

500<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
*of the*

REFORMATION

## An Introduction to our Reformation Series

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BY DR. KRISTI KIRK



On October 31, 1517, a young professor at a German university wanted to start a conversation with his colleagues and the church about the practices of the church (particularly the practice of selling indulgences). He posted some talking points (95 of them, to be precise, called the 95 Theses) that he hoped would be points of discussion for him and his colleagues at the university where he taught. From there, he published innumerable pamphlets, songs, letters and writings – all in the hopes of continuing conversations about the practices of the church, the teachings of the Bible, the nature of theology, the purpose of education, the work of the state, and many other topics. In doing so, he started a conversation that changed the world (or as we might say here at Concordia – took the world by storm) and that continues today.

As part of our celebration of this momentous anniversary, Concordia invited 12 members of our faculty to reflect on the events of 500 years ago and how they still shape how we teach and learn here at Concordia University. You'll explore Luther

as a communicator, who used the technology of the times in addition to his own understanding of human nature, to get his message out (with blogs by Mikail McIntosh-Doty, University Librarian; Dr. Paul Muench, Professor of Communication; and Dr. Jacob Youmans, Associate Professor of Religious Education). You'll be invited to think about how the work and ideas of the Reformation still impact the academy and the ways we go about teaching and learning (with blogs by Dr. Erik Green, Associate Professor of Communication; Dr. Phil Schielke, Assistant Professor of Computer Science; Dr. Jeff Utzinger, Assistant Professor of English; Dr. Sarah Baker, Assistant Professor of Education; and Dr. Jim McConnell, Dean of the College of Education). You'll learn more about women of the time who supported Luther and the other reformers (blog by Joel Heck, Professor of Religion) and how Luther's ideas continue to be essential in our understanding of the roles of church and state (blog by Matt Bloom, Associate Professor of History).

Finally, you'll be invited to think deeply about whether the time has

come for a new reformation (blogs by Grant Carey, Assistant Professor of Religious Education and Brent Burgess, Associate Professor of Political Science).

As a liberal arts university, we at CTX understand that the study of the past tells us a lot about ourselves today. We look for the intersections of history, politics, art, theology, literature, psychology and human behavior – all of which play a part in this story of the Reformation. As a Lutheran university, we are grateful specifically for the ideas that Luther and his followers wrestled with, wrote about and preserved for the future. With our mission of Developing Christian Leaders, we look to the reformers as examples (although certainly not the only ones) of leaders who lived out their vocations in ways that made a difference in the world. Our hope is that as you read these blog postings over the next few months, your own thinking about the Reformation, the church and the academy will be sharpened. We hope that you will think deeply about the ways that the reformers lived as Christian leaders – and the ways that you are called to do so also.



## Every Nation, Every Tribe

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BY DR. JACOB YOUMANS



Fortunately I have “lost” two of the Bibles in my language collection. One was in Thai, received as a gift on a visit to Thailand from an American Business man with a passion for the Gospel. Several years after that trip, the secretary of the church I served was telling me about her new neighbor who’s from Thailand. As they built a relationship and got to know each other eventually the conversation came up about Jesus. Throughout her life she had heard random things about Jesus, but really knew nothing about him, so she asked my secretary if she could get her a Bible in Thai. Coming to me with this request, she was shocked when I pulled a Thai Bible off of my shelf. Her neighbor came to faith in Jesus through that Bible in her native language.

I bought a very expensive Chinese and English Bible on a visit to China. A few years later while talking to one of the CTX international students from China, my wife learned that she was curious about Jesus but didn’t know where to get a Bible in Chinese. So without asking me, my wife gave her my beautiful Bible from China. I was not thrilled at first, and I let

my wife know how much that Bible cost me, but then was incredibly humbled a month later when I was able to attend a worship service where she was baptized! She came to faith by the Holy Spirit working through a Bible in her native language.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the Reformation was the Word of God being put into the vernacular- or the natural and native language of the people. Martin Luther, as an enemy of the state, spent years translating the texts, and in so doing helped to mold the German language. Before this monumental undertaking, the common person who did not speak Hebrew, Greek or Latin had to trust that whatever the learned said was in fact what God was saying. One can only imagine the power and control that comes from saying you speak directly for God. The reformation tore down that barrier! Now anyone (who could read- another good argument for the great value of education!) could see for themselves exactly what God was saying in the scriptures.

Very quickly it became more than just reading or hearing. With the Reformation coinciding so

beautifully with the advent of the printing press- one could actually even own their own copy of the Holy Scriptures! And to this day the Bible is regarded as the bestselling book of all time.

How many copies of the Bible do you actually own?

According to the Wycliffe Global Alliance, portions of the scriptures have currently been translated into 3,223 different languages. While this certainly sounds impressive- there is still much work to be done. It is estimated that 1,700-1,800 languages still have none of the scriptures in their language and that translates to approximately 1.5 billion people with the scriptures in their vernacular.

While it can be very easy to take the fact that we have the Bible in our native language for granted, it's important to ask: what does hearing God's word in the "vernacular" mean for us today? Luther strived to make a translation that could be easily understood by everyone. How can we speak the Gospel in the vernacular of the people- in a way that they will easily understand? Perhaps we need to think beyond language and explore culture. Do we share the Gospel the same way in the inner city as we do the small rural town? How do we train workers who will be ministering to senior citizens, and how is that different than ministering to teenagers? Even though they may all speak English- how do ethnic background, socioeconomic status, age, and gender (to name a few) come into play in "vernacular"?

How do you feel about some people never actually reading the Bible as a book- but instead as an app on their phone?

