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// featuring a
foreword by

Kenneth G. Appold

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The Reformation and Ecumenism

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Editor's Note

BRANDON WATSON

Executive Editor, Princeton Theological Review

Prior to receiving the Eucharist, Augustine encouraged the church to "be what you see, and receive what you are."¹ Augustine's words reflect the essential unity found in the sacramental elements. As the congregation looked at the bread and wine, they were united. When they partook of the elements, they took in what they already were—the body of Christ. Even today, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist brings us into covenant fellowship with God and one another. When we come to the table, we bear witness to the reality of being united in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in all."²

Many efforts are being made this year to remember the dawn of the Protestant Reformation. The quincentenary of Martin Luther nailing the *Ninety-five Theses* to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg is a battle cry for some. For others, the remembrance strikes a chord of discomfort and grief over the dissension in the church. Still yet, others may find encouragement in the commemoration because it points to the progress made in restoring unity. While some would hope to bring others into their "camp," the urging of gospel unity is not uniformity, but unity amidst diversity. As the history of the church speaks, we discern what is good and progress toward a brighter future.

This issue of the *Princeton Theological Review* is an effort to continue the conversation of the Reformation in hopes to bring clarity, progression, and a witness to the unifying gospel of Jesus Christ. While this publication will not provide such realized unity, we hope the dialogue of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation will spur the church on to seek peace, justice, and reconciliation.

It is the privilege of the *Princeton Theological Review* to have the Foreword written by Dr. Kenneth Appold. He provides keen insight into the historical development of the Reformation and beyond. Making note of the multiplicity of church options today, he points to the deep wounds such division has caused. To address the hurt, Appold urges us to allow the "pain of our failings" to sharpen the vision of unity.

The first essay, written by Emilee Snyder, challenges the notion of Luther's theology providing a basis for antinomianism. By juxtaposing Luther's early life and pastoral

¹ Augustine, "Sermon 272" in *Essential Sermons: Classroom Resource Edition*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Edmund Hill, The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century (New York: New City, 2007), 318.

² Eph 4:4–5 (NRSV).

concerns with his theological writings, Snyder argues for a reexamination of Luther's doctrine of sanctification. Thus, this paper provides a rationale for contemporary Christians to take Luther's *simul iustus et peccator* as a motivation for pursuing holiness, not as a detractor.

Mark Almquist-Murray explores Erasmus of Rotterdam's biblical hermeneutic in the second essay. Treading the waters of Erasmus's dialectic of visible and invisible, the essay investigates how Erasmus's understanding of scripture is compatible with his theology. To do so, key works of Erasmus are examined, both theological and biblical. Tracing the spiritual and material themes throughout his life and work, this essay shows an appreciation for Erasmus and encourages the reader to employ the same hermeneutic.

Minjung theology, an emerging theological voice, is the focus of the third essay, written by Yoon Ki Kim. Part of being in the Reformed tradition, argues Kim, is to have an ecumenical spirit and be in dialogue with other traditions. The essay seeks this spirit by placing minjung theology in conversation with three other theological trajectories, namely, black theology of the United States, dalit theology of India, and ludu theology of Myanmar. Hearing each of these theologies on their own terms, minjung theology is then presented as a dialogue partner. Giving voice to marginalized and oppressed theological understandings, Kim hopes to continue reforming and seek solidarity.

The final essay, written by Charles Johnson III, focuses on two students in higher education who studied abroad in cities of differing confessions. This paper illuminates some of the earliest models of ecumenism. By focusing on the confessional identities and interactions of people in Oxford and Wittenberg, Johnson investigates the struggles of inter-personal relationships amidst contrasting theological confessions. The result is an inside look at formative experiences of cross-cultural study and engagement.

Disunity and friction prevail in the church today. Altogether, the essays herein are an attempt to foster dialogue that unites the people of God. May we follow Augustine and live into the reality which was possible through the self-giving love of Jesus Christ, namely, that we see and already are—one body.

March 24, 2017
Princeton, NJ

Foreword

KENNETH G. APPOLD

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If the Reformation divided the church, as many people argue, then it seems incongruous to claim ecumenism as one of its legacies. How can this be? Some might respond: It hasn't always been. From a legal standpoint, the Reformation undeniably introduced a number of durable divisions into Christianity. The Act of Supremacy of 1534 established King Henry VIII as head of the Church of England, thereby removing that church from the jurisdiction of the pope and from sacramental unity with the Roman Catholic Church. The Peace of Augsburg of 1555 established Lutheranism as a legally recognized "religion" next to Catholicism within the Holy Roman Empire, thereby, and for the first time, creating two politically legitimate churches throughout much of Europe. Related events took place in Scotland, the Nordic countries, and in parts of Eastern Europe. However, disunited medieval European Christianity may have been—and it is worth pointing out that in many ways it was—the Reformation clearly added to the problem.

Christianity was changing in other ways during the sixteenth century, as well, however, and those changes impacted Christian unity in a different fashion. That becomes more obvious as one leaves the stage of Western Europe. For one thing, Roman Catholicism of the Latin West had long been divided from the Orthodox Christianity of the Greek East, a split cemented by mutual excommunications in 1054. Separated by culture, language, and geography, these two ancient churches seemed to be going their own ways as the Reformation erupted in the West. In fact, during precisely the same period, Russia was shifting the balance of authority within Orthodoxy, advancing itself as the successor to recently fallen Constantinople and positioning Moscow as the "Third Rome"—or new capital of Christendom. Catholicism itself was changing, too, however. The most dramatic of those changes came as the result of Europe's encounter with cultures on other continents. Since the major exploring powers of the age were Catholic—Spain and Portugal—and since the pope had ordered them to temper their imperial adventures with a commitment to Christian mission, Roman Catholic Christianity very suddenly found itself a world religion. There were now new Christians in the Americas, Africa, and in South and East Asia, all of whom acknowledged at least formal obedience to the Roman pope and were understood to belong to one church. At the same time, however, their inclusion introduced an utterly unprecedented degree of cultural pluralism into the Roman Catholic Church. In that sense, too, church "unity" became a challenge.

The legacy of that eventful sixteenth century continues today. The jurisdictional divisions introduced by the Reformation have multiplied exponentially, as new churches pop up like spring crocuses all over the world. While the Reformation established two legal alternatives to Roman Catholicism (Lutheran and Reformed churches) in Europe, today's ecclesial landscape is dotted by a virtually countless number of denominations. As if that were not enough, a rapidly growing number of local congregations are calling themselves "non-denominational" and seemingly dispensing with any thought of trans-local unity whatsoever. And if the many new cross-cultural encounters of the sixteenth century seemed transformative then, how much more complicated is the situation today?

Astonishingly, the quest for Christian unity has never been as strong as in the present. To be fair, it was never far from the surface even during the Reformation. All of the changes that rocked the sixteenth century's churches were accompanied by strenuous efforts to heal the wounds and reconcile the spirits. There were religious councils and colloquies between Catholics and Lutherans, Lutherans and Reformed, Catholics and Reformed, and in some cases all three—plus representatives of different branches of the "Radical Reformation." Paradoxically, the most ecumenical place in early modern Europe was ruled by Muslims. After they occupied Transylvania, the Ottoman Turks forced the various churches—Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and Unitarian—to sign an ecumenical treaty. The Muslims even organized disputations between them, with a Turkish bey as theological judge. The transformative forces experienced by globalized Spanish and Portuguese Catholicism were also counterbalanced by measures to ensure Christian unity. Few such efforts went smoothly, and none succeeded entirely: Christians remained divided. But the fact that such projects existed at all is important. Jesus's commands and prayers that Christians be one (e.g., John 17), echoed by Paul's repeated injunctions that Christians form the one body of Christ, have never left the scene. They continued to resonate throughout the Reformation, and they resonate in new ways today. The deeper the divisions, the more painful the wound. And it is that pain which drives ecumenism. No matter how insurmountable divisions between persons, groups, parties, or cultures may seem, no matter how strong the temptation to respond by turning one's back and walking the other way, Christians have an answer: we are one body. We have not always heard that call as clearly as we should, but the pain of our failings sharpens the vision.

Luther's Doctrine of Sanctification

Reteaching the Gospel in Medieval Christendom

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INTRODUCTION

In the centuries following the European Reformation, Martin Luther's doctrine of sanctification has become prone to both doubt and dismissal on the basis of an alleged "anti-sanctification bias" born from many of his writings.² Unimpressed with a seeming lack of standards for Christian holiness, contemporary critics voice concerns that such an absence, or underdevelopment, in Luther's spiritual teachings may result in spiritual idleness among laity and clergy alike.³ As I will argue in this paper, however, this stance is largely both misguided and misinformed, for it often emerges from a selective, partial

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² Kurt E. Marquart, "Antinomian Aversion to Sanctification?," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 67, no. 3/4 (July–October 2003): 380. Rev. Dr. Kurt E. Marquart, a long-time Lutheran and former professor of systematic theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, observes the occasional antinomian accusations toward Luther's theology, suggesting that the "anti-sanctification bias" towards Luther perhaps is an "over-reaction to Evangelicalism's stress on practical guidance for daily living" (380). William P. McDonald adds that traces of these criticisms can also be found in John Wesley, who held fervently to sinless perfection throughout his religious career. McDonald argues that Wesley charged Luther with both antinomianism and solafideism, a criticism that in some circles has lingered through today. "A Luther Wesley Could Appreciate? Toward Convergence on Sanctification," *Pro Ecclesia* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 43. However, observing these sentiments in this paper is not to imply any universality of the critiques within their respective wider traditions. For further demonstrations of these critiques, see also Jennifer A. Herdt's chapter "Luther: Saved Hypocrites" in *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 173–196.

³ Alexander Jensen, "Martin Luther's 'Sin Boldly' Revisited: A Fresh Look at a Controversial Concept in Light of Modern Pastoral Psychology," *Contact* 137 (2002): 5. Specifically, Jensen notes here Luther's famous statement "pecca fortiter sed fortius fide (sin boldly but believe even bolder)" as, at points, causing "embarrassment for Lutheran Christianity" since its "critics have often perceived it as undermining morality and thus used it to attack Lutheranism."

view of Luther's works that likewise fails to properly consider the way his cultural context, spiritual background, and pastoral objectives framed his theology. Specifically, in challenging medieval theology's emphasis on external works,⁴ Luther approached sanctification with an inward focus, dismayed by the legalism and lack of belief he perceived to be implicit in scholastic soteriology.⁵ To minister to those misinformed by this medieval system, Luther provided a *simul iustus et peccator* model of sanctification, a Latin phrase that translates as "simultaneously just and sinner." This paradigm succeeds in both mandating an increase in one's Christian piety, while also freeing those tormented by teachings of conditional, merit-earned holiness. The absence of sinless perfection in Luther's spiritual paradigm, therefore, need not been seen as a deficiency in his sanctification doctrine but as evidence of his serious and sincere pastoral objective: reinforcing the gospel to Christians who had been misdirected in a pursuit of works-based righteousness.

To properly contextualize this contention, this paper begins with critical background material from Luther's own spiritual life, which equipped him with empathy for the spiritual struggles of those around him. A delineation of Luther's doctrine of sanctification follows, offering insight into his pastoral priority that guided his theological vocation. On a final note, I will insist on both the relevance and necessity of this sanctification concept for contemporary Christianity, as it ministers not only to recovering legalists⁶ but to all Christians alike. Indeed, the inclination to rely on one's human righteousness, rather than the promise of the unwavering grace of God, is a religious experience common to most. An under-utilization of Luther's spiritual theology born from enduring mischaracterizations thus robs the field of spirituality from this essential, insightful voice.

