des fidèles entre deux chaires en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), p. 30, argues, however, that the rupture was not over dogma but over “religious sensibility”: “parole” or “eucharistie?”

<sup>32</sup> Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), p. 9.

Swiss and South German cities in the unfolding of Reformation in those regions is unparalleled.<sup>33</sup> Then there are the various manifestations of the Anabaptists. There was indeed “a plurality of Reformations.” It is difficult to assert, then, that the sixteenth century is the era of “*the* Reformation” (my emphasis).

Earlier than Lindberg, the term “Counter-Reformation” began to be qualified. Not wishing to deny that there was a Catholic response to the Protestant challenge that was both defensive and hostile—and hence “counter” to the dissenters—John Olin argued that there was nonetheless a vital Catholic Reformation in the first half of the sixteenth century, a movement that continued persistent medieval efforts.<sup>34</sup> Generally, scholars now recognize both positive (“purify the church”) and negative (“destroy the heretics”) motivations in the Catholic leadership in this period. So, both terms—Counter-Reformation and Catholic Reformation—have currency.<sup>35</sup> Yet, we should note that the latter term helped to bring into question the use of the phrase “the Reformation”—meaning, of course, the birth of Protestantism.

Others have tried to overturn the assumptions connected with the “monolithic” perspective on Protestant origins. Studies in Reformation thought owe a large debt to the extensive and paradigm-shifting work of Heiko Oberman. His *Forerunners of the Reformation*,

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<sup>33</sup> See Bernd Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation, Three Essays*, tr., ed. by H. C. Erik Midelfort, Mark U. Edwards, Jr. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972).

<sup>34</sup> John C. Olin, *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola, Reform in the Church, 1495 – 1540* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. xiii-xiv. Evennett, *Counter-Reformation*, pp. 6-7, outlines how Maurenbrecher was the first to use the term “Catholic Reformation” in 1880—and encountered the objections of Protestant scholars for using “their” term, Reformation. Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève*, p. xix, believes it is “abusive” to reserve the term, “reform,” for the Protestants.

<sup>35</sup> John W. O’Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (London, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), affirms both terms, up to a point, but also wrestles with their inadequacy and the inadequacy of all terms to describe effectively the variegated realities of Catholicism in the sixteenth century. His preferred term is “Early Modern Catholicism.”

published in 1966, ran against the scholarly tide.<sup>36</sup> Oberman, in some key ways, carried the day by establishing that there is much continuity between streams of thought in the late medieval period and in the sixteenth century. The movement he described as *Forerunners of the Reformation* is “a two-pronged movement, providing context and antecedents for both the Protestant and the Tridentine Reformation.”<sup>37</sup> The thought was not entirely new. Augustin Renaudet had argued that the *préréforme* of the late Middle Ages had split into two streams: in the universities, it became the humanism that fed both Catholic desires for church renewal and the efforts of many early Protestant leaders. The *préréforme* in the monasteries ended up furthering the Tridentine Reformation.<sup>38</sup>

In agreeing with Oberman, scholars do not deny the “headlines,” the ruptures of the Reformation period. They are seeking, however, to move beyond the common disparagement of the later Middle Ages. It is a period with its own strengths, and there are more connections in thought between the late medieval/early modern worlds than the disruptions of the sixteenth century have suggested.<sup>39</sup> Oberman calls both for moral reform and for doctrinal

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<sup>36</sup> Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought, Illustrated by Key Documents*, translations by Paul L. Nyhus (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 3-4.

<sup>37</sup> Oberman, *Forerunners*, p. 41. Italics his. See too Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 421-422, who still emphasizes enormous differences in the renewing efforts of the Catholics and the Protestants, while allowing for some notable common ground. Oberman, p. 42, allows that the Anabaptists may be a third Reformation movement that rests on the same foundations, either going beyond what Luther had started, or, in fact, picking up on the apocalyptic themes of medieval spirituality directly. For more on the “radicals,” see Cameron, chap. 18, and Ozment, *Age of Reform*, chap. 10. Remarkably, given the time in which he wrote, Carl Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation, Principally in Germany and the Netherlands*, tr. Robert Menzies, v. I, *The Need of a Reformation in Reference to the General Spirit of the Church and Certain Particular Abuses* (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1855), p. xxi, states that the goal of his work is to demonstrate “the fact of the Reformation having pre-existed its actual advent, its origin in the Church's own bosom.”

<sup>38</sup> Augustin Renaudet, *Préréforme et Humanisme à Paris pendant les premières guerres d'Italie (1494-1517)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: Librairie D'Argences, 1953), pp. 702-703. For more on the late medieval desire for reform, see Cameron, *European Reformation*, chaps. 3, 4.

<sup>39</sup> See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*, vol. 4 (University of Chicago Press, 1984) in his *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* in 5 vols.; and Steven Ozment, *The Age of*

reform that prepared the way for the two Reformations. They come from many different documents and many different writers from several different nations.<sup>40</sup> The relationship between Scripture and church tradition was debated. As for the Protestants, tradition which comprises scriptural interpretation was welcomed. However, Wessel Gansfort had reservations, like Luther, about extra-biblical doctrinal formulations.<sup>41</sup> The radical Augustinian emphasis on God's electing decree in Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin was already anticipated by Thomas Bradwardine, Gregory of Rimini, and Johann Staupitz; but, then, the moderate Augustinianism of Trent had medieval forerunners in Robert Holcot and Gabriel Biel.

Later, Oberman examined carefully the life of Martin Luther. Luther brings about "The Longed-for Reformation"<sup>42</sup> as three circles of influence intersected: first, the politics and culture of the German people in Luther's day and, second, the elemental realities of Luther's life experience. Third, and most important for our purposes, Luther's Reformation was a medieval event.<sup>43</sup> The traditional longing for Reformation, both in the monasteries and in the wider church, was part of the medieval pursuit of the millennium. Expected to stand in the way were

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*Reform, 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). Making the same point for England, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Yale University Press, 2005), and Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

<sup>40</sup> Oberman, *Forerunners*, p. 25.

<sup>41</sup> Oberman, *Forerunners*, p. 58. See too his earlier work, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967; originally published, 1962), pp. 365-412.

<sup>42</sup> Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, tr. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989; originally published in German, 1982), part one.

<sup>43</sup> Oberman, *Luther*, pp. 50-81. Posthumously, Oberman continued his reflections on the continuity between late medieval reform and Luther in Donald Weinstein, ed., *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). See also two "festschriften" for Oberman: Robert J. Bast, Andrew C. Gow, ed., *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late-Medieval and Reformation History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), and Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Katherine G. Brady, Susan Karant-Nunn, James D. Tracy, ed., *The Work of Heiko A. Oberman: Papers from the Symposium on His Seventieth Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). Similarly, Berndt Hamm, *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), sees some discontinuity between the late medieval period and the Protestant Reformation, but sees much more continuity.

agents of the Antichrist. Luther quickly identified the pope as the Antichrist. Significantly, Luther's indebtedness to medieval theology was noted by a contemporary, Wendelin Steinbach at the University in Tübingen, who saw in Luther's attacks on scholasticism a reformulation of the position of Gregory of Rimini.<sup>44</sup>

Historians have generally been receptive to Oberman. William Bouwsma argues that John Calvin was both a philosopher who craved intellectual certainty, and a humanist and rhetorician, willing to embrace ambiguity.<sup>45</sup> Despite his insistence on the intelligibility of God, Calvin was aware that his teaching on God's transcendence placed the divine above the ability of human reason to comprehend fully. He could scorn the "thorny subtleties" of Scholasticism, and yet he was in agreement with this medieval nominalist outlook.<sup>46</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan argues that "doctrinal pluralism," especially concerning predestination and the sacraments, was clearly evident in the later medieval period. It was at the Council of Trent that the Catholic Church moved from "pluralism to definition," only then declaring heretical options that Protestants embraced.<sup>47</sup> His periodization for "reform" covers four centuries—1300 to 1700. Robert Scribner demonstrated the continuity of much popular piety from pre-Reformation Catholic times to the post-Reformation period.<sup>48</sup> Despite the best efforts of Protestant preachers, the populace continued to have a "weakly sacramentalized" view of the world, one in which the supernatural inhabited the material realm in ways both orthodox and less orthodox.

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<sup>44</sup> Oberman, *Luther*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>45</sup> William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 230-234. Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), chaps. 1, 2, gives details of the impact upon Calvin of different humanists.

<sup>46</sup> Bouwsma, *Calvin*, p. 156.

<sup>47</sup> Pelikan, *Reform*, p. 7 and chaps. 1, 7.

<sup>48</sup> R. W. Scribner, "Elements of Popular Belief" in his *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400-1800)*, ed. Lyndal Roper (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

Oberman has carried the day. Yet, his presentation has made little impact on curricula in university History departments, which still generally have a course on “the Reformation” that covers sixteenth century religious change.<sup>49</sup> This periodization seems structurally embedded.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, the notions of the late medieval period as moribund and the Reformation period as a radical break with the preceding centuries remain lodged in many people’s minds.<sup>51</sup> Most textbooks acknowledge medieval precedents, yet still privilege the Protestant reformations. Olin, in a source book for the Catholic Reformation, traces its roots to the longing in the later Middle Ages for reform of the Church “in head and members” (*in capite et in membris*), and suggests that longstanding efforts finally succeeded within the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century because the Protestants first had success in establishing a measure of reform. He cites documents which demonstrate that strong calls for reform preceded the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Yet, he still dates his work from 1495-1540, more or less conceding that the periodization that privileges Protestantism is legitimate.<sup>52</sup> Mark Greengrass demonstrates how confusing it is to try to graft the standard periodization on to the historical evidence. On the same page, he claims both that the French Reformation “begins” in the 1520s *and* that its “heterodoxy” had not “necessarily begun with the protestant reformation.”<sup>53</sup> Carter Lindberg sets *The European Reformations* into a late medieval context, emphasizing social and economic

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<sup>49</sup> Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff, in an apology for Lutheranism, coined the term “Reformation” in 1694 to refer to the events surrounding Martin Luther. His work was entitled: *Commentarius historicus et apologeticus de Lutherismo sive de reformatione religionis ductu D. Martini Lutheri in magna Germaniae parte aliisque regionibus*. Cited in Lindberg, *Reformations*, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Richard A. Muller, “Reflections on Persistent Whiggism and its Antidotes” in Chapman, Coffey, Gregory, *Seeing Things Their Way*, p. 141, also expresses concern for “excessively strict periodization.”

<sup>51</sup> For the classic expression of a waning medieval culture, see Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, tr. Rodney J. Payton, Ulrich Mammitzsch (University of Chicago Press, 1996; originally published in Dutch in 1919).

<sup>52</sup> Olin, *Reform in the Church*, pp. xiii, xv-xxvi.

<sup>53</sup> Mark Greengrass, *The French Reformation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 1. The confusion is compounded when he says that the old chronology of pre-reform, reform and counter-reform “has to be abandoned” (p. vii)—a point that is correct, as I will argue below.

changes and the rise of conciliarism in response to schism and anti-clericalism. Yet, he leaves the basic periodization untouched. Euan Cameron includes discussion of political, social and economic change as it prepared for sixteenth century religious movements, while concentrating on the religious thinking and practice of the late medieval world. His approach represented a welcome return to religion as a topic in its own right rather than as a derivative of social change. Still, he leaves in place the traditional impression of a moribund church that awaits rescue through the Reformation,<sup>54</sup> one not essentially incompatible with that of A. G. Dickens' famous text, *The English Reformation*, first published in 1964,<sup>55</sup> nor that of G. R. Elton's notion of the "religious revolution" of the early sixteenth century as almost appearing "from nowhere" through Luther in 1517.<sup>56</sup> So, while more recent scholars do take Oberman's work into account, we still have a distance to travel to overcome the widespread privileging of the Protestant portion of European religious reform.

We now need specifically to assess the attempts to periodize "the Reformation" in France in order to understand Roussel's "disappearance." The religious historiography of sixteenth century France manifests a noteworthy contrast. Surveys of this century tend to give the majority of their attention to the period after 1562, when the first War of Religion broke out.<sup>57</sup> Like Cameron, Mack Holt and Denis Crouzet insist that religious factors need to be taken

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<sup>54</sup> He calls it a "precarious equilibrium": *European Reformation*, p. 91.

<sup>55</sup> A. G. Dickens, *The European Reformation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989).

<sup>56</sup> G. R. Elton, *Reformation Europe: 1517-1559* (London: Fontana Press, 1963), pp. 274-283. Elton did speak of the prior "state of Germany" (pp. 23-34) but his restricted geographical focus certainly had the effect of privileging Luther and, therefore, the Protestant Reformation, while the brevity of his efforts to set this reformation in context now seems breathtakingly simplistic.

<sup>57</sup> See Nancy Lyman Roelker, *One King, One Faith: The Parlement of Paris and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); J. H. M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975).

seriously in historical study.<sup>58</sup> They argue the Wars of Religion had a specific religious impulse that contributed to the violence of the period, an impulse that must be considered alongside economic, social and political factors. Still, Holt begins the main part of his study with 1562, and Crouzet places much greater emphasis on the latter part of the century, too. Nancy Roelker observes the “relative scholarly neglect” of the early century. Why this under-emphasis on what she calls *pré-réforme*? Roelker asserts it “is partly to be explained by its scattered and amorphous character.”<sup>59</sup> As Salmon states, “Pre-Calvinist religious dissent in France lacked specific social or political affiliations.”<sup>60</sup> Jonathan Reid challenges the claim to a lack of affiliation, demonstrating that the evangelicals were indeed well connected in France and internationally through their network centered on Marguerite of Navarre.<sup>61</sup> Their connection did not centre so much on institutions—a point of vulnerability, as we shall see—but on a common spiritual and intellectual commitment to gospel-centered church renewal. Participants struck out on paths that were congruent with a recognized tradition of reform and yet also challenged existing conditions.<sup>62</sup> Some were drawn to this gospel-centered church renewal, while having no intention of abandoning Catholicism. The fluidity of the early sixteenth century

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<sup>58</sup> Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Denis Crouzet, *La genèse de la Réforme française, 1520-1560* (Paris: Sèdes, 1996), pp. 477-591; Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu: La violence au temps des troubles de religion (vers 1525 - vers 1610)*, 2 tomes (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 1990).

<sup>59</sup> Roelker, *One King, One Faith*, p. 193. Bernard Quilliet, *La France du beau XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle (1490-1560)* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), also wishes to correct the lack of attention given to the early sixteenth century in France.

<sup>60</sup> Salmon, *Crisis*, p. 87.

<sup>61</sup> Jonathan A. Reid, *King's Sister—Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549) and her Evangelical Network* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 2 vols.

<sup>62</sup> Certain university faculties were, for a time, supportive of humanism and even Protestantism, as part of this longing for reform. The Faculty of Law at Toulouse, especially prior to 1532, is an example. See R. de Boysson, *Un Humaniste Toulousain: Jehan de Boysson (1505-1559)* (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard & fils, 1913), chaps. II, III, IV; John Charles Dawson, *Toulouse in the Renaissance* (New York: AMS Press, 1966; originally published, 1923), pp. 12-27; Henri Jacoubet, *Jean de Boysonné et son temps* (Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1930), chap. III; Robert A. Schneider, *Public Life in Toulouse, 1463-1789: From Municipal Republic to Cosmopolitan City* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 48-58.

makes it a fascinating focus for historical inquiry. So why the relative neglect? I will suggest below that dominant historical narratives have tended to “blind” scholars to the importance of this Navarrian Network. They have been ignored because they do not contribute to a consciously or subconsciously predetermined teleology.

Roelker referred above to *pré-réforme*, an elusive term. It is not hard to define, yet it has been very difficult for scholars to agree on the time period it covers, and on those who belonged to the movement. Larissa Taylor uses the term to refer to the longing for church reform that marked the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries among French Catholics.

Religious reformation was an ongoing process that began not with Luther’s published attack on indulgences, but *early in the fifteenth century* in response to a church wracked by schism, a church that many thought had lost sight of its original mission. The problems of bureaucracy, venality, anticlericalism, and related issues so preoccupied later fifteenth-century preachers that they began to make an attempt from within to correct the faults of the church and its priesthood.<sup>63</sup>

The prescriptions of these preachers were generally consistent with the Catholic sacramental system. Yet their preaching was Christ-centered, both for salvation and for living. They toyed with the “heterodox” (a term Taylor distinguishes from “heretical”), encouraging innovation. It was only after “it became clear that Luther’s beliefs could not be contained within the Catholic Church” that “heterodoxy and heresy became virtually synonymous.”<sup>64</sup> Pressure, which would eventually crush this reforming network, then mounted to abandon any practice or teaching that hinted at “heterodoxy.” Yet, let us note that calls for reform had been part of French culture since *at least* the early fifteenth century. A key motivation was a visceral rejection of a

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<sup>63</sup> Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (Oxford University Press, 1992), p.233. Italics mine.

<sup>64</sup> Taylor, *Soldiers*, pp. 208-209.

return to the open schism within the Church of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Augustin Renaudet established this use of the term in *Préréforme et Humanisme à Paris (1494-1517)*.<sup>65</sup> First published in 1916, it demonstrated that a reforming spirit was active in monastic houses, particularly through the *devotio moderna* originating in the Netherlands, and in the universities through the impact of humanism. The latter group had modest goals:

They desired bishops who were less indifferent, monks more respectful of their vows, less greedy and quibbling, preachers less uncouth, a parish clergy less ritual-bound, more devout, a theology less ignorant of the gospel and of humanity, a religion less priestly and formal, more interior and tender.<sup>66</sup>

The reforming movement in the monasteries ended up in the service of “the Counter-Reformation army.”<sup>67</sup> Some of the university-based humanists would end up Protestants. It was often difficult to distinguish between the latter and other humanists who had no intention of furthering schism.

Why was it hard to distinguish between schismatics and non-schismatics? As previously noted, a reform movement had been active long before 1517. One of the surprising conclusions from investigations into this period is that the piety of this Catholic reform movement was virtually identical to the piety of the emerging Protestants. As Francis Higman puts it:

We hope that this presentation will permit us to grasp a little of the broad outline of a very important, but little known phenomenon of the years 1525-1550: the piety of the

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<sup>65</sup> Holt, *Wars of Religion*, pp. 14-17, also affirms this usage. O’Malley, *And All That*, pp. 131-132, states that the call for reform began in the eleventh century and intensified in the fifteenth century, starting with the Council of Constance, 1414-1418.

<sup>66</sup> Renaudet, *Humanisme*, p. 702: “Ils veulent des prélats moins indifférents, des moines plus respectueux de leur règle, moins avides et moins procéduriers, des prédicateurs moins barbares, un clergé paroissial moins inculte et plus dévoué, une théologie moins ignorante de l’Évangile et de l’homme, une religion moins sacerdotale, moins formelle, plus intérieure et plus tendre.” It is interesting that Pelikan, *Reform*, p. 2, and chap. 6 includes the humanists in the chapter that deals with the “revolutionaries” of the era, along with the Anabaptists and the anti-Trinitarians.

<sup>67</sup> Renaudet, *Humanisme*, p. 703: “l’armée de la Contre-Réforme.”

Gallican church was, at the same time, “Lutheran” and “orthodox,” radical and anchored in the traditional church; in sum, *evangelical*.<sup>68</sup>

Emphasizing preaching, Taylor agrees: it ‘is virtually impossible to differentiate between the evangelical preaching that had been part of the French *préréforme* movement and early “reformed” preaching, at least in the 1520s and 1530s.’<sup>69</sup> Schismatic choices would soon separate the Protestants from the humanists and other reformers who remained loyal to the Catholic Church. Yet there was much common ground among these evangelicals (another problematic term I will discuss below), and this fact is lamentably “little known.”<sup>70</sup>

One important conclusion may be drawn from the work of those who use *pré-réforme* to refer to reforming sentiment prior to Luther. Lutheran ideas did not spark “the Reformation” in France. They made a strong impact<sup>71</sup> on a movement that already existed:

All that can be said with any certainty is that there was no Lutheranism as such in France, except [for a few individuals]. Although innate French and Swiss ideas dominated the early French Reformation, this is not to suggest that Lutheran *theology* did not have an impact.<sup>72</sup>

The reforming spirit in France was not an import. Reformers there turned to Luther to guide them, but the path was one that they had already chosen out of their own cultural framework. They were attempting a reformation in France well before “the Reformation.”

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<sup>68</sup> Higman, *Lire et Découvrir: La circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1998), pp. 199-200: “Esperons . . . que cette présentation . . . aura permis de saisir un peu les grandes lignes d’un phénomène très important et peu connu des années 1525-50: le piété de l’Église gallicane en même temps << luthérienne >> et << orthodoxe >>, radicale et ancrée dans l’Église traditionnelle: somme toute, *évangélique*.” Emphasis in original.

<sup>69</sup> Taylor, “Dangerous Vocations: Preaching in France in the Late Middle Ages and Reformations” in Larissa Taylor, ed., *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period* (Boston: Brill Academic, 2003), p. 101; see too Taylor, *Soldiers*, p. 208.

<sup>70</sup> Wanegffelen, *Ni Rom, Ni Genève*, p. xx, uses the term “méconnus” of those caught between confessions.

<sup>71</sup> In “Ideas for Export: Translations in the Early Reformation,” Higman, *Lire et Découvrir*, pp. 531-544, demonstrates that Luther was easily the dominant author during the first twenty years of translating Protestant works into French. So, when the indigenous French reformers were accused of being “Lutherans,” the stereotype had some validity—but only some.

<sup>72</sup> Taylor, “Dangerous Vocations” in *Reformations*, pp. 101-102. Italics hers.

Salmon and Roelker use *pré-réforme* to refer to the earliest “Reformation” period, prior to the establishment of Calvinism as the Protestant church in France.<sup>73</sup> In 1559 representatives of these Huguenots gathered secretly in Paris to form a national synod of Reformed churches. This organizational event marked the end of a significant transition. These churches had become the Protestants in France. However, back in the 1520s it was far from clear that Protestant differences would harden into nearly exclusive streams. It is this fluid period prior to 1559 which some call the *pré-réforme*.

The transition to Calvinist dominance began in the 1530s. Key points include the first publication of Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536, and the mission of the company of pastors sent out from Geneva, starting in 1555, to establish a rapidly increasing number of Reformed churches. One reason Protestants welcomed the efforts flowing from Geneva was a sense of vulnerability. Certainly, Protestants were at risk prior to 1534.<sup>74</sup> However, prior to the Affair of the Placards on October 18, 1534, Protestants had grounds to hope that Francis I, in his support of Renaissance learning and arts, would provide them protection. He often did. The high number of humanists among Protestant leaders certainly helped. Calvin appealed to this tendency in Francis when he dedicated his *Institutes* to the king. When the placards appeared in a number of northern French cities, condemning Catholic teaching on the nature of the sacrament, Francis turned severely against the Protestants.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Salmon, *Crisis*, p. 87 and Glossary; Roelker, *One King, One Faith*, pp. 189-191.

<sup>74</sup> See William Monter, *Judging the French Reformation: Heresy Trials by Sixteenth-Century Parlements* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>75</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 436-439, claims that the Navarrians still felt that their goals were attainable after the severe response to the Affair of the Placards. Francis, in fact, was still open to bringing Philip Melancthon to France to explore the possibility of a church concord.

Some Catholic reformers were afflicted in the prosecutions.<sup>76</sup> Protestants could expect little protection from Francis anymore. Many would seek a shield under the more symbolic umbrella of Geneva. With the benefit of hindsight, the Affair of the Placards marks the beginning of the transition period. From 1534 until 1559, the early, more fluid “Reformation” is steadily swallowed up by a well organized Calvinism.

So we have two possible time periods for the *pré-réforme*: a reforming movement predating 1517, and the fluid years of “the early Reformation” itself. Clearly the choice of time period affects our understanding of who participated in the movement. Yet a summary of what *pré-réformistes* considered important would accurately describe participants in either era, a confirmation of Higman’s and Taylor’s arguments that their piety was more Gallican and evangelical than Catholic or Protestant. What, then, is the *pré-réforme*? It is a longing for reform of church and society, increasingly affected over the course of the fifteenth century by the humanism stemming from the Renaissance and by a fresh reading of the Bible, encouraged by many humanists—notably, in France, Lefèvre d’Étaples and his evangelical disciples—but most famously by Martin Luther. (Hence, many of the French who responded to this call for reform in the 1520s were labelled Lutherans; yet most had no desire to follow Luther into schism.<sup>77</sup>) While these early reformers had extensive networks, there was little about the movement that was systematized or disciplined, as later Calvinism would be. C. A. Mayer

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<sup>76</sup> See Monter, *Judging*, pp. 69-74, for a useful summary of the Affair of the Placards. The fact that many Protestants disagreed with the teaching on the Lord’s Supper expressed in the placards was a “fine point” lost on many Catholics of the day. See Francis Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne: A Bibliographical Study of Books in French Censured by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520-1551* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), p. 44. The term “sacramentarian” was intended to identify those behind the placards.

<sup>77</sup> See Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne*, p. 39: “in many cases, the French evangelicals were saying the same things as Luther; but that does not make them Lutherans.” See too p. 45. Mack Holt stresses that the earlier (pre-1517) humanists as a group “were clearly not proto-Protestants”: *Wars of Religion*, p. 15.

reminds us that the preferred term for self-identification among those in the movement who would separate from Rome was *évangélisme*, best translated into English as “evangelicalism,” not its cognate “evangelism.” The term Protestant is anachronistic prior to the “protestation” issued by the minority evangelical princes against the majority led by Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Speyer in 1529.<sup>78</sup> *Évangélisme* is related to the Greek word *euaggelion*. It refers to the “good news” of Jesus. The early reformers wanted to be “good news” people, seeking to recapture what they felt had been lost: the joy of the gospel of Christ. It was this spirit that marked the approach of Gallican reformers. They were “concerned much less with credal statements, intellectual definitions of a truth which, in any case, is beyond human comprehension, than with a quality of life, an attitude of mind and soul, the imitation of Christ, the living relationship of man with God.”<sup>79</sup> This spirit can be said to mark either era that scholars have labelled *pré-réforme*.

Is there a better term than *pré-réforme*? Clearly, it is problematic. An alternative may be the term that many sympathizers of reform used for self-identification: evangelical. While I will prefer its use, and while it is an appropriate word when we consider the inclinations and beliefs of those who participated in the so-called *pré-réforme*, this term is problematic, too. Many reformers were clearly non-schismatic; yet they wished to recall the Catholic Church to its evangelical roots. However, the early participants in the Protestant Reformation also used that word to underline the urgency of what they taught and did, including the schism they generally rued, but would not reverse. Since evangelical was the term all these reformers used of

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<sup>78</sup> C. A. Mayer, “Évangélisme et Protestantisme” in *Studi Francesi* 30 (1986), pp. 1-2.

<sup>79</sup> Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne*, p. 38. See also his “Premières réponses catholiques aux écrits de la Réforme en France, 1525-c.1540” in *Lire et Découvrir*, p. 513.

themselves, it is best to use it to describe participants in the *pré-réforme*. Even though a parting of the ways would come, these evangelicals often sensed the common ground they shared. When a distinction is called for, I will label the two groups as irenic evangelicals and schismatic evangelicals. The Navarrian Network contained both. (I am conscious that not all reformers who refused schism used “peaceful” methods,<sup>80</sup> but most did. Also, I know that not all Protestants were schismatic in attitude or strategy. It is difficult, indeed, to find clear descriptors.)

However, a more important historiographical point should be raised, one which has a broader impact. Given the difficulty in delineating the *pré-réforme*, perhaps we should not just avoid the term, but actually question the assumptions that lie behind it. How useful can a term be when the time periods variously demarcated by it have no overlap (fifteenth century to 1517, or 1517 to 1559) and the people labelled by the term are two distinct groups? The fact that these two periods have a similar spiritual and theological ethos, however, is significant, and leads to an important conclusion. Perhaps this entire movement is better described, not as “pre-anything,” but as succeeding generations of the same reform movement that began already in the fourteenth century during the scandal of the voluntary exile of the papacy in Avignon. We do not need, therefore, to debate when *réforme* actually started (1517 or 1559) in order to establish when the term *préréforme* becomes relevant; it is a moot point. We do not need to deny all significance to the *Ninety-Five Theses* or the development of a national Reformed church structure in France to sustain the argument; we only need to see these events as part of a longer series of developments that punctuated and, in turn, shaped the long-standing movement for reform of church and society that the French (and many Europeans)

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<sup>80</sup> We can remind ourselves of the episode of Savonarola in Florence.

knew well. To see almost exclusively the disruption of the Protestant Reformation and how it prepared the way for the modern world does a disservice to the people of the sixteenth century. To fail to see the enormous and often conscious continuity in the reform impulse in the centuries from the early fourteenth through the mid-sixteenth is to fail to “see things their way.”<sup>81</sup> ‘Calling “Pre-Reformers” all those who attempted to improve the state of religion before Luther is a common enough mistake. But whatever we know of the deeper feelings of the Christian humanists runs clear against such a view.’<sup>82</sup> Protestantism represented a very important intensifying of *réforme*, but it did not represent its beginning. It was a tributary of a wide reforming river, an arm that went farther from the main stream and followed a more turbulent path than most, but it was part of the same river, consciously so for the 1520s through the 1540s. Diarmaid MacCulloch, citing the future Cardinal Contarini’s discovery of God’s gracious free gift of salvation in 1511 and Lefèvre d’Étaples’ assertion of salvation apart from human works in 1512, points out that the “Reformation was not the necessary outcome of this renewed interest . . . [in] what Augustine said about salvation.”<sup>83</sup> We need to shake ourselves free of narratives that overemphasize 1517 and so prevent us from seeing many French folk as “reformers” in their own right—possessed as they were of an urgency to renew the church “which everyone ruins.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Chapman, Coffey, Gregory, *Seeing Things Their Way*.

<sup>82</sup> Pierre Janelle, *The Catholic Reformation* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1963), p. 30. Stephen D. Bowd, *Reform before the Reformation: Vincenzo Querini and the Religious Reformation in Italy* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2002), focuses on one Catholic reformer, who trod several paths toward that goal: monastic, prophetic, humanistic, biblical, homiletical and papal renewal through a council. Querini was friend to the famous Cardinal Contarini.

<sup>83</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490-1700* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 111.

<sup>84</sup> Guillaume Briçonnet, Marguerite d’Angoulême, *Correspondance (1521-1524)*, ed. Christine Martineau and Michel Veissière, t. II, *Années 1523-1524* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), p. 104; t. I, *Années 1521-1522* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1975), p. 60: “qui tous ruyne.”

One of the distortions that follow from seeking for a *préréforme* movement is the tendency of historians to assume that Lefèvre d'Étaples really wanted to be Protestant, but lacked the courage to declare himself. Even an admirer suggests as much: Lefèvre d'Étaples died in conformity to Rome out of "prudence" and "with a bad conscience."<sup>85</sup> Screech's repeated use of the term *préréforme* leads him to the conclusion that any thorough-going reformer would have turned Protestant. So, Lefèvre d'Étaples can only be a pre-reformer. We must consider the possibility that there were diligent reformers who would never have contemplated schism, who therefore had no "bad conscience" to deal with but were entirely consistent with their own principles in remaining loyal to the Catholic Church, and yet who could appreciate and not react in horror to the preaching of the gospel by Protestants because they recognized them as fellow evangelicals. *Préréforme*, as a term, has become entwined with our inability to see these people. An historical narrative that takes into account the self-perception of people from this era will declare that there were numerous reformers from several centuries: most were Catholics, some were Protestants. The *Ninety-Five Theses* and the Reformed church synod of 1559 in Paris represent only two of many outcomes from what, by 1517, was a longstanding, venerable impulse in the hearts and minds of many folk.

This argument runs counter to the curricular structure of many university history departments, which generally treat the Renaissance and the Reformation as discrete courses.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> M. A. Screech in "Introduction" in Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples et ses disciples, *Épîtres et Évangiles pour les cinquante et deux semaines de l'an*, Fac-similé de la première édition Simon du Bois (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1964), p. 17: "avec mauvaise conscience."

<sup>86</sup> In a previous generation, it was common to view the two movements as hostile toward each other. See Ernst Troeltsch, "Renaissance and Reformation" in Lewis Spitz, ed., *The Reformation: Material or Spiritual?* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1962), pp. 17-27; Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon, 1952), pp. 16-17.

The case argued here suggests that Renaissance humanism (at least, its northern European manifestation) and Protestantism are better understood in a complex relationship with one another that must be comprehended in light of the common ground they shared within the one broad stream of reform. Neither movement intended to overthrow the dream of a renewed Christian church and society, but rather to strengthen this dream. Sometimes rivals and sometimes allies, they interacted in a somewhat chaotic fashion with other manifestations of the reforming impulse (such as conciliarism or the self-conscious rise of urban commonwealths) and with the resistance of the powerful in both church and the wider society. Put another way, there were multiple reformations spread over centuries, making it strange indeed to have a course called “The Reformation” and bringing the periodization accompanying such a course into doubt.<sup>87</sup> Taught this way, a course on Reformation would struggle to find its beginning and end. For France, it seems best to eliminate any notion of *préréforme* and to do the more subtle work of describing commonalities and differences between the various reforming thrusts.<sup>88</sup> We can expect to find more common ground than we have tended to look for.

The difficulties delineating *préréforme* help to illuminate the “case of the missing bishop.” If this period is defined as leading up to the establishment of the Reformed Church in France in 1559, then Roussel represents a timid sideshow to Calvin’s steadily growing

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<sup>87</sup> James D. Tracy, *Europe’s Reformations, 1450-1650: Doctrine, Politics and Community*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), argues that the Protestant Reformation was the high point in a series of reformations from the eleventh through the eighteenth centuries. Bainton, *Sixteenth Century*, p. 8, asserts, “By the *twelfth century* reform was *universally* conceded to be grievously needed.” My emphasis.

<sup>88</sup> Lucien Febvre, *Au Cœur Religieux du XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Paris: Sevpen, 1957), p. 161, already questioned the “Préréforme, Réforme, Contre-Réforme” terminology; he preferred “Rénovations, Révolutions, Révisions,” indicating a single movement manifesting varying levels of intensity.

influence.<sup>89</sup> If *préréforme* refers to the earlier period, then by 1517 the contribution of humanism to “the Reformation” in France is largely complete, and Roussel and his allies seem like an afterthought. From either perspective, it has seemed appropriate largely to ignore their place in French history. However, if they were a movement with a distinct vision of renewal in church and society that built on longstanding aspirations and that nearly prevailed in France in the early 1530s, this disregard seems out of place. The prominence of Roussel to his contemporaries is congruent with this latter possibility.

#### An underappreciation of Christian society: Violence and Much Irenicism

“Christian society” was an aspiration for many people in the Middle Ages. The longing—it was more than a “concept”—informed choices made in the political realm in the attempt to bring about both social harmony and corporate godliness under the umbrella of the Catholic Church. Many believed it possible to construct a just, peaceful and faithful society with which God would be pleased and upon which he would pour out his blessings. Church and state were the “two heads” of Christendom, who were to mediate such a grace to the people. This sacramental view of Christian society had a powerful hold on the imagination well into the early

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<sup>89</sup> Chadwick, *Reformation*, avoids the problem of the *préréforme* by leaving the evangelicals out of his story of the French Reformation altogether. He simply tells us of the Calvinists. See pp. 25-28, 31-34, 63, 75, 91, 97, 137, 153-168. Similarly, Philip Benedict, “Un roi, une loi, deux fois: parameters for the history of Catholic-Reformed co-existence in France, 1555-1685” in Ole Peter Grell, Bob Scribner, ed., *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chap. 5, does not even contemplate efforts at irenicism prior to 1555; Ruth Rouse, Stephen Charles Neill, ed., *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), does not mention France until 1578. Greengrass, *French Reformation*, pp. 14, 20, notes the non-schismatic, gospel-centered approach to church reform that the evangelicals followed, but then accuses them of being unwilling to see that “reformation was concerned with the making of a new religion and a new church” and, therefore, of refusing to accept “leadership and responsibility.” Here is a teleologically driven dismissal.

modern period,<sup>90</sup> implying that Protestant reformers were not the “secularizing heroes” that the Enlightenment narrative has often portrayed them to be.<sup>91</sup> This section will demonstrate that the commitment of both Protestants and Catholics to a version of Christian society remained very strong in the sixteenth century, engendering violence but also much irenic behaviour—ranging from forbearance of differences to active fraternity despite differences.

John Bossy tackled Emile Durkheim’s objectivist treatment of “religion” and “society.”<sup>92</sup> The latter suggested the organic connections in a society derived from its division of labour. Religion was more ephemeral, more a part of the “mechanics” in a society. All these sources of social unity could be examined in a detached manner. Bossy objected on three grounds. First, there was in the late medieval/early modern period no such thing as religion as something outside of oneself that could be examined in a detached fashion. Second, in this era the only meaning for the word “society” that applied was “companionship,” a relational and non-objective connotation. “So society for Catholics was practically of the order of the sacred. It was a saving fraternity, the outward face of charity.”<sup>93</sup> Yet, Protestants saw society in the same relational fashion, though with less intensity. Third, Bossy makes an important distinction. For

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<sup>90</sup> Peter Matheson, *The Imaginative World of the Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), pp. 9-10, 96-97, 130, describes the longing for a just social, political and spiritual commonwealth that informed the hopes of the peasants in their war of 1525, and that caused the manifestation of other forms of gender and social equality. James R. Payton, Jr., *Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings* (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP Academic, 2010), pp. 99-107, describes the difference between Luther and the Swiss Reformers as Luther focusing on the individual as he—in the manner of a good scholastic theologian—sees all reform through the lens of justification by faith alone, and the Swiss as concentrating on the urban commonwealth and its problems by seeking the renewal of Christian society in all its aspects through the application of biblical teaching.

<sup>91</sup> Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), argues that secularization did follow from the irresolvable conflicts between Christian confessions during and after “the Reformation.” He stresses, however, that the Protestant leaders had no intention of encouraging this development.

<sup>92</sup> John Bossy, “Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim” in *Past and Present* 95 (May 1982), pp. 3-18. Durkheim’s book, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, was published in 1915.

<sup>93</sup> Bossy, “Durkheim,” p. 11.

Durkheim the statement, “A country needs to have unity of religion to have unity of society,” had great explanatory power: here is the reason unity of religion was so important in the early modern period. Bossy revises it crucially: “A country needs to have unity of religion to have society.” This revision deepens the intertwining of society and religion for both Protestants and Catholics. It explains, positively, the profound impact of religion on social order, and, negatively, the great fear that was unleashed when religious change or difference appeared to threaten social order. Thus, conflicts over disunity in religion reflect fear: fear for the well-being of all that might be dear—family, friends, village, monarch. The rise of Protestantism did not secularize (nor objectivise) the notion of society, nor did it lessen this fear.

Bossy’s analysis, though valuable in challenging Enlightenment objectivism, now needs refining. Recent research—which I will introduce below—demonstrates many Europeans were less concerned in their everyday lives about unity in religion than many have anticipated. A shared participation in a generalized Christian piety and a desire to love one’s neighbour as an expression of one’s faith often functioned as a sufficiently common religion to maintain Christian society.<sup>94</sup> This piety is less substantial than the confessional unity produced by a state church that scholars, under the influence of previously dominant narratives, had posited. However, Bossy still gives insight into the fear that produced violence in the early modern era, and into the ways in which the powerful in church and society legitimated their initiatives to produce social unity. “Almost without exception, early-modern intellectuals argued that there

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<sup>94</sup> Michele Zelinsky Hanson, *Religious Identity in an Early Reformation Community: Augsburg, 1517 to 1555* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009); Willem Frijhoff, “How Plural were the Religious Worlds in Early-Modern Europe? Critical Reflections from the Netherlandic Experience” in C. Scott Dixon, Dagmar Freist, Mark Greengrass, ed., *Living with Religious Diversity in Early-Modern Europe* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009); Christine Kooi, *Liberty and Religion: Church and State in Leiden’s Reformation, 1572-1620* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), gives examples from this city and concludes that Reformation there had more to do with liberty and less to do with religion.

could be no lasting order in either church or state without a uniform corpus of beliefs. Without it, religion would descend into chaos, ordered rule would give way to anarchy, and mankind would lapse (even further) into sin.”<sup>95</sup> Such efforts at legitimation were not without effect; however, we now recognize that common folk often chose which parts of these discourses they would embrace in their daily life. It turns out to be less than we had, until recently, expected.

The rise of European cities from the eleventh century has been portrayed as a secularizing trend. With a long time frame, the argument can probably be sustained. However, the evidence suggests ambitious local government was not having that effect in the sixteenth century. The magistrates on council and the citizens shared a common goal: the city should pursue both material and spiritual well-being. In solidarity they believed the sins of one could bring divine judgment on the city. Piety was, therefore, encouraged by almost all.<sup>96</sup> When the town sought to usurp control of ecclesiastical elements, it was not to lessen the influence of Christianity, but to ensure its effective local representation.<sup>97</sup> Towns were viewed as Christian commonwealths.<sup>98</sup> A subtle shift had taken place by the 1520s. Towns were no longer seen as connected to eternal salvation; still, they held out the promise of ensuring peace on earth, a

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<sup>95</sup> Dixon, “Introduction” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> Moeller, *Imperial Cities*, p. 62-63: it was often the populace that pressured the magistrates to adopt Protestantism as part of this search for communal piety. For more on the deeply communal political efforts of cities, see Peter Blickle, ed., *Gemeinde und Staat im Alten Europa* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998); Patrick Collinson, John Craig, ed., *The Reformation of the English Towns, 1500-1640* (Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

<sup>97</sup> Martin Greschat, “The relation between church and civil community in Bucer’s reforming work” in D. F. Wright, ed., *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 17-31, details this conjunction between civic and spiritual concerns for the magistrates and reformers in Strasbourg.

<sup>98</sup> Dixon, “Introduction,” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, pp. 14-15, emphasizes the “corpus Christianum,” especially as it related to urban communes.

goal stemming from the pursuit of Christian society.<sup>99</sup> The city (or other local polities)—not European-wide Christendom—now constituted the focus for this aspiration.

One way to pursue the peace of the polity, which could clash with those who sought peace through spiritual purity, was to practise peaceable behaviour toward fellow citizens, *including those who had a divergent view regarding biblical teaching*. Many who chose this approach did not do so because they thought religion unimportant. In fact, they were convinced the Christian faith instructed them “to love your neighbour.” (Matthew 22:39) We will see that Gérard Roussel was one.

Let us first illustrate from England. Reformation there came “from above,” through the Tudor monarchs (except Mary) and their leading churchmen. Yet it was not the state’s power of enforcement that ensured its progress.<sup>100</sup> Dickens had already noted “a great many” moderate conservatives and moderate reformists practised cooperation with each other.<sup>101</sup> Christopher Marsh credits the common folk. They could raise riot when economic problems distressed them. Yet changes to the much-loved traditional religion left them quiet. Scholars call this puzzle the “compliance conundrum.” Marsh argues commoners had imbibed the Christian message of “love to neighbour” in such a way that they flexed with changes from above, even though many edicts were bewildering. He suggests that too often historians expect intellectual consistency in people, when their capacity to live with ambiguity, even contradiction, was high

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<sup>99</sup> Moeller, *Imperial Cities*, p. 53.

<sup>100</sup> Despite the suggestions of J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 81-84.

<sup>101</sup> Dickens, *English Reformation*, p. 22.

and enabled many to move between “old” and “new” with minimal stress.<sup>102</sup> Many granted “space” for inconsistencies in their neighbours as well, not out of indifference, but because they had a greater dream of social concord—a specifically Christian hope for a society marked by “charity” and “neighbourliness,”<sup>103</sup> as enjoined by the official homilies of the church.<sup>104</sup> For the English majority (not the Puritans) this society included the alehouse, popular revelries and Sunday sports.<sup>105</sup> It also frequently involved permitting dissenters to function within the community: witnessing wills, attending services of the established church, and even serving as parish officers.<sup>106</sup> We must not idealize popular religion. Intolerance for dissent manifested itself. What we must stress is that this intolerance, which has grabbed the historical “headlines,” also coexisted with a “benevolent side” to “local opinion.”<sup>107</sup> This benevolence goes a long way in explaining the compliance conundrum. What stands out is the determination of many commoners to practise irenic behaviours, even when pressure from governing bodies in the English polity suggested such choices were risky.

Beyond England, scholars have recently identified various ways in which irenicism existed in the early modern era. We are rapidly “seeing more” as we free ourselves from dominant narratives that portray historical development fairly monolithically.<sup>108</sup> (I will reflect on these narratives and on postmodernity below.) As recently as 1993, Gregory Hanlon asked,

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<sup>102</sup> Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England: Holding Their Peace* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 11.

<sup>103</sup> Marsh, *Holding Their Peace*, pp.25-26.

<sup>104</sup> Marsh, *Holding Their Peace*, p. 184-195, 202-203, 209, 213.

<sup>105</sup> Marsh, *Holding Their Peace*, pp.25-26, 106-107.

<sup>106</sup> Marsh, *Holding Their Peace*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>107</sup> Marsh, *Holding Their Peace*, p. 196. Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England 1500-1700* (Manchester University Press, 2006), demonstrates that acts of hatred and of charity were two sides of the same coin that sought the well being of others.

<sup>108</sup> See Alexandra Walsham, “In Sickness and in Health: Medicine and Inter-Confessional Relations in Post-Reformation England” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, pp. 161-162.

“Why are historians uninterested in interconfessional harmony in seventeenth century France and in Europe generally?”<sup>109</sup> He suggested social historians often functioned with the axiom that religion is inherently conflictual, and then he doubted that conflict is the only universal aspect of human societies.<sup>110</sup> While there was no permissible discourse available then to further tolerance, nonetheless behaviour exhibited between Catholics and Protestants demonstrated that tolerance was “normal.”<sup>111</sup> He concluded that such coexistence was European-wide, “wherever the minority community (in terms of social and political power, if not in numbers) recognized their inferiority and posed no challenges to the ruling confession.”<sup>112</sup> An irenic literature has now developed to confirm and sharpen his contention.

Earlier efforts in this direction reinforced the Enlightenment narrative: the Reformation was a first step on the way to freedom of conscience and of worship, but it was inadequate. The scepticism that slowly emerged in the later seventeenth century was the crucial element in bringing about such liberties.<sup>113</sup> “Tolerance” and “toleration,” as abstract ideals to be embraced, are associated with this narrative.<sup>114</sup> Ironically, efforts to affirm this narrative have

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<sup>109</sup> Gregory Hanlon, *Confession and Community in Seventeenth Century France: Catholic and Protestant Coexistence in Aquitaine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 1.

<sup>110</sup> Hanlon, *Confession and Community*, p. 5.

<sup>111</sup> Hanlon, *Confession and Community*, pp. 8, 116. Hanlon, p. 90, does need to argue, however, that interconfessional tensions found in the primary sources are not a sign of social breakdown, but the more normal conflict between households for honour.

<sup>112</sup> Hanlon, *Confession and Community*, p. 260. See also Philip Benedict, *The Faith and Fortunes of France's Huguenots, 1600-85* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 302; Arie-Jan Gelderblom, Jan L. de Jong, Marc van Vaeck, ed., *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

<sup>113</sup> Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton University Press, 2003), who argues that Christianity is the most intolerant of religions.

<sup>114</sup> Malcolm C. Smith, *Montaigne and Religious Freedom: The Dawn of Pluralism* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1991), and his follow-up article, “Early French Advocates of Religious Freedom” in *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXV, 1 (1994), pp. 29-51; Gary Remer, *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); Ferdinand Buisson, *Sébastien Castellion, sa vie et son œuvre (1515–1563), Etude sur les origines du protestantisme libéral français*, ed. Max Engammare (Geneva: Droz, 2009; originally published in French, 1862); W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England* in 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University

led to its undermining. A 1988 conference celebrating the tercentenary of the Glorious Revolution in England produced a volume whose title is telling—*From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England*.<sup>115</sup> It affirmed the beginnings of modern pluralism in the Edict of Toleration issued in 1688. However, a follow-up conference in 1994 produced a volume that veered toward revisionism.<sup>116</sup> Instead of assessing the impact of ideas about religious liberty, it provided case studies from different parts of Europe that demonstrated local political negotiations undergirded most developments in toleration—face-to-face neighbourliness in action. Similarly, a book produced for the four hundredth anniversary of the Edict of Nantes—another heroic milestone for the Enlightenment narrative—disputes a simplistic reading. The Edict aimed to pacify the body politic in France after decades of civil war, but its goals included ultimate religious reunification<sup>117</sup>—hardly an embrace of religious diversity. Local politics, however, did negotiate actual diversity with some frequency.<sup>118</sup>

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Press, 1933-1940); Hans R. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio, 1515-1563: Humanist und Verteidiger der religiösen Toleranz im konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); John M. Headley, *The Europeanization of the World: On the Origin of Human Rights and Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2007); Berndt Hamm, Michael Welker, *Die Reformation: Potentiale der Freiheit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Nicolas Pique, Ghislain Waterlot, ed., *Tolérance et Réforme: Éléments pour une généalogie du concept de tolérance* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), while providing detailed studies of the French context in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, largely treat “tolerance” as an idea; John Tedeschi, ed., *The Correspondence of Roland H. Bainton and Delio Cantimori, 1932-1966: An Enduring Transatlantic Friendship between Two Historians of Religious Toleration* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2002); Bainton, *The Travail of Religious Liberty* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1951). See R. I. Moore, *The formation of a Persecuting Society: authority and deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 2007; originally published, 1987) as “background perspective” for this narrative.

<sup>115</sup> Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel, Nicholas Tyacke, ed., *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>116</sup> Grell, Scribner, *Tolerance and Intolerance*; Grell, Roy Porter, ed., *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2000). A similar transition can be observed in C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, J. Israel, G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes, ed., *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), where some of the essays reflect an Enlightenment narrative and some veer toward a postmodern politicized perspective.

<sup>117</sup> Cary J. Nederman, John Christian Laursen, ed., *Difference & Dissent: Theories of Tolerance in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Lanham, MD.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), p. 12, call this approach “concordance.”

<sup>118</sup> Michel Grandjean, Bernard Roussel, ed., *Coexister dans l'intolérance: L'édit de Nantes (1598)* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1998). Similarly, most of the papers in Richard L. Goodbar, ed., *The Edict of Nantes: Five Essays and a New Translation* (Bloomington, MN.: National Huguenot Society, 1998) emphasize the political pragmatism of the

Postmodernity's suspicion of metanarratives has been salutary in allowing us to notice interactions among people that we had previously missed because they did not accord with dominant perspectives. Dixon affirms a swing away from discussion of religious reform and state formation that emphasized consolidation and uniformity in the direction of embracing the ambiguity of historical realities: "no one single or inescapable history captures the phenomenon of religious plurality in the early-modern period."<sup>119</sup> Suspicion of the claims of Western states to civilized superiority over other nations has contributed to a willingness to go beyond prevailing narratives. The Enlightenment narrative also claimed tolerance arose because of a secularization of society in the later early modern period, through the exaltation of human reason and human rights over against the controlling dogmatism of religious belief. However, critics from feminist and multicultural perspectives have pointed out the way this narrative has abstracted individuals as disembodied beings independent of their social and cultural settings. As the world increasingly becomes aware of divergent cultures in close proximity, the oppressive potential in this notion of tolerance is being recognized. In 1996, Cary Nederman and John Christian Laursen edited an important work that accomplished several goals at once, all intended to conceive toleration in another fashion than individualistic abstraction.<sup>120</sup> Several medieval theorists advocated a communitarian, functionalist approach

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concord in bringing about social and political peace, while Henry IV aimed at eventual religious unity. Janine Garrisson, *L'Edit de Nantes: Chronique d'une paix attendue* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), prefers an Enlightenment understanding that the edict intended to embrace religious diversity.

<sup>119</sup> Dixon, "Introduction" in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, pp. 2-3, 5. See also Mark Greengrass, "Afterword: Living Religious Diversity," pp. 282-283; Wayne te Brake, "Emblems of Coexistence in a Confessional World," p. 77. He unfolds the same "everyday" diversity in regard to politics in *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Religious diversity can be found in sixteenth century Russia, too: Laura Ronchi De Michelis, *Eresia e Riforma nel Cinquecento: La dissidenza religiosa in Russia* (Turin: Claudiana, 2000).

<sup>120</sup> Nederman, Laursen, *Difference & Dissent*. See also their follow-up volume, *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration before the Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998). They were

to toleration that suggested the community was stronger for allowing dissent.<sup>121</sup> Others argued the cost to the body politic of enforcing uniform opinion was too high.<sup>122</sup> Even the Enlightenment hero John Locke is found not be as tolerant as is commonly supposed.<sup>123</sup> We realize that if ideas alone accounted for the rise of toleration, then it could have appeared earlier. In place of a unified abstract theory, historians find “many divergent and potentially conflicting visions,”<sup>124</sup> a reality that may allow people to press today for arrangements of tolerance among multiple communities (as opposed to just individuals). One new set of communities in European countries that does not assimilate easily to the Enlightenment narrative is Muslims. Some historians hope to learn political strategies for the present from earlier examples of what contributes to religious coexistence. Early modern Europe provides numerous examples of attempts at such coexistence. Some of these attempts reflect the longing for neighbourliness within Christian society.

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building on earlier work by Joseph Leclerc, *Toleration and the Reformation* (New York: Association Press, 1960; originally published in French, 1955); Leclerc, Marius-François Valkhoff, *Les premiers défenseurs de la liberté religieuse* (Paris: Cerf, 1969). Henry Kamen, *The Rise of Toleration* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) argued that religious liberty arose from a commitment to freedom of trade, a deeply pragmatic foundation.

<sup>121</sup> John of Salisbury and Marsiglio of Padua cited in Cary J. Nederman, “Liberty, Community, and Toleration: Freedom and Function in Medieval Political Thought” and Kate Langdon Forhan, “Respect, Interdependence, Virtue: A Medieval Theory of Toleration in the Works of Christine de Pizan” in Nederman, Laursen, *Difference & Dissent*, pp. 17-38, 67-82; see too Diane Wolfthal, ed., *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies for Coexistence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000). See too István Bejczy, “Tolerantia: A Medieval Concept” in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58, 3 (1997), pp. 365-384; Alexander Patschovsky, Harald Zimmermann, ed., *Toleranz im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1998).

<sup>122</sup> Stephen Lahey, “Toleration in the Theology and Social Thought of John Wyclif” and Gary Remer, “Bodin’s Pluralistic Theory of Toleration” in Nederman, Laursen, *Difference & Dissent*, pp. 39-66, 119-138. From a believers church perspective, see E. J. Furcha, “‘Turks and Heathen are our Kin’: The Notion of Tolerance in the Works of Hans Denck and Sebastian Franck,” pp. 83-98. John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments for Religious Toleration in Early Modern and “Early Enlightenment” Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), adopts an Enlightenment narrative, but does acknowledge a religious sense of toleration existed prior to Locke.

<sup>123</sup> William Walker, “Force, Metaphor, and Persuasion in Locke’s *A Letter concerning Toleration*” in Nederman, Laursen, *Difference & Dissent*, pp. 205-229.

<sup>124</sup> Nederman, Laursen, “Difference & Dissent: Introduction” in Nederman, Laursen, *Difference & Dissent*, pp. 5, 12. They cite two taxonomies to categorize the arguments for toleration: both include philosophical and political approaches. Forhan adds an aesthetical category and Guggisberg an economic one.

One of the strengths of this recent work on irenicism is that it demonstrates how much neighbourliness was practised through various forms of everyday negotiation and even improvisation. Keith Luria mentions a number of factors that, at times, trumped religious difference in seventeenth century France: common culture, shared language and political ideas, shared notions of civic and family life, kinship, neighbourliness, professional connections, economic interests, civic ties, “in short, everything that people have in common apart from religion.”<sup>125</sup> This “multi-layered identity”<sup>126</sup> helped to motivate irenic actions in the first two of his three “confessional boundaries.” The first boundary—where people consciously overlook religious difference in order to engage in daily amicable interactions—was informal and vulnerable because it lacked agreed upon mechanisms to maintain it. It had the effect of blurring religious distinctions. The second boundary consisted of agreed upon methods of sharing public domains—both institutional, such as representation on town councils, and physical, such as cemeteries—that made the differences between Reformed and Catholic firmer. These local arrangements were often encouraged by the monarchy to pursue peace in the realm. (Luria’s third confessional boundary—Louis XIV’s persecution of Protestants—destroyed such arrangements, and led to the conversion [Louis’ intent], exile or disappearance from public life of the Reformed. Even here Catholic neighbours sometimes assisted Protestants to flee or otherwise cope with the government’s persecution.) Many of the arrangements in the second confessional boundary addressed local points of tension, just as many interactions in the first boundary were relational and not part of bigger accommodations. As Scott Dixon,

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<sup>125</sup> Keith Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), p. 316.

<sup>126</sup> Frijhoff, “How Plural?” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 46, n. 45. On a prominent politician and advocate of religious freedom during the Dutch Revolt, see Gerrit Voogt, *Constraint on Trial: Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert and Religious Freedom* (Kirksville, MO.: Truman State University Press, 2000).

referring to much of early modern Europe, puts it, “Confessional relations were ambiguous and pragmatic, shaped more by contingencies than the higher principles of faith.”<sup>127</sup>

Luc Racaut and Alec Ryrie edited a series of essays that cover a variety of countries and individuals, and span the decades from the 1520s to the early seventeenth century. Resisting the tendency to see “moderates” as the first wave in the rise of Enlightenment toleration,<sup>128</sup> the essays hear irenic voices as rooted in their own age, seeking peace—some of the time—because of inspiration from their faith, and by building on medieval precedents. The editors point out several different motives for moderation.<sup>129</sup> First, moderation can be a style of

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<sup>127</sup> Dixon, “Introduction” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 2. See too his, “Urban Order and Religious Coexistence in the German Imperial City: Augsburg and Donauwörth, 1548-1608” in *Central European History* 40, 1 (2007), pp. 1-33; Andreas Höfele, Stephan Laqué, Enno Ruge, Gabriela Schmidt, ed., *Representing Religious Pluralization in Early Modern Europe* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2008); Randolph C. Head, Daniel Christensen, ed., *Orthodoxies and Heterodoxies in Early Modern German Culture: Order and Creativity 1500-1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Rosine A. Lambin, *Femmes de Paix: La coexistence religieuse et les dames de la noblesse en France, 1520-1630* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003), p. 466, calls the efforts of these women to pursue peace essentially “practical.” See also Robert Sauzet, ed., *Les frontières religieuses en Europe du XVe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1992); Mark Greengrass, Penny Roberts, Keith Cameron, ed., *The Adventure of Religious Pluralism in Early Modern France* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2000); Kathleen Perry Long, *Religious Differences in France: Past and Present* (Kirkville, Missouri: Truman University Press, 2006); Richard Bonney, D. J. B. Trim, ed., *Persecution and Pluralism: Calvinists and Religious Minorities in Early Modern Europe, 1550-1700* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006); Olivier Christin, *La paix de religion: L'autonomisation de la raison politique au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), sees a number of French and imperial cities as willing to embrace biconfessionality, based on local political considerations. See too Paul Warmbrunn, *Zwei Konfessionen in einer Stadt: Das Zusammenleben von Katholiken und Protestanten in den paritätischen Reichsstädten Augsburg, Biberach, Ravensburg und Dinkelsbühl von 1548 bis 1648* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983). On the social peace in Senlis, adroitly managed by local magistrates, see Thierry Amalou, *Une concorde urbaine: Senlis au temps des réformes (vers 1520-vers 1580)* (Limoges: Pulim, 2007). Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), speaks of negotiating Reformation, not just coexistence, between elites and commoners, as well as within these groups; see too Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*; John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England 1558-1689* (Harlow: Longman, 2000). Christopher W. Close, *The Negotiated Reformation: Imperial Cities and the Politics of Urban Reform, 1525–1550* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) focuses on the interactions between political units in Swabia; see too Kaspar von Greyerz, Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen, Thomas Kaufmann, Hartmut Lehmann, ed., *Interkonfessionalität—Transkonfessionalität—binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität: Neue Forschungen zur Konfessionalisierungsthese* (Gütersloher Verlag, 2003).

<sup>128</sup> See the conclusion by Mark Greengrass, “Moderate Voices: Mixed Messages” in Luc Racaut, Alec Ryrie, ed., *Moderate Voices in the European Reformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 199.

<sup>129</sup> Luc Racaut, Alec Ryrie, “Between Coercion and Persuasion” in their *Moderate Voices*, pp. 1-12. The essay by Alexandra Kess, “Diplomacy, Evangelism and Dynastic War: The Brothers Du Bellay at the Service of Francis I,” is a

presentation designed to make a more aggressive agenda palatable. Second, it can reflect a decision to fight only carefully selected battles. Third, we find Melanchthon's issues of indifference that were not worth fighting over (*adiaphora*). Fourth, *politiques* saw the political and social risks of rushed reform, and moved cautiously for the welfare of the body politic. Fifth and finally, some were moderates out of personal style. (Roussel displayed all five tendencies—though the first only rarely.)<sup>130</sup>

Benjamin Kaplan uses the word "tolerance" in its earlier meaning of "to suffer, endure or put up with something objectionable."<sup>131</sup> This definition yields a different picture of moderation than the one Ryrie and Racaut provide—though the presentations are complementary. He focuses on the confessional age, asking, "Can people whose basic beliefs are irreconcilably opposed live together peacefully? More often than usually recognized, the answer in that earlier era was yes. . . . Then, as perhaps now, people did not have to love each other in order not to kill each other."<sup>132</sup> "The community as religious body" had a dark side—especially when it intersected with the politics of the day<sup>133</sup>—yet the Christian faith shared by both Catholics and Protestants taught love of neighbour and reinforced the desire to live in

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very useful complement to the story of church renewal pursued by the Circle of Meaux. The Du Bellays sought on the level of international diplomacy to support these renewal efforts.