As we train Christian Leaders, we must train good exegesis of the scriptures- and second to that must be good exegesis of culture. Or- how can we speak God's eternal truths into the vernacular of a specific people and culture? May the eternal Truth of Jesus' life, death and resurrection be boldly spoken and read in every language to every tribe!



## Luther as Communicator

BY DR. PAUL MUENCH

To fully understand Luther's impact on the world around him which brought about the Reformation it is important to see Luther as the communicator. Luther's understanding of Scripture, his understanding of church leadership and his understanding of Christian doctrine were not new or limited to him. However; Luther communicated these understandings in ways that made a significant impact.

We can trace Luther's impact on theology, translation, leadership in the church, use of media and communication in the church.

Luther's "Theology of the Cross" can be understood as a lesson in communication. God, who is far beyond our understanding, chose to reveal Himself to humans. Luther writes:

The hidden God is none other than the revealed God. God is hidden for the sake of revelation. Revelation is possible only in concealment, the revealed God as such must be hidden... Man hides his own things in order to deny them, God hides His own things to reveal them... By this concealment He does nothing else than remove that which obstructs revelation,

namely pride. (Luther's Works, Weimar edition 1:38 13ff)

Luther's impact on translation came in the form of what today is called "dynamic equivalent" translation. Grace alone, Faith alone and Scripture alone are key Reformation phrases, yet Luther himself admits that the work alone is not in the Bible verse he quotes. (Romans 3:28) Luther exclaims that his opponents stared at the word alone like a cow stares at a new gate. He then goes on to explain how in the original Greek the meaning "alone" is there without a specific word. (Heinz Bluhm, Martin Luther; Creative Translator)

Luther's treatise on "The Priesthood of All Believers" continues to have an impact today. Luther wrote: Faith alone is the true priestly (priesterlich) office. It permits no one else to take its place. Therefore all Christian men are priests (pfaffen) and all women priestesses (pfeffyn), be they young or old, master or servant, mistress or maid, educated or lay. Here there is not difference, unless faith be unequal. (Kristian Baudler p. 130)

Luther was adamant that those in church offices performed only the duties which served the



needs of the people. I believe this is foundational to the modern business model of “servant leadership.”

Luther, much like we are today, was challenged by new media. He quickly learned to be effective using the media. Luther regretted posting the 95 thesis only in Latin. He says they should also have been posted in German for the non-scholars.

Luther also quickly learned that longer printed documents were too expensive for the common people to buy. He learned to publish pamphlets rather than books. His opponents wrote longer pieces which few could afford to buy. Luther’s pamphlets would cost about the same as a chicken allowing many more people to buy them. This also made a larger profit for the printers who were then much more willing to pass on what Luther wrote. (How Luther Went Viral, The Economist, December 17 2011)

Luther demonstrated his understanding of communication and his willingness to adjust to the needs of his audience in many ways. He says this about public worship:

But such orders are needed for those who are still becoming Christians... They (orders of worship) are essential especially for the immature and the young who must be trained and educated in Scripture and God’s Word daily so that they many become familiar with the Bible, grounded, well versed, and skilled in it, ready to defend their faith and in due time

to teach others and to increase the kingdom of Christ. For such, one must read, sing, preach, write and compose. And if it would help matters along, I would have all the bells pealing, and all the organs playing, and have everything ring that can make a sound.

(Luther’s Works, vol. 62)

Kristian Baudler, *Martin Luther’s Priesthood of All Believers in an Age of Modern Myth*. Oxen Press, New York, 2016.

Heinz Bluhm, *Martin Luther: Creative Translator*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1965  
How Luther Went Viral, *The Economist*, December 17th 2011  
Luther’s Works, Weimar edition



## Luther and the Printing Press

BY MIKAIL MCINTOSH-DOTY

Why was Martin Luther, an obscure friar / monk in a small German town, able to make such an impact that he is widely seen as launching the Reformation? Others across Europe had challenged the Roman Catholic Church on indulgences and other corrupt practices that emerged as a consequence of the cash flow demand that emerged from the papal need to build large cathedrals in the late 14th and 15th centuries. Why did Luther rise to the top? Why was he so successful? Why do historians claim he and not the others launched the Reformation?

Like others, I believe it was the use by Luther and his supporters of the printing press. When Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the church door at Wittenberg on the 31st of October 1517, it’s possible that no one would have noticed if not for the press. He used the press so well because he knew his audience and used the language of the people. Prior to his excommunication, Luther was a member of an Augustinian order of friars that went out into the community and preached the church’s theology in the vernacular. Latin was the language

of the church and of law (and that would continue years after the Reformation), but most people of the time spoke the language not only of their country but of their local community. Luther’s religious order understood this and used the vernacular to evangelize and educate the “lower” classes -- at the time a rising middle class in Germany. It was the vernacular and not Latin that Martin learned to use in his street orations, and he naturally turned to the vernacular for his message to his German colleagues as he sought a way to embody his new theology. And it was his use of the printing press to get that vernacular message out quickly and effectively that made the difference: he would have loved our current social media and given President Trump a run for his money on Twitter.

For also in Germany, a little over 50 years earlier, Johann Gutenberg, a goldsmith with an engineer/ inventor’s eye, pushed the printing press from a random series of parts into an extremely efficient engine of publication. While some form of a printing press, including movable type, was created around 1000 CE in China and Korea, the



version in Europe by that time was not that sophisticated. Gutenberg used his goldsmith skills to create a more easily manipulated type made with lead and an oil-based ink as well as a stable frame with screw-down plates. Unfortunately after producing 180 copies of the world's most famous copy of the bible (48 of which still remain; one of which is here in Austin at UT's Harry Ransom Center), he was pushed out by his partners and died in relative obscurity in 1468. The press was enhanced by new and cheaper forms of paper made possible by also innovations of the Chinese and the Muslims, the latter who brought the processes with them to Spain in the 13th and 14th centuries. So despite his short time on the stage of history, Gutenberg and his invention transformed the production of scholarly and political discourse for the next 500 years.