LUTHER'S EARLY LIFE

Martin Luther's upbringing groomed him for his struggle with—and skepticism of—the traces of merit in scholastic soteriology prominent in medieval Catholicism,

⁴ Carl Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 64. Medieval scholastic soteriology was expansive and varied; Luther's objections, as cited in this paper, are directed primarily against the medieval motto "do what lies within you" and accompanying misunderstandings of grace. In this "mathematics of salvation," Christians were taught to offer to God one's most sincere efforts at loving him fully and living righteously. In turn, God would empower the believer to do so even better by infusing further grace (*ibid.*, 58). According to Luther, however, this scholastic idea exacerbated spiritual insecurity. Meriting grace and securing salvation were both conditionally bestowed and subjectively discerned. Christians thus remained piercingly unsure whether they had truly done their best and perpetually unaware of their spiritual stance before God.

⁵ John Dillenberger, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings* (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), xx. In 1343, Clement VI published the papal bull *Unigenitus*, which established the legitimacy of indulgences—papal pardons for repented sins, often resulting in lessened purgatorial punishment. Eventually, Luther argues, this led to the evolving misunderstanding among lay Christians that one could earn one's own salvation, through both spiritual merits of the saints and financial contributions to the papacy. As Dillenberger explains, moreover, the indulgence preaching of Dominican Johann Tetzel was the most pressing impetus of Luther's 95 Theses. For Luther, an incorrect understanding of indulgences bred an incorrect understanding of grace.

⁶ As used in this context, "legalists" refers specifically to those Luther himself deemed victimized by a poorly taught salvific system—namely, those misinformed by the wider teaching of the time.

wherein his doctrine of sanctification is most properly understood. As Luther admits, "From childhood on, I knew I had to turn pale and be terror-stricken when I heard the name of Christ; for I was taught only to perceive [God] as a strict and wrathful judge."⁷ His earthly father, Hans Luder, contributed significantly to the concept Martin developed of his heavenly Father, as the young Luther was subject to strict and severe discipline under Hans.⁸ Growing up in the presence of high superstition also contributed to Luther's sensitive religious conscience. Analyzing the psychological and religious development of Luther, Erik Erikson emphasizes the impact of his father's mining occupation on the young Luther's psyche. "The constant danger of being crushed by a mere squeeze of the earth's insides makes miners prone to primitive superstition," Erikson explains, noting that "disasters in mines were often attributed to the Devil."⁹

This religious torment followed Luther into his pursuit of higher education. After earning his liberal arts degree from the University of Erfurt in 1501, he planned to follow the calling of his earthly father and pursue a career in law. After a supernatural, near-death moment in 1505, however, this calling clashed with the direction of his heavenly Father, who was summoning him to become a monk, spiraling Luther into a crisis over which paternal authority to obey.¹⁰ As Luther reiterated to his disappointed father, "I did not become a monk out of my own free will and desire, but was walled in by the terror and agony of sudden death."¹¹ Upon taking his monastic vows in 1507, the *Anfechtung* that he had entered with strengthened exponentially, largely a consequence of his father's enduring disapproval of his religious career.¹² Even more terrorizing for Luther, Hans suggested his son misheard the voice in the thunderstorm, claiming he mistook the words of a ghost for the words of God. All the while, Hans continued to threaten the unstable Luther with the repercussions of defying the divine commandment to honor thy mother and father in his rebellion against his father's order of studying law.

In addition to these familial troubles, spiritual and theological burdens lingered in Luther, which failed to improve despite his relentless religious dedication to earn his merit before the examination of his heavenly Father. Desperate to be counted as righteous, Luther took his monastic disciplines exceptionally seriously, praying seven

⁷ As quoted by Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1958), 71.

⁸ Ewald M. Plass, *This is Luther: A Character Study* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1948), 31. Plass adds that since Luther was the oldest of seven children, this amplified the pressure and burden his father placed on him.

⁹ Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 58.

¹⁰ Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1959), 2:1021.

¹¹ Martin Luther, "To Hans Luther," in *Martin Luther: The Best from All His Works*, ed. Stephen Rost, Christian Classics Collection 7 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 252.

¹² David C. Steinmetz, *Luther in Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), 1. *Anfechtung* can be understood as intense, terror-filled spiritual trials. In Luther's case, this turmoil took the form of "an unnerving and enervating fear that God had turned his back on him, once and for all, had repudiated his repentance and prayers, and had abandoned him to suffer the pains of hell."

times a day and occasionally going days without eating.¹³ When Luther was charged with the supreme responsibility of performing a rite as an ordained priest, his *Anfechtung* peaked, as “the priest who performs the miracle of transforming the elements enjoys a power and privilege denied even to the angels.”¹⁴ It is thus no surprise that the German mysticism he saw modeled in both his Augustinian mentor John Staupitz and chancellor Jean Gerson appealed to him during his defining years as a monk and student.¹⁵ In contrast to scholastic methodology, the “emphasis on passive reception of God’s grace, self-denial and willingness to suffer for Christ” came as a breath of fresh air for Luther, who felt engulfed in the reigning regimen of works-righteousness.¹⁶ Coupled with the inward piety that he learned through the Brethren of the Common Life, these early years were formative in preparing Luther’s modification of this medieval soteriology. It was on the basis of these early theological experiences, in fact, that his later writings on sanctification were birthed—writings which gave weight to passive holiness, exemplified through inward faith, rather than external works. It is to his own doctrine of sanctification that we now turn.

LUTHER’S WRITINGS: DEVELOPING A DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

Pneumatology and Ecclesiology

Luther’s doctrine of sanctification stems significantly from his understanding of justification by faith. As he argued in *Freedom of a Christian*, righteousness consists in passively hearing the promises of God and receiving them in faith. External works, unable to fulfill the requisite of hearing God’s promises, necessarily fail to produce this inner holiness and are therefore deprived of this justifying power. Yet, in addition to this passive righteousness, Luther introduced a second kind, known as proper righteousness, which is the product of the preceding righteousness that justifies.¹⁷ In this, the Christian actively produces good works and slays both the flesh and the sinful desires therein; sanctification here naturally ensues from justification. When Luther preached in June 1544, exegeting 1 John 3:13–18, he observed that “justification and sanctification are related like cause and effect and from the presence of the effect we may conclude that the cause is at work.”¹⁸

Additionally, sanctification is grounded in both pneumatology and ecclesiology, as this regenerating work in the believer cannot happen apart from either the Spirit or the

¹³ Ronald H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 27. According to Ewald Plass, portraits of Luther, beginning in 1520, portray him as withered and worn out, arguably a result of this spiritual habit he developed in his monastic years. *This is Luther*, 171.

¹⁴ Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 30.

¹⁵ Martin Luther, “On the Devil,” in *Luther’s Spirituality*, eds. Philip D. W. Krey and Peter D. S. Krey (New York: Paulist, 2007), 9. In this July 1530 pastoral letter to Jerome Weller, Luther recalls the encouragement he received from Staupitz in the midst of his spiritual turmoil. According to Luther’s account, Staupitz affirmed that his temptations were useful and necessary. “Do not fear,” Staupitz would reiterate, “God does not occupy you thus, you will see, except to use you as a servant to accomplish great things” (ibid., 8).

¹⁶ David G. Schmiel, “Martin Luther’s Relationship to the Mystical Tradition,” *Concordia Journal* 9, no. 2 (March 1983): 47.

¹⁷ Martin Luther, “Two Kinds of Righteousness,” in Dillenberger, *Martin Luther*, 89.

¹⁸ Plass, *What Luther Says*, 2:723.

church. As Daniel Yeago points out, "Luther maintains that we are not saved by the work of Christ except by way of the complementary work of the Holy Spirit."¹⁹ Illustrating this unified work of the Son and Spirit, Luther explains that the very purpose of the Holy Spirit's work in Christians is for sanctification, "which [the Spirit] accomplishes by applying, so to speak, the redemptive activity of Christ in our Life."²⁰ Likewise, while Christ is the source of all true holiness, the impartation of the Holy Spirit in the Christian is what makes that holiness available to humanity. Exemplifying this ecclesial element, Luther believes the Holy Spirit imparts this holiness through the Word and the Sacraments, events that take place within the Christian church.²¹ Luther emphasizes this in *The Large Catechism*, stating that the Holy Spirit "commences sanctification on earth and daily increases it by means of two things: the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sins."²² Sanctification is thus largely a corporate endeavor, implicating the wider Christian body wherein the Spirit works.

Simul Iustus et Peccator

Luther's *simul iustus et peccator* doctrine, "simultaneously just and sinner," further articulates his understanding of sanctification.²³ According to his notion of original sin, humanity is inherently depraved, evidenced not only through "outer works of the body, but also all the activities that move [humans] to do these works, namely, the inmost heart, with all its powers."²⁴ Although baptism "works forgiveness of sins, delivers from

¹⁹ David S. Yeago, "A Christian, Holy People: Martin Luther on Salvation and the Church," *Modern Theology* 13, no. 1 (January 1997): 115.

²⁰ Elmer L. Towns, "Martin Luther on Sanctification," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126, no. 502 (1969): 117. Here, it is important to note Tuomo Mannermaa's new approach for studying Luther's justification doctrine and consequent notions of sanctification, relevant for our purposes. Mannermaa reinterprets justification as not merely the impartation of Christ's work but the impartation of Christ's person as well. Accordingly, Mannermaa understands the concept of the *inhabitatio Dei*, the indwelling of Christ, as analogous to the Eastern doctrine of *theosis*. The Christian, therefore, is not only a justified sinner but also a divinely indwelt sinner, allowing for a union with Christ, *unio personalis*, that not only justifies but also sanctifies. Tuomo Mannermaa, "Justification and Theosis in Lutheran-Orthodox Perspective," in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 25.

²¹ Philip Watson, "Luther and Sanctification," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 30, no. 4 (April 1959): 245. Specifically, in Luther's Sermons on the Catechism, Luther describes the benefit and fruit of the Lord's Supper as the congregation of Christ receiving "forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. Dillenberger, *Martin Luther*, 238.

²² Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, trans. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 62.

²³ George Hunsinger, "What Karl Barth Learned from Martin Luther," *Lutheran Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 140. Although commonly overlooked, Karl Barth strongly adopted Luther's view of sanctification. As articulated by Hunsinger, "few theologians have ever aligned themselves more meticulously with Luther than did Barth in adopting the great doctrine of *simul iustus et peccator*," surprisingly standing more in line with Luther than with Calvin on this particular issue. Hunsinger continues that "Barth was unimpressed by the counter-argument that to deny such progress [in justification] would have a crippling effect on ethics. It would be a sad day, he retorted, when Protestantism could find no better motivation for Christian ethics than self-improvement in the Christian life. Barth took his stand staunchly with Luther that all our actions, not only the worst but also the best, exist before God as filthy rags" (ibid., 143).

²⁴ Martin Luther, "Preface to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 100. This theology of free will is further elaborated in the Heidelberg Disputation given in April 1518. Stated in Thesis 14, Luther argues, "Free will, after the fall, has the

death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this," the reign of sin continues to oppress humanity for as long as one's earthly sojourn persists.²⁵ This leads to Luther's paradoxical and revolutionary conclusion concerning sanctification: "As we have once obtained forgiveness of sins in baptism, so forgiveness remains day by day as long as we live, that is, as long as we carry the old creature around our necks."²⁶ Luther finds a scriptural basis for this tension within the Epistle to the Romans. Here, Luther interprets Paul's self-portrayal in 7:9 as still a sinner yet one whom "no charge is held against" since, as declared in 8:1, he is "in Christ."²⁷ Brilliantly articulating his *simul iustus et peccator* model, Luther states,

Insofar as our flesh is not yet killed, we are still sinners. Nevertheless insofar as we believe in Christ, and begin to receive the Spirit, God shows us favor and good-will. He does this to the extent that He pays no regard to our remaining sins, and does not judge them; rather He deals with us as according to the faith which we have in Christ until sin is killed.²⁸

Though legitimate and long-lasting, sanctification for Luther at the same time takes seriously the pervasiveness and persistence of sin within believers. Righteousness ceases to be equated with sinlessness per se but rather with the faithful perseverance *toward* such a state. For Luther, sanctification subsists in the process underway, amid both warring selves.