<sup>130</sup> Phillips Brooks, *Tolerance: Two Lectures* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1887), pp. 19-21, describes six different motivations for the practice of tolerance: indifference, political calculation to avoid harm, inability to correct other opinions, human respect, spiritual sympathy despite differences, and an understanding that God's truth is vaster than our apprehension. Brooks, p. 29, attributes to Christ an "utter refusal to use any power except reason and spiritual persuasion to turn [others] from their error." Barbara Sher Tinsley, *History and Polemics in the French Reformation, Florimond de Raemond: Defender of the Church* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1992), pp. 141, 151, has noted that Catholic polemicist Florimond de Raemond was treated by many moderate Catholics as an embarrassment, because they wanted to support political efforts at religious unification in France. On the other hand, she credits de Raemond with fighting his religious battles with the pen and not the sword.

<sup>131</sup> Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap Press, 2007), p. 8.

<sup>132</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 12.

<sup>133</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, chaps. Two, Three, Four.

“peaceful coexistence. . . . Honor, loyalty, friendship, affection, kinship, civic duty, devotion to the common weal” contributed to irenic impulses.<sup>134</sup> The churches contributed to the problem of religious conflict through preaching and teaching that was intolerant of other belief systems; yet they also contributed to the amelioration of the problem by faithful instruction in ways of living that included patience, forgiveness and peacemaking.<sup>135</sup> Kaplan assembles examples of “toleration” that form a fascinating picture. He discusses “comprehension,” the effort to allow people of varying convictions to have membership in the same church. Largely unsuccessful, it had some effect in Restoration England where it was called “latitudinarianism.”<sup>136</sup> He speaks of *Auslauf*, German for “walking out.” Examples come from Vienna in the 1570s where thousands would walk each Sunday to nearby estates of Protestant nobles to worship together;<sup>137</sup> and the Netherlands in the 1560s where “hedge preaching” contributed to the beginnings of the Dutch Revolt. Voluntary exile was another option.<sup>138</sup> Chapels, housing full-fledged congregations not affiliated with the state church, were sometimes allowed, as long as their exterior looked like a normal residence.<sup>139</sup> Individuals often treated those belonging to other confessions simply as

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<sup>134</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 9. See too his “Coexistence, Conflict, and the Practice of Tolerance” and Olivier Christin, “Making Peace”, in R. Po-chia Hsia, ed., *A Companion to the Reformation World* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 486-505, 426-439. B. J. Sokol, *Shakespeare and Tolerance* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) understands the great playwright as embracing such themes in a pre-Enlightenment form of toleration.

<sup>135</sup> Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), chap. 8, speaks of a rhetoric of “mediation and reconciliation.” Many in the sixteenth century eschewed the escalating tensions and pursued instead what Erasmus called the “dream of an understanding.”

<sup>136</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, chap. Five.

<sup>137</sup> On considerable efforts to bridge the confessions there, see Howard Louthan, *The Quest for Compromise: Peacemakers in Counter-Reformation Vienna* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>138</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, chap. Six.

<sup>139</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, chap. Seven.

friends.<sup>140</sup> Finally, there were efforts made officially to share church buildings or have more than one confession established within a political unit.<sup>141</sup>

Other examples of interconfessional pragmatism have been documented. The cooperative efforts between Protestants and Catholics to pursue effective poor relief in predominantly Catholic Lyon indicate a strong concern for the common good, even during the Wars of Religion. Similar cooperation took place in Protestant Emden.<sup>142</sup> In the Dutch Republic, a variety of churches were tolerated, as long as they kept social order, in particular by addressing the needs of their own poor.<sup>143</sup> The authorities, while privileging the Reformed as the public church, nonetheless encouraged a cultural Calvinism that embraced all churches.<sup>144</sup> They sought an inclusive version of Christian society by pursuing three main goals: ecclesiastical moral control of the civic community; a cohesive civic religion; a trans-confessional piety. During the revolt, people would access the church buildings or public ministers for religious services, even if they were not parishioners of the Reformed church.<sup>145</sup> Even Catholics,

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<sup>140</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, chap. Nine.

<sup>141</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, chap. Eight.

<sup>142</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, "Poor Relief, Humanism and Heresy" in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford University Press, 1975); Timothy G. Fehler, *Poor Relief and Protestantism: The Evolution of Social Welfare in Sixteenth-Century Emden* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999). Thomas A. Brady, Jr., *Communities, Politics and Reformation in Early Modern Europe* (Boston: Brill, 1998), p. 186, suggests that classes saw the "common good" of Christian society differently: the elites sought social order first, the peasants longed for justice. In some locales in the early part of the sixteenth century, these concerns came together to effect reform of poor relief.

<sup>143</sup> Joke Spaans, "Religious policies in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic" in R. Po-Chia Hsia, Henk F. K. Van Nierop, ed., *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 72-86.

<sup>144</sup> Kooi, *Liberty and Religion*.

<sup>145</sup> Frijhoff, "How Plural?" in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, pp. 38-45, 49-51. See also his "Religious toleration in the United Provinces: from 'case' to 'model'" in Hsia, Van Nierop, *Golden Age*, pp. 27-52; and his "The Threshold of Toleration: Interconfessional Conviviality in Holland during the Early Modern Period" in his *Embodied Belief: Ten Essays on Religious Culture in Dutch History* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002).

proscribed by law, could bribe, litigate or otherwise find considerable social space.<sup>146</sup> In England people sought health remedies across confessional divides.<sup>147</sup> In Augsburg, prior to the politicization of confessional identities after Charles V imposed Catholic worship by removing the city's right to organize its own political structure, people found a common Christian piety and a common commitment to neighbourliness, honour and friendship allowed them to deal peaceably—and expect to deal peaceably—with fellow citizens. In fact, the contradictory claims of clergy and theologians freed people to be eclectic in their own beliefs and practices.<sup>148</sup> In 1552 in the Rhineland city of Wesel, the magistrates demanded that all confessions—Lutheran, Catholic and the newly arriving Calvinists—celebrate communion together to maintain social peace and to express the sacral communalism of Christian society. Yet, in allowing people to express their differences informally, it became apparent both that confessional identity was not a complete package, yet neither was it of no consequence. People made choices.<sup>149</sup> An ironic

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<sup>146</sup> Christine Kooi, “Paying off the sheriff: strategies of Catholic toleration in the Golden Age” and Henk Van Nierop, “Sewing the bailiff in a blanket: Catholics and the law in Holland” in Hsia, Van Nierop, *Golden Age*, pp. 87-111. Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Harvard University Press, 2008), describes a Catholic community that functioned with much independence despite official proscription.

<sup>147</sup> Walsham, “Sickness and Health” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, chap. 8.

<sup>148</sup> Hanson, *Religious Identity in Augsburg*, pp. 25, 219-225. Andreas Gößner, *Weltliche Kirchenhoheit und reichsstädtische Reformation: Die Augsburger Ratspolitik des "mitten und mitleren weges" 1520-1534* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999), illustrates the political deliberations of the Town Council in seeking to navigate religious change peacefully. Community formation was often a process of negotiating identities: Michael J. Halvorson, Karen E. Spierling, ed., *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>149</sup> Jesse A. Spohnholz, “Multiconfessional Celebration of the Eucharist in Sixteenth Century Wesel” in *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXXIX, 3 (2008), pp. 705-729; and his *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011). Municipal leaders in Norwich had similar concerns; see Muriel C. McClendon, *The Quiet Reformation: Magistrates and the Emergence of Protestantism in Tudor Norwich* (Stanford University Press, 1999). Also Auke Jelsma, *Frontiers of the Reformation: Dissidence and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Brookfield, VT.: Ashgate, 1998), demonstrates variation in the way people embraced confessional orthodoxy; similarly, Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Toleration and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic Worlds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Bridget Heal, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500-1648* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), focuses on continuity (even in Protestant Nuremberg) and change (even in Catholic Cologne) of Marian devotion. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, tr. John Tedeschi,

example comes from the border region between the Spanish Netherlands and the Dutch Republic. On a number of occasions, Catholics north of the border supported the continued existence of Protestants south of the frontier—despite official policy that sought their elimination—for fear of reprisals if those officials should succeed.<sup>150</sup> During the seventeenth century, people began to practise a public/private dichotomy, engaging in social relations across confessional boundaries while maintaining strong personal opinions on theology.<sup>151</sup>

Not all irenic choices seem high-minded. Greengrass identifies a number of factors: connivance, dissimulation, “getting by,” moral casuistry and compartmentalized lives could all contribute to such choices.<sup>152</sup> Te Brake outlines several mechanisms for the survival of religious diversity in this era.<sup>153</sup> Secrecy protected a group, and dissimulation an individual. Private education strengthened the resolve of a minority, and casuistry relaxed the standards that they needed to adhere to, reducing risk. In the wider society, minorities found support from others at various levels: indifference to their “difference,” connivance in evading persecuting measures, and genuine toleration of and active defence of diversity. Some of these descriptions imply underhandedness. Yet, an embrace of ambiguity should cause us to pause before affirming this implication. When connivance produces an “ecumenicity of everyday life” out of a reasonably successful pursuit of Christian society represented by civic order and the welfare of

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Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980), introduced us to Menocchio, a layman who created his own cosmography.

<sup>150</sup> Te Brake, “Emblems,” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 67.

<sup>151</sup> Judith Pollmann, *Religious Choice in the Dutch Republic: The Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565-1641)* (Manchester University Press, 1999); and “The bond of Christian piety: the individual practice of tolerance and intolerance in the Dutch Republic” in Hsia, Van Nierop, *Golden Age*, pp. 53-71.

<sup>152</sup> Greengrass, “Afterword” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 293.

<sup>153</sup> Te Brake, “Emblems,” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p.73, Table 3.1.

the local community,<sup>154</sup> perhaps some high-mindedness can be behind these very ordinary transactions. Poor motives, mixed motives, admirable motives: cannot all play their part?

While it is fair to note that not all motivations for coexistence were religious, an emphasis on politics has led some historians to downplay the possibility that the Christian call to love one's neighbour was one of these motivations. Luria weakly allows that his "first confessional boundary" *could* have had "a foundation in religious belief."<sup>155</sup> It is, in fact, anachronistic to read into the early modern era the modern fragmentation of society into components such as the economy, politics or religion. In the sixteenth century, these components were basically aspects of Christian society. Neighbourliness was part of the Christian calling and, therefore, could provide genuinely religious motivation to minimize religious difference. Thierry Wanegffelen argues that there were many French folk who preferred—prior to 1560 and, somewhat, even after, when the Wars of Religion raged—not to be forced into affiliation either with Calvinist Geneva or Catholic Rome; they simply wished to be seen as followers of Christ.<sup>156</sup> He refuses to see France in the century following 1520 as simply divided between two monolithic religious blocks. Dixon's statement, quoted earlier, bears examination here: "Confessional relations were ambiguous and pragmatic, shaped more by contingencies than the higher principles of faith."<sup>157</sup> While he makes an important point, we must still ask, "Is it not possible that love of neighbour was a significant motivation for working out some of the pragmatic accommodations?" Simply put, we need not dismiss principles of faith in order to establish that other factors were also important.

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<sup>154</sup> Frijhoff, "How Plural?" in in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 33.

<sup>155</sup> Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, p. 316.

<sup>156</sup> Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève*, pp. xv-xvi, 481. He believes that the "majority" occupied this "plat pays."

<sup>157</sup> Dixon, "Introduction" in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 2.

Kaplan points out that those “who harboured no antagonism toward other faiths were exceptional people, in conflict with the official norms of their communities. . . . By the same token, those willing to kill their neighbours over a religious dispute were exceptional too.”<sup>158</sup> (I will suggest that Roussel was among those exceptional ones who taught and modeled minimal antagonism toward others.) Kaplan does not glamorize people’s motivations, but he succeeds in challenging the narrative that religion is always aggressive. When love of neighbour could neutralize official intolerance, often proclaimed by both church and state, frequently enough that most people lived in peace despite the near presence of the “other,” the contribution of this religious factor to irenic living needs to be acknowledged.<sup>159</sup> Larissa Taylor’s admonition is appropriate: “Nor should we generalize—there were, even in the worst of times, preachers who called for conciliation, and men and women who protected those of the other faith.”<sup>160</sup>

Taylor shifts our attention to reforming leaders. Some reformers practised irenicism, but we do not always perceive it. Among them were members of the Navarrian Network. Martin Bucer of Strasbourg and his friend, Philip Melanchthon, were also such peacemakers. Yet, their historical portraits are not always painted warmly. Many assume true believers are zealous to the point of participating in or assenting to violence. To agree that violence has been endorsed is not the same as agreeing that “true believers” will always endorse it. This assumption precludes the possibility that, for those like Roussel, Melanchthon and Bucer, the command to

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<sup>158</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 9.

<sup>159</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 8, chap. Twelve, especially pp. 356-358, warns of intolerance toward devout people today because we fail to see the self-congratulatory and polemical nature of the Enlightenment narrative and, therefore, accept its reading of developments uncritically. Grell notes that we find evidence of people encouraging toleration for religious reasons in the early modern era: “Introduction” in Grell, Scribner, *Tolerance and Intolerance*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>160</sup> Taylor, *Preachers and People*, p. xiii.

practice peacemaking was considered integral to their Christian faith to the point that they restrained themselves from certain levels of controversy, and engaged in bridge-building exercises that, at times, seemed to have little chance of success. Yet they were convinced that they must try. Euan Cameron makes this mistake: "Some reformers, like Martin Bucer or Philip Melanchthon, were habitual, almost obsessive compromisers, and would have compromised with the papacy itself if their more stiff-necked colleagues had allowed them to."<sup>161</sup> Note the assumptions here: true believers in the Protestant cause are uniformly stiff-necked; and bridge-builders are by definition weak in character, "obsessive compromisers." Could it not be integral to the Christian faith of some that compromise with the pope was desirable, if it achieved an acceptable balance between church reform and church unity?

It will be helpful to recite a few occasions where Bucer and Melanchthon demonstrated courageous leadership. Michael Servetus was a free-thinker who wrote *On the Errors of the Trinity* while in Strasbourg. Later, Calvin would give approval for Servetus' execution in Geneva. In contrast, Bucer promised him, despite the legal trouble with the City Council he was courting for himself and the Protestant movement in Strasbourg, that he would not divulge Servetus' whereabouts. Bucer kept that promise.<sup>162</sup> From 1539 to 1543, Bucer engaged heavily in efforts at church reunification, responding to irenic gestures from Catholics. He granted the Roman rite of the Mass validity in an earlier, "less compromised" form. (Luther and Zwingli could never

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<sup>161</sup> Cameron, *European Reformation*, p. 317. Donald Weinstein, ed., *The Renaissance and the Reformation, 1300-1600* (New York: Free Press, 1965), pp. 34-35, makes the same mistake: "Reformation faith had to compete with Renaissance tolerance." Cameron corrects himself in his contribution to a fine set of essays on confessional bridge-building in various parts of Europe, "The Possibilities and Limits of Conciliation: Philipp Melanchthon and Interconfessional Dialogue in the Sixteenth Century" in Howard P. Louthan, Randall C. Zachman, ed., *Conciliation and Confession: The Struggle for Unity in the Age of Reform, 1415-1648* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2004).

<sup>162</sup> Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Strasbourg and the Reform: A Study in the Process of Change* (New Haven: Yale, 1967), p. 199.

bring themselves to such a point.)<sup>163</sup> Bucer was strongly condemned for his willingness to enter these discussions, but he manifested courage in the face of much predictable criticism.

Philip Melanchthon enunciated a principle that has caught the imagination of those seeking peaceful religious accommodation ever since. Though drawn out of him under severe pressure, it represents, nonetheless, the moderation he often displayed in dealing with religious differences, both toward Catholics who would negotiate with him and toward other Protestants (with the exception of Anabaptists). After the crushing defeat of the Protestant Schmalkaldic League in 1547, the Catholics seemed poised to end the Protestant experiment. In southwest Germany, Catholic imperial forces destroyed many Lutheran churches that would not yield to the emperor's religious demands. In order to stave off similar destruction in Saxony, Melanchthon entered negotiations for a settlement. The Catholics could virtually dictate the terms. Melanchthon, trying to preserve the doctrine of justification by faith, allowed for many Catholic practices to be reinstated. He developed the principle of *adiaphora*, a Greek word meaning "things indifferent." Melanchthon later admitted he panicked and applied the principle too widely. Certainly, many Lutherans attacked Melanchthon for yielding too much. The possibility exists that one's person's point of indifference can be another's essential element of faith.<sup>164</sup> Still, consistent with a career that built bridges more than it sought out controversy, Melanchthon's principle of *adiaphora* provided an imaginative contribution to peaceful religious change. His persistence in defending the principle under withering attack

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<sup>163</sup> Nicholas Thompson, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and Patristic Tradition in the Theology of Martin Bucer, 1534-1546* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 286. Brian Lugoio, *Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification: Reformation Theology and Early Modern Irenicism* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2010), argues that Bucer's doctrine of "double justification," adopted at Regensburg in 1541, was not a compromise position for him.

<sup>164</sup> See the discussion in Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 344.

undermines the assessment that he was a weak-willed compromiser.<sup>165</sup> So, we can find examples in both Bucer's and Melanchthon's lives where they practised irenicism courageously.

Both the rise of cities and the supposedly radical break in Protestantism with the medieval communal emphasis have been described as "the beginning of the end" for medieval Christendom. In one sense, they were.<sup>166</sup> However, at the time they constituted efforts to purify Christian society in reaction to a compromised church hierarchy.<sup>167</sup> The flexibility of this notion demonstrates its deep influence on imaginations. If Christendom as a whole could not live up to its calling, then perhaps a smaller political unit could.<sup>168</sup> If an overtly sacramental foundation for society seemed disappointing, then reformers (not just Protestants) could reconceive this society as one united under the preaching of the gospel. The concept mutated, but was not abandoned. One impact of this longing for Christian society was the encouragement of neighbourliness and other forms of irenicism, more or less noble.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Clyde Leonard Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1958), chap. 21; Michael Rogness, *Philip Melanchthon: Reformer without Honor* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1969), pp. 123-125; James William Richard, *Philip Melanchthon: The Protestant Preceptor of Germany, 1497-1560* (New York: G. R. Putnam's Sons, 1907), chap. XXVIII.

<sup>166</sup> See Gregory, *Unintended Reformation*.

<sup>167</sup> See Peter A. Dykema, Heiko A. Oberman, ed., *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), and Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Popes: Their Church and State*, v. I, tr. E. Fowler (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966; originally published in German in 1901), pp. 54-56. Anti-clericalism was widespread and represented the cynicism of the populace for the many in the church hierarchy who obviously loved luxury and had little spiritual sensitivity; only rarely was it a rejection of Christianity. As Chadwick, *Reformation*, p. 22, put it: "The Reformation came not so much because Europe was irreligious as because it was religious."

<sup>168</sup> John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford University Press, 1985), chap. 8, calls this slow abandonment of continent-wide renewal, embracing all of society, "Migrations of the Holy."

<sup>169</sup> W. J. Sheils, "'Getting on' and 'getting along' in parish and town: Catholics and their neighbours in England" in Benjamin J. Kaplan, Bob Moore, Henk F. K. Van Nierop, Judith Pollmann, ed., *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands, c. 1570-1720* (Manchester University Press, 2009); Nadine Lewycky, Adam Morton, ed., *Getting Along?: Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England—Essays in Honour of Professor W. J. Sheils* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).

The longing could also manifest frightening outcomes. The Protestant narrative I will describe below easily portrayed “the Reformation” as the victory of “rational religion” over the “crudities and superstitions” of Catholicism.<sup>170</sup> In reaction to such self-serving claims, scholars have identified violence done, not just with religious legitimation for dynastic ambitions,<sup>171</sup> but with a specific religious impulse. A prevailing atmosphere of coexistence could break down when a destabilizing force applied pressure to local accommodations.<sup>172</sup> Coexistence frequently led to toleration and social peace; but it could also lead to conflict. Greengrass cites Robert Scribner’s contention that religious plurality led to a decline in the ability to experience the sacred in ordinary life, while increasing the desire to live in a rightly ordered, “moralized”

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<sup>170</sup> See Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present*, 59 (1973), pp. 51–91, reprinted in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, pp. 152–87, who suggests this point subtly and, more directly, Crouzet, *Les Guerriers*, t. 1, p. 616. Allan A. Tulchin, “The Michelade in Nîmes” in *French Historical Studies* 29, 1 (Winter 2006), pp. 1-36, details one example where a Protestant majority massacred Catholics in “overwhelming” fashion, calculated to send a message of disdain and hatred, not in the limited manner Crouzet suggests, with more focused actions and objectives.

<sup>171</sup> MacCulloch, *House Divided*, pp. 164, 338, points out that it was the princes that insisted on religious uniformity in their territories and that religious persecution was first a policy of state before it became an aspect of popular religion (for some) later in the sixteenth century; Allan A. Tulchin, “Massacres during the French Wars of Religion” in *Past and Present* (2012), 214 (supplement 7), pp. 100-126, argues that political/dynastic leaders generally were responsible for ordering massacres to achieve political and military ends during the French civil wars. Politicians could even insist on uniformity of grammar textbooks in this era. See Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford University Press, 2002), loc. 3236 (Kindle ed.). Chrisman, *Strasbourg*, pp. 149-154, reminds us, however, that politicians sought increased social order not just to consolidate their power, but also to be “peacemakers.”

<sup>172</sup> Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, pp. 310-314, describes how the implementation by Louis XIV of forced Protestant conversion (Luria’s “third boundary”) destabilized earlier “second boundary” arrangements; Mack P. Holt, “Religious Violence in Sixteenth-Century France: Moving Beyond Pollution and Purification” in *Past and Present* (2012), 214 (supplement 7), pp. 52-74, makes a case that violence was avoided when clear legal and social boundaries between religious groups were maintained; Walsham, “Sickness and Health” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 179, notes that plagues could destabilize confessional relations.

world.<sup>173</sup> When things went wrong in this pursuit, scapegoats were sought, and the passion for Christian society exhibited a dark side.<sup>174</sup>

Barbara Diefendorf studied the rise of violent tendencies among the Catholics in Paris that produced the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572.<sup>175</sup> First, fear developed because of a blockade of food by Huguenot armies. Then, Catholics sought to draw the Protestants back into the fold, first with military-style processions of familiar relics. Polemical preaching then stirred militia groups to become ready to do violence "in the name of keeping the peace." The weakness of the Crown made the militias bolder.<sup>176</sup> In killing Huguenots, they were "sharing in a vital effort to rid their polis of the corruption of heresy and return it to a pristine state."<sup>177</sup> Many Catholics abhorred the rampage, but the destabilizing elements of fear, religious polemics and weak political leadership had their effect.

We need to consider Denis Crouzet. His *La genèse de la Réforme française* followed up on his earlier ground-breaking *Les Guerriers de Dieu*. These works could be typified as glorious successes and glorious failures. He deemphasizes socio-economic and socio-cultural factors in

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<sup>173</sup> Greengrass, "Afterword" in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, p. 294; R. W. Scribner, "Reformation and Desacralisation: From Sacramental World to Moralised Universe" in R. Po-Chia Hsia, Scribner, ed., *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 1997), pp. 75-92.

<sup>174</sup> Similarly, Denis Crouzet, *La nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy. Un rêve perdu de la Renaissance* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), suggests that the violence represents "a lost dream" of Neo-platonic harmony embraced by the French royalty. Crouzet was building on the work of Denis Richet, "Aspects socio-culturels des conflits religieux a Paris dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle," in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 32, 4 (July-August, 1977), pp. 764-789, who argued that an elite was trying to impose a more moral, self-controlled religion on the populace, an initiative passionately resisted by the common folk. Matheson, *Imaginative World*, pp. 57-59, talks of "conservative manifestations" of the longing for social wholeness. They could aim at preserving hierarchical social structures, as well as what I call the "dark side."

<sup>175</sup> Barbara B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>176</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath*, chap. 6.

<sup>177</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath*, pp. 171-172. See too Jehan de La Fosse, *Les "Mémoires" d'un Curé de Paris (1557-1590): Au temps des guerres de religion*, ed. Marc Venard (Geneva: Droz, 2004).

explaining the rise of Calvinism and its rivalry with Catholicism, and convincingly argues religious motivations played a key role.<sup>178</sup> Unfortunately, Crouzet at times makes his case more “sinister” than the evidence allows for. For example, he refers to an incident in Toulouse in 1532, where forty-one warrants were issued for the arrest of suspected Lutherans in the respected law faculty at the university.<sup>179</sup> One professor, Jean de Caturce, was executed. Crouzet’s narration focuses on a half dozen participants who are cast as conspirators. He minimizes the university connection. He treats Jean de Boysonné, a popular professor of Roman law who was forced to abjure publicly, as a committed Lutheran, and the group as millenarian in emphasis. These claims create a false impression. Caturce was a Lutheran, but de Boysonné was a Catholic humanist. It is more appropriate to see the group, not as millenarian conspirators, but as temporarily losing an academic battle with scholastics when the local Parlement took the side of the latter.<sup>180</sup> (In the next paragraph, I will explain what motivated Crouzet to focus so heavily on violence. Such concentration has caused many to miss efforts at irenicism.)

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<sup>178</sup> Crouzet, *La genèse*, pp. 477-591; Crouzet, *Les Guerriers*. His predilection to see Catholicism and the Reformed as two monolithic blocks accounts for some of the weaknesses that I now identify. For a refusal of this perspective, see Wanegffelen, *Ni Rom, Ni Genève*, p. 481. The latter’s follow-up study reinforces his nuanced view of religious identity: *Une difficile fidélité: Catholiques malgré le concile en France XVI-XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1999); see also the essays, focusing on the later sixteenth century, in the volume Wanegffelen edited, *De Michel de l’Hospital à l’Édit de Nantes: Politique et Religion Face aux Eglises* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2002). O’Malley, *And All That*, pp. 122-125, emphasizes the diversity and complexity of the Catholic Church, prior to and during the sixteenth century. In support of Crouzet and Diefendorf, see Mack P. Holt, “Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion” in *French Historical Studies*, 18, 2 (Autumn 1993), pp. 524-551.

<sup>179</sup> Crouzet, *La genèse*, pp. 212-214.

<sup>180</sup> See Schneider, *Toulouse*, pp. 47-49; Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995). Alain Talon, *Le Concile de Trente* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2000), argues that Trent was both anti-Luther and anti-Renaissance.

Diefendorf's careful handling of her sources is preferable to Crouzet's overdramatized approach, but generally their depictions agree. It is the concern to maintain (for Catholics) or renew (for Huguenots) Christian society that allowed both to participate in acts of violence.<sup>181</sup> Philip Benedict, focusing on the seventeenth century, weighs in against Crouzet's tendency to psychologize.<sup>182</sup> The decline of religious violence did not result from Catholic guilt (as Crouzet suggests), but from a shift in local balances of power: one party became numerically so much stronger that the minority party did not risk an open challenge. Commitment to their respective views of Christian society had not abated.<sup>183</sup> In the same vein, Benedict demonstrates that Huguenot theorists only embraced notions of freedom of conscience when it became clear their dream of reforming the entire Gallican church could not be achieved.<sup>184</sup> All three authors demonstrate, then, that intense religious motivations could be destabilizing in their own right.

It is appropriate to state, having clarified that religious considerations did contribute to fear and violence in the early modern period, that the frequently heard comment in public discourse today that religion is a most serious threat to human harmony is an exaggerated conclusion. To return to Crouzet, he overstates because of the need to address a pertinent

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<sup>181</sup> The Huguenots participated in many acts of iconoclasm, a small number of murders of Catholic leaders, the attempted abduction of kings and war.

<sup>182</sup> Benedict, *Faith and Fortunes*, p. 302.

<sup>183</sup> There were exceptions: Robertus van de Schoor, *The Irenical Theology of Theophile Brachet de la Milletière*, tr. J. Grayson (Leiden: Brill, 1995). One pastor had his hands full in bringing peace to various refugee Reformed churches: Timothy G. Fehler, "Conflict and Compromise in International Calvinism: Ysbrand Trabius Balck's Pastoral Mediations in Exile and Beyond" in *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 10, 3 (2008), pp. 291-313.

<sup>184</sup> Benedict, *Faith and Fortunes*, p. 308. On pp. 313-316, he accepts a "weak" view of confessionalization as valid for France. It is the formation of religious group identity as a defensive measure in light of the existence of rival alternatives. Amy Nelson Burdett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529-1629* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 276-277, sees confessionalization more as religious identity formation than as "social disciplining." See too Eszter Andor, Istvan György Toth, ed., *Frontiers of Faith: Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities 1400-1750* (Budapest: Central European University, 2000). On rulers who encouraged religious diversity, see Toth, "Old and New Faith in Hungary, Turkish Hungary, and Transylvania" in Hsia, *Reformation World*, pp. 203-220.

question: why was there so much more violence in France than England or the Netherlands? Greengrass acknowledges the problem. He distinguishes between violence that manifested itself in religious terms and violence caused by religion. Since religion was the most powerful source of legitimacy in the period, it would have been called upon even if actual causes were different. He rejects Crouzet's analysis that Catholics, gripped by apocalyptic fear, embraced illogical violence, and that the Reformed were more rational in their violence, targeting property more than people, priests more than other Catholics. Crouzet's explanation cannot answer the question regarding the greater level of violence in France. The factors he identifies existed elsewhere without the same level of destructiveness. Greengrass also finds inadequate Racaut's collective psychological explanation that Protestants had become the alien others.<sup>185</sup> Instead Greengrass argues that high-stakes political manoeuvring, a considerable variety of localized pre-existent social tensions and the allegiance of the French judiciary to the Crown (which hampered its ability to deal with local conflicts flexibly, as magistrates in the Netherlands successfully did) were all important factors leading to the French Civil Wars. Religion frequently provided legitimacy for these other motives, and was, therefore, one factor, but only one.<sup>186</sup> Stuart Carroll reinforces this conclusion when he refuses to see the Guise family, traditionally viewed in all three major narratives as fanatic Catholics who embraced violence in the name of faith, as religious radicals. The Cardinal actually flirted with Lutheranism. Carroll portrays instead unsavoury power politicians, desperate to triumph in the

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<sup>185</sup> Luc Racaut, *Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity during the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002)—though we can be sure that much “othering” did, in fact, occur.

<sup>186</sup> Mark Greengrass, “La grande cassure: Violence and the French Reformation” in *Historische Zeitschrift* 285 (2007), supplement 45, pp. 71-92. On greater inflexibility in the French judiciary, see too Christin, *La paix de religion*. Grégory Champeaud, *Le Parlement de Bordeaux et les paix de religion (1563–1600): Une genèse de l'Edit de Nantes* (Nérac: Editions d'Albret, 2008), examines one instance where responsiveness to royal wishes helped a Parlement accept measures promoting interconfessional coexistence.

dynastic wars of the era. They sought to overthrow the French and English monarchies in seeking to outshine the Valois, Bourbons and Hapsburgs—and failed.<sup>187</sup> William Cavanaugh identifies the state-building projects of the dynasties as a much greater destabilizing factor than religion, and suggests that the projection outward of state power continues to be responsible for wars in recent times.<sup>188</sup>

Coexistence in the early modern era produced demonstrations of neighbourliness that, until recently, have been missing from our historiography. It also produced conflict when local accommodations were destabilized. Christian society was the pervasive assumption behind it all for almost all Europeans in the late medieval and early modern periods. Its dark side, the fear-filled insistence on only one manifestation of Christian society, helped to produce the violent headlines that have dominated our understanding of the sixteenth century.<sup>189</sup> Yet, Christian society also had a benevolent side, where love toward one's neighbour was taken seriously—even when the neighbour was “different.” Scholars now claim this “benevolent” coexistence was the norm.<sup>190</sup> Much of it was “pragmatic.” Some harmony, however, was intentional and principled: Gérard Roussel, for one, worked hard to encourage people to embrace “faith working through love.”

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<sup>187</sup> Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>188</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>189</sup> Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 346, reminds us that for ecclesiastical and secular authorities to abandon altogether their willingness to kill would have required three things: abandoning their paternalism, renouncing much legal precedent, and decriminalizing heresy despite their fears about salvation for the majority.

<sup>190</sup> Walsham, “Sickness and Health” and Te Brake, “Emblems” in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, pp. 180, 76, though the latter adds that both conflict and coexistence were “durable.”(p. 78)

### The Catholic Narrative concerning French Evangelicals

Writing about the Counter-Reformation in 1968, Evennett has asked, “Has there not been a certain tendency for post-medieval ecclesiastical history to become imprisoned within its own categories?”<sup>191</sup> This tendency began early. Barbara Sher Tinsley illustrates with a study of Florimond de Raemond, an influential Catholic apologist and historian in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Initially attracted to Reformed Protestantism in the 1560s, by the end of the century he became a popular writer who buttressed the Catholic Church’s claims to being the True Church. She summarizes the methodological bent he shared with Protestant historians of the era:

. . . they were thoroughly imbued with the notion of the duality of human history, split between the affirmative God-approved, and the negative, ungodly qualities of existence. This conception could not help but present church historians with a methodology, upholding the good and condemning the evil qualities of life, if necessary, by excluding examples or evidence pointing to disturbing conclusions.<sup>192</sup>

We remind ourselves that selectivity did not disappear with the rise of “objective” history in the nineteenth century. The Enlightenment narrative had its own heroes and excluded its own “evidence pointing to disturbing conclusions.” The historiographical disappearance of Gérard Roussel is a case in point. Tinsley provides another illustration by pointing out that de Raemond and his Protestant foil, Theodore de Bèze, have been ignored in discussions of “preparations” for modernity as it began to appear in the seventeenth century, while François Hotman has not been. The latter, a Protestant, “registers” because he advocated popular sovereignty as a limit

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<sup>191</sup> Evennett, *Counter-Reformation*, p. 2. John Coffey, Alister Chapman, “Introduction” in Chapman, Coffey, Gregory, *Seeing Things Their Way*, pp. 13-14, call it “idealistic reductionism”: taking “*their own* theology so seriously that they judge all other theologies in the light of it.” Italics theirs.

<sup>192</sup> Tinsley, *Polemics*, p. 136.

to the rights of kings. Yet, his motivation is distinctly “not modern”: he appeals to Frankish constitutional notions (already a millennium old) for the purpose of challenging kings—even to the point of overthrowing them, if necessary—who would not protect the Protestants.<sup>193</sup> Tinsley challenges historians who dismiss de Raemond’s polemics for catering to their own “modern and liberal” values.<sup>194</sup> Ironically she cannot fully free herself from the Enlightenment narrative she criticizes. She maintains de Raemond and his contemporary historians were “beginning to take modern methods into consideration, but had not yet achieved independence from the theology or institutions of the past.”<sup>195</sup> The implication is that “modern historians” have no political or philosophical perspectives, reinforced by current institutions, that affect their work—a doubtful assumption.

Regarding Roussel and the evangelicals, de Raemond had, first, to deny the earlier indigenous French reforming effort to place the blame for all sixteenth century religious upheavals in France on the Protestants. He effectively removes the context by which we can understand these evangelicals. Second, he had to maintain the humanists at Meaux were Lutherans, including Lefèvre d’Étaples and Briçonnet.<sup>196</sup> As we will see in the next chapter, such an analysis is untenable. However, this misrepresentation, rooted in de Raemond’s commitment to the Catholic narrative, has been influential for centuries.

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<sup>193</sup> Tinsley, *Polemics*, p. 138.

<sup>194</sup> Tinsley, *Polemics*, p. 151.

<sup>195</sup> Tinsley, *Polemics*, p. 138.

<sup>196</sup> Tinsley, *Polemics*, pp. 106-108.

### The Protestant and Enlightenment Narratives concerning French Evangelicals

The Reformation of the sixteenth century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, the greatest event in history. It marks the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times. Starting from religion, it gave, directly or indirectly, a mighty impulse to every forward movement, and made Protestantism the chief propelling force in the history of modern civilization.<sup>197</sup>

Philip Schaff, in 1888, clearly betrays his commitment to the Protestant narrative. He goes on:

Catholicism and Protestantism represent two distinct types of Christianity which sprang from the same root, but differ in the branches. Catholicism is legal Christianity which served to the barbarian nations of the Middle Ages as a necessary school of discipline; Protestantism is evangelical Christianity which answers the age of independent manhood. Catholicism is traditional, hierarchical, ritualistic, conservative; Protestantism is biblical, democratic, spiritual, progressive. The former is ruled by the principle of authority, the latter by the principle of freedom.<sup>198</sup>

Schaff gives a typical Protestant perspective concerning the necessity for “the Reformation,” which also prepared the way for the subsequent Enlightenment narrative. Schaff and many others in the nineteenth century actively merged them.

The stylized attacks on the Catholic Church, however, had already begun in the sixteenth century. Peter Matheson describes the first emergence of public opinion in Europe as the Protestants, Luther in particular, exploited the new medium of print.<sup>199</sup> He also illustrates how our own narratives can affect our ability to “see” what was happening in earlier times:

The language and thought of Luther’s anti-Jewish tracts appals [sic] one. For not a few of this writer’s students reading them has made it virtually impossible to engage in any way with the remainder of his theology. The over-blown imagery and the sprawling self-indulgence of the arguments against the Papacy, on the other hand, provoke that very

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<sup>197</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian church*, in 8 vols., *Modern Christianity: The German Reformation*, v. VII, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., rev. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910; originally published, 1888; reprinted at Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1994; found online [www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/About.htm](http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/About.htm)), § 1.

<sup>198</sup> Schaff, *German Reformation*, § 2. John Viénot, *Histoire de la Réforme Française des Origines à l’Édit de Nantes* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1926), also enthuses over the “liberté” brought about by French Protestantism.

<sup>199</sup> Matheson, *Rhetoric*, chap. 2. See also Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne*, p. 7.

derision which Luther hoped to direct at his Roman Antichrist. Such ungoverned rage becomes ridiculous, an unintended theatre of the absurd.<sup>200</sup>

Matheson's concern is for his students. Reflecting a legitimate opposition to anti-Semitism, rooted in Enlightenment thinking concerning human rights, they overreact and disengage from Luther's historical significance. Yet, they also respond to Luther's anti-Catholicism with deep emotional approval, despite its excessive, self-serving nature. The Enlightenment narrative, then, can prevent genuine engagement with sixteenth century Protestantism and Catholicism, contenting itself with uncritical rejection. With such an approach we see only what we wish to see. Matheson warns historians to avoid becoming "drearly predictable" in reading only through their own narrative lenses, instead of remaining open to creativity and "liberation" as we encounter historical phenomena that may not fit our initial perspective.<sup>201</sup>

Regarding the French evangelicals, Calvin set the tone for the Protestant narrative. He was infuriated that his old friend, Roussel, had betrayed the Protestant cause by becoming a Catholic bishop. He wrote against Roussel and his friends in the 1540s. Building on his earlier advice to Renée of Ferrara—a cousin of Marguerite of Navarre, who shared her spiritual perspective—that to be faithful to God one must openly renounce the Catholic Church, Calvin wrote two blistering attacks. "Nicodemites" was the label he applied to those whom he thought were afraid to embrace the "true faith" openly.<sup>202</sup> The slur derived from Nicodemus in John 3—a Jewish leader intrigued by Jesus, who visited the latter at night apparently to avoid detection.

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<sup>200</sup> Matheson, *Rhetoric*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>201</sup> Matheson, *Rhetoric*, p. 249.

<sup>202</sup> *L'Excuse de Jehan Calvin à Messieurs les Nicodemites, sur la complainte qu'il font de sa trop grand rigueur* (1544). See Axel Schoeber, 'John Calvin and the "Still-born" Third Option in the French Reformation' in *Calvin@500: Theology, History, and Practice*, Richard R. Topping, John A. Vissers, ed. (Eugene, OR.: Pickwick, 2011), pp. 86-97. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 173, points out that martyrs and martyrologists played a crucial part in legitimating anti-Nicodemite arguments.

(The slur involved turning the tables on those Calvin was challenging: they had referred to Nicodemus as an example to be imitated.<sup>203</sup>) Not surprisingly, many in France complained that it was easy for him to be so bold when he, in the safety of Geneva, did not face the possibility of prosecution for his faith.<sup>204</sup> However, the narrative had been set in place that the French evangelicals were only failed Protestants and, therefore, fell outside the trajectory of historical development. They could be ignored.<sup>205</sup>

Thomas Lindsay provides an example of how the Protestant narrative has caused Roussel to go “missing.” He refers to Roussel’s sermons in Paris, which drew enormous initial attention and provoked a tumultuous response. Yet Lindsay appears unimpressed: “one of the Reformers of Meaux preached in the Louvre during Lent (1533), and some doctors of the Sorbonne, who accused the King and Queen of Navarre of heresy, were banished from Paris.”<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> In response to an earlier tract of Calvin’s, *Petit traicte monstrant que c’est que doit faire un homme fidèle, cognoissant la verité de l’Evangile quand il est entre les papists* (1543). See Allan L. Farris, “Calvin’s Letter to Luther” in *The Tide of Time: Historical Essays by the late Allan L. Farris, Professor of Church History and Principal of Knox College, Toronto*, John S. Moir, ed. (Toronto: Knox College, 1978), pp. 61-73. Wanegffelen, *Ni Rom, Ni Genève*, pp. 72-74, believes that the term “Nicodemite” should be reserved for those who made a deliberate choice to avoid both Rome and Geneva by occupying the “flat lands” (plat pays) of faith between confessions. He assigns the term “temporizer” to crypto-Protestants. Mack Holt, “Book Review” in *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXIX, 2 (1998), pp. 576-577, wishes that Wanegffelen had spent some time assessing the choices of ordinary French folk who entered the frontiers of beliefs, less out of conscious reflection and simply for survival.

<sup>204</sup> Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), chap. 11. The title of the chapter is instructive: “‘Since Calvin Acts So Bravely, Why Does He Not Come Here?’: France.”

<sup>205</sup> J. H. Merle D’Aubigné, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, vol. III, *France, Switzerland, Geneva* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1864), pp. viii-xix, provides an apology for the centrality of Geneva to the Reformation, and ends with a wish that his volume would help determine the only battle of importance—that between Rome and Geneva—in favour of Geneva.

<sup>206</sup> Thomas M. Lindsay, *A History of the Reformation in two volumes*, v. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 145. Friedrich August Pischon, *Vorträge Über die Deutsche und Schweizerische Reformation: Mit besonderer Beziehung auf die symbolischen Schriften der lutherischen und reformierten Kirche in Brandenburg* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1846), and M. Le chanoine Fleury, *Courte Réponse Aux Dernières Attaques Contre La Brochure Calvin à Genève* (Geneva: Pfeffer & Puky, 1864), also make little reference to France before Calvin. William Hanna, *Wycliffe and the Huguenots: Or, Sketches of the Rise of the Reformation in England and of the Early History of Protestantism in France* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1860), and Henry Martyn Baird, *History of the Rise of the Huguenots of France* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1896), anachronistically call the reformers active in 1515 Huguenots. Henri Lutteroth, *La Réformation en France pendant sa Première Période* (Paris: Librairie De Ch. Meyrueis Et Comp.,

Roussel is consigned to anonymity and apparent ineffectuality. More recently, Jason Zuidema and Theodore Van Raalte have written a book on the theology and spirituality of Guillaume Farel. They effectively set Farel into his historical context. Yet they manage to do so without a single reference to Farel's friend and fellow reformer, Gérard Roussel.<sup>207</sup> Likewise, Brad Gregory writes extensively of the anti-Nicodemite writings of Calvin and his collaborator, Pierre Viret, without mentioning Calvin's prime target, the bishop of Oloron.<sup>208</sup>

Historians writing from the Enlightenment perspective could do the same.

. . . in the period of the formation of the grand perspectives of European history by the nineteenth-century Romantics, twin colossuses of 'Renaissance' and 'Reformation' stood out in linked greatness . . . of liberated, progressive post-medieval Europe. . . the Catholic Church . . . had no claim to be reckoned among the forces . . . that had a positive part to play in the making of the future of mankind. The reform of Catholicism in the sixteenth century and its struggle against the 'progressive' forces of Renaissance and Reformation could only be peripheral to the significant, creative, movements of that age, and could only be worthy of study in that light.<sup>209</sup>

Fortunately, sixteenth century European history is not taught in this manner now. However, the attitude Evennett described explains why Roussel went missing. His primary interest was in renewing the Catholic Church. He would not be taken seriously by those who saw history through this lens.

Karl Hagenbach, writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, shows how the

Enlightenment narrative emerged from the Protestant one:

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éditeurs, 1859), pp. 5-6, 15, though typically treating Roussel as *préréforme*, nonetheless speaks warmly of his influence.

<sup>207</sup> Jason Zuidema, Theodore Van Raalte, *Early French Reform: The Theology and Spirituality of Guillaume Farel* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011).

<sup>208</sup> Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, pp. 154-163. Roussel is not mentioned in either Klaus Ganler, Bruno Steimer, ed., *Dictionary of the Reformation*, tr. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroad, 2004; originally published in German, 2002), or, Hans J. Hillerbrand, *Historical Dictionary of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation* (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2000).

<sup>209</sup> Evennett, *Counter-Reformation*, p. 4.

Whilst some perceive in it merely a *return* to biblical Christianity, to the simple and pure doctrine of the gospel, divested of all which they regard as a later addition, as the "ordinance of men," and as a disfigurement of the primitive apostolic type of religion . . . others behold in the Reformation of the sixteenth century only the first impulse to a movement which, supported by the acquired privilege of free investigation, is pressing resistlessly forward, thrusting aside everything, of divine or human origin, which lays claim to authority, and, consequently, regarding the systems of belief drawn up by the Reformers as barriers to further progress, the utter destruction of which is reserved for modern times.<sup>210</sup>

The Enlightenment narrative felt constrained to eliminate both Catholic and Protestant narratives as rivals. Medieval Catholicism was deemed a "theocracy" and Geneva under Calvin "despotic."<sup>211</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch in 2003 still manages to assert the superiority for historians of "unbelief" over "belief" in order to avoid bending "the story to fit irrelevant preconceptions."<sup>212</sup> With the Protestant and Enlightenment narratives working in combination, Roussel and his friends were convenient to ignore. On the wrong side of "progressive" historical developments, the evangelicals had made themselves irrelevant by attempting to renew Christian church and society under the banner of the Catholic Church.

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<sup>210</sup> Karl Rudolph Hagenbach, *History of the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland Chiefly*, v. 1, tr. Evelina Moore (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878), p. 2. Italics his. Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution—A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-first* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), argues that the individual's right to interpret the Bible on their own was the revolutionary heart of Protestantism, one with continuing relevance in the twenty-first century.

<sup>211</sup> C. Coignet, *La Réforme Française avant les Guerres Civiles 1512-1559* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1890), pp. 2-3, 6, identifies Sebastien Castillo as the hero of the day. See too Charles Beard, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in its Relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge* (London, Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1883), particularly p. 3. Jean Claude, one of the most eloquent of French Protestant ministers, in *Cruel Persecutions of the Protestants in the Kingdom of France* (Boston: Narcisse Oyr, 1893; first published in French, 1686; published in London in 1707), notes coercion by "Popery, when it has the power on its Side." (p. 4) He claims, pp. x-xii, that the translator into English and the publisher of an earlier, somewhat sanitized version of the book were severely punished under James II at the behest of Louis XIV.

<sup>212</sup> MacCulloch, *House Divided*, p. xxv.

### John Arnold: Postmodern Insights

John Arnold published *Inquisition and Power* in 2001—a study of the campaign against the Cathari in thirteenth century Languedoc (southwestern France). He offers a significant methodological insight that I will draw on; I need, however to address a theoretical concern first. His book provides a “romantic” approach to laity whose lives were potentially violently touched by the discourse of heresy. Like most postmodern thinkers, he shies away from the notion of truth: ‘One cannot recapture the “true” voices of the past.’<sup>213</sup> Yet, he claims too much. Our awareness of the truth may be partial; however, we need to heed a note of realism:

In the midst of what has become a veritable Babel of theories, practicing historians have done what they have done all along: they have written histories that may have dominant theoretical accents but have remained at a considerable distance from theoretical purism and close to theoretical eclecticism.<sup>214</sup>

Historians in their research and writing rely on the dynamic that partial truth will be supplemented by examination of further evidence. Certainly, Arnold provides vivid accounts of the lives of six deponents before the inquisition. There are huge portions of each deponent’s story we do not know; still, the accounts strike the reader as real and accurate. I suspect that Arnold would not want it any other way.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> John H. Arnold, *Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 229. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, v. I, tr. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 178, evades this problem when it comes to the study of religion historically. He simply defines “belief” as the “investment in a proposition” (emphasis mine), making belief subjective and, therefore, beyond evaluation.

<sup>214</sup> Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 324. See too p. 8 above.

<sup>215</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, quoted in Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), p. 258, protests “inverted positivism”—which he describes as the conviction that, if we cannot know all about the past, then we cannot know it at all. In “Forum: Raymond Martin, Joan W. Scott and Cushing Strout on *Telling the Truth about History*,” pp. 320-339, in *History and Theory* 34, 4 (Dec. 1995), p. 327,

Still, a strength arises from postmodernity. It is the reminder that even “scientific” attempts to write history have been embedded in ideological narratives. Specifically, an irenic literature has sprung up as the Catholic, Protestant and Enlightenment narratives have weakened under healthy doses of scepticism. It is also true that discourses have affected much documentation we possess, and we need to be alert to their impact. Postmodern historians could ignore the sixteenth century French evangelicals. The latter were unabashed in their declaration of the gospel as truth (*vérité*). However, postmodern historians like Arnold generally have been sympathetic to voices drowned out by dominant historical memories, as the evangelicals have been. He tries to repay “the elusive debt to the voices of the past.”<sup>216</sup> He wished to study marginalized people:

Dealing with stories and silence—words recovered and words lost to death—is the task of every historian. If we are interested in the subaltern, those silenced beneath the grand narratives of state history and the condescension of posterity, the possibility of resurrecting such voices gains a particular urgency.<sup>217</sup>

Adopting Michel Foucault’s version of discourse theory, Arnold sees the accused as drawn into a linguistic context that shapes a specific confessional identity; it is also a context of power—the inquisition. Building on Carlo Ginzburg’s understanding that the deposition—the first text produced in inquisitorial procedure, containing a record of the interview between the suspect and the inquisitor—is dialogic, Arnold suggests these depositions can reveal both dialogue and opposition between the two parties. We will see both dialogue with and resistance to other perspectives in Roussel’s works.

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Martin declares, “Hardly anyone, including self-proclaimed skeptics, *acts as if* he or she believes skepticism all the way down.” Italics his. See too F. R. Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>216</sup> Arnold, *Inquisition*, p. 3. Or, with greater flourish, p. 226: “We are a little in love with the dead, I think. They appear to be at once so biddable and yet so mysterious.”

<sup>217</sup> Arnold, *Inquisition*, p. 2.

This reflection leads to another methodological insight from Arnold that helps us reflect on the evangelicals in sixteenth century France. He feels Foucault pessimistically leaves everyone so in thrall to power that there is no space left in which to create “resistance.” Yet, Arnold refuses to be as pessimistic. He still believes in the possibility of agency for deponents, and introduces a theoretical novelty:

Rather than seeing discourse as controlling every detail of what is, or can be, said within its chosen field, we might instead note that discourse always demands an *excess* of speech. If I suggest anything new with this thought, it is an idea that has arisen through the conjunction of theoretical questions and empirical research. . . . Discourse, I suspect, always necessitates an excess of speech and language, must always insist that the subjects it constructs produce language beyond the carefully mapped boundaries that constitute a given terrain of “knowledge.”<sup>218</sup>

In the spaces between discourses—produced by this excess of speech—the individual retains the possibility of resistance and the opportunity for “self-making.”<sup>219</sup>

Arnold positions his work within subaltern studies. He hopes to regain a voice for the deponents by finding in the excess of speech contained in the textual records some authentic reflection of these people. Gyan Prakash describes a methodology for subaltern studies:

It delves into the history of colonialism not only to document its record of domination but also to identify its failures, silences, and impasses . . . The aim of such a strategy is not to unmask dominant discourses but to explore their fault lines in order to provide different accounts, to describe histories revealed in the cracks of the colonial archaeology of knowledge.<sup>220</sup>

It is easy to match Prakash’s “fault lines” with Arnold’s “spaces between discourses produced by an excess of speech.” The evangelicals, to some extent, were cast in a subaltern position by

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<sup>218</sup> Arnold, *Inquisition*, p. 114. Italics his. See further pp. 114-115.

<sup>219</sup> De Certeau, *Everyday Life*, v. I, p. 200, similarly speaks of ordinary resistance to imposed narratives.

<sup>220</sup> Gyan Prakash, “AHR Forum: Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism” in *American Historical Review* 99, 5 (December 1994), p. 1486.

the Faculty of Theology's discourse of heresy, and so these insights can illuminate their practice. (We should not exaggerate their helplessness, however. They were still influential social elites through other operative discourses. Consequently, they dared to advance an alternative discourse, whose persuasiveness made them feared by traditionalists.)

One weakness can be found in Arnold's book. The vivid portrayals of the six accused contrast with the flat depictions of the inquisitors. They are reduced to personifications of power.<sup>221</sup> I am not defending the inquisition, but making the point that inquisitors were people whose motivations were both complex and intelligible, if not necessarily laudable, in their own context. Yet I will do something similar to Arnold. Since I will focus attention on recovering the voice of the evangelicals, I will present a flat picture of their traditionalist antagonists. The latter deserve a more nuanced depiction of their significance.<sup>222</sup>

There are insights in Arnold's theoretical approach that will help us understand Gérard Roussel and his friends in the French church. Their voices for irenic religious change have been lost in the strife between three dominant historical memories: the Catholic, Protestant and Enlightenment narratives. These voices were shaped by the persecution they experienced. At times, Roussel speaks about the existence of great problems, but usually he says no more; he practices silence. The silences—what could have been said in light of contemporary circumstances, but was not—will teach us about the approach and commitments of the

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<sup>221</sup> We can doubt that priestly hegemony was as complete as it is frequently portrayed. See one example of social resistance in Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*, tr. Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage Books, 1979; originally published in French, 1975).

<sup>222</sup> For this obverse perspective, see James K. Farge, *Le parti conservateur au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Université et Parlement de Paris à l'époque de la Renaissance et de la Réforme* (Paris: Collège de France, 1992).

evangelicals.<sup>223</sup> These silences parallel Prakash's "fault lines" and Arnold's "excesses of speech." Hence, my study of the original documents will take on, at times, the flavour of historical commentary, an approach familiar in the study of literature. For example, I will note occasionally verses in the biblical passages chosen for the preaching manual that receive no comment in the accompanying sermon, and assess the significance of this silence. It also seems that the opposition the evangelicals experienced intensified their irenicism. In the chapters that follow, we will note that their consistent message of "loving one's neighbour," even when placed under pressure by that neighbour, is not the response to menacing attacks typically found in historical records. Here, too, "excesses of speech" can be discerned as Roussel embraces an almost Protestant emphasis on renewal by the gospel, while also maintaining loyalty to the Catholic Church. Several times he is very creative in avoiding pressure to conform to one discourse or the other. One senses Roussel is trying to create an alternative discourse that better expresses his understanding of biblical life and faith. In other words, he "resists." As the evangelicals found their identity formed in the gospel, they self-consciously advocated limits to the use of power. They believed that others who came to embrace the gospel would also be enabled peacefully to embrace a hopeful possibility of change—a constructive form of "agency." The fact that the politics of the day brushed their movement aside in no way lessens the importance of their attempt. Arnold's theoretical insights are helpful for us, then, as we

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<sup>223</sup> Greengrass, "Afterword" in Dixon, Freist, Greengrass, *Diversity*, pp. 292-293, wrestles with the question of historical silences.

examine both Roussel's silences and his creative responses to the controversies around him. They will help me attempt a "contextualist approach to intellectual history."<sup>224</sup>

### Historiography on Gérard Roussel

For someone as famous in his era as Gérard Roussel was, there has been remarkably little written about him. Many works, especially older ones, refer to him in a manner that assumes he is "a known quantity"—one whom the reader is expected to know how to place within the particular historiographical narrative. Yet there has been little written about Roussel as a figure worthy of study in his own right. John Calvin dismissed him as a Nicodemite, as one who lacked the courage of his convictions by refusing to become a Protestant openly. Florimond de Raemond dismissed him as one, far from seeking the welfare of the Catholic Church in his efforts at renewal, instead sought to create his own movement of *Rousselistes*. The Protestant and Catholic narratives were set early on to ensure the bishop—as hero to no one—would go "missing." Charles Schmidt wrote a study of Roussel in 1845.<sup>225</sup> He repeatedly emphasizes Roussel's timidity: if he had only had sufficient courage, he could have led France to a Protestant future. Gustave Cadier wrote a Master's thesis on Roussel in 1947, attempting to measure the bishop's impact upon *la Réforme française*.<sup>226</sup> Paul Landa did a dissertation on Roussel, focusing on the latter's *Familière Exposition*. He rightly pointed out the many parallels

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<sup>224</sup> Coffey, Chapman, "Introduction" in Chapman, Coffey, Gregory, *Seeing Things Their Way*, p. 17. In the same book, p. 222, see also Mark A. Noll, "British Methodological Pointers for Writing a History of Theology in America," who argues for "research keyed to the interplay of normative languages and the connection of normative languages to their social contexts."

<sup>225</sup> Charles Schmidt, *Gérard Roussel, Prédicateur de la Reine Marguerite de Navarre: Mémoire servant à l'histoire des premières tentatives faites pour introduire la réformation en France* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970; originally published in Strasbourg, 1845).

<sup>226</sup> Gustave Cadier, "Gérard Roussel (1480-1555): sa vie, son influence sur la Réforme française" (University of Geneva, unpublished Master's thesis, 1947).

between Roussel's doctrines and Calvin's Reformed theology. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude, therefore, that Roussel was a closet Protestant. His teaching on the Lord's Supper is the clue that Roussel did not harbour Protestant longings, even while he appreciated much that Protestants taught.<sup>227</sup> Neither Cadier's study nor Landa's research were published.

Jonathan Reid recently published a major work on the Evangelical Network in France. His two-volume study brings to light again this movement associated with Marguerite de Navarre. He demonstrates that earlier writers like Salmon and Roelker went too far when they claimed the *préréforme* (their term) was scattered and unaffiliated.<sup>228</sup> He characterizes the network, through its authors and printers, as balancing two priorities: "Carefully avoiding outright attacks on the church and its doctrine, these tracts nevertheless highlighted the urgent need for reform."<sup>229</sup> He notes more than a "missing bishop": "we have lost track of the group entirely."<sup>230</sup> He also draws attention to the influence of dominant narratives upon our historiography: "In one way or another and in order to suit the collective memory of the confessional "winners," all these Catholics and Protestant historians appropriated, framed, and thus obscured the story of the French evangelicals' unsuccessful reforming project."<sup>231</sup>

In brief overview, Reid makes the following central point: "that the Navarrian network existed, that its members articulated a set of coherent and consistent religious beliefs, and,

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<sup>227</sup> See chap. 6 below. Paul Landa, "The Reformed Theology of Gerard Roussel, Bishop of Oloron (1536-1555), Based upon a Critical Edition of his *Familiere Exposition du Simbole, de la Loi et Oraison Dominicale en forme de colloque* and his *Forme de visite de diocese* (c. 1548)" (Vanderbilt University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 1976).

<sup>228</sup> See p. 21 above.

<sup>229</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 27.

<sup>230</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 36.

<sup>231</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 53. It is instructive to note that Lambin, *Femmes de Paix*, p. 466, argues that when we undervalue the part played by the noblewomen she studies we also miss an important swath of the history of "tolerance" in France—a parallel observation to Reid's and to mine.

furthermore, that they acted to see them adopted through politics and by rooting them in institutions.”<sup>232</sup> Their efforts were rooted in medieval Gallican precedents, and they saw European Protestant leaders as fellow travelers on the road toward reform, not as originators of their movement. The network looked to the endeavours of Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples as their inspiration. Reid examines the ways in which the network strove for renewal from the 1520s through the 1550s—many of which we shall see. When the first War of Religion broke out in 1562, the hopes of the evangelicals for peaceful reform were finally dashed.<sup>233</sup> Reid points out those influenced by Marguerite and her allies ended up “in both the Royalist (moderate Catholic) and Huguenot camps but rarely among the Guise-led intransigent Catholic party.”<sup>234</sup>

Though I affirm Reid’s work highly, I will disagree with two of his claims. Both points have implications for my contention that Roussel and his evangelical colleagues were *irenica* reformers. Reid believes the goal of the international diplomacy of French evangelicals in the 1530s and 1540s was to create a Protestant Gallican church along the lines of the Church of England, established in 1534.<sup>235</sup> They indeed sought reform of church and society through the leadership of Francis I, but their motivation derived from ancient notions of the sacred responsibility of the French crown, not from schismatic leanings. Also, Reid notes the many ways Roussel formulates the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper as John Calvin does. Like Landa, he

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<sup>232</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 13. Wanegffelen, *Ni Rom, Ni Genève*, p. 95, is nuanced concerning this claim. He feels that there was a network around Marguerite and Roussel, but cautions that the movement was not unified, because many who shared the same religious sensibility did not become part of the network.

<sup>233</sup> Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII’s England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), argues that reformers during Henry’s reign were not Protestants, but evangelicals, with a late medieval Catholic bent, but still emphatic that reform was needed.

<sup>234</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 571. Mark Greengrass, *Governing Passions: Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom, 1575–1585* (Oxford University Press, 2007), portrays Henry III as a genuine political reformer who was unable to bring about the peaceful changes he pursued—not unlike Roussel earlier.

<sup>235</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 497-516.

identifies Roussel's articulation of the Eucharist as Protestant.<sup>236</sup> Reid takes Roussel's silences into account and affirms that Roussel was navigating between confessional divides to build bridges of reunification. However, I wish to demonstrate Roussel was not a "Protestant-in-hiding," but a determined reformer who was also committed to avoiding schism. I will show that his doctrine—in many ways congenial to Calvin's views—also was consistent with a simplified, Catholic understanding of the Mass. He did not articulate this ambiguous position out of timidity, but out of commitment to a gospel-centered understanding of the sacrament that would avoid schism, nourish renewing faith and embrace a mediating, perhaps reunifying viewpoint. He was thoroughly committed to irenicism. Reid's study makes it plain Roussel had many colleagues in pursuing such a vision.