The stableness of the press made authorship more reliable, and Luther and his followers understood well how to use the "power of the press" to distribute Luther's ideas. It was also amazingly efficient: before Gutenberg, there were less than 30,000 books in all of Europe; because of his invention, by 1500 there were anywhere from 9-20 million books; by 1600 historians estimate something between 150-200 million. Printing presses could print broadsides (what we might view as posters, mostly images with some text), pamphlets, and books. While Luther was proficient in utilizing all three to get his

message out, it was the pamphlets that he primarily employed to share his theses and theology. Between 1518-1520, most historians believe that Luther was able to distribute across Germany (and quickly as far as Italy and England) 300,000 printed copies of his tracks. Luther never slowed down, in fact he produced publications each year from 1517 until his death in 1546, including a translation into the vernacular (German) of the Bible. Luther and the printing press didn't just change religion, it changed history: His translation influenced other vernacular translations -- most notably for Americans the King James Bible (KJV). When the common folk could read a book as rich as the bible for themselves, they didn't just embrace a more democratic theology ("a priesthood of all believers"), they had the tools to educate themselves in all ways.

For Martin Luther a good and effective education led to right action and life-long learning: "the earnest desire to educate the young [will] benefit and serve the world with able men and women.... no effort or expense should be spared to provide good libraries" LW46, 370-373. For Luther libraries provided that life-long learning support. With the right resources [a good library], the right education and the right vehicle to get your message out, you too could "take the world by storm" just like Luther.

## Martin Luther: Monk, Reformer, Best-Selling Author

BY DR. JEFFREY UTZINGER



Exactly one month to the day after I was born, I was baptized in a Lutheran church. I still have a Sunday School perfect attendance pin emblazoned with the Luther rose. I broke my arm the week before confirmation but there I was with an arm cast in the class picture—no way was I going to miss the opportunity to publicly answer the question: "what does this mean?" I graduated from a Lutheran college, married the daughter of a Lutheran pastor, got my first job at a Lutheran University (left and returned again a decade later) and most of my closest friends are Lutheran. For better or for worse, my identity is inextricably linked with being Lutheran.

About the only other constant in my life, besides Lutheranism, that looms as large, that has shaped who I am, is my love for reading and talking about literature, and creative and academic writing. Oddly enough, it has only been in the past several years that I began to think seriously about how these two worlds—my faith life and my life as an English professor—intersect.

I was reading a book called "Imagined Communities" by

Benedict Anderson in which he argues the concepts of "nation" and "nationality" are ideas that are as contrived as they are fixed in the modern mind. In the midst of tracing the genesis of the idea of nation, linking it to the emergence of print culture, Anderson writes: "In effect, Luther became the first best-selling author so known. Or to put it another way, the first writer who could 'sell' his new books on the basis of his name" (39). Anderson estimates that a third of all books published in German that sold between 1518 and 1525 were authored by Luther, and that during the same time period "a total of 430 editions . . . of his Biblical translations appeared."

Luther as a best-selling author was not a Luther that loomed in my psyche. In fact, as an undergraduate, such an idea would have diminished my estimation of him. As an aspiring elitist, I had firmly embraced the idea that "popular" writing was synonymous with "poor" writing. Keep your "Grisham" and your "King," I'll be in the corner pretending to understand "Finnegan's Wake." However, over the past 20 years,

the idea of a literary canon—a list of texts college students must read—has gradually fallen out of fashion, and for very good reasons; namely, it has allowed historically marginalized people’s voices to be heard. At the same, as I have delved more deeply into the historical context of literary texts, I also have discovered that some of my favorite literary texts—for example, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”—were considered best-sellers, at home and abroad, during Stowe’s lifetime. Some lingering snobbery remains as I take perverse pleasure in the fact that two of my favorite writers, Henry David Thoreau “Walden” and Herman Melville “Moby Dick,” both died in possession of more unsold texts in their store rooms than were circulated among the general population.

But back to the best-seller Luther. It’s probably safe to say he didn’t set out to be a best-selling author. However, he did have a deep concern about the quality of content, both of his own work and his translations; a deep concern about disseminating good (even great) ideas; a deep concern that the masses could consume texts without an intermediary.

In much the same way, I have the privilege of engaging in such work on a daily basis. My job these days is less about telling students what to read (although I still do a fair share of that) and more on how to read, how to judge the quality of texts, how to explicate the meaning of texts and, most importantly, I

facilitate vigorous conversations about the ideas we encounter in texts, always asking: do these ideas make the world a better place? Together, (in Luther’s perfect phrasing), we read, mark, learn and inwardly digest texts, asking one another “What does this mean?”



## All Those Who Say There is No Problem Must Go

BY DR. JIM MCCONNELL



I love problems! Well, I don’t actually love them so much that I go around looking for problems, but the “status quo” or “maintenance” mode is not a place I like to be. For some reason, a problem or challenge gets me excited and working all day to solve a problem makes me fulfilled!

I don’t understand people who are okay with ignoring a problem, in hopes it will go away or not be noticed by others. Really? If you clearly see a problem, don’t you think others notice it, too? Remember the time as a child when that reasoning seemed logical? So, if I just ignore that broccoli on my plate, mom won’t notice that I didn’t eat it, so it won’t be a problem. Yeah, that worked out great, didn’t it!