Mandate for Christian Piety

Although Luther discredits the notion of sinless perfection, largely for pastoral reasons, he rejects any interpretation that would imply a license to sin.²⁹ In fact, Luther warns Christians with eternal punishment if they neglect their sanctification, stating,

power to do good only in a passive capacity, but it can always do evil in an active capacity" (ibid., 15). This stands true, despite the fact that "works of men [and women] always seem attractive and good," stated in Thesis 3. In fact, "they are nevertheless likely to be mortal sins" (ibid.).

²⁵ Martin Luther, *Small Catechism*, trans. Timothy Wengert (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 46. Luther's somber view of life on this side of the eschaton is expressed in his "Letter of Comfort to His Dying Father," composed in February 1530: "For this accursed life is indeed nothing but a real vale of tears, in which the longer one lives, the more sin, arrogance, plague and misfortune one sees and experiences. And it all does not stop or decrease until the sound of the shovels filling our graves, where it must finally leave us in peace and allow us to sleep peacefully in the rest of Christ, until he comes again and with happy rejoicing wakes us up." "Letter of Comfort to His Dying Father," in Krey and Krey, *Luther's Spirituality*, 13.

²⁶ Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 90. According to Philip Watson's interpretation of Luther's paradigm, the believer has received the forgiveness of sins and the "first fruits of the Spirit, *primitiae Spiritus*," but remnants of sin in the flesh, "*reliquiae peccati in carne*," nonetheless remain in him or her. "Luther and Sanctification," 254. The Christian is simultaneously a saint and sinner because, although having been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, regeneration is not implemented to completion yet. Nonetheless, "there is a real increase of holiness and decrease of the power of sin even in this life" (ibid.).

²⁷ Martin Luther, "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," in Dillenberger, *Martin Luther*, 23.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Alexander Jensen, "Martin Luther's 'Sin Boldly' Revisited: A Fresh Look at a Controversial Concept in Light of Modern Pastoral Psychology," *Contact* 137 (2002): 5. Jensen looks specifically at Luther's *pecca fortiter sed fortius fide*, "sin boldly, but believe even bolder" (ibid., 2). Here, analyzed in the context of Luther's perception of Christian legalism, this is illustrative of his Christocentric, faith-based justification doctrine, of which not only passive righteousness is a part, but active ("proper") righteousness, as well. This entails spiritual responsibility on the part of the believer rather than a "moral 'free-ticket,' encouraging immorality" (ibid., 5).

“While we are not saved by good works, we shall surely be damned if we do not cease from evil works and repent.”³⁰ David Scaer similarly interprets Luther’s sanctification as both *passive* concerning God, while *active* concerning the world. Thereby discrediting an altogether passive and idle notion of sanctification, Scaer explains that “passivism in the world prevents God from acting Christologically in the world and thus thwarts [God’s] purposes.”³¹ Yet such active participation is not merely for the sake of advancing the kingdom of God in the cultural realm but also for the spirituality of Christians themselves.

For this reason, Luther emphasized the need of spiritual disciplines, in order to continually and increasingly break the chains of pride and produce godliness, warning that “[one] who does not go forward on the way of God goes backward.”³² This new form of piety necessitated active work on the believer pneumatologically through resisting the flesh and ecclesialogically through partaking in the Word and the Sacraments in church. The cooperation between God and believer suggested in Luther’s concept of piety, however, differed from the demands of merit-based righteousness. By replacing salvific indulgences and crippling confession with a trust-based spirituality, he effectively “threatened to put virtual sainthood within the reach of every man [and woman] and to make the halo the common property of all believers.”³³

Admittedly, upon hearing his radical teachings on liberty, abuse of this newfound freedom was not uncommon among medieval lay circles. In response, Luther took this abuse of freedom seriously, warning that those who “do whatever they please and take advantage of their freedom” have no permission “to share or enjoy any part of our liberty.”³⁴ Similarly, Luther was equally emphatic in rejecting an antinomian interpretation of his teachings, which focused solely on the forgiveness of Christ and ignored the mandate of sanctification.³⁵ Against this view, Luther charged,

They may be fine Easter preachers, but they are very poor Pentecost preachers, for they do not preach ... “about the sanctification by the Holy Spirit,” but solely about the redemption of Jesus Christ, although Christ ... has purchased redemption from sin and death so that the Holy Spirit might transform us out of the old Adam into new [humans] ... Christ did not earn only *gratia*, ‘grace,’ for us, but also *donum*, “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” so that we might have not only forgiveness of, but also cessation of sin. Now [one] who does not abstain from sin, but persists in [one’s] evil life, must have a different Christ, that of the Antinomians.³⁶

³⁰ Watson, “Luther and Sanctification,” 255.

³¹ David P. Scaer, “Sanctification in Lutheran Theology,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (April–July 1985): 188.

³² Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans: Glosses and Scholia*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Jacob A. O. Preus, vol. 25 of *Luther’s Works* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1972), 225.

³³ Plass, *This is Luther*, 169.

³⁴ Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 101.

³⁵ Antinomianism (*ἀντί*, meaning against + *νόμος*, meaning law), in this context, refers simply to the standpoint that Christians are no longer bound by moral laws following justification.

³⁶ Martin Luther, “On the Councils and the Church,” in *Church and Ministry III*, edited by Eric W. Gritsch, vol. 41 of *Luther’s Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 113–14.

While Luther's emphatic renewal of freedom within the Christian gospel may have spurred "anti-sanctification bias[es]," his writings indicate an explicit rejection of this misinterpretation.³⁷ Although some may have taken advantage of this newly-discovered Christian freedom, it does not denote that the freedom itself is wrong. Rather, it is more likely suggestive of an inadequacy of pastoral guidance Christians received under the existing system, failing to learn sustainable spiritual habits to healthily tame their flesh or operate appropriately under this freedom.

LUTHER'S PASTORAL CONCERNS

Ministering to Victims of Legalism

Luther's pastoral objectives directed his theological projections, particularly pertaining to spiritual growth. In this sense, many contemporary criticisms toward Luther may, in fact, be birthed from ineffective approaches by theologians, whereby Luther is mistaken as a systematic theologian instead of a sixteenth-century Wittenberg pastor to spiritually-vulnerable souls.³⁸ Timothy Wengert estimates that "our modern and postmodern addiction to theories and ideas may make it difficult for us to assess properly Martin Luther's own theology, unless and until we resituate it within his parish experience."³⁹ Although it has been established that Luther was as equally concerned for "peace of conscience" as he was for "purification of souls," as illustrated through his relentless mandate of demonstrating one's salvation through godly fruit, his overarching goal was to place this piety "on a secure basis."⁴⁰ As a pastor, he was comforting souls, reforming consciences, and guiding damaged Christians from ingrained legalistic perspectives toward a genuine comprehension of the Christian gospel. In doing so, he drew largely on his own continual experience with *Anfechtung* to console other believers enveloped in a similar spiritual struggle. In light of this context, sanctification need not be understood solely as personal holiness. Rather, as a Reformation pastor, Luther sought just as much to sanctify his parishioners from their misunderstandings of grace as he did from their inherent original sin.⁴¹

Luther's pastoral mindset is evident as early as the publication of the 95 *Theses*, in which he regretted deeply the "false understanding of the indulgence preachers' sermons among the people," exhorting Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz in 1517 to remember and reinforce the "first and only duty of all bishops"—namely, that "the

³⁷ Marquart, "Antinomian Aversion to Sanctification?," 380.

³⁸ John W. Kleinig, "Luther on the Reception in God's Holiness," *Pro Ecclesia* 17, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 77. Luther's doctrine of sanctification, as explained by Kleinig, was not formed in a classroom, theological setting but "was first forged in his opposition to the cult of the saints and the use of relics as holy things, objects that communicated holiness" (ibid., 7). Scott Hendrix, in his article "The Future of Luther's Theology," echoes Kleinig, explaining that Luther's agenda was "not to write a learned theology, but to teach laity and clergy how to live the evangelical Christian life." *A Journal of Theology* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 128.

³⁹ Timothy J. Wengert, *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 11.

⁴⁰ Plass, *This is Luther*, 167. As Luther explains in his Commentary on Galatians, sanctification and good works are not the means for justification but the fruit of it.

⁴¹ Gerhard O. Forde, *The Captivation of the Will: Luther vs. Erasmus on Freedom and Bondage* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 115.

people learn the gospel and the love of Christ.”⁴² Likewise, he lamented that prior to his German translation of the Bible in 1534, lay Christians in Germany lacked the privilege of understanding scripture. In particular, he suggested “what a treasure it would have been if a [Christian] could have rightly understood one single Psalm, and could have read or heard it in German.”⁴³ In accordance with this conviction, Luther preached vernacular sermons, filled not with scholarly theology or Greek and Latin sources but allusions to everyday life that people could understand.

This pastoral priority, over and above systematizing theology or formulating Reformation dogma, requires contemporary Christians to analyze Luther’s sanctification doctrine accordingly and responsibly. In particular, as Philip Krey keenly emphasizes, “Luther approached the issue of sanctification with some reserve for fear that his generation, so recently weaned from the idea of good works as a means to grace rather than a fruit thereof, would fall back into the old patterns of thought.”⁴⁴ Luther’s theology thus accommodated this sensitive spirit among his congregation, re-forming fragile parishioners. His doctrine of justification by faith—and ensuing sanctification—was formed with this caution and consideration in mind.

Relevance for Contemporary Christianity

Following this contextualization of Luther’s sanctification doctrine, this paper now turns to a contemporary analysis of *simul iustus et peccator*. Here, Luther’s doctrine of sanctification will be placed in brief dialogue with John Wesley’s holiness-centered—and seemingly divergent—spiritual theology. In doing so, the compatibility of both styles of sanctification will be argued, each as essential in speaking to diverse spiritual contexts. As a preliminary comment, one must not forget that Luther’s *Commentary on Romans* initially stirred Wesley’s spirit, causing his heart to feel “strangely warmed,” as he felt an assurance that Christ had taken away his sins, saving him from the law of sin and death.⁴⁵ Yet, as Wesley progressed in his spiritual and theological journey, he grew skeptical of Luther’s understanding of sanctification, speculating the Reformer espoused antinomianism, based on Luther’s misunderstanding of the doctrine of sanctification. To guard against any implications that Christians have a license to sin, Wesley insisted that sinful intentions can be gradually resisted through the Spirit’s power and presence. Rather than merely the “declared righteousness” that he saw in Luther, Wesley posited a “new birth” that joined this change in legal status before God, allowing the Christian to be “made perfect in love in this life.”⁴⁶ This teaching largely inspired the Holiness Movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, advocating the possibility of entire sanctification as a solution to original sin and inherited depravity.⁴⁷

⁴² Martin Luther, “Letter to the Archbishop of Mainz,” in *The Works of Martin Luther*, eds. Adolph Spaeth, L. D. Reed, and Henry Eyster Jacobs (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman, 1915), 1:26.

⁴³ Martin Luther, “Preface to the Psalms,” in Dillenberger, *Martin Luther*, 41.

⁴⁴ Krey and Krey, *Luther’s Spirituality*, xxv.

⁴⁵ McDonald, “A Luther Wesley Could Appreciate?,” 44.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁴⁷ Paul Merritt Bassett, “Culture and Concupiscence: The Changing Definition of Sanctity in the Wesleyan Holiness Movement, 1867-1920,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 61.