Reid highlights Roussel prominently, as is correct. De Raemond blamed only two people for the existence of French Protestantism: Roussel and Marguerite.<sup>237</sup> However, Reid's focus on Marguerite's sponsorship of the evangelicals leaves Roussel as a supporting player.<sup>238</sup> The latter's story needs further development. My study will focus, then, on Roussel's writings, seeking to understand him in his own right. This chapter has explained why historians have overlooked Roussel, and perhaps created an appetite to discover more about this difficult-to-categorize man. It is time to study Roussel's crucial contribution to the reforming network that encircled the Queen of Navarre.

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<sup>236</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 534-550. Landa, "Reformed Theology," pp. 219—221, 226-231, though Landa has to qualify his conclusion by admitting Roussel's presentation also does not reject transubstantiation, p. 257. I will consider the importance of this qualification in chap. 6.

<sup>237</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 567.

<sup>238</sup> Marguerite's leadership role in the network has not always been evident to others. Holt, *Wars of Religion*, p. 17, calls her "a disciple of the Meaux circle." Barbara Stephenson, *The Power and Patronage of Marguerite de Navarre* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), in contrast, affirms Marguerite's political influence.

### Chapter 3

#### Collaborator on a Preaching Manual

If Gérard Roussel was not a Protestant who lacked the courage of his convictions, what was he? We will look at various documents that he authored or co-authored in an attempt to explain him *as he might have explained himself*. I will examine the documents, one in each chapter to come, in chronological order. A view of the bishop will emerge that does not coincide with the presentations in the familiar narratives, Catholic, Protestant or Enlightenment.

The late medieval world was familiar with debate and rivalry within Christian society. Scholastic rhetorical methods encouraged argument that was pointed and uncompromising. Humanists scorned scholastics, as I will explore further in a moment. Movements such as conciliarism and the *via moderna* stirred debates. Renewal movements within monasticism, particularly the Franciscans and Augustinians, often led to deadlocks within their houses and orders. Yet something seemed to shift when Martin Luther decided in 1517 to challenge the practice of selling indulgences in his *Ninety-Five Theses*. All Germany *seemed* to rise against to the papacy. Luther used the printing press as none before had to denounce a self-indulgent church hierarchy that was resistant to reform. The year 1520 stands out in his efforts. Many in other lands were sympathetic. As had become standard practice, the papacy excommunicated the dissenter that same year, but instead of quelling the problem, defiance increased. Reformers in different jurisdictions in Europe, under the authority of local political leaders (who participated for a variety of reasons), began to declare independence of Rome in order to

strengthen the Christian society within their reach. Old conflicts, such as the struggle to reform the Augustinians, took on potentially heretical (Lutheran) overtones. (Many Augustinian reformers would embrace Protestantism.) Interestingly, all parties to the intensifying debates— influenced by humanism’s return to the sources— appealed to the New Testament for justification. Distressingly for many, such appeals rarely solved the conflicts. A particularly poignant example came from the falling out of northern Europe’s two most quotable reformers. Erasmus and Luther in many ways could have been allies. However, in engaging in 1524 and 1525 the old theological debate about the capacity of human volition in regards to the salvation of the soul, they became vociferous opponents. Luther, a very stubborn debater, was already viewed as a heretic by the Catholic hierarchy. Erasmus escaped condemnation for a time, but by 1559 Pope Paul IV prohibited his works, too.

It was in the early days of this increasingly hostile environment that the Circle of Meaux would attempt to renew a French Catholic diocese in a manner consistent with an irenic understanding of the Christian faith. We will examine in this chapter the preaching manual they produced, including the theology that undergirded irenic choices. One of the Circle’s members, Guillaume Farel, had a different understanding of the relationship between reform and irenicism in the faith. After he left Meaux, he produced a summary of the faith that demonstrates his theology contributed to his aggressive ways. We will, therefore, also examine his *Sommaire et Brève Déclaration* to illustrate the contrasting approaches between irenic evangelicals and schismatic ones. Theology shaped these different paths.

As further background, we should note that during the Renaissance, humanists typically battled scholastics over appropriate methodology. In legal studies, the recovery of “pure” Roman law through textual criticism pitted the humanists against the scholastics who argued that present civil law in France constituted the definitive development of that ancient law.<sup>239</sup> Such battles also raged over approaches to the Bible in theological faculties. Humanists like Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples (of whom we will speak more below), wanted to study the Bible afresh in the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. Scholastics defended the standard Latin translation, the Vulgate. James Farge shows that the Faculty of Theology in Paris remained aloof from these arguments until they encountered and condemned the works of Luther. Then, they vigorously took the scholastic side, equating humanists and heretics.<sup>240</sup> (This equation would have a dramatic impact upon the evangelicals.) It is worth noting that not all humanists became reformers; some sided with the Faculty. So, this picture has a general, but limited accuracy.

Francis Higman argues that the Faculty was not as powerful as it has often been portrayed. In the 1520s and 1530s it was unclear whether a traditional or humanist perspective would become dominant in French Catholicism. In fact, just prior to the Affair of the Placards in

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<sup>239</sup> Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 164-165.

<sup>240</sup> James K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation France: The Faculty of Theology of Paris, 1500-1543* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), pp. 170-171, 176, 186-196. See Lucien Febvre, Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800* (New York, London: Verso, 1976; originally published in French, 1958), p. 305. The Sorbonne in 1530 condemned the view that study of Hebrew and Greek was necessary in order to understand the Bible. Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 16, says that the evangelical circle in Meaux “probably would have been viewed as just another revival of spirituality” if Luther were not so prolific in his production of publications at the same time.

1534, optimism seemed to reign that the humanist spirit would prevail.<sup>241</sup> It did not. Higman provides a chronological list, from 1523 through 1550, of books condemned by the Faculty.<sup>242</sup> Before the Affair of the Placards, such censure was fairly limited, though it did impact the evangelicals: translations of the Bible into French (usually only portions, by Lefèvre d'Étaples), several works by Erasmus, and works by Martin Luther or his followers such as the parlementaire of Paris, Louis de Berquin. One of Lefèvre d'Étaples' works was the preaching manual that we will consider in this chapter—which Gérard Roussel (and other preachers in the Circle of Meaux) almost certainly co-authored with him. Until after 1536, however, the position of the Sorbonne was contested in a way that it would not be in the 1540s. So, while the restrictions of the Faculty did impact the flow of information and could hurt specific individuals or groups like Roussel and the Circle of Meaux that we will familiarize ourselves with in this chapter, they did not stop the spread of reforming ideas nor could the theologians be confident that their perspective would prevail.<sup>243</sup> In January 1543, reacting to the articulation of Reformed doctrine pouring out of printing presses, especially in Geneva,<sup>244</sup> the Sorbonne issued its "Twenty-Six Articles of Faith." This step significantly strengthened the traditionalist perspective within the French church, and it formed the basis for a thorough attempt to prevent Protestant ideas from appearing in French-language publications. The power of the

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<sup>241</sup> See Francis Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne: A Bibliographical Study of Books in French Censured by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520-1551* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), chap. III, "Religious Policy: Évangélisme"; and Higman, "De l'affaire des Placards aux nicodémistes: le mouvement évangélique français sous François Ier" in his *Lire et Découvrir: La circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1998), pp. 619-625; Denis Crouzet, *La genèse de la Réforme française, 1520-1560* (Paris: Sèdes, 1996), pp. 216-220.

<sup>242</sup> See Higman, *Censorship*, chap. V, "Texts in French Censured by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520-1551."

<sup>243</sup> Higman, *Censorship*, pp. 62, 71-72.

<sup>244</sup> Higman, "Genevan Printing and French Censorship, 1520-1551" in *Lire et Découvrir*, pp. 107-127.

Faculty would become greater than in the 1520s and 1530s, and more as it had been in earlier centuries.

In contrast, Farge believes that the Sorbonne largely determined orthodoxy in France in the 1520s.<sup>245</sup> It was the leading theological faculty in France, and one of the most respected in Europe.<sup>246</sup> He emphasizes its independence and strength, describing the manner in which the Faculty continued to play its time-honoured role of “consultant for Christendom.”<sup>247</sup> Farge demonstrates that the Faculty’s reputation was still formidable throughout these decades, but he weakens his case when he describes the “reformation” of the Faculty imposed on it in 1536 by the Parlement of Paris.<sup>248</sup> The magistrates forced the theologians to accept a solution that evangelicals would have applauded. In addition to lectures on Peter Lombard’s standard scholastic doctrinal text, the *Sentences*—which the Faculty argued were sufficient—the Parlement insisted on four new lectures virtually every day from November through August to consist of exposition of the Bible directly. To suggest that the jurists acted without “antagonism” is hard to credit.<sup>249</sup> They knew well the depth of the Sorbonne’s resistance to such humanist emphases and acted anyway. Higman’s case seems the stronger. The Sorbonne hurt the evangelicals. Yet, their power was limited and they could not do damage at will.<sup>250</sup> This

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<sup>245</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>246</sup> The proper name was the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris. The designation “Sorbonne” came from one of the colleges at the University. It is unclear why its name came to stand for the whole faculty. See Farge, *Faculty*, pp. 3-4, 38.

<sup>247</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, p. 270 and chap. III.

<sup>248</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, pp. 47-54.

<sup>249</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, p. 53.

<sup>250</sup> The king’s disposition seems the more critical factor in the changing fortunes of the evangelicals. Higman suggests that the foreign policy of Francis I was not as changeable as it has often been portrayed. He opposed both ultramontane tendencies that would make the Pope too powerful in his realm, and any radical declarations that tended toward schism in the church. His foreign policy is more consistent when it is viewed as steering between these opposing forces. See *Censorship*, pp. 37, 45. The evangelicals were often caught in Francis’ changing foreign

conclusion leaves open the possibility that there were not merely two monolithic movements (Catholic and early Reformed) in France at this time, but a third option, the evangelicals—a possibility with significant implications for our understanding of Roussel and his allies.

Farge and Higman provide insight into the thinking of the evangelicals by concentrating on their opponents. Perhaps this development is inevitable: for example, all the copies of the works written or translated by Berquin that were condemned by the Faculty in 1523 have been lost or destroyed, probably the latter.<sup>251</sup> Here it is true that history is written by the “victors.” Higman and Farge are to be applauded for their enlightening work. Still, it would be constructive also to write history from the perspective of evangelicals like Roussel, a project I will now attempt.

#### The Circle of Meaux: A Brief History

Guillaume Briçonnet became Bishop of Meaux in 1516. He had already led, as abbot from 1507, in the successful work of reforming the famous, but moribund, abbey in Paris, St. Germain-de-Prés. He also came from a well-known and influential family in church and state. His father had been an archbishop and cardinal; his uncle was a minister of the crown; his brother Denis also became a bishop in St. Malo. So, his appointment served as a catalyst to

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policy priorities as he alternately cooperated with the Pope (times of pressure for the evangelicals) or put pressure on the Pope (times of favour) in Francis' rivalry with Charles V for influence and territory in Italy. See Henry Heller, “1523: Panorama religieux et politique” in Guillaume Briçonnet, Marguerite d'Angoulême, *Correspondance (1521-1524)*, ed. Christine Martineau, Michel Veissière, t. II, *Années 1523-1524* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), p. 8.

<sup>251</sup> Higman, *Censorship*, p. 74-75. Larissa Taylor discovered that there is an almost total lack of Protestant sermons extant until we reach the period of the Wars of Religion. She had to turn to Catholic sermons, available both as manuscripts and in print, for the earlier period: Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. viii, 5.

draw a number of well-trained preachers to further church reform in Meaux. It was a dynamic group.

Briçonnet had had chances to participate in top-level diplomacy for the crown. He was an ambassador from King Louis XII to the Pope in 1507. Several years later, he organized an “alternate” church council in Pisa to pressure the papal court in the direction of French interests. Then, he participated in a council in Rome in 1516-1517. There he supported the overthrow of the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges of 1438, which had secured many local aspects of the Gallican liberties, in favour of even greater royal control of the ecclesial structure in France. The agreement between Francis and the Pope was called the Concordat of Bologna. Briçonnet, therefore, was committed to a centralized Gallican view of church life and so saw, with many others, the king as the most important leader in the life of the French church. “The sacerdotal king of France stood as a prophylactic barrier to protect the Gallican liberties from papal intervention.”<sup>252</sup> This persistent support for royal privilege is one of the reasons Briçonnet received both an ear for his policies in the royal court (most importantly, though not exclusively, from the king’s sister, Marguerite d’Angoulême—who would later marry Henry, King of Navarre, and would be remembered more as Marguerite de Navarre) and a considerable measure of royal protection through 1523, when Francis’ military campaign in Italy diverted his attention.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Holt, *Wars of Religion*, p. 10. See his summary of the ancient and priestly role of the French king, pp. 8-10.

<sup>253</sup> Henry Heller, “The Briçonnet Case Reconsidered” in *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 2, 2 (Fall 1972), pp. 223-258, describes well the impact on the reform at Meaux of the political, diplomatic and military priorities of Francis I.

Briçonnet came to Meaux with a track record of working for church reform. Yet his commitment to it seems to have grown as he tired of “honours, pleasures, sensualities and worldly goods.”<sup>254</sup> As a result of the self-serving ecclesiastical activities he witnessed, he came to speak sorrowfully of the church “which everyone ruins . . . which is in such disorder, as everyone can see.”<sup>255</sup> A frequent theme in his correspondence with Marguerite is that they should do “*le seul necessaire*.”<sup>256</sup> The allusion is to Luke 10:42 where Jesus declares that the “one thing needful” is to listen responsively to him. The bishop seems to have concluded that ecclesiastical structures are of no value unless there is a healthy spiritual life in the people of the church.

Meaux furnishes a good illustration of a diocese in need of renewal. The traditional preaching in French towns during Advent and Lent had been much ignored there. “Certain parishes had not had preaching in two to ten years.”<sup>257</sup> Yet Meaux, with a population near seven thousand, had a high number of literate folk for the era. The economy and agriculture in the diocese was advanced compared to other rural areas of France, leading to a relatively high number of well-off farmers and merchants and other bourgeois. It was a leading wool-cloth manufacturing centre. Its grain, wine, cheese and cloth primarily were sold in Paris, and most of its clergy reside in the capital.<sup>258</sup> The people of the diocese were ready for better leadership. In 1518 Briçonnet began the attempt to reform the local Franciscans, a move that would create

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<sup>254</sup> *Correspondance*, t. II, p. 89: “honneurs, plaisirs, voluptez et biens terriens.” The quote occurs in a discussion of the vast superiority of spiritual pursuits over against worldly ones.

<sup>255</sup> *Correspondance*, t. II, p. 104; t. I, *Années 1521-1522* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1975), p. 60: “qui tous ruyne . . . qui est en tel desordre que chacun voit.”

<sup>256</sup> *Correspondance*, t. I, e.g., p. 25.

<sup>257</sup> Taylor, *Soldiers*, pp. 16, 246, n. 1.

<sup>258</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The French Peasantry 1450-1660*, tr. Alan Sheridan (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1987; originally published in French, 1977), pp. 234-235, 239-246; Henry Heller, “Meaux” in Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* in 4 vols (Oxford University Press, 1996), v. 3, p. 36.

permanent enemies for him. (They would participate in the legal actions against him and the Circle.) In the same year, he organized his diocese of two hundred parishes into twenty-six preaching stations. In 1519 he sought to discourage absenteeism among his clergy, and in 1521 he began to recruit his preachers.<sup>259</sup> Briçonnet was a diligent bishop whose commitment to his reforming task and the people under his care was noteworthy.<sup>260</sup>

Yet change often breeds resistance. Briçonnet's high view of the spiritual role of the king had led him to seek to enlist Francis not only to support reform in the diocese, but to lead a reform throughout France.<sup>261</sup> Those who thought they heard similarities to the calls of Luther were not entirely wrong; yet they also ignored clear indications that Briçonnet was no schismatic and no Protestant.<sup>262</sup> Francis, in this period, was frequently at odds with the Pope over matters of French foreign policy, and a move by the king to become head of the church in France, much as Henry VIII did in England in the following decade, seemed a realistic possibility to some. Consequently, fearing that Meaux would be a beachhead not just for church reform, but for a break with Rome, traditionalists mobilized. They looked upon the Gallican liberties of the French church favourably; but a return to open schism as had occurred in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries was too scandalous to contemplate. Such a rending of

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<sup>259</sup> For details, see Pierre Imbart de la Tour, *Les Origines de la Réforme*, t. III, *L'Évangélisme (1521-1538)* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1944), pp. 112-115.

<sup>260</sup> See Marguerite's assessment, echoed by several modern day scholars, in *Correspondance*, t. II, p. 104, n. 141.

<sup>261</sup> See Jonathan A. Reid, *King's Sister—Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549) and her Evangelical Network* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), v. 1, chap. 6, on the "Meaux experiment" as a "model for national reform," including the attempted "breakout" of the Circle of Meaux into the diocese of Bourges in 1523-1524, pp. 241-247. Holt, *Wars of Religion*, pp. 8-12, describes the symbolically charged coronation ceremony of the "Most Christian King" of France. This title had venerable roots, going back to the baptism of the first Frankish king, Clovis, in 496. In the sixteenth century, it competed for prestige with the 1496 designation by the Pope of the Spanish monarchs as "Catholic kings." The French king vowed to "preserve at all times true peace for the Church of God."

<sup>262</sup> C. A. Mayer, "Évangélisme et Protestantisme" in *Studi Francesi* 30 (1986), p. 9, makes the improbable claim that the beliefs of Briçonnet and Roussel may not have been more moderate than Luther's. Only persecution, he believed, constrained them from more openness.

the fabric of Christian society was simply intolerable in their eyes. Particularly at the Sorbonne and in the Parlement of Paris—Meaux lay in its jurisdiction—they became determined to shut down reform in the diocese, even seeking to circumvent the king’s resistance to their efforts. In the end, they succeeded.

The Faculty’s first salvo came in 1523. They investigated two members of the Circle who were also Doctors of Theology in the Faculty itself: Martial Mazurier and Pierre Caroli. By November these preachers had been condemned on several charges, including criticizing prayers to the saints, praising Luther, and maintaining “the Mass was an awkward, human accretion to the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>263</sup> (In comparison to Guillaume Farel’s assessment below, the wording, though actually Farge’s summary, is mild indeed.) Both men issued the required retractions early in 1524.

Briçonnet had attempted to head off the condemnations by taking firm action against his own preachers. Some in the Circle had become unmanageable. The preachers in the Circle actually lacked agreement about what a reformed church should look like. Their divergent visions had begun to emerge. Farel was expelled in April. On October 15, the bishop issued two decrees. The first forbade the circulation of Luther’s books. The second ordered the preachers in Meaux to affirm the reality of purgatory and to uphold the validity of praying to the Virgin Mary and the saints. In the Circle both doctrines had been questioned.<sup>264</sup> Earlier, the diocese had specifically affirmed the seven Catholic sacraments.<sup>265</sup> Still, the dynamism of the Circle’s preachers had a popular effect not to the liking of the Faculty. On the streets, songs mocked the

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<sup>263</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, p. 173. See pp. 171-175, for a fuller account.

<sup>264</sup> Heller, “1523,” in *Correspondance*, t. II, p. 9.

<sup>265</sup> Imbart de la Tour, *Origines*, t. III, p. 149.

Paris theologians. Calling them “bigots living in hypocrisy,” the people sang that the scholars “have studied past time in their grand theology, which they practise well without charity.”<sup>266</sup>

The people were not impressed with the failure by the theologians to embrace neighbourliness.

The condemnations came despite Briçonnet’s forestalling tactics.

In 1523 and 1524 the Sorbonne sought to censure work by the humanists, Erasmus (in the Netherlands) and Lefèvre d’Étaples. The Greek versions of the New Testament that they produced and Lefèvre d’Étaples’ publications translating it into French were seen as threats to the authority of the Latin Vulgate. The king headed off the condemnations for a time, but the investigations had a chilling effect at Meaux. In his *Correspondance*, Briçonnet ceases speaking of reform in the year 1524.

In 1525 the Faculty again, in conjunction with the Parlement, vigorously prosecuted the diocese of Meaux.<sup>267</sup> With Francis in captivity in Madrid, the court decided that the Faculty’s jurisdiction over matters of faith took precedence over a bishop’s jurisdiction over preaching in his diocese—especially if the bishop had appointed several preachers that the Faculty had already found to be suspect. Some two dozen defendants were prosecuted and then the bishop was forced to turn over the large sum of two hundred *livres* to pay for the hostile proceedings against those he had actively sponsored.<sup>268</sup> The humiliation was palpable. Briçonnet’s Circle was dispersed. His attempts at evangelical reform were now quite limited and subtle. On December

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<sup>266</sup> Quoted by Farge, *Faculty*, p. 240: “les bigotz vivans en ypocrisie . . . ont estudie le temps passe en leur grande theologie, Dont ilz ont bien pratique sans charite.” It is amusing to note that the Faculty, despite the accusation in the song, and despite its overall desire to keep good works as part of salvation, nonetheless condemns the proposition “faith without charity is not faith.” See Screech, “Appendice B” in *Épistres et Évangiles*, p. 45, Proposition 20.

<sup>267</sup> The details are in Farge, *Faculty*, pp. 237-240.

<sup>268</sup> William Monter, *Judging the French Reformation: Heresy Trials by Sixteenth-Century Parlements* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 60.

14, 1525, he called together all his priests and their vicars. He wished to confirm their orthodoxy in belief and practice, so he could prevent further prosecutions. He concluded that evangelical teaching had made an impact on the people without any visible Lutheran tendencies. He may have seen what he wanted to see, however. A more radicalized faith did become entrenched in Meaux.<sup>269</sup> Several times in the sixteenth century the city would be the center of violent Protestant agitation or Catholic repressive strategies. It was one of the provincial towns where an “echo” of the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre took place in 1572.

#### Other Important Players at Meaux

Beyond Briçonnet, a quick look at other key leaders in Meaux will be illuminating before we examine Gérard Roussel’s part there, particularly in producing the preaching manual that arose out of this Circle. Martial Mazurier, who had been one target of the Sorbonne’s legal proceedings in 1523, had one of his books condemned in 1550.<sup>270</sup> The Faculty gave no reasons for its censure, but we can guess. The book advocates confession to God alone and makes no mention of the sacrament of penance.<sup>271</sup> Yet Mazurier was a Catholic evangelical, not a schismatic. He died in 1551 “and specified in his will that his house should be sold to finance Lenten sermons . . . with a proviso specifying that the preacher ask the congregation to pray for his soul.”<sup>272</sup>

After his retraction in 1524, Pierre Caroli preached for more than a year in Paris under the protection of the local bishop despite the continuing objections of the Faculty, reinforcing

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<sup>269</sup> Larissa Taylor, *Heresy and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Paris: François Le Picart and the Beginnings of the Catholic Reformation* (Boston: Brill, 1999), pp. 153, 39.

<sup>270</sup> He also came under investigation in 1521, 1525 and 1530. See Farge, *Faculty*, pp. 171, 198.

<sup>271</sup> Higman, *Censorship*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>272</sup> Taylor, *Soldiers*, p. 50.

Higman's contention that the Sorbonne had genuine limits on its power.<sup>273</sup> Caroli then embraced Protestantism, becoming a leading pastor and teacher in the Swiss city of Lausanne. Displaying a penchant for the controversial limelight, he accused his one-time colleague at Meaux, Guillaume Farel, of being an Arian, which is failing to teach that Jesus was "*vrai Dieu*," as well as fully human.<sup>274</sup> Farel was able to prove the charges false, and in reprisal the reformed magistrates in Berne deprived Caroli of his income. Caroli then returned to external conformity, at least, with the Catholic Church.

François Vatable was a gifted scholar of the Hebrew Old Testament, and a capable translator of New Testament Greek. He was appointed one of the king's Bible lecturers at the Collège de France in 1530.<sup>275</sup> As part of the battle between scholastics and humanists, he faced charges in 1534 of undermining the Vulgate.<sup>276</sup>

Much could be said about Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples.<sup>277</sup> The leading humanist in Paris for decades, he had taught many younger humanists, including Briçonnet, Farel and Rousset. He had come to St. Germain-de-Prés during Briçonnet's abbacy, deliberately associating himself with the reform project. Writing in Latin, he published about justification by faith before Luther

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<sup>273</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, p. 175. See the discussion on pp. 78-81 above.

<sup>274</sup> It is a curious fact that nowhere in Guillaume Farel, *Sommaire et brève déclaration (1525)*, adapted by A. L. Hofer (Neuchâtel: Belle Rivière, 1980), does the author affirm the Trinity or the full divinity of Jesus Christ. He did, however, write earlier to that effect in another context: pp. 13-14.

<sup>275</sup> James K. Farge, *Le parti conservateur au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Université et Parlement de Paris à l'époque de la Renaissance et de la Réforme* (Paris: Collège de France, 1992), indicates that Vatable was also attached to the Collège du Cardinal-Lemoine as a way to secure his income. The king was not generous in supporting his lecturers. The college was originally named the College of the Three Languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin), indicating its (and Francis') humanist leanings.

<sup>276</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, p. 205.

<sup>277</sup> Augustin Renaudet, *Préréforme et Humanisme à Paris pendant les premières guerres d'Italie (1494-1517)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: Librairie D'Argences, 1953), covers his career extensively.

did.<sup>278</sup> He was the inspiration at Meaux for the younger members of the Circle and Briçonnet's most important ally there.<sup>279</sup> He was appointed "vicar-general" in 1523.<sup>280</sup> At Meaux he began to publish Bible portions in French with the purpose of reforming the church by having all its members personally acquainted with the evangelical faith. Soon condemned by the Sorbonne, he had to flee France as a "heretic" when the Circle of Meaux collapsed in 1525. He first went to Strasbourg, a leading centre of early Protestantism. He died in the Kingdom of Navarre (now southwest France), under the protection of Marguerite, the queen there. Some scholars say his connection to the Catholic Church at death was merely nominal.<sup>281</sup> It is a conclusion that I have already disputed.<sup>282</sup> Along with Briçonnet and most of the preachers in the Circle of Meaux, Lefèvre d'Étaples was no schismatic. He eagerly desired reform, but his unbroken connection to the Catholic Church until his death suggests his continued loyalty.

Although there were other members of the Circle—younger preachers like Pauvant and Saulnier also were corrected by the Sorbonne<sup>283</sup>—there is one more leading figure, Guillaume Farel. At St. Germain-de-Prés, Lefèvre d'Étaples led him in the direction of reform. Farel became the fieriest preacher at Meaux in 1521 and, by 1523, he had been expelled as too radical. The separation was mutual. In Farel's estimation, reform under Briçonnet was too slow and too

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<sup>278</sup> Holt, *Wars of Religion*, p. 16.

<sup>279</sup> See *Correspondance*, t. II, pp. 27-32 (a letter that Lefèvre d'Étaples helps to write because Briçonnet is ill); and p. 108, as sample places where "Monsieur Fabry" is singled out.

<sup>280</sup> M. A. Screech in "Introduction" in Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples et ses disciples, *Épîtres et Évangiles pour les cinquante et deux semaines de l'an*, Fac-similé de la première édition Simon du Bois (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1964), p. 11.

<sup>281</sup> E.g., Holt, *Wars of Religion*, p. 16.

<sup>282</sup> See p. 30 above.

<sup>283</sup> Pauvant was burned at the stake in August 1526. He opposed the doctrines of purgatory and the mass, the practices of confession and offerings to the saints, and supported iconoclasm. See Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 358, and Taylor, *Soldiers*, p. 199.

small.<sup>284</sup> He quickly declared himself a Protestant, and actively advanced the Reformation in several locales, most notably the Swiss cities of Geneva and Neuchâtel. He became a key encourager and partner of John Calvin, helping to create the Reformed stream of the Protestant movement. His picture of what a reformed church should look like differed considerably from his fellow preachers at Meaux (though Caroli, Roussel and Mazurier appreciated some of Farel's perspectives). He shared much evangelical doctrine with the others, but Farel's determined embrace of schism—rooted in the conviction that the Catholic Church was a false church—in pursuit of his vision of reform stands in contrast to Roussel's desire to renew the existing church. Our examination in this chapter of both the preaching manual produced by the preachers at Meaux and Farel's theological summary will demonstrate these differences.

#### Gérard Roussel's Place in the Story

Gérard Roussel was born about 1480 in Vaquerie near Amiens in Picardy. By 1501, he was a collaborator with Lefèvre d'Étaples. Unlike Mazurier and Caroli, he did not obtain a doctorate, but a Master of Arts degree. Nonetheless, his academic abilities were widely recognized. In 1508, he functioned as a corrector at Estienne's press for Lefèvre d'Étaples' edition of the *Dialectica* of George of Trebizond. In 1511, he wrote the prefatory epistle for the publication of Pomponio Gaurico's Latin adaptation of Porphyry's introduction to Plato and Aristotle, with commentary by the sixth century Neo-Platonist, Ammonius. Roussel added

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<sup>284</sup> Hofer in *Sommaire*, p. 9.

comments of his own.<sup>285</sup> He was a teacher at the College of Cardinal Lemoine, beginning around 1512.<sup>286</sup> At some point, he was appointed priest in the Ardennes village of Buzancy.<sup>287</sup>

As an ambitious young preacher at Meaux, Roussel first published in order to establish his humanist credentials. In 1521 he wrote a commentary on the *De Arithmetica* of Boethius, a Christian statesman and philosopher of the early sixth century, who was a much-loved figure for medieval and Renaissance students. (Boethius' work was itself a loose Latin translation of a first century Greek book by Nicomachus, a Pythagorean interested in the mystical properties of numbers.) Masi describes the publications of the French humanists working under the direction of Lefèvre d'Étaples, including Roussel's commentary, as "certainly the most brilliant phase in the history of the Boethian texts on the disciplines of the Liberal Arts."<sup>288</sup> Roussel combines mystical spirituality and traditional Aristotelian intellectualism in a way that shows innate conservatism of thought—which, Masi insists, demonstrates that he had no schismatic tendencies.<sup>289</sup> Roussel affirms Boethius' educational approach. The latter coined the term for the second tier of medieval education, the *quadrivium*, consisting of arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy—all disciplines based on number theory. Such theory, Roussel asserts, is the basis and unity of all knowledge, even of the divine. Nonetheless, like Boethius, Roussel generally avoided the mystical approach to numbers, instead using philosophical mathematical concepts such as "equality" and "infinity" to affirm the Trinity (God is Three-in-

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<sup>285</sup> Eugene F. Rice, ed., *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 246-247.

<sup>286</sup> Francis Higman, "Gérard Roussel" in Hillerbrand, *Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, v. 3, p. 452.

<sup>287</sup> Michel Veissière, *L'évêque Guillaume Briçonnet (1470-1534)* (Provins: Société d'histoire et d'archéologie, 1986), p. 202.

<sup>288</sup> Michael Masi, "The Liberal Arts and Gerardus Ruffus' Commentary on the Boethian *De Arithmetica*" in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 10, 2 (Summer 1979), pp. 23-41. The quotation is on p. 23.

<sup>289</sup> Masi, "Ruffus," p. 26.

One) and the two natures of Christ (both fully human and fully divine), going well beyond Boethius' original work in exploring these doctrines.

A year later, Roussel translated Aristotle's *Magna Moralia*, adding textual notes, at the request of Josse Clichtove, who found an earlier translation by the famous Italian classicist, Lorenzo Valla, inadequate. Clichtove added his commentary but also included Valla's earlier translation and the notes provided by Lefèvre d'Étaples when the latter had published Valla's translation in 1497. This work, including the request to improve upon Valla, certainly burnished Roussel's scholarly credentials. Yet, his goal also solidified his humanist reputation, as he sought the reconciliation of the "honour ethics" of Aristotle with the mercy and service ethics of the New Testament.<sup>290</sup> Roussel also connected the book with the project of church renewal at Meaux by holding up Briçonnet, his bishop, as an exemplar of this honourable way of life.<sup>291</sup>

Upon arriving in Meaux, Roussel was appointed the parish priest at the collegial church of Saint-Saintin and the treasurer of the chapter there. Along with Vatable, he assisted Lefèvre d'Étaples in the translation of the New Testament, which appeared in 1523.<sup>292</sup> Roussel had his license to preach withdrawn by Briçonnet in December 1523, when the bishop responded to the initial investigation by the Sorbonne. He began with a synodal decree in October condemning Luther's doctrines. Two months later Briçonnet he revoked the licenses of Roussel and Michel d'Arande, probably his best preachers. One can wonder how serious the bishop was. D'Arande was the Advent preacher in Bourges at the very time that he lost his license in

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<sup>290</sup> Josse Clichtove, *Opus magnorum moralium Aristotelis . . . elaborata et breviusculis annotationibus explicata*, tr. Gérard Roussel (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1522), 32r.

<sup>291</sup> See Roussel's "Dedicatory Epistle to François Bohier [nephew of Guillaume Briçonnet]" in Clichtove, *Opus magnorum moralium Aristotelis*, 3v.

<sup>292</sup> Veissière, *Briçonnet*, p. 233.

Meaux and returned to the former city in 1524 for further evangelical preaching with the strong backing of Marguerite, the king's sister.<sup>293</sup> Roussel soon resumed his prominent place among the preachers in Meaux. In the summer of 1524 (the time when the preaching manual was being produced), he became a daily public lecturer for the common folk on the letters of the Apostle Paul, in addition to more learned lectures on the Psalms. He wrote a commentary on Paul's epistle to the Romans, which he hoped Farel would have published for him in Basel.<sup>294</sup> It appears that it never was. Yet, of fifty-three epistle lessons selected for the preaching manual, forty-one come from the Pauline corpus, making it likely that a significant number of the sermons attached to these lessons were originally preached by Roussel. When we consider Roussel's close collaboration with some of Lefèvre d'Étaples' earlier publications, it becomes probable that the younger preacher had a highly significant role in the manual's production (as I will maintain in the next section). His preaching was so effective that Briçonnet increased the number of lecturers to four to visit the larger towns in the diocese and he also arranged for copies of the Gospels in French to be distributed to the literate, who were encouraged to bring them along for these public lectures and so become deeper students of the Bible themselves.<sup>295</sup> During this time, Roussel defended the approach of the preachers at Meaux against the urging of his former colleague Farel to be more direct in challenging church abuses. "The time has not yet come. It would be a pointless battle against the gates of hell until the gospel is known."<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, pp. 241-247.

<sup>294</sup> Roussel to Farel, before October 5, 1524 in A.-L. Herminjard, ed., *Correspondance des Réformateurs dans les pays de langue française*, 9 vols. (Geneva: H. George/Paris: Michel Levy, 1866-1897; reprinted in Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1965), v. I, no. 124, pp. 291-294.

<sup>295</sup> Febvre, Martin, *Coming of the Book*, pp. 295-296.

<sup>296</sup> Roussel to Farel, August 24, 1524 in Herminjard, *Correspondance*, I, no. 117, pp. 270-273. See Imbart de la Tour, *Origines*, t. III, pp. 167, 115, 163.

At times, Roussel was like Mazurier and Caroli. He sometimes courted controversy in opposing Catholic teachings not found in the Bible. When these two friends ran afoul of the Sorbonne in 1523, Roussel stepped forward in Meaux and preached against the Assumption of Mary, the veneration of the saints, and the poor translation, at points, of the Hebrew original by the Vulgate.<sup>297</sup> In private he questioned ecclesiastical orders and the doctrine of purgatory.<sup>298</sup> In the final legal proceedings against the Circle, Roussel was condemned for several violations: encouraging iconoclasm by a number of artisans; disparaging the Pope; distributing the Gospels, Psalms and letters of Paul in the vernacular; refusing to recite the *Ave Maria* in the liturgy, despite having promised to do so, and replacing it with the Lord's Prayer until "his bishop should correct him."<sup>299</sup> The formal complaint was made on January 11, 1525, charges were laid on February 6, and the condemnations came months later: November 6 by the Faculty, February 5, 1526 by the Parlement. Roussel had already left for Strasbourg. We know he was still in Meaux on September 25, but fled under threat of arrest and arrived in the Rhineland city by early October.<sup>300</sup>

In later chapters we will see more of his subsequent life's work. We will now seek to understand his early thinking through the preaching manual in which he was involved.

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<sup>297</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, p. 173.

<sup>298</sup> Roussel to Jean Œcolampadius, August 24, 1524 in Herminjard, *Correspondance*, I, 118, pp. 274-278, specifically pp. 277-278.

<sup>299</sup> C. Schmidt, "Gérard Roussel, Inculpé d'Hérésie à Meaux, 1525" in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français* 10 (1861), pp. 219-221.

<sup>300</sup> Veissière, *Briçonnet*, p. 371.

### Authorship of the Preaching Manual

It is time to introduce the homiletical manual to which Roussel almost certainly made a major contribution. It was designed to be an aid for preachers that would encourage them to emphasize evangelical teaching: *Épîtres et Évangiles pour les cinquante et deux semaines de l'an*. It was composed by Lefèvre d'Étaples "and his disciples," who felt many of the vicars in Meaux—who had to deliver sermons when Briçonnet suspended preachers' licenses in late 1523—were not capable biblical expositors and needed help. In this environment, the manual needed to distinguish itself from schismatic Lutheranism.<sup>301</sup>

It seems most likely that it was published first in 1525.<sup>302</sup> Two catalogues of condemned books list the work as published in 1523, one claiming that the Sorbonne had issued its proscription in the same year. We know the precise date of the condemnation of *Épîtres et Évangiles*: November 6, 1525. So, the catalogues seem to be in error. Lefèvre d'Étaples wrote a Latin work as an introduction to the four gospels in 1522, which the Faculty of Theology condemned the following year, and it seems the catalogues have confused these two works associated with same scholar. The earliest edition of *Épîtres et Évangiles* available to us was published by the noted Protestant printer Simon Du Bois. He later published a corrected second edition in Alençon, where he had fled for safety under the protection of Marguerite de Navarre after the martyrdom of the Lutheran Louis de Berquin in 1529. So, we can narrow the window for publication of the first edition to between 1525 and 1529. Curiously, the Du Bois edition is not the same as that proscribed by the Paris theologians. We have no copy of the edition

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<sup>301</sup> Screech in "Introduction" in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, pp. 10, 18, n. 7.

<sup>302</sup> See the discussion on dating, in Screech, "Les Éditions" in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, pp. 21-23.

examined for heresy, but the pagination cited in the condemnations differs from the available version. Still, the actual text cited in the censures is the same. This fact suggests that the publication date for the first Du Bois edition is near 1525, and it may, in fact, be the original version.<sup>303</sup> While there is uncertainty about the time Du Bois first published the work, the Sorbonne's condemnation of *Épistres et Évangiles* allows us to date the manual's original appearance quite precisely: 1525. Therefore, Lefèvre d'Étaples' "disciples" almost certainly came from the Circle of Meaux, even though they were being dispersed by the time of publication.

In fact, no name is on the title page. The risks of prosecution and possibly execution were real in this era, and the hostility of the Sorbonne was a known factor. Not naming the authors just might help them avoid condemnation. However, immediately after publication authorship was widely attributed and the Sorbonne assumed this attribution was accurate. Noel Beda, who was the driving force behind the Faculty's hostility toward humanism and evangelical spirituality, wrote *Annotations on Two Books by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples* in 1526.<sup>304</sup> He called one of these books, *liber Exhortationum super Epistolas & Evangelia pro usu Meldensi*. Since *Meldensi* is Latin for Meaux, he certainly had *Épistres et Évangiles* in mind. He cites the common understanding: "Moreover, the authors of that book (it is said) were Jacques

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<sup>303</sup> Other known editions are: a second one by Simon Du Bois, published in Alençon c. 1532; four published in Lyons—c. 1531 (by Pierre de Vingle), 1542 (Étienne Dolet), twice in 1544 (Jean de Tournes, Balthazar Arnoullet); 1549 in Rouen (Claude Treszet)—which Higman suspects was also published in Lyons; 1556, in Avignon (Barth. Bonhomme). The 1542 edition formed part of the case for the condemnation and execution of Dolet in 1546. See Higman, *Censorship*, pp. 80, 98, and *Lire et Découvrir*, pp. 81-82. Screech gives examples of additional sermons that Dolet inserted into the book. They are closer in spirit to Farel's preaching and writing than to the original work. See "Les Éditions" in *Épistres et Évangiles*, p. 23 and Appendice A.

<sup>304</sup> *Annotationes in Jacobum Fabrum libri duo*, cited by Screech in "Introduction" in *Épistres et Évangiles*, p. 18, n. 9.

Lefèvre and his disciples.” This attribution was not contested in the years following.<sup>305</sup> So, scholars accept that Lefèvre d’Étaples was the primary author, but also that he was not the only author. Most of his work was done in Latin. However, he did translate the Bible into French: the New Testament was published in 1523, and the Old Testament by 1530. The translation of the New Testament was very much part of his commitment to reform at Meaux, and it appeared before the Circle began to disintegrate. *Épistres et Évangiles* is his only other French book. Now, there is precedent for a well-established author to make a limited contribution to a publication, while younger, lesser-known writers do the bulk of the work. The known author adds prestige and marketability. Since the disciples seem to have been active preachers at Meaux, it appears plausible that their sermons formed the content of the manual, while Lefèvre d’Étaples—not a regular preacher—edited the various homilies to provide consistency in style and ensure exegetical accuracy. It would have been an appropriate division of labour. If true, then *Épistres et Évangiles* reflects the disciples’ thinking in a major way—and I am about to suggest that Roussel was the most important of these young preachers.

For this study, it is critical that we assess the likely identity of Lefèvre d’Étaples’ disciples. In an old article, H. Vuilleumier introduced Jean Lecomte, who would later attach himself to the reform efforts of Calvin and Farel in Switzerland.<sup>306</sup> Lecomte, whose description of the purpose of the preachers at Meaux will be important to us, relates that he had been, during his pre-Protestant days, one of four co-workers on this manual. Vuilleumier speculates that the other co-workers were Farel, Roussel and Michel d’Arande. D’Arande, who often

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<sup>305</sup> “Libri autem illius authores (ut dicitur) fuerunt Jacobus Faber, et ejus discipuli.” Screech in “Introduction” in *Épistres et Évangiles*, p. 11, refers to a decree of the Parlement in 1543 that condemns the preaching manual and affirms Lefèvre d’Étaples’ authorship.

<sup>306</sup> “Quelques pages inédites d’un réformateur trop peu connu” in *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 19 (1886).

functioned as a courier between Guillaume Briçonnet and Marguerite d'Angoulême, is a plausible suggestion. Roussel, in light of his work at Meaux and his subsequent career, also makes sense. The speculation regarding Farel, however, is hard to credit. Since he was deprived of his place at Meaux in April 1523 because of his radical preaching, it is improbable he would have been invited to contribute to the preaching manual during its production, which likely took place in 1524, the year before its first publication. With the Sorbonne paying close and hostile attention, neither the bishop nor the scholar would have felt they could rely on the “firebrand” for such sensitive work.

Since Vuilleumier is speculating, we can test his more plausible suggestions by asking, “Who else might have contributed to the preaching manual?” Mazurier and Caroli, both capable of participating, are unlikely candidates because of their preoccupation with the Faculty’s legal challenge in 1523 and 1524. Briçonnet himself was also too busy with legalities and other political and administrative responsibilities. Vatable clearly may have helped. While his expertise was more in the Old Testament, he did contribute to the translation work on the New Testament and he did preach. His participation, a credible possibility, is less likely than that of d’Arande or Roussel, both of whom were already noted biblical preachers. (It is also easy to explain why Lecomte would not have named the latter two in the letter to Geneva cited below: evangelicals who became bishops were highly unpopular there—as we shall see in chapter 5. Of the leading participants at Meaux, only Roussel and d’Arande took on episcopal assignments subsequently.) We then come to less prominent preachers in the Circle, like Pauvant and Saulnier. Lecomte himself would fit into this group, so we must acknowledge that another co-worker could likewise have arisen from among them. Still, the probability is that d’Arande and

Roussel would have taken the greater role in producing the preaching manual because of their recognized scholarly abilities, inclination for such tasks and their influence at Meaux. Since d'Arande was travelling frequently to engage in diplomatic work for Briçonnet, the probability of Roussel's involvement seems greatest of all. It is, in fact, entirely possible that Roussel, who remained consistently available in the diocese during this time and must have contributed significantly out of his public lectures in the summer of 1524 to the sermons in the manual on the Pauline epistle readings, did the greatest share of the work under the general guidance of the aging Lefèvre d'Étaples. Veissière's observation reinforces this possibility: the use of Scripture in *Épistres et Évangiles* is notably different from its personal use by Lefèvre d'Étaples and Briçonnet.<sup>307</sup> Allegorical interpretation is used quite sparingly.

So, it seems appropriate to conclude that the preaching manual that we will now examine represents the basic attitude and approach of, not just Lefèvre d'Étaples, but also Lecomte, d'Arande, Roussel and (as the most likely fourth participant) Vatable.<sup>308</sup> Regarding Roussel, if the tone and content of the preaching manual is consistent with the other documents we will study, we can read *Épistres et Évangiles* as a witness to his contribution to the evangelical reform movement he clearly participated in and in some ways led.

#### *Épistres et Évangiles: An Attempt at Peaceful Religious Change*

Lecomte's testimony about the approach of the Circle of Meaux needs to be considered here. Seeking to extend the Protestant Reformation in the western part of Switzerland, he composed a preaching manual, similar in concept and goal to *Épistres et Évangiles*. Known alternatively as *Cinquante-deux dimanches* and *Démégories (Sermons) sur tous les Dimanches*

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<sup>307</sup> Veissière, *Briçonnet*, p. 310-311.

<sup>308</sup> Veissière, *Briçonnet*, p. 308, favours Lecomte, Roussel and Vatable, but leaves out d'Arande.

*de l'an*, Lecomte sought permission from the City Council in Geneva to print the work. In the Preface, he explains that he already engages in regular Protestant preaching—consisting of sermons from the Old Testament during the week and two *prédications* on Sunday—in the neighbouring village of Giez. There the Catholic Mass had already been abolished. Yet, in the town of Grandson, he felt constrained to follow another practice, one he had used at Meaux.

Here at Grandson, I accommodate myself to the papists in the sense that I take for the [preaching] texts the apostolic and evangelical pericopes that are found in the [Catholic] Missals. Among the Sunday sermons we have inserted those for feast days, specifically Incarnation (or Annunciation), Christmas, Circumcision and Ascension. In all things we have applied ourselves to be intelligible, concise and moderate (at least for as much as gentleness can be reconciled with the duty not to dissimulate concerning the truth), abstaining from all misplaced censure and from all odious invective.<sup>309</sup>

We observe several important points in this explanation. First, we note the openness with which he admits to accommodation with the Catholics. Lecomte did not see any inherent conflict between reformation, even *Protestant* reformation, and such irenic interaction. Second, as at Meaux, he was willing to pursue reform by attaching gospel preaching to the Roman Mass. Third, certain feasts helped the people to retain the “grand mysteries of our unique Redeemer” and so were wise to retain, “so as not to displease God.”<sup>310</sup> Fourth, he presciently worded himself in light of Calvin’s coming attack on the Nicodemites in 1544. (Lecomte sought permission to publish in 1543.) Dissimulation had to be renounced. Fifth, censure and invective were counterproductive, while moderation and gentleness commended themselves. Clearly, Lecomte used this approach to convert his Catholic parishioners. His

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<sup>309</sup> Cited in Screech in “Introduction” in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, p. 20, n. 39: “Ici, à Grandson, je m’accommode aux papists . . . en ce sens que je prends pour textes les péripopes apostoliques et évangéliques qui se trouvent dans les missels. . . . Parmi les démégories dominicales nous avons inséré celles des jours des fêtes, savoir de l’incarnation, de la nativité, de la circoncision et de l’ascension . . . En toutes choses nous nous sommes appliqué à être intelligible, concis et modéré (pour autant du moins que la douceur peut se concilier avec le devoir de ne pas dissimuler la vérité), nous abstenant de toute censure déplacée et de toute invective odieuse.”

<sup>310</sup> Screech in “Introduction” in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, p. 20, n. 39: “grands mystères de notre unique Redempteur”; “ce qu’à Dieu ne plaise.”

approach did not reflect a modern “live and let live” tolerance. However, it did reflect a desire to promote peaceful religious change, and so is noteworthy for our purposes. Sixth, the Protestant narrative that has overlooked these irenic efforts was already in formation in Geneva. The magistrates rejected the request for a license to publish because Lecomte’s preaching manual—in their estimation—lacked any “*grande édification*.”<sup>311</sup>

Elsewhere, Lefèvre d’Étaples also affirmed this methodology. In a letter to Farel dated January 13, 1524, we find a declaration of peaceful intent in his work of *réforme*. Lefèvre d’Étaples identifies two possible approaches to the preaching task, which was also in his mind the task of religious renewal.<sup>312</sup> It was possible simply to teach the biblical lessons in the Missal without challenging the cult of the saints and other human traditions. *Épîtres et Évangiles* exemplifies this strategy. The alternative was to attack unbiblical practices. Mazurier and Caroli, as Doctors in the church and as members of the Faculty, had attempted this approach, and were quickly subjected to an effective and comprehensive discipline. Clearly, the choice to preach the “pure gospel” for renewal without unnecessarily antagonizing traditionalists in the church was conscious and deliberate.<sup>313</sup> Lefèvre d’Étaples also was conscious of a doctrinal basis for this approach. In his *Commentary on the Four Gospels* of 1522, he writes, “In Christ there must not be sects or division, but one universal religion only, everywhere the same, in which we are all carried toward God by the same charity, all closely united among ourselves.”<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Screech in “Introduction” in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, p. 20.

<sup>312</sup> Cited in Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, pp. 295-296.

<sup>313</sup> Lefèvre d’Étaples felt that a new age for the Gospel was emerging in the 1520s, with greater knowledge of languages and a wider geographic spread of the New Testament message than ever before. See his “Preface” in his *Commentaries on the Four Gospels*, found in Olin, *Reform in the Church*, p. 114.

<sup>314</sup> Charles-Henri Graf, *Essai sur la vie et les écrits de Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970; originally published, 1842), p. 101: “En Christ il ne doit pas y avoir de secte, de division, mais une seule religion

Here, then, we see a faith-based commitment to charity, unity and the avoidance of the type of division we see with painful clarity as the sixteenth century continues on; in other words, we see in Lefèvre d'Étaples deliberate irenicism, rooted not in compromise, but in conviction. With Lecomte and Lefèvre d'Étaples as contributors, we should expect to find little “attack” in our preaching manual—an expectation, in fact, realized. For example, the preaching manual can certainly criticize Catholic leaders. Yet, it criticizes their sins rather than their doctrine.

Furthermore, the criticism is often oblique, indirect and tentative: referring to Jesus' day, “the scribes and Pharisees by their human constitutions and ordinances are corrupt, contaminated and depraved.”<sup>315</sup> The listeners to the sermon have to decide for themselves whether contemporary church leaders are implicated. Certainly, we do not see the scorching denunciations that we will see in Farel below.

*Épîtres et Évangiles pour les cinquante et deux semaines de l'an*<sup>316</sup> was structured around the seasons of the church year. In addition to Sundays, eleven special days were provided for. Ironically, despite the manual's title, fifty-three Sundays are covered, perhaps intending to address the rare year in which there is an extra Sunday. Or perhaps it was intended to add an extra Sunday to the post-Pentecost period for the years in which this period was longer than the twenty-four weeks allocated to it. (Up to twenty-seven weeks are possible.) The shifting date of Easter accounts for the variation. The period between Epiphany and Lent

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universelle et partout la même, dans laquelle nous sommes tous portés vers Dieu par une même charité et tous étroitement unis entre nous.”

<sup>315</sup> “les scribes & pharisiens par leurs humaines constitutions & ordonnances ont corrompu, contamine et deprave.” (lxvii,v-lxviii,r) On Sexagesima, the “faulx docteurs” of 2 Corinthians 11:19-12:9 could hint at the doctors of the Sorbonne, but the exhortation always refers to the Apostle Paul's first century opponents. (lxxvi,v-lxxix,r) Contrast *Sommaire*, pp. 90-92, where Farel uses similar words, and leaves no doubt that he is referring to contemporary Catholic leaders.

<sup>316</sup> *Epistles and Gospels for the Fifty-Two Weeks of the Year*.

involves between six and nine Sundays. *Épistres et Évangiles* simply provides for all nine; when the post-Epiphany season is shorter, the subsequent period between Pentecost and the beginning of Advent becomes longer.

The four major seasons of the Christian year were, as expected, included. The four Sundays of Advent, prior to December 25, focused on preparation for the celebration anew on Christmas Day of Christ's birth. The end of the Twelve Days of Christmas is marked by the Feast of Epiphany (called *Le jour des Roys* [The Day of the (Three) Kings] in our manual) on January 6. Then begins the first period of "ordinary time" (to use liturgical language) until Lent starts. Lent was a period of self-denial, focusing on the "Passion" (suffering) and death of Christ, in preparation for the remembrance of his resurrection at Easter. It involves six Sundays, the final one commemorating Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday. The season of Easter observes the Christian hope of triumph over death and extends over seven Sundays, with Easter itself emphasized by two extra feast days in the manual: Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday. The final Sunday of the season remembers Christ's Ascension into Heaven, which also is observed on the Thursday previous to correspond precisely to the New Testament time frame of forty days after Easter. (Acts 1:3) As Epiphany does after the Christmas season, the Feast of Pentecost, remembering the "pouring out" of the Holy Spirit upon the earliest church as a strengthening gift for the living out of a Christian life (Acts 2), begins the other period of "ordinary time." The manual places a major emphasis throughout on the Holy Spirit's importance for Christian living. It is the first Sunday after Ascension Sunday, but—like Easter—is punctuated by two extra feast days on Monday and Tuesday.

We have noted seven of the eleven special feasts already: Christmas Day, Epiphany, Easter Monday and Tuesday, Ascension Day, and Pentecost Monday and Tuesday. Along with Christmas Day and Epiphany, three other feasts are included in the crowded calendar of the Christmas season. On January 1, the Feast of Circumcision marks the day on which Jesus received the common rite of Jewish boys and was given his name, which means “saviour.” The feasts of St. Stephen (first martyr in the book of Acts [chapter 7]—December 26) and St. John the Evangelist (author of the fourth gospel—December 27) are the only days in the manual that observe a saint’s day. With the typical focus of the evangelicals on Jesus, *Épistres et Évangiles* avoids most commemorations of the saints. It is perhaps to ensure Christmas is accorded the same importance as Easter and Pentecost that these two days are retained, so that each of these high points in the Christian calendar consist of three feast days in a row. One other special day remains, the Feast of Purification (February 2). According to Old Testament practice (Leviticus 12), forty days after birth a male child is be presented before God and the woman is to make an offering for purification from her flow of blood in childbirth. The feast is sometimes called the Presentation of the Lord, which makes it part of the cycle of feasts that commemorate the life of Jesus. However, naming it Purification—as the preaching manual does—connects the feast to many days that honour the Virgin Mary, too. However, Purification is the only Mariological feast that the authors retain. This observation leads to two related questions: If they chose to include one of Mary’s feast days, why not the rest? If they excluded the other days that focus on the mother of Jesus, why include this one? As I explore these questions, several worthwhile observations will emerge; yet, the likely answer will still remain that the Purification is also about the infant Jesus.

Lefèvre d'Étaples—teacher of the contributors to the manual—was renowned as a student of medieval thought, as well as a humanist scholar and a Bible scholar. Interestingly, we find in *Épistres et Évangiles* a skill for choosing words that were both biblical in phrasing and appealing to the medieval mind, a skill most suitable for Catholic evangelicals. One example refers to the life of a Christian: “who also shall offer to [God] agreeable sacrifices . . . sacrifices of continual praise and of spiritual mortification which please him even more than the ancient sacrifices and oblations.”<sup>317</sup> The notions of “agreeable sacrifices” and “spiritual mortification” were congruent with medieval piety. Regarding the Feast of Purification, the day’s exhortations do stress that Christ had come to be, among other callings, a “light to the Gentiles.”<sup>318</sup> Still, the homily does not avoid a Mariological overtone:

The virgin who without male semen conceived the Son of God by the work of the Holy Spirit . . . could become the Holy of Holies. [But Jesus], leaving the womb of his mother, preserved the seal of virginity. Even so we must believe that all these things have been done in mysteries and sacraments for the sanctification and purification of poor sinners, men and women.<sup>319</sup>

Mary is highly regarded: equating her womb to the Holy of Holies would have offended Protestants. Nonetheless, on the only feast celebrating Mary in the book, the exhortations still place the primary focus on the gospel (*évangile*). It is the consistent tendency in the book. Perhaps the glowing words about Mary were included to please traditionalists and to placate heresy hunters at the Sorbonne. (If so, they failed to achieve the latter goal.) Perhaps only one feast celebrating Mary was included to avoid reinforcing the popularity of the Virgin in

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<sup>317</sup> “lesquelz aussi luy offrirôt sacrifices agreables . . . sacrifices de continuelle louenge et de spirituelle mortification qui luy plairont autant plus que les anciens sacrifices & oblations.” (lxviii,r)

<sup>318</sup> Luke 2:32.

<sup>319</sup> “La vierge qui sans semence d’homme avoit conceu le filz de dieu par loeuvre du saint esperit . . . estoit le saict des saintz. . . . sortist du ventre de la mere saulve le seau de virginite. Pourtant nous fault croire que toutes ces choses ont este faictes en mysteres et sacrementz: pour la sanctification & purification des povres pecheurs & pecheresses.” (lxix,r,v)

contemporary devotion at the expense of Christ-centered gospel preaching. Clearly, the manual's primary goal was the declaration of faith in Christ.

This discussion leads to a crucial observation about the comfort of the French evangelicals—and the Meaux preachers specifically—with a framework for the Christian church that is biblical in tone and yet congruent with medieval spirituality. A structural observation demonstrates this point vividly: the entire preaching guide was meant to be used at the Mass. On Christmas Day, the passages and homilies were targeted for use “*a la grant messe,*” at High Mass.<sup>320</sup> Our preachers wanted to attach to the Mass “a good gospel sermon.”<sup>321</sup> Put another way, they were not against the Mass nor did they desire to overturn it. Instead of negation, they were positively excited about the potential of gospel preaching.

The preaching guide translated into French a New Testament epistle lesson and a lesson from the gospels for each day, readings that were appropriate for that part of the church year. It also provided an exhortation or short sermon on each lesson—two for each Sunday or feast day. These exhortations stressed the evangelical core of the New Testament.

We will sample their content, after considering several features of the biblical passages included. All gospel readings come from the four canonical gospels. This statement is unremarkable, but necessary in light of the variations manifest in the epistle readings. Old Testament passages find virtually no place as assigned readings. In no way should we read into this choice a rejection of the Hebrew Bible as Scripture. Instead, entirely consistent with the pursuit of church renewal by the *évangile*, the decision to focus on epistles and the gospels

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<sup>320</sup> Xix,r.

<sup>321</sup> Screech in “Introduction” in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, p. 17: “une bonne prédication évangélique.”

represents the desire to deepen the knowledge of Jesus Christ in parishioners, and to help them grow in love and faith toward him. Old Testament passages, however, are cited or alluded to in the sermons with regularity.<sup>322</sup> Of particular note is the Third Sunday after Epiphany Sunday, where the stories from Genesis of Abel, Noah and Abraham illustrate the importance of faith and love toward God as affirmed by the epistle lesson. Interestingly, Susanna is also held up as a model. Yet her story is found in the Additions to the book of Daniel, which belong to the apocryphal Old Testament books that Protestants would reject as Scripture.<sup>323</sup> It is a glimpse into the irenic spirit alive in Meaux that gospel-centered preachers would simply accept the traditional Catholic canon rather than engage in “unnecessary” controversy in order to challenge that canon. In the gospel exhortation, Job 5:7 is paraphrased and Psalm 44:23, 26 are quoted in Latin, though no reference is given. Citations from the Hebrew Bible are used as authoritative confirmation of the doctrinal teaching contained in the exhortation; in other words, the Old Testament (including the Apocrypha) is viewed as Scripture. Reinforcing this conclusion is the fact that three times an Old Testament passage replaces a New Testament Epistle as an assigned reading. On the Feast of Purification, Malachi 3:1-4 is used, and on the

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<sup>322</sup> A few examples: Zechariah 9:9, 10, is understood to foretell Christ’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem to bring peace (First Sunday of Advent, v,v). A paraphrase of Isaiah (“In [Christ], the nations will have hope.”) probably has in mind 11:1-12, a Messianic prophecy, or 49:6, which is embedded in one of the Songs of the Suffering Servant that Christian interpreters have often linked to Christ’s ministry (Second Sunday of Advent, viii,v). Psalm 55:22a is cited as Psalm 54 in the manual, which follows the Vulgate numbering (Fourth Sunday of Advent, xvi,v). Deuteronomy 18:15 indicates that Jesus is the promised “true prophet like Moses” (St. Stephen’s Day, xxiii,r). On Epiphany, Psalm 2:1, 2 (two separate citations) points to the resistance of the nations to the Lord and his Christ, and Micah 5:2 predicts that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (xxxvii,v-xxxviii,r). On Epiphany Sunday, the sage is paraphrased concerning wisdom (probably coming from Proverbs 1:6 and its context), with a direct quote from 8:34 in conclusion (xlili,r). On the following Sunday, Psalm 68:18 foreshadows Christ’s Ascension and his distribution of “gifts” to people (xlv,v). Another Sunday on, Psalm 22 (Psalm 21 in the manual) describes the humiliation of God as an example to us in pursuing a life of peace; and Psalm 33:9 (Psalm 32, Vulgate) describes how we are all created by God (xlix,v; lii,r). The use of Vulgate numbering in the Psalms may have been an attempt to reassure the traditionalists.

<sup>323</sup> See the Decree concerning the Canonical Scriptures, Fourth Session of the Council of Trent, promulgated in 1546 in response to Protestant doubts about these deuterocanonical works.

final entry in the manual, the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost, Jeremiah 23:5-8 is printed. *Épistres et Évangiles* indicates the passage originates in Jeremiah, chapters 22 and 23. Although verses 7 and 8 are displaced in the Greek Old Testament to the end of chapter 23, it is difficult to explain on the basis of Hebrew, Greek or Latin texts why the authors thought the passage began in chapter 22. On Epiphany, the text of the epistle is left out. However, it is introduced by a notation in French and Latin, which is followed by an exhortation upon the text referred to. The notation reads: *Sur l'epistre commenceant* (French: "on the epistle beginning") *Surge illuminare*. The last two words are Latin and they mean, "Arise, to shine." Students of the Bible will recognize the famous sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, which forms a natural accompaniment to the story in the gospel reading of the visit of foreign kings to the infant Jesus. Isaiah 60, of course, is not an epistle, but displaces the epistle reading.