Life is full of problems. Working at Concordia has problems, too. As Christians, we owe it to ourselves, and our fellow students and workers, to not ignore, but tackle those problems. Some may be as simple as working out a course schedule for a student or figuring out how you will get everything you need to run your department with your allotted budget. Others

may be more challenging such as speaking up for a fellow student who is being ignored or treated unfairly by peers or understanding the views of a fellow worker that differ from your own.

Luther was emphatic in Thesis 92 when he wrote, “All those who say there is no problem must go. Problems must be tackled.” We need to follow that advice today. Problems do not just go away, nor will ignoring them get resolution. Problems seem to reproduce like rabbits when we don’t acknowledge and address them directly. Take the lead and tackle that problem. Who knows, may you will get that “rush” like I do!

## Christians Are To Be Taught

BY DR. PHILIP SCHIELKE



Nine of Luther's 95 theses begin with the Latin phrase, "Docendi sunt christiani," in English, "Christians are to be taught..." In the theses of 1517, Luther enjoined that Christians should be taught specifically about the church's abusive practice of selling indulgences, because it was antithetical to the faith. As the Reformation progressed, Luther's conviction that Christians "are to be taught" never wavered. As foreshadowed in these early theses, a primary emphasis of the Reformation would be to teach Christians the faith, and Luther would work tirelessly to clarify what "the faith" was and is.

During the years of 1526-1528, Luther and other reformers visited clergy and laity in Saxony. Luther was appalled by the laity's lack of basic knowledge of Christian doctrine, and he found similar lacking in some of the clergy as well. In his words, "The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and, alas! many pastors are altogether incapable and incompetent to teach. Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, have been baptized and receive

the holy Sacraments. Yet they [do not understand and] cannot [even] recite either the Lord's Prayer, or the Creed, or the Ten Commandments." These visitations prompted Luther to write the Small Catechism for heads of households to teach their families, and the Large Catechism to instruct clergy. Luther's goal was to put the key tenets of Christian doctrine in a form that could be comprehended by anyone. These teaching aids are still used by Lutheran parents and congregations today to instruct and teach the faith.

"The faith" is not some abstract concept or a set of obscure propositions, but is the power of God to salvation. Luther writes extensively throughout his career on what the true teaching of the church is to be. He summarizes the chief article of the faith in the Smalcald Articles of 1537, "That Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4:25. And He alone is the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world, John 1:29; and God has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all, Is. 53:6. Likewise: All have sinned and are justified without merit [freely, and without their own works or

merits] by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood, Rom. 3:23f"

One can find parallels between 21st century Christianity in America and the situation Luther observed in early 16th century Saxony. Recent polls would indicate that Biblical illiteracy in this country is on the rise and engagement with the Bible itself is in decline. Where does Concordia's mission of "developing Christian leaders" fit within this context? As an institution of higher education, Concordia University Texas is tasked with teaching a wide variety of disciplines. As an institution of the LCMS and in the tradition of Luther, Concordia University Texas and her sister schools are called to teach the faith. Concordia University Texas teaches the faith formally in the classroom through required classes in the Bible and other courses and through our chapel services. In addition, Bible studies available to students and interactions amongst students and between students and staff and faculty present opportunities to teach the faith in a less formal setting.

The faith is taught and proclaimed to lead people to repentance and to rest confidently in the promises of God guaranteed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All people need this comfort. Following the example of Luther and the other reformers, may we in our day be steadfast in teaching the faith to this generation.



# When School Flourishes, All Flourishes

BY DR. ERIK GREEN



We talk a lot about what it means to “Take the World by Storm” around here at CTX.

Luther took Germany by storm and the ripple-effect went international. And we’re still thinking about it 500 years later. As a professor, I am personally inspired when I think about how Luther completely changed the game with teaching and learning. He cared so much for the people of his community that he had to break the conventions of his time. Now, if you wanted to learn more about Lutherans, an afternoon scroll through Wikipedia will lead you to a bunch of people whose names I can’t pronounce, a geography lesson on Germany and some talk about a diet of worms (gross), a strong stance against sacerdotalism (I promise, that’s really a word) and an emperor that was pretty annoyed. That will be a fun afternoon for you one day. For now, I’m going to just jump right to three lessons I think we can all learn from Luther on teaching and learning.

## **Learn from all those hats you wear**

Teaching and learning requires multiple perspectives. We all

have many daily responsibilities. Luther was no exception. He was a theology professor, a priest, a composer, a monk, a husband and father of so many children (I mean, my wife and I celebrate when we can get our two dogs fed and out the door before heading off for work). His many hats – or vocations as he’d refer to them – are central to what we can learn from him about teaching and learning. Because of his intense studying to be a theology professor, he was referred to as a man “full of learning.” As he began to preach in his pastoral role though, he struggled to craft his teaching approach to engage his community in sermons on topics of concern to them (read, “he was always learning”). Additionally, as a father he saw how the ordinary act of washing and changing diapers could be done in faith and a reason for God to smile. Our various roles are not simply competing with each other – they are offering opportunities for teaching and learning.

## **Don’t claim superiority over others**

Teaching and learning requires deep humility. Aren’t we seeing

just way too many examples of disrespect for other humans and lack of civil dialogue popping up in the news? The other day, once I worked through my sadness, anger, fix-it-all plan, discouragement (you know that stream of mixed emotions), the thought that came to my mind was “the one who has nothing to learn seeks no teacher.” Um, please don’t be this person. The fact is, we all have something to learn, and all need teachers in our lives. When Luther believed the church was claiming spiritual superiority over others, it was his love for his community that compelled him to initiate a conversation in the public arena. When it came to their spiritual health, he believed they were not being respected or cared for and so he raised concerns about some of the practices in the church and encouraged an environment of continued learning. His actions fundamentally brought the opportunity for learning to all people in his community. By translating Scripture into German he supported his belief that all could read scripture and engage in teaching and learning together. Today, we too can insist that those in positions of authority continue to learn. That means professors learn from their students, employers learn from their employees, presidents learn from her or his citizens, capitalists learn from the poor and all leaders of all kind listen to those marginalized or abused (and those advocating for them).