As it stands, sanctification for these two thinkers exhibits different emphases; one, it seems, preferring perfection, the other pardon. At the core of this issue, however, is the careful balancing between grace and works in the Christian life. This responsibility is allocated to both theologians, based on their respective contexts and convictions. With pastoral sensitivity and theological integrity, Christian teachers are tasked with attending to this equilibrium of grace and works with faithfulness to the Christian gospel. Thus, when either is jeopardized, it is important to appropriately restore the balance. Such was Luther's intention, as was Wesley's in his later context. A century following Wesley, in fact, Christian writer Halee Gray Scot notes that, for many, "the aftertaste of [many] legalistic fire-and-brimstone sermons of the 20th century remains embedded in [our] consciousness,"⁴⁸ offering warrant for a Luther-like reminder that a Christian is not one who has no sin but one whom God "imputeth not his [or her] sin because of his [or her] faith in Christ."⁴⁹ When the balance is compromised, it is the role of theologians and teachers to redirect the Christian to a healthy tension between works and grace. As emphases shift, so too must the remedies.

Put simply, the spectrum is vast, as expressions and expectations of spirituality dance from side to side. What one era needed, another era may seek to correct. In light of this, scholars need not force unrealistic agreements between Luther's and Wesley's notions of Christian holiness, nor must they validate one sanctification doctrine at the exclusion of the other. Rather, these diverging sanctification doctrines operate best when they are given the freedom to coexist with one another and function ecumenically to a spiritually diverse body of believers. These differing spiritualities minister not only to a present culture that sways back and forth between a works-righteousness mentality and an apathetic, complacent security but also to a community of Christian individuals who experience this tension within themselves both seasonally and daily. As Puritan Anthony Burgess asserted, "Every[one's] belly houses a [legalist] and an antinomian,"⁵⁰ pulling us in the direction of either input. More importantly, both voices "have a truth to tell, but trouble lay in the wake of imprudent privileging of the one over the other."⁵¹ This inner conflict illustrates not only the capacity for Luther's and Wesley's differing doctrines of sanctification to coexist with one another but the *necessity* of it, as Christians are equally susceptible to both antinomian spiritual idleness and legalistic self-justification, both of which distort the true freedom offered in the gospel.

⁴⁸ Margaret Feinberg, Halee Gray Scott, and Will Willimon, "Do American Christians Need the Message of Grace or a Call to Holiness?," *Christianity Today* 56, no. 11 (December 2012): 58. Scott Hoezee likewise identifies a twenty-first-century form of this legalistic pitfall, evident through the "application sermons" in many Christian churches today that emphasize what the congregation must do, week by week, to stay in the favor of God. "Applying Gracefully," *Calvin Theological Journal* 47, no. 2 (2012): 243. Teetering toward this works-righteousness mentality, Hoezee warns that "the threat of moralism is ever at hand" (*ibid.*, 244).

⁴⁹ Martin Luther, "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," in Dillenberger, *Martin Luther*, 23.

⁵⁰ David Parnham, "Motions of Law and Grace: The Puritan in the Antinomian," *Westminster Theological Journal* 70 (2008): 73.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

CONCLUSION

Despite suspicions of antinomianism against Luther, a close and holistic examination of his writings indicates not an elimination of good works but a restoration of good works to their *proper, post-justification* context. Even still, Luther's grace-based sanctification need not be endorsed at the exclusion of other Christian spiritualities but can exist in harmony with differing yet biblical notions of Christian sanctification. Embracing this interdenominational collaboration of holiness doctrines ensures that the entirety of the spiritual spectrum is ministered to, from Christians with legalistic tendencies to nonchalant nominal disciples. Luther's *simul iustus et peccator* understanding of sanctification is thus not emblematic of a timeless, fundamental doctrine of theology but a voice for the exploited Christians oppressed by offshoots of legalism. Yet indeed, one need not ascribe to the scholastic merit system to fall prey to the prideful impulse of attempting self-justification. Since such legalistic aspirations are often inherent to the human ego, it stands that even contemporary Christians have a need for Luther's two-fold nature of sanctification, a cleanse not only from original sin but also from human-made religious systems that facilitate self-sufficiency and merit-based ascents to holiness.

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A Visible Invisibility

The Paradoxical Biblical Hermeneutic of Erasmus

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INTRODUCTION

Erasmus of Rotterdam remains one of the most unique patrons of the Bible translation project, thereby making him a particularly enigmatic figure of the Protestant Reformation. In large part, it is his lack of a rigid systematization within both his theology and humanism that makes his methodology difficult to categorize. Despite this obscurity, there are consistent motifs throughout his corpus of writings. For example, his preference for the “invisible” and “spiritual” over the “visible” and “bodily” proves core to his theology. Erasmus’s participation in the philological bedrock of Renaissance humanism—with its resounding *ad fontes* clarion call—is also central to his style. And yet, considering these tenets, an important question arises: why would Erasmus, who seemingly discourages the visible world, at the same time be so fervently a proponent of the reception of a more fully disclosed, and *visible*, biblical text—through its original languages? In other words: is Erasmus’s theology compatible with his biblical hermeneutic?²

Arguably, Erasmus’s preference for the invisible-spiritual should not be a theme relegated exclusively to his theology but one that also remains a viable component of his biblical hermeneutic.³ Moreover, because the invisible-spiritual is evident in his

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² Erasmus’s translation effort is not a “hermeneutic” per se. This paper considers what his translation effort suggests about how he thinks the biblical text should be read. This is how “hermeneutic” is meant in this paper.

³ Throughout this paper, the phrase “invisible-spiritual” will be used. It appears Erasmus conflates, semantically, “spiritual” and “invisible.” It is worth mentioning that the notion of “spiritual” as “invisible,” though popular in Christian theology, is not universally established. That something may be called “spiritual” does not assume it is invisible to the human eye. However, inklings of this association—of spiritual things constituting invisible realities—are pervasive throughout western Christian thought. In *The Confessions*, Augustine exudes this presupposition of the spiritual as “invisible.” In Book VII he writes: “But in those days, after reading the books of the Platonists and following their advice to seek for truth beyond corporeal forms, I

hermeneutic, along with his effort to make visible the biblical text, his hermeneutic is uniquely paradoxical in that it seeks what we might call a “visible invisibility.” The skeptical underpinning of his methodology will also prove to galvanize this sensibility of a paradoxical hermeneutic. We will begin by observing two of his more theological texts, remarking on the prominent interaction of the invisible-spiritual and the visible-bodily and noting how Erasmus employs comedy. Then we will explore two texts that chart his hermeneutic and show where the visibility of the text is compatible with the invisible-spiritual. Finally, we will see how his methodology of skepticism helps disclose this paradoxical hermeneutic of a “visible invisibility.”

ALLEGORY AND THE INVISIBLE-SPIRITUAL: *THE HANDBOOK OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER*
(*ENCHIRIDION MILITIS CHRISTIANI*)

Let us begin by observing one of Erasmus’s first works: *The Handbook to the Christian Soldier* (*Enchiridion Militis Christiani*).⁴ In this work, penned in 1501/2 and appearing first in 1503/4, Erasmus outlines several core aspects of the Christian life. Described as a moral “how-to” book, the *Enchiridion* provides principles for achieving a fruitful spiritual life.⁵ The Fifth Rule of the *Enchiridion* is summarized here in part:

Therefore let this rule be ever in readiness, that we do not linger over temporal matters at any time, but move on, rising up to the love of spiritual things, which are incomparably better, despising visible things in comparison to those that are invisible.⁶

Erasmus’s emphasis on the spiritual, which he adamantly identifies with the invisible, non-physical world, is seen clearly. The moral hierarchy privileges those things unseen while “temporal things” prove to be hindrances in one’s spiritual quest.

What, exactly, does Erasmus mean by “visible” things? Further in this text, Erasmus references the use of holy water in religious ceremonies. He asks, “What is the use of being sprinkled with a few drops of holy water as long as you do not wipe clean the inner defilement of the soul?”⁷ The inner piety characteristic of Erasmus’s thought is evident here. Later he discourages the veneration of the ashes of the Apostle Paul—these visible ashes being composite materials used for religious purposes. However, Erasmus clarifies he does not condemn these outward venerations completely,

turned my gaze toward your invisible reality, trying to understand it through created things...” Here, Augustine does not reject corporeal things but intimates a superior invisible realm to which corporeal and visible things may point. See Augustine, *The Confessions*, Book VII, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1997), 141. The crucifix is an example of something visible, which has been interpreted as eliciting a spiritual quality.

⁴ The translation used here is taken from the extract provided in Erika Rummel’s *The Erasmus Reader*. Citations of *The Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, with appropriate pagination, are from Rummel’s work. See Erika Rummel, *The Erasmus Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 138. Rummel uses the translation of Charles Fantazzi. See Desiderius Erasmus, *The Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, trans. Charles Fantazzi, in vol. 66 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 1–128.

⁵ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, in *The Erasmus Reader*, ed. Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 138.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 144.

contending that it is most important that religion be consistent with devotion.⁸ Erasmus discourages pilgrimage to Jerusalem, “treading where Christ trod,” when “there is Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon,” within a person.⁹ These references to destitute places suggest that for Erasmus the interior life must govern the exterior.

The invisible-spiritual life is more significant than the visible-material world because it yields a moral paradigm in which persons reach a higher, heavenly world. Erasmus emphasizes this here:

Embrace zealously this rule, not to be willing to crawl along the ground with unclean animals, but supported on those wings whose growth Plato thinks are induced in our minds by the heat of love and shoot out anew, raise yourself as on the steps of Jacob’s ladder from the body to the spirit, from the visible to the invisible, from the letter to the mystery, from sensible things to intelligible things, from composite things to simple things.¹⁰

His explicit reference to Plato clarifies his theory’s source. In this Platonic scheme, the higher, unearthly realm of eternal attributes must transfix one’s attention. Ultimately, though, how Platonic is his thought outlined in the *Enchiridion*?

In her chapter entitled “Neoplatonism,” in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: Advocate of A New Christianity*, Christine Christ-von Wedel claims it is likely that Erasmus read the Florentine Platonists, Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, before he composed the *Enchiridion*.¹¹ Thus, Christ-von Wedel describes Erasmus’s paradigm as Neoplatonic. In particular, the Platonic ambiance is revealed in his continued appeal to allegory.¹² As in the previous quotation, Jacob’s ladder is employed as a spiritual elevation device. Essential to this metaphor is the upward thrust, conveying that the eternal destination is cosmically superior over the earthly realm. And yet, this cosmic hierarchy is not the only feature of his allegory. His allegorical picture shows that historical events repurpose themselves. The event of Jesus’s death, as the quintessential historical event for the Christian, is not confined to history. Rather, Jesus’s death becomes allegorically revived vis-à-vis the restraining of one’s passions.¹³ Christ-von Wedel notes how Erasmus’s template addresses the bodily world in a new way:

The *Enchiridion* propagated a new form of worldly piety in which the pious do not flee from the tangible world to the sacred, but instead remain in the world to which they are born, fighting to overcome the flesh while pressing on to obtain the things of the spirit.¹⁴

⁸ Ibid., 145. At many points throughout the *Enchiridion*, Erasmus clarifies he does not “condemn” these outward signs or actions: “I do not disapprove in any way of the external ceremonies of Christians” (147); “Paul does not forbid you to use the elements of this world” (151); “Corporeal works are not condemned, but those that are invisible are preferred” (151).

⁹ Ibid., 152–53.

¹⁰ Ibid., 154.

¹¹ Christine Christ-von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam: Advocate of a New Christianity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 48.

¹² Ibid., 48–51. Christ-von Wedel argues that John Colet’s allegory had a profound influence on Erasmus. In addition, the allegorical interpretations of Origen also had an impact on Erasmus.

¹³ Ibid., 52.

¹⁴ Ibid., 53.

Here, the nuance is that Erasmus is not advocating a strict escape from the visible world. Erasmus preaches a transformed understanding of the visible-physical world—namely, that it is at the service of the invisible-spiritual world. The visible world of daily actions, physical religious symbols, and geographical places has the capacity to serve and usher in the governing world of the invisible-spiritual.