Seven times the epistle lesson is replaced by a passage from the Acts of the Apostles, not a letter but a history of the expansion of the early church from Jerusalem to Rome. On the Feast of St. Stephen, the story of Stephen's martyrdom is the lesson. (6:8-10, 7:54-60) On Easter Monday and Tuesday, portions of two Easter-type sermons by the Apostle Peter constitute the "epistles." (10:34-43 and 13:16a, 26-33a) On Ascension Day and Pentecost Sunday, the occasions remembered are actually first recorded in the book of Acts: 1:1-11 and 2:1-11. On Pentecost Monday and Tuesday, two other occasions where the Holy Spirit "comes upon" new groups of people are cited. (10:42-48a, upon the first Gentiles; and 8:14-17, upon the Samaritans, the usually hostile neighbours of the Jews) In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit had come upon Jews from many different parts of the Middle East and the Mediterranean world, who had gathered in Jerusalem for a Jewish feast. Combined these passages demonstrate the initial

fulfilment of Acts 1:8,<sup>324</sup> instilling optimism in the French evangelicals that a more perfect fulfilment through gospel witness was coming.

Interestingly, on the Feast of St. John, both the epistle and the related exhortation are missing. The reason for the anomaly is unclear. Also, the manual cites an emendation of the biblical text. On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the preacher declares that “Bethany” in John 1:28 is actually a corrupted reference to Bethabara.<sup>325</sup> (See Judges 7:24.) The authors openly draw on the humanist discipline of textual criticism.

On the final Sunday, we note a curious error. The gospel lesson for that day—the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost—is a repeat: John 6:5-14 was also used on the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Sunday. The exhortation for the day simply repeats the same message from the earlier Sunday, too. The fact that it is the last sermon in the book suggests some kind of rush to publication. This impression is reinforced by an inaccurate acknowledgement of the repetition. While admitting they used again an earlier sermon, they wrongly cite it as coming from the Fourth Sunday of Lent. What was behind the apparent rush? Could the legal pressure from the Sorbonne have given the authors or Simon Du Bois, the printer, the impression that the work might not get published if they did not hurry? We would love to know more. This error also is intriguing for another reason. The confusion in citation between the Fourth Sunday of Lent and the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Sunday is, in fact, understandable. The exhortation for the Lenten week was indeed different from the other two Sundays mentioned. However, the passage was nearly the same, just longer: John 6:1-14. Since no other gospel reading is

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<sup>324</sup> The risen Jesus declares: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

<sup>325</sup> Xviii,v. The Faculty condemn this claim: Screech, “Appendice B” in *Épistres et Évangiles*, p. 42, Proposition 4.

repeated even once and no epistle reading is ever repeated in the manual, why would this story of Jesus feeding a crowd of five thousand from five loaves and two fish in the presence of his sceptical disciples be cited three times? There are many other gospel passages that are not chosen. My best guess is that it would encourage those who were eager for church renewal, but were also aware of the magnitude of the challenges, with what Jesus could do with the apparently small resource of gospel preaching—an interpretation reinforced by the inclusion on the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost of the parallel story of Jesus miraculously feeding four thousand found in Mark 8:1-9.<sup>326</sup> Though it fits the internal evidence of the two exhortations used to expound the story, this suggestion remains speculative.<sup>327</sup>

In light of the apocalyptic vision of some connected to the reform movements of the medieval and early modern periods, we should note the basic absence of this theme from the preaching in the manual.<sup>328</sup> While the Final Judgment could be emphasized with regularity as a motivation both for godly living and for personal faith in Christ, the dark, pessimistic visions of life in the present world that often accompanied a thorough-going apocalyptic perspective are not a feature of the exhortations. Even the Bible portions in the manual reflect this more optimistic view of life and faith. No passage from the apocalyptic literature in the Bible, either

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<sup>326</sup> Cxcviii,v-cxcix,v.

<sup>327</sup> The fact that the readings selected followed the traditional missals in the diocese does not negate the speculation in this paragraph. See Veissière, *Briçonnet*, p. 310. The authors of the preaching aid still made some hard-to-explain choices. The continuity in the readings does underline, however, the non-confrontational approach to church renewal practised by the Circle of Meaux.

<sup>328</sup> See above, pp. 55-56, regarding Denis Crouzet's overemphasis on this theme and the resultant confusing presentation of aspects of the sixteenth century reformations.

in the book of Revelation in the New Testament or in portions of Old Testament prophecies like Daniel and Zechariah, appears.<sup>329</sup>

The use of Latin phrases from the Bible occurs frequently in the exhortations. Sometimes, but not always, a French translation precedes or follows the brief quotation. It seems the preachers expected that the meaning of these short sayings would be recognized by their listeners. Since they took noteworthy risks in making the Bible available in the vernacular (including the passages translated for this preaching aid), it is surprising that they would use Latin so frequently. On the other hand, it is possible to imagine this choice as part of an irenic strategy to reassure the traditionalists that they were not religious revolutionaries. Perhaps, too, church goers were more conversant with Latin phrases than we have tended to think.

Finally, some notable commemorations in the Western Christian calendar find no place in *Épîtres et Évangiles*. Trinity Sunday is deemphasized on its traditional day one week after Pentecost and Maundy Thursday is omitted in Holy Week. Both traditional fast days, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, are missing. Holy Innocents (December 28), Corpus Christi (Thursday after the Feast of the Trinity), Transfiguration of the Lord (August 6), and All Saints' Day (November 1) are ignored. Major Mariological feasts do not appear, including Annunciation (March 25), Visitation (May 31) and Assumption (August 15).<sup>330</sup> We can imagine why some of these feasts were overlooked. Holy Innocents was "just" a saint's day,<sup>331</sup> and Ash Wednesday,

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<sup>329</sup> It is sometimes explained by interpreters of this genre that the intent in the literature is to provide comfort and hope to conquered or persecuted peoples, not an excuse for destructive behaviours. See, for example, J. J. Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse in Hellenistic Judaism" in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, D. Hellholm, ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), pp. 531-548.

<sup>330</sup> Roussel preached against the latter commemoration because there is no biblical witness for it. See p. 94 above.

<sup>331</sup> Adding it to the series of commemorations at Christmas (Christmas Day, St. Stephen, St. John) might also have given Christmas precedence over Easter and Pentecost by celebrating four feast days in a row. See p. 104 above.

anchoring the beginning of Lent with biblical themes of repentance, could still be said to have no precedence in the biblical texts. All Saints and the Mariological feasts might detract from the emphasis on Jesus. Corpus Christi might be too sacramental and insufficiently evangelical. Other feasts, however, like Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Transfiguration, seem like “missed opportunities.” Our puzzlement is not relieved when the preacher acknowledges Good Friday (*vendredi saint*) as the time when Christians were *lavee au sang du benoist Jesus* (washed in the blood of blessed Jesus).<sup>332</sup> Trinity is acknowledged as the traditional designation for the First Sunday after Pentecost, and the reason for its de-emphasis is made plain: acknowledgement of the Trinity should be *universelle*—all of life should be a celebration of the Trinity.<sup>333</sup> In the end, we cannot entirely explain the rationale behind the choices of feast days.

### Épîtres et Évangiles: Analysis

To give the reader a flavour of the manual, I will translate here one exhortation, along with the passage upon which it is based. It comes from the epistle reading on the Second Sunday after Epiphany Sunday, and is representative in style, but also in the manner in which it seeks to preserve the peace, while increasing the welfare of the church. I will later provide more, but briefer examples to reinforce the latter point.

Do not be wise at all in your own eyes. Render to no one evil for evil. Provide the good, not before God alone, but also before all people. If it is possible for you, as much as it is in you, have peace with all people. In no way, take revenge, my beloved ones, but give place to [God’s] wrath, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine; and I will render it.” But if your enemy is hungry, give him something to eat, if he is thirsty, give him something to

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<sup>332</sup> First Sunday after Epiphany Sunday, xlvii,v.

<sup>333</sup> [C]lxxi,r. Condemned by the Sorbonne: Screech, “Appendice B” in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, pp. 47-48, Propositions 33, 34.

drink; for in doing so, you will gather for him coals of fire on his head. In no way be vanquished by evil, but vanquish evil by good.<sup>334</sup> (Romans 12:17-21)

Consider, my brothers, what diligence the apostle of God, Saint Paul, puts forth to induce us to brotherly love. For in pursuing the doctrine which he gave us in the epistle lesson last Sunday, he says today that which follows from it, “Do not at all judge yourselves wise in your own eyes.” As he says it, “To maintain brotherly love and charity to one another, it is necessary that the one who is ‘the more perfect’ support and endure the imperfections of the others.” Here is what is not possible to do: to judge ourselves and our perfections. For this reason, in no way reckon yourselves to be greater or more perfect than others, but rather consider him who indeed was God, being willing to humble himself to become human and not only just human, but (as it is written in Psalm 21<sup>335</sup>) the shame of humanity, the most abject and miserable of all people. Is it not, my friends, an example of great humility? And, if perhaps it happens that someone in encountering you says or does that which injures, to maintain this fraternal friendship, in no way take revenge on him, rendering to him evil for evil. For Jesus Christ (whose life must be our example) in no way avenged himself upon us, but for us who were his enemies he chose to endure death. You must not only make effort to be good before God—who knows all things—but also before people—in no way to glorify yourselves—but so that here weighing your life, you may give the glory to Eternal God. In no way think that it suffices to maintain peace toward the good; but, inasmuch as it is possible for you, guard the peace toward one and all. And if it happens that someone injures you in truth or otherwise, you, in following the innocent lamb Jesus, must not demand vengeance, but rather endure the injury, considering the truth of the Most High Eternal God, who says, “Vengeance belongs to me; I will render it.” And specifically, not only must you guard yourselves against avenging yourselves on others, but—what is more—if your enemy is hungry or thirsty, you must give him [something] to eat or to drink. And why? For in doing so, if he is no more brutal than a beast, you induce him to know the Creator and to love you. And it may be so, that he who is as brutal as a beast does not love him who does what is good to him . . .<sup>336</sup> Here then, my friends, is the manner by which the Sovereign God desires that we maintain love, fraternity and charity. In no way think, then, my brothers, to overcome evil with evil, but emphatically with good only. For everything is like this: cold plus cold makes it freeze; similarly, evil added to evil—whichever party it comes from—engenders much greater malice and indignation. Overcome evil, therefore, with good, so that you may be like our

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<sup>334</sup> “Ne soyez point prudens en vous mesmes. Ne rendez a nulluy mal pour mal. Pourvoyez les biens non point seulement devant dieu mais aussi devant tous hommes. Sil se peut faire autant que en vous est, ayez paix avec tous hommes. Ne vous vengez point mes tresaymez, mais donnez lieu a ire. Car il est escript A moy est la vengeance : et je la rendray dit le seigneur dieu. Mais se ton ennemy a faim, donne luy a manger. Se il a soif, donne luy a boire. Car en ce faisant tu luy assembleras charbons de feu sur sa teste. Ne soye point vaincu de mal, mais vaincz le mal par bien.” (xlviij,v-xlix,r)

<sup>335</sup> Vulgate numbering; Psalm 22 in English Bible versions.

<sup>336</sup> The ellipsis does not represent an omission of text from the sermon, but rather an attempt to render the rhetoric accurately.

Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the blessed Holy Spirit, lives everlastingly in glory, ready to give us his grace and charity. Amen.<sup>337</sup>

In approaching such a text, a basic philosophical question must be addressed. Some discourse theorists could see the exhortation as a tool of the power of the monarchy and/or French elite. Others might suggest that such advancement of social peace and harmony might have been an indirect appeal for favour from the king to counter the pressure the Faculty of Theology was bringing upon the evangelicals. John Arnold, while benefiting from discourse theory in his work on medieval Catharism, believes that Foucault's discursive approach pessimistically leaves everyone so in thrall to power that there is no space left in which to create "resistance."<sup>338</sup> Arnold, however, seeks "hope," and finds it in the spaces between

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<sup>337</sup> "Considerez mes freres, quelle diligence mect lapostre de dieu saint Paul pour nous induire a dilection fraternele. Car en poursuyvant la doctrine laquelle en lepistre de dimenche passe il nous donnoit, il dit au jourdhuy ce qui sensuit Ne vous jugez point estre prudens en vous mesmes. . . . Comme se il disoit, pour entretenir fraternele dilection et charite les ungz envers les autres, il est necessité que celuy qui est le plus parfait supporte et endure limperfection des autres. Ce qui nest possible de faire : en jugeant de nous et de noz perfections. Pour laquelle chose, ne vous reputez point estre plus grans ou plus parfaitz que les autres, mais plustost considerez celuy lequel ja soit quel fust dieu, sestant voulu humilier que destre homme et non point homme seulement, mais (comme au xxi. pseaulme est escript) loppobre des hommes et le plus abject et miserable de tout le peuple. Nest ce pas mes amys exemple de grande humilité. Et si daventure il advient que quelcun a lencontre de vous dit ou fait quelque iniure : pour entretenir ceste amitie fraternele, ne vous vengez point de luy, en luy rendant mal pour mal. Car Jesuchrist (duquel la vie nous doit estre pour exemple) ne sest point venge de nous, mais pour nous qui estions ses ennemys il a voulu endurer la mort. Vous ne devez point seulement prendre peine destre bons devant dieu, lequel congnoist toutes choses : mais aussi devant les hommes, non point pour vous glorifier, mais affin que iceulx considerans vostre vie, rendent la gloire a dieu eternel. Ne pensez point que il suffist dentretenir paix envers les bons : mais dautant quil vous sera possible gardez la paix envers ung chascun. Et sil advient que on vous iniurie par parolles ou aultrement: vous, en ensuyvant laigneau innocent Jesus, ne demandez point vengeance, mais plustost endurez liniure considerans le parole du treshault dieu eternel, lequel dic, A moy appartient la vengeance: et je la rendray. Et non point seulement vous vous devez garder de vous venger dau truy, mais qui plus est si vostre ennemy a faim ou so[i]f vous luy devez donner a manger et a boire. Et pourquoy? Car en ce faisant, sil nest plus brutal que une beste, vous l'induirez a congnoistre le createur et a vous aymer. Et que ainsi soit: qui est la beste si brutalle, laquelle nayme celuy la qui bien luy fait. Voyla donques mes amys la manière par laquelle le souverain dieu veult que nous entretenons dilection et fraternele charite. Ne pensez point doncques mes freres surmonter le mal par mal: mais par bien tant seulement. Car tout ainsi comme froit avec froit fait une plus grande froidure : semblablement mal adioust avec mal, de quelque partie quil vienne, engendre une plus grande malice, et indignation. Surmontez donques le mal par bien, affin que vous soyez semblables a nostre seigneur Jesuchrist lequel avec le pere, et le benoist saint esperit vit pardurablement en gloire, prest a nous donner ses graces et charite. Amen." (xliv,r-l,v)

<sup>338</sup> John H. Arnold, *Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 109-115.

discourses caused by an excess of speech.<sup>339</sup> The French evangelicals seem to fit Arnold’s model. Not without power themselves, they had to engage in an intricate dance involving doctrinal argumentation, methodological disputes between scholastics and humanists, political lobbying for influence, evasive tactics and “resistance”—more openly shown to the Sorbonne and Parlement, more subtly and occasionally advanced against the king’s changing policies. They were agents in the sense that they sought to guide their country toward peaceful and beneficial religious change. At times, their treatment by others seems unfair, but they were no mere victims, and they generally lived in the “hope” that is important to Arnold. Put another way, the “excess of speech” arising from their discourse is drenched in the hope that the preaching of the gospel of Jesus, if only it were allowed the space to thrive, would renew individuals, the church and its leaders, the Gallican nation and its leaders, and the common society they all shared. Arnold’s methodology, then, certainly illuminates the experience of the Circle of Meaux.

Still, I would take one more step methodologically. While not denying the intricate assessment of power involved in the rise and fall of the Circle of Meaux, I would also suggest that historians can maintain a needed critical stance toward their subjects, while embracing a sense of wonder or admiration.<sup>340</sup> The preachers in Meaux had—by 1525, the publication date of *Épîtres et Évangiles*—endured a persistent campaign of legal and doctrinal attack. Their attempt to use Meaux as a beachhead for the evangelical renewal of all France had already been crushed. Briçonnet himself had become discouraged. Yet, for all the distress caused by the

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<sup>339</sup> Arnold, *Inquisition*, p. 228. See the discussion in the previous chapter, pp. 67-72.

<sup>340</sup> Figure skating judges, for example, can assess the artistic and technical merits of a routine, while expressing deep admiration for a superb performance.

enemies of this renewal effort, they still manage to preach: “in no way take revenge . . . guard the peace toward one and all . . . endure the injury . . . overcome evil with . . . good only.” In addition, we should note the only significant phrase in the epistle lesson that is not elaborated upon in the exhortation: “you will gather for him coals of fire on his head.” It is an assertion that could easily lend itself to the misinterpretation that we have the right to seek that those who mistreat us should “burn.” Leaving out any mention of this clause is consistent with the thoroughly irenic exposition in the sermon.

Perhaps we need to concede that the preachers were convinced that this behaviour was mandated by their beliefs and they were, therefore, obligated to teach it—not so much for the potential pacifying effect on the body politic and the service this pacification could render to the power elite—but to achieve the peace and harmony among people that they believed their faith sought after. This exceptional behaviour lasted beyond 1525. Monter sets the context: the prosecutions of the Parlement of Paris “had dispersed the once-flourishing French Reformation movement of the early 1520s into holes and corners, frightening many waverers into obedience and driving the most committed Protestants into exile.”<sup>341</sup> Briçonnet yielded to a disheartened spirit; yet, we shall see that Roussel and others continued on with the same hope and irenic spirit that typifies the preaching manual, all the while facing persistent obstruction from the Faculty of Theology.

This choice does not represent the expected response to persistent enmity found in historical investigations, and can, therefore, legitimately elicit wonder and admiration. Brad Gregory has helped us to take seriously the competing absolutisms of martyrs from the

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<sup>341</sup> Monter, *Judging*, pp. 82-83.

different confessions in this era.<sup>342</sup> We accept that it is their faith that gave them such a strong commitment that they were willing to die for it. Can we not also take seriously the possibility that others had a similar commitment to charity and love within a united Christian society, one they would persist in pursuing in the face of much opposition? We must guard against discounting something because it does not fit our expectations. Otherwise, we risk misrepresenting the past at its exceptional moments—and perhaps some more “commonplace” ones, as well. By all means let us analyze events with the careful assessment of power structures and of discourses that many theorists would encourage. A workable philosophy of history must include such considerations. We should be willing to conclude that historical actors displayed a mixture of motives. Yet, let us also leave room for admiration of atypical behaviour that provides what Arnold so deeply sought: hope. Gérard Roussel and some of his friends lived in such atypical fashion.

Other passages also demonstrate irenic tendencies. On the Third Sunday after Epiphany Sunday, Colossians 3:12-17 is the epistle reading. It includes the following admonitions:

Clothe yourselves . . . with mercy, kindness, humility, modesty and patience. Support each other and pardon one another if anyone has a quarrel against someone. Pardon as our Lord pardoned you. And above all things have love, which is the bond of perfection. Let the peace of Christ, in which you were called in one body, be jubilant in your hearts. Be agreeable. . . . All things that you do in word or deed, do them all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>343</sup> “Vestez vous . . . de misericorde, benignite, humilite, modestete, patience. Supportez lung lautre : et pardonnez entre vous mesmes, si aucun contre aucun a querelle. Ainsi aussi que nostre seigneur vous a pardonne : vous aussi pareillement. Et sur toutes ces choses ayez charite qui est le lyen de perfection et la paix de Christ soit en lyesse en voz cueurs ; en laquelle aussi estes appelez en ung corps: et soyez aggreables. . . . Toutes choses quelconques que vous facies en parole, ou en oeuvre: faictes les toutes au nom de nostre seigneur Jesuchrist.” (lvii,v-lviii,r)

The exhortation speaks of original sin and prescribes a remedy that could be the theme verse of the manual: “renew oneself in the knowledge of God.”<sup>344</sup> It thoroughly deemphasizes controversy, and commends the very attitudes and behaviours that would undermine strife.

On the First Sunday after Pentecost, we are “to give our lives for our brothers, which is far from having hatred toward them.” Astonishingly, in the context “brothers” include “the worldly ones that hate and persecute us.”<sup>345</sup> On the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, the preacher gives careful instructions on winning over our enemies, including eating and drinking with them and avoiding rivalries by not seeking worldly honours.<sup>346</sup> Biblical faith manifests itself in the general approach of “faith working by love.”<sup>347</sup> We are called “to walk in the *peaceful* gospel.”<sup>348</sup>

Some of the irenicism manifests as opportunities to attack that are foregone. The possibility of pandering to widespread anticlericalism was readily present.<sup>349</sup> Persistently, the manual does not. On the Third Sunday of Advent, the epistle is 1 Corinthians 4:1-5. It contains the command: “judge nothing before its time.”<sup>350</sup> The exhortation expands the thought: “we are forbidden to judge the justice or injustice (or, ‘righteousness or unrighteousness’) of those who are living and of those also who are dead, for this is something that belongs to God.”<sup>351</sup> Apparently, even the Doctors of the Sorbonne should not be condemned by others. The same sermon declares

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<sup>344</sup> “se renouvelle en la congnoissance de dieu.” (lviii,v)

<sup>345</sup> “mettre noz vies pour noz freres : cela est bien loing davoit vers eulx haine. . . . les mondains nous hayent et persecutent.” (clxxii,v-clxxiii,r) See also the gospel sermon on the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, clxxvii,r-clxxxix,v.

<sup>346</sup> Ccxlivii,v-ccxlv,v.

<sup>347</sup> For example, Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost: “foy ouvrant par charite.” (cclviii,v)

<sup>348</sup> Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost: “cheminer en levangile pacifique.” (cclx,v) Emphasis mine.

<sup>349</sup> See Peter A. Dykema, Heiko Augustinus Oberman, ed., *Anticlericalism in late medieval and early modern Europe* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993).

<sup>350</sup> “ne jugez point devant le temps.”(xi,r)

<sup>351</sup> “Et nous deffend fort de iuger de la iustice ou iniustice de ceulx qui sont vivans et de ceulx aussi qui sont mortz, car cest une chose qui appartient a dieu.” (xiii,r)

“the world has been and is filled again” with “deceptive” and “seductive”<sup>352</sup> preachers. Yet, it scrupulously avoids identifying them or even hinting at their identity.

In the epistle for the First Sunday in Advent, Romans 13:11-14, three statements could easily have launched attacks on a church hierarchy that was filled with complacency, that set a poor example of faith in action and that was far too zealous in the defence of its own prerogatives: “time to rouse ourselves from sleep” (v. 11); “let us then reject the works of darkness” (v. 12); “in no way fulfill the will of the flesh and its desires” (v. 14). Each injunction “invited” a denunciation of the inadequate example and leadership of the hierarchy; yet, these invitations were completely spurned. The closest the exhortation comes is the general statement, applicable to all folk of means: “avoid all banquets and fine fruits, all luxuries and buckets of fat, all contentions and jealousies; instead, let us put on Jesus Christ.”<sup>353</sup> If the manual is targeting the hierarchy or the opponents of the evangelicals, it is a gentle, oblique and indirect correction, and is in striking contrast to the excoriating words Farel unambiguously directs against the Catholic hierarchy, as we shall shortly see.

Similarly, the gospel for the Second Sunday in Advent, Luke 21:25-33, speaks of signs of distress in the created order that will precede the expected return of Jesus Christ. It includes the quizzical phrase: “this generation will in no way pass away until all these things are accomplished.”<sup>354</sup> Again, the chance to lament the failings of the leaders of this generation is hard to miss. The preacher simply avoids it.

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<sup>352</sup> “ung decepveur . . . ung seducteur. Et de telz le monde a este et est encores rempli.” (xii,r)

<sup>353</sup> “Temps de nous lever de somne . . . Rejectons doncques les œuvres de tenebres . . . Ne faites point la volonte de la chair en ses desirs . . . fuyons tous banquetz et yrongneries, toutes luxures et pail lardises, toutes contentions et envies : et vestons nous de Jesuchrist.” (ii,v ; iii,r)

<sup>354</sup> “ceste generation ne passera point tant que toutes ces choses soyent faictes.” (ix,r)

Some opportunities for attack are turned into mild correction. On St. Stephen's Day (December 26), the exhortation does make points against the popular cult of the saints. The first Christian martyr, "Stephen clearly does not invoke the angels nor Moses nor Abraham, Isaac nor Jacob, nor any of the prophets, but only Jesus Christ." So, the manual warns against praying to saints; instead, Protestant-like, it promotes prayer to Jesus alone. Yet, it also promotes prayer for one's foes: "We ought kindly to pray for the offenses and sin of our enemies, that it please God to pardon them."<sup>355</sup> By implication, then, the opponents of the preachers are prayed for, not attacked—an effective example of irenic religious change.

Probably against the speculative tendencies of scholasticism, the gospel sermon on St. John's Day (December 27) includes the following instruction: "We learn that we ought not to be curious to know the secrets of God . . . [but] to believe simply in the truth of God according to the Spirit and certainly not in the presumption of our intelligence and conceptions . . . and of devising foolish opinions."<sup>356</sup> The words are strong enough and invite some controversy; yet the tone is less that of attack and more that of instruction and gentle correction.

A few sermons could be possible exceptions to the irenic pattern. On Pentecost Tuesday, the listeners are told to follow no other pastor or doctor than Jesus Christ.<sup>357</sup> It is an atypical challenge for the manual, which concentrated on clerical misdeeds when it talked of the priests. Not surprisingly, this particular passage incurred the condemnation of the Sorbonne. Elsewhere, however, bishops and priests are assigned a positive role of prayer and

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<sup>355</sup> "invoquoit non point les anges ou Moyse ou Abraham, Isaac ou Jacob, ou aucuns des prophetes : mais seulement Jesuchrist. . . . devons benignement prier pour les oultrages et pechez de noz ennemis : qu'il plaise a dieu leur pardonner." (xxiii,v)

<sup>356</sup> "nous enseignans que ne devons point estre curieux de savoir les secretz de dieu . . . a croire simplement a la parole de dieu selon lesperit et non point la presumption de noz intelligences et conceptions . . . et en faire folles opinions." (xxvii,v-xxviii,v)

<sup>357</sup> "ne suyvez que ung pasteur et navez que ung docteur qui est Jesuchrist." (clxx,r)

instruction.<sup>358</sup> On the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, the gospel lesson clearly challenges those who sell church offices and are blatantly acquisitive.<sup>359</sup> However, simony and luxury had been condemned by church reformers for centuries already; it was not a radical statement. The epistle lesson for the same day is more pointed and distinguishes between false preachers and those who are “true and evangelical.”<sup>360</sup> On the Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost, both exhortations speak directly against those who challenge “the evangelical truth.”<sup>361</sup> The opponents are not identified. In light of the very determined prosecution by the Sorbonne and the Parlement, this small number of references is perhaps understandable. They are in marked contrast with the denunciations of Farel below, however, and do not take away from the overall irenic attitude displayed in *Épistres et Évangiles*.

On the surface, some sermons seem less irenic because they affirm apparently Protestant themes. On Christmas Sunday, the epistle lesson is Galatians 4:1-7. The flow of thought in the exhortation is as follows.<sup>362</sup> Those who are “under the ancient law [are] like serfs.” Or, they are “like little children under the mercy of the law: the letter, the ‘exterior’ sacrifices and the works [required].” The argument is that those who seek their salvation by adhering to Old Testament law in its literal application put themselves under the “mercy” of animal sacrifices and the behaviours required by the Torah. The result is bondage and immaturity. In place of this reliance, the sermon indicates God has “sent the Spirit of his Son

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<sup>358</sup> Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, ccxxxviii,r-v.

<sup>359</sup> “simoniacles et grans avaricieux.” (ccxiii,r)

<sup>360</sup> “les vrays et euangeliques.” (ccxi,r)

<sup>361</sup> “la verite euangelique.” (cclxviii,v)

<sup>362</sup> “soubz lancienne loy comme serfz . . . comme petis enfans soubz les clementz de la loy, la lettre, les sacrifices exteriores, et les oeuvres . . . envoie lesperit de son filz en noz cueurs qui faict les oeuvres en nous . . . en foy et en fiance en dieu seul, en sacrifice raisonnable, sacrifice interior, offrans nostre corps mortifie par le saint esperit comme nostre seigneur Jesuchrist se est offert pour tous a dieu son pere eternal.” (xxix,r-xxx,v)

into our hearts, who accomplishes the works in us.” Later, these “works” are explained: “in faith and in confidence in God alone, in a ‘reasonable sacrifice,’<sup>363</sup> an interior sacrifice, offering our bodies<sup>364</sup> mortified by the Holy Spirit as our Lord Jesus Christ was himself offered for all to God, his eternal Father.” The reliance on “works” for salvation was a key charge against Catholic teaching by Protestant leaders across Europe. They, too, would emphasize the interiority of personal faith in God through Christ and the “liberty” that results. Some have, therefore, concluded the preachers were “Protestants at heart.” The next conclusions easily follow that they lacked the courage of their convictions and that their conformity to the Catholic Church was merely an external adhesion to assure personal safety.

However, another interpretation is more likely. Both humanism and the spiritual renewal movement, the *via moderna*, had already argued for a deeper interiority in life.<sup>365</sup> This interiority promoted a personal faith and often derided mere participation in the external rites of the church. Humanism, in the spirit of the Renaissance, had already urged a “return to the sources,” which, in the case of the church, meant the Bible in particular. The humanism of the preachers in the Circle of Meaux is easily documented. A careful reading of the passage in Galatians—and of another Pauline passage that the sermon alludes to (Romans 12:1-2)—would conclude that the sermon straightforwardly teaches what the Apostle had written. So, there is no need to assume Protestant inclinations here—as the example of the great Catholic humanist, Erasmus, demonstrates. Humanists, concerned faithfully to impart biblical instruction, would have preached roughly what this sermon said. The references to *oeuvres* in

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<sup>363</sup> An allusion to Romans 12:1.

<sup>364</sup> Another allusion to Romans 12:1.

<sup>365</sup> Renaudet, *Humanisme*, p. 702.

this sermon are not Protestant denunciations nor open rebukes; instead, they lie somewhere between a “hint” and a “mild corrective”—very much in the spirit of non-schismatic efforts at spiritual renewal.

A similar point could be made from the epistle exhortation on the First Sunday after Epiphany Sunday: “Do not even think that the gifts of grace that are in you come to you by your merits, but only by the grace, generosity and infinite kindness of Jesus Christ.”<sup>366</sup> The Protestant attack on “merit” is echoed here, but its tone is pastoral and mildly corrective, not combative. Its source seems less Protestant than Pauline.

On the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Sunday, the sermon cites the verse that was Luther’s breakthrough: “the just shall live by faith.” The crucial context for Luther was in Romans 1:17, where Paul quotes from Habakkuk 2:4. The preaching manual refers only to Habakkuk and commends faith, with one mild warning against “human doctrines.”<sup>367</sup> In contrast to Luther’s approach, there is no attack; the source of these doctrines is not identified. The sermon simply makes a biblical point without specifically Protestant overtones. Again, the preacher reminds the listener that “the power for any good we do comes from God”<sup>368</sup>—echoing Luther’s *Bondage of the Will*. Yet, it also echoes some medieval Augustinian theologians and cannot therefore simply be ascribed to Protestant leanings.<sup>369</sup> In another exhortation, “works of faith” actually contribute to justification.<sup>370</sup> In its efforts faithfully to reflect various strands of biblical

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<sup>366</sup> “ne pensez point que les dons de grace qui sont en vous, vous adviennent par vos merites : mais seulement par la grace largesse, et infinie bonte de Jesuchrist.” (xlv,r) See also the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, ccxv,v (the second page so numbered)-ccxvi,r and the Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, cclxxvi,r.

<sup>367</sup> “Le juste vivra de foi . . . doctrines humaines.” (lxv,v-lxvi,r)

<sup>368</sup> “de dieu laccomplissement de toute bonne oeuvre commencee.” (cclxiii, r)

<sup>369</sup> See p. 17 above.

<sup>370</sup> “feront les oeuvres de foy, par laquelle dieu veult tout justifier.” (clxiii,v)

teaching, the preaching manual manages to embrace both and avoid both Protestant and traditional identities.

On Septuagesima, listeners are warned not to think that eternity will be theirs just because they have been baptized or “have received the body of Jesus Christ sacramentally.”<sup>371</sup> Personal faith is necessary. While Protestant-sounding, its origin too is biblical. Unlike Protestants, there is no rejection of the sacramental system, and transubstantiation is not contradicted either. In fact, on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves (John 6:1-14) serves as a “grand sacrament and instruction for us.”<sup>372</sup> On the First Sunday after Pentecost, “the holy communion of faith” is emphasized. However, this connection is also made: “the sacrament is a sign” of this communion “as sacrament”—a statement in no way at odds with transubstantiation.<sup>373</sup> On the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, the preacher declares that “grace and benediction definitely are not given by saints (male or female) nor even by the observation of the law.”<sup>374</sup> Protestants would say the same. However, the preacher simply claims to cite the Apostle Paul—a conclusion difficult to dispute.

Rather than longing to be Protestants but fearing to act on this desire, Roussel and his friends were consistent in pursuing their irenic vision of spiritual renewal through gospel preaching. In fact, schism is explicitly rejected on the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, where the unity of the church is affirmed. Believers are to act “in all humility, leniency and gentleness . . . in peace and concord” to further that unity.<sup>375</sup> Then, one day “all the countries and nations

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<sup>371</sup> “sacramentellement avoir receu le corps de Jesuchrist.” (lxxi,v-lxxii,r)

<sup>372</sup> “grant sacrement et grande instruction pour nous.” (cvi,v)

<sup>373</sup> “par la sainte communion de foy dont le sacrement est signe, comme sacrement.” (clxxii,r)

<sup>374</sup> “grace et benediction ne nous est point donnee par saint ne sainte, ne mesme par lobservation de la loy.” (ccxxiii,v)

<sup>375</sup> “en toute humilite, mansuetude, et douceur . . . de paix et de concorde.” (ccxliii,r)

will be filled with the Holy Spirit . . . in spiritual joy” as they embrace this gospel.<sup>376</sup> Our understanding of this period is not furthered by reading Protestant developments into this movement. If, instead, we allow their own testimony to their aims and their obvious heritage—combining New Testament spirituality and late medieval reform—to guide our interpretation, their carefully cultivated commitment to irenic renewal stands out.

### Condemnation of *Épistres et Évangiles*

The Faculty of Theology did not look kindly on the preaching manual. Increasingly agitated over the connection they perceived between Lutheranism and humanism, they moved quickly after publication to condemn the work. It did little to reassure the scholastics that the preaching manual did not quote a single church father, ecclesiastical doctor or “holy exegete”—which made it look suspiciously similar to Luther’s *Adventpostille*, published in 1522.<sup>377</sup> Moving even more rapidly, the Parlement of Paris issued an injunction on August 27, 1525 requiring all those who possessed a copy of the Bible in French to surrender it, including “a printed book containing some Gospels and Epistles for Sundays and some formal occasions of the year, with certain exhortations in French.” No authors are named, but it is our preaching manual that the Parlement is seeking to suppress.<sup>378</sup> The scholastics in both law and theology were teaming up to crush humanistic innovations they deemed destabilizing.

The trial began as a confrontation between Mazurier and the obdurate Franciscans in Meaux. Briçonnet’s first attempt at reform had targeted them in 1518 and they remained

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<sup>376</sup> “tous les pays et nations soyent remplis du saint esperit . . . en joye spirituel.” (ccxxiii,r,v)

<sup>377</sup> Screech in “Introduction” in *Épistres et Évangiles*, p. 13. Screech suggests that the Sorbonne would have condemned the Apostle Paul himself. (p. 16)

<sup>378</sup> Farge, *Faculty*, p. 179, particularly n. 93: “un livre imprimé contenant aucuns Evangiles et Epistres de Dimanches, et aucuns solemnitez de lan avec certaines exhortations en francois.” Some contemporaries speculated that Briçonnet was the author: p. 184, n. 120.

implacable in their opposition to his efforts. The bishop, as Mazurier's defender, was drawn in, and then the traditionalists struck at Lefèvre d'Étaples' Bible translations and the preaching manual associated with his name. Francis I, hostage in Madrid while awaiting ransom after the Battle of Pavia, tried to stop the prosecution in a November letter, but his weakened authority did not prevail.<sup>379</sup> (His mother Louise, acting as regent, was in favour of the proceedings.) The final decree was issued by Parlement in February 1526. By then, Lefèvre d'Étaples, Roussel, d'Arande and Caroli had fled into exile; Mazurier, Pauvant and Saulnier had been forced to abjure; and Briçonnet's reform efforts had become a shadow of earlier initiatives, minimal and unobtrusive.<sup>380</sup>

What did the Faculty of Theology find objectionable? On November 5, 1525, they declared forty-eight propositions heretical, including the following: Proposition 8. We need to believe simply in the truth of God by the Spirit and not according to the presumption of our intelligence and conceptions. 11. What we have, we have by the goodness of God, and not by our own merits. 14. Salvation is clearly not in our own power, but in the goodness of God. 20. Faith without charity is not faith. 32. Follow the only pastor and the only doctor, who is Jesus Christ. Particularly objectionable to the doctors were claims of salvation by faith alone in Jesus Christ (1, 16, 22, 26, 47), and the denial of salvific effects for our works or merits (11, 12, 17, 37, 38, 39). The emphasis on Scripture as the sole authority for the Christian was also condemned (2, 13, 15, 21, 24, 30-32, 40, 48).<sup>381</sup> In the conclusion, the theologians describe what they fear

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<sup>379</sup> Screech in "Introduction" in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, p. 9, speculates about the impact of Pavia: "il est permis de penser que, sans la défaite, Lefèvre d'Étaples et ses disciples auraient pu changer l'histoire religieuse de la France."

<sup>380</sup> Imbart de la Tour, *Origines*, t. III, pp. 245-254; Higman, *Censorship*, p. 26.

<sup>381</sup> Screech, "Appendice B" in *Épîtres et Évangiles*. See too Richard M. Cameron, "The Charges of Lutheranism Brought against Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples" in *Harvard Theological Review* 63, 1 (January, 1970), pp. 119-49, particularly pp. 132-133.

will be lost if the preaching manual shapes spirituality: good works (since they no longer contribute to salvation), reverence for the saints and their feast days, adherence both to ecclesiastical prescriptions and to the Catholic interpretation of the Bible. It is easy to sense a defence of the old order, especially of the authorities—including the Sorbonne—who saw themselves as its guardians.<sup>382</sup> They associate the preaching aid with the heresies of Mani, Waldo, Wycliffe and Luther. However, we can read both the manual and the condemnations and doubt that the theologians used their abilities to read with subtlety. They found what they looking for and ignored portions that would cast doubt upon their conclusions. Presumption is also evident when we remember that the old order was, in fact, contested. It was the Catholic narrative that has made us think the Sorbonne's traditionalist vision was already dominant. It was not. The Faculty did not even issue their Articles of Faith—which would eventually set the standard in France—until 1543.

Brian Cummings offers two reflections that are worth pondering at this point: “French irenics sought to avoid the inevitable battle by focusing on the core: the gospel. . . . It is the exactness of definition, applied to the subtlest areas of belief, which creates the optimum conditions for heresy, and the severest sanctions in eliminating it.”<sup>383</sup>

The Parlement issued its proscription on February 5, 1526. *Épistres et Évangiles* was condemned again by Parlement on February 14, 1543.

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<sup>382</sup> It is amusing that when they condemned Luther they still, with Luther, condemned the “superstitious” preaching of indulgences, and that—by failing to condemn this aspect of Luther’s message out of loyalty to the Gallican privileges of the French church—they apparently accept his rejection of papal primacy. Farge, *Faculty*, pp. 164-167.

<sup>383</sup> *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford University Press, 2002), loc. 1935, 1985-1986 (Kindle ed.).

### Tensions at Meaux

The Circle of Meaux disintegrated, in part, because they had not agreed in advance on the nature of a renewed church. So, while renewing vital faith for many, they also gave traditional opponents opportunities to find fault and to destroy. It is probable that they did not at first realize they had a fundamental disagreement on the nature of the church. Speaking generally, the irenic evangelicals sought to make the church the best it could be without rupturing its unity. This attitude led to the acceptance of many historical accretions to its life. Farel (and probably Caroli into the 1530s), the schismatic evangelicals, sought to negate many of these accretions. In theory they tried to recreate the life of the New Testament church. To demonstrate the differences between these two groups, we will examine briefly an important work of Farel's. The contrast with *Épistres et Évangiles* in purpose, language and attitude toward opponents will be clear.

Guillaume Farel's publication was a short manual on basic Christian doctrine, *Sommaire et Brève Déclaration*. The traditional understanding is that it was first published in 1525 in the Italian city of Turin. (A single copy in the British Museum has this information on its title page.) Scholars are quick to doubt the place of publication. Turin is deemed a "cover" for another venue to help the printer evade heresy proceedings.<sup>384</sup> Higman asks, if the address is false, "Why not also the date?"<sup>385</sup> He mounts a serious case.

Farel himself wrote that he revised this work thirteen or fourteen years after the original. We have copies of a 1542 revision. We know of a 1529 edition, now lost, condemned

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<sup>384</sup> See Hofer in *Sommaire*, p. 8; and Higman, "Dates-clé de la Réforme française: Le *Sommaire* de Guillaume Farel et *La somme de l'écriture sainte*" in *Lire et Découvrir*, pp. 53, 58.

<sup>385</sup> Higman, "Dates-clé" in *Lire et Découvrir*, p. 58: "Pourquoi pas la date aussi?"

by a provincial Parlement. We also have copies of editions in 1534 and 1552. Farel acknowledges that there were several pirated editions of his work, in addition to the four editions above that were printed with his approval. Higman suggests that the “1525” book was one of the unauthorized printings. Since the print composition and type and the paper marks were all consistent with other works published by Simon Du Bois after he moved from Paris to Alençon in 1529, Higman feels quite certain that Du Bois is the printer and that the actual publication date must be after 1529, probably closer to 1533.

Higman is convincing.<sup>386</sup> If he is right, the first edition of the *Sommaire* did not appear until 1529, and the edition recently published by Hofer appeared later. Hofer believes that the “1525” and the 1534 publications form one family of editions. The 1542 edition, with its important revisions, and the 1552 publication form a second family.<sup>387</sup> So, Hofer’s text probably gives us reliable insight into the instruction contained in the first, lost edition from 1529.

Of course, we must ask if the redating of the “1525” *Sommaire* affects our inquiry into the Circle of Meaux. At first glance, it would appear to. The Circle definitively broke up in 1525. If the publication date had been accurate, we could assume the teaching in this edition closely reflected Farel’s preaching while at Meaux. If the *Sommaire* dates no earlier than 1529, and the edition we are using was perhaps published in 1533, can we assume that we know from it what Farel taught when part of the Circle? There are several intervening years in which he was openly involved in advancing Protestantism. Could his Protestant convictions have hardened over those years? They could have.

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<sup>386</sup> Hofer in *Sommaire*, p. 8, makes no attempt to dispute Higman’s argument, but simply explains its impact, if accepted.

<sup>387</sup> Hofer in *Sommaire*, p. 7.

Yet, we should also ask if Farel's convictions are likely to have hardened. His story suggests perhaps not: his convictions were strong all along. He did not leave in 1525 when the Circle dispersed under pressure from the Sorbonne. Briçonnet expelled him in early 1523, only two years after the Circle was formed. He was too radical for most of his fellow preachers. When expelled, he was not disappointed, but criticized the efforts at Meaux for their inadequacy, and promptly declared as a Protestant. It seems that Farel had schismatic tendencies throughout his time at Meaux. Therefore, it is likely the "1525" edition of the *Sommaire* gives us fair insight into the general difference between what Farel preached in Meaux and what the irenic evangelicals in the Circle propounded.

It will help to highlight the differences between the irenics and the schismatics by first drawing attention to three key areas of substantial agreement among them: the nature of humanity, the saving work of Christ and the primacy of Scripture. Farel, as was his wont, uses powerfully negative language to describe humanity: "Man—it cannot be helped—is nasty, foolish, and rash, ambitious, full of falsehood and hypocrisy, inconstant, changing, thinking only of evil and sin . . . all is corrupted in him."<sup>388</sup> The preaching manual similarly declares that people possess "all impiety which is an overabundance of sin and vileness, all concupiscence and worldly desires."<sup>389</sup> Both works indicate that humanity, left to its own devices, is in trouble; however, neither remains pessimistic.

Both texts celebrate a solution, in Christ, to the human condition. In the exhortation for Easter Sunday, the manual sums it up joyously:

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<sup>388</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 42: "L'Homme est meschant, ne povant rien, fol et temeraire, ambitieux, plein de faulseté et d'hypocrisie, inconstant, variable, ne pensant que mal et peché . . . tout est corrumpu en luy."

<sup>389</sup> "toute impiete q'est superfluite de peche et dordure, toutes concupiscences et desirs seculiers." (xxxiii,v)

My brothers and friends, the true Passover, the true paschal lamb, is our saviour and redeemer, Jesus Christ, who is the true bread who came down from heaven, being without the leaven of malice and iniquity. He desired to be slain and sacrificed in order to deliver us from the captivity of the great Pharaoh who is the devil from hell and, three days after, resuscitated by a glorious resurrection for our justification. His death is the pardon for our sins. He has satisfied everything, and for all. His resurrection is our justification; it is our glory.<sup>390</sup>

The manual stresses repeatedly that justification comes through faith in Christ's sacrifice. It also, in emphasizing that Christ's death satisfied "everything, and for all," hints that the teaching in the Mass that Christ is being sacrificed again and again is unnecessary. Yet, by providing only hints, it aims to shift emphasis from ritual to Christ himself, rather than to overturn the doctrine of the Mass. Farel will take a different approach, but agrees with the manual about the work of Christ, who died "offering his body and his blood for the purification of our souls."<sup>391</sup> Christ was raised "for the marvellous joy, glory, triumph and jubilation of the faithful he has elected."<sup>392</sup> The evangelicals all felt they had "good news" to share, a solution to the human predicament. The manual declares that this gospel has been absent: "the evangelical truth, which has been hidden for such a long time."<sup>393</sup> It is this conviction and their confidence in the biblical gospel to make people new that provided the evangelicals the motivation to persist in the face of determined opposition from traditionalists.

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<sup>390</sup> "Mes freres et amys, la vraye pasque, le vray aigneau paschal, cest nostre sauveur et redempteur Jesuchrist: lequel estant le vray pain qui est descendu du ciel estant sans le levain de malice et iniquite, a voulu estre imole et sacrifie pour nous delivrer de la captivite du grant Pharaoh qui est le diable denfer, et troys jours apres resuscite dune glorieuse resurrection, pour notre justification. Sa mort est le pardon de noz pechez. Il a satissfait a tout, et pour tous. Sa resurrection est nostre justification, cest nostre gloire." (cxvii,r,v)

<sup>391</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 48: "offrant son corps et son sang pour la purification de noz ames."

<sup>392</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 306: "pour la merueilleuse joye, gloire, triumphe et liesse des fideles qu'il a esleu." Farel emphasizes the "elect" in a way the other preachers at Meaux do not, theologically placing him close to his friend and protégé, John Calvin, and he does so before Calvin has published the first edition of his *Institutes* in 1536.

<sup>393</sup> "la parole evangelique, laquelle a este si long temps cachee." (clxvii,v)

Finally, we mention the source of the commonalities among the evangelicals. They looked to the Scriptures: “to love above all things and to have in reverence the Holy Scriptures—and not without cause, for they are the words of God.”<sup>394</sup> Occurring as it does early in the preaching manual, this admonition serves as an apology for the book’s existence. Yet, it also reflects a bedrock conviction of the evangelicals: the written word of God needs much more serious attention. Hence, Lefèvre d’Étaples risks a well-established career by translating the Bible into French and associating himself with a preaching guide that emphasizes the gospel of Christ. Hence, Briçonnet risks resistance in order to assemble a team of preachers who took the Bible seriously and could help the folk in Meaux do likewise. Hence, younger scholars, humanists and church leaders—like Roussel, Mazurier, Caroli and Vatable—potentially jeopardize their careers and lives in order to pursue biblically based church reform. Hence, Farel took the risk of declaring himself a Protestant with the danger to reputation and life it entailed. He instructs his readers to understand Scripture passages, not in isolation, but within their context, and to study related passages together before reaching doctrinal conclusions—Scripture interpreting Scripture.<sup>395</sup> Affirmations of the importance of the Bible appear throughout both works.

Farel also strengthens his view of Scripture by a significant word, disclosing a strategic difference between the Meaux preachers: “concerning salvation and that which touches the soul, one must only propound very certain things, which one so takes from Holy Scripture

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<sup>394</sup> “aymer sur toutes choses et avoir en reverence toutes les saintes escriptures: et non sans cause. Car elles sont, parolles de dieu.” (vii,r,v)

<sup>395</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 98.

*alone.*<sup>396</sup> It is probable that, had they heard Farel preach this sentence, his fellow preachers at Meaux would have nodded in agreement. Yet, he interpreted the word “alone” as justification for aggressively rejecting all Catholic doctrine not in line with his understanding of biblical teaching. This aggressiveness placed him among the radicals in the Circle, and soon it placed him among the Protestants instead. Most of the other preachers at Meaux avoided this aggressiveness.<sup>397</sup>

We have seen three key points of common ground between *Épistres et Évangiles* and Farel’s *Sommaire*. Concerned for the plight of humanity, rejoicing in the response of God to that plight through the work of Christ as it has been revealed in the Bible, these authors were eager to renew both church and society with “people made new.” This common ground accounts for the dynamism of the Circle of Meaux, and for their considerable success in vitalizing the diocese. I have also indicated some ways in which differences between the irenic and schismatic evangelicals began to show. They were more profound than what we have seen.

Farel’s *Sommaire* is much more systematic in presentation and in thought process than the preaching manual and leaves little room for mystery in the faith. He has confidence that a fixed description of God’s intentions can be laid out in an orderly fashion: “God, whose pronouncement is immutable; that which he says cannot be otherwise.”<sup>398</sup> Manifesting surprising self-sufficiency, he is also confident that the human mind, once it has found its

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<sup>396</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 30: “en l’affaire du salut, en ce qui touche à l’ame, ne fault proposer que choses trescertaines, lesquelles on prent de l’Escripture sainte tant seulement.” Italics mine.

<sup>397</sup> Caroli, Pauvant, Saulnier and, to some extent, Jean Le Comte would have sided with Farel.

<sup>398</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 26: “Dieu, duquel le propos est immuable, et ce qu’il dit ne poeut estre aultrement.”

salvation in Christ, can assess its own motives and direct one's behaviour.<sup>399</sup> In similar fashion, Farel battles concerning miracles. He is incensed by those who make false claims, and attacks "false signs and miracles by which many are deceived."<sup>400</sup> We can applaud his antagonism toward religious charlatans, and still note that almost everything in the *Sommaire* can be rationally explained. Even the sacraments are demystified in Farel's teaching.<sup>401</sup> They no longer have saving power nor do they lead to a mystical encounter with the Lord who is present. Instead, they are an act of memorial with a moral purpose: to inculcate charity.

"Behave so everything enables you [to act] in charity, guarding friendship, peace and concord with everyone."<sup>402</sup> So Farel teaches; yet his behaviour suggests that he meant everyone except Catholic leaders. His denunciations of these leaders abound. He takes seriously the principle: "everything which is not within this faith, that is to say, according to the knowledge of the Word, is sin."<sup>403</sup> So, he attacks "sinful" Catholic teaching on many points. "Merit is a voice full of arrogance, completely repugnant to God and to all Scripture, contrived by the spirit of pride and of error to negate the grace of our Lord."<sup>404</sup> Tradition is "human doctrine that desires to mix with the things of God. . . . It is nothing other than abomination before God, vanity, falsehood and diabolical doctrine, error and vain deceit."<sup>405</sup> In contrast to the Catholic Church, "the Church [of Jesus Christ] certainly does not consist in its various

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<sup>399</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 142: "Chascun regarde ses œuvres, s'il y a aultre regard que l'honneur de Dieu." See also p. 160.

<sup>400</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 226: "faulx signes et miracles par lesquelz plusieurs sont deceuz." See also pp. 26, 232.

<sup>401</sup> *Sommaire*, pp. 110, 112: "Les sacrementz sont signe et protestations des choses qui doibvent estre ès fideles, servantz et profitantz à conserver, croistre, et augmenter la charité l'ung avec l'aultre . . . rememorans la mort de nostre Seigneur jusques ad ce qu'il vienne."

<sup>402</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 30: "Faictes que tout vous serve à charité, à garder amytié, paix et concorde avec tous."

<sup>403</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 78: "tout ce qui n'est en ceste foy, c'est-à-dire, selon la congnoissance de la parolle, c'est peché."

<sup>404</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 82: "Merite est voix pleine de arrogance, pleinement repugnant à Dieu et à toute l'Escripiture, controuee par l'esperit d'orgueil et d'erreur pour mettre à neant la grace de nostre Seigneur."

<sup>405</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 90: "Doctrine humaine se voulant mesler des choses de Dieu . . . n'est aultre chose que abomination devant Dieu, vanité, mensonge, et doctrine diabolique, erreur et vaine tromperie."

degrees, laws, ordinances and orders given by the will of man.”<sup>406</sup> On claims that persecuting Protestants is valid, Farel says with disgust, “The shadows are reigning and . . . the Antichrist is reigning so strongly.”<sup>407</sup> Purgatory “is an invention of Satan and of his ministers contrary to Holy Scripture.”<sup>408</sup> Celibacy for priests produces “great scandals which the ministers of the Antichrist create . . . ravishing and seducing girls and women, and openly committing vile and infamous adulteries and fornications.”<sup>409</sup> “The Mass is to give understanding of the big difference between the priests and the people. . . . By the Mass the poor are destroyed, the widows also, and orphans. For, by it, the Church of the Pope has drawn all the goods of the world [to itself].”<sup>410</sup> To these attacks, we can add harsh words against monastic orders, prayers to the saints (which he calls “blasphemy”), feast days, confession to priests, indulgences—and more.<sup>411</sup> The importance of these quotations is to show the vituperative manner in which Farel writes. While declaring “good news,” he pours forth acrimony. While proclaiming a cause for joy and the opportunity for restoration, he tears apart and condemns. The disjunction between his message and his manner is striking. He is highly divisive and schismatic, and contrasts notably with the irenic evangelicals, who manage largely to keep their message and their manner congruent.

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<sup>406</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 100: “Ceste Eglise ne consiste point en diversité de degrez, loix, ordonnances et orders donnees par la volonté d’homme.”

<sup>407</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 180: “Les tenebres ont regné et . . . l’Antichrist a si fort regné.”

<sup>408</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 122: “Qui est une invention de Satan et de ses ministres contre la sainte Escripiture.”

<sup>409</sup> *Sommaire*, p. 280: “grandz scandals que les ministres de l’Antichrist font . . . ravissantz et seduisantz filles et femmes, et commettans manifestement ordz et infames adulteres et fornications.”

<sup>410</sup> *Sommaire*, pp. 116, 118: “La messe est pour donner à entendre la grosse difference entre les prebstres et le peuple. . . . Par la messe les paovres sont destruietz, les veufves aussi, et orphelins. Car par elle l’Eglise du pape a tiré tous les biens du monde.”

<sup>411</sup> *Sommaire*, pp. 134-138, 108, 110, 184-190, 192-200, 206.

### Concluding Thoughts on the Circle of Meaux

The preaching manual (to which Gérard Roussel made a major contribution) certainly criticized the sins of church leaders (though it did so in a very restrained manner). Farel went farther, harshly challenging their doctrines and their prerogatives. It is little wonder that schism ensued, and little wonder that, with such preaching part of the picture at Meaux, traditionalists undermined the whole enterprise, destroying an effective work of spiritual renewal by Catholic loyalists. Two points are most salient as we reflect upon the schismatic denunciations. First, attacking the Mass produced much negative reaction. (It would again do so in the Affair of the Placards in 1534.) Roussel and his irenic friends were convinced that the gospel could be preached freshly and powerfully in a Catholic context, diverting attention from ritualism to faith, when actual Eucharistic doctrine was not questioned. Farel, instead, was driven out. Second, questioning the rights, not just the sins, of the Catholic leaders soon led to repression and actually lessened the opportunities for the gospel to be heard. The Mass and the prerogatives of church leaders were two untouchable subjects. The Protestants tackled them, and schism quickly overshadowed renewal of the church in France and in Europe.

These reflections carry historiographical implications. Denis Crouzet makes a good case that, from fairly early in the sixteenth century, the social struggle in France was not a two-way, but a three-way contest. He points out that the party later called the *politiques* was already striving to carve out a middle ground between Catholic *exclusivisme* and *la dissidence réformée* as early as 1534.<sup>412</sup> Yet one can ask, “Why start in 1534?” Did not many of the evangelicals of the 1520s also pursue a middle way, both Catholic and reforming? Perhaps Crouzet misses this

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<sup>412</sup> Crouzet, *La genèse*, pp. 239, 344. The terms are his.

possibility, because he embraces one of his hypotheses that—even though the preachers were non-schismatic—gospel preaching itself, in Meaux and elsewhere, unleashed schismatic tendencies nonetheless.<sup>413</sup> He would naturally miss the irenicism. However, if we do go back to the earlier decade, we then link to the long-standing reform movement I described in the previous chapter. The “peace-seeking middle ground” then shifts from being an embattled minority of *political* seekers of the welfare of the French people amidst a sea of religious extremists to a strong and vibrant *religious* movement within French society that nearly carried the day in its promotion of irenic ecclesiastical and societal renewal. This shift in perspective raises a further major question: Does Enlightenment rationalism actually save the French from “inevitable” religious strife? Such a claim can be seen as suspect.

Though we will develop the picture further in subsequent chapters, let us pause to summarize. There existed in France in the early sixteenth century an indigenous humanistic reform movement. It sought, in line with Renaissance ideas, a return to ancient sources, particularly the Bible in its original languages. It also sought to make this learning available in the vernacular to produce for many people a faith that was better understood, that was less ritualistic and more spiritual, with a deeper personal morality. It was open to Luther, sharing his piety to a great extent and giving considerable approval to his doctrines. (In Meaux Briçonnet turned against Luther in an effort to preserve his Circle from legal challenges.) Ultimately, the majority of those involved in the movement refused to accept Luther’s schism. Yet, for a time, many were optimistic that this evangelical movement would renew the Gallican church. The Circle of Meaux, short-lived though it was, contributed substantially to this optimism. Gérard

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<sup>413</sup> Crouzet, *La genèse*, p. 143.

Roussel was a key player at Meaux as a younger preacher and he became, for the irenic evangelicals, their most important ecclesiastical leader as they sought to bring their optimistic vision and hope to the wider French public. We will see his leadership in the following three decades through several more of his works.

Given the powerful passions of the era, it is doubtful that change—in Meaux or elsewhere—could have been handled smoothly. Still, the renewing work that Briçonnet headed up in Meaux was an admirable effort, and its failure led, in France, only to increased tensions, extensive repression and, ultimately, the Wars of Religion. “But the Sorbonne, the Parlement, and France all together would pay very dearly for the crushing of . . . a reform of the Church within the Church” which manifested a “charitable gentleness.”<sup>414</sup> The loss of the irenic thrust for renewal found in the preaching manual would prove costly.

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<sup>414</sup> Screech in “Introduction” in *Épîtres et Évangiles*, p. 17: “Mais la Sorbonne, le Parlement et la France tout entière devaient payer très cher l’écrasement . . . une réforme de l’Eglise dans l’Eglise. . . . douceur charitable.”

## Chapter 4

### Lobbying a Future King

On September 25, 1525, Gérard Roussel wrote his final letter from Meaux to his strong-willed friend, Guillaume Farel.<sup>415</sup> Farel had taken up exile in Strasbourg and, within days, the threat of arrest brought Roussel and his long-time mentor, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, to the same city. The battle between the traditionalists in the Faculty of Theology and the Parlement of Paris, and reform-minded humanists in many places but particularly the Circle of Meaux, was threatening to turn deadly.<sup>416</sup> Francis I, who had protected humanists, could no longer shield them after he had been taken hostage by Charles V at the battle of Pavia on February 24. The traditionalists would have the upper hand until the king's sister, Marguerite, secured his return from Madrid in March 1526. Farel soon moved to take up Protestant leadership in Switzerland. Roussel in particular, as the younger and more energetic man, but also Lefèvre d'Étaples returned to France to take on leadership of the evangelical movement there, once the king was in a position to recall them. Marc Venard suggests that Roussel and Farel took advantage of their exile together in Strasbourg to produce the first French catechism,<sup>417</sup> a conclusion that I will dispute below. Roussel almost certainly, however, was chiefly responsible for the production of *Initiatore instruction en la religion pour les enfants*. This document is the focus of this chapter.

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<sup>415</sup> See Charles Schmidt, *Gérard Roussel, Prédicateur de la Reine Marguerite de Navarre: Mémoire servant à l'histoire des premières tentatives faites pour introduire la reformation en France* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970; originally published in Strasbourg, 1845), pp. 185-187.

<sup>416</sup> Jacques Pauvant of the Circle of Meaux was executed for heresy in August, 1526. See pp. 89, 126 above.

<sup>417</sup> Marc Venard, "Un catéchisme offert à Marguerite de Navarre" in *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 142, 1 (1996), pp. 5-32.

Let us first, however, understand Roussel's activities in the years after he left Meaux.