## **Engage in the tough conversations**

Teaching and learning requires civil dialogue. I’m reading a book called “Brand Luther” right now, and this thing is chock-full of insights on teaching and learning from Luther. To get to the point, let’s just say through his preaching and writing, Luther found his way into the homes of his fellow citizens, because he decided that teaching and learning was not just for the academy. So he wrote short works in German (Latin was the standard for academics by the way) to enlarge the conversation to the wider public. This guy knew blogging was cool way before we did. His Sermon on Indulgence and Grace was barely 1500 words (total shift in how theological writing was done at the time). Oh, and he developed sermons that could be read aloud in ten minutes. Basically, Luther would have some awesome TED Talks viewed by millions today. He took the risk to bring the conversation (now that it was in German) to the general public theater – no longer contained among elite theologians writing in Latin. Okay, so what does this mean for us today? Well, I think teaching and learning requires “letting go” of exclusive claims to the conversational agenda to entrust others with the dialogue. Luther engaged in conversations he regarded as crucial concerns of the people in his community. Pastoral responsibility to the people of Wittenberg shaped his vocation from a scholar to a speaker that

engaged with a diverse audience of members of his community. The needs of his community prompted Luther to shift the theological debate of the academy to wider public interests. What are the needs of your fellow community members? How can we together contribute to the dialogue that meets the needs of our neighbors? How might we learn to have the courage to engage in those tough conversations – even when it is hard.

### Get started

I read that “Luther and his friends used every instrument of communication known to medieval and Renaissance Europe: correspondence, song, word of mouth, painted and printed images.” It inspired me to think about all the ways we can all begin to apply lessons learned from Luther on learning and teaching. Here are a few that came to mind: Get involved with more conversations. Speak up in the classroom, have conversations over beer, start the tough conversations with your kids. Learn through music. My wife and I love going to Symphony in the Park at the Long Center. Listen to a podcast and discuss it with a friend. I’m learning so much from the “Pass the Mic” podcast. Start a Book Club. Each year Concordia picks a book for students to read together. This year we’ll be engaging in teaching and learning about “The Circle.” It’s worth a read. Watch TED Talks and discuss them with your co-workers (or your family...or anyone

who will listen). Oh, and choose some that you wouldn’t normally be drawn to just to expand your learning. Keep reading Concordia’s Blog and share your thoughts with the author (yeah, yeah, shameless plug). So, it’s not helpful to compare our many hats to Luther’s. Instead, we’re better off looking at what he learned from those many hats. Let’s remember how he broke down claims of superiority to invite all people of his community into teaching and learning. Let’s be inspired by his courage to engage in the tough conversations. It was 500 years ago that Luther took the world by storm, and his work continues to shape how we engage in teaching and learning in different ways at Concordia. How about you? How might you engage in new or different opportunities for teaching and learning in your daily life?



## Luther and Women

BY DR. SARAH JEAN BAKER

What does this mean? I remember reciting this question and the responses when I was a seventh grader in confirmation class studying Luther’s Small Catechism. I could not have guessed when I was 13 that I would still be asking myself that question- What does this mean? Except now, when I ask the question- What does this mean?- I’m reflecting on my vocation of being a mama and a teacher. What does this mean to be a mama and a teacher?

During my recent research for my dissertation study I found myself studying the very nature of these questions. As a researcher I believe in order to better understand the world of today, one must understand the world of yesterday. This meant that I spent quite a bit of time reading a variety of history books to more fully understand the history of women in the Western world- specifically how women came to represent the teaching profession. In 2011–12, 76 percent of public school teachers were female (National Center for Education Statistics). What I found was the foundation for this reality was laid during the Reformation.

During Luther’s Reformation,

women became valued for their role in the family’s religious instruction (McClelland, 1992). Luther was an early supporter of educating both boys and girls, because he believed when girls become mothers they would then be able to manage the home and children, including the religious instruction within the home (Virtual Museum of Protestantism). Prior to this time the majority of women were not even literate. (Virtual Museum of Protestantism; Vandenberg-Daves, 2014).

These beliefs and values from the Reformation followed the settlers to the New Land and became the foundation of the political movement of the republican mother in the new republic (McClelland, 1992). A republican mother was a mother that was educated. And she was educated, so she could raise her sons to be able to effectively participate in the nation’s government and her daughters to be future wives and mothers that would one day be the ones raising the next generation to participate in the government. The success of the new country was in the hands of mothers and their work in their homes.



The republican mother political movement also determined mothers to be morally superior to men (Hays, 1996; Vandenberg-Daves, 2014). So, when the idea for a free and public education for all came to the newly founded country, it only made sense to seek women—the ones morally superior—to become teachers. (Of course, there was also an economic reason, but that's a post for another day.) Fast forward to today and one can see that Luther's beliefs from the Reformation continue to persist, especially in our schools and homes.

It means that as a mama in today's world, I still feel like I am the one that is ultimately responsible for not only the successes of my children, but also their failures. If my children fail, somehow I have failed them, as their mama. And it means that my home (its cleanliness and my cooking) are also attributed to me, as the mama. It doesn't matter that I have a husband that can help with our children and home because the pressure is not on him— it's on me, as the mama.