ALLEGORY CONTINUED: *PRAISE OF FOLLY (MORIAE ENCOMIUM)*

Praise of Folly (*Moriae encomium*) is undoubtedly Erasmus's most popular work. Written in 1509 and published first in 1511, *Praise of Folly* exhibits Erasmus's strident polemical tone most vividly. Erasmus's tone indicates, perhaps, the severity at hand when the invisible-spiritual is inhibited by theological discourse. What, though, is Erasmus criticizing specifically? Erasmus criticizes not only the dogmatic scholastic methodology but also the scholars themselves. This kind of ad hominem attack is evident in the following passage:

There are the theologians, a remarkably supercilious and touchy lot. I might perhaps do better to pass over them in silence without stirring the mud of Camarina or grasping that noxious plant, lest they marshal their forces for an attack with innumerable conclusions and force me to eat my words.¹⁵

Erasmus distances himself from theologians; he self-admittedly “stirs the mud of Camarina,” by which he takes part in the proverbial adage of bringing trouble upon himself.¹⁶ One of Erasmus's primary critiques is that these dogmatic, scholastic theologians do not comply with biblical ideals.¹⁷ He criticizes their infatuation with fancy titles, likening them to the Jews and their reverence for the Tetragrammaton.¹⁸ The epitome of his disdain lies in his doubt that these theologians have read the Gospels at all.¹⁹

In *Praise of Folly*, Erasmus refers to the visible and invisible in a broader way. In particular, these references are couched within another discussion about the body and mind. Erasmus contends:

¹⁵ Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, in *The Erasmus Reader*, ed. Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 157. Rummel uses Betty Rice's translation. See Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly/Moriae encomium*, trans. Betty Radice, in *Literary and Educational Writings*, 5 and 6, ed. A. H. T. Levi, vol. 27 of *The Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 77–153.

¹⁶ See Desiderius Erasmus, *Spiritualia and Pastoralia: Exomologesis and Ecclesiastes*, eds. Frederick J. McGinness and Alexander Dalzell, trans. Michael J. Heath and James L. P. Butrica, vol. 67–68 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 320.

¹⁷ For example, he ridicules their philosophical use of causation (formal, material, efficient, and final causes) for speculating about baptism, stating that the biblical apostles did not use these categories. See Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, 159.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 162. Throughout Erasmus's corpus, his sharp anti-Judaism is clear. Later in *Praise of Folly* he contends that Christ would quickly call these theologians a “new race of Jews” (164). Malicious as it is, Erasmus seeks to ridicule these theologians by comparing them to the Jews.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 161.

And so long as the mind makes proper use of the organs of the body it is called sane and healthy.... Undoubtedly this happens because the mind is beginning to free itself from contamination by the body and exercise its true natural power.²⁰

Erasmus's Platonic theology surfaces again. In this instance, Erasmus is more candid that the body itself is inherently poisonous. His case for the necessity of a "proper" control over the physical body continues from the vein outlined in the *Enchiridion*. However, in the latter part of this quotation he reveals what seems an amendment to his theory on the ordering of the mind and body. The exercise of a mental "true and natural power" is itself the antithesis to the body. This "true and natural power" is the eventual byproduct of a mind which not only disciplines the body but also begins to depart from the body altogether. Later, Erasmus puts it more succinctly, saying, "in fact the pious man throughout his whole life withdraws from the things of the body and is drawn towards what is eternal, invisible, and spiritual."²¹ Where the *Enchiridion* promotes an instrumentalization of the visible and bodily world, by the invisible-spiritual, *Praise of Folly* reveals a stronger interpretation—namely, the spirit is to be summarily unhinged from the encumbering clutches of the temporal life.

Upon closer examination, however, Erasmus appears less dualistic than we might assume. Erasmus references a gradation between the body and the mind. The senses of touch, taste, hearing, sight, and smell are "grosser" or more vulgar than other purportedly bodily faculties such as memory, intellect, and will, which are presumably more spiritual.²² That Erasmus adamantly opposes the body and at the same time speaks of gradation certainly demonstrates the paradoxical correlation between bodily faculties and the spiritual realm.

Despite this ambiguity, Erasmus sums up how Christians are to use their bodies. He contends they are to express the death of Christ through the "extinction of their bodily passions, laying them in the tomb, as it were."²³ Here we glimpse what Christ-von Wedel claims Erasmus was communicating in the *Enchiridion*—namely, that the event of the cross becomes reified in the personal piety of one's life, and specifically in ridding oneself from a zeal for bodily passions. At this tension, between the visible/invisible and bodily/spiritual, we now turn to another essential feature of Erasmian thought.

THE NOTION OF COMEDY: PRESERVING MYSTERY AND THE INVISIBLE-SPIRITUAL

Erasmus utilizes comedy to bridge the complicated divide between the visible and invisible. Through humor, ubiquitous in *Praise of Folly*, he underscores the unsolvable tension between body and spirit. Erasmus's polemical jab at the theologian's use of the philosophical sequence of causation (formal, material, efficient, and final causes), for example, does not rest on Erasmus's assumption that baptism is known through another and more superior epistemological structure.²⁴ Rather, Erasmus disdains the

²⁰ Ibid., 165.

²¹ Ibid., 167.

²² Ibid., 166.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See footnote 16.

basic presupposition that one can know, and tease out, the particularities of baptism in the first place. Simply put, Erasmus wants to preserve the mystery of baptism. His humor vis-à-vis his polemical wit becomes the method by which he clings to mystery.

In his work, *Humanist Play and Belief*, Walter Gordon contends that Erasmus's choice to evoke comedy in his theology is inextricably linked with his intention to acknowledge divine mystery. Gordon summarizes Erasmus's sentiment eloquently:

Divine madness lies at the heart of Erasmian comedy.... The human mind, enlightened by faith, can know God in so far as he reveals himself, but this very revelation veils a mystery.... Knowledge of the revelation leads to a knowledge of one's ignorance, a kind of inner 'nada,' an emptiness. Man is in no way equal to the enigma of the divine fullness. His situation, then, in confronting God, includes a comic aspect.²⁵

For Erasmus, comedy remains the only feasible response to the inescapable reality that God is mysteriously incomprehensible. Thus, in relation to our previous question of whether or not Erasmus endorses an all-out escapism from the body, the answer is a resounding "No!" This is because escaping is simply impossible, as the spiritual realm is fundamentally out of reach for the human person. People are thus limited to tangible objects, the temporal life, because this is all they have to make sense of the world. As we have seen, though, Erasmus still wants to hold onto the hope that humans can, and eventually will, reach a divine and invisible reality. Truly, both negative and positive theologies abound in Erasmus's thought.

Ultimately, allegory becomes the way for Erasmus to announce these leaps from the visible to the invisible world. Unlike the ambitious allegorical interpretations of many thinkers throughout Christian thought, Erasmus's allegory does not serve as a tool for certainty, but as a boundary—reminding one of the inexorable mysteries of the theologian's subject matter: God. Importantly, Erasmus derives his method from the symbolic theology of Hugh of St. Victor. This theology is predicated on a notion that the visible world is symbolic for the invisible-spiritual.²⁶ Therefore, one must take part in these allegories through comedy, knowing full well the unavoidable situation of mystery.²⁷ In the end, comedy is not simply a constitutive trait of Erasmus's abrasive personality.²⁸ Comedy is a central tenet of his theology—a way of responding to the tension between the visible and invisible, a way of preserving mystery.

²⁵ Walter M. Gordon, *Humanist Play and Belief: The Seriocomic Art of Desiderius Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 23. Gordon stresses that Erasmus receives this theological perspective not only from Hugh of St. Victor but also from Jerome, Origen, and Augustine. Erasmus hearkens back to an allegorical style familiar to these figures, which had, according to Gordon, been glossed over in the late medieval preoccupation with scholasticism. Because of this, it is faulty to assume Erasmus contributes nothing to medieval thought (24).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁸ Erasmus's disdain for the scholastic climate is not to be overlooked. This disdain is mainly theological, and yet there are practical reasons for his disdain as well. Michael Mullet describes Erasmus's six years at the house of the Augustinian Canons at Steyn as "miserable." Later, his time at the College de Montaigu in Paris brought more reasons to convince him that the theologians were appalling: "its old fashioned, prehumanist curriculum, centered on Scholasticism, its filthy living conditions, and its poor diet all appalled the intellectually innovative and physically fastidious young scholar...." See Michael Mullet, *Historical Dictionary of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2010), 172–73.

THE *PARACLESIS*: THE PREFACE TO THE *NOVUM INSTRUMENTUM*

We now shift gears in our attempt to disclose more precisely Erasmus's biblical hermeneutic. Shortly, it will become clear how Erasmus's hermeneutic of a "visible" text is compatible with the invisible-spiritual dynamic in his theology. Published by Froben in 1516, the *Paraclesis* serves as the quintessential marker of Erasmus's humanist ethos.²⁹ Fittingly, the *Paraclesis* is his preface to the 1516 *Novum Instrumentum*.

One central theme throughout the *Paraclesis* is the idea of openness. This posture of openness is necessary for people of faith as they approach the biblical text and interpret it meaningfully. Erasmus writes, "the journey is simple, and it is ready for anyone. Only bring a pious and open mind, possessed above all with a pure and simple faith."³⁰ Here, Erasmus begins to make a case for his hermeneutical approach to the Bible. On one hand, Erasmus's discussion of openness refers to the accessibility of the biblical text—that it should be commoditized and made available to all. There is no doubt of Erasmus's agenda that the text be made practically accessible vis-à-vis a vernacular translation.³¹

On the other hand, Erasmus seems to refer to a deeper openness, a keen attention one must exude when approaching the text. Here, we glimpse what lies at the heart of the *Paraclesis*—namely, the *Philosophia Christi*. As one of the central prongs of the "Philosophy of Christ," openness is incumbent for all readers of the biblical text. This intentional openness is important because it allows for Christ to "guide the strings of our lyre," that he might "deeply affect and move the minds of all," as Erasmus says.³² Erasmus spotlights this openness because, in his opinion, theologians have obscured the text in such a fundamental way so as to inhibit people's ability to encounter Christ's teaching.³³ For our purposes, though, what does this necessary openness have to do with Erasmus's prioritization of the invisible-spiritual?

HOW THE TEXT'S VISIBILITY FUNCTIONS IN SERVICE TO THE INVISIBLE-SPIRITUAL

Erasmus's openness can be described as a particular visibility. This visibility has a dual nature. At a basic level, the openness of the biblical text through its increased access is a form of visibility. A second form of visibility occurs when one's effort to approach the text purely, free of scholastic constraints, inculcates a perceptive awareness of Christ's teaching. This hermeneutical sequence depends on a certain visible consciousness, on the part of the reader, in order to perceive Christ's teaching. Ultimately, Christ's teaching is emblematic of the invisible-spiritual nature. And the Gospel, the very substance of the Christian life, is spiritual.³⁴ Therefore, in Erasmus's thought we witness

²⁹ Erasmus, "The Paraclesis," in *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus*, ed. John C. Olin (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 97–108.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 101. Here, Erasmus says pointedly, "Indeed, I disagree very much with those who are unwilling that Holy Scripture, translated into the vulgar tongue, be read by the uneducated" (101).

³² *Ibid.*, 98.

³³ The availability of Christ, according to Erasmus, "Casts aside no age, no sex, no fortune or position in life." He contends, "the sun itself is not as common and accessible to all as is Christ's teaching" (*Ibid.*, 101).

³⁴ Erasmus, *The Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, 147.

a kind of dialogical relationship between visibility and invisibility. We have the visible reality of the text itself, as well as the visibility exemplified in the reader's conscious anticipation of Christ. And yet, these visibilities precipitate the climactic encounter of the invisible-spiritual. Just as the visible and bodily world symbolizes, through allegory, the invisible-spiritual in Erasmus's theology, there follows a correlation between the visible and invisible within his hermeneutic.