From Strasbourg to Aumonier

Roussel and Lefèvre d'Étapes found a welcoming shelter in the home of one of the leading pastors in Strasbourg, Wolfgang Capito. Farel had preceded them there, and d'Arande would soon follow. It seems that the renowned head of the cathedral chapter, the noble Sigismund de Hohenlohe, financed their stay.<sup>418</sup> From their arrival, Farel preached to strengthen them and other French religious refugees, and so established a French-language church in that city. The emotional impact of the refugee experience can be discerned from the fact that all three new arrivals chose pen names for added personal security. Roussel called himself Tolninus.<sup>419</sup>

The Reformation in Strasbourg impressed Roussel. However, we should not, therefore, conclude that he was a closet Protestant. We need to remember the deep longing of the French evangelicals for renewal of church and society through gospel preaching. Roussel had participated in a major way in the beginnings of such a renewal, and now believed he had found a place that echoed those initial successes in Meaux. We also need to recall the nature of the reform movement in Strasbourg. Under Martin Bucer, religious change there had a noteworthy irenic tone. It is little surprise that those who, like Roussel, taught *un évangile pacifique* were

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<sup>418</sup> Jonathan A. Reid, *King's Sister—Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549) and her Evangelical Network* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), v. 1, p. 344.

<sup>419</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 50-52, 59, 61. Lefèvre d'Étapes chose Antonius Peregrinus; d'Arande called himself Cornelius.

attracted to it. Labels such as “Protestant” or “Catholic” were of limited interest to their theological and spiritual perspective.<sup>420</sup>

Roussel expresses his excitement toward year’s end in a letter to Briçonnet.<sup>421</sup> He covers several topics. First, there are the frequent services at which the gospel is preached. Preaching takes place daily: at parish churches at 5 a.m. and 7 a.m., then at the cathedral at 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. At the latter location, Psalms in the vernacular are chanted; the mixing of women’s and men’s voices “produces a ravishing effect.”<sup>422</sup> Numerous attendees come “eager to hear the word of God. How happy I would be to see a comparable desire among my compatriots!”<sup>423</sup> Second, the preachers are a humanist’s dream come true. Their piety equals their considerable knowledge, and their explanations of the Bible, based on study of the original languages, are “not with impoverished scholasticism.”<sup>424</sup> These preachers do not display their learning, but are even willing to work with their hands, like the Apostle Paul. “It is impossible for me to imitate their example, whatever such desire I may have.”<sup>425</sup> Third, alms and offerings are collected to help “true indigents”<sup>426</sup> and to train those who are healthy. Fourth, each parish has a pastor and a deacon “who are far from being rewarded by unjust riches and from acquisitiveness on every side.”<sup>427</sup> Partly, they are paid from public funds and partly they work with their hands.

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<sup>420</sup> In fact, the term “Protestant” did not exist until the “protest” by Lutheran princes at the Diet of Speyer in 1529.

<sup>421</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 188-191 (in the Latin original), 55-58 (in French translation). English translations are mine.

<sup>422</sup> “Iucundum sit audire.”

<sup>423</sup> “Divini verbi perquam avida. Quod desiderium in nostratium pectora immissum nihil est quod tam affectarem.”

<sup>424</sup> “Non destituuntur scolis.”

<sup>425</sup> “Assequi non datur quanquam plurimum mihi cupiam.” We do not know why Roussel feels constrained about manual labour.

<sup>426</sup> “Vere pauperibus.”

<sup>427</sup> “Qui non iniustis et undelibet corrogatis lucris aluntur.”

Fifth, the convents are largely closed, but without any “tyrannical oppression.”<sup>428</sup> Some religious have taken up “honest professions,”<sup>429</sup> while those that wish to can stay in their cells. They, however, cannot receive new recruits. The incomes from these institutions support the poor, the pastors and the teachers of the young. Images have been removed from the churches, except in one place accessible to all; however, there they celebrate the “communion as in the time of Christ”<sup>430</sup>—probably offering both the bread and the cup to the laity.

We discern aspects of traditionalism that Roussel feels have obscured the gospel: too much Latin, too many images and restrictions on communion. He is hostile to scholastics, but—in light of the legal attack he has recently endured—his words are remarkably restrained. He clearly opposes, as in the preaching manual, the amassing of wealth and luxuries by church leaders. Yet, he affirms the avoidance of “tyrannical oppression,” as the following reflection also demonstrates:

While it is natural to afflict those who are not sufficiently advanced in the doctrine of the Spirit, in order to empower them to rise above the exterior world, yet—while allowing them to be carried away to invisible regions by faith—they [the preachers] believe that they ought not to scandalize the neighbour and ought to accommodate themselves to the neighbour’s “measure.”<sup>431</sup>

We see here three important inclinations of the French evangelicals: the traditional acceptance of mortification for spiritual progress, the humanistic emphasis on an interior faith, and the irenic insistence on advancing the gospel while accommodating the sensibilities of others and avoiding unnecessary scandals. In many ways, Roussel saw his own reflection in the Strasbourg

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<sup>428</sup> “Nulla species tyrannidis.”

<sup>429</sup> “Honesto opificio.”

<sup>430</sup> “Communio proxime ad Christi tempora.”

<sup>431</sup> “Quædam porro sunt, quæ plerosque offendere possent non eousque provectoros in doctrina Spiritus, ut cuncta externa contemnere queant, sola interim nixi fide quæ sic in invisibilia tota rapitur, ut proximum non negligat, sed per charitatem ad mensuram illius se summittat atque attemperet.”

of the 1520s; it was a place and time where new possibilities in the pursuit of renewal were considered and even Anabaptists were initially given an irenic reception.

Two of Roussel's friends, Conrard and Bentin, printers in Lyons, fled to Basel at the same time Roussel and Lefèvre d'Étaples sought refuge in Strasbourg. The printers wanted to pursue humanistic priorities: printing French Bibles and publishing new editions of various Latin authors. Lefèvre d'Étaples went to Basel in January, 1526. Schmidt assumes that Roussel accompanied him.<sup>432</sup> When the king returned to Paris in March, d'Arande was recalled as almoner (chaplain) to Marguerite and soon became a bishop in the Dauphiné.<sup>433</sup> Lefèvre d'Étaples and (it seems) Roussel came back to Strasbourg from Basel in mid-April, and were immediately recalled by the king "with honour."<sup>434</sup> Lefèvre d'Étaples was appointed royal librarian and tutor to the younger royal children. Roussel joined the court of Marguerite d'Angoulême and was at Blois by June. Though he toyed with the idea of preaching in Italy, he soon accepted the role of Marguerite's court preacher and later became almoner (*aumonier*) in place of d'Arande (1529). Roussel sought to bring Farel back to France as well, obtaining an invitation from Marguerite to join her court.<sup>435</sup> He warns Farel, however: "We must often practise dissimulation."<sup>436</sup> He felt his life was in danger despite Marguerite's patronage. Yet his stance was principled, choosing not to cause offense over lesser concerns in order to concentrate on the gospel, as he will spell out later in *Familière Exposition*. (See chapter 6.) In October, Farel communicated to Nicolas d'Esch in Metz a report from Roussel that Francis I

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<sup>432</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>433</sup> D'Arande begins to fade from evangelical leadership after this appointment. Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 79.

<sup>434</sup> Erasmus, writing to John à Lasco, May 17, 1527 in Erasmus, *Epistolæ* (Basel, 1536), p. 386, cited in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 65.

<sup>435</sup> Roussel to Farel, August 27, 1526 in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 69, 197-198.

<sup>436</sup> "Dissimulanda nobis sunt plurima."

intended to call the churches in France to an assembly to ensure that the evangelicals would no longer be persecuted.<sup>437</sup> This assembly did not occur, but it could have changed sixteenth century French history drastically. Such rumours at court would have confirmed Roussel in his principles of irenicism, including the dissimulation he felt it sometimes entailed. As it turned out, the evangelicals would feel pressure to constrain their preaching and practice for another four years, until Francis' sons were able to return from their captivity as hostages in Madrid in place of their father.<sup>438</sup> Roussel adjusts the invitation several months later, having arranged that Farel could become court preacher for the influential de La Marck family, who lived in Sedan, just beyond the jurisdiction of the traditionalists in Paris: "I begin to credit you with the talent to preach glory in Christ, and they [Farel's potential patrons] desire Christ will eventually so direct your sermons even more than I, that in the end you and sons and brothers would rather come to regard the face of the Father." Farel should, however, avoid "dissent. . . . I plead, 'Abstain from that; but content yourself to teach Christ and the true uses of his works.'" <sup>439</sup> Roussel's irenic strategy is clearly spelled out here. It almost sounds that he believes Farel's more effective sermons and his ultimate participation in the beatific vision are both dependent on learning to serve Christ in this manner. In the end, Roussel's and Marguerite's more patient approach did not sit well with Farel; he soon turned away from his homeland to labour in Switzerland. Already there were those who adopted what would become the Protestant narrative concerning the evangelicals, including Roussel. Unable to credit faith-

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<sup>437</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 362, including n. 142.

<sup>438</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 350.

<sup>439</sup> Roussel to Farel, December 7, 1526 in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 69, 199-201: "cœpi talentum tibi creditum in Christi gloriam prædicare, et demum ita direxit sermonem Christus ut plus quam ego te cupiant, te perinde ac filium et fratrem imo si vis patrem habituri. . . . dissentio. Abstine oro ab ea, sed contentus esto docere Christum et verum usum operum illius."

based conviction for their irenic choices, their unwillingness to become Protestants was attributed to vacillation.<sup>440</sup> Protestant sympathizers simply vindicated Farel's schism.

Francis I commissioned Lefèvre d'Étaples and Roussel, though they remained attached to Marguerite's court, to translate the sermons of fourth century preacher John Chrysostom on the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>441</sup> After the marriage on January 24, 1527 of Marguerite to Henry, the king of Navarre (in the southwest of France today), Roussel was appointed confessor to the royal couple and travelled with their court. Lefèvre d'Étaples began his slow withdrawal from leadership among the evangelicals at this point. While he still translated the Old Testament into French—the completed version, based on the Vulgate, was published in 1530—*ecclesiastical* leadership of the movement now fell upon Roussel.<sup>442</sup> (Jonathan Reid's assessment is sound that the king's sister, Marguerite—first d'Angoulême, then de Navarre—was the heart and protector of the French evangelical movement.<sup>443</sup> Marguerite, however, often needed a churchman to provide leadership at a number of points, and Roussel was frequently her choice.) His friends in Strasbourg were happy to support his efforts. Capito, writing a dedicatory epistle to Marguerite for his 1528 commentary on Hosea, called Roussel “as solid in his judgment as [he is] ardent in his zeal for the glory of God.”<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> See Pierre Toussaint, writing to Œcolampadius in Basel, July 26, 1526, in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 193-196.

<sup>441</sup> Erasmus to Lefèvre d'Étaples, March 24, 1527 in Erasmus, *Epistolæ*, p. 809. Erasmus offered his own work on Chrysostom to his French friend. This work was never published.

<sup>442</sup> The choice to base this French translation on the Vulgate seems yet another failed attempt by the evangelicals to mollify powerful traditionalists. In 1530, Lefèvre d'Étaples retired to the Navarrian court at Nérac and remained there until he died in 1537.

<sup>443</sup> A point conclusively and thoroughly made in Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, both vols.

<sup>444</sup> “Aussi solide dans son jugement qu'ardent dans son zèle pour la gloire de Dieu.” Tr. by Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 75, from the Latin: “Homo ut acri iudicio, ita zelo gloriæ Dei vehementi præditus.” Capito to Marguerite, May 22, 1528 in Capito, *Commentarii in Hoseam* (Strasbourg, 1528), p. 8.

We find, however, the evangelicals did not have the same level of influence with local judicatories, both ecclesiastical and legal, as the traditionalists. Zealous to guard their understanding of the Christian faith and their place of power within the traditional structures, they simply wore down the evangelicals with legal harassments, much as they had done at Meaux. It began again in 1528.<sup>445</sup> On May 31, a statue of the Virgin Mary was damaged in Paris and, when no perpetrator could be identified, Francis I determined that Protestants were probably to blame and should be punished. Traditionalists cast suspicion on the evangelicals by associating them with Lutherans. Provincial synods in Lyons, Sens and Bourges all condemned Luther and those who sympathized with him. Etienne Renier in Vienne (1528) and Louis de Berquin in Paris (1529)—a friend of the king, but unable to clear himself when tried for a third time—were executed as heretics. Further high profile executions followed: Philippe Huant in Bordeaux (1530) and Jean de Caturce in Toulouse (1531). French evangelicals mourned the loss of these executed co-workers, and at the same time took action to avoid being caught in the same legal trap. Their responses were multi-faceted: political, diplomatic, legal, theological (preaching and publication), artistic and pastoral.<sup>446</sup> Schmidt argues that, under this pressure, “many of the faithful . . . preferred to hide their convictions.”<sup>447</sup> Undoubtedly, many did. However, Schmidt’s strongly Protestant perspective kept him from even considering the possibility that some of the evangelicals refused to leave the Catholic Church out of faith-based convictions. I have demonstrated there were numbers who so chose.

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<sup>445</sup> See Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>446</sup> See Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, both vols.

<sup>447</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 78: “beaucoup de fidèles . . . préférèrent cacher leurs convictions.”

Not all was bleak for Roussel and his friends. In fact, there were signs that the evangelical network might yet prevail over the traditionalists. In 1529 Francis, consistent with his humanist sympathies, imposed several new chairs in ancient languages on the Faculty of Theology in Paris, despite the Faculty's objections. The evangelicals enjoyed the discomfort of the traditionalists. The king's mother, Louise de Savoie, died in 1531. Of the "Royal Trinity" of Francis, Marguerite and Louise,<sup>448</sup> the queen mother was the only supporter of scholastic tendencies. As regent during the captivity of Francis in Madrid in 1525-1526, she had encouraged traditionalists to break the Circle of Meaux. Her passing, therefore, was a source of optimism for those seeking renewal. At the University of Bourges, which was directly under the rule of Marguerite as Duchess of Alençon, humanistic learning and evangelical preaching were quite openly permitted, particularly in 1532-1533. John Calvin and Theodore de Bèze, later extremely influential leaders in Geneva, both absorbed this atmosphere. In Paris, the royal professors gave humanistic lectures based on ancient Hebrew and Greek, including François Vatable, earlier part of the Circle of Meaux. Roussel continued as chaplain to the king and queen of Navarre, but was also appointed as abbot of the wealthy and renowned monastery at Clairac (1530), and of the historic and influential abbey in Userche, both east of Bordeaux.<sup>449</sup>

In this atmosphere, mixing sorrow over repressive traditionalist victories and surprised joy over encouraging developments, emotions ran high. These emotions would be on prominent display in 1533. When we pick up his story again, Roussel will be in the middle of the action, preaching the gospel in Paris to crowds of thousands.

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<sup>448</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, Chap. Three.

<sup>449</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 78-82; Eugene F. Rice, ed., *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 246-247.

The story of *Initiatore instruction*

This manuscript (found in *bibliothèque de l’Arsenal*, no. 5096) has a fascinating history. It was presented to Marguerite of Navarre and, as a luxury manuscript, was lavishly illuminated.<sup>450</sup> The manuscript’s existence was widely known, yet its content had not been studied until twenty years ago. The reason is simple: the illustrations had drawn the attention of art historians, and the text was overlooked. Marc Venard and Myra Orth began independently to examine the text and its significance, concluding that it is an important witness to the French evangelical movement. Their exchange—of great importance for our purposes—demonstrates scholars respectfully sharpening each other’s understandings.

Venard cites Leroux de Lincy’s opinion from 1853 that the manuscript was prepared in honour of the wedding of Marguerite to Henry of Navarre.<sup>451</sup> This view was already held by those who had owned the manuscript in the eighteenth century. It is crucial that we keep in mind the wedding date as we test this opinion and assess the provenance of this significant little work: January 24, 1527. The *Frontispiece* certainly contributes to this impression. It depicts Henry extending a daisy (*margaritam* in Latin) to Marguerite (whose name can also refer to the pearl of the gospel in Matthew 13:46). He has placed this pearl (Marguerite, but also implying

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<sup>450</sup> The *Frontispiece* can be found in Figure 4.1, Myra D. Orth, “Reconsidering Radical Beauty: Marguerite de Navarre’s Illuminated Evangelical Catechism and Confession (Arsenal, Ms 5096)” in Jean-François Gilmont, William Kemp, ed., *The French Evangelical Book before Calvin: Original Analyses, Newly Edited Texts, Bibliographic Catalogues* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2004), p. 86. It is also in Orth, “Radical Beauty: Marguerite de Navarre’s Illuminated Protestant Catechism and Confession” in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24, 2 (Summer 1993), p. 397, Fig. 1. *Carrying the Cross* appears on the covers of Reid, *Queen of Dissent*. The first vol. shows Christ carrying his cross, with the royal court following behind, doing the same. The second vol. depicts a close-up of the same scene that features Henry and Marguerite. It is also in Orth, “Radical Beauty” (1993), p. 398, Fig. 2. The other “miniatures” are in Orth, “Radical Beauty” (1993): *Penitent David*, p. 401, Fig. 5; *Christ Appearing to the Apostles*, p. 407, Fig. 11; *Christ’s Ascension*, p. 409, Fig. 13. See pp. 396–425 for her detailed analysis of each illumination.

<sup>451</sup> A.-J.-V. Leroux de Lincy, ed., *L’Heptameron des nouvelles de très haute et très illustre Marguerite d’Angoulême, reine de Navarre*, 3 vols., t. 1, Appendix V, pp. ccliv–cclvii, cited in Venard, “Catéchisme,” pp. 5–6.

the gospel movement) “in my heart.”<sup>452</sup> It would be an appropriate sentiment to celebrate the wedding. The centrality of Henry in the *Frontispiece* also leaves the impression that he has commissioned the manuscript and seems to endorse the content. Yet, the closer one studies the work the more one discerns there is much intended to mislead. Overall, Henry gave little evidence of taking the evangelical movement into his heart: he supported his wife in her prodigious endeavours, but was indifferent or mildly hostile himself.<sup>453</sup> So, Henry’s depiction in the *Frontispiece* is calculated to create an impression, one not entirely accurate. Why? I will try to unravel the various deceptions below.

Venard, in part, relies on this traditional understanding in fixing his proposed date. It would need to be ready before, on or soon after January 24, 1527. He assigns primary authorship to Gérard Roussel, discerning a comparable style between the catechism and Roussel’s later manuscript, *Familière Exposition*. (See chapter 6 below.) Both are “ponderous and verbose.”<sup>454</sup> He cites two letters by Roussel to deepen the connection between him and the manuscript. In 1524, Roussel wrote to Æcolampadius that the evangelical mission in France faced so many enemies that its supporters “are forced in fear to carry the cross of Christ.”<sup>455</sup> Venard connects this thought to the miniature, *Carrying the Cross*. Writing from Amboise on August 27, 1526 Roussel tells Farel, in Strasbourg, that “he has offered to the duchess a part of

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<sup>452</sup> “Intimo corde collegi.”

<sup>453</sup> His daughter Jeanne purportedly tells a story that he interrupted a prayer meeting involving Marguerite, Roussel and Farel, slapping his wife and threatening her for involvement in matters of doctrine. If so, he did not enforce his wishes most of the time. Nancy Lyman Roelker, *Queen of Navarre: Jeanne d’Albret 1528-1572* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 127. Farel’s presence is puzzling and hard to date. Indeed, some doubt the veracity of the letter describing these events: David M. Bryson, “The Vallant Letters of Jeanne d’Albret: Fact or Forgery?” in *French History* 13, 2 (June 1999), pp. 161-186; Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 571.

<sup>454</sup> Venard, “Catéchisme,” p. 20: “pesant et verbeux.”

<sup>455</sup> “Ne ferre Christi crucem adigantur.” Roussel to Æcolampadius, in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 182-183. The letter is undated, but Schmidt, based on internal evidence, estimates a date of August 24, 1524.

our work, which she received with a joyous face; I occupy myself to have it copied and then to send it to press, if I am able to manage it.”<sup>456</sup> Venard sees the “work” as this catechism and believes that “our” refers to collaboration between Farel and Roussel. We can observe that Roussel, as part of his role in Marguerite’s court, would undertake to have manuscripts copied and prepared for publication. Perhaps he also exercised some oversight at the printer’s. The oblique reference to obstacles that might have prevented Roussel from completing this task is intriguing, but vague. However, the links Venard discerns between the letters and the catechism are weak. “Carrying the cross” was a common theme in Christian devotion, and Roussel’s use of the phrase in a 1524 letter establishes no connection with the illumination in Marguerite’s catechism. Reid understands the “work” presented to the queen in 1526 as a now lost French translation of the Pentateuch done by Roussel, but almost certainly in collaboration with Lefèvre d’Étaples (hence “our”), work that influenced the translation of the Old Testament by the latter, published in 1530.<sup>457</sup> As we shall see, Reid’s suggestion is more plausible. However, Venard’s stylistic comparison between *Familière Exposition* and *Initiatore instruction* is sound. Also, Venard misses another pointer toward Roussel’s authorship. He rightly points out that the Ave Maria is not included in this catechism, but fails to observe that the charges against Roussel at Meaux included replacing the Ave Maria in the liturgy with the Lord’s Prayer. Roussel insisted that he would do so until “corrected by his bishop.”<sup>458</sup>

Venard notes the hard-line statements in the catechism—which scholars have tended to assign to Protestantism—and sees the hand of Guillaume Farel working with Roussel. We will

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<sup>456</sup> “Obtuli Duci partem nostri laboris quam hilari vultu accepit; hoc ago ut exscribatur et demum prelo mandetur, si quo modo possim hoc ipsum consequi.” Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 197-198.

<sup>457</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, pp. 282-283, v. 2, p. 717.

<sup>458</sup> See pp. 102-103 above, and Venard, “Catéchisme,” p. 8.

examine those statements shortly. For Venard, the postulation that Farel partnered with Roussel reinforced the notion that the catechism was translated into French prior to 1527. He suggests the two friends co-produced *Initiatoire instruction* while they were in Strasbourg between October 1525 and April 1526. It may have been the first French language catechism.<sup>459</sup>

Venard marshals two more arguments for an early dating. He credits Orth with alerting him to the work in German of Christoph Weismann.<sup>460</sup> Weismann demonstrated that manuscript 5096 contains a translation, with notable insertions, of both the *Smaller (Children's)* and *Larger Catechisms* written by the Swabian Lutheran reformer, Johann Brenz.<sup>461</sup> Yet, the translation was not made from the original German, but was derived from a Latin translation/adaptation produced by Vincent Obsopoeus and published in Hagenau in 1529.<sup>462</sup> Obsopoeus used it to instruct pupils in his school. Not only did the Latin adaptations find their way into the French version, we know the French evangelicals did not know German. Brenz' original was probably published the year before. Venard, though, makes much of the fact that there is no sign in the work of a debate Brenz had carried on with the reformers in Strasbourg. The children's catechism stresses the need to approach the Lord's Supper in a "spiritual" manner. Brenz would teach, as Luther did, the presence of Christ in the material elements, while in Strasbourg a more spiritual approach was commended. Venard believes Brenz would have introduced his own emphasis into the instruction, if his catechism was first compiled in 1528, since the debate would have been on-going by then. So, he posits that Farel and Roussel

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<sup>459</sup> Venard, "Catéchisme," pp. 20, 7. Orth agrees: "Radical Beauty" (1993), p. 383.

<sup>460</sup> See his discussion in "Catéchisme," pp. 12-17. Christoph Weismann, *Die Katechismen des Johannes Brenz: Die Entstehungs-, Text- und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990).

<sup>461</sup> Brenz entitled his works, *Fragstück des Christenlichen glaubens für di Jugendi* and *Catechismus maior*.

<sup>462</sup> *D. Martini Lutheri theologi, Catechismus, lectu dignissimus, latinus factus per Vincentium Obsopoeum. Huic adiecti sunt alii quoque gemini Catechismi, Iohannis Brentii Ecclesiastæ Hallensis, eodem interprete.*

had access to an earlier print or manuscript edition—which would fit his early dating. Venard also emphasizes that no child is specified, either in the text or the miniatures. Since Henry’s and Marguerite’s eldest child, a daughter Jeanne, was born in November 1528, he is adamant the manuscript predates her arrival.<sup>463</sup>

Orth decisively undercuts Venard’s attempt to date manuscript 5096 early. Her basic point is that we cannot find any evidence for Brenz’ catechism existing in German prior to 1528 or in Latin prior to 1529.<sup>464</sup> It is unwise methodologically to ignore this fact, as Venard did, to construct an earlier, but hypothetical provenance. If we release ourselves from the need to connect the manuscript to the wedding in 1527, we begin to read the text itself (which had been so long ignored) with fresh possibilities. Not only do we doubt the involvement of Farel in the project, but we can read the document as emerging from the French evangelical milieu rather than see it as a subversive Protestant text. Both Venard and Orth understand it from the perspective of the Protestant narrative. Orth accepts Venard’s analysis that the catechism is “impregnated with authentic Evangelism and [is] as a whole very close to Lutheran themes.”<sup>465</sup> Both treat French evangelicalism as covert Protestantism. Yet, when we free ourselves from the Protestant narrative, we can pay more attention to the deceptions woven into the manuscript and discover fascinating hints about provenance that we do well to take seriously.

It is valuable for us to understand Orth’s fuller case, for it goes well beyond the basic facts of publication. First, however, let me outline the full content of manuscript 5096.<sup>466</sup> It

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<sup>463</sup> Venard, “Catéchisme,” p. 18, n. 22, where he opposes Weismann’s argument that the manuscript was prepared to instruct Jeanne: *Katechismen*, p. 231.

<sup>464</sup> Orth, “Reconsidering” (2004), p. 91.

<sup>465</sup> Orth, “Reconsidering” (2004), p. 89. She probably meant “evangelicalism” rather than “Evangelism.” Venard, “Catéchisme,” p. 10.

<sup>466</sup> Venard, “Catéchisme,” p. 7; Orth, “Radical Beauty” (1993), pp. 390-396.

begins with the *Initiatoire instruction en la religion chrestienne pour les enffans* (folios 2-13), which draws on Brenz' *Children's Catechism*. Then the adaptation of his *Larger Catechism* follows: *Perfectoire instruction pour les enffans apres quils seront devenuz plus aagés* (folios 14-34). The translated title is intriguing. Brenz calls it a *Larger Catechism*, but the French adaptation continues to reference children. It is a "perfect instruction" for children who "had become older." Yet, in its French version, both Venard and Orth insist that even the *Initiatoire instruction* is too complicated for children.<sup>467</sup> Here is another of the deceptions with which this manuscript is rife. The inclusion of the word *enffans* in both catechetical titles seems designed to mislead about the contents of the texts. We will try to understand the reason below.

The third and final section is on confession and asserts "that we ought never to seek or inquire of anyone except God [concerning] the things which belong to our salvation."<sup>468</sup> (folios 35-55) I will not draw much attention to this section, because it is unlikely that Roussel was the author.<sup>469</sup> Its purpose in this study will be to understand the provenance of the whole of manuscript 5096. Still, the likelihood that two authors from the former Circle of Meaux collaborated to produce this work as a single whole shows both the unity of purpose within the work and the continuing cooperation among the dispersed evangelical network.<sup>470</sup>

Orth draws on her expertise in French Renaissance illuminated manuscripts in approaching the catechism. This kind of luxury manuscript was not always destined for

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<sup>467</sup> Venard, "Catéchisme," p. 8; Orth, "Reconsidering" (2004), p. 95.

<sup>468</sup> "Que jamais ne devons chercher ne querir d'autre que de Dieu les choses qui appartiennent à n[ot]re salut."

<sup>469</sup> Both Venard, "Catéchisme," pp. 18-19, and Orth, "Reconsidering" (2004), p. 92, n. 18, accept the attribution of authorship by Eugénie Droz, *Chemins de l'hérésie: Textes et documents* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1970), 4 vols., v. 1, p. 54, to Jean Lecomte de la Croix, whom we met above as a Protestant irenic reformer in Switzerland and who had also been one of the contributors to *Épistres et Évangiles*. See pp. 97-101 above.

<sup>470</sup> As Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, makes clear in both vols.

publication<sup>471</sup>—a possibility that could affect our understanding of its provenance. She argues for a date about 1530 for several reasons. First, the letter Venard cites from Roussel to Farel that mentioned the former presenting “our work” to the queen had to be dated about six months prior to the conclusion of the negotiations for the engagement.<sup>472</sup> It would have been presumptuous to make presentation of such a manuscript before arrangements for the royal wedding were complete—if indeed it was produced for this event. Second, as mentioned above, we cannot find evidence that the German original existed before 1528 nor of a Latin edition prior to 1529. Third, a version of the catechism was published by Martin Lempereur in Antwerp in 1534 as *Livre de vraye et parfaite oraison*.<sup>473</sup> Shorn of the more radical additions Roussel inserted into the French edition (see below), the book became very popular. Fourth, the bulk of the treatise on confession was also published in Alençon by the evangelical printer Simon du Bois, where—under the protection of Marguerite as duchess—he was safe from prosecution by the Faculty in Paris.<sup>474</sup> His time in Alençon spanned mid-1529 (after the execution of Louis de Berquin) until mid-1534, when he returned to Paris. Higman dates the publication early in this period, c. 1530.<sup>475</sup> The fact that there was little change between the printed text and the one in the manuscript also suggests the time between the productions of both was short. It is conceivable Du Bois would have been quick—as a blow against the traditionalists in Paris—to publish this treatise that emphasized the essential part of confession was to speak to God directly; confession to a priest was, therefore, optional. (For all its

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<sup>471</sup> Orth, “Reconsidering” (2004), p. 89.

<sup>472</sup> Orth, “Reconsidering” (2004), p. 90.

<sup>473</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 370, believes that *Livre de vraye et parfaite oraison* is actually “an amalgam of many short catechetical works” and does not derive from only one edited source.

<sup>474</sup> Orth, “Reconsidering” (2004), p. 92, including n. 18.

<sup>475</sup> Francis Higman, *Piety and the People: Printing in France 1511-1551* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), p.57.

radicalism, this work still was a product of an irenic evangelical [like Lecomte] rather than a more thorough-going Protestant like Farel. Confession to a priest was abhorred by the latter group.) Fifth, the birth of a son, Jean, to Henri and Marguerite in July 1530 could have been the occasion prompting the production of this lavish gift.<sup>476</sup> Against Venard, the child may have not been identified for a combination of the following reasons: the work may have been completed during the pregnancy; the children targeted may have been the royal ones—not just the son, but also Jeanne and any future siblings (Jeanne indeed took the evangelical faith expressed in the catechism to heart, eventually declaring herself a Protestant in 1560.); the authors were cognizant of the reality that many children, including royal ones, died in infancy and so did not wish to assume that either child would live to adulthood. Indeed, Jean died at five months.

Orth, who has carefully analysed and rejected Venard's dating of *Initiatore instruction*, accepts his attribution of authorship to Gérard Roussel. (By dating the catechism later, she does reject Venard's contention that Farel was involved.) In fact, she adds a detail that is congruent with Roussel's involvement in overseeing the preparation of a work for publication.

A later documented example shows a probable pattern: for the illuminated copy of *La Coche*, which Marguerite presented to the Duchesse d'Étampes in 1542, her chaplain went to Paris to pay the publisher (*libraire*) and spend a month overseeing the final work of copying, decoration, illumination, and binding. In the case of the *Initiatore* the chaplain was Roussel and the publisher would have been Du Bois.<sup>477</sup>

Roussel's description of his own efforts is similar, though less detailed: "I occupy myself to have it copied and then to send it to press, if I am able to manage it." Orth posits the same actions for *Initiatore* at a time when we know Roussel was Marguerite's chaplain—an entirely reasonable supposition, given the lavish illumination and the honoured recipient. Roussel had

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<sup>476</sup> Orth, "Reconsidering" (2004), p. 97.

<sup>477</sup> Orth, "Reconsidering" (2004), pp. 95-96, particularly n. 38.

done such work earlier for Lefèvre d'Étaples,<sup>478</sup> and so we can conclude Roussel's authorship is likely. He was certainly more than a translator, as we shall now see.

### Analysis of *Initiatore instruction*

We are fortunate to know the genealogy of the catechetical portions of manuscript 5096. In tracing its transmission from German to Latin and then into French, we can identify the additions Roussel made, and so understand his theological and ecclesiastical passions at the end of the 1520s. They stand out so starkly at times that we pause concerning the case for his irenicism. However, the possibility that these statements were not intended for publication, but to instruct royal children who could then play the part that good Christian royalty were expected by the French evangelicals to fulfill in pursuing renewal through the gospel, allows us to view the statements simply as signs of Roussel's spiritual priorities. We will find, despite their radical nature, they are not schismatic and do not deny the validity of the Mass or of the Catholic hierarchy.

The catechism has a simple and almost predictable structure, moving through seven different topics: baptism, the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, predestination and the grace of salvation, the Lord's Prayer, the Lord's Supper and a conclusion. The topic that seems not to fit in a children's catechism is the fourth one on predestination—and, in fact, it is a long addition to Brenz' work by Roussel. The catechism does leave out the Ave Maria, a notable omission for a Catholic work, but one consistent with the concerns of the evangelicals to minimize devotions that do not focus on Jesus Christ. I will summarize each section, highlighting points that could suggest Protestant leanings in Roussel. (Too often scholars forget that others,

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<sup>478</sup> See p. 90 above.

including the French evangelicals, had sources in common with Protestant reformers, like the Bible, medieval anti-clericalism and centuries of discussion of Augustinian theology, including his doctrine of predestination. An addition by Roussel on Sabbath in *Perfectoire instruction* has Protestant echoes, but can be explained simply by biblical antecedents.<sup>479</sup>)

The first section begins with *Theophile*,<sup>480</sup> the teacher, asking the student, *Theodidacte*, “What are you?”<sup>481</sup> He responds by referring to two births,<sup>482</sup> first as a “reasonable creature,” and second as a “Christian.” The student identifies the grounds for his claim to be a Christian: baptism in the name of Christ, “but also I believe in Jesus Christ.”<sup>483</sup> Baptism is “a washing of regeneration and renovation by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>484</sup> This emphasis on personal faith and on the Spirit is a mark of the evangelicals and of this catechism. The student affirms basic doctrines by reciting the Apostles Creed. “This faith” is what “makes one a new creature.”<sup>485</sup> One senses the desire to move beyond external rites as the source of salvation. Protestants taught in this fashion, but many Catholics studied the Bible and found these themes, too.

This new creature is to keep “the commandments of God.”<sup>486</sup> The student affirms that there are ten, but only identifies nine. Why? Reformed Protestants listed as the second command the statement banning images of God, which both Lutherans and Catholics subsumed under the first commandment of having “no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3-

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<sup>479</sup> “Mais ce repos, et ceste journelle cessation de tout œuvre manuelle, a esté ostée et abolie, par l’avenement de la liberté evangelicque, en sort que la loi ne requiert de nous plus ample repos, que celuy qui nous est requis pour vacquer a la parole divine Et pour la reparation de noz virtus corporelles.” (29r)

<sup>480</sup> “Lover of God.” See Luke 1:2 and Acts 1:1, where the two New Testament books written by Luke are addressed to Theophilus. I am grateful for the critical edition of *Initiatore instruction* produced by Venard, “Catéchisme,” “Annexe,” pp. 23-32.

<sup>481</sup> “Quelle chose es tu?” (2r) Theodidacte means “learner of God.”

<sup>482</sup> “Nativité.” See John 3:3-7. “Creature raisonnable . . . Chrestien.” (2r)

<sup>483</sup> “Mais aussi je croy en JesuChrist.” (2r)

<sup>484</sup> “Un lavement de regeneration et renovation par le Saint Esperit.” (2v)

<sup>485</sup> “Ceste foy . . . faict l’homme nouvelle creature.” (3r)

<sup>486</sup> “Les commandemens de Dieu.” (3v)

17) Based on this second command, Reformed Protestants justified iconoclasm as securing the spiritual welfare of those trapped in idolatry. To find a tenth command, Lutherans and Catholics divided the list of what not to covet into two: the goods and the people that belong to someone else. This catechism does not follow the Reformed or the Catholic/Lutheran pattern. It keeps the command not to covet as one and overlooks the statement regarding images, leaving only nine commandments. It is a quiet sign of irenicism, reading the command not to covet in a straightforward manner, while assiduously avoiding encouragement to iconoclasm.

The fourth section on predestination and salvation by grace alone is marked as an insertion by a marginal note: “Addition until such sign \*.”<sup>487</sup> This insertion is proportionally massive and represents the original work of Roussel. I will return to it shortly. It is important to note that the marginal notes are written in the same hand as the main body of the text and that the illuminated borders work around them.<sup>488</sup> They were not later additions, but part of the original work presented to Marguerite.

The fifth section of *Initiatore instruction* focuses on the Lord’s Prayer. It includes the doxology left out by Farel:<sup>489</sup> “For the Kingdom, the power and the glory belong to you forever. Amen.” (Matthew 6:13) A discussion follows, exploring the basis for the forgiveness of our sins. It is “by the grace of only one, Jesus Christ,”<sup>490</sup> grace which was manifest through his sacrifice of himself on the cross.

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<sup>487</sup> “Addition jusqu’à tel signe \*.” (4r)

<sup>488</sup> Orth, “Reconsidering” (2004), p. 97, n. 44.

<sup>489</sup> Farel, *Le Pater noster et le Credo en françoys*, F. Higman, ed. (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1982), p. 39.

<sup>490</sup> “Pour la grace d’ung seul JesusChrist.” (11r)

*Theophile* asks, “In what way has he offered to you and by what means has he communicated to you such a great good?”<sup>491</sup> The answer is clearly evangelical: “by the preaching and public announcement of the gospel and the institution of the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>492</sup> This reflection leads into a discussion of the Lord’s Supper, where we find more of Roussel’s additions. That exchange needs to be reproduced in order to understand its intricacies, what Roussel is saying and not saying. One important assumption that I bring to the text is that even the content we trace back to Brenz reflects Roussel’s thinking and those of the French evangelicals. The reason behind this assumption is the marginal notes demonstrate Roussel knows how to insert his own thoughts when he deems it necessary.

*Theophile*: What do you understand by the Lord’s Supper?<sup>493</sup>

*Theodidacte*: I understand a spiritual banquet in which a spiritual meal to eat and a similar spiritual drink to drink are offered to us.<sup>494</sup>

*Theophile*: Why do you dare to call this meal and this drink spiritual, since it is manifest that this bread and this wine which are offered for distribution to the people of God are not only spiritual, but material?<sup>495</sup>

*Theodidacte*: It is true that, if we wish to follow the judgment of our taste buds, the bread is a material meal and the wine is a material drink. But since it is so that our Lord Jesus Christ has by his all powerful truth ordained and consecrated the bread of the supper into (or “in”) his true body and the wine into (or “in”) his true blood, and since this supper was not a meal or drink destined to fill this fleshly stomach alone, but rather was assigned to nourish and support well the Christian soul, in order to substantiate and keep from perishing the spiritual blessings that are distributed to us by the benefit of baptism and that we receive by faith, it is certainly not a mistake to call this meal and drink spiritual.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> “En quelle sorte t’a il offert, et par quel moyen t’a il communiqué ung si gros bien?” (11v)

<sup>492</sup> “Par la predication et publicque annunciation de l’evangile et par l’institution de la cene dominicale.” (11v)

<sup>493</sup> “Quelle chose entens tu par cene dominicale?” (12r)

<sup>494</sup> “J’entens ung convive spiritual, auquel nous est proposé une viande spirituelle, pour menger, et ung breuvaige semblablement spirituel, pour boyre.” (12r)

<sup>495</sup> “Pourquoy oses tu appeller spirituels ceste viande et ce breuvaige, veu qu’il est manifeste que ce pain et ce vain qui sont proposés à diverser au peuple de Dieu sont non point spirituelz, mais corporelz?” (12r)

<sup>496</sup> “Il est vray que si nous voulons suivre le jugement de nostre goust, le pain est viande corporelle, et le vin est breuvaige corporel. Mais comme ainsi soit que nostre Seigneur Jesuschrist hait par sa toutte puissante parole ordonné et consacré en son vray corps le pain de la cene, et le vin en son vray sang, et affin que ceste cene ne fust une viande ou un breuvaige destine à la seule repletion de ce ventre charnel, mais plustost feut deputé à nourrir et bien entretenir l’âme chrestienne, pour substanter et garder de perir les biens spirituelz qui nous sont par le

Marginal note: Christian readers, read without carnal affection and with spiritual judgment, knowing that carnal sense and intelligence profit nothing, but that the intelligence that the Spirit gives is that which vivifies. (John 6)<sup>497</sup>

*Theophile*: Why has Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper for us?<sup>498</sup>

*Theodidacte*: So that by the presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, we have a memorial of his death, and of all the blessings together, which by his death he has won and acquired for us. And not only do we have a memorial in it, but also that we announce and give others to know these blessings every time we commune.<sup>499</sup>

Addition within *Theodidacte's* response: By which one perceives that taking this bread and this wine without announcing and preaching the gospel is to use the Supper against the ordinance of Jesus Christ and the will of God. Yet, be on guard against our priests who actually make of it trade and bargaining.<sup>500</sup>

*Theophile* leads *Theodidacte* to recite the biblical words of institution of the Lord's Supper, and asks if the student desires that "your faith may be made stronger by these things?"<sup>501</sup>

*Theodidacte* responds enthusiastically, "Yes certainly, I desire it with a good heart."<sup>502</sup>

An immediate response to this exchange is surprise that an irenic Catholic wrote some of these statements. To accuse the priests of turning the Lord's Supper into a business sounds Protestant—until we remember that Reformed Protestants decried the Mass with much more serious words such as "superstition" and "idolatry." Roussel, as a non-schismatic reformer, corrects abuse of the Mass, rather than challenging the institution itself. Again, to call the Supper a "memorial" brings to mind the non-sacramental Zwinglian view. The phrase "spiritual

benefice du baptesme distribués et que par la foy nous recepvons, ce n'est point à tort qu'on apelle spirituels cest viande et ce breuvage." (12r,v)

<sup>497</sup> "Lecteurs chrestiens, lises sans affection charnelle, et avec spirituel jugement, tout ce propos, sachans que le sens et intelligence charnelle ne profite en riens, mais que l'intelligence que l'Esperit donne est celle qui vivifie. (Joan 6)." (12v)

<sup>498</sup> "Pourquoy nous a Jesuschrist institué la cene dominicale?" (12v)

<sup>499</sup> "Affin que pour la presence du corps et du sang de Jesuschrist, nous hayons memoire de sa mort, et ensamble de tous les biens lesquelz par sa mort il nous ha gaigné et acquis. Et non seulement en ayons memoire, mais aussi que les annonçons et donnons à congnoistre aux aultres, toutes foyz que nous communions." (12v)

<sup>500</sup> "Par quoy apert que prendre ce pain et ce vin sans anoncer et prescher l'evangile, c'est use[r] de la cene contre l'ordonnance de Jesuschrist et la volonté de Dieu. Pourtant prennent garde nos prestres, qui vrayement en font mestier et marchandage." (12v).

<sup>501</sup> "Ta foy soit par ces chozes faicte plus forte?" (13r)

<sup>502</sup> "Oy certes, je le desire de bon cuer." (13r)

banquet” also could fit this perspective. It seems possible Roussel embraced the piety of the Placards that French “sacramentarians” posted to publicize their anti-Roman Catholic views in 1534.<sup>503</sup> Venard consequently concludes Roussel’s return to ministry in France was “purely opportunistic.”<sup>504</sup> He embraces the Protestant narrative, and Orth does not challenge this conclusion. From this perspective, Roussel does not seem irenic.

However, closer reading raises doubts about how radical Roussel actually was. The emphasis on the spiritual nature of the Lord’s Supper was an attempt to emphasize the need to approach it with vital faith and not mechanically—an evangelical concern, parallel to their insistence on preaching the gospel at celebrations of the Lord’s Supper. In fact, we have a declaration of either consubstantiation (if we understand *en* to mean that the body and blood of Christ have been consecrated in the bread and the wine) or transubstantiation (if *en* means they have been consecrated into the bread and the wine). Against Venard,<sup>505</sup> Brenz said enough in the original to point children to consubstantiation. While *en* is ambiguous in *Initiatoire instruction*, I am inclined to think Roussel was affirming a simple doctrine of transubstantiation here by this word—a point I will amplify when we look at Roussel’s *Familière Exposition* in chapter 6. It is important to note we cannot find any occasions where he contradicts the traditional understanding. John 6, referred to in the marginal note, actually contains statements compatible with transubstantiation. Jesus says:

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever

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<sup>503</sup> Orth, “Radical Beauty” (1993), p. 394, calls the teaching in *Initiatoire instruction* an “uncompromising Sacramentarian view.”

<sup>504</sup> Venard, “Catéchisme,” p. 21: “purement opportuniste.”

<sup>505</sup> See pp. 151 above.

eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.<sup>506</sup>

By citing this chapter, Roussel seems to affirm an uncomplicated understanding of the Eucharist, with biblical roots, that is consistent with the traditional view of the rite. He is not a closet Protestant.

The marginal note also displays Roussel's characteristic peacemaking. He does not contradict the assertion of Christ's Real Presence in the elements because he agrees with it. However, he is conscious the emphasis on receiving the elements with faith and on the Supper as a spiritual event could raise concerns. So, he urges readers not to respond with "carnal affection." They need the understanding provided by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures, specifically John 6. His reference to the authority of Scripture is typically evangelical. The note also attempts to keep emotions in check and to find common ground that, perhaps, all parties could agree on. It is straightforward irenicism.

It is time to examine Roussel's interpolation on predestination. It forms a major portion of *Initiatore instruction*, which is contained in thirteen folios. The addition covers folios four through nine and the first half of folio ten. In other words, it constitutes half of the French work. The passage is unequivocal about the sovereignty of God, his predestination of believers who come to faith and that humans can in no way contribute to their salvation. God alone elects them by his gracious choice and favour. Luther's *Bondage of the Will* and Calvin's *Institutes* come immediately to mind. Yet, such themes were also found in medieval Catholic

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<sup>506</sup> John 6:51, 53-56 in *Today's New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

theologians who picked up these emphases from Augustine.<sup>507</sup> Two stylistic features stand out. First, the discussion is too complex for general use with children, despite the work's title. It is another of the deceptions in the manuscript. We could, however, imagine it being prepared for children with a tutor who could explain these difficult passages—royal children, for example. The intended audience was certainly limited. Second, the run-on sentences are indeed “ponderous and verbose.”<sup>508</sup>

Three passages need attention, though we can link two together. First, there is the claim that only some prayer is valid, that is the prayer “the Holy Spirit moves us to make.”<sup>509</sup> It alone is prayer consistent with the eternal will of God. Roussel contrasts such prayer with self-initiated prayer that has not been “purged” by “the truth of God’s commandment.” Such self-willed devotion represents “the audacity of presenting God with the stinking smoke of our prayers.”<sup>510</sup> Roussel probably intends to bring to mind the incense used during the Mass. Certainly, he wants to curtail ritualized prayer where personal faith, the content of Scripture and the presence of Holy Spirit seem unimportant. Still, the words “stinking smoke” seem shocking. Earlier, he had expounded at length against the theology and spirituality which implied that by our actions we have “merited, won, acquired” our spiritual blessings.<sup>511</sup> He exclaims, “Who is the one among the children of God by Jesus Christ who can hear these enormous and damned blasphemies without great horror.”<sup>512</sup> Evangelicals have persistently

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<sup>507</sup> See p. 17 above.

<sup>508</sup> As Venard puts it, “Catéchisme,” p. 20. See p. 149 above.

<sup>509</sup> “Nous esmeut à faire le S. Esperit.” (8r)

<sup>510</sup> “Purgées . . . la parole de son commandement.” (9v) “L’audace de luy presenter la puante fumée de nos oraisons.” (9r)

<sup>511</sup> “Merité, gagné, acquis etc.” (6r) The use of “etc.” condemns all related words and concepts.

<sup>512</sup> “Qui est celuy entre les enffans de Dieu par Jesuchrist qui pourra sans grant horreur ouyr ces enormes et damnés blasphèmes.” (6v)

countered notions that one can deserve salvation. *Épistres et Évangiles* was written to assist people to hear, during the Mass, that salvation is a gift offered in response to personal faith. Still, Roussel sounds like Farel when he asks, “Who can hear these enormous and damned blasphemies without great horror?” It may help to observe he is not attacking the Mass, but rather, on the one hand, its mechanistic performance and, on the other hand, its quasi-commercial understanding—where salvation is a transaction people can negotiate, not a gift they receive. He does not claim all participation in the Mass is destructive, as Farel does.<sup>513</sup> Still, when this catechism contributed to *Livre de vraye et parfaite oraison* in 1534, these harsh words were deleted. We could pardon them as the frustration of a committed evangelical, weary and somewhat bitter over the prolonged, sometimes deadly attack of the traditionalists. His irenic work of gospel renewal was proving anything but easy. However, these words still seem uncharacteristic if we understand them as intended for publication. On the other hand, if we understand them as directed toward a smaller audience—the royal children—and not intended for publication, they become strategic words for winning the hearts of future royalty. I will reflect more on this possibility below.

*Initiatore instruction* closes with a brief conclusion. *Theodidacte* voices this aspiration: “It is necessary that . . . I walk in the fear of God, diligently following justice and innocence of life. Furthermore, I must pardon all as, I believe, God blessedly remits and pardons my sins.”<sup>514</sup> Given the evangelicals’ high expectation of the part royalty would play in the longed-for national renewal through the gospel, it seems fitting that the royal children of Navarre were

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<sup>513</sup> See p. 135 above.

<sup>514</sup> “Il faut que . . . je chemine en la crainte de Dieu, suyvant diligemment justice et innocence de vie. Davantage que je pardonne à tous, comme je croye que Dieu m’a benignement remis et pardonné mes péchés.” (13v)

taught such aspiration. The miniature of Penitent King David in the manuscript reinforces this possibility.<sup>515</sup>

We can spend less time on *Perfectoire instruction*. It consists of fuller commentary on the Apostles Creed and the Lord's Prayer. One passage does deserve special notice, however.<sup>516</sup>

In discussing the "holy catholic church," the question is posed: "What does 'church' signify in our common parlance?"<sup>517</sup> Drawing on the root meaning of the New Testament Greek word *ekklēsia*, the answer is "congregation." The visible gathering of the people of God is contrasted with a "pile of wood or rocks," but also with "the multitude of antichristians, ministers . . . each of whom wish to be different from the other, as much in expression or opinion, as in superstitious and hypocritical ceremonies."<sup>518</sup> Yet one mark of this congregation is they know "that anyone who withdraws from unity withdraws from God."<sup>519</sup> Protestants, of course, asked what the nature of the true church was, so that they could maintain unity with it. It did not, for most of them, include the Roman Catholic Church. However, among the French evangelicals, this sentence reinforces their commitment to avoid schism from Rome. The emphasis on "congregation" draws attention to the point that renewal in church and society, depends not on fine buildings nor on putative leaders who had gotten sidetracked—whether theologians bogged down in academic disputes, or priests who distinguished themselves by further

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<sup>515</sup> See n. 450 above.

<sup>516</sup> See the discussion in Venard, "Catéchisme," pp. 10-11.

<sup>517</sup> "Que signifie eglise en n[ot]re langue commune?" (23v)

<sup>518</sup> "Monceau de boys ou de pierres. La multitude des antichristians, ministres . . . chacun d'eulx veut estre differend de l'autre, tant en sentence ou opinion, que en supersticieuses et hipocritiques ceremonies." Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 369, n. 173, points out that these words have been inserted into Brenz' original. The margin attributes them to an unknown "Claudius" whose name appears here (23v) and twice on 24r. Given the use of pseudonyms in this period, we simply do not know who he is. However, Reid convincingly suggests that participants in the evangelical network would have known. Roussel, then, is not responsible for these stronger words; however, he seems able to live with them in the context of this manuscript.

<sup>519</sup> "Que quiconques se retire d'unité il se retire de Dieu." (23v) These words were found in Brenz' original.

variations on human-based (as opposed to biblically based) rituals—but on renewed people.

These faithful ones find a way to maintain “unity.” The misdeeds of the hierarchy are exposed, as the evangelicals felt liberty to do, but the legitimacy of the hierarchy is not challenged.<sup>520</sup> The strong wording, however, is again inconsistent with irenicism, if it was intended for publication. It could, however, make an impression on select young minds about the nature of a healthy church.

The section in manuscript 5096 on confession, probably written by Jean Lecomte,<sup>521</sup> demonstrates a balance between evangelical faith and irenic strategy for the most part. It teaches that the essential feature of biblical confession is confession directly to God, which clearly was a challenge to the hierarchy. This challenge was expressed with some hostility:

And together they have promised the Kingdom of Heaven to all those who confess as they have ordered, as though they were themselves God. . . . You will see that Scripture does not say that he who will confess as the Roman Church, or the Faculty of Paris, or men whoever they may be, will have commanded, will be saved, and who will not do it will be damned. This doctrine did not come from God but is a doctrine of the Devil. . . . Confess not from the mouth, as is the custom of the hypocrites, but deeply from the heart.<sup>522</sup>

Nonetheless, the challenge is tempered by practical advice to practise dissimulation. In order to avoid scandalizing one’s neighbours, one can still go to the local priest. The penitent need only keep in mind the priest cannot legitimately claim to dispense absolution, but can only pronounce the forgiveness of sins already extended through Jesus Christ. The penitent should

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<sup>520</sup> Against Venard, “Catéchisme,” p. 11. See chap. 3 above.

<sup>521</sup> See n. 469 above.

<sup>522</sup> “Et ensemble ont promis le Royaulme des cielz a tous ceulx qui se confesseront celon ce qu’ilz ont ordonné comme s’ilz estoient Dieu eulx mesmes. . . . Vous voyes que l’escripture ne dict point Celuy qui se sera confessé ainsi que l’église Romaine, ou la faculté de paris, ou les hommes qu’elz que soient, l’auront commandé, sera saulvé et qui ne l’aura fait, sera damné. C’estte doctrine n’est point venue de Dieu, mais est Doctrine de Diable. . . . confesse de soy mesmes non point de bouche, ainsi que ont de coustume des hypochristes, mais du profond de son cuer.” (38r-39r, 40v)

hear the words, “I absolve you,” in this light. Penitential actions assigned by the priest should be completed, but only if the penitent remembers these actions cannot contribute anything to salvation. The fact that these words of challenge and the counsel to practise dissimulation were soon in print reminds us that frustration did manifest itself, on occasion, in ways that were uncharacteristic for these irenic reformers. We may be witnessing the reactions that brought Lecomte to Protestantism, though he again embraced his natural peacemaking tendency. At times, the attack they were under got the best of the French evangelicals.<sup>523</sup>

The final two folios of manuscript 5096 cite a few Bible passages and finish with a poem on “loving God.” The elect need one another for consolation “because many are unfaithful.” Yet they live above suffering because of the hope they have.<sup>524</sup>

### The Deceptions

Orth states, in her earlier article, that “*L’Initiatore instruction* was not meant to hide its message, but to please its royal owner.”<sup>525</sup> The lavish illumination would have pleased Marguerite. However, there are enough things about this manuscript that seem designed to mislead that I argue that “hiding” was indeed one of its aims. Let me catalogue these deceptions and draw conclusions about their combined significance.

First, Orth, an expert in Renaissance manuscripts of this type, is clear that the luxury manuscript looks like a late medieval Book of Hours. Its appearance gives the sense of a classic Catholic devotional booklet.<sup>526</sup> While Marguerite may well have appreciated the aesthetics of such Books of Hours, the authors may also have hoped that, should a traditionalist look at the

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<sup>523</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, pp. 368.

<sup>524</sup> “Comme plusieurs sont infidelement.” (56v-57r)

<sup>525</sup> Orth, “Radical Beauty” (1993), p. 383.

<sup>526</sup> Orth, “Reconsidering” (2004), p. 93, and “Radical Beauty” (1993), p. 383.

manuscript, that person would notice its appearance and not investigate the text. The other deceptions make it a possibility.

Second, the *Frontispiece* gives the impression that it celebrates the wedding of Henry and Marguerite in early 1527. It was not possible that the manuscript was produced so early.<sup>527</sup> Nonetheless, it looks like an apt gift produced for that occasion. Such self-conscious presentation seems designed to draw attention away from the written content.

Third, the title *Initiatoire instruction . . . pour les enfans* implies “light reading.” Some might, therefore, quickly turn away without reading the text. Combined, these first three deceptions have proven highly effective. Until a quarter century ago, the provenance was simply assumed on the basis of the *Frontispiece* and the text overlooked, even by scholars.

Fourth, Henry’s central position in the *Frontispiece* implies he was the donor of the gift and that he endorsed the content it contained. Henry’s personal indifference to the evangelical movement makes both implications unlikely. Orth is convinced that Marguerite commissioned the work and that Roussel, as overseer of its production, would normally have been depicted in Henry’s central position as the donor, offering it to the queen on bended knee.<sup>528</sup> However, it would have encouraged those who could discern the symbolism of the miniatures or read the text with appreciation to think that Henry endorsed the message along with his wife. For the royal children, an implied dual endorsement was potentially powerful, suggesting both mother

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<sup>527</sup> See pp. 148-155 above.

<sup>528</sup> Orth, “Reconsidering” (2004), p. 93.

and father wished the children to embrace evangelicalism.<sup>529</sup> While somewhat speculative, we cannot rule out the possibility Marguerite hoped to elicit this thought.

Fifth, the flower in the *Frontispiece* is used to hide its most basic meaning. Venard seems irritated by Orth's suggestion that the daisy Henry offers to Marguerite (which, in French, means "daisy") could also refer, via the Latin word *margaritam*, to the pearl of the gospel. He states, "Frankly, one cannot then see why the painter of the miniature (and the one who ordered it from him) would put a flower and not a pearl in the hand of the king of Navarre."<sup>530</sup> However, if deception was intentionally woven into the production, the unreasonable becomes probable. Those who should know could be taught that the daisy refers to both Marguerite and the pearl of the gospel. Others can be left in the dark in the hope that they will not take offense at the gospel-centered faith of the manuscript. For them, it could be "just a daisy."

There is one more possible deception, but it is one I want to argue against. Jonathan Reid has pointed out that the manuscript comes with transitional words repeated at the bottom of most pages, a practice that was unusual for illuminated manuscripts, but common for printed books. His conclusion is that Roussel and Marguerite planned to have it published soon. The portion on confession was, but they had to abandon their plans for the catechisms.<sup>531</sup> One could argue that the appearance of preparation for publication was another deception, but, if so, what was the purpose? It might even have backfired, as others who would not be

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<sup>529</sup> Three of the other miniatures could have had a similar effect for the children: the procession showing Henry and Marguerite, among many others, carrying the cross; the disciples surprised by the presence of the Risen Christ; and the wonder shown at Christ's Ascension.

<sup>530</sup> Venard, "Catéchisme," pp. 17-18: "Franchement, on ne voit pas alors pourquoi le peintre de la miniature (et celui qui la lui commandée) aurait mis dans la main du roi de Navarre une fleur et non pas une perle." See pp. 148-149 above.

<sup>531</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 369.

curious to read the text might have done so if they thought it would soon be a published book. Two other possibilities commend themselves. Perhaps Marguerite did hope this work could be published to contribute to the anticipated gospel-based renewal of France, but was eventually convinced that, if an unpublished manuscript needed deceptions to protect its recipients, then publishing that work was too risky. Or, the real purpose of the transitional words may have been suggestive. When the royal children came into their rightful rule, the suggestive marks might have encouraged them to order that this work, which had become dear to them, be published to benefit others. With their royal backing, the risk associated with doing so in their younger years would be much reduced.

In short, manuscript 5096 seems designed to fool the casual or those who were hostile to evangelical reform, so that the intended recipients could come to embrace the gospel “in peace.” Marguerite commissioned the work primarily to influence her own children (*enffans*) so they might be important agents of renewal in the next generation. The likely dating of this luxurious production suggests it was created during Marguerite’s pregnancy with Jean or shortly after his birth; hence, somewhat speculatively, I entitle this chapter “Lobbying a Future King.” Still, it seems that all involved were wise enough to know that to gift it in honour of a specific child might have reduced its value for other children in the family. With Jean’s early death, their caution was validated and Jeanne probably was the royal child instructed by the *Initiatoire instruction*. The more strident comments, then, were not intended for publication or to pick a fight with traditionalists, but (ironically) to influence royal children to pursue irenic gospel-centered renewal themselves. Under some circumstances, they could have proved crucial in bringing it about.

## Chapter 5

### A Bishop Dedicated to Faith—Irenic Faith

The final two decades of Gérard Roussel's life begin with a crescendo that seems improbable in light of subsequent historical developments. Our historical narratives almost have no room for these apparent successes. These years end with his strange death, the story with which this study began. This chapter will enter into the drama of Roussel's impressive gospel preaching in the centre of French culture and political and legal power—Paris itself. Yet the pincer movement of Reformed Protestantism and Catholic traditionalists quickly reversed the impact of the irenic evangelicals. Roussel soon moved to the edge of the French-speaking world, geographically, culturally and in terms of his ability to affect the centres of power. He took a bishopric in Oloron in 1536 in the Kingdom of Navarre, where his sponsor, Marguerite, was queen. There he pursued the quieter approach of faithful pastoral care and teaching as the means to establish renewal by the gospel. Yet the pincer movement remained active during his time as bishop, making it harder to advance irenicism. Roussel was a target for both Catholic traditionalists and Reformed leaders, including John Calvin. The Protestant and Catholic narratives were already powerful while Roussel was alive—and at the trial of his murderer. We will bring his story to a conclusion in this chapter.

The source document we will examine is a brief manual concerning the *Forme de visite de diocèse*. It is the counsel of a bishop on what to look for while visiting parishes in order to encourage the vitality of the church of Jesus Christ. Though not stated specifically, it seems Roussel wished to draw the attention of others with episcopal oversight to the themes that

were dear to his heart and to the hearts of French evangelicals. It was, however, never published. It has been preserved at the end of a bigger manuscript, the main portion of which we will consider in the next chapter. Of the four documents by Roussel I have studied, *La Familère Exposition* has received the most attention. I will contend that, though the explanatory work done by others has been very helpful, several important conclusions were influenced by the Protestant narrative and so have caused a distortion in our understanding of Gérard Roussel. *Forme de visite* merits attention in its own right. The context of the pincer movement magnified some emphases and diminished others that we might have expected, and we will discover an amazing balancing act between reform by the gospel and irenicism. Not all of Roussel's efforts will seem equally successful.