I mentioned at the beginning that I'm also a teacher, specifically a professor in the College of Education. The teaching vocation is also a vocation that carries a lot of responsibility. So, how do I negotiate my vocations— mama and teacher? Unlike the clear answers given in the Catechism, I am still looking for the answers to my questions— the "what does this mean?" But, I believe that during my recent research for my

dissertation study I came to more fully understand and appreciate both of my vocations.

Of course, some would be quick to say that perhaps I shouldn't be working outside of the home—my greatest vocation is in the home. But, what if I feel called to both? And what would Martin Luther say today about my feeling called to both? While it's always hard to know for sure what one from the past would say about our today, Martin Luther did write about the possibilities of a professional career for women. He wrote that girls should also study the liberal arts like their brothers (Green, 1979). And he even pointed out the need for female teachers. Before women entered the teaching profession it was considered a profession for men. So, maybe if Luther was writing today he would be encouraging women to be professionals, in addition to their vocation of being mothers.

For me, I have decided that I don't want to choose between the two— that I can be both a mama and a teacher. And looking at the images just reminds of this even more, because the joy I feel from even from looking at these two images of my vocations fills my heart with gratitude to the Lord.

## Housewife of the heart

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BY DR. JOEL HECK

Katherine von Bora, the wife of Martin Luther, was known for her astute management of the Luther household, including the family finances. Luther affectionately called her his "housewife of the heart," "Madame Doctor," "Mrs. Brewmaster" and "Madame Sow-Marketer in Wittenberg." She was also the woman Luther complimented when he described his favorite book of the Bible, the book of Galatians, as "my Katie von Bora." But what about other women, people like Katherine Zell, Wibrandis Rosenblatt and Vittoria Colonna?

Katherine Zell came to believe Luther's tracts about the doctrine of justification by faith. In 1523 she married Matthew Zell, who had introduced the Reformation to the city of Strasbourg, France. When her husband was excommunicated by the bishop, she wrote such a strong letter of protest to the bishop that it caused the bishop to complain to the Strasbourg city council. She was actively involved in providing for various people who were forced by the religious authorities to leave their territory, accommodating 80 of them in the parsonage at various times and writing letters of comfort



to their wives.

After the Peasants' War of 1525, she was once again at the forefront, dealing with refugees who were fleeing the retribution of the princes who had defeated the peasants. Katherine Zell and Lucas Hackfurt fed and housed thousands of these peasants. She published one of the first hymnals ever published in Strasbourg, and she traveled extensively with her husband, even spending time with Luther in Wittenberg. When some questioned her marriage to Matthew Zell, she wrote, "You remind me that the Apostle Paul told women to be silent in the church. I would remind you of the word of this same apostle that in Christ there is no longer male nor female and of the prophecy of Joel: 'I will pour forth my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters will prophesy.' I do not pretend to be John the Baptist rebuking the Pharisees.... I aspire only to be Balaam's ass, castigating his master."

Wibrandis Rosenblatt married Ludwig Keller, a humanist and early Protestant, who died two years later. Then she married Oecolampadius, the Reformer from

Basel, who died less than three years later. She married Capito, another reformer, in 1532, who died from the plague in 1541, when she married Martin Bucer, still another reformer. During the years of her four marriages, Wibrandis took care of financial matters, managed the family and supported each husband, carrying out challenges at least as demanding as those her husbands faced.

Vittoria Colonna was a Catholic woman of the Italian nobility who never became a Protestant, but who realized that her own church needed reform. In the 1530s she supported the Capuchins, (one of the new orders committed to reformation,) wrote and published poetry with spiritual themes that supported reforming ideas and drew on the counsel of Cardinal Reginald Pole, who worked with her for reform within Catholicism.

Vergerio, the Catholic bishop of Capodistria, wrote to Colonna in 1540, summing up her reforming attitude (as well as that of Zell and Rosenblatt), "If God will raise up spirits of this kind and of both sexes ... who will wake us up from the sleep that burdened our eyes, then our minds would be kindled toward the knowledge of the way and service of God, more than all the ink of the whole world used to write about reformations and more than all the ideas that one would conceive."



## Church and State

BY DR. MATTHEW BLOOM



Martin Luther understood the compatibility of the work of clergy and princes, and he worked with the political authorities of his day to further his cause. A question: How does this affect contemporary thinking about the relationship between church and state?

You could summarize Luther's views of the relationship between clergy and political leaders by paraphrasing the opening narration of the TV show *Law and Order* like this:

"In today's world, the people are influenced by two separate yet equally important groups called by God: the clergy, who are called to preach His Word; and the government officials, who are called to provide and maintain order in society. These are their stories."

To better answer the question, we can look at a very small part of Luther's vast writings. In his 1523 treatise on earthly authority, Luther wrote:

"God has ordained two governments: the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people... and the temporal [earthly], which restrains the unchristian and the wicked.... Both must be permitted

to remain—the one to produce righteousness, the other to bring about external peace. Neither is sufficient in the world without the other."

What would happen if we have one but not the other? In Luther's words,

"When theologians disappear, God's word disappears, and there remain nothing but heathen, nay, nothing but devils; when jurists disappear, the law disappears, and peace with it...."

So, what does this mean? For contemporary thinking about the relationship between church and state, it means a few things.

God's Word is eternal, but situations faced by governments change. The Holy Spirit brings the scriptures to life through filling the church. God's Word was, is, and will be. No matter the century or situation, the bible provides a guide for our lives. However, the events of the world are different—however similar they might seem—in time and place. Leaders need to be aware of how their actions benefit or challenge others. It is their calling to ensure justice flows like streams, but there is no one book to instruct them on what specific decisions

to make. However, taking many history classes would certainly help. (yes, a shameless plug!).