Here, the intersection of Erasmus's theology and humanism emerges. For Erasmus, as Michael Legaspi says, "the restoration and revitalization of the Christian Church depends upon an active engagement with the scriptures, a learned reappropriation of the Christian faith, a return *ad fontes*."³⁵ "Back to the sources" serves as the fundamental humanistic criterion; for Erasmus *ad fontes* is also an admonishment that the reader prioritize the biblical text in order to yield Christ's teaching. In this approach, the text must be ever-present; it must grip the reader's attention. This is why Erasmus exhibits particular concern that the Vulgate is no longer the main foci of theological discourse.³⁶ Though this concern leads Erasmus to a career of philology and grammar, his theology fuels these literary endeavors. As a humanist influenced by Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus is definitely engrossed by philological concerns. At their core, however, these textual preoccupations contain a deeply confessional backbone.

This theological-hermeneutical linkage is evident in what scholars have referred to as the *theologia rhetorica*. Rhetoric, as a methodological tool, is central to the humanist enterprise. In his work, *Rhetoric and Theology*, Manfred Hoffman posits that for the humanists, rhetoric "was an eminently practical art, an educational program that aimed at social utility and religious renewal."³⁷ Rhetoric is for the humanists what dialectic is for the scholastics.³⁸ Unlike the complex logic of the theologian's method, rhetoric rests on the simple assumption that speech has power and that this fervent energy can be experienced through the text. The text, as Erika Rummel notes, has a "persuasive" and "redemptive" capacity.³⁹ This power can evoke an awakening, hence the incessant "back-to-the-text" zeal. For Erasmus—as one concerned with the Christian life—this rhetorical event has everything to do with the *word* of God, the experience of Christ's teaching, spoken in and through the visible text. At the site of the text, one becomes enthralled by the invisible-spiritual.

ERASMUS'S PARAPHRASE AND ANNOTATIONS ON ROMANS

We also observe the correlation between the visible and the invisible in another set of Erasmus's works—namely, his *Paraphrase and Annotations on Romans*. In his paraphrase to chapter 1 of Romans, written in 1517, Erasmus's most glaring reference to the

³⁵ Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁷ Manfred Hoffmann, *Rhetoric and Theology: The Hermeneutic of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 23.

³⁸ Erika Rummel, "The Theology of Erasmus" in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, eds. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

dualism between the visible-bodily and the invisible-spiritual is revealed in his paraphrase of Paul's statement: "For I have as my witness God the Father himself—whom I worship with my spirit, not with gross corporeal ceremonies."⁴⁰ By "gross corporeal ceremonies," we certainly hear the echo of Erasmus's concern for outward rituals in the church. Erasmus sees the legal nature of the Mosaic law as anathema to the gospel. Paraphrasing Paul again, he writes, "Not the fleshly gift of Moses but the spiritual gift of Christ."⁴¹ Christ, not Moses, is the means by which the gospel is made known. However, Paul, through Erasmus, acknowledges that the law "promised" and "prefigured" Christ.⁴² Though it serves by promising, the law is still an impediment for Erasmus. Erasmus's Paul says, "righteousness does not depend on the superstitious cult of idols or on the legal ceremonies of the Jews. Rather it comes from faith."⁴³ The world of faith is oriented in the invisible-spiritual. And, strikingly similar to his sentiment in *Enchiridion* and *Praise of Folly*, this world of the gospel must distance itself from these visible hindrances.

Though Paul implies that God is invisible, Erasmus still intimates that this God is made known through human intellect. Again, Erasmus is aware of the basic epistemological dilemma of the human inability to know God fully. Meanwhile, Erasmus links the world of the invisible-spiritual, the habitation of God, with humanity—through the less crude means of the intellect. Ultimately, Erasmus underscores what Paul says in Romans—that the way to God is through faith in Christ.

In *Annotations on Romans*, Erasmus continues to underline the dichotomy between works of the law and faith offered through the gospel—between Moses and Christ. Erasmus writes on 1:4, "Indeed, [Paul] had assumed this obligation not from men but from Christ himself; or that with this word he is excluding the merit and works of the Law and declaring the grace of the gospel."⁴⁴ Erasmus interprets Paul as making a strict departure from the law. Another important phrase for Erasmus is *κλητοι*, "called."⁴⁵ That Paul was "called" by God and set apart from the law in order to preach the gospel is essential to Erasmus's interpretation. Again, Erasmus provides subtle clues that the visibility of the law—of the flesh—is important in the journey toward the invisible-spiritual; this is the particular venue of the gospel. On Rom 1:4 he writes, "[Jesus] 'was made,' so that you may understand that something which was not came into existence; concerning the divinity he says 'he was shown.'"⁴⁶ In order for the divinity of God to be "shown," it is proper that Jesus's body be visible. The parallel is discernible between this

⁴⁰ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Paraphrase on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, in *New Testament Scholarship: Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians*, ed. R. D. Sider, vol. 42 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 16.

⁴¹ Ibid. It must continue to haunt contemporary scholars and Christians that thought such as this, displayed by Erasmus, is responsible for the dominating anti-Judaism in Christianity's history. We must never forget this unfortunate and troubling problem.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁴ Desiderius Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, ed. R. D. Sider, vol. 56 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 5–6.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 16.

scene's account of visibility and invisibility and the accounts provided in the other works we have examined.

In sum, Erasmus's interpretation of Romans is contingent upon a similar demarcation between visible and invisible—body and spirit. The moment Erasmus seems to completely do away with the body, we realize the dependence he actually places on the body—the law, the visible signs—in order to disclose the invisible-spiritual world of Christ. Having explored more of his exegetical choices and interpretations, it is clear that his theology is inherently linked with his hermeneutic. The visibility of the law and Jesus's body, just like the visibility of the biblical text, is required in order to broadcast the prized realm of the invisible-spiritual.

VISIBILITY AND SKEPTICISM: CONTROVERSIES WITH LUTHER AND MAARTEN VAN DORP

This study would not be adequate if it failed to cast light on some of the specifics of Erasmus's disagreements with key figures. Erasmus's contention with Luther over human will is noteworthy. The crux of their disagreement deals with the role of skepticism as a viable methodological posture. As a humanist, skepticism is Erasmus's self-identified method of inquiry.⁴⁷ Erasmus outlines his stance in his 1524 piece *Hyperaspistes*, a direct response to Luther's *On the Bondage of the Will*. As Rummel notes, Erasmus's skepticism "meant refraining from facile definitions and from headstrong assertions and accepting instead 'as a probability what another accepts as certainty.'"⁴⁸ In Erasmus's opinion, the biblical text does not clearly endorse a notion of free will. Instead, the church's consensus and long-standing grasp on this tenet merit its role. Erasmus appeals to the authority of the church, then, in order to justify its role within faith.⁴⁹

Luther's adage of "faith alone" is too confident a sentiment for Erasmus. In Luther's point of view, Erasmus's skepticism lacks the confidence required in being a person of the faith. Erasmus, however, does not appeal to skepticism because of an overly cynical fervor. Uniquely, his skepticism carries with it a great degree of faith—namely, willingness to trust the church community in light of the great mystery of faith. As Richard Popkin contends:

To raise even the possibility that the criteria could be faulty (as Luther did) was to substitute another criterion by which the accepted criteria could be judged, and thus, in effect, to deny the entire framework by which orthodoxy had been determined for centuries.⁵⁰

In light of the mysterious character of the invisible-spiritual, Erasmus must offset this mystery by staying true to the church and trusting its discernment. Consensus functions as a buttress, which allows Erasmus to weather the grammatical and textual problems

⁴⁷ Rummel, "The Theology of Erasmus," 28.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁹ Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*, 15.

⁵⁰ Richard H. Popkin, *History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (Assen, Netherlands: Konink Van Gorcum, 1960), 3.

he sees as a philologist; all the while, the scriptures can remain the touchstone of his theology.⁵¹

Despite Erasmus's incessant appeals to the church, in light of Luther's claims, Erasmus also faces pushback from his Catholic colleagues. One of the main dilemmas for Maarten van Dorp, a Louvain theologian, is that he disagrees with Erasmus's assumption of the superiority of the Greek text.⁵² Furthermore, Dorp does not see textual criticism as the role of a grammarian but as the job of a theologian.⁵³ Now, in light of Erasmus's writings it is difficult to state conclusively whether he sees himself primarily as a theologian or a grammarian. At times he seems to imply he is a grammarian solely.⁵⁴ At other times, he sees his job as a grammarian directly coinciding with his theological work.⁵⁵

At any rate, Dorp sees Erasmus's philological moves as obfuscating scripture's central authority. In principle, Dorp asks, "if there were grammatical errors in the Vulgate, then why not in the Greek?"⁵⁶ Dorp is less sympathetic to entertain textual issues at all. Interestingly, Dorp does allow for "stylistic changes" to be made to the Vulgate, and for him these changes do not diminish the Vulgate's authority.⁵⁷ Erasmus's case for utilizing the Greek text rests on the sanctioning of the use of languages at the 1313 Council of Vienne.⁵⁸ Ironically, in 1516 Dorp concedes to Erasmus and declares his support openly.⁵⁹

The two controversies, over free will with Luther and over the use of Greek with Dorp, have at their roots questions of the role of skepticism. Uniquely, Dorp is rather skeptical of Erasmus's use of Greek. Dorp has not allowed himself to entertain the degree of errors and mistakes Erasmus is comfortable with. Fundamentally, Erasmus advocates a paramount visibility of the text, to the point that errors are purposely uncovered. Erasmus's appeal to skepticism, in his disagreement with Luther, centers on preserving a present awareness of the epistemological dilemma of uncertainty, which confronts the human person. For Erasmus, certitudes are elusive; thus, an intentional hermeneutic of visibility is required. A visibility vis-à-vis the text precipitates the primordial invisibility of faith. In the end, Erasmus advocates a "visible invisibility," a hermeneutic that is markedly paradoxical.

⁵¹ Rummel, "The Theology of Erasmus," 31.

⁵² Rummel, *1515–1522*, vol. 1 of *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1989), 4.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See Desiderius Erasmus, "Letters 108" in *The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 1–141: 1484 to 1500*, trans. R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson, vol. 1 of *The Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 203, lines 24–42.

⁵⁵ Erasmus describes grammar as Theology's "handmaid." See Rummel, "The Theology of Erasmus," 32–33. Here, Rummel discusses Erasmus's work, *Method of Attaining True Theology*.

⁵⁶ Rummel, *1515–1522*, 7.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 5. However, as Rummel notes, Erasmus mistakenly uses this to endorse the Greek. At the council, only Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldean were sanctioned.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 10–13.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, attempts have been made to uncover the nature of Erasmus's biblical hermeneutic. In the *Enchiridion*, as well as *Praise of Folly*, we witness Erasmus's unyielding elevation of the invisible-spiritual realm. Despite his raucous language for the visible/bodily realm, Erasmus does not preach abandonment of the visible world. Instead, he utilizes it for the service of the invisible-spiritual through allegory. In the *Paraclesis*, Erasmus's emphasis on openness is pointed. This openness—involving increased access to the text, as well as the reader's openness toward Christ's teaching—is tantamount to the visible-invisible paradigm in his theological texts. Comedy, mystery, and the *theologia rhetorica* all interlace throughout his thought. Therefore, his preference for the invisible-spiritual is essential to his hermeneutical approach. Ultimately, we can describe Erasmus's hermeneutic as paradoxical in that it seeks a visibility of the invisible-spiritual. Such is the nuance and beauty of his enterprise.

As Rummel says, Erasmian thought gained popularity in the Enlightenment, where Erasmus was interpreted as a kind of Voltaire of the sixteenth century.⁶⁰ In the wake of the five hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, as academics and persons of faith let us rekindle a similar fervency for such an iconic, though oft-forgotten figure. Perhaps this fervency might implore us to inculcate a similar hermeneutical approach to Erasmus's—to attend to the biblical text's visibility and, as a result, become mystified by its wellspring of spiritual wisdom.

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⁶⁰ Rummel, "The Theology of Erasmus," 37.