First, however, an overview of the key events in Roussel's life from 1533 to his death will set his later work into context.

### The Triumph of 1533 and its Reversal

Marguerite of Navarre arranged for her court preacher, Gérard Roussel, to become the Lenten preacher in Paris in 1533.<sup>532</sup> His success in proclaiming the gospel was astounding, particularly when we remember Paris was the location where the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacres began in 1572 and was the adamantly Catholic city that "forced" Henry IV to revert to Catholicism in 1593, if he wanted to unite French lands under his rule and end the recurring Wars of Religion. The need for the latter political calculation is all the more noteworthy, when

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<sup>532</sup> Details are found in a long letter from Pierre Siderander to Jacques Bédrot, May 28, 1533 in Charles Schmidt, *Gérard Roussel, Prédicateur de la Reine Marguerite de Navarre: Mémoire servant à l'histoire des premières tentatives faites pour introduire la reformation en France* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970; originally published in Strasbourg, 1845), pp. 201-211.

we consider that, under the Salic law governing succession to the French crown, Henry was the legitimate heir. So, crowds of five thousand (or more) people flocking to the Louvre Palace to hear the preaching of an evangelical stir up astonishment. Both Catholic and Protestant narratives had a stake in casting the capital city as the staunch defender of traditional Catholic practice, persecutor of the heretics (Catholic narrative) or the saints (Protestant narrative). Yet, Roussel's popularity demonstrates there was a "third option" in France in the early 1530s: traditionalists, Protestants (at this stage, both Lutherans and Reformed) and non-schismatic evangelicals.<sup>533</sup> In hindsight, we can regard 1533 as the apex of evangelical success in the kingdom.

How did events unfold?<sup>534</sup> After the festivities of the pre-Lenten Carnival in 1533, Francis I left the capital, while Henry and Marguerite of Navarre remained. The Queen arranged for Roussel to preach at the Louvre daily, and such large crowds came that a larger venue was needed. Schmidt attributes the eagerness of the inhabitants for evangelical preaching to the contrast between Roussel's message and the subtleties and obscurities of scholastic preaching.<sup>535</sup> Florence Volusene explained the points in Roussel's message that infuriated the

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<sup>533</sup> See the discussion of *préforme*, pp. 22-27 above; Axel Schoeber, 'John Calvin and the "Still-born" Third Option in the French Reformation' in *Calvin@500: Theology, History, and Practice*, Richard R. Topping and John A. Vissers, ed. (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2011), pp. 86-97; Denis Crouzet, *La genèse de la Réforme française, 1520-1560* (Paris: Sèdes, 1996), pp. 239, 344, also argues for three movements at this time. Jonathan A. Reid, *King's Sister—Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549) and her Evangelical Network* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), v. 2, pp. 570, 642, argues for three strains of religious literature in France during this period: Catholic, Protestant and evangelical, and that opponents, both Catholic and Protestant, saw the evangelicals as a distinct group.

<sup>534</sup> Suggestions that Roussel also preached in Paris in 1531 and 1532, such as in Pierre Imbart de la Tour, *Les Origines de la Réforme*, t. III, *L'Évangélisme (1521-1538)* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1944), p. 507, seem to be based on a mistaken dating of a letter from Florence Volusene to Thomas Cromwell to 1531. The damaged original clearly was commenting on events from 1533. See Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 420, n. 109.

<sup>535</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 85-86. Roussel was so popular in Paris at this time that his followers had a nickname, "Geraldini." John Calvin was one of the Geraldini—a poignant observation in light of events several years later, described below. See Jean Dupèbe, "Un document sur les persécutions de l'hiver 1533-1534 à Paris" in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 48 (1986), pp. 405-417; Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 431.

Faculty in a letter to Henry VIII's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell.<sup>536</sup> Roussel spoke against compulsory fasting in Lent on the grounds that works should come from a heart purified by faith and that the Church should require nothing beyond what is in Scripture. A German student in Bourges wrote home to Erfurt that Roussel was attacked for declaring that justification comes solely through the merits of Jesus Christ, a credible report. However, he also related that Roussel "damned the invocation of the saints and proscribed good works."<sup>537</sup> These additional thoughts need to be tested. It is possible a younger Roussel spoke against prayers to the saints and then modified that opposition in later years, as we will see below. However, we have evidence only that Roussel described good works as conjoined to true faith. It is highly unlikely that he ever proscribed them. It is possible the reports were given a more Protestant slant than Roussel's sermons deserved. The Faculty of Theology, showing its normal antagonism to evangelicalism, sent a delegation in turn to Francis, his chancellor Duprat, the Bishop of Paris Du Bellay (who was sympathetic to the evangelicals), and Pierre Lizet, the President of the Parlement in Paris (who shared the antagonism of the theologians, but could sense the political tide). None acted against Roussel. Remarkably, the Faculty then sent out rival preachers in the capital who denounced not just Henry, Marguerite and Roussel, but even Du Bellay and Francis as complicit in the spread of heresy. Noel Beda continued to lead in this attack. The rival homiletical camps produced increasing agitation in the city. It appears Roussel was physically

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<sup>536</sup> April 25 [1531] (sic) for [1533] in James Gairdner, ed., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, v. 5: 1531-1532 (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1880), no. 212, pp. 99-100.

<sup>537</sup> "Sanctorem invocationem damnaret . . . bona opera prohiberet." Basilius Mourner to Georg Sturz, June 13, 1533 in Otto Clemen, "Zwei Briefe von Basilius Mourner" in *Mitteilungen der Vereinigung für Gothaische Geschichte und Altertumsforschung* 12 (1912), p. 110.

attacked and nearly injured.<sup>538</sup> On May 12, the Sorbonne condemned several declarations by Roussel, concluding “that they appear to be favourable to the errors of Luther.”<sup>539</sup> Just after Easter, the agitations became severe enough that Henry, acting in Francis’ absence, ordered the Sorbonne preachers confined to their dwellings. After several days, Beda returned to the streets anyway. Henry and Du Bellay went to Meaux, where the royal court was located at the time, and urged the king to act or face civil tumult. A younger François le Picart, later the premier preacher in Paris until his death in 1556, was arrested, banished and forbidden to preach and teach.<sup>540</sup> Colleagues of Le Picart were made to answer charges of attempted treason, while Roussel was examined for heresy. The theologians angered the king by attempting to reprise their successful methods in Berquin’s trial and execution in 1529. He dismissed the heresy case against Roussel. When the theologians tried again anyway, Francis literally chased them from his presence. He pressed the Parlement to act on charges of sedition against the Sorbonne, and eventually Beda, Le Picart and another preacher were banished, and forbidden to teach, preach, participate in an assembly, or communicate directly or indirectly to incite further trouble. The order was effective until the king chose to reverse it. The Sorbonne’s unwillingness in 1529 and 1530 to endorse the divorce of Henry VIII of England from Catherine of Aragon—a decision that Francis had lobbied for—contributed to Francis’ impatience with them. Roussel was given his liberty. As the banished prepared to leave, crowds gathered—some horrified at the treatment of the doctors and some rejoicing—and a war of posters broke out. The traditionalists’ message contained threats and included condemnation of Roussel. The fear

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<sup>538</sup> Urbanus Rhegius to Philip Melanchthon, July 8, 1533 in Heinz Scheible, ed., *Melanchthons Briefwechsel: kritische und kommentierte Gesamtausgabe: Texte* (Stuttgart: Fromman-Holzboog, 2003), v. 5, no. 1344, p. 459.

<sup>539</sup> Cited in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 87: “qu’elles paraissaient être favorables aux erreurs de Luther.” Emphasis his.

<sup>540</sup> See Larissa Taylor, *Heresy and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Paris: François Le Picart and the Beginnings of the Catholic Reformation* (Boston: Brill, 1999).

that God would condemn Parisians for failing to maintain the right kind of Christian society was becoming manifest. Francis left the capital again.

At this point in the story it is hard even to imagine the eventual outcome. The king was thoroughly put off by the odious behaviour of leading traditionalists. His anger had separated the theologians from their allies in the Parlement. The evangelicals had emerged from this episode unscathed: Henry and Marguerite continued to wield authority in Paris; Du Bellay remained bishop; Roussel resumed his preaching and others began to preach reform. A young John Calvin returned from his studies at Bourges and became a friend and admirer of Roussel—a “Geraldini.”<sup>541</sup> The traditionalists, however, still undermined this *status quo*. In October a play was written and performed in a rhetoric class at the College of Navarre that depicted a queen (Marguerite) seduced by a thinly-disguised Roussel with “a gospel.”<sup>542</sup> Roussel is portrayed as a “fury” who chides Marguerite into an insanity of heresy.<sup>543</sup> The queen proceeds to oppress the innocent and unhappy. The raucous response to the play impacted the city and arrests of students and professors followed. In the same month, Francis asked the university to give account for its condemnation of Marguerite’s well known devotional work, *Miroir de l’âme pécheresse*. The new rector of the university, Nicolas Cop, energetically reversed this condemnation. The traditionalists seemed only to be hemming themselves into an ever tighter

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<sup>541</sup> Florimond de Raemon, *L’histoire de la naissance, progrès et decadence de l’herésie de ce siècle* (Paris: Gvillavme de la Novë, 1610), p. 992, states that Calvin, after he fled Paris, in 1534 visited Lefèvre d’Étaples at Nérac and Roussel at Clairac. Frans P. van Stam, “Calvin’s Conversion as his First Step Towards the Ministry” in *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 12, 1 (2010), pp. 43-70, argues that Calvin’s initial conversion (which van Stam dates to 1532) was to the evangelical reform movement and that he only embraced Protestantism at the disputation in Lausanne in October, 1536.

<sup>542</sup> Details in a letter from Jean Sturm to Martin Bucer, November 1533 in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 217-220.

<sup>543</sup> Henry Heller, “Marguerite of Navarre and the Reformers of Meaux” in *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 33 (1971), pp. 284-285.

corner. Little wonder that many in the Navarrian Network were rejoicing with anticipation that gospel renewal was about to prevail in their beloved France.

Yet the story did not finish there. It was Nicolas Cop who overreached and initiated the reversal. On All Saints Day (November 1) the university gathered to hear the annual address from its rector. Cop used the occasion to preach at length on the doctrine of justification by faith. The backlash against its Protestant tone was immediate and, significantly, had the support of Francis. While he had generally supported humanists, including evangelicals, he had also generally stood against Protestants as heretics. His sacred calling as the Most Christian King made an impact on him. In a momentous piece of timing, Francis had just met in Marseilles with Pope Clement VII to obtain the latter's support for French foreign policy that sought to escape encirclement by the Hapsburgs. In exchange, he returned with authorization to pursue "Lutherans." Cop's speech probably increased the intensity of the king's anti-Protestant activity but, for political purposes, some persecution was a given. Some were burned as heretics; others fled the realm. Cop escaped to Basel, and Calvin also left Paris—giving the impression that he had conspired with Cop to produce the address.

The meeting between Francis and Clement VII had a direct bearing on Gérard Roussel.<sup>544</sup> Francis had tried to bring together an alliance against the Habsburgs consisting (improbably, in hindsight) of France, Henry VIII of England, the German Protestants and the papacy. Clement, who had been subject to enormous imperial pressure as Charles V tried to keep the Italian peninsula away from France, decided to fall in with French foreign policy. (France and Spain

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<sup>544</sup> See Henry Heller, "An Unknown Letter from Clement VII to Gerard Roussel" in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 38 (1976), pp. 489-492. Heller plausibly argues that this undated letter was written at this time.

were repeatedly at war over Italy from 1494 to 1559, and Charles' troops had brutally sacked Rome itself in 1527, imprisoning Clement.) Part of this rapprochement was the marriage of Catherine de' Medici—a member of the ruling family of Florence to which Clement also belonged—to Francis' son Henry, Duke of Orleans. The cooperation included the pope giving endorsements to key evangelicals, presumably because they already had warm relationships with German reformers like Bucer and Melanchthon—a political calculation. In Toulouse a protégé of Marguerite, Arnaud de Badet, became Inquisitor in 1531 but was suspected of Lutheranism by conservatives there. He had to flee the city but returned in late 1533 with a letter from Clement exonerating him of heresy.<sup>545</sup> Similarly, Roussel received a letter from the pope praising his evangelistic preaching, and giving him permission to read the works of Luther and other heretics without interference.<sup>546</sup> The pope's assumption was that Roussel would examine these works in order to refute them. Henry Heller tells the story as if Clement was misinformed and should have known that Roussel's orthodoxy had long been in doubt. Another way to read it, however, is that the pope had reason to be confident that Roussel was within the broader scope of orthodoxy—which was not as clearly defined in a traditionalist direction as it would be later in the century<sup>547</sup>—and was not a schismatic like Luther and many others. If the latter—and it is hard to imagine Clement being inadequately informed of Roussel's long-

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<sup>545</sup> See Raymond A. Mentzer, *Heresy Proceedings in Languedoc 1500-1560, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, v. 74, pt. 5 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984), pp. 20-33, 161; William Monter, *Judging the French Reformation: Heresy Trials by Sixteenth-Century Parlements* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 64-66.

<sup>546</sup> For the Latin text see Paul Landa, "The Reformed Theology of Gerard Roussel, Bishop of Oloron (1536-1555), Based upon a Critical Edition of his *Familiere Exposition du Simbole, de la Loi et Oraison Dominicale en forme de colloque* and his *Forme de visite de diocese* (c. 1548)" (Vanderbilt University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 1976), Appendix C, pp. 616-617.

<sup>547</sup> Jean de Salignac, one of the theologians of the Sorbonne, reported in 1533 that nothing Roussel was preaching was heretical: cited in Francis Higman, "De l'affaire des placards aux nicodémistes" in his *Lire et Découvrir: La circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1998), pp. 622-623. See also pp. 78-81 above.

standing public ministry in France<sup>548</sup>—then, even if this letter is surrounded by political calculations, it still bears witness to some acceptance by Clement of Roussel's leadership.

However, Cop's All Saints Day sermon had shifted momentum to the traditionalists, though the final outcome remained uncertain. Gérard Roussel was soon imprisoned on a heresy charge, with two Augustinians. In July the Faculty had already petitioned the king, without success, for the return of the banished doctors. However, after the summit with Pope Clement, the king did grant the request, though he soon regretted it. Beda, whose capacity for animosity seemed endless, sought the interdiction, through the Parlement, of three royal professors, including François Vatable, who were teaching the Bible in Hebrew and Greek. The royal professors were new positions, specifically created by Francis in his sponsorship of Renaissance humanism. Beda and Le Picart also urged that Roussel be burned as a heretic. Francis, fed up with the antics of Beda, forced the latter to debate theology in prison with Roussel. A Protestant source reported that Roussel humiliated Beda.<sup>549</sup> A pamphlet was published that collected the defamatory statements toward the king of Beda, Le Picart and Nicolas Leclerc, the doctor who had led the censure of Marguerite's *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse*. These doctors were arrested for treason,<sup>550</sup> Roussel and his Augustinian friends were released again, and momentum looked as if it were shifting once more. The pope's letter may have helped in

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<sup>548</sup> Indeed, Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 384-385, cites a letter from the papal legate, Girolamo Aleandro, to Clement VII's secretary, Sanga, in A. L. Herminjard, ed., *Correspondance des Réformateurs dans les pays de langue française*, 9 vols. (Geneva: H. George/Paris: Michel Levy, 1866-1897; reprinted in Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1965), v. II, no. 363, pp. 386-388, in which the legate speaks of Roussel with great suspicion.

<sup>549</sup> Myconius to Bullinger, February 28, 1534 in Johann Conrad Füsslin, ed., *Epistolæ ab Ecclesiæ helveticæ reformatoibus vel ad eos scriptæ* (Zurich: Heideggeri & Sociorum, 1742), p. 121. As in some German and Swiss cities, plans had been made for the previous summer to have a public disputation in Paris between Roussel and other evangelical leaders, on the one hand, and traditionalist members of the Faculty. These plans did not materialize. Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 427. These debates might have risked street battles.

<sup>550</sup> Nicolas Cop to Martin Bucer, April 5, 1534 in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 122.

procuring this release. Yet we see a difference this time, only months after Roussel's first release. Marguerite had to intercede for her chaplain: "The King will find that he [Roussel] is worthy of better than fire, and that he has never held an opinion to merit it, nor felt anything heretical."<sup>551</sup> The liberty came with restrictions: the evangelical preachers were not permitted to preach or even to read.<sup>552</sup> Roussel tempted fate by attempting to deliver a sermon at Notre Dame, but the priests and people drove him away, having given credence to the repeated charges of Lutheranism laid against him. He accompanied Marguerite on a trip to Normandy and then retreated to the southwest, where Marguerite's ability to protect was more certain. Roussel would not preach in Paris again. His life had more than once been in danger from rivals there. Their ability to access the Parlement in much of the 1520s and 1530s was highly intimidating. Roussel would attempt another strategy in the realm of Navarre.

Francis reacted to these tumults by seeking outside help to bring about the reunification of the traditionalists and the evangelicals. In July 1534, he sent Jean Du Bellay and his brother, Guillaume (a diplomat), to request Bucer and Melancthon to draw up a proposal that could unite on essential points and offer liberty regarding secondary matters. Since neither the traditionalists nor the evangelicals were schismatic, it is interesting that the king would approach Protestants. Their reputation for learning, however, appealed to Francis' Renaissance leanings, and their moderation seemed to address the need in France. More importantly, their importance in German lands opened the possibility of cooperation with German princes against the Hapsburgs. Many evangelicals rejoiced at the prospect of such a proposal, since

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<sup>551</sup> "Le Roy trouvera qu'il est digne de mieulx que du feu, et qu'il n'a jamais tenu opinion pour le mériter, ny qui sente nulle chose hérétique." Marguerite to Montmorency, date uncertain, but Roussel is in Paris. Cited in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 106, n. 3.

<sup>552</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 107.

accommodation to traditional practices had generally marked their approach all along. Then, on October 19, the infamous placards of Antoine Marcourt were posted in various places in northern France, including on the door of the palace in Blois where Francis resided at the time. Their hard-line condemnation of the Mass as a blasphemy once again turned Francis against Protestants and those who sounded like them, the evangelicals. Roussel was on the “most-wanted list” of over seventy names issued by the Parlement in Paris.<sup>553</sup> A severe persecution would follow for a time. Reid rightly points out that the Navarrian Network did not conclude that their efforts to bring gospel renewal to France were permanently defeated. In fact, negotiations continued to bring Melanchthon to France to confer about a religious concord. Francis still needed the diplomatic support of German Protestant princes. In the end, however, these negotiations did not bear fruit.<sup>554</sup>

Despite the unquenchable optimism of the evangelicals, hindsight makes it plain that their best chances of success were now behind them. We see in the affairs of Nicolas Cop and the placards the beginning of the pincer movement that would crush the hopes for gospel-centered, non-schismatic *réforme*. In 1525, the Sorbonne wore down the Meaux experiment by heavy-handed application of legal power through the Parlement—though we should remember that Francis’ absence through captivity in Madrid was crucial to their success. In 1533 and 1534 Francis was present, but simply felt he had to react to sermons at his university on justification by faith and to placards that denounced the Mass as blasphemy. Even the highly abrasive behaviour of the leading theologians did not prevent his defence of traditional piety. (To

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<sup>553</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 432.

<sup>554</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 436-441.

complete their story, Le Picart and Leclerc were released in November 1534 to aid in the pursuit of heretics; Beda, however, had to make a public recantation<sup>555</sup> for his words against the king and then was permanently banished to the coastal monastery of Mont St. Michel.) The evangelicals generally had avoided attacking key traditional tenets. However, zealous hotheads within their network undermined years of patient labour that the initial response to Roussel's preaching during Lent 1533 demonstrated had a genuine chance of succeeding. When Francis gave traditionalists permission to prosecute hard-line stances, the pincer was complete.

Roussel's decision had already been made prior to the Affair of the Placards. He had left Paris in the summer. He now attempted a return to the strategy that nearly succeeded in Meaux, seeking to develop a renewed diocese that would serve as a bridgehead for the *réforme* of the nation. In the southwest, distant from both the Parlement of Paris and the Sorbonne, under the protection of the diligent Queen of Navarre, he felt he had a chance.

#### A Reformer becomes a Bishop

In 1536 Gérard Roussel was appointed Bishop of Oloron, below the northern slopes of the Pyrenees. Henry of Navarre had petitioned the Pope on his behalf. Marguerite had already lobbied to have Roussel appointed coadjutor upon his retreat to Nérac from Paris in 1534, but without success.<sup>556</sup> The position was not without risk. His predecessor, Pierre d'Albret, had died of poisoning on the return leg of a journey to Rome, after only six months in office.<sup>557</sup> Cardinal Salviati in Rome had strongly opposed Roussel's appointment—until bribed into silence by

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<sup>555</sup> "Amende honorable."

<sup>556</sup> Gustav Cadier, "Gérard Roussel (1480-1555): Sa vie and son influence sur la réforme française" (University of Geneva: unpublished Bachelor of Theology thesis, 1947), p. 66.

<sup>557</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 113, n. 2.

Henry.<sup>558</sup> It gives a sense of the stature of Roussel with contemporaries (despite the subsequent silence of historians) that he arrived with a reputation that elicited both considerable acclaim and persistent opposition. Poets wrote verse to celebrate this man whose Christian life had been a shining example.<sup>559</sup> Yet, his jurisdiction over approximately two hundred fifty priests, many of whom could legitimately be described as “corrupt, placed him in the midst of challenges.”<sup>560</sup> He encouraged priests to marry in order to avoid the scandal often associated with mandatory celibacy. While it angered traditionalists, this proposal reflected the bishop’s desire for renewal which manifested works of faith consistent with the commands of God.<sup>561</sup> Roussel could not begin his official duties for three years, because he first had to overcome the nomination of a traditionalist by the cathedral chapter in Oloron.<sup>562</sup> Reid has described the political context in which the new bishop had to function.<sup>563</sup> Henry’s only sovereign territory—that is, lands in which his rule was supreme, as opposed to those he held as a vassal of Francis I or as governor with his wife—was in Béarn, which had two bishoprics. The bishop of Lescar, Jacques de Foix, was a reformer in a different mold than Roussel. He pursued vibrant traditional piety and was not focused on the gospel. He functioned as “prime minister,” implementing Henry’s state-building program, and Roussel was his junior. Several royal counsellors repeatedly

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<sup>558</sup> Cadier, “Roussel,” p. 68.

<sup>559</sup> See several examples of such poems written by Nicolas Bourbon in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 243-244.

<sup>560</sup> Cadier, “Roussel,” p. 71.

<sup>561</sup> Cadier, “Roussel,” p. 75. Cardinal Cajetan argued in 1530 that clerical marriage was a concession that Catholics could make to reconcile with the Protestants: John Hamer, *The European Reformation, 1500-1610* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational, 2002), p. 25. Charles V, in preparation for conciliation efforts at the Colloquy of Regensburg in 1541, argued that—in order to end the widespread scandal caused by clerical licentiousness—either celibacy be enforced by sanctions (a strategy he tried to implement without success through the Diet of Augsburg in 1548) or that clerical marriage be allowed: Henry Charles Lea, *An Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1867), pp. 442-447. Though Roussel wrote *Forme de Visite* about 1548, he typically adopted the more irenic proposal connected to Regensburg.

<sup>562</sup> A. Durengues, “Gérard Roussel, abbé de Clairac, évêque d’Oloron” in *Revue de l’Agenais* 34 (1916), pp. 340-362. See p. 353 specifically.

<sup>563</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 521-525.

harassed Roussel, including making a false statement that he had been charged at the Parlement of Bordeaux with heresy. The junior bishop lost his irenicism at this point, challenging his accuser to a duel. Priests deprived of their posts (for various disciplinary reasons) and local *seigneurs* caused riots over the sermons of *protégés* of the bishop. One, Bernardi Paloma, was attacked by de Foix and his allies as a heretic.<sup>564</sup> Early in 1545 Henry issued an ordinance against disorders in the churches, particularly in Oloron.<sup>565</sup> While Henry shielded his wife's favourite, even after her death, Roussel functioned under pressure the entire time he was implementing his reform program. His death, then, at the hands of a local traditionalist notable was part of this pattern.

In addition, long-time friends in the struggle for *réforme* were not impressed with Roussel's elevation to the episcopate. Calvin, who so recently had rejoiced in Roussel's successful preaching in Paris, excoriated his old friend<sup>566</sup> in a letter subsequently published. Some quotes will give us a taste of Calvin's thorough rejection of Roussel's decision:

You who long ago rebuked the abuses of the clergy of Rome, you accept now a dignity which obliges you to approve the Mass that you regard as idolatry, and perhaps to pronounce excommunications which you know to be unjust.<sup>567</sup>

The abuses of the church hierarchy were widely acknowledged, and the evangelicals could decry them, but they would not attack the hierarchy's prerogatives.<sup>568</sup> Calvin gives us no new

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<sup>564</sup> Cadier, "Roussel," p. 77.

<sup>565</sup> Cadier, "Roussel," p. 78.

<sup>566</sup> "A un ancien ami, de présent évesque." "Ancien ami" could mean "old friend" or "former friend"—certainly the latter in this case. It was published in *Epistolæ duæ, de rebus hoc sæculo cognitu apprime necessariis* (Basel: Balthasarem Lasium & Thomam Platterum, 1537), and translated into French in *Traité des Bénéfices, où il y a plusieurs matières et questions bénéficiales, décidées selon la simple et pure verité de la Parole de Dieu* (Geneva: 1554). Excerpts quoted in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 114-117.

<sup>567</sup> "Toi qui blâmais jadis les abus du clergé de Rome, tu acceptes maintenant une dignité qui t'oblige à approuver la messe que tu regardes comme une idolâtrie, et à prononcer peut-être des excommunications dont pourtant tu reconnais l'injustice."

insight on this point. His fear that Roussel would resort to excommunicating Protestants proved unfounded. We have already seen that the bishop used his disciplinary authority less than the king would have liked, leading the monarch to issue decrees calling for church order. Roussel preferred to focus on leading people into a vibrant faith by the example of his life and by his preaching and teaching (as we shall see). Their theological labels were much less important to him. Calvin's argument concerning the Eucharist may also represent a twisting of Roussel's position. We cannot, of course, know the private conversations that Calvin and Roussel participated in 1533. Yet, Roussel could treat the traditional spirituality of many as idolatry, including their approach to the Mass, without denouncing the actual ritual or its theology.<sup>569</sup>

To the trumpet, you who perform lookout duty; to arms, pastor! What are you waiting for, what are you dreaming of? Is it time to sleep? Unhappily, you must render account for the death of so many people before the Lord! So many times you commit homicide, so many times guilty of blood, of which there will not be a drop that the Lord does not ask again from your hand.<sup>570</sup>

The exaggeration and rhetoric are strikingly excessive. We note the ironic call of an irenic "to arms," and the accusation of multiple homicides is incredible.

There are, I say, those whom we support, with their faults and imperfections, with a fraternal affection and gentleness; there are those whom we hold as brothers and receive amiably into our arms, to acknowledge those who follow a Christian way of life, and whom one sees with all their power attempting to reach the Kingdom of God.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>568</sup> See pp. 136 above.

<sup>569</sup> See pp. 159-162 above. I will investigate Roussel's teaching on the Lord's Supper more in chap. 6.

<sup>570</sup> "A la trompette, toi qui dois faire le guet, à tes armes, pasteur! Qu'attens-tu, à quoi songes-tu? Est-il temps de dormir? Malheureux, tu dois rendre compte de la mort de tant de gens devant le Seigneur! tant de fois es-tu homicide! tant de fois coupable de sang, duquel il n'y aura pas une goutte que le Seigneur ne redemande de ta main."

<sup>571</sup> "Voilà, dis-je, ceux lesquels avec leurs fautes et imperfections nous supportons d'une affection et douceur fraternelles; voilà ceux que nous tenons pour frères et recevons amiablement entre nos bras, à sçavoir ceux qui suivent un train de vie chrestienne, et lesquels on voit de tout leur pouvoir tascher de parvenir au royaume de Dieu."

These words depict well the approach of the irenic evangelicals, an approach they largely lived up to. Calvin appropriates this discourse, but immediately shows that there are limits as to whom he will admit to his “fraternal affection”:

And, at the same time, we also do not support the faithful in their faults so much that it may nourish their vices by our dissimulations and flatteries; there remains [this point] that we in no way wish to reject from our company those that the Lord recognizes and avows as his servants. But in you, is there any [such] semblance? In whom life has no appearance of Christian vocation and even is totally distanced from the way of the Lord?<sup>572</sup>

Dissimulation is something Calvin hated,<sup>573</sup> and he considered efforts to treat external rites as “indifferent”<sup>574</sup> as a form of dissimulation. (Theodore de Bèze, Calvin’s successor in Geneva, blamed Roussel for Marguerite’s continued participation in the Mass. He had taught her, apparently, that it was a matter of “indifferent” external ritual.<sup>575</sup>) Calvin’s attack on Roussel became highly derogatory and personal with his two questions—and the opinion expressed differs wildly from the perception of those who welcomed Roussel as their bishop. Calvin had had a very different perspective when he interacted with Roussel in Paris:

Long ago I myself admired [you], whose example had been of immense profit for me.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> “Et toutesfois encore ne supportons nous pas tellement les fidèles dans leurs fautes, que ce soit pour nourrir leurs vices par nos dissimulations et flatteries; il y a cela seulement que nous ne voulons point rejeter de nostre compagnie ceux que le Seigneur reconnoist et advoue pour ses serviteurs. Mais en toy y a-t-il rien de semblable? duquel la vie n’a aucune apparence de vocation chrestienne et mesmes est totalement eslongnée de la voye du Seigneur?”

<sup>573</sup> See, for example, Carol Thysell, *The pleasure of discernment: Marguerite de Navarre as Theologian* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 100-102.

<sup>574</sup> See Melancthon’s principle of “adiaphora,” pp. 52-53 above.

<sup>575</sup> See Thysell, *Discernment*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>576</sup> “Jadis j’ai moi-même admirée et dont l’exemple a été pour moi d’un profit immense.”

Four years earlier is, in fact, not “long ago.” However, the unforgiveable step was not a change in the conduct of Roussel’s life, but the choice to accept a Catholic bishopric. Calvin closes with rhetorical overkill:

You profane the call of pastor to destroy maliciously and villainously the poor flock; such that you will be of the band of those whom Christ names thieves, brigands and murderers of his Church, think of yourself what you will: at least I will never hold you for a Christian or a man of good. Good bye.<sup>577</sup>

Calvin was incensed over a strategic decision to pursue to “the way of the Lord” by irenic influence from within the Catholic Church. It was not differences over the shape of Christian living or doctrine that turned Calvin against his former friend, but disagreement over the appropriate tactics for pursuing *réforme*. His hostility remained implacable.<sup>578</sup> Reid argues the 1540s involved a concerted and ultimately successful campaign by the French reformers in Switzerland to commandeer the leadership of *réforme* in France from Marguerite’s network.<sup>579</sup>

In his contest with the Nicodemites several years later, Calvin seems to refer to Roussel, without naming him, as one type of compromiser: a preacher that will preach the gospel in some fashion, but who will not preach a “pure Evangel.”<sup>580</sup> High ecclesiastical officials and philosophers, both of whom happily separate words from action, were two other types. A final

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<sup>577</sup> “Tu profaneras la charge de pasteur pour détruire meschamment et vilainement le pauvre troupeau; tant que tu seras de la bande de ceux lesquels Christ nomme voleurs, brigands et meurtriers de son Eglise, estime de toy ce que tu voudras : pour le moins je ne te tiendrai jamais ni pour chrestien ni pour homme de bien. Adieu.”

<sup>578</sup> Farel to Calvin, April 16, 1540 in Herminjard, *Correspondance*, v. VI, no. 860, pp. 209-210, asks Calvin to encourage Roussel because of the good reports the former has heard about Roussel’s initial efforts in Oloron. Calvin to Farel, about May 13, 1540, in Herminjard, *Correspondance*, v. VI, no. 863, p. 223, refuses.

<sup>579</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 550-563.

<sup>580</sup> *Excuse de Jehan Calvin à Messieurs les Nicodemites sur la complaincte qu’ils font de sa trop grand’ rigueur* (Geneva: 1544). Allan L. Farris, “Calvin’s Letter to Luther” in *The Tide of Time: Historical Essays by the late Allan L. Farris, Professor of Church History and Principal of Knox College, Toronto*, John S. Moir, ed. (Toronto: Knox College, 1978), p. 67, n. 19, summarizes the four types of Nicodemites, according to Calvin. At the same time as his attack on the Nicodemites, Calvin also sought to discredit others at Marguerite’s court that he called Libertines: *Contre la secte phantastique et furieuse des Libertins, qui se nomment spirituels* (Geneva: J. Girard, 1547).

type—most interesting in light of Wanegffelen’s claim about the spiritual attitudes of most French folk in this era<sup>581</sup>—was common folk “who only want to be left alone to pursue their ordinary occupations.”<sup>582</sup> Calvin implies spiritual indifference motivated them; but what if Wanegffelen is correct and their attitude was more positive: “Leave us out of these struggles so we can more effectively live in Christian neighbourliness?”<sup>583</sup> In light of the strife in France later in the sixteenth century, what a loss that these folk were eventually caught up into the hardened confessional identities that resulted from the marginalization of irenic leaders like Roussel through the condemnations of the Faculty of Theology in Paris and the Reformed Protestants led by Calvin. It was a powerful pincer movement, with actual blood on its hands in the Wars of Religion and other violence in the era—ironic, in light of Calvin’s false accusation against Roussel upon the latter’s accession to the episcopate.

Charles Schmidt was thoroughly committed to the Protestant narrative. So, his book on Roussel, published in 1845, enlightens us considerably about the distortions this narrative produced. He finds Calvin’s condemnation of the bishop too harsh: Roussel “at least remained

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<sup>581</sup> Thierry Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève: Des fidèles entre deux chaires en France au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), p. XVI. See p. 49, n. 156 above.

<sup>582</sup> Farris, “Calvin’s Letter to Luther,” p. 67, n. 19.

<sup>583</sup> Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England: Holding Their Peace* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), describes just such an attitude for common folk in England during the Reformation period. See pp. 36-37 above. Jean-François Gilmont, “En guise de conclusion: le livre évangélique de langue française avant Calvin” in Gilmont, William Kemp, ed., *The French Evangelical Book before Calvin: Original Analyses, Newly Edited Texts, Bibliographic Catalogues* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2004), pp. 309-310, rejects both Ginzburg’s analysis of Nicodemites as those who dissimulated with a clear conscience, embracing a privatized faith, and Wanegffelen’s description of “le temporiseur” who dissimulated with a bad conscience: see *Ni Rome, Ni Genève*, pp. 70-74. He uses Wanegffelen’s expression of le “plat pays de la croyance” (p. IX) to emphasize that the French evangelicals lived in a period before the confessions were firmly established. Therefore, not all choices to “mix” what would later clearly be Protestant and Catholic approaches to faith should be considered “dissimulation.” Rosine A. Lambin, *Femmes de Paix: La coexistence religieuse et les dames de la noblesse en France 1520-1630* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003), p. 143, referring to Renée of Ferrara, cousin to Francis I and Marguerite de Navarre, argues that it would be a mistake to classify her either as Catholic or as Protestant.

attached in heart to the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel.”<sup>584</sup> Yet he dismisses Roussel as too weak and too mystical to stand up for what he believed. He had a “spirit more conciliatory than aggressive.”<sup>585</sup> It is hard not to ask, “What is the problem here?” Schmidt’s description of Roussel’s work as bishop depicts a diligent leader, committed to doing good. Often, while touring his diocese with a translator, he would preach two or three times a day, ensuring his French gospel sermons were comprehended by the *Béarnais*. He would celebrate Mass by the rites of the Catholic Church, but dispensed both the bread and the cup to the people. At the same time, he would expound the “mystery of the sacrament.”<sup>586</sup> He was preoccupied with instruction of the young, including children. He created schools and instructed in them, teaching love of knowledge and purer religious conviction.<sup>587</sup> He created numerous study circles for youth and gathered them into a communal life.<sup>588</sup> He eschewed the splendour of the episcopate, preaching in lay dress and using the revenues of his office for schools and works of mercy and charity. As abbot at Clairac, Roussel granted the town “a liberal constitution of self-rule.”<sup>589</sup> It takes remarkable commitment to the Protestant narrative to describe such a conscientious leader as “weak” and someone so committed to education as “too mystical.” Schmidt could only see Roussel’s conciliatory approach as a feature of personality that tended toward weakness. He could not see the possibility that it was a conviction, rooted in Roussel’s

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<sup>584</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 118: “du moins demeura attaché de cœur à la doctrine fondamentale de l’Évangile.”

<sup>585</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 119: “esprit plus conciliant qu’agresseur.”

<sup>586</sup> Henri de Sponde, *Continuatio Annalium Baronii* (Leiden: Sumptibus Fratrum Anissoniorum, & Ioan Pos, 1678), t. II, p. 523. A partisan Catholic writer, Sponde still describes Roussel’s teaching on the Mass as “une remontrance sur le mystère du sacrement.”

<sup>587</sup> Sponde, *Continuatio*, t. II, p. 523.

<sup>588</sup> Cadier, “Roussel,” p. 74.

<sup>589</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 68.

understanding of the gospel, which strongly influenced his strategic approach to life and to the work of renewal in the Gallican church.<sup>590</sup>

Into his duties as bishop and abbot, Roussel fit regular time at Marguerite's court in Nérac. He continued as her almoner and confessor. In a funeral oration for Marguerite, Charles de Sainte Marthe described the queen's typical dinner consisting of discussion with Roussel on matters learned and spiritual.<sup>591</sup> We also have evidence of more writing activity by Roussel in the 1530s and 1540s than just *Familière Exposition* and the *Forme de visite*. In 1533, then-friend Calvin wrote that he has sent the second *Epitome* by "our G." of earlier commentaries.<sup>592</sup> Both *Epitomes* have been lost. To which commentaries does Calvin refer? We do not know. Reid suggests two other tracts encouraging the reading of the Bible might have come from the pen of the Bishop of Oloron.<sup>593</sup> The theme clearly was dear to Roussel's heart. René Paquin also draws parallels between Roussel's teaching on the Eucharist and the thought in these tracts, but backs off from asserting Roussel's authorship.<sup>594</sup> We will consider his points in the next chapter. However, unlike the other sources I examine in this study, it is important to stress that we have no historical evidence connecting Roussel to these works, only similar thematic

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<sup>590</sup> Craig Harline, Eddy Put, *A Bishop's Tale: Mathias Hovius among his Flock in Seventeenth Century Flanders* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), describe the life of a reforming bishop a century after Roussel. In contrast to the latter's gospel-centered piety, Hovius clearly emphasizes Counter-Reformation devotion, especially involving the saints.

<sup>591</sup> Heller, "Marguerite and the Reformers," p. 285.

<sup>592</sup> John Calvin to François Daniel, October 27, 1533 in Herminjard, *Correspondance*, v. III, no. 437, p. 105.

<sup>593</sup> See Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 694, 696, 703. *Petit traicté* was published by Étienne Dolet in 1542.

*Exhortation à la lecture des Saintes Lettres* was published in the same year by Dolet, and in 1544 by Balthazar Arnoullet. All were published in Lyon.

<sup>594</sup> René Paquin, "Érasme expurgé: L'exhortation a la lecture des Saintes Lettres et le problème nicodémite" in Gilmont, Kemp, *The French Evangelical Book before Calvin*, pp. 213-240. See too Eugene F. Rice, ed., *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 503-504, who stresses that suggestions of Roussel's authorship are entirely conjecture.

emphases. There were many evangelicals in France who shared such concerns. The suggestions by Reid and Paquin should, therefore, be regarded as tentative.

Roussel was one of a small number of French bishops who attended the opening session of the Council of Trent in 1545. MacCulloch misleadingly calls him “a rare crypto-evangelical,”<sup>595</sup> reflecting both Catholic and Protestant narratives. It is true that the pincer movement was making French evangelicals “rarer” by this time, but to imply Roussel had been secretive about his evangelicalism is untrue. In fact, his commitment to non-schismatic renewal through the gospel can explain both Roussel’s choice to attend Trent and his disappointment with its declarations.<sup>596</sup> A council called to address the many weaknesses of the Church and possibly to pursue reconciliation had an attractive potential. When Trent quickly defined Catholic doctrine in a traditionalist direction and denounced the Protestants as heretical, Roussel saw the opportunity for church unity and gospel renewal fading. Similarly, Calvin’s denunciation of Nicodemites in the 1540s caused a stir in Navarre. The massacre of Waldensians in 1545 and deadly persecutions of Protestants in Paris, Meaux and elsewhere in 1546 did likewise. (It seems likely Roussel would have known some of those killed in Paris and Meaux.<sup>597</sup>) Still, these events did not alter Roussel’s diligent commitment to creating a renewed diocese in Oloron that could serve as a beachhead for renewal within the Catholic Church in the rest of France.<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490-1700* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 245-246. Roussel’s only appearance in MacCulloch’s book concerns the bishop’s minor role at Trent, reinforcing the point that the dominant historical narratives have caused Roussel to go missing.

<sup>596</sup> See Alain Tallon, *La France et le concile de Trente (1518-1563)* (École française de Rome, 1997), pp. 163-172, 754-770. It is fascinating to note that the French contingent was more adamant in defending traditionalism and negating Protestantism than the bishops from Imperial lands.

<sup>597</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 122-125.

<sup>598</sup> His friend, Michel d’Arande, had attempted the same strategy as bishop in Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux but in 1536 felt that he had failed. See Frederic J. Baumgartner, *Change and Continuity in the French Episcopate: The Bishops and the Wars of Religion 1547-1610* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), p. 126; d’Arande to Farel, c.

A curious confirmation of this approach comes through the fact that Roussel wrote to the papal curia to get a dispensation to hold his multiple benefices, and later wrote again to seek to have them conferred on his nephews.<sup>599</sup> We could, of course, imagine less laudatory reasons for these letters, but the motivation I suggest is consistent with Roussel's overall strategy.

What evidence do we have that Roussel's strategy was successful? Roelker cites a report that radical Protestantism was significant in Oloron before 1555, the year Calvin began to send out pastors from Geneva to multiply rapidly the number of Reformed churches in France.<sup>600</sup> This outcome may or may not have pleased Roussel: his gospel preaching clearly made inroads among the people, but non-schismatic irenicism was less influential. Also, a monumental study by Hayden and Greenshields of reforming efforts by Catholic bishops over six centuries, a reformation they argued suffered setbacks but never ceased, raises questions about how much Roussel contributed to this Catholic Reformation. Methodologically, they concentrated on records of pastoral visits and synodal statutes.<sup>601</sup> However, records for visitation (which we know Roussel practised diligently) are practically non-existent in the province of Auch, to which the diocese of Oloron belonged.<sup>602</sup> The records for Roussel's episcopate are simply lost.<sup>603</sup> The

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March 1536 in Herminjard, *Correspondance*, v. III, no. 544, pp. 399-401. For a perspective beyond France, we can note Franz Posset, *The Front-Runner of the Catholic Reformation: The Life and Works of Johann von Staupitz* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). Von Staupitz pursued a similar strategy of non-schismatic evangelical renewal among the Augustinians and in German lands, which included but was far from limited to his influence upon Luther.

<sup>599</sup> Antoine Degret, "L'évêque d'Oloron, G. Roussel et la curie romaine" in *Revue de Gascogne* (1904), pp. 227-228, cited in Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 548, n. 129.

<sup>600</sup> Nancy Lyman Roelker, *Queen of Navarre: Jeanne d'Albret 1528-1572* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 123. See, too, Cadier, "Roussel," p. 80.

<sup>601</sup> J. Michael Hayden, Malcolm R. Greenshields, *Six Hundred Years of Reform: Bishops and the French Church, 1190-1789* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), pp. 4, 7-8.

<sup>602</sup> Hayden, Greenshields, *Six Hundred Years of Reform*, p. 417. Paul Landa, "The Reformed Theology of Gerard Roussel, Bishop of Oloron (1536-1555), Based upon a Critical Edition of his *Familiere Exposition du Simbole, de la Loi et Oraison Dominicale en forme de colloque* and his *Forme de visite de diocese* (c. 1548)" (Vanderbilt University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 1976), p. 53, n. 2, indicates that two eighteenth century fires (1716 in Pau; 1787 in Lescar) destroyed most of the records in this region.

only synodal statute on record for Oloron over the six centuries was promulgated in 1686.<sup>604</sup> Guillaume Briçonnet registers as a strong reformer in this study.<sup>605</sup> Roussel is not mentioned. In fact, Auch is listed as among the weakest of provinces in responding to the Catholic Reformation movement.<sup>606</sup> What do we make of this evidence? First, Roussel certainly had more impact than Hayden and Greenshields identified through the sources they used. Second, Roussel might still have been disappointed that his efforts throughout the southwest, at Nérac, Clairac, Userche and the entire diocese of Oloron, registered so little movement toward reform of the Catholic Church. In fact, one of the few records remaining from the period, a revendication from 1558—only three years after Roussel’s death—suggests that he had had minimal impact in curbing absenteeism and corruption among a segment of his priests.<sup>607</sup>

Larissa Taylor intriguingly relates a Jesuit report that Roussel was considered for appointment as a cardinal in 1553.<sup>608</sup> The Jesuits spoke strongly against the possibility and it never materialized. At this late date, with another condemnation in 1550 by the Sorbonne behind him relating to *Familière Exposition*, it is noteworthy that Roussel still had sufficient stature for the suggestion to be taken seriously. The pincer movement of traditionalists and Calvinists had done much damage to the evangelicals, but Roussel still commanded respect.

Since we will look at Roussel’s *Familière Exposition* in the next chapter, we can now consider his death. That story started off this study. Apparently, Roussel was already

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<sup>603</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 521.

<sup>604</sup> Hayden, Greenshields, *Six Hundred Years of Reform*, p. 283.

<sup>605</sup> Hayden, Greenshields, *Six Hundred Years of Reform*, pp. 82-83, 99.

<sup>606</sup> Hayden, Greenshields, *Six Hundred Years of Reform*, pp. 101, 492-493.

<sup>607</sup> Pau, Archives Départementales des Basses-Pyrénées, C 684, 96r, cited in Landa, “Reformed Theology,” p. 56, including n. 2. Harline, Put, *Bishop’s Tale*, pp. 226-228, indicate that Mathias Hovius also experienced limited success in reforming the mores of nuns and priests in his diocese in seventeenth century Flanders.

<sup>608</sup> Taylor, *Le Picart*, p. 124.

considering retirement as a bishop.<sup>609</sup> Mauléon, the site of the assault on Roussel, is in a Basque region, which was known both for strong religious traditionalism and antipathy to the *Béarnais*.<sup>610</sup> Roussel aggravated both sentiments. He sent his vicar general, Aymérici to address some resistance, but his lieutenant only made things worse. Arnauld de Maytie led those who angrily chased away the vicar. Roussel sought to assert his authority by convening a synod where he attempted, as we will also see in the *Forme de visite*, to preach that the people should honour the saints by imitation not by adoration and that they would do well to increase economic productivity by working more and observing fewer saints' days. De Maytie had smuggled in under his coat the axe that he used to chop down the elevated pulpit while the bishop was preaching. Three further points should be made. First, de Maytie benefited from Roussel's death. De Maytie's son was a successor as bishop of Oloron. Second, Florimond de Raemond reported that, late in the century, he talked with an old man from Clairac, who apparently told him that Roussel had, on the day before he died, repented of saying the Mass contrary to his own convictions and of not separating himself from the Catholic Church.<sup>611</sup> Such a statement would align with the Catholic and Protestant narratives that I have attempted to undermine regarding the French evangelicals: traditionalists could accuse Roussel of always having been a dangerous subversive, while Protestants could rest satisfied that he was too timid to be of any real help to their cause. Since there is much, both in Roussel's life and in his

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<sup>609</sup> Antoine de Bourbon and Jeanne d'Albret to Pope Paul IV, June 20, 1555, cited in Lucien Romier, *Les origines politiques des guerres de religion* (Paris: Perrin, 1914), t. II, p. 257-258, n. 1. See Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève*, p. 91, n. 1.

<sup>610</sup> Cadier, "Roussel," pp. 83-84. Kevin Gould, *Catholic Activism in South-West France 1540-1570* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) demonstrates that there was a surge in resistance by traditionalists in nearby Toulouse, Agen and Bordeaux, too.

<sup>611</sup> Florimond de Raemond, *L'histoire de la naissance, progrès et decadence de l'herésie de ce siècle* (Paris: Gvillavme de la Novë, 1610), p. 851.

writings and teachings, that accords instead with my presentation that the evangelicals were a discrete movement with different motives than both Catholic traditionalists and Protestant schismatics, that they were, in fact, irenics, we can be sceptical of de Raemond's report. It suited his purpose of discrediting both Protestants and the evangelicals only too well.

Third, we need to note a discrepancy in historians' reporting of Roussel's death. Some declare his death took place in 1550.<sup>612</sup> However, this date is an error. The Jesuits certainly thought Roussel was alive and dangerous in 1553. In fact, we have record of two wills he notarized in 1555. On July 7, 1555 he deeded his worldly possessions to his relatives, including some land near Clairac intended for a nephew. Then, a little note published in 1861 preserves from the archives of the town of Clairac the record that Roussel "institutes the poor as his heirs general and universal. July 8, 1555."<sup>613</sup> Only the title of his testament is preserved, not the will itself. That final will, as so much of his life's work and legacy, seems to have been contested—probably by members of his family. At least two attempts at reregistration were made at Bordeaux in 1558 and 1560—years after his death.<sup>614</sup> On the way to some springs for

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<sup>612</sup> Michel Veissière, *L'évêque Guillaume Briçonnet (1470-1534)* (Provins: Société d'histoire et d'archéologie, 1986), p. 371; Monter, *Judging*, p. 113, who implies 1550 when he says Roussel "died almost when [Marguerite] did." The Queen died in 1549. Dartigue-Peyrou separates the Mauléon incident from Roussel's death by five years, 1550 and 1555, but the latter's death seems closely connected to the attack. See Cadier, "Roussel," p. 86, n. 1. However, we have here a clue to explain the earlier date.

<sup>613</sup> A. L., "Recherche d'un document important relative à Gerard Roussel" in *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 10 (1861), p. 342: "il institue les pauvres ses héritiers généraux et universels. Du 8 juillet 1555." See the discussion in Landa, "Reformed Theology," p. 60, including n. 2 and n. 3.

<sup>614</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Sara Beam for pointing out to me these attempts to reregister. She found the references in the manuscript guide to the Parlement of Bordeaux, Archives Départementales de Gironde, 1B210 1560-02-06, 1v. The register was compiled by an archivist named Loirette.

treatment, he died at the village of Louvie on August 15, 1555. Buried at Nérac, there is no sign of his tomb today.<sup>615</sup>

It is time to examine Roussel's advice for episcopal visitation. It contains a few surprises.

### Analysis of *Forme de visite de diocèse*

We have seen Roussel's diligence as bishop. Not surprisingly, he counsels similar diligence in others.<sup>616</sup> It will help us understand the idiosyncratic approach he advocates by contrasting it to the "normal" pattern of episcopal visitation described by Hayden and Greenshields:

The visitor might concentrate on the state of the parish church and churchyard; he might examine the condition of sacred vessels, images, or instruments; or he might show a particular interest in church finances. . . . However the medieval visitor sometimes also asked questions about persons; lay, religious and clerical "scandal" or immorality; and heresy. In later years [seventeenth and eighteenth centuries], "impious" festivities, catechism, the sacraments (especially confession and communion), parish registers, the condition of parish schools, and the conduct of midwives also received the attention of visitors.<sup>617</sup>

This description shows only a little overlap with the points emphasized by the Bishop of Oloron.

Roussel begins *Forme de visite* with four points by which to assess the lives of priests. First, the visitor should enquire about the doctrine and "truth" that are taught the people and how "purely and holy" the sacraments are administered. Do the ministers do their duty, both in the above requirement and in the "example of their lives?" Second, what is the quality of their prayer life, both in public and in private? Third, do they practise hospitality, particularly by

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<sup>615</sup> These details are found in Cadier, "Roussel," p. 85.

<sup>616</sup> The text of *Forme de visite de diocèse* is found in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 226-239, and, in a critical edition, in Paul Landa, "The Reformed Theology of Gerard Roussel, Bishop of Oloron (1536-1555), Based upon a Critical Edition of his *Familiere Exposition du Simbole, de la Loi et Oraison Dominicale en forme de colloque* and his *Forme de visite de diocese* (c. 1548)" (Vanderbilt University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 1976), pp. 600-610.

<sup>617</sup> *Six Hundred Years of Reform*, p. 14.

contributing to the “needs of the poor?”<sup>618</sup> Fourth, the visitor should examine how youth are instructed in the schools.

We would expect each of these goals to be explained more fully in the pages that follow. However, *Forme de visite* is quite uneven in this regard. Nothing is said about the schools (the fourth goal) or about hospitality to the poor (the third goal). Roussel does not identify what would constitute “good performance” in these areas. The desired content in the preaching is specified in detail, an explanation of the gospel that Reformed Protestants and Lutherans would be comfortable with. However, also relating to Roussel’s first goal, nothing is said about the administration of the sacraments or about ways to gauge the “exemplarity of life” of the priests. The question of prayers (the second goal) is given much attention, with the bulk of the teaching focusing on prayers to the saints. This latter discussion takes some surprising turns, demonstrating vividly Roussel’s determination to pursue irenicism in the promotion of gospel renewal. As in his earlier writing, some arguments are presented in convoluted fashion, with run-on sentences a noteworthy feature. As a humanist, he appeals freely to church fathers, quoting them (loosely) as it suits his purpose: Augustine (six times), Chrysostom and Basil the Great (though Roussel actually mistakenly attributes to Basil a quotation from Gregory of Nazianzus).<sup>619</sup> We will look more closely at both the explanation of the gospel and the discussion on prayer.

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<sup>618</sup> 175r: “parole . . . purement et saintement . . . exemplarité de vie . . . necessitez des indigens.”

<sup>619</sup>Landa, “Reformed Theology,” p. 610, n. 1.

“No other truth ought to be preached and announced than the pure truth of God, the gospel that Jesus Christ commanded to be preached to every creature.”<sup>620</sup> The basic content of this preaching is in the “articles of faith” (the Apostles Creed) and the Ten Commandments.<sup>621</sup> Roussel distinguishes, following Augustine, between the justice of faith and the justice of law. It is the former that is God’s justice and, in fact, it is a living faith that enables people to fulfill the commands of the law. Jesus Christ “has spun, woven and stitched this robe which we call the robe of justice.”<sup>622</sup> (The allusion to the *noblesse de robe*, among whom Roussel’s opponents in the Parlements were prominent, is not accidental. He is obliquely saying it is Jesus who confers true justice.) This justice “is by faith, is communicated to us, attributed, imputed and made ours by grace . . . as if we ourselves have done what he did.”<sup>623</sup> He who pursues the justice of law, however, “wishes to establish his [own] justice and this demonstrates that he ignores the justice of God and, in fact, does not recognize at all having been in need of the coming and death of Jesus.”<sup>624</sup> Roussel, as the reference to the Ten Commandments indicates, recognizes that faith should lead to good deeds: “by this means, we are made good workers; to do good works we are united with Jesus, his Spirit dwells in us, pours out joy in us, and writes in our hearts the living law.”<sup>625</sup> In this context, he again quotes Augustine—which demonstrates that similarities to Protestant teaching may come from a common source (this Church Father) rather

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<sup>620</sup> “Aultre parolle ne doit estre preschée et annoncée que la pure parolle de Dieu, l’evangille que Jesuchrist a commandé estre presché à toute creature.” (175r)

<sup>621</sup> “Le sommaire de ce que nous debvons croire est contenu aux articles de la foy, et de ce que debvons faire, es dix parolles de la loy.” (175r)

<sup>622</sup> “a filé, tissu et cousu ceste robbe que nous appellons la robbe de justice.” (175v)

<sup>623</sup> “est par foy, nous est communiquée, attribuée, imputée, et faicte nostre par grace . . . comme si nous mesmes avons faict ce qu’il a faict.” (176r)

<sup>624</sup> “veult establir sa justice, et ce demonstre ignorer la justice de Dieu; et de faict ne reconnoist point avoir esté besoing de la venue et mort de Jesus.” (176v)

<sup>625</sup> “par ce moyen sommes faictz bons ouvriers, pour faire de bonnes œuvres, sommes unys avec Jesus, son esprit habite en nous, espond en nous dilection, et escript en noz cueurs la loy vive.” (176v)

than from direct dependence upon Protestant contemporaries. Against traditionalists, Roussel maintains:

But the good works are those that God commands, not those that we propose; those that God in his Scripture approves, not those that man finds good; those that are done in faith, not those which are founded in a particular devotion; those which are of the will and Spirit of God, not those that are of the will and spirit of man.<sup>626</sup>

Roussel could confront when the gospel was at stake—though it is clearly not a strong polemic as in Farel, Calvin, Luther and their Catholic protagonists. Roussel makes positive assertions about the gospel without resorting to direct attack. His irenicism constrained him, even as he contradicted others.<sup>627</sup>

Roussel's teaching on prayers, particularly to the saints, is a fascinating mixture of gospel instruction and irenic strategy. The Lord's Prayer is the model, "comprising all that which we could and ought to request and ask."<sup>628</sup> (*Forme de visite* relates closely to *Familière Exposition*, with which it is united in the same manuscript, strongly commending the major sections of the latter: the Apostles Creed, Ten Commandments and Lord's Prayer.) The essential emphasis is that "faith accompany our prayer. . . . The commandment and promise of God ought to stir up in us faith, to remove from us all servile fear; despite all our unworthiness we ought to be bold and assured in approaching God."<sup>629</sup> Roussel acknowledges that a natural

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<sup>626</sup> "mais les bonnes œuvres sont celles que Dieu commande, non point celles que nous proposons; celles que Dieu en son escripture approuve, non point celles que l'homme trouve bonnes; celles qui sont faites en foy, non celles qui sont fondées en devotion particuliere; celles qui sont du vouloir et esprit de Dieu, non celles qui sont du vouloir et esprit de l'homme." (176v-177r)

<sup>627</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 1, p. 311: "Roussel and the others in the network held more limited views than Farel about what was permissible and productive in promoting God's work."

<sup>628</sup> "comprend tout ce que pouvons et devons requerir et demander." (177r)

<sup>629</sup> "foy accompaigne nostre oraison. . . le commandement et la promesse de Dieu doibvent en nous exciter la foy, nous oster toute craincte servile, nonobstant toute indignité nostre nous doibvent enhardir et asseurer d'aller à Dieu." (177v)

conclusion from this instruction is to cease all prayers to the saints, and “today such words are acted on and come into controversy.”<sup>630</sup> (It is clear from the context that Roussel does not welcome controversy.) His advice is striking:

First, it is not necessary to dismiss [by putting] in doubt whether it is good to praise and honour the saints, [to suggest] that the prayers and intercessions of the saints are disagreeable to God. But the essential point is to know how and with what praise it is necessary to praise them, how and with what honour one ought to honour them, what are their prayers and intercessions, how [the saints’ prayers] are different from those of Jesus Christ, and to know what access we have to them in order to pray to them, how we ought to pray to them and address our prayers to them. It is certain that the perfection of man and his true praise proceeds from the interior of the heart that God alone scrutinizes and knows; which is why it is best by far to rely on the praises that God shows us in his Scripture than to presume of ourselves, and that we adjust faith to the praises of Scripture, and that with such praise we praise the blessed saints, than by inventing [prayers] ourselves.<sup>631</sup>

Roussel intends to put prayers to the saints into a context that he deems acceptable for evangelicals, by clarifying how the saints’ prayers are different from those of Jesus and how one, in fact, can access the saints. God is best praised by the praises and intercessions that Scripture models, and it is by these prayers—rather than prayers we invent ourselves—that we can approach the saints. It is a clear demonstration of Roussel’s irenicism that—when prayer from the faith-filled heart allows us boldly to approach God directly and, therefore, makes prayers to the saints redundant—he creates a path by which he can still affirm prayers to the saints.