The church can help mold the minds of those that make decisions. Through preaching the Word, producing and leading bible studies, and praying for government leaders on a regular basis, church workers help develop righteous people who strive for justice and peace. This can be done through a variety of media—sermons, books and pamphlets, music, television, radio, podcasts and blogs. The hope is that political leaders would use what they glean from religious sources to make wise decisions to make society function well for all of us.

Government leaders should not try to control someone's conscience. In Luther's view, it is the church's duty to instruct us in what God calls us to do. One of Luther's theological contributions was the idea that we do not need an intermediary—clergy or lay—between us and God for salvation. Working for the good of society should not lead elected or appointed officials to tell us what to think or to shame us into (or from) doing something we believe is wrong (or right). Government leaders trying to legislate morality are usurping the church's job and taking what they learn from religious sources too far.

Church workers have a duty to point out when actions beyond the doors of the church don't quite match up with the ideas inside the doors. Saying "hatred be damned" in your sermon is perfectly

acceptable. Of course, not everyone listens! So, church workers might need to spread their messages in different ways. They could write letters to legislators, post messages on social media, meet with elected officials or join in marches. However, a worship service should not be a political ad for Candidate X—this disrespects a worshipper who supports Candidate Y.

Both church workers and government leaders should respect God's children. Producing righteous people who make just decisions and maintaining peace among people both demonstrate a respect for all people made in the image of God. To love God is to love your neighbor which is to respect everyone, no matter who they are or what you are doing.

It seems like the relationship between church and state epitomizes the interplay among different people's vocations. Some are called to shepherd God's children through church work. Some are called to protect God's children through making laws, executing laws and interpreting laws. No matter what, we are all called to act with justice, to love and serve our neighbors and to walk humbly with God.

## The need for a new Reformation?

BY DR. GRANT CAREY

This past summer I started watching more of those home renovations shows. You know the ones I'm talking about- the shows that feature a good looking couple who buy an outdated property for a cheap price, fix it up in a few weeks and then sell it for a significant profit. As I thought about what drew me to shows like this, I came to realize that I like seeing outdated things become repurposed. While the foundation and structure of the house rarely changed, the way it was presented was so that it was more useable and accessible to the next owners. I guess one could argue that these types of shows are really about reformation.

It was about the same time I started watching the renovation shows that I ran across an article in Christianity Today which reported a bleak number for the Southern Baptist Convention. Attendance at Sunday services is down seven percent compared to the previous year. But this isn't just the trend with Southern Baptists; Lutherans and other denominations have been wrestling with declining attendance and membership for the past few decades. This makes me wonder if there is a need for a better way for



the Church to operate and share the Gospel? Maybe instead of hoping people will come TO church each week, the church could find a better way to GO to the people in everyday life?

Perhaps this means a new reformation is needed. Did you know that throughout the last two millennia we have experienced a major theological reformation, or dramatic shift, about every 500 years. Check this out:

- 1st Century- Jesus changes history and reforms classical Judaism to the new covenantal Christianity
- 313 AD- Roman Emperor Constantine declares Christianity to be the official religion, allowing it to be practiced openly.
- 1054 AD- The Great Schism occurs separating Christianity into two main sects, which we now know as the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church bodies.
- 1517 AD- The Reformation begins when Luther nails his 95 theses, or issues, with the Roman Catholic church.
- 2020 AD- ???

So what does this look like? What conditions are necessary

for a new reformation? For one, technological innovation has always been a catalyst of previous reformations. Like repurposed houses, these innovations help make life more functional and modern. Here are some examples from history:

- Transcontinental roads built by the Romans helped the spread of the gospel in the time of the apostles.
- A switch from fragile papyrus to vellum, or parchment paper, helped Biblical manuscripts last longer and become more accessible to Christians in the following centuries after Jesus.
- The printing press, invented around 1440 by Johannes Gutenberg, helped Martin Luther and others, get important books and theological documents into the hands of the people.
- Advances in transportation (airplanes and automobiles) and communication (radio, television, and telephones) in the past years with have enabled Christianity to expand to more places around the globe.

But, perhaps the greatest technological innovation has been given to us in our lifetime: the internet. We now have instant access to all sorts of information that would have previously taken years of study and expertise to uncover. I wonder if we have fully utilized the potential of this technology for sharing the Gospel and perhaps using it as a platform for arguing and tearing each other down hasn't contributed to its

connective power.

I think those in higher education, and especially those of us at Concordia University Texas, are wrestling with the degree which technological advances will affect education. We have plans to phase out our centers in San Antonio, Houston and DFW in order to better use our resources in development of online education. Google Docs, Blackboard and MyInfo have streamlined many of the processes that help higher education flow more smoothly. Concordia even offers a Master of Education that can be done completely online. But what will the future of education look like? My guess is that the main structure of teaching and learning won't necessarily change, but like a renovated house, how that is done may change significantly.

I'm not sure the Church's next reformation, as well as Concordia Texas' next innovation in higher education, are yet to be fully realized. But there are two things these both have in common; first, each is about keeping Jesus and His message of redemption, grace and saving love at the forefront, and secondly, each are about relating to the people around us as we strive to do life together and make the world a better place for all. Like the renovation show, these foundations won't change, but my hope is that whatever the next reformation looks like, more people come to know and experience the amazing love of Jesus Christ.

## Has the time come for a new Reformation?

BY DR. BRENT BURGESS

Does the Church's reformation, need another reformation? My initial inclination is to say "yes" given all the dysfunction in the Church and all of the wrong doings and injustice that have been committed in the name of Christ. However, after thinking, researching and praying I have come to the conclusion that we are not in need a new reformation, but rather a return to many of the principles of the movement that God's servant Martin Luther started in 1517. Before I get into why this is, I'd like to share a little about my own faith journey.