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Reillumination of Minjung Theology

Emerging Theologies in Ecumenical Dialogue

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INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to remember the Protestant Reformation today after five hundred years of eventful church history? What better time to look into the tradition of the Protestant Reformation and its church as well as its theology in retrospect and prospect in order to remember and rejuvenate the authentic expression of where we are today? Though there are many emerging themes of the twenty-first century world Christian movement,² many Protestants would agree that one of the foremost tasks of the ongoing reformation includes the task of ecumenical dialogue. Multiple perspectives are incorporated, and the approaches are now multidisciplinary.³ In accordance with this post-structuralist paradigm shift in Christian history, dialogue is a significant theme as new wineskins come into formation. Richard Shaull once stated that theology “must find expression in the language of the people in relation to the concrete situation in which they live, as it draws on and re-creates a long and rich tradition.”⁴ It is crucial then not to illustrate theology as a stagnant source that one can continually draw water from; rather, it is like a river that has a constant flow, and at the same time, that embraces

¹ Yoon Ki Kim completed his ThM at Princeton Theological Seminary in May 2016 and is currently a PhD candidate in the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. Initiating his research on the theme of “theology in the experience of forced migration,” Yoon Ki is hopeful that his work will positively affect various frameworks, mindsets, and dialogues among emerging theologians in different parts of the world.

² The term “world Christian history” is taken from the two volumes of *History of the World Christian Movement* by Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003–2012). Throughout the volumes, the authors lucidly depict the history of world Christianity from the earliest Christianity to 1800 with ecumenical implications.

³ Jehu J. Hanciles, “New Wine in Old Wineskins: Critical Reflections on Writing and Teaching a Global Christian History,” *Missiology: An International Review* 34, no. 3 (2006): 367–78.

⁴ Richard Shaull, *The Reformation and Liberation Theology: Insights for the Challenges of Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 72–73.

other currents in order to maintain its flow to reach greater waters eventually. Christine Helmer's assertion is helpful:

Plural predications, embraced by careful epistemic attention, expand traditional conceptual boundaries, break down walls that would deny the right to speak of Christ's work in particular lives and particular persons, and rejoice that Christ's gospel of newness is experienced all over the world.⁵

Another question that one should consider in remembrance of the Protestant Reformation is: what does it mean to be a reformer in our context today? Again Shaull gives an acute depiction by asserting that reformers were those who were "aware of the structures of oppression and exploitation around them" and "experienced the Holy Spirit present in their midst as the Spirit of innovation[,] calling for new responses on the part of a community of believers."⁶ In short, to be a theologian with a Protestant spirit in a given context, one must go through constant reconstruction of the theology that has validity in his or her context by embracing other interlocutors. Oscar García-Johnson makes clear that "the task of elaborating theology collaboratively, interdisciplinarily, and interlocally entails an act of self-interpretation and self-representation in the form of a discourse that acknowledges its own context as it pursues a constructive dialogue with the contextual other."⁷ Accordingly, the main thesis of this paper is to look into a form of contextual theology in South Korea that emerged during the time of political struggle. It was a theology that answered to the cries of the masses; it was a movement that followed the groans of the Spirit. I will reilluminate and recreate its prophetic implications for contemporary Protestant theologians by putting it in dialogue with the contextual other, in the aspiration of creating further dialogues amongst emerging theologies in diverse parts of the world.

Is it possible to have an answer to the question, what is the theology of South Korea today? The most convincing answer is: a theology that has integrated many forms of western theologies in a holistic way according to its needs in a rapidly changing society. Though many would deny this fact in remonstrance, this is true, and it is for this reason that South Korean theologians are in need of reformation. To add an insightful character and a new wave of continuing reformation to this holistic approach dominant in the Korean context, I will take a closer look at minjung theology of South Korea. The overall methodology that I will be using in this paper is a collation of dialogical texts that combine minjung theology and other emerging theologies—black theology of the United States, dalit theology of India, and ludu theology of Myanmar—in conversation in order to argue that when a form of theology opens up to dialogue and gives voice to another, it can find common ground for solidarity, create partnership for future development, and possibly guide one into theological enlightenment.

⁵ Christine Helmer, *Theology and the End of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 139.

⁶ Shaull, *The Reformation*, 120-21.

⁷ Oscar García-Johnson, "Transoccidentalism and the Making of Global Theology," in *Theology Without Borders: An Introduction to Global Conversations*, William A. Dyrness and Oscar García-Johnson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 9.

MINJUNG THEOLOGY

The term “minjung theology” emerged when South Korea was going through a painful and gruesome period of its history. It was a theology that emerged from the lowliest people and consoled the oppressed and the marginalized. It is also a theology that represents *han* of the Koreans and marks a foreground in the history of Korean Christianity. Many South Korean theologians today who identify as mainline theologians or theologians with Protestant spirit, however, characterize themselves and their tradition of theology by criticizing minjung theology and its historicity. A majority of these theologians regard minjung theology as an artificial theology and reject it as a whole by claiming that it has and will be harmful to Christianity on many bases. The term minjung is, in a way, an institutionalized term in the Korean society that is heavily loaded with political demagoguery, and the dominant atmosphere makes it a taboo in many theological academic settings. But on what grounds can they make such a claim? As a Protestant theologian, is it right to be conformed to a complacent and dependent form of theology ignorant of its historical foundation? Theology must embrace its historical heritage and embody the spirit of its own people. If South Korea is willing to stand on its own authentic theology, it must not be ashamed of the theology that emerged out of its own context or be content by mere criticism with abstract arguments based on a certain tradition. In that sense, minjung theology must be reilluminated to see what kind of meaning it has for the South Korean context and broader theological academia today. Up until this day, many South Koreans are still sobbing their hearts out every night. They are worn out in a traumatized society. They are suffocating between generational values and different worldviews. They are living in a society where the majority is minjung and the minority holds the ruling power over them—another side of South Korea that not many talk about, especially in theological academic settings. The readers should acknowledge that South Korea is a divided country that is wearing a democratic mask, still running on dictatorship and layers of oppression.

So then, what does it mean to be the common people in the Korean context? To answer this question, one has to begin with the definition of the word “minjung.” “The word minjung is a Korean pronunciation of two Chinese characters, ‘min’ and ‘jung.’ ‘Min’ literally means ‘the people’ and ‘jung[.]’ ‘the mass.’ Combining these two words, we get the idea of ‘the mass people’ or simply ‘the people.’”⁸ To be more precise, Hee-Suk Moon defines minjung as people “who are oppressed politically, exploited economically, alienated socially, and kept uneducated in cultural and intellectual matters.”⁹ Unfortunately, it is a word that has not met extinction in the South Korean society. To figure out the relationship between the Korean context then and now, Edmond Tang’s epitomized illustration of how minjung theology first emerged out of its context is helpful:

⁸ Jung-Young Lee, “Minjung Theology: A Critical Introduction,” in *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective: Commentary on Korean Minjung Theology*, ed. Jung-Young Lee (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988), 3.

⁹ Hee-Suk Moon, *A Korean Minjung Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 1.

In 1972 President Park Chung-[H]ee declared Martial Law across the country in order to maintain power. The ideology of his regime was based on the concept of “national security” and the promotion of economic growth. Opposition forces were systematically described as “communists” and put down with brutal force. Many church groups stood up against the dictatorship and growing infringement of human rights, such as the Urban Industrial Mission, the Korean Student Christian Federation, the Christian Ecumenical Youth Council, the Catholic Farmers’ Union and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, and similar organisations. Christian “koinonias” – mission groups – were organised to care for the people who were oppressed and marginalised, the *minjung*.¹⁰

In accordance with this contextual movement emerged many of the first generation minjung theologians. Nam-Dong Suh and Byung-Mu Ahn are the ones who first used the term “minjung theology” in the mid-1970s.¹¹ Suh is one of the founders of minjung theology, who introduced the notion of *han*, a unique Korean word, which is one of the core concepts of minjung theology. Ahn is a New Testament scholar who is known as the other founder of minjung theology. In Ahn’s book, *Jesus of Galilee*, he concentrates on the word *ochlos* in the Gospel of Mark to match it with the word “minjung” in developing minjung theology.

Hence in the 1970s, when the brutal governmental force was enforced upon the people and the grassroots movements grew as a reactionary force with the help of some context-sensitive churches, minjung theologians who were central in leading the way had to find out a way to survive social persecution and, at the same time, preserve and proclaim what they believed. So they developed a unique way of doing theology: telling stories of *han*. In order to introduce the notion of *han*, Nam-Dong Suh uses “The Story of the Sound” (1972) by the poet Chi-Ha Kim, who wrote many of the central stories that developed the notion of *han* in *Minjung Theology*:

There was a fellow called Ando. He came as an aspiring young man to the city. He lived in a rented room of a shanty on the bank of Chung Ryang Chun (river) in Chung Ryang Ri (part of Seoul). Unfortunately, nothing he did was ever successful. It is not known whether it was bad fortune related to his previous birth or his ill fortune to have an evil spirit. When he attempted to stand up with his two feet on the ground, immediately he would be bombarded with endless visions of crimes no one had ever heard, seen or thought of, so he could not help but run all the time, day and night, all the year round. Even if he earned [1 cent], he would lose [10 cents]; if he borrowed [10 cents], [1 dollar] would be taken away; he would be robbed and stepped on by various rascals until at last his fare to go back to the country, which was kept inside his underwear was also lost. Going around from east to west to south to north, he became tired. He was starving and near crazy. So, on an evening when there was a beautiful sunset, he stood up with his two feet on the ground and said, “Damn! This is a doglike world!” Because of this word of damnation about the world, he was immediately taken away, beaten up, then taken to the court and found guilty of having spread a false rumor and of slandering the regime. His head and legs were chopped off, so that only the trunk of his body was left. It was put into a cell for a 500 year imprisonment.... He would hit the walls of the cell by rolling

¹⁰ Edmond Tang, “East Asia,” in *An Introduction to Third World Theologies*, ed. John Parratt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 96.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

the trunk of his body, shouting in a soundless cry. Every time he did it, it made a bumping sound which made people shiver, and those with money and power[,] tremble.¹²

Writers, in this case especially poets and minjung theologians, wrote for the people, about the people, and amongst the people. "A large part of what Suh Nam-Dong envisioned theoretically had previously been articulated by Kim Chi-Ha in his plays, poems, and pamphlets in the form of a narrative theology."¹³ What seemed like a folktale actually carried the sociopolitical biography of minjung, which were often concealed by the officials and censored in the newspapers.¹⁴ The helpless stories of teenage factory workers, court-martialed students, political prisoners, marginalized, and outcasts, all led to a *han*-ful state of the people.¹⁵ Suh's precise definition of *han* is as follows:

Han is an underlying feeling of Korean people. On the other hand, it is a dominant feeling of defeat, resignation and nothingness. On the other, it is a feeling with a tenacity of will for life which comes to weaker beings. The first aspect can sometimes be sublimated to great artistic expressions and the second aspect could erupt as the energy for a revolution or rebellion.¹⁶

For Suh, this state of *han* is the erupting point of theology. In brief, *han* was a result of the political oppression, and Suh's contextual minjung set of lenses was what embraced the sentiments of the common people.

Furthermore, for Byung-Mu Ahn the Gospel of Mark is the basis for his theological-biblical method in doing minjung theology. He not only discovers the notion of the *ochlos*, but also finds the biblical support for establishing his method of doing minjung theology. The word *ochlos* can be defined as "slaves," "soldiers of the employed army," "conscripted soldiers," "a disorderly mob," or basically a group of people whose assembling is not based on any power, duty, or any other relationship in Jewish society.¹⁷ These were the people who followed Jesus, shared the table with him, had conflicts with rulers from time to time, and even became a threat to the powerful ruling classes.¹⁸ They were also "sheep without a shepherd," as well as "brother, sister, and mother" of Jesus.¹⁹ Jesus treated them like equals and offered them the advent of the kingdom of God.²⁰ Ahn overlaps minjung on top of *ochlos* and stresses that minjung waits for the new heaven and the new earth since the masses are in the midst of

¹² Nam-Dong Suh, "Towards a Theology of Han," in *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, ed. Yong Bock Kim (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1981), 60.