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<sup>630</sup> “au jourdhuy telz propos sont agitez et viennent à controverſie.” (177v)

<sup>631</sup> “Premierement ne fault revocquer en doubte que ne soit bien fait louer et honorer les ſainctz, que leurs prieres et interceſſions ne ſoient à Dieu agreables; mais le tout eſt ſcavoir comment et de quelle louange les fault louer, comment et de quel honneur les doit on honorer, quelles ſont leurs prieres et interceſſions, combien differentes de celles de Jeſuſchriſt, et ſcavoir quel acces nous avons à eulx pour les prier, comment nous pouvons les prier et adreſſer à eulx nos prieres. Il eſt certain que la perfection de l’homme et ſa vraye louenge procede de l’interieur du cueur que Dieu ſeul ſcrute et congnoist; parquoy vault trop myeulx ſ’arreſter aux louenges que Dieu nous monſtre en ſon eſcripture, que preſumer de nous memes, et que adjouſtons foy aux louenges de l’eſcripture, et que de telle louenge louons les benoiſtz ſainctz, qu’en inventer de nous memes.” (177v)

Roussel does describe inappropriate approaches to the saints first. The tone is instructive, not combative. As time passed, “many superstitions and deceptions [were] introduced.”<sup>632</sup> (Here is Roussel’s motivation for persistent efforts to pursue gospel renewal.) One misleading notion is to think that bending the knee or removing one’s hat “and all other exterior things” are central to “true devotion.”<sup>633</sup> (This principle of “exterior things” was at the heart of the dispute between Roussel and Calvin, who accused the former of “dissimulation” for disregard of external proprieties.) One bad way to honour the saints is “to love vice and hate virtue.” Another is to speak their praise and keep their festivals, while failing “to put out effort to imitate and follow them.” Yet, it is Jesus, not the saints, who has made satisfaction for sinners through his death for them. It is an “abuse,” then, to “particularize” commemoration of the saints through “times, places and people.”<sup>634</sup> Here we can introduce Higman’s pointed statement: “for these Catholic evangelicals it was the Faculty that was heretical.”<sup>635</sup> There are hints in this section on prayers for the saints that Roussel, if pushed, might agree. However, given the seriousness with which heresy was so often viewed and treated in this century, it is a confirmation of deliberately chosen irenicism that we have no more than hints. The gospel constrained him at this point, and—he was convinced—could do so for others who embraced it as well. Schism was ruled out on the same basis. Hence, the need to concentrate on evangelism within the existing church. As Reid puts it, “the evangelicals in Marguerite’s circle divorced the

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<sup>632</sup> “introduit plusieurs superstitions et mensonges.” (178r)

<sup>633</sup> “et toutes aultres choses exterieures . . . la vray honneur.” (178r)

<sup>634</sup> “aymer vice et hayr vertu . . . mettre peyne de les imiter et suyvre . . . abuz . . . particularisent . . . aux temps, lieux et personnes.” (178v)

<sup>635</sup> Francis Higman, *La diffusion de la réforme en France 1520-1565* (La Faculté de Théologie de l’Université de Genève, 1992), p. 155: “Pour ces évangeliques catholiques **c’était la Faculté qui était hérétique.**” Both emphases are Higman’s.

reformers' positive teachings from their destructive demand to reject the old church, attempting to use the former to transform the existing culture."<sup>636</sup>

Roussel makes his case for prayer to the saints by pointing out that, since they are "members united to their head" [Christ] "we do not have access to them . . . except by him."<sup>637</sup> Such thinking overturns popular devotion that the saints assist petitioners in accessing Christ; yet, it still permits the acts of devotion and so is irenic in noteworthy fashion. "Let consistent biblical teaching slowly change thinking in a gospel-oriented direction. No need for controversy." Such was the consistent approach to renewal by the French evangelicals.

Still, this unusual approach comes with a required response. Echoing the practice of indulgences and obliquely correcting their abuse, Roussel refers to the Lord's Prayer and indicates the way we can know we have received pardon from Jesus: "it is if we pardon from the heart those who have offended us."<sup>638</sup> Forgiveness extended is the way the Father gives us "a good note" or letter of indulgence. Roussel continues the theme with this striking statement: "This bull (containing [the ruling] that if we pardon, the Father will pardon us) is irrefutable and from the grand master, pontiff and pope Jesus Christ, on whom we can and ought surely to rely."<sup>639</sup> Roussel does not dismiss the papacy, but states that—when we have a word from Christ himself—his pronouncement (bull) cannot be overturned, since he is the ultimate master, pontiff and pope. Four words that had papal associations in a single sentence is a clear sign of rhetorical emphasis—inviting traditionalists to agree, and perhaps to reconsider the role

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<sup>636</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 559.

<sup>637</sup> "membres unys avec leur chef . . . n'avons acces aux saintz . . . sinon par luy." (179r)

<sup>638</sup> "c'est si nous pardonnons de cueur à ceulx qui nous ont offensez." (179r)

<sup>639</sup> "une bonne nothe . . . Ceste bulle (contenant que si nous pardonnons, le pere nous pardonnera) est indubitable et du grand maistre pontife et pape Jesuchrist, à laquelle nous pouvons et debvons seurement arrester." (179r)

of indulgences. Firmness concerning gospel renewal; maximum flexibility concerning other practices—in a word, an irenicism that was quintessentially Roussel, but also typical of the French evangelicals.

Perhaps the reference to the Pope caused Roussel to finish *Forme de visite* with a reflection on the role of the priesthood. Certainly, the state of the diocesan priests was the primary concern of this document. He distinguishes between the power of order and the power of jurisdiction—and then completely avoids discussing the latter. It is likely that in matters of jurisdiction Roussel could identify a host of problems. Anticlericalism was widespread, and he could name a number of friends who had been mistreated by traditionalists in jurisdictional battles. Again, it seems a sign of irenicism that he avoids the topic. His discussion of the power of order, however, manifests very high respect for the existing priesthood. “By his ministry, [the priest] offers, presents and distributes the ‘goods’ of Jesus Christ, [that people might] know the remission of sin and eternal life.”<sup>640</sup> Yet, immediately he repeats his emphasis on faith: “But those alone are made participants in [these ‘goods’] who believe and receive such ministry by true faith.”<sup>641</sup> He sounds Protestant when he maintains that the sacrament should be administered “purely” and that it is “only God who by his authority and power remits and pardons sin.”<sup>642</sup> One can “confess and accuse oneself at any time and place”—and not just to a priest. Still, “it is necessary to use the ministers and their ministry, and to receive by their

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<sup>640</sup> “Par son ministere il offre, presente et distribue les biens de Jesuchrist, assavoir remission de peché et vie eternelle.” (179r)

<sup>641</sup> “Mais ceulx seulement en sont faictz participans qui croient et recoipvent par vraye foy tel ministere.” (179r)

<sup>642</sup> “purement . . . Dieu seul qui de son auctorité et puissance remect et pardonne le peché.” (179v)

ministry the word [in preaching] and the sacraments. . . . The priest [is] the sole dispenser.”<sup>643</sup>

We cannot call such a position a rejection of the Catholic priesthood.

Roussel, then, shows consistent determination and some creativity, in balancing a strong commitment to renewal through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ and a disposition to practise irenicism in other matters. At points where the two goals “rub together,” the balancing act seems delicate indeed. This dynamic is typical of Roussel’s life as a whole. His *Forme de visite* shows how carefully he worked at this task as he proposes a formula for the priest to pronounce absolution for sin that precisely fits his understanding of the gospel:

Also, do not say, ‘I absolve you in my name, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the blessed Holy Spirit’; better if he says, ‘God by my ministry offers you and exhibits remission of your sins; embrace and receive this word in faith and take from him by my ministry.’<sup>644</sup>

In the next chapter, we will see more of this balancing act in Roussel’s *Familière Exposition*.

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<sup>643</sup> “se confesser et accuser en tout temps et lieu . . . fault donc user des ministres et de leur ministere, et recevoir par leur ministere la parole et sacremens . . . le prebtre seul dispensateur.” (179v)

<sup>644</sup> “aussi ne dict point: je t’absoubz en mon nom, au nom du pere et du filz et du benoist saint esprit, aultant que s’il disoit: Dieu pour mon ministere t’offre et exhibe remission de tes pechez, embrassant et recepvant ceste parole en foy, et prens de luy par mon ministere.” (179v) Landa, ““Reformed Theology,”” p. 610, n. 2, suggests that “pour” should read “par.”

## Chapter 6

### Roussel's Simplified Mass

The most familiar of Gérard Roussel's works is, fittingly enough, *Familière Exposition du simbole, de la loy et oraison dominicale en forme de colloque*. Written about 1548 and condemned by the Sorbonne in 1550, it is the writing that most fully expresses the thoughts and motivations of the bishop of Oloron. It was never published, a recurring theme in Roussel's life. The opposition of the Faculty of Theology ensured its obscurity. We have a single manuscript version in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.<sup>645</sup> Maurice Causse suggests that it was not a polished work, ready for publication, but rather represents notes taken by a student of lectures delivered by Roussel.<sup>646</sup> It is a plausible suggestion in that the bishop did provide such instruction, and there are a number of errors in the text. It is not a necessary conclusion, however. In Roussel's other works we have observed a tendency toward run-on sentences and a convoluted style that made them feel less than polished, too.<sup>647</sup> *Familière Exposition* has received more attention than his other works,<sup>648</sup> so some helpful insights are already available.

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<sup>645</sup> Manuscript number 419.

<sup>646</sup> Maurice Causse, "La « Familière Exposition » de Gérard Roussel et l'aventure « Nicodémite » en Guyenne" in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français* 131 (January-March 1985), pp. 5-33, specifically p. 23. There are a few interlinear corrections in the text, neatly inserted, all in the same hand. Causse's insistence that the work had never been intended for publication (p. 24) seems puzzling. Publication would have served the renewal work of the evangelicals. The time taken by the Faculty of Theology to condemn it makes more sense if they thought it was intended for publication (as Causse himself allows).

<sup>647</sup> This observation is less applicable to *Épîtres et Évangiles*, where Lefèvre d'Étaples' hand should be discerned. However, it does apply to *Initiatore instruction* (p. 163 above), *Forme de visite* (p. 197) and *Familière Exposition*.

<sup>648</sup> Charles Schmidt, *Gérard Roussel, Prédicateur de la Reine Marguerite de Navarre: Mémoire servant à l'histoire des premières tentatives faites pour introduire la reformation en France* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970; originally published in Strasbourg, 1845), pp. 129-155; Gustave Cadier, "Gérard Roussel (1480-1555): sa vie, son influence sur la Réforme française" (University of Geneva, unpublished Master's thesis, 1947), pp. 87-100; Paul Landa, "The Reformed Theology of Gerard Roussel, Bishop of Oloron (1536-1555), Based upon a Critical Edition of his *Familière Exposition du Simbole, de la Loi et Oraison Dominicale en forme de colloque* and his *Forme de visite de diocese* (c. 1548)" (Vanderbilt University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 1976); Thierry Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève: Des fidèles entre deux chaires en France au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), pp. 85-97; Jonathan A. Reid,

However, conclusions about the significance of these insights vary considerably. Was Roussel a symbolist,<sup>649</sup> a Lutheran who held to consubstantiation,<sup>650</sup> a crypto-Reformed theologian dependent upon John Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine,<sup>651</sup> or a traditional Catholic holding to transubstantiation?<sup>652</sup> Could the fact that scholars can find evidence for each of these positions indicate we have not understood Roussel properly yet? Are we too eager to place him into preset theological categories that produced limited conviction in him, even while they were hardening around him during the 1520s, 1530s and 1540s? Do we miss his attempt to create an inclusive doctrine that, while not averse to the traditional understanding, could also embrace other key perspectives from the era? Was he trying to create common ground to unite all who declared a stake in renewal by the gospel of Jesus? He would then be a leader who sought to break out of limitations imposed by hardened positions in order to pursue that irenic renewal.

We will begin with an overview of these lectures. Then, we will consider the differing conclusions scholars have drawn from *Familière Exposition* about Roussel's sympathies. I will next outline Roussel's doctrine as I understand it from these lectures. It is plain that a Catholic non-schismatic would not propound doctrine that was at odds with what was acceptable in Catholicism in the 1540s. So, I am testing my hypothesis here. If we find rejection of the Mass, as we do in Farel and Calvin, or if we find teaching that cannot accommodate an understanding of the Mass as transubstantiation, then my argument fails. However, I stress a crucial

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*King's Sister—Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549) and her Evangelical Network* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009, v. 2, pp. 525-548.

<sup>649</sup>Marc Venard, "Un catéchisme offert à Marguerite de Navarre" in *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 142, 1 (1996), p. 12, arguing from the *Initiatore Instruction*, suggests that the position on the Eucharist there is *spiritualiste* and *symboliste*, akin to the reformers in Strasbourg and Switzerland.

<sup>650</sup> As Francis Higman implies in *La diffusion de la Réforme en France, 1520-1565* (Geneva: Éditions Labor et Fides, 1992), p. 179.

<sup>651</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 545.

<sup>652</sup> Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève*, p. 95.

methodological point: we do not require explicit affirmation of transubstantiation. Rather, we would expect an irenic to avoid privileging one perspective on the Lord's Supper at the expense of other options. So, we are looking for a doctrine that allowed Roussel to work with the existing Mass, even as he moulded the ritual to further gospel-centered reform. Such a balancing act would necessitate ambiguous expression in pursuit of both church unity and evangelical solidarity. Along the way, it will be illuminating to compare and to contrast Roussel's approach to reform with that of other noteworthy Catholic reformers from the decade. We will also need to understand the objections of the Faculty of Theology to *Familière Exposition* and then draw any final conclusions.

#### *Familière Exposition—Its Provenance and Contents*

The 1540s opened with optimism for those who hoped for reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. Charles V was determined to unite his German territories in order to stand together against the threat posed by the Ottoman Turks. He first encouraged meetings to bridge the theological divide in Hagenau (1540), Worms (1541) and Regensburg (1541). When they failed to arrive at an acceptable compromise, imperial delegates strongly urged the Council of Trent, when it opened in 1545, to avoid theology and to concentrate on reform measures that might appease Protestants. Some who gathered anticipated a council that could restore Christian unity. In France continued diplomatic efforts to create an anti-imperial alliance that included German Protestants also bred optimism in the early 1540s. By 1548, the approximate date for the production of *Familière Exposition*, the picture had turned bleak. The Edict of Fontainebleau, issued in 1540, codified the opposition of Francis I to Protestants and

caused their increased persecution through the 1540s; legal activity was particularly aggressive in the south through the Parlements of Bordeaux, Toulouse and Aix.<sup>653</sup> The massacre of Waldensians at Mérindol in 1545 sharply highlighted the divide between Catholics and heretics. The Sorbonne's Twenty-six Articles, issued in 1543, claimed traditionalist piety as the orthodox position in France. While not definitive immediately, these articles influenced legal proceedings and slowly led France away from evangelical emphases. The Council of Trent in 1547 pronounced transubstantiation as the official doctrine of Rome, ending any hope for reconciliation with Protestants. (It would take considerable time, because of traditional Gallicanism, before Tridentine decrees were accepted in France.) In Germany Charles V shifted to imposing political unity by force in the Schmalkaldic War of 1546-47. After his victory he mandated severe restrictions on Lutheran worship. Irenics clearly had much less ground for optimism by 1548. Interestingly, Roussel shows no sign of gloom in his *Familière Exposition*. Jonathan Reid actually offers a broad estimate for dating the work: between 1543 and 1550.<sup>654</sup> The lack of foreboding in the manuscript leaves room for an earlier date. However, such dating invites the question of why did it take so long for the Faculty to issue a condemnation. If indeed *Familière Exposition* represents lectures to theological students, it is hard to imagine that it would take so many years for the Sorbonne to procure a copy. A suggested date of 1548 seems preferable, then. If accurate, it is striking that the increase in traditionalist Catholic resistance in

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<sup>653</sup> William Monter, *Judging the French Reformation: Heresy Trials by Sixteenth-Century Parlements* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), chap. 4, particularly p. 93.

<sup>654</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 719.

southwest France and other setbacks on the European scene did not discourage the bishop or cause him to change his strategy.<sup>655</sup>

Like *Épîtres et Évangiles* two decades earlier, *Familière Exposition* was produced to assist priests to preach the basic truths of the Bible in an effort to renew the lives of priests and people together. It was a catechism with a question and answer format, rather than a preaching manual, but its goal to encourage reform-minded preachers was the same. Since he had reverted to the same strategy for renewal of French church and society that had been attempted at Meaux, it should not surprise us that he pursued similar methods.<sup>656</sup> It is interesting to note far less use of Latin quotations in the later work.<sup>657</sup> Roussel's passion for the vernacular seems to have increased over time. Also, the lack of militant language is striking. The closest we find to such draws on sporting illustrations used by the Apostle Paul about not running in vain or boxing the air aimlessly—inspiring, not strident.<sup>658</sup> The features of the faith explained are the three in the title (the Creed, Ten Commandments and Lord's Prayer) and the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.

The occasion for the work was the petition by Roussel, granted by Henry of Navarre, to introduce into the regular Sunday liturgy the recitation of the Creed, Ten Commandments and

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<sup>655</sup> See Kevin Gould, *Catholic Activism in South-West France 1540-1570* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

<sup>656</sup> Causse, "L'aventure," pp. 26-27, n. 42, suggests that the renewal work in Béarn was an attempt to implement the near-consensus that emerged at the Colloquy of Regensburg in 1541—an intriguing suggestion, not impossible, but also not necessary, since the evangelical movement had its own Gallican roots. René Paquin, "Érasme expurgé: L'exhortation a la lecture des Saintes Lettres et le problème nicodémite" in Jean-François Gilmont, William Kemp, ed., *The French Evangelical Book before Calvin: Original Analyses, Newly Edited Texts, Bibliographic Catalogues* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2004), p. 231, agrees with Causse's suggestion. See p. 24 above.

<sup>657</sup> They are easy to spot in the manuscript, written in a bolder, larger script, though by the same hand.

<sup>658</sup> 23v; 1 Corinthians 9:24-26.

Lord's Prayer in French.<sup>659</sup> Previously, they had been recited in Latin, less accessible to most. The bishop gratefully acknowledges the permission in his dedicatory preface.<sup>660</sup> Roussel saw a superb opportunity, as part of a movement toward renewal, to expound further on the doctrine, life choices and piety reflected in these elements of worship: "O, I reckon happy those instructors and ministers who will so establish their disciples and people! O happy school, happy temple, where such instruction is recognized!"<sup>661</sup>

I have identified some central evangelical teaching for those in the Circle of Meaux: concerned for the plight of humanity, rejoicing in the response of God to that plight through the work of Christ as it has been revealed in the Bible, they were eager to renew both church and society with "people made new."<sup>662</sup> Roussel had manifested confidence in that message in his preaching, teaching and writing throughout his career. This focus continued and was expanded upon in *Familière Exposition*. To avoid repetition, I will here only draw attention to noteworthy additions or nuances in these lectures to that basic message. One such addition is the emphasis on the helplessness of the human will to move a person toward salvation:

without being inspired from above, by the powers which one has from the first birth, [people] are not able to reach the true and salutary knowledge, not able truly to love and to glorify [God] by word and life. . . . [Adam's fall] not only rendered us ignorant, inclined—even prompt—to do wrong, but also powerless in ourselves to think of and to do good.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>659</sup> It is likely Henry was furthering the consolidation of his political authority throughout his realms by advancing the use of the language of state.

<sup>660</sup> 1r.

<sup>661</sup> "O que je réputerois heureux les maistres et ministres qui auroient leurs disciples et peuples ainsi instituez! O heureuse escholle, heureux temple, là où se reconnoit telle instruction!" (18r)

<sup>662</sup> See pp. 130-133 above.

<sup>663</sup> "mais sans être inspiré d'enhault, par les puissances qu'il a de sa première nativité ne peult parvenir à la vraye et salutaire congnoissance, ne peult vrayement l'aymer et glorifier de parolle et vie. . . . nous a rendu non

Luther had made this “bondage of the will” (1525) a key aspect of his message, and so entered into acrimony with Erasmus, who reflected most humanists by insisting on the liberty of the human will (1524). (Calvin wholeheartedly followed Luther.) Roussel already had made the sovereignty of God in salvation a strong emphasis in his interpolation into *Initiatore instruction*, but we have a new, though related, reflection on human incapacity in *Familière Exposition*.<sup>664</sup> It reflects a choice to side with Luther and Calvin. Yet, the irenic does not disavow medieval Catholic teaching. He, like many scholastics before him, quotes Augustine to the effect “that all which is done with a good intention is well done.”<sup>665</sup> Part of Roussel’s irenicism included embracing tensions between competing perspectives without resolving them. We will see more of this approach below. This lack of resolution should caution us about placing him into a clearly identified camp.

In his dedication, Roussel acknowledges he is expounding “three very artificial summaries”; however, their value is that they provide “brief collections of the contents of *all* the Scripture.”<sup>666</sup> He delivers his instruction “in the form of a dialogue” in order to “render it more plausible and familiar.”<sup>667</sup> As a typical evangelical, he insists on the clarity of the Bible. He aims “to remove from us all excuses that we make pretense of concerning the prolixity or difficulty of the Scripture.”<sup>668</sup> His commitment to Christian society and the central role of the king in the evangelicals’ conception of that society is evident: he desires that his work confirm

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seulement ignorans, enclins et promptz à mal faire, mais aussi impuissans de nous mesmes à bien penser et faire.” (1r, 80r)

<sup>664</sup> See further: 1r, 25r, 26r, 108v, 160r, 173r.

<sup>665</sup> “tout ce qui se faict à bonne intention est bien faict.” (16v) Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 31, II, 4; *De Trinitate* IX, 1.

<sup>666</sup> “troys très artificieux sommaires et briefz recueils du contenu de toute l’Escripture.” (1r) Emphasis mine.

<sup>667</sup> “en forme de dialogue . . . la rendre plus plausible et familière.” (1r)

<sup>668</sup> “oster de nous toutes excuses que nous pourrions prétendre sur la prolixité et difficulté de l’Escripture.” (1r)

the people in “the cordial and affectionate love which God has placed in the heart of your subjects to revere and to obey you.”<sup>669</sup>

The Apostles Creed, analysed as twelve confessional statements, is examined first. It helps people “to know what they have come to this world to do. . . . One is to be made a member of [Christ’s] body and a child of his Church.”<sup>670</sup> At the heart of Roussel’s confession is the conviction that affirmations of doctrine are insufficient to yield transformative Christian living. Such an approach is compared repeatedly to failing to take the drugs that would produce health that are available at the apothecary’s.<sup>671</sup> Instead, one must lay hold of these teachings with a fervent personal faith.<sup>672</sup> “Such faith brings about a true union of grace and spirit.”<sup>673</sup> “The whole gist” of the Christian life, then, boils down to “these two words: to believe and to do.”<sup>674</sup> Though he insists on the primacy of faith, Roussel makes no attempt to separate good works from faith; on the contrary he insists on their unity: “both faith and works, both gospel and law.”<sup>675</sup> True faith begins with penitence and “works through charity.”<sup>676</sup> He divides the twelve affirmations into four sections, reflecting a common division according to the persons of the Trinity and adding the Church.<sup>677</sup> In regard to the Trinity, it is best “simply to believe rather

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<sup>669</sup> “le cordial et affectionné amour que Dieu a mis au cueur de voz subjectz pour vous révéner et obéyr.” (1r) See 131r for a description of the good king who brings concord among his people. Good kings acknowledge that all their “powers and glory” come from God. (145r)

<sup>670</sup> “sçavoir qu’ilz y sont venuz faire. . . . il est fait membre de son corps et enfant de son Eglise.” (1r,v) Catholic overtones exist, though not conclusively, in the latter phrase.

<sup>671</sup> See 4r; 5r,v; 15v; 21v; 24r; 25v. Le Picart also views the Mass as food and medicine, but defines it unmistakably as transubstantiation—unlike Roussel. See below. See Larissa Taylor, *Heresy and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Paris: François Le Picart and the Beginnings of the Catholic Reformation* (Boston: Brill, 1999), pp. 171-173.

<sup>672</sup> The Greek word πίστις (faith) is expounded in 3v. See too 25r.

<sup>673</sup> “par telle unyon de foy qui est vraye union de grace et d’esprit.” (14r) See 18r, 30r where this union is declared to be stronger than that brought about physically by the sacrament of marriage.

<sup>674</sup> “le tout gist en ces deux motz : croire et faire.” (2r)

<sup>675</sup> “tant de la foy que des oeuvres, tant de l’évangile que de la loy.” (2r)

<sup>676</sup> “ouvrante par charité.” (e.g., 4v, 16r) See Galatians 5:6. On penitence, see 27r.

<sup>677</sup> 3r.

than to inquire.” In fact, “there curiosity displeases God and is the mother of many errors.”<sup>678</sup>

God is defined in mystical terms of negation:

God is one substance above all capacity of created spirit . . . exceeding all definitions, names and interpretations. . . . By his infinite power [he] created everything from nothing, by his wisdom ordered all very well, and by his infinite goodness preserves everything.<sup>679</sup>

Yet, he is “my Father . . . who truly cares for me perpetually.”<sup>680</sup> The name Jesus is equated with the Hebrew Testament’s Tetragrammaton, יהוה, a name for God. Jesus, then, makes the invisible God known to human senses.<sup>681</sup> Roussel carries on a long-standing interpretation of human birth as sinful, since it originates in the sex act that is deemed “impure” and “depraved”:

You believe him then to be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary to purify and to sanctify our impure conception and depraved birth, and to deliver us (conceived and engendered in sin) from the curse. . . . His birth [in] extreme poverty and humility [is] true instruction to the poor to rejoice in their poverty and bear it willingly, and to the rich and important to take no pride in their riches and greatness.<sup>682</sup>

Yet Christ’s birth is much more than a moral lesson: “he was made man in order to deify me by grace.”<sup>683</sup> In the Apostles Creed Christ is said to descend to hell. Roussel suggests “hell” is an exaggerated word to express “his passion.”<sup>684</sup> Speaking of the church, as Eve was formed from

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<sup>678</sup> “simplement croire que plus avant s’enquérir. . . . là ou curiosité luy desplaist et est la mère de plusieurs erreurs.” (3r)

<sup>679</sup> “Dieu est une substance surmontante toute capacité d’esprit créé . . . mais excède toutes diffinitions, noms et interprétations. . . . par sa puissance infinie le tout créé de riens, le tout trèsbien ordonné par sa sapience, et le tout conservé par son infinie bonté.” (4v) The irenic Catholic Contarini also embraced such negation. Elizabeth G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 88.

<sup>680</sup> “mon Père . . . qu’il a cure de moy vraiment perpétuelle.” (5r)

<sup>681</sup> See, e.g., 8v.

<sup>682</sup> “Tu le crois donc estre conceu du Saint Esperit et né de la vierge Marie pour purifier et sanctifier nostre impure conception et vitieuse nativité, et nous (conceuez et engendrez en péché) délivre de malédiction. . . . sa nativité qu’extreme povreté et humilité, vraye instruction aux paovres de s’esjoyr en leur povreté et la porter volontiers, et aux riches et grandz ne se fier en leurs richesses et grandeurs.” (10r)

<sup>683</sup> “il cest faict homme pour me déifier par grace.” (10r) Landa, “Reformed Theology,” p. 292, emends “cest” to “s’est.”

<sup>684</sup> “sa passion . . . estre ycy en ung mot exagérée et exprimée par enfer.” (12v)

the side of sleeping Adam, the Church was formed, “not without mystery, from the side of Jesus sleeping on the cross, from whom blood and water flowed.”<sup>685</sup> We note both medieval mysticism in the understanding of the church, and probable comfort with a sacramental constitution of the Church through baptism (water) and the Lord’s Supper (blood). Both factors are congruent with French Catholic devotion—yet they do not represent rejection of most Protestant understandings. Then, Roussel embraces a Protestant description of the church: it is constituted “by the Holy Spirit, who makes the ministry of the Word of God and sacrament efficacious from the mouths and hands of ministers.”<sup>686</sup> Despite its congruence with Calvin’s marks of the church,<sup>687</sup> this depiction is not used to negate Catholic devotion. This balancing act is another indication of irenicism. In fact, “as all the faithful have only one Head, it is also necessary that all might assemble as one and form one body, so that there might be one Church spread through the entire world, and not many.”<sup>688</sup> Here is a rejection of the divisions engulfing the church in Europe.

Roussel adds two doctrinal points to his exposition of the Apostles Creed. First, he emphasizes, as a typical evangelical, that the authority for Christian belief and practice is *l’Escripture*.<sup>689</sup> Second, he emphatically endorses a key Protestant doctrine, justification by faith, covering no less than eight folio pages. He articulates the notion that Christ’s obedience

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<sup>685</sup> “comme d’Adam dormant fut de son cousté formée Eve, aussi du cousté de Jésuschrist dormant en la croix l’Eglise, duquel sortit eaue et sang, non sans mistère.” (22r) See John 19:34.

<sup>686</sup> “Par le Saint Esprit, qui fait le ministère de la Parolle de Dieu et sacrement efficace ès bouches et mains des ministres.” (22r) See too 23r.

<sup>687</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, tr. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), v. 2, IV, 1, 9, p. 1023.

<sup>688</sup> “comme de tous les fidèles n’y a qu’ung Chef, aussi fault il que tous soient assemblez en ung et faitz ung corps, de sorte que’il y ait une Eglise esandue par tout le monde, et non plusieurs.” (22v) Contarini thought embracing Christ as Head of the Church could only lead to chaos. So, he affirmed papal leadership. Gleason, *Contarini*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>689</sup> See 29v, 30r.

and justice are imputed to those who believe and so are made theirs.<sup>690</sup> “All justice inherent in us which is acquired by good works is imperfect.”<sup>691</sup> These terms had been given prominence at the Colloquy of Regensburg in 1541. “Inherent justice” referred to indwelling righteousness that has its entire source in Christ, but depends on the cooperation of human wills. “Imputed justice” comes from the declaration of God that the sinner is found righteous because of the finished work of Christ. These two concepts were joined in the article on “double justification” which emerged from the Colloquy, but which was quickly rejected by Protestants and Catholics alike. Gasparo Contarini, the article’s champion, was disappointed that fellow reforming cardinals Reginald Pole and Jacopo Sadoletto failed to support it.<sup>692</sup> In 1543 the Faculty of Theology in Paris, in its Twenty-Six Articles, stressed that the human will was free to cooperate with God’s grace; that—after mortal sin—penitence was necessary, consisting of contrition, verbal confession to a priest and “satisfaction” prescribed by the priest; and that faith and good works are both needed for salvation.<sup>693</sup> In effect, they affirmed inherent justice. Pole, in attempting to keep Lutherans engaged with the Council of Trent, introduced his own version of double justification as the council was debating its formulation in 1546. By letter, he argued for a righteousness imputed by Christ that then manifested in a righteousness of charity.<sup>694</sup> Roussel, slightly later, also brings the concepts together again, but in terms different from Regensburg and from Pole, which gave primacy to gospel faith. Yet he does not condemn

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<sup>690</sup> “son obéissance et justice nous est imputée et faite nostre.” (30v) See too 109v.

<sup>691</sup> “Toute justice inhérente en nous qui s’acquiert par bonnes oeuvres est imparfaite.” (30v)

<sup>692</sup> Gleason, *Contarini*, pp. 249-250. Pole was cool and refused to attend the meeting of the College of Cardinals that discussed the formula. Sadoletto rejected it.

<sup>693</sup> James K. Farge, *Le parti conservateur au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Université et Parlement de Paris à l’époque de la Renaissance et de la Réforme* (Paris: Collège de France, 1992), p. 145, articles II, III, IIII.

<sup>694</sup> Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 157-163. Some participants at the council accused Pole of Lutheranism.

justice acquired by good works, only stressing its insufficiency. Also, faith must produce good works, because our final “judgment by God will be based on our works,” such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked.<sup>695</sup> (Matthew 25:31-46) Such works help make our election sure, reassuring us through “the eye of faith.”<sup>696</sup> Roussel’s insistence on justification by faith irenically still seeks to mitigate concerns expressed by Catholic leaders that this doctrine undermines the need to practice good works. It also manifests his independence from other Catholic reformers.

The necessity for good works forms a bridge to consider the Decalogue. The exposition is long, covering one hundred eight folio pages. Roussel is highly repetitive here. For example, for most commandments he manages to stress the inadequacy of the “philosophers in their school of reason,” preferring instead to emphasize the “school of faith.”<sup>697</sup> He also often declares the usages of the law: to help us acknowledge sin; to lead us to faith in Christ when we despair of keeping the dispositional implications of these commands; to teach us to live well.<sup>698</sup>

Roussel picks up on medieval Dionysian spirituality when he declares that “God is inaccessible in himself.” However, he made himself known through two sources, “the book of nature” and “his law”<sup>699</sup>—particularly the Decalogue. The latter commandments are grouped into two tables: three are directed toward God, seven toward our neighbours. (In the *Initiatore*

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<sup>695</sup> “le jugement de Dieu soit fondé sur nous oeuvres.” (33r)

<sup>696</sup> “l’oeil de foy.” (111r) See too 32r, 110v, and 2 Peter 1:10.

<sup>697</sup> “Laissons les philosophes en leur escholle de raison, et ne sortons point de l’escholle de foy.” (34r) See too 39r, 71r,v, 75r, 77v, 82r,v.

<sup>698</sup> “Premièrement pour faire congnoistre le peché qui est en nous, puis nous sert de pédagogue à Jésuschrist . . . lors est ce que nous est vrayement reigle de bien vivre.” (35r) See too 36v-40v, 66v-67v, 75v, 85v, 87r.

<sup>699</sup> “Dieu est de soy inaccessible. . . le livre de nature . . . sa loy.” (34r,v)

*Instruction*, Roussel did not identify ten commandments, but only nine.<sup>700</sup>) He chooses, then, the Catholic/Lutheran division as opposed to the Calvinist division, not for theological reasons, but for irenic ones: “it is best to accommodate ourselves to the common division.”<sup>701</sup>

Consistently, the commandments—which are mostly expressed as negations—are explained in both negative and positive terms. So, the law can positively be summarized “as delighting God and neighbour.”<sup>702</sup> The first one prohibits embracing other gods. It is “the means which I [God] wish here to give you to know me and to obey me, and to regain participation and joy in my divine glory and life.”<sup>703</sup> Roussel explains the origin of the name, Jehovah. The Tetragrammaton, which the Jewish people decided was too holy to pronounce, merged with the vowel points for *Adonai* (meaning Lord). Public readers of the Hebrew Scriptures were supposed to read *Adonai*, when they saw those points. Roussel considers this choice superstitious.<sup>704</sup> “There is a difference between things ordained of God, like the Word and the sacraments, and ceremonies which are not of God.”<sup>705</sup> Worship founded on “human invention” is also superstitious and can lead to false worship.<sup>706</sup> The bishop mentions “images,” but in contrast to Farel,<sup>707</sup> refuses to engage in personal attack of others who might be responsible for

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<sup>700</sup> See pp. 157-158 above.

<sup>701</sup> “vault myeulx nous accommoder à la commune division.” (35v)

<sup>702</sup> “en la dilection de Dieu and du prochain.” (39v) Of course, this summary parallels Jesus’ own summary in Matthew 22:37-40 that we are to love God and neighbour.

<sup>703</sup> “le moyen que je te veulx icy donner pour me congnoistre et m’obéir et en reporter participation et joyssance de ma divine gloire et vie.” (36r)

<sup>704</sup> “plus par superstition qu’aultrement.” (41r) See too 100v.

<sup>705</sup> “mettra-il différence entre choses ordonnées de Dieu, comme sont la Parolle et les sacremens, et les cérémonies qui ne sont de Dieu.” (41v)

<sup>706</sup> “aussi les inventions humaines fondées en superstition.” (43r)

<sup>707</sup> See pp. 133-135 above. Already at the Lausanne disputation in October 1536, Farel’s friend Calvin affirmed the abolition of the Mass and the removal of images from churches. Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 67. See p. 176, n. 541 above. Gordon, pp. 190-191, vividly portrays the sharp denunciation of the Mass and any participation in it as idolatry in Calvin’s campaign against the Nicodemites in

such questionable practice. Still, Roussel stresses his message and not irenicism when he insists that the Turk [Muslim], Jew and philosopher practise “idolatry.”<sup>708</sup> This first commandment is fundamental “and on its observation depends the observation of the others.”<sup>709</sup> It must manifest as “faith working by charity,”<sup>710</sup> for God, in extending mercy to thousands of generations while extending punishment only to three or four generations (Exodus 20:5-6), demonstrates “he is more inclined to mercy and blessing than to rigour.”<sup>711</sup>

The second commandment says we should not take the name of the Lord in vain. Another hand writes in the margin, *Le second*,<sup>712</sup> indicating that the long exposition of the first commandment has come to an end. Later, the transition to the second table of the law is noted by this same hand.<sup>713</sup> The goal of this editor seems simply clarity for the reader. Contrary to Anabaptist claims, Roussel permits Christians to use oaths, though with discretion.<sup>714</sup> Still, it is better that the Christian’s word be simply Yes or No, as required.<sup>715</sup> (Matthew 5:37)

Roussel explains the third commandment, sanctifying the Sabbath, in an interesting fashion. “This figurative ceremony obliges no one.”<sup>716</sup> Roussel met his death trying to persuade traditionalists in Mauléon to reduce the number of saints’ days to encourage greater work

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1544. His denunciation of Roussel’s elevation to the bishopric contained similar language. See pp. 63-64, 184-188 above.

<sup>708</sup> “ydolatre.” (44v)

<sup>709</sup> “et de l’observation de luy dépend l’observation des aultres.” (43v)

<sup>710</sup> “la foi . . . ouvre par charité.” (44v)

<sup>711</sup> “il est plus enclin à miséricorde et bñéficence qu’à rigueur.” (46v)

<sup>712</sup> 47v. See Landa, “Reformed Theology,” p. 364, n. 1.

<sup>713</sup> 56v. These few words tell us nothing about the editor.

<sup>714</sup> “il est licite au chrestien de jurer.” (49r) See too 49v.

<sup>715</sup> 50r.

<sup>716</sup> “ceste figurative cérémonie n’oblige nul.” (52v) See too 53r. Roussel affirms the observance of some feast days to encourage people to imitate these saints (54r).

productivity—an argument heading in the same direction.<sup>717</sup> The real goal of Sabbath is confession, thanksgiving, continual mortification and renewal of spirit. Ultimately, Sabbath must be “spiritual,” leading to cessation of sin and purification of the heart.<sup>718</sup> One enters the “rest of God.”<sup>719</sup> Nonetheless, it is advisable to gather for worship, specifically on Sundays, the day of Christ’s resurrection. Other estimable Sabbath activities are: giving rest to servants, making collections for the poor, visiting the sick and instructing one’s family in the faith. It is not sufficient to cease from labour.<sup>720</sup> Roussel attempts a delicate balancing act, trying to end legalistic observance of holy days, while encouraging transformative worship and acts of charity. Contarini, genuinely interested in reform of abuses, nonetheless readily accepts these holy days as practised, including fasting on Fridays and in Lent; Le Picart, the preacher of the Catholic Reformation in Paris and opponent of Roussel during the upheaval surrounding the latter’s Lenten preaching in 1533, reinforces firm observance of Sundays.<sup>721</sup>

The fourth commandment instills honour toward one’s parents, but also all superiors, including the wife toward her husband.<sup>722</sup> One is to see “with the eye of faith,” not the person nor the imperfections of the superior, but Christ.<sup>723</sup> The purpose is “true establishment and conduct of all good affairs and polity.”<sup>724</sup> We remember how important to the evangelicals the renewal of Christian society was. Conversely, but to the same end, parents were “to use

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<sup>717</sup> See pp. 194 above. It is, therefore, noteworthy that Roussel stresses “our daily bread” is a gift from God and does not come by our own labour or industry (120r).

<sup>718</sup> “Cesser et abstenir de peché . . . nous puriffie le cueur.” (54v)

<sup>719</sup> “repos de Dieu.” (55v) See Hebrews 3:18, 4:1.

<sup>720</sup> 52v, 53v, 54r.

<sup>721</sup> Gleason, *Contarini*, p. 102. Contarini is responding to the Augsburg Confession in his *Confutatio*. Taylor, *Le Picart*, p. 184. See pp. 182-192 above.

<sup>722</sup> 57v, 59v-61r.

<sup>723</sup> “de l’oeil de foy.” (60r)

<sup>724</sup> “vray establissement et conversation de toute bonne oeconomie et politie.” (58r)

*fatherly* discretion and prudence” in raising children, particularly avoiding Christian instruction “in a language unknown to them.”<sup>725</sup> We see the humanist and evangelical emphasis on translating the faith into the vernacular. Roussel’s irenicism slips again concerning Jews. They do not participate in building this wholesome society because they are “servants of money.”<sup>726</sup>

The fifth commandment against murder not only prohibits physical destruction but all inner dispositions that might lead to killing. It excludes murder “by hand, mouth and heart.”<sup>727</sup> Similarly, the sixth commandment against adultery prohibits all lewdness and requires above all purity.<sup>728</sup> It forbids excessive eating and drinking and lascivious talk.<sup>729</sup> Roussel introduces two medieval concepts that demonstrate his bridge-building efforts between theological opponents. Pseudo-Dionysius made famous the three stages of spiritual advance much loved by traditionalists: the purgative (*via negativa*), the illuminative and the unitive (Beatific Vision or mystical union).<sup>730</sup> The bishop of Oloron posits “degrees of perfection” in obeying these commands. Regarding murder, the highest stage involves not feeling ire toward a brother inwardly. The middle degree involves keeping the ire within without verbalizing it. The lowest degree is to “restrain the hand from striking.”<sup>731</sup> Furthermore, we are to make every effort to

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<sup>725</sup> “user de discrétion et prudence paternelle . . . en langue à eulx incongneue.” (61v) Emphasis mine.

<sup>726</sup> “serviteurs mercennaires.” (62v) Roussel also discredits Jewish faith as based on “humaines inventions et doctrines.” (108r)

<sup>727</sup> “ny de main, ny de bouche, ny de cueur.” (64v)

<sup>728</sup> “Toute manière de paillardise est icy prohibée. . . . il requiert trop plus la puretè.” (68v-69r)

<sup>729</sup> “avec gourmandise, yvrorgnerie et parolles lascives.” (70r)

<sup>730</sup> See, e.g., Guillaume Briçonnet, Marguerite d’Angoulême, *Correspondance (1521-1524)*, ed. Christine Martineau, Michel Veissière, t. I, *Années 1521-1522* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1975), pp. 59, 80, 97, 117; t. II, *Années 1523-1524* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), pp. 22, 72. Lefèvre d’Étaples views his commentaries on the gospels as belonging to the purgative stage. See his “Preface” to his *Commentaries on the Four Gospels* (originally published at Meaux in 1522), in John C. Olin, *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola, Reform in the Church 1495-1540* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 115.

<sup>731</sup> “degrez de perfection . . . nous la cohibons devant d’occuper la main pour frapper.” (68r) See 71v, 72v for degrees of conformity to the sixth commandment.

ascend the degrees of perfection to assure ourselves that God is agreeable to give “value to all our efforts, whatever they may be, even though we are by faith made agreeable to him.”<sup>732</sup>

Regarding the prohibition against adultery, Roussel reassures that, if we diligently do our part, “our weakness and imperfection will be well supplied by the benefit of the blood of Jesus

Christ.”<sup>733</sup> Here is a peacemaking effort to affirm justification by faith, while assuring

traditionalists that works still have “value” before God. If Roussel’s doctrine is embraced there

is no disincentive for good works. Yet he also stands against Joachim Westphal and the Gnesio-

Lutherans who would argue openly, starting in the 1550s, that good works might endanger

one’s salvation. The bridge-building bishop in anticipation counters: “It appears clear to me that

the resolution is not to give foolish and rash assurance, as one must when one believes with the

mouth, but is not required to have a functional faith.”<sup>734</sup> Roussel distinguishes himself from

Catholic traditionalists who reject justification by faith and from adamant Protestant

theologians who jettison good works, while creating common ground for those willing to

embrace both.

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<sup>732</sup> “nous devons nous plus efforcer et contendre de monter par les degrez de perfection, que devons estre persuadez que le bon Dieu aura pour agréable et fera valloir tous noz effortz, quelz qu’ilz soient, pourtant que par foy luy sommes faitz agréables.” (68r) With this awareness that our works always fall short, it is a puzzle that one theme in *Familière Exposition* is that, for the Christian, obedience to the Law is “trèsaysé” (very comfortable). See, e.g., 40r. Perhaps Roussel feels the longing for obedience to these injunctions now comes readily, even though conformity is incomplete. Perhaps it is a tension he feels no need to resolve.

<sup>733</sup> “la défaillance et imperfection nostre sera bien suppliée par le bénéfice du sang de Jésuschrist.” (73r) See too 76r, 85r.

<sup>734</sup> “Bien me semble que ainsi le résoudre n’est donner folle et téméraire assurance, comme s’il ne failloit sinon croire de bec, et ne fust point requise la foy opéreuse.” (84v) Luther in his *Large Catechism* [found in Theodore G. Tappert, tr., ed., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 391-392], agrees with Roussel on the importance of good works, but not so gently, specifically attacking the Carthusians: “If this could be thoroughly impressed on people’s minds, we would have our hands full of good works to do. . . . Know, however, that it is the works commanded by God’s Word which are the true, holy, and divine works in which he rejoices with all the angels. In contrast to them all human holiness is only stench and filth, and it merits nothing but wrath and damnation.”

The seventh commandment against stealing prohibits all harm done to the goods of another and inculcates “procuring, promoting, increasing the goods of the neighbour, supporting him in his necessities and his own affairs.”<sup>735</sup> Roussel makes several interesting additions to this basic point. Though supported throughout his ministry by the powerful, he still quotes the common saying, “The small insects are captured, and the big ones get away.”<sup>736</sup> He mentions the utopia of having all things in common, with no division of goods or private property. Such a society does not require a prohibition against stealing. However, he clearly affirms the right of Christians to participate in the existing economy of private property. While not attacking the ideal, he clearly favours the real world of exchange and expects Christians to live up to this commandment within it.<sup>737</sup> “Greed and waste are the two extremities”<sup>738</sup> that turn away from obedience. Roussel also slips in another purpose statement for *Familière Exposition*: “I shall count happy the fathers, masters and ministers who shall have so instructed their children, disciples and parishioners.”<sup>739</sup>

The eighth commandment does not just prohibit perjury in a law court, but all words spoken falsely against another and even “sinister suspicions.”<sup>740</sup> It can be spiritualized to encourage one “to defend and conserve in its entirety the honour and reputation of one’s neighbour.”<sup>741</sup> Roussel explains when lies might be permissible, citing several examples in Scripture where those who did so flourished. He gives both negative and positive answers. “All

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<sup>735</sup> “procurer, promouvoir, accroistre les biens du prochain, subvenir à ses necessitez et affaires du propre.” (75r)  
See also 74r.

<sup>736</sup> “les petites mouches sont prinses et les grosses passent outre.” (74v)

<sup>737</sup> 74v.

<sup>738</sup> “Avarice et prodigalité sont les deux extremitez.” (75v)

<sup>739</sup> “je réputerois heureux les pères, les maistres et ministres qui auroient ainsi instruitz leurs enfans, disciples et parroissians.” (76r)

<sup>740</sup> “Suspensions sinistres.” (77r)

<sup>741</sup> “deféndre et conserver en son entier l’honneur et fame du prochain.” (77v)

silence, dissimulation and hiding” is permissible “to stop the malice of Satan and his instruments and ministers, and not let it serve for malice and cruelty to the harm of one’s neighbour.” Positively, it must represent “faith working by charity, which is simple, only regarding the true goal of the glory of God and the good of one’s neighbour.”<sup>742</sup> Given the legal climate in France, with its hostility toward evangelicals and the sometimes fatal outcomes, it seems that Roussel had given this theme much thought. These positive and negative expressions of moments when it is acceptable to lie tell us much about his thinking as he balanced faithfulness and survival. It is the only commandment where he softens its requirements, instead of raising the instruction to the highest ideal.<sup>743</sup>

The ninth and tenth commandments are dealt with as one. The distinction is made that the ninth refers to immobile goods (like a house) and the tenth covers other goods (like a wife, servants and farm animals)—all of which we must not covet. The bishop embraces realism in explaining this difficult commandment. It is possible to covet something for one’s neighbour that would be helpful to her or him. Roussel does not believe such coveting is prohibited.<sup>744</sup> Also, even the regenerate struggle with a “bent to sinning.”<sup>745</sup> The Disciple explains the choice between the Reformed understanding—which splits the conventional first commandment into two and highlights the charge to avoid images of God—and the common (Catholic/Lutheran) division. He commends the familiar understanding. The Master articulates a general principle of

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<sup>742</sup> “tout teue ou dissimulée et occultée pour empescher la malice de Sathan en ses organes et ministres, et ne la faire servir à malice et cruaulté au préjudice du prochain. . . . foy ouvrante par charité, lequel est simple, ne regardant pour vray but que la gloire de Dieu et le bien du prochain.” (78r)

<sup>743</sup> Calvin was vociferous in his denunciation of dissimulation. See pp. 63-64, 186-188 above. Luther elevates the commandment from not depriving one’s neighbour of rights in court to not speaking any damaging words against our neighbour. He does not discuss when it is permissible to lie: *Larger Catechism* in Tappert, *Book of Concord*, pp. 399-404.

<sup>744</sup> “non point le convoiter qui est conjoint avec l’utilité du prochain.” (81v)

<sup>745</sup> “concupiscence.” (83r)

irenicism in response: “where there is no harm to anyone, either in faith or in charity, follow what is customary.”<sup>746</sup> In other words, Roussel supports the traditional numbering since there is no loss to “faith or charity” in retaining it.

Roussel ends his treatment of the Decalogue with a short consideration of the summary provided by Jesus: love of God and love of neighbour. (Matthew 22:37-40) The neighbour includes all humanity, enemies as well as friends.<sup>747</sup> He then admits “that which the Lord has briefly and in few words composed, by all the discourse on Scripture here is treated too lengthily and copiously.”<sup>748</sup>

Roussel’s loquaciousness provides humour for the reader as he examines the Lord’s Prayer in an exceedingly long section: one hundred fourteen folio pages.<sup>749</sup> One striking example will demonstrate the way the bishop multiplies words:

On the contrary, we ask to obtain above all the things which are for the promotion of the glory of the Father, which are to know him, to invoke him, to fear him, to love him, in order to celebrate, to preach, to magnify his name as is the Word of God, the evangelical doctrine, which we ask to be purely administered by all, not having any corner of the world where it is not preached, heard and received, that it may be so expressed by word, life and conversation, that by it all may be induced to glorify the Father who is in heaven. . . . That by it we may be so established and formed in heart, mouth, speech, hands, feet, that our life, conversation and morals may be so composed that there may not be anything in us nor of us that may not be to his glory, whether we drink, eat, or do something else.<sup>750</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> “là où n’y a préjudice aucun ny en foy ny en charité qu’on suyve l’accoustumé.” (78v-79r) See also 140v.

<sup>747</sup> 87v.

<sup>748</sup> “ce que nostre Seigneur brièvement et en peu de parolles a comprins, par tout le discourse de l’Escripture y est traicté plus au long et copieusement.” (88v)

<sup>749</sup> 88v-145v.

<sup>750</sup> “Au contraire, demandons obtenir par tout les choses qui sont à la promotion de la gloire du Père, qui sont pour le congnoistre, l’invoquer, le craindre, l’aymer, pour célébrer, prescher, magnifier son nom comme est la Parolle de Dieu, la doctrine évangélique, laquelle demandons estre par tout purement administrée, n’y avoir anglet au monde où ne soit preschée, ouye et receue, qu’elle soit tellement exprimée par parolle, vie et conversation, que de là tous soient induictz à glorifier le Père qui est ès cieulx. . . .Que de là soyons tellement instituez et formez

Here are two very complex run-on sentences. (A short biblical quotation in between was omitted.) The ironic humour is apparent when he warns, based on Matthew 6:7, that “superfluity of words” are a sign of “hypocritical”<sup>751</sup> prayer, and that the brevity of the Lord’s Prayer should be our example.

This section is marked by conventional evangelical piety. To illustrate, Roussel offers four reasons to pray to our Father: Jesus commands us to; he promises we will be heard; he models prayer for us; he has given this model for us to pray, too.<sup>752</sup> Two devotional features stand out in this section: the copious references to other Bible passages (with occasional references to church fathers, especially Augustine), and the frequent displacing of the word God (*Dieu*) by Father (*Père*)—noticeable even if not surprising. Many biblical books are alluded to, but we should note how frequently the Psalms and the Pauline corpus are cited. Roussel’s lectures for the lay folk in Meaux in 1524 come to mind again.<sup>753</sup>

For the purposes of this study, two features seem important. First, there is more evidence of restraint in dealing with abuses found in the church. Second, the theological basis for irenicism is expressed several times, revealing mature reflection upon Roussel’s life-long strategy for advancing needed change and renewal.

We begin with Roussel’s restraint, noteworthy because irenic options were disappearing in the late 1540s.<sup>754</sup> Before analyzing the prayer in detail, he identifies three ways in which

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coeur, bouche, langue, mains, piedz, que nostre vie, conversation et meurs soient tellement composez, que n’y ait rien en nous ny de nous qui ne soit à sa gloire, soit que beuvons, mangeons ou faisons aultre chose.” (101r,v)

<sup>751</sup> “superfluité de parolles . . . hipocrates.” (94r)

<sup>752</sup> 90r.

<sup>753</sup> See p. 93 above.

<sup>754</sup> On the virulence of many, see Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998).

outward prayer cannot be called “truly talking to God.”<sup>755</sup> Prayer can be merely outward “without the attention of the heart.”<sup>756</sup> “Also one must not say ‘prayer’ if anyone reads and recites just any prayer.”<sup>757</sup> Finally, it is not genuine prayer “if it is done and formed according to the doctrine and mandates of men and not according to the doctrine and mandates of God.”<sup>758</sup> To this end, Roussel warns against “setting certain times for prayer.”<sup>759</sup> Public prayer nonetheless is “very useful . . . but one must above all guard against superstition, foolish confidence and rash assurance.”<sup>760</sup> Instead, prayer “must be done in Spirit and truth.”<sup>761</sup> Consequently, “it is necessary to remove all mercilessness toward one’s neighbour and the poor.”<sup>762</sup> Roussel wants prayer to be transformative of spirit and of action. He rejects some ways it is practised, yet he avoids launching any attacks.

Roussel laments over the state of Christian society, seeing a sign of the end of times:

In these last days . . . in which there is continual increase of tribulations—whether we see the state of temporal things, or we see Christianity, the state of the churches—in all we can see there such disorder that thousands of tears will not suffice to deplore the infelicity of our times.<sup>763</sup>

Similarly, he rues “the superstitions and merchandising that we are constrained to see done today in the Church.”<sup>764</sup> He laments, but he avoids assigning blame. He describes contemporary

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<sup>755</sup> “proprement parler à Dieu.” (89r)

<sup>756</sup> “sans l’attention du cueur.” (89r)

<sup>757</sup> “Ne se doibt aussi dire prière si aulcun lict et récite quelque oraison.” (89r)

<sup>758</sup> “si elle est faicte et formée selon la doctrine et mandement des hommes et non point selon la doctrine et mandement de Dieu.” (89r)

<sup>759</sup> “ne se peult statuer certain temps pour prier.” (92v)

<sup>760</sup> “très utile . . . Mais se fault sur tout garder de superstition, folle fiance et téméraire assurance.” (94v)

<sup>761</sup> “soit faicte en Esperit et vérité.” (89r)

<sup>762</sup> “Fault aussi oster toute immiséricorde envers le prochain et les pauvres.” (94r)

<sup>763</sup> “en ces derniers jours . . . esquelz y a continuel accroissement de tribulations, soit que nous regardons l’estat des choses temporelles, soit que regardons le christianisme, l’estat des Eglises, par tout nous y pouvons veoir ung tel désordre que milles larmes ne suffiroient pour déplorer l’infélicité de nostre temps.” (92v)

<sup>764</sup> “les superstitions et marchandises que sommes contrainctz veoir faire au jourd’huy en l’Eglise.” (129v)

“Pharisees who persuade themselves that their traditions and additions to the law of the Father are a greater perfection than this law of the Father—which is an unbearable blasphemy.”<sup>765</sup> Remission for sins comes through Jesus Christ alone; therefore, we should not “seek it elsewhere . . . nor seek it in another.”<sup>766</sup> Clerics are admonished: “So they remit sins as ministers and by the ministry committed to them, and not of their own power.”<sup>767</sup> Yet, he will not identify those who fail to lead in a biblical fashion nor excoriate them further. He clearly is uncomfortable with the control of remission of sins by the priests. In fact, Roussel commends the opposite: everyone is to pray for remission of sin for others. “All Christians have access here by Jesus Christ to the throne of grace to ask and appeal both for themselves and their brothers the entire remission of sins.”<sup>768</sup> “All bulls, letters and seals, from wherever they may arise” cannot replace the simple command, “forgive and you will be forgiven.”<sup>769</sup> Roussel had himself been crucially protected by a letter from Pope Clement VII in 1533.<sup>770</sup> Still, he boldly emphasizes the gospel as the only solution for human sin, undercutting the claims of the church hierarchy. The solution to the “blasphemy” of traditionalists who “add” to the salvation found in Christ is not to contend or fight for the truth, but to pray that “we may deny ourselves and, carrying our cross, we may follow our Lord, obeying the Father until death.”<sup>771</sup> Furthermore, it

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<sup>765</sup> “les pharisiens qui se persuadoient leurs traditions et additions à la loy du Père estre de plus grande perfection que icelle loy du Père qui estoit ung importable blasphème.” (114v) See, similarly, 116v, where both the charge of Pharisaism and the response of enduring persecution are the same as here. Also, see 128r.

<sup>766</sup> “ne la chercher ailleurs . . . n’en cherchons d’aultre.” (126r)

<sup>767</sup> “Ainsi remettent les péchez comme ministres et par le ministère à eulx commis, et non de leur puissance.” (126v)

<sup>768</sup> “tous chrestiens ont icy par Jésuchrist accès au throne de grace pour demander et impétrer tant pour eulx que pour leurs frères l’entière rémission des péchez.” (128r)

<sup>769</sup> Luke 6:37. “Toutes bulles, lectres et seaulx, de quelque part que soient émanées.” (130r)

<sup>770</sup> See pp. 177-179 above.

<sup>771</sup> Matthew 16:24. “abnyons nous mesmes et portans nostre croix nous suyvions nostre Seigneur obéissant au Père jusques à la mort.” (115r) See also 142v.

is not because of “infirmity or impotence that one does not take vengeance.”<sup>772</sup> Such noble words were, often enough, not put into practice; however, the evangelicals did follow this irenic path with considerable consistency. Roussel reminds his readers the true source of injury is not a neighbour, but humanity’s real enemy, the Devil.<sup>773</sup> These words are poignant since Roussel could name friends in Meaux and Paris who had been executed by human opponents. On another topic, Roussel challenges the rich several times: “It is not even decent that the children of such a Father seek delicacies and sensual pleasures.”<sup>774</sup> He could have declaimed against some traditionalists for their self-indulgence, but he does not do so. His own practice as a bishop and his revised will testify to his authenticity in this regard.<sup>775</sup>

The theological basis for irenicism evident in this section on the Lord’s Prayer is an important addition to our study. Roussel begins with the conditional basis upon which God hears prayer: “it is necessary to remove from ourselves all deception, discord, rancour; it is necessary to remit and pardon all injuries.”<sup>776</sup> He lived as though he took this condition seriously. The urging to carry one’s cross in the face of attacks, often virulent, also challenged Roussel’s disciples and forms part of this theological grounding. Yet it goes deeper.

. . . to impart to us such grace of humility and patience that no prosperity in this world may cause arrogance to arise, that we fall not into ingratitude, into despising our neighbour; but remain humble, giving thanks so much that we count ourselves greater debtors to our neighbour to serve him in gratitude the greater our prosperity, the more of good we have received; that by no adversity, persecution and tribulation of any kind

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<sup>772</sup> “ne pensons que soit par infirmité et impuissance que ne se venge.” (144v)

<sup>773</sup> 140v-141r.

<sup>774</sup> “Il n’est aussi décent que les enfans d’ung tel Père cherchent les délices et voluptez.” (120r) See also 119v, 120v, 122v, and more in 120r.

<sup>775</sup> See pp. 188, 195 above.

<sup>776</sup> “fault oster de nous toute similté, discorde, rancune, fault remettre et pardonner toutes injures.” (94r)

the world provoke us by its malice, we fall not into impatience, wrath, vengeance; but taking it all in patience from his hand, from which only all good may come.<sup>777</sup>

. . . all made members of one body, by the action of one Spirit, [the Father] desires that we have solicitude one for the other. Indeed he made common prayer to be for us true doctrine, exhortation and motivation to ask as much the good of our neighbour as our own, to remove from us all discords and enmities, to repress all arrogance and make everyone equal by the union of faith and charity, whatever diversity there may be outwardly and in condition . . . since we all confess to have the same Father in heaven. . . . Whoever is not moved by such affection of charity is not truly able to call him “our Father” or use his formulas to pray.<sup>778</sup>

[The Father] remits our debts for us, that is, he cedes his right and requires of us nothing which in anyway may be for him, but which profits us grandly, knowing that we remit the offenses of our brothers which they have committed against us, so that peace, delight and concord can be preserved among us.<sup>779</sup>

The latter passage reflects on the petition “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” All three passages encourage a peaceable, even peacemaking response to faith in Jesus. The centrality of this gospel is evident when he interprets the petition “May your name be sanctified” this way: “that your gospel may sincerely be taught by you.”<sup>780</sup> A sincere gospel stimulates harmonious living. Roussel was strongly motivated to peaceable living by his desire to be heard in his prayers. The Lord’s Prayer, then, was central to his understanding of an irenic life of gospel renewal for himself and for others.

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<sup>777</sup> “nous impartir telle grace d’humilité et patience que par nulle prospérité de ce monde ne soyons eslevez en orgueil, ne tumbons en ingratitude, en mespris de nostre prochain; mais persévérans humbles, rendans graces d’aautant que nous réputans plus débiteurs à nostre prochain pour l’en servir que plus grande est la prospérité, que plus avons receu de bien; que par nulle adversité, persécution et tribulation quiconque nous suscite le monde par sa malice, ne tumbons en impacience, courroux, vengeance; mais prenons le tout en patience de sa main de laquelle ne pourroit venir que tout bien.” (140r)

<sup>778</sup> “membres faitz tous d’ung corps, agis d’ung Esprit, veult qu’ayons solicitude les ungs pour les aultres. Pourtant fait-il la prière commune pour nous estre vraye doctrine, exhortation et expédient pour demander austain le bien de nostre prochain que la nostre, pour oster de nous toutes discordes et inimitiez, pour réprimer tout orgueil et esgaller le tout par l’unyon de foy et charité, quelque diversité qu’il y ait au dehors en estat et en condition . . . puis que tous confessons avoir un mesme Père au ciel. . . . Qui n’est meü de telle affection de charité ne peult vrayement l’appeler nostre Père ne user de ses formules de prier.” (98r,v)

<sup>779</sup> “nous remect nos debtes, c’est à dire qu’il cède son droict et requiert de nous non chose qui en rien soit pour luy, mais qui nous prouffite grandement, assavoir que remettons à noz frères les offenses qu’ilz nous ont faites, affin que paix, dilection et concorde se puisse conserver entre nous.” (130v)

<sup>780</sup> “Que ton évangile soit de toy sincèrement enseigné.” (99v)

Roussel walks a fine line when he discusses the just-mentioned petition “forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.” To forgive others should not be understood as a cause of our remission by the Father; it is an imitation, as God’s children, of his generosity. However, to keep faith and works inseparably together, he then declares that those who do not forgive their neighbour are “rejected by the Father and erased from the number of his children.”<sup>781</sup> This statement seems to make forgiveness of others a condition of our own salvation. The irenic bishop, trying to emphasize the gospel like the Protestants but trying to retain the necessity of good works like Catholic traditionalists, holds these points in tension without resolving it.