I was not raised in the Lutheran church. In fact, I rarely attended any church until I was 13 years old when I decided that I wanted to become a follower of Christ. I was baptized a few months later on Easter Sunday in a small Baptist Church in West Texas. I still remember the smell of the water and the warmth of the baptismal pool as I was pulled up out of the water shaking my head like a wet puppy. I knew I was cleansed of my sins at that moment and that the slate was clean. However, avoiding sin can be tough for a teenage boy and I soon started racking them

up, but also feeling shame and disappointment. My clean slate was being soiled.

I took being a Christian very seriously and for the first time in my life, I was holding myself to a high standard. I would set out to read the Bible every day, do a Bible study every night and not act upon sinful thoughts for a week. More often than not, I would fail and I would beg God to forgive me again and again, but I never felt forgiven and the shame always remained. I knew that God "could" forgive me, but I lacked the faith and trust to believe that He actually did. In a way, I believed that God forgave me like I imagined a wife might forgive a cheating husband, which is to say, she may say that she forgave him, but in her heart she would never be able to fully let it go. I thought of God looking down on me from heaven and shaking his head as I sinned, like the parent who had a child that was a constant disappointment. Yes, I knew God loved me, but I really did not think he liked me or wanted to even be around me until I got my act together.

I would be lying if I said that I outgrew this mentality when I



became an adult. I bought into the myth that God blessed only those who did good things and in a way He eventually cursed or punished those who did wrong. I lived in constant fear that the other shoe was going to drop if I kept sinning and that my life would get better if I just sinned less and tithed more. It wasn't until I started really diving into God's Word and reading some outstanding books that I started seeing that my perspective on Christ was flawed. I realized that while my sins could have earthly and personal consequences, if I asked, my sins were as far as the east was from the west and I was made pure again by the blood of Christ. I did not, and could not, earn that grace and I could not repay it either; it was simply a free gift from Christ that was already paid for with His blood.

The thinking of my youth, while misguided, is fairly common by those both inside and outside Christ's church. Many Christians treat grace as a type of commodity that is withheld and even most non-believers that I know subscribe to some type of belief in karma (Good Acts = Blessings/Bad Acts = Retribution). I believe that this type of thinking (and preaching) does much more harm than good because it makes potential followers of Christ believe that their Savior doesn't want a relationship with them until they get a handle on their sins. I have counseled many friends who didn't believe that they could be a homosexual, a fornicator, a heavy drinker, a drug

user or a "fill in the blank" and a follower of Christ at the same time. I understand their sadness I usually try to tell them that even though I don't know exactly how God views their struggles, I do know that God is always seeking a relationship with them and that they should let God love them. Grace is simply counterintuitive to many Christians as well as those outside the church. Many people simply can't wrap their mind around the thought that they can actually get something for nothing.

So, at this point you may be asking yourself how in the world does this relate to the Reformation? Early in his ministry Martin Luther believed that God's grace was insufficient to cover his sins. He hid away in an Augustinian Monastery begging God to forgive him for his sins and castigating himself. He simply did not believe that God's grace was big enough to cover his sins. Thankfully, a friend and mentor came to Luther and convinced him that his focus on sin and personal conduct was obscuring the beauty of a relationship with Christ.

The Church in the 16th Century quite literally treated grace like a commodity as indulgences were sold by the church. You could literally purchase with gold a "Get out of Purgatory" edict and absolve your sins. While this was likely an effort by the Pope Leo X to raise money for St. Peter's Basilica, it also represented the familiar misunderstanding of grace. Then, like now, some folks simply could

not reconcile the fact that grace could be unearned and that the price for their sins had already been paid. It was counter-intuitive and when something is thus, people seek to provide alternatives to make sense of that thing for which they fail to understand. It was on this point that Luther was most adamant.

He contended that God's grace was not a commodity, but rather it was a free, abundant and accessible gift to all believers. Still today, even in the Lutheran Church, we struggle with this idea. It simply can't be that easy. My sins can't be that easily forgiven can they? I have to pay a price for my sins somehow, right? Isn't grace only available to the righteous? The problem with this type of thinking is that when we find ourselves more in control of our sins, especially our public ones, we start to believe that we are more worthy of God's grace than others. So, do we need another reformation? For me the answer is "No". Martin Luther may not have had to deal with issues like same-sex marriage, gender neutral bathrooms, weapons of mass destruction or Islamic terrorism, but it would be a mistake to assume that the controversies of his day were not just as pressing. The evil one wants us to define our relationship with God based on what we do or don't do, because we can never attain perfection and we can easily get suspended in the tension of that failure. We (believers) can even use our quest for righteousness as a club to beat

back others who want a relationship with Him who created us.

Luther changed the world in a way that few others have. What we need today is not a new reformation, but perhaps a reaffirmation of what Christ spoke through his servant Luther back in the 16th century. We need to start working harder to invite sinners to dine at our table and lead with the beauty of a relationship with Jesus instead of a list of hoops that people need to jump through to receive the blessings of their Creator. Finally, we need to realize that when we treat Christ's church as an exclusive club only for the righteous instead of a place of healing and acceptance, we are only doing the work of the evil one.

According to Christ, the greatest commandments are to love God the Father with all your heart and to love your neighbor. I don't discount that the rest of the law matters and I believe it is relevant, but not at the expense of these two commandments. If we want to serve God in a way that Christ instructed us, it's time to start trusting God and get out of the way of His perfect and beautiful love.

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