¹³ Volker Küster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion: Korean Minjung Theology Revisited*, vol. 4 of *Studies in Systematic Theology* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 81.

¹⁴ Lee, "Minjung Theology," 17.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Suh, "Towards a Theology of Han," 58.

¹⁷ Byung-Mu Ahn, "Jesus and Ochlos in the Context of His Galilean Ministry," in *Asian Contextual Theology for the Third Millennium: A Theology of Minjung in Fourth-Eye Formation*, eds. Paul S. Chung, Kyung-Jae Kim, and Veli-Mattie Kärkkäinen, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 70 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2007), 42.

¹⁸ Ahn, "Jesus and Ochlos," 42.

¹⁹ Ibid., 45–46.

²⁰ Byung-Mu Ahn, "Jesus and Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," in *Reading Minjung Theology in the Twenty-First Century: Selected Writings by Ahn Byung-Mu and Modern Critical Responses*, eds. Yung-Suk Kim and Jin-Ho Kim (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 63.

suffering and depicts Jesus as one of the minjung who fought alongside with them for the advent of the kingdom of God.²¹ Mark 1:14–15 is considered the economic and cultural background for Ahn's theology. Ahn points out that Jesus himself was minjung in his makeup and behavior, was a Galilean like the people, was among minjung, and used minjung's language from beginning to end.²² Moreover, Jesus's passion narrative depicts a contour of minjung's experience.²³ In the end, Jesus is swallowed up by Jerusalem, but the tomb that buried him threw him up.²⁴ For Ahn, the resurrection of Jesus is "the starting point of the new hope" and the "coming parousia to the minjung of Mark."²⁵ This is the Jesus of Galilee who was, and is, and will be with minjung.

BLACK THEOLOGY

James Hal Cone is one of the most dominant voices in black theology in the United States. For Cone, black theology is like a two-horse carriage. The first is the black experience. For Cone theology must be "more than the conceptualization of theological doctrine."²⁶ In that sense, the expression of "the tragic side of social existence" as well as "[the] refusal to be imprisoned by its limitations" is what makes up the foundational ground for black theology.²⁷ The second is, indubitably, Scripture. These two are the expressing tools that make black theology authentic. With the black experience and Scripture as the driving force, black theologians proclaim Jesus Christ as the essence of theology, which creates the precise character of its theological language. Jesus Christ is the content of the hopes and dreams of African-American people. He is the foundation of their struggle for freedom. He is the one for the oppressed, the one to liberate the poor and the weak. Cone makes a powerful statement that "Christ was not crucified on an altar between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves. He is not in our peaceful, quiet, comfortable suburban 'churches,' but in the ghetto."²⁸ He also claims, "Where human beings struggle for freedom and refuse to be defined by unauthorized earthly authorities, there Jesus Christ is among them."²⁹ Through the events of the cross and the resurrection, "we now know that Jesus' ministry with the poor and the wretched was God effecting the divine will to liberate the oppressed."³⁰ For Cone, faith is believing in the fact that Jesus Christ brought strength, justice, and freedom to the oppressed in first-century Palestine and that he is still doing so today. This creates a driving force that allows the oppressed to say "No!" to the oppressors because they have been freed in Jesus Christ. Cone's Christology is at its apex when he states that Jesus is

²¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²² Byung-Mu Ahn, "Minjung Theology from the Perspective of the Gospel of Mark," in *Reading Minjung Theology in the Twenty-First Century: Selected Writings by Ahn Byung-Mu and Modern Critical Responses*, eds. Yung-Suk Kim and Jin-Ho Kim (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 87–88.

²³ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁸ James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 66.

²⁹ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 32.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

black. "Christ's blackness is both literal and symbolic. His blackness is literal in the sense that he truly becomes One with the oppressed blacks, taking their suffering as his suffering and revealing that he is found in the history of our struggle, the story of our pain, and the rhythm of our bodies."³¹ On the other hand it is symbolic because God has never "left the oppressed alone in struggle. He was with them in Pharaoh's Egypt, is with them in America, Africa and Latin America, and will come in the end of time to consummate fully their human freedom."³²

BLACK-MINJUNG DIALOGUE

J. Deotis Roberts puts black theology and minjung theology in dialogue by comparing their commonness. He reflects on the roots of these theologies and points out that "in both cases there is a ready acceptance of the exodus paradigm in doing theology."³³ He also mentions David Shanon, who strongly emphasizes the need for African-Americans to become "subjects" rather than "objects" of history.³⁴ This means that they will not be defeated by the oppressive circumstances and that they will take their destinies into their own hands in a constructive, nonviolent response.³⁵ He also states "this concern to become subjects rather than objects of history brings black and minjung theologies together at a vital point."³⁶ Jin-Kwan Kwon also states the relevancy of being the subjects of history and our present time. He underscores that "the oppressed and poor people must become the subjects of history and of their own lives. They have been treated as the objects of the manipulation and rule of the ruling classes. They have not been respected as 'sons and daughters' of God in history." If a context is to move from the state of oppression to the state of independence, it requires the common sense of being a subject of history, not an object. Further, in order to accomplish this task, nonviolent leadership and the theme of exodus are some of the central concerns.

Another point Roberts upholds is the Christocentric model that both theologies adopt: "In both cases the Jesus of history is also the Christ of faith."³⁷ The emphasis is on the cross of Jesus Christ, but this is not the absence of a well-rounded christological model; rather, it is really about emphasis and balance.³⁸ Thus he makes the conclusion that Jesus Christ is Lord, but at the same time, he is Liberator.³⁹ Black theology and minjung theology open new doors to cross-cultural understanding and ecumenical dialogue.⁴⁰ Mitzi J. Smith affirms that "we are called to take a stand with God in

³¹ Ibid., 125.

³² Ibid., 126.

³³ J. Deotis Roberts, "Black Theology and Minjung Theology: Exploring Common Themes," in *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective: Commentary on Korean Minjung Theology*, ed. Jung-Young Lee (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988), 101.

³⁴ Ibid., 102.

³⁵ Ibid., 101-102.

³⁶ Ibid., 102.

³⁷ Ibid., 104.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

solidarity with minjung in the struggle for justice, restoration, and wholeness. I am minjung. Minjung are God's children."⁴¹ Moreover, Jesus Christ is a liberating event that is eschatological and eternal. He is God with us, black and amidst minjung.

DALIT THEOLOGY

Dalit theology is a distinct form of theology that emerged out of India. "Dalit derives from a Sanskrit term.... The word means 'broken, downtrodden,' and has been adopted as a self-designation by those in the Indian population (roughly 16%) who are outside the four main castes."⁴² In other words, dalits are the outcasts of the Indian society. John Parratt explains the context of dalits succinctly:

It has been estimated that nine out of ten dalits live in villages, and that over half exist below the poverty line. A high percentage of them are denied the use of village wells and not permitted in temples. They have in general a very low literacy rate and their political influence has been limited by the control upper castes have over them.... Action to attain their legal rights is frequently met by harassment and violence. Hindu religious tradition excludes them from the main practices of Hindu religion and from studying Sanskrit sacred texts, and it finds the warrant for this in the Hindu scriptures. Dalits are thus caught in a trap of powerlessness, exploitation and dehumanisation.⁴³

Emerging out of this context, dalit theology focuses on the social injustice and oppression that dalits have experienced under the caste system.⁴⁴ "It is an Indian version of liberation theology.... Dalit Christians began to discover their own history and their 'little traditions' and to theologize in their own language and categories."⁴⁵ Moreover, "there is an implicit theology of liberation underlying many of their myths, stories, poems, narratives, folklore and rituals, which they began to discover and articulate in the light of their faith-experience."⁴⁶ Here is a dalit poem in the Marathi language:

Their inhuman atrocities have carved caves in the rock of my heart
I must tread this forest with wary steps eyes fixed on the changing times
The tables have turned now
Protests spark now here now there
I have been silent all these days listening to the voice of right and wrong
But now I will fan the flames for human rights.
How did we ever get to this place this land which was never mother to us?
Which never gave us even the life of cats and dogs?

⁴¹ Mitzi J. Smith, "Minjung, the Black Masses, and the Global Imperative," in *Reading Minjung Theology in the Twenty-First Century: Selected Writings by Ahn Byung-Mu and Modern Critical Responses*, eds. Yung-Suk Kim and Jin-Ho Kim (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 119.

⁴² John Parratt, *The Other Jesus: Christology in Asian Perspective*, vol. 156 of *Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 103.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Y. Tan, "Asian Liberative Theologies," in *Introducing Liberative Theologies*, ed. Miguel A. De La Torre (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 61.

⁴⁵ Kuncheria Pathil, *Trends in Indian Theology* (Bangalore: ATC, 2005), 46.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

I hold their unpardonable sins as witness and turn, here and now, a rebel.⁴⁷

This is a voice demanding a total change in the life of dalits.⁴⁸ Jonathan Y. Tan borrows from Arvind Nirmal, a leading dalit theologian, and identifies three important dimensions of dalit theology:

First, Dalit theology is *experiential* in orientation, rooted in the Dalits' experience of pathos in their lives. Second, Dalit theology *anticipates* the coming liberation of the Dalits from such pathos and oppression. Third, Dalit theology seeks to *dismantle* the caste framework that has enslaved them for generations.⁴⁹

In other words, the inhumane experience under the framework and power dynamics of the caste system has created a sentiment of anticipation and rebellion at the heart of dalit theologians. Another dalit theologian, Sebastian Kappen, articulates a Christology in which Jesus's liberative actions among the marginalized of Galilee continue with the quest for dalits' liberation in India.⁵⁰ God had moved the Israelites out of Egypt, Jesus liberated the masses with his hands and words, and now dalit theologians are perceiving the movement of the Spirit in their context. To be more specific, for Kappen, "Jesus is a prophet who models the 'praxis of subversion' that liberates the dalits from oppression by the upper castes, as well as exploitation by global capitalism."⁵¹ In relation to Kappen's assertion, Peniel Rajkumar's summary is helpful: "Dalits anticipate liberation through their theologizing by linking Jesus' and God's acts of salvation to their own situation of suffering and their aspiration for a hopeful future in Jesus Christ which is filled with justice and equality."⁵² It is this characterization that opens up continuous dialogues in solidarity between dalit theology and minjung theology.

DALIT-MINJUNG DIALOGUE

Dialogue between dalit theology and minjung theology has been a productive ecumenical model since the early 1990s. Theologians from each context gathered for a conference biannually. Since then, with their common concerns and theological issues, the dialogue and solidarity has been productive for each, as well as for Asia and the theological community worldwide. The 9th Dalit-Minjung Theological Dialogue Conference was held at Sunkonghoe University, Korea, in 2011, to discuss the theme "Towards a Theology of Justice for Life in Peace."⁵³ The following is a portion of their theological affirmation.

⁴⁷ James Massey, *Introducing Dalit Theology*, Center for Dalit Studies Pamphlet 1 (New Delhi: Centre for Dalit Studies, 2004), 31.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁹ Tan, "Asian Liberative Theologies," 61.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Peniel Rajkumar, "Dalit Theology: The 'Untouched' Touching Theology," in *Asian Theology on the Way: Christianity, Culture and Context*, ed. Peniel Rajkumar (London: SPCK, 2012), 138.

⁵³ Jin-Kwan Kwon and P. Mohan Larbeer, eds., *Towards Theology of Justice for Life in Peace: Minjung-Dalit Theological Dialogue* (Bangalore: Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College, 2012), 314.

Now, we stand together in a firm solidarity with one another in our *madangs*⁵