A strong indicator of irenicism and the rejection of schism is Roussel’s acceptance of the discipline of the Catholic Church. The faithful sometimes must accept castigation as their lot, though such castigation in no way contributes to the satisfaction made for their sin. So, “we can well recognize the ecclesiastical and canonical penitence and satisfactions as such true disciplines for our instruction and that of others, not to commit the same [sins] in the future.”<sup>782</sup> He is also aware there are “many sects, heresies and scandals”<sup>783</sup> that plague the church. Roussel does not wish to add to these problems, but neither does he advocate punishment here for people engaged in such turmoils.

Roussel begins his section on baptism with a brief consideration of sacraments in general. He paraphrases the view of Augustine that a sacrament is “the visible form of invisible

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<sup>781</sup> “rejettez du Père et effacez du nombre de ses enfans.” (130r) See too 131v.

<sup>782</sup> “Telles pouvons nous bien reconnoistre les pénitences et satisfactions ecclésiastiques et canoniques vraies disciplines pour l’instruction de nous et des aultres de ne commettre le semblable pour l’advenir.” (129v)

<sup>783</sup> “combien de sectes, d’hérésies, de scandalles.” (141r)

grace.”<sup>784</sup> Yet the Bishop of Oloron quickly adds a definition of his own: it is “a sign of something holy . . . that it signifies and represents . . . but also [that] it offers and exhibits.”<sup>785</sup> The words “offered and exhibited” occur frequently in this section and are crucial for understanding Roussel’s teaching on both baptism and the Lord’s Supper. He rejects as an abuse a view of sacrament as merely a representative sign or reminder. He focuses on two sacraments only without rejecting the possibility of others. His justification for discussing only baptism and “the sacrament of [Jesus’] body and of his blood” is that they are “those that Jesus Christ has expressly instituted and ordained.”<sup>786</sup> Roussel then presents a thematic sentence that is central to his theology: “For baptism is not cleansing from sin in that it signifies it, neither is the bread of the Supper the body in that it signifies it, but rather that, in fact and truly, it offers and exhibits it.”<sup>787</sup> It expresses Eucharistic theology in a way that is congruent with Lutheran consubstantiation, Calvin’s assertion of the real presence of Christ at the communion and traditional transubstantiation without choosing between them. As an irenic, Roussel tries to build bridges rather than to take sides. (I will focus on his discussion of the Lord’s Supper shortly.) This position allowed him to remain in the Catholic setting, while still emphasizing the gospel. He stressed gospel preaching; yet Roussel also believed baptism and communion declare the gospel when properly understood.

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<sup>784</sup> “visible forme de la grace invisible.” (145v) See Landa, “Reformed Theology,” p. 549, n.1, for sources in Augustine’s work.

<sup>785</sup> “signe de la chose sainte . . . qu’il la signifie et représente . . . mais aussi offerte et exhibée.” (145v)

<sup>786</sup> “le sacrement de son corps et de son sang . . . par exprès ceulx que Jésuschrist a institué et ordonné.” (146r)

<sup>787</sup> “Car le baptesme n’est point ablution des péchez pourtant qu’il la signifie, ny le pain de la cène le corps pourtant qu’il le signifie, mais pourtant que de fait et vrayement l’offre et exhibe.” (146r)

Baptism cleanses the “filth . . . of the soul” for which “the benefit of Christ’s blood and presence is required.”<sup>788</sup> As a typical evangelical, he stresses that “to administer it without faith . . . [is] unworthy.”<sup>789</sup> Failure to do so has led to “idolatries, superstitions, abuses, which too frequently and in too great a number we are constrained to witness in our assemblies.”<sup>790</sup> Here is the reformer’s cry, but he immediately steers away from the “error of the Anabaptists”<sup>791</sup> in rejecting infant baptism. Quoting several biblical verses, he asserts God’s promises are also intended for children and the church should welcome the young.<sup>792</sup> Roussel also counters the ancient Donatist position that the impure character of a celebrant can make the sacraments invalid,<sup>793</sup> by asserting the validity of these ceremonial actions even when the celebrant proves unworthy. Then he promptly declares salvation does not, however, come through the baptismal water.<sup>794</sup> This irenic evangelical reformer performs a complicated doctrinal dance.

The primary aspect of baptism is the redemptive action of God in Christ. The secondary aspect involves a necessary response of human obedience.<sup>795</sup> The primary aspect is proclaimed verbally during baptism, for “it is by the Word and promise that the use and efficacy of the sacraments are expressed.”<sup>796</sup> God “freely offers and exhibits [these promises] under the external and sensory element and sign. . . . The faithful receive the truth offered and exhibited

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<sup>788</sup> “ordures . . . de l’ame . . . est requis le bénéfice de son sang et présence.” (146r) Roussel is relatively brief in discussing baptism, but he could have been briefer. He emphasizes most points three or more times.

<sup>789</sup> “sans la foy l’administrer . . . indignement.” (147r)

<sup>790</sup> “ydolatries, superstitions, abus, lesquelz par trop fréquens et en trop grand nombre sommes contrainctz veoir aux assemblées nostres.” (148v)

<sup>791</sup> “l’erreur des anabaptistes.” (152r) See also 148v-149r.

<sup>792</sup> 151v.

<sup>793</sup> 148r, 153r,v.

<sup>794</sup> “ne transférions au signe nulle portion de salut.” (150v)

<sup>795</sup> 148r, 149r,v, 151r, 155v.

<sup>796</sup> “est par la Parolle et promesse qu’est exprimé l’usage et efficace des sacremens.” (149v)

with the sign, and the unfaithful reject the truth and receive only the sign.”<sup>797</sup> The latter do not manifest the obedience expected of those who embrace baptism as Christ intended.

We receive baptism, with regard for its institution, to be the washing of regeneration and renovation, participation in the death of Christ, clothing [ourselves] with Christ, entrance into his body through the Church to become a member and [his] child. . . . Therefore it is possible and necessary to call it the symbol and sign of the new alliance [with Christ]. . . . Efficacy [is demonstrated by] . . . profession of faith, a good conscience, penitence, mortification of the flesh, a new life.<sup>798</sup>

Baptism also “provides for [strength] against all temptations.”<sup>799</sup> Roussel continues to insist upon faith working through charity.<sup>800</sup> This new life demonstrates that the grace manifested in baptism has been appropriated.<sup>801</sup> Without good works, baptism is simply a “nude sign.”<sup>802</sup>

Roussel’s irenic approach to Christian leadership is evident in this section. “The ministry and office committed to and enjoined upon them is not to rule and to dominate in order to resemble the princes of this world, but to preach and teach. . . . [They are] to preach the gospel, not the traditions and doctrines of men.”<sup>803</sup> Both the references to human traditions and to resembling worldly princes are a mild swipe at traditionalist leaders, but a type of leadership is

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<sup>797</sup> “gratuitement y offre et exhibe soubz l’élément et signe externe et sensible. . . . les fidèles reçoivent la vérité offerte et exhibée avec le signe, et les infidèles rejettent la vérité et n’en reçoivent que le signe.” (151r, 150r)

<sup>798</sup> “recevons le baptesme, pour le regard de son institution, estre le lavacre de régénération et rénovation, la participation de la mort de Christ, l’investiture de Christ, l’insertion au corps de luy en son Eglise pour estre fait membre et enfant. . . . Parquoy se peult et doibt appeller le symbolle et signe de la nouvelle alliance. . . . l’efficace . . . la profession de la foy, la bonne conscience, pénitence, mortification de la chair, nouvelle vie.” (150r,v, 151r)

<sup>799</sup> “pouvoir à toutes tentations.” (155v)

<sup>800</sup> 152r.

<sup>801</sup> 148r.

<sup>802</sup> “signe nud.” (152r)

<sup>803</sup> “le ministère et office à eulx commis et enjoinctz n’estre point de régner et dominer pour ressembler aux princes de ce monde, mais de prescher et enseigner. . . . prescher l’évangile, non les traditions et doctrines des hommes.” (147v) Calvin set a different tone a decade earlier, *Instruction in Faith* (1537), tr. Paul T. Fuhrmann (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947), p. 74, contending that human traditions should be resisted. Roussel attempts instead to displace them by gospel preaching.

commended that is both gospel-oriented and gentle with people, an approach Roussel also modeled. He inserts a purpose statement for this section:

To remove all the abuses and restore the whole to concord and true edification—which, at this point, are reduced and revoked by all—and not to wish to appear more wise and circumspect in administering them than Jesus Christ who, from his sacred mouth, has instituted and ordained them.<sup>804</sup>

Roussel sees himself as an irenic reformer, struggling to remove abuses from and to counter seemingly endless contestation over sacraments that could have been a source of unity. The plural “them” suggests the bishop has in mind both baptism and the Lord’s Supper. (The latter was more keenly contested in the sixteenth century.) He concludes with the debate about whether baptism should be “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” as in Matthew 28:19, or “in the name of Jesus Christ,” as in Acts 2:38, 10:48 and 19:5. He simply, in typical fashion, declares that the formulae amount to the same thing.<sup>805</sup> He points out that baptism into the Triune God distinguishes the Christian faith from the Jewish and “Turkish” religions. However, here he makes no disparaging remarks about the other faiths.<sup>806</sup>

### Scholarly Perspectives on Roussel

Scholars generally have not spent enough time taking Roussel on his own terms. It has been easy, under the influence of prevailing narratives, simply to cite features of his teaching and then suggest dependence upon others or adherence to a certain camp. However, a bridge builder like Roussel, with the motivation and capacity to reach out to many others, could well

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<sup>804</sup> “pour en oster tous les abus et ramener le tout à concorde et vraye édification que là du tout les réduire et révoquer, et ne se vouloir monstrier plus saige et circonspect à les administrer que Jésuschrist qui, de sa sacrée bouche, les a instituez et ordonnez.” (153v)

<sup>805</sup> 153v-155r.

<sup>806</sup> 153v, 155r.

manifest comfort with multiple perspectives while avoiding committing himself to any one camp. However, such a conclusion can only follow from a careful assessment of his whole teaching and manner. When we take this approach, more selective readings prove inadequate, as I will demonstrate in the next two sections.

Paul Landa entitles his chapter on the bishop of Oloron's doctrinal perspective, "The Reformed Theology of Gerard Roussel."<sup>807</sup> Landa demonstrates many parallels, even dependencies. For example, John Calvin expounds the role of Jesus Christ as mediator between God and humanity as the fulfilment of three Old Testament offices: prophet, king and priest. Roussel straightforwardly borrows this scheme.<sup>808</sup> Despite Calvin's hostility toward him, he had studied the *Institutes* and drew on the book at this point and others. However, Landa finds almost as many allusions to Luther, making it problematic to assign Roussel to the Reformed camp. In fact, Landa explains the bishop's unwillingness to embrace schism by stating he was "a concerned *Roman Catholic* Christian."<sup>809</sup> Landa then affirms and dismisses Roussel on the same page. "He seems to lack dogmatic emphasis. . . . There is too much serenity and sweet reasonableness in his formula for salvation—believe and live aright. . . . Roussel's God appears more kind than just, more good than almighty."<sup>810</sup> One could ask, "What is the problem?" Landa answers: Roussel was a "peace-loving, reform-minded disciple of Lefèvre" d'Étaples when "the drastic situation in the early part of the sixteenth century called for drastic actions." Immediately, however, Landa reflects on the many people and places the bishop impacted and declares that Roussel's "restrained, calculated activism was particularly well-suited to the

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<sup>807</sup> Landa, "Reformed Theology," chap. II.

<sup>808</sup> 7v. See Calvin, *Institutes*, v. 1, II, xv, pp. 494-503.

<sup>809</sup> Landa, "Reformed Theology," p. 265. Emphasis mine.

<sup>810</sup> Landa, "Reformed Theology," p. 264.

temper of the times.”<sup>811</sup> Landa’s confusion arises because he tried to make Roussel fit the camps earlier narratives recognized.

Landa correctly points out “one discovers a surprising lack of careful research on the part of the majority of those who have pronounced judgment upon the bishop of Oloron.”<sup>812</sup> Paquin proposes the solution: “It will be necessary to pay much more attention to individuals while avoiding schematizing excessively the vision of diverse reformations.”<sup>813</sup> To succeed, we must leave room for common sources that all gospel-oriented reformers drew on, particularly the Bible and church fathers, especially Augustine. As they explored a renewed definition of Christian faith, they also learned from one another. So, there were parallels and dependencies, but we still need to be cautious in drawing further conclusions in such fluid circumstances.<sup>814</sup>

The tendency to assume Protestant parallels can be striking. Landa speaks of Roussel’s embrace of the notion that the Christian is both just and a sinner—a statement Luther had made famous.<sup>815</sup> Landa plausibly argues the bishop derived that interpretation from Romans 7, but then declares it is “an interpretation which [Roussel] must have taken from the reformers.”<sup>816</sup> Cadier likewise describes Roussel as introducing into the old church that which was needed from *Luther’s* teaching.<sup>817</sup> How is it decided that a scholar who had done much

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<sup>811</sup> Landa, “Reformed Theology,” p. 266.

<sup>812</sup> Landa, “Reformed Theology,” p. 12.

<sup>813</sup> Paquin, “Le problème nicodémite,” p. 232: “il faudra accorder une plus grande attention aux individualités en évitant de trop schématiser la vision des diverses réformations.” This study on Roussel attempts to do so.

<sup>814</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 526-527, notes Roussel’s theological dependence upon Calvin and Luther, but avoids the conclusion that the bishop, therefore, was “a cowardly Protestant hiding under a bishop’s miter.”

<sup>815</sup> “Simul justus et peccator.” Landa, “Reformed Theology,” pp. 169-174. Folios 82v-83r.

<sup>816</sup> Landa, “Reformed Theology,” pp. 170-171.

<sup>817</sup> Cadier, “Roussel,” p. 103. Emphasis mine.

study of and preaching from these texts cannot come to conclusions on his own? Roussel drew his teaching (like many Protestants) from the New Testament, but so did many Catholics.

Lack of careful research can also be associated with the doctrine of justification by faith. Too often scholars have practised mere word association: if someone speaks about justification by faith, they must be Protestant or have Protestant leanings. Catholic evangelicals cannot exist with such an approach. However, Lefèvre d'Étaples wrote about this doctrine before 1517.<sup>818</sup> Gasparo Contarini and his friend, Tommaso Guistiniani, both Catholic loyalists, had already embraced it by 1511. Elizabeth Gleason, in fact, states this doctrine was embraced by many “serious Christians at the time.”<sup>819</sup> It was preached in Meaux; it appears in *Initiatoire Instruction* and in *Forme de Visite*; and Roussel spoke extensively about it in *Familière Exposition*.<sup>820</sup> However, in writing on this theme, Roussel simply understood himself to be teaching what the Apostle Paul had taught.<sup>821</sup>

The Protestant narrative could turn a strength—the insistence on irenic living—into a weakness. Schmidt sees *Familière Exposition* as a “semi-reform,” based upon the gospel but unwilling to deal with the degeneracy of Rome.<sup>822</sup> He unfavourably observes

the pain Roussel gives himself to reconcile his individual belief with his obligations as a Catholic bishop. . . . Roussel is not a dogmatist; for the reform of doctrine for him is less

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<sup>818</sup> See pp. 88-89 above.

<sup>819</sup> Gleason, *Contarini*, p. 17. See pp. 15-17.

<sup>820</sup> 3v, 30r,v, 31v, 33v, 39v, 84v, 127v, 157v, 176r.

<sup>821</sup> 3v, 33v, 106v, 175r-v.

<sup>822</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 127.

important than the reform of life through faith that regenerates the heart and produces charity.<sup>823</sup>

In contrast, we could understand Roussel as bringing together Catholic devotion focused on the Mass and Protestant affection for the Word (*Parolle*). Thierry Wanegffelen convincingly argues the confessional frontier in the sixteenth century did not consist of theology, but of these pious sensibilities, and suggests that Roussel overcame the barrier.<sup>824</sup> Denis Crouzet agrees: the bishop's insistence on "faith working through charity" combined Eucharistic devotion and justification by faith and distinguished him from Calvin.<sup>825</sup> Rather than being weak, Roussel was an effective bridge builder.

Interestingly, Cadier insists Roussel is "neither Lutheran, nor Zwinglian, nor Calvinist, but all the same a reformer."<sup>826</sup> He follows de Raemond and suggests the bishop was creating his own movement: *Rousselisme*. Its essential characteristic is that piety can be decimated by change that is too radical; nothing must be destroyed. Cadier's analysis is quite sound, except that Roussel was no sectarian. He wished to recall to the Catholic Church to its purer roots.

Francis Higman effectively sums up *Familière Exposition*: Roussel "seeks desperately to formulate the faith in a manner acceptable to all Christians."<sup>827</sup> Higman notes the bishop's

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<sup>823</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 158, 155: "la peine que Roussel s'est donnée de concilier sa croyance individuelle avec ses obligations de prélat catholique. . . . Roussel n'est pas dogmatiste ; ce qui lui importe plus encore que la réforme de la doctrine, c'est la réforme de la vie par la foi qui régénère le cœur et qui produit la charité."

<sup>824</sup> Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève*, pp. 29-31, 93.

<sup>825</sup> Denis Crouzet, *La genèse de la Réforme française, 1520-1560* (Paris: Sèdes, 1996), pp. 318-319.

<sup>826</sup> Cadier, "Roussel," p. 99: "Ni luthérien, ni zwinglien, ni calvinien, mais tout de même réformateur."

<sup>827</sup> Francis Higman, *Lire et Découvrir: La circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1998), p. 624: "cherche désespérément à formuler la foi d'une manière acceptable par l'ensemble des chrétiens."

bridge building efforts, but also the sense that, by 1548, the time for rapprochement was running out.<sup>828</sup>

Landa makes an interesting observation about development in Roussel's thinking since he had translated *Magna Moralia*.<sup>829</sup> In the latter, he argues the spiritual virtues of faith, hope and love (distinct from Aristotle's list of virtues) arose without egotistical features from within the Body of Christ. They were, therefore, meritorious. Nearly three decades later, he denies these virtues any merit. Protestant Reformers may have influenced him; but, years of Bible study and evangelical preaching may have done so, too. What is most remarkable, though, is how few changes we find in Roussel's doctrine or basic strategy for gospel renewal. He was a consistent evangelical irenic, even as times changed and circumstances grew more ominous in the 1540s.

#### Scholars' Interpretations of Roussel's Eucharistic Doctrine

Roussel does not specifically affirm that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus. Yet, if he was building bridges between strongly contested opinions, he might well have avoided a clear statement in favour of a definite position. Schmidt argues "transubstantiation is completely foreign to" Roussel.<sup>830</sup> Cadier states Roussel rejects transubstantiation and Zwingli's symbolic understanding.<sup>831</sup> The latter point is true, but the former claim is based on silence: Roussel fails to affirm transubstantiation. Cadier then manifests uncertainty. The bishop draws on Calvin's doctrine of spiritual presence. Or is he is

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<sup>828</sup> See pp. 207-209 above.

<sup>829</sup> Landa, "Reformed Theology," p. 159, n. 2.

<sup>830</sup> Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, p. 151: "la transubstantiation lui est complètement étrangère."

<sup>831</sup> Cadier, "Roussel," pp. 92-93.

closer to Luther's view of consubstantiation? Roussel's doctrine seems hard to pin down. Likewise Crouzet, following Wanegffelen, uses the ambiguous term, "the real Eucharistic presence."<sup>832</sup> He leaves room for the possibility Roussel avoids recognized categories in order to cross their boundaries.

Wanegffelen cites an important precedent for assessing Roussel's teaching in *Familière Exposition*. In his letter to Farel written from Meaux, Roussel already embraced the two sensibilities, Word and Eucharist. "I recognize like you that one has erred here relative to the Eucharist, by abandoning adoration in spirit and in truth, but I do not wish to conclude then that Christ in Heaven does not exhibit his presence, even corporally, to whom he wills and as he wills."<sup>833</sup> The emphasis on "spirit and truth" points to the Word, and the admission that Christ may still reveal himself corporally in the Mass points to traditional piety. Roussel uses the word "exhibit"—so important in *Familière Exposition*—to describe the physical manifestation of Christ's body. Wanegffelen sums up his understanding of Roussel's Eucharistic teaching: "Adoration of Christ on the cross in the moment the host is elevated, meditation on the fact that 'I am not worthy,' these appear to be the two elements that bind [his] Eucharistic piety and affirmation of the absolute grace of salvation."<sup>834</sup>

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<sup>832</sup> Crouzet, *La genèse*, p. 237: "la présence réelle eucharistique."

<sup>833</sup> Roussel to Farel, September 25, 1525 in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 186-187, pièce justificatif no. V: "Sane nihil ad adorationem quæ in spiritu et veritate fieri debet, quod alii prodiderunt, nec gravatim in tuam descendo sententiam nisi quod nolim Christum ita cælo concludi ut suam præsentiam etiam corporalem non exhibeat quibus voluerit et quum voluerit."

<sup>834</sup> Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, Ni Genève*, p. 95: "Adoration du Christ en croix au moment où l'hostie est élevée, méditation sur le *non sum dignus*, tels apparaissent les deux éléments qui soudent piété eucharistique et affirmation de l'absolue gratuité du salut."

Paquin disagrees.<sup>835</sup> He rightly points out Roussel never mentions the elevation of the Host, but he also notes Roussel never rejects Christ's real presence "under" (*sous*) the elements. He suggests the bishop of Oloron's position is close to Melancthon's view expressed in the 1531 *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*.

Reid correctly agrees with Paquin in taking Wanegffelen to task. He presents a carefully nuanced argument that I will both agree and disagree with.<sup>836</sup> He notes Landa did not attempt to find parallels in Roussel to Calvin regarding the Eucharist. Reid does so and concludes Roussel's dependence on Calvin's 1543 (Latin)/1545 (French) edition of the *Institutes* was high. This point should be granted, though with reservation. Some parallels seem more like working on common issues from common New Testament sources than items of dependence. Importantly, Reid states that "it is the differences that reveal Roussel's independence."<sup>837</sup> Here are two examples. First, both Roussel and Calvin write about the bread and wine losing their names and being called the body and blood. However, Roussel describes the process as "*truly taking the name of things that are by [the bread and wine] offered and exhibited,*" while Calvin says, "to borrow the title of things they *represent*, of which they contain the certain *signification* without deception."<sup>838</sup> Calvin, with precision, distances himself from any notion that Christ is present in the elements; Roussel, with precision, chooses words that strongly suggest such a presence, but that also avoid taking sides in the contemporary Eucharist

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<sup>835</sup> Paquin, "Le problème nicodémite," p. 229.

<sup>836</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 534-549.

<sup>837</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 537.

<sup>838</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 539, n. 101. The emphasis is mine. *Familière Exposition*, 164r: "prennent vrayement le nom des choses que par eulx sont offertes et exhibées." *Institutes*, v. 2, IV, xvii, 21, p. 1385: "emprunter le tiltre des choses qu'ilz représentent, desquelles ilz contiennent la signification certaine et sans fallace." To complicate matters, Calvin uses the word "exhibit" in this section; however, its range of connotations allows for his use to fit his more spiritual interpretation, while Roussel uses "exhibit" more literally.

debates. Second, in considering the benefits of communion, Calvin emphasizes confirmation of faith, while Roussel stresses union with Christ.<sup>839</sup> It is possible, as Reid implies, that such emphases signify only minor variations in piety. However, Calvin's expression fits a Word-centered devotion, while Roussel's words are consistent with belief in a simplified, evangelical Mass. These differences could be important. The fact that they are subtle could indicate Roussel has done his bridge-building work well, seeking as much common ground among sixteenth century Christians as possible. Roussel's dependence upon Calvin does not appear as strong as Reid argues.

More importantly, Reid states Roussel "uses metaphors and analogies that are common to the exegetical traditions of both confessional camps"—meaning Catholic and Protestant.<sup>840</sup> In light of such common traditions we should be cautious in making claims of dependence. Regarding the bishop of Oloron, we need to be especially careful for two reasons. First, we struggle to know how to interpret Roussel's deliberate silences. He wished to avoid statements that could generate strife—unless, in his mind, failure to speak misrepresented the gospel. Defining this misrepresentation, ironically, opened the possibility for strife; Calvin, for example, was convinced that anything less than open denunciation of the Catholic Church was dissimulation, while Roussel focused on a much narrower strand of biblical teaching. He frequently was silent on topics beyond this core, and we often do not know his precise positions. Second, Reid affirms the statement by Higman that Roussel made "a courageous

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<sup>839</sup> 159v, 160v. In 161v, "ceste unyon estre avec persévérance." Roussel echoes Calvin's theme of the perseverance of the saints, though dependence is not established. They may have had common sources.

<sup>840</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 545, finds possible use of Erasmus and Heinrich Bullinger in *Familière Exposition*. Bullinger's *Decades* were published in 1549; if Roussel used this work as a source, we must set the proposed date for *Familière Exposition* later—to late 1549 or early 1550.

attempt to find ground for understanding between Catholics and Lutherans (perhaps even with Calvinists), by renewing the terminology, for example on the Eucharist.”<sup>841</sup> Reid believes there is “clear evidence that Roussel played with the usual terms of debate . . . complement[ing] his effort to quell the fray.”<sup>842</sup> The bishop of Oloron sought renewal through transformative gospel preaching and through unity derived from deemphasizing disagreements and focusing on “faith working through charity.” We should not be surprised if his explanation of the Lord’s Supper reflects these concerns.

### An Irenic Synthesis

I will begin with an overview of Roussel’s presentation on the Eucharist in *Familière Exposition*, and then demonstrate why his views do not fit into recognized categories.<sup>843</sup> He first insists on biblical authority. To understand communion aright, we need “to follow the intention and word of the founder . . . without falling into dispute which may engender and nourish discord. . . . If this simplicity had been followed, diverse opinions and discords would not have been introduced, causing great harm to the true Christian union recommended and required by this sacrament.”<sup>844</sup> Here is Roussel’s vision—biblical simplicity in order to avoid contentions and

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<sup>841</sup> Higman, *La diffusion*, p. 179: “C’est une tentative courageuse de trouver un terrain d’entente entre catholiques et luthériens (peut-être même avec les calvinistes), en renouvelant la terminologie, par exemple sur l’eucharistie.”

<sup>842</sup> Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, pp. 547-548.

<sup>843</sup> Florimond de Raemond, *L’histoire de la naissance, progrès et decadence de l’herésie de ce siècle* (Paris: Gvillavme de la Novè, 1610), pp. 850, 921-922, claims Roussel wrote two other works around this time entitled *L’Eucharistie* and *Mémoires de Gérard Roussel sur l’opinion de Calvin, touchant le Cène*. He states Roussel draws more fully on Calvin’s doctrine in them, but then asserts the bishop denied a glorified and spiritual presence of Christ—which would oppose Calvin. In the end, we are uncertain what these books actually taught. See the analysis in Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 159, including n. 1, and 160.

<sup>844</sup> “suyvre l’intention et parole de l’instituteur . . . sans tumber en dispute qui soit pour engendrer et nourrir discorde. . . . Si ceste simplicité eust esté suyvie, n’eussent esté introduictes les diverses opinions et discordes, au grand préjudice de l’unyon vrayement chrestienne recommandée et exigée par ce sacrement.” (156r) See also 158r, 173r, 161r (citing Galatians 5:19-21, where Paul includes in his list of works of the “flesh”: hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy).

promote unity. The Lord's Supper is central to his hopes. Next he recites the words of institution, as found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and 1 Corinthians.

The discussion follows in three sections. The first is "to know what our Lord has done."<sup>845</sup> Roussel manifests his commitment to the gospel when he attempts "to obviate error": that Christ's death provided satisfaction only for original sin that is transferred to us by our parents, and not for our actual sins; and that the blood of Christ covers sins committed before baptism, but other forms of satisfaction are necessary for sins that follow.<sup>846</sup> Both perspectives created a need for the sacramental system that dominated piety in the late medieval period; for the sake of the gospel, Roussel issues a challenge instead of building a bridge, rejecting both as unbiblical. He equates such doctrine with "the school of sense and human reason."<sup>847</sup> Instead, Christ chose "to give his body and his blood, and consequently all the fruit and benefit of his body and blood, and by this all that he has acquired and merited."<sup>848</sup> The sacramental system as a means to provide access to heaven is unnecessary; Christ has already acquired all the merit we need. Yet this gospel reformer strongly affirms the communion. Just as food must be eaten to benefit the body, so the Eucharist must be "apprehended and eaten" to profit the spiritual life.<sup>849</sup> This apprehension comes through faith, trusting in the fact that Christ's body was sacrificed and his blood shed for us.<sup>850</sup>

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<sup>845</sup> "assçavoir ce que nostre Seigneur a fait." (156v)

<sup>846</sup> "pour obvier à l'erreur." (158r)

<sup>847</sup> "l'escolle du sens et raison humaine." (158r) See also 160v, 162r,v, 164v.

<sup>848</sup> "donner son corps et son sang, et conséquemment tout le fruit et bénéfice de son corps et sang, et par ainsi tout ce qu'il a acquis et mérité." (158v) See also 163v, 169v, 171r, 174r.

<sup>849</sup> "appréhendé et mangé." (158v-159r)

<sup>850</sup> 159v, 160r,v.

Roussel, despite using memorialist language with some frequency—as we will see—unambiguously rejects this position. It is clearly inadequate, only recognizing “the actual and real exhibition of the bread and of the wine, and not of the body and of the blood of Jesus Christ.”<sup>851</sup> Roussel believes that, in this view, the Supper is merely the “mark and receipt of possession [of Christ] and [participation in] Christian society.”<sup>852</sup> Instead he feels it is more biblical to embrace a more expansive view of Christ’s presence in the Supper, and so walking by faith, simply and confidently, for “this makes no opening for error.”<sup>853</sup> Nonetheless, Roussel can say the primary purpose of the Lord’s Supper is that his disciples “have memory of him.”<sup>854</sup>

As usual, Roussel is highly repetitive in explaining the Mass. So, his second section on the form the Eucharist should take is surprisingly brief. One should avoid “human inventions,”<sup>855</sup> a hint that many contemporary observances were, for Roussel, overlaid with non-scriptural additions that detracted from the gospel. One should follow the biblical pattern “without addition or subtraction.”<sup>856</sup> This pattern consists of five elements, taken from 1 Corinthians 11:23-26: taking the bread and the cup; giving thanks (“Eucharist” comes from the Greek word for “thanksgiving.”); breaking the bread; eating the bread *and* drinking from the chalice; preaching the death of the Lord. It is unclear whether a commitment to biblical authority or a conviction that union with Christ depended upon communing—not just with the body of Christ, but also with his blood—lay behind Roussel’s controversial decision to offer

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<sup>851</sup> “l’actuelle et réelle exhibition du pain et du vin, et non point du corps et du sang de Jésus-Christ.” (163r) See also 163v, 164v, 165r,v, 166r,v, 168v.

<sup>852</sup> “merque et livrée de la possession et société chrestienne.” (166v)

<sup>853</sup> “ce qu’elle ne fait aucune ouverture à erreur.” (163r,v) See also 167r.

<sup>854</sup> “ayent mémoire de luy.” (165r) The discussion continues through 169v.

<sup>855</sup> 167v.

<sup>856</sup> “sans y adjoûter ny diminuer.” (168r)

both elements to the laity. He instituted the practice in Oloron.<sup>857</sup> There is no need to read Protestant leanings into this choice. In a gospel passage that has striking overtones of transubstantiation, participating in both elements is clearly enjoined: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.” (John 6:54-56) United with gospel preaching, the bishop depicts a simple celebration that is evangelical in tone and yet evokes key elements of the Mass. There is no discussion of other features of contemporary Eucharistic devotion, including the elevation of the Host. Was he suggesting they were part of the “human inventions” that should be avoided? Perhaps. Yet, typically, Roussel does not specify, reintroducing his irenic tendency.

In the third and final section, he insists that participating as merely “an external work” is insufficient.<sup>858</sup> It must be joined to a lively faith, which “nourishes and increases in us faith, hope, charity, patience, to restore and to recreate the entire inner being . . . from which proceeds the joy and peace of a still conscience . . . that we might no longer sin.”<sup>859</sup> Such benefits motivated Roussel to insist on a gospel-oriented celebration of the Eucharist. Vital faith approaches communion with awareness the individual needs God’s help, rather than with confidence or fear that an irreproachable life makes one worthy to come.<sup>860</sup> Those who are

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<sup>857</sup> Roussel was not alone. Jean de Monluc, bishop of Valence and Die, advocated in 1557 a reformist Mass, emphasizing the vernacular and communion with both elements for the laity. See Thierry Wanegffelen, *Une difficile fidélité: Catholiques malgré le concile en France XVI-XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1999), pp. 152-160, and his *Ni Rom, Ni Genève*, pp. 204-208. In, *Ni Rom, Ni Genève*, p.117, he points out Pope Pius IV at the Council of Trent considered offering communion in both kinds to the lay people of Germany.

<sup>858</sup> 168v, 172v.

<sup>859</sup> “pour nourrir et accroistre en nous foy, espérance, charité, patience, pour refociller et recréer tout l’homme intérieur . . . de là procède la joye et paix de la conscience appaisée . . . pour ne plus pécher.” (169v) See also 172r, 173r,v.

<sup>860</sup> This discussion runs from 169v through 171r, and again from 173v through 174r.

distracted by the “pleasures, goods and honours of this world,” those who are complacent in their own righteousness, and those who perpetuate “discord and contempt toward others” cannot receive worthily.<sup>861</sup> These folk should heed the three warnings against partaking unworthily in 1 Corinthians 11: 27, 29, 34. However, the bishop immediately forbids examining the worth of others; each should examine oneself.<sup>862</sup> Failure to observe this biblical pattern for celebrating the Eucharist has led to “wars, famines, pestilence.”<sup>863</sup> The need for gospel-based irenic renewal is urgent. The bishop of Oloron closes with a prayer in block letters: *AINSI SOIT-IL*,<sup>864</sup> which means “so be it,” but is better translated by the familiar Greek term, “Amen.”

The reader can taste Roussel’s many ways of describing the sacrament from the following series of quotes, which I will assess afterwards.

. . . the metaphor and similitude of food and beverage, of eating and drinking, by which he wishes to give us to understand that his body and blood are above all a great necessity and [have great] efficacy for the spiritual and eternal life. . . . [He] wished by things sensory and well-known to induce and to raise them to things beyond human senses and heavenly.<sup>865</sup>

. . . the *body*, if it is not apprehended and eaten, does not benefit for spiritual and eternal life.<sup>866</sup>

Those who walk according to the flesh . . . do not demonstrate they have truly eaten the flesh and drank the blood of Jesus Christ. . . . our Lord offers and exhibits to us by his flesh and his blood.<sup>867</sup>

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<sup>861</sup> “plaisirs, biens et honneurs de ce monde. . . . discorde et mespris des uns aux autres.” (170r) See also 171r.

<sup>862</sup> 170v.

<sup>863</sup> “guerres, famines, pestilences.” (173v)

<sup>864</sup> 174r.

<sup>865</sup> “la métaphore et similitude de la viande et breuvaige, de manger et boyre, par laquelle nous veult donner à entendre que son corps et sang sont de trop plus grande nécessité et efficace pour la vie spirituelle et éternelle . . . voulut par les choses sensibles et notoires à eulx induire et eslever aux choses insensibles et célestes.” (158v)

<sup>866</sup> “le corps, s’il n’est appréhendé et mangé, ne proffite pour la vie spirituelle et éternelle.” (159r) Emphasis mine.

<sup>867</sup> “Ceulx qui cheminent selon la chair . . . ne se démontrent vrayement avoir mangé la chair et beu le sang de Jésuschrist. . . . nostre Seigneur nous offre et exhibe par sa chair et son sang.” (161r) Another variation is: “mangent son corps et boyvent son sang.”

. . . using a similitude . . . the one who eats [Christ] lives by him and because of him. . . . he makes us Christ-like. . . . to take this similitude . . . in the manner of recollection . . . [of] the things offered, exhibited and given by Jesus Christ.<sup>868</sup>

Also with regard to us and to accommodate himself to our capacity, in this sacrament by the bread and the wine he exhibits and gives to us here his body and his blood, and by such signs and visible means places and puts [us], in a manner of speaking, in possession [of himself] with rejoicing. . . . this mystery . . .<sup>869</sup>

. . . such exhibition says nothing of [Christ] holding himself back but efficaciously giving himself.<sup>870</sup>

. . . losing their names, and they are no longer called bread and wine, but the body and the blood: for so they truly take the name of things that, by them, are offered and exhibited.<sup>871</sup>

. . . this exhibition of his body and his blood: why did he not content himself to have given his body and his blood on the cross for the life of the world, but also by such means offered and exhibited them to his apostles to eat and to drink?<sup>872</sup>

. . . his will to be to give us his body and his blood.<sup>873</sup>

. . . this sacrament [is] the sign of the grace of redemption . . . the actual and real exhibition of his body and blood.<sup>874</sup>

For Jesus Christ, founding this sacrament and by it giving us his body . . . to be *the communication* of the body and of the blood of Christ.<sup>875</sup>

. . . we do not continue to live with his perpetual memory as though he were absent.<sup>876</sup>

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<sup>868</sup> “usant de similitude . . . celuy qui le mange vit de luy et à cause de luy. . . . nous fait christiformes. . . . prendre ceste similitude . . . par manière de recollection . . . les choses offertes, exhibées et données par Jésuchrist.” (161v-162r)

<sup>869</sup> “Aussi pour le regard de nous et s’accommoder à nostre capacité, en ce sacrement icy par le pain et le vin nous exhibe et donne son corps et son sang, et par telz signes et moyens oculairement en investist et met, par manière de dire, en possession et joyssance. . . . ce mistère.” (163r) See also 163v, 165v, 167r, 168v, 169v, 170r, 171r,v, 172r, 173r, 174r.

<sup>870</sup> “telle exhibition se déclare rien ne se réserver mais efficacement se donner soymesmes.” (163v)

<sup>871</sup> “perdent leurs noms, et non plus sont appelez pain et vin, mais le corps et le sang: par ainsi prennent vrayement le nom des choses que par eulx sont offertes et exhibées.” (164v)

<sup>872</sup> “ceste exhibition de son corps et son sang, pourquoy ne s’est contenté d’avoir donné son corps et son sang en la croix pour la vie du monde, mai aussi par telz moyen les a offert et exhibé à ses apostres pour manger et boyre.” (164v)

<sup>873</sup> “sa volonté estre nous donner son corps et son sang.” (164v) See also 167r.

<sup>874</sup> “ce sacrement estre le signe de la grace de rédemption . . . l’actuelle et réelle exhibition de son corps et sang.” (166r)

<sup>875</sup> “Car Jésuchrist, instituant ce sacrement et par icelluy nous donnant son corps . . . estre la communication du corps et du sang de Christ.” (166v) Emphasis mine.

<sup>876</sup> “ne persévérans vivre en sa perpétuelle mémoire, non pas comme absens.” (169v)

. . . this supper and sacrament.<sup>877</sup>

. . . by which communication that our Lord himself made to us of his body and of his blood by this sacrament.<sup>878</sup>

. . . this supper is the communion of the faithful.<sup>879</sup>

. . . in this sacrament they recognize [Christ] . . . by this sacrament clothed in and seized by his body and his blood.<sup>880</sup>

Several observations can be made about these representative quotes and the preceding summary of the bishop's presentation in *Familière Exposition*. First, Roussel rejects a memorialist theology of the Lord's Supper as inadequate, catering to human reasoning. Still, he generously uses memorialist language, speaking of metaphor, similitude and recollection, and discussing at length the need to remember Christ. The supper is a "communion of the faithful." He seems to reach out to moderate memorialists, while keeping his distance from militant sacramentarians. Second, he repeatedly equates the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ. He is clearly comfortable with Luther's consubstantiation view, but also seems comfortable with the traditional doctrine of transubstantiation. The Supper is a "mystery" by which the body and blood of Christ are "communicated" to participants, as long as they approach with "faith working through charity." Third, we still cannot discern the exact theological position Roussel held. Reid has also demonstrated affinity between Roussel's approach and language and Calvin's.<sup>881</sup> When the bishop speaks of signs efficacious for spiritual

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<sup>877</sup> "ceste cène et sacrement." (170r) See also 170v, 171v, 172r, 174r.

<sup>878</sup> "par laquelle communication que nostre Seigneur luy mesmes nous fait de son corps et de son sang par ce sacrement." (171r) See also 172r.

<sup>879</sup> "ceste cène est la communion des fidèles." (171v) Here Roussel introduces an unknown Greek work, "blazis." Landa, "Reformed Theology," p. 595, n. 3, suggests the bishop intended *κοινωνία*, meaning "fellowship."

<sup>880</sup> "en ce sacrement le reconnoissent . . . par ce sacrement investuz et saisiz de son corps et son sang." (173r)

<sup>881</sup> See p. 241 above.

and eternal life, Reformed Protestants—with their understanding of Christ’s spiritual presence at the meal—could approve.

Perhaps we confuse ourselves by trying to make Roussel fit into one of the categories theologians and historians have adopted to explain this prominent sixteenth century issue. The scheme of four major positions has clarified many discussions. Still, we know we cannot place reformers into these categories tidily. Historians generally categorize Zwingli, Bucer, Bullinger and Calvin as Reformed Protestants. Does this description mean they had identical doctrines of the Lord’s Supper? Why then do scholars generally try to place Roussel in one of the major categories, rather than allowing him his own place within the early modern discussion? Perhaps his doctrine did not fit the four-fold scheme.

Gérard Roussel was an irenic who passionately believed fidelity to the gospel would multiply social peace in France and beyond. He was a gifted scholar and preacher, and a diligent leader, and he devoted these gifts to the goal of gospel renewal. He lived up to his understanding of the Christian life with remarkable consistency and stood firm for his aspiration over decades of contested ministry. In his presentation on the Lord’s Supper, the same motivation guides the emphases he makes. He simplifies to increase the possibility of finding common ground in the “sacrament of unity,” in the hope of renewing lives and increasing concord. He avoids choosing one position and so alienating adherents of other views. He draws on perspectives that would appeal to some in all four major categories, including the memorialists. Calvinists and Lutherans could be comfortable with what he says, as long as they did not claim their position was solely valid. Traditionalists who embraced the necessity of an

active faith in partaking of the Mass could also recognize much of their spirituality. Roussel willingly challenged other traditionalists because he felt their approach, lacking the centrality of gospel faith, had failed to produce the harmonious Christian society that many longed for. The bishop grounded his instruction in the Bible as the common authority to which all could turn; yet he assiduously bridged the competing spiritualities of the day. In his mind, both the Word of God and Eucharistic devotion were foundational for vibrant Christian living. It is instructive to contrast Roussel with Gasparo Contarini, who also worked hard to bridge differences between competing Christian perspectives, but implemented his commitment to peace quite differently. While he emphasized a lively personal faith, his authority was the Catholic Church under the Pope and his irenicism was more a strategy to win others back to Roman obedience than it was an effort to find common ground. So, for example, it was he that insisted on the inclusion of the word “transubstantiation” in the discussions at the Regensburg Colloquy in 1541.<sup>882</sup>

So, could we call Roussel a memorialist? No, though he drew considerably on their language. Could we call him a Calvinist, comfortable with a spiritual presence of Christ at communion? Yes, but not exclusively. Could we call him a Lutheran, at ease with consubstantiation? Yes, but he used other language as well. Could we call him a Catholic Christian, able to affirm transubstantiation? It seems so. He avoided explicit confirmation of that doctrine in his desire to embrace as many sixteenth century Christians as possible. However, he never rejected it, clearly not imitating his old friends Farel and Calvin in decrying

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<sup>882</sup> Gleason, *Contarini*, pp. 91, 107-108, 236-240. His words were very reformist, but his actions often failed to measure up to his prescriptions for the church (p. 184). He introduced book censorship in Venice (p. 41) and was an absentee bishop for Belluno (p. 179). Gleason suggests that Protestants have seen Contarini as more open to them than he really was and that Catholics have believed he was more reformist than he was (p. ix).

the Mass as idolatry.<sup>883</sup> As a reformer, he labeled some devotional practices as superstitions and abuses, but not the Mass itself. Was Wanegffelen correct in emphasizing the adoration of the Host at its elevation? No, he went beyond the evidence. Likewise, scholars who conclude the bishop rejected transubstantiation are too hasty. We must all wrestle with Roussel's oft-repeated phrase "offered and exhibited." The elevation was a primary, but not the only moment during the Mass that exhibited the Body of Christ. The "physicality" in many of his expressions suggests he could live with traditional understandings as long as they did not obscure the centrality of faith in Jesus Christ. So, was he able to affirm transubstantiation? Tentatively, I believe he was. Roussel teaches a simplified biblical Mass, focused on the atoning and renewing work of Jesus Christ. This understanding is consistent with his refusal of schism, and his determined pursuit of peaceful religious change in the charged atmosphere of the early sixteenth century. It is interesting to note an echo in Thomas More, a contemporary English Catholic humanist, who found the heart of the sacrament to be the way it brought unity and society to all within the Body of Christ.<sup>884</sup> Roussel strove mightily to this end—though he put more emphasis on gospel preaching as a partner with the Eucharist in this task—giving his life as a preacher, bishop and, ultimately, martyr.

### The Sorbonne, Yet Again

The Faculty of Theology was determined to discredit a man they felt had been persistently troublesome. When the manuscript for *Familière Exposition* came to them, they

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<sup>883</sup> Wanegffelen, *Une difficile fidélité*, pp. 114-119, calls the ambiguity embraced by Roussel "un agnosticisme croyant" founded in "le sens du mystère." (Wanegffelen does not name Roussel, but does name Lefèvre d'Étaples.)

<sup>884</sup> Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, v. 1, From Cranmer to Hooker, 1534-1603* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 438.

again issued a judgment of heresy. Interestingly, we can tell from the points they cite that they ceased reading the work before the end. Their condemnations, issued on October 15, 1550, stopped at folio 111r—about two-thirds through the manuscript.<sup>885</sup>

What propositions stirred their wrath? Twenty-two statements are cited for condemnation. Ironically, these charges seem to place the Sorbonne itself at odds, in a sense, with common aspects of Catholic theology; the clue to understanding them is that Roussel's condemned statements generally undermine late medieval penitential devotion.<sup>886</sup> This devotional system privileged the episcopate and provided it much income. It also gave the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris the influence it had long enjoyed—an influence slipping away in the first part of the sixteenth century.<sup>887</sup> The initial group of charges dispute Roussel's claim that salvation was exclusively found in Christ. Jesus is "the sole sacrifice" (condemnation #1), the "sole propitiation for sins" (#2), "the sole true treasure of all good" (#6), "the entire sum of our salvation" (#7).<sup>888</sup> "No other" can lead to God's glory (#3); his justice "alone is complete, perfect, [providing] satisfaction [and] merit" (#4). Faith in Christ is "the only one for all" (#5).<sup>889</sup> These claims fit within Catholic theology. However, they could undermine the confidence people placed in sacraments and indulgences, and so reduce the

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<sup>885</sup> The condemnations are found in Landa, "Reformed Theology," Appendix B, pp. 612-614; and Schmidt, *Prédicateur*, pp. 240-243. Reid, *Queen of Dissent*, v. 2, p. 521, n. 49, suggests that a different manuscript version fell into the hands of the Sorbonne. He believes they would have condemned much more if they had seen the version we have access, too. However, we know of no other version. I prefer the explanation that they stopped reading when they had found sufficient grounds to condemn.

<sup>886</sup> Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), chap. 6.

<sup>887</sup> See pp. 78-81 above.

<sup>888</sup> "le seul sacrifice, la seule propiciation pour les pechez, le seul vray tresor de tous biens, l'entiere somme de nostre salut."

<sup>889</sup> "non d'aulture; seule est entiere, parfaite, satisfactoire, meritoire; ung seul pour tout."

income of the church. Crouzet indicates such decline did set in.<sup>890</sup> Similarly, the statement that “all access the same gifts and privileges” (#8) undercuts the exclusive position of the clergy.<sup>891</sup> To object to the notion that “our justice . . . is not properly called meritorious” (#10) shows the theologians wanted to keep people turning to their prescriptions for “obtaining justice.”<sup>892</sup> They also objected to Roussel’s assertions that it is impossible to keep the law (#12, #13, #14, #19, #21). When we read condemnation #11, we remind ourselves Catholics regularly complained Protestant doctrine would sever the link to good works: “the evangelical faith does not exist without charity.”<sup>893</sup> Roussel maintains the link between faith and good works and is censured. Again, the theologians protected the lucrative penitential system. They also defended the bishops’ right to form new doctrine and to mandate prayers, objecting when Roussel questions “human inventions and doctrines” (#20) and prayers “made and formed according to the doctrine and mandate of men” (#15).<sup>894</sup> Ironically they defended prayers offered “with no understanding”<sup>895</sup> (#16) and they found heretical the notion ‘God desires that “you remove all darkness of error, superstition, idolatry, [so that] to him alone all knees may bow.”’ (#18)<sup>896</sup>

Two propositions with Calvinistic overtones are condemned: the church is made up “only of the saints, the elect and sons of God” (#9) and “nothing is able to cause us to falter” (#22)—which echoes the “perseverance of the saints.”<sup>897</sup> Yet such formulations also have Augustinian overtones. Finally, Roussel is called heretical for claiming no one invokes God as

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<sup>890</sup> Crouzet, *La genèse*, p. 556.

<sup>891</sup> “tous usent de mesmes dons et privilegeiges.”

<sup>892</sup> “la justice nostre . . . ne se peult dire proprement meritoire.”

<sup>893</sup> “La foy evangelique n’est sans charité.”

<sup>894</sup> “humaines inventions et doctrines . . . faicte et formée selon la doctrine et mandement des hommes.”

<sup>895</sup> “sans rien entendre.”

<sup>896</sup> ‘Dieu desire que . . . “ostez toutes tenebres d’erreur, superstition, ydolatrie, à luy seul tous genouilz soyent ployez.”’

<sup>897</sup> “n’y a que les saintctz, les eleuz, et filz de Dieu . . . ne nous pouvoir defaillir.”

Father in the Old Testament. (#17) As a general observation of Old Testament theology, the bishop has a point; however, it is an exaggeration (see, e.g., Psalm 2:7, 89:26, Isaiah 63:16). Still, is mild exaggeration heretical?

The Sorbonne's Twenty-Six Articles from 1543 impart a sense of how they were defining orthodoxy during this period. There is very little attention to foundational Christian doctrines, such as God as Creator and Christ as Redeemer. Instead the articulated doctrines assert as orthodoxy traditionalist understandings on faith and good works and on the Mass, and focus on affirming popular devotional practices and on preserving hierarchical authority.<sup>898</sup> The Faculty worked with the monarchy to enforce this standard, steadily establishing its legal credibility with sometimes deadly effect.<sup>899</sup> Brian Cummings' reminder seems apt that everyday grammar had a terrifying impact on discussions of heresy in this century.<sup>900</sup> Still, Gleason has emphasized that prior to and in the early stages of the Council of Trent Catholic doctrine was not yet firmly set in the traditionalist Counter-Reformation mold. Reformers like Contarini and Pole and some of their Italian *spirituali* friends entertained similar doctrines to that espoused by Rousset, though in the end they adhered to Tridentine doctrine on the Mass and justification.<sup>901</sup> The dwindling number of evangelicals in France by 1548 signifies both that Catholics could still entertain Rousset's teaching and that those days were coming to an end. The bishop's persistence is striking. The Faculty stretched to make some of their censures against him, so we

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<sup>898</sup> Farge, *Le parti conservateur*, pp. 145-149.

<sup>899</sup> William Monter, *Judging the French Reformation: Heresy Trials by Sixteenth-Century Parlements* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), chap. 4.

<sup>900</sup> *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford University Press, 2007), chap. 4.

<sup>901</sup> Gleason, *Contarini*, pp. 191, 225. The Augustinian general, Seripando, defended the Regensburg formula of double justification at the Council of Trent: p. 234. See too Jaroslav Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*, vol. 4 (University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 285, in his *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* in 5 vols.

can conclude he still seemed a threat to achieve his purpose of promoting gospel renewal in an irenic manner. In hindsight it was a groundless fear. In the meantime, it is hard not to conclude that defense of the income-producing penitential system, from which the theologians benefitted, and personal animosity were the essential reasons for their condemnations.

### Final Reflections

Roussel skilfully avoided most controversies to stay focused on gospel “faith working through charity.” It is probably inevitable that he found persistent opposition from aggressive traditionalists like the Sorbonne theologians—though he tried hard to minimize disagreements with them. What is perhaps surprising are the ways in which he distinguished himself from other Catholic reformers in the 1540s. He manifested some similarities to them, but demonstrated more independence of thought than they tended to, especially in creating a doctrine of the Eucharist that was his own and that, he hoped, would bridge the hardening divides among professing Christians. The fact that he failed does not diminish the noteworthiness of his attempt. The harsh judgments of Roussel in much historical writing, then, reflect misunderstanding—deliberate or otherwise—of his motivations, work and impact. The bishop was no timorous weakling, hoping for renewal but unwilling to pay the cost: “Mr. Facing-both-Ways.”<sup>902</sup> Nor was he a sectarian. He was committed to irenic renewal based on evangelical preaching, and demonstrated considerable creativity in presenting his doctrines in order to bring together many who called themselves Christians. It was a precarious, but courageous stance, rooted in deep conviction from which Roussel did not waver.

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<sup>902</sup> As Landa calls him, “Reformed Theology,” p. 266.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

The dominant narratives noisily contested with one another for centuries. First, the Protestant and Catholic narratives, then the Enlightenment narrative that emerged from the Protestant one, strove to maintain the loyalty of their adherents and win over others committed to one of the other perspectives. Though still structurally embedded in the teaching of most history departments, these three narratives have begun to lose their influence, especially since the 1990s, as postmodernity has questioned the helpfulness of such overarching claims. Historians have found much more evidence than expected of pragmatism among sixteenth century folk in responding to assertions of control over their religious lives by government leaders and their ecclesiastical allies. The people frequently found ways to adapt to such efforts. Some adaptations emerged out of an indifference to matters of faith, and a desire that folk within the polity just “get along” and forget about religious difference. However, more often people resisted demands for doctrinal purity as it was set by the dominant religious body because of a deeply ingrained desire to see the Christian faith have a flourishing impact on their version of Christian society. Particularly, the desire to practise neighbourliness—to love one’s neighbour as oneself, as Jesus put it (Matthew 22:39)—led people to find ways to seek the everyday welfare of those who might dissent from official theology. The peace of Christian society triumphed over the pursuit of purity in the polity more often than not—and this triumph sometimes had to ignore or resist pressures to conform from the elite. The hunger for purity, rooted in a fear of God’s wrath, could sometimes affect the masses and lead to bloody

eruptions. These events formed the headlines to which all three narratives accorded much attention. Yet historians have made it clear in recent years that peaceful relations were the norm. We cannot idealize the situation: sometimes peace was maintained while the majority group merely tolerated dissenters. At other times, relationships were more positive. Christian neighbourliness was highly adaptable, pragmatically working out relationships of difference according to local circumstances. At times it was negotiated through formal political arrangements. The point is that this aspect of faith frequently motivated the myriad of social adaptations scholars have been identifying.

Sometimes people had to defy authorities to embrace neighbourliness, as when Catholics hid their Protestant neighbours from Louis XIV's soldiers.<sup>903</sup> At other times, governing authorities led the way in encouraging interconfessional cooperation, such as the city council in Wesel that mandated that Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists participate in the Eucharist together.<sup>904</sup> Sometimes common folk had to ignore their pastors to engage in everyday neighbourliness.<sup>905</sup> At other times, preachers led the way in encouraging irenic behaviour. Gérard Roussel was one of these leaders. Convinced of the need for renewal of church and society in France, he gave his life to preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ, insisting that folk renewed by such faith show it through peaceful living and persistent acts of kindness and forgiveness to those around them, including persecuting opponents.<sup>906</sup> To a noteworthy

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<sup>903</sup> See p. 42 above.

<sup>904</sup> See p. 47 above.

<sup>905</sup> For Augsburg, again see p. 47 above.

<sup>906</sup> See A. G. Dickens, *The European Reformation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), p. 379, for a reflection that points to both the existence and the minority status of people like Roussel in England: "After all, the notion was bound to occur at least to some of these diligent Bible-readers that Christ and his Apostles nowhere envisaged or advocated the winning of human hearts through juridical persecution and

degree, Roussel and his fellow evangelicals modelled such choices personally. From his days as a dynamic young preacher in Meaux, through his years as court preacher for Marguerite de Navarre (where he alternated between boldness in his preaching, such as during Lent in 1533, and caution in pursuing renewal when the political winds were unfavourable), to his mature leadership as a diligent, gospel-centered reforming bishop in Oloron, he steadfastly pursued his goals, striving to minimize conflict in this age when accusations of heresy came all too easily. Neither the persistent spite of traditionalists at the Sorbonne, nor the rage of his one-time admirer, John Calvin, who accused him of dissimulation, turned Roussel from his course. In fact, the lack of both discouragement and bitterness in the bishop of Oloron is remarkable.

The recently dominant narratives all ignored Roussel. He was too evangelical for Catholic traditionalists; compromised in the eyes of most Protestants by his willingness to accept a Catholic bishopric; too faith-based to be of interest to those committed to the Enlightenment exaltation of human reason. However, his fame among his contemporaries suggests we have missed an important part of the story in sixteenth century France, if we fail to engage him and his impact. This study has sought “to solve the case of the missing bishop,” to make Roussel known to an age that could be sympathetic to his pursuit of peaceful religious change. It has agreed with Jonathan Reid that the evangelicals were not so diffuse that they barely constituted a movement in France during the 1520s and 1530s. In fact, the French in those decades had not two paths forward (Catholic or Protestant), but three (traditionalist,

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physical duress. Many must indeed have noted this fact, but all too few drew the practical conclusions that seem to us so obvious.” Research since 1989 suggests that the numbers of folk who put some of these “practical conclusions” into practice were greater than we once realized.

Protestant and evangelical). In 1533, the evangelicals were most likely to prevail—and Roussel was their most visible spokesperson.<sup>907</sup>

Scholars who have acknowledged Roussel often did so superficially, mostly attempting to fit him into wider movements without sufficiently engaging with his own thinking. We have discovered he had high sympathy for those who sought similar reform, Protestant and Catholic alike. He freely learned from John Calvin, despite the latter's antipathy. Yet, we have also found he was independent in the way he conceived of reform strategies. His acceptance, for example, of the role of saints in popular piety, while nonetheless pointing people to the fully efficacious intercessory role of Jesus is highly creative.<sup>908</sup> His doctrine of the Mass demonstrates his consistent loyalty to the gospel core of biblical teaching, yet does not fit any of the commonly recognized definitions for the sacramental meal. Calvin saw dissimulation in this elusiveness. Florimond de Raemond saw Roussel's independence and suspected him of seeking to spark his own religious movement. Yet the bishop of Oloron was not guilty of these accusations. He was cautious when political and legal winds blew against the evangelicals, but he was fiercely loyal to the Catholic Church and bold in declaring the gospel as a remedy for the ills of French society. As the choice was increasingly forced on people between the Word and the Mass, Roussel refused to choose, affirming both biblical preaching and the Eucharist as renewing factors. He was a committed bridge builder who could appreciate many, while also avoiding—for the sake of the unity of the whole Christian church—fitting neatly into the theological camps hardening around him. His independence at key points from Protestant and Catholic reformers

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<sup>907</sup> Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 347, would question this contention: "What chance did Erasmian moderation have when martyrs were dying for disputed doctrines?"

<sup>908</sup> See pp. 199-202 above.

demonstrates the point. I hope this study has allowed Roussel his own place under the sun: a Catholic evangelical, diligent in pursuing gospel-based reform in an irenic manner.

Further lines of inquiry could be pursued. The extent of both the overlap and the differences in doctrine and strategy between Roussel and others—Protestants and Catholic reformers—could be examined more closely. Such studies could range over much of Europe, including the British Isles. The complete story of the Circle of Meaux has yet to be written. A closer examination of the legal, social, cultural, linguistic and governmental environment in Oloron would be worthwhile. Since we know Henry protected Roussel consistently, but also showed little sympathy for Marguerite’s evangelicalism, it would be intriguing to examine what the king of Navarre gained from maintaining the bishop of Oloron in office. Did Roussel contribute more to Henry’s state-building project? The general capacity of people to get along slipped into confrontation often enough that this dynamic bears further study. Alexandra Walsham speaks of destabilizing factors, such as plague, that caused people to lash out.<sup>909</sup> Religious motivations could destabilize, but politics also caused ruptures in Christian society. The impact of political and dynastic ambition—regularly using the Christian faith as legitimation—on the violence of the era invites further study.

The four questions from my introduction can now be addressed.<sup>910</sup> Was the first half of the sixteenth century “early” in the French reform movement? No, that movement had been active for many decades already. Were there more Catholic reformers than Protestant ones? If

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<sup>909</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “In Sickness and in Health: Medicine and Inter-Confessional Relations in Post-Reformation England” in C. Scott Dixon, Dagmar Freist, Mark Greengrass, ed., *Living with Religious Diversity in Early-Modern Europe* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), p. 179.

<sup>910</sup> See pp. 3-4, 10 above.

we accept that reform began much earlier than 1517, the answer is affirmative (though quantifying it is difficult). Would the majority of professing Christian folk in France have preferred to live out their faith in a peaceable manner without being pressed into a confessional straightjacket? While an intriguing question, we have not moved any closer in this study to providing an answer. However, it is possible. Most importantly, we can conclude that Gérard Roussel was a prominent French ecclesiastical leader in the sixteenth century and ought to be better known; that the French evangelicals were more significant in the first third of the century than is commonly understood, and that they were nearly successful as a social movement; and, finally, that irenic impulses had a greater impact on Christian society in this era than has often been recognized.

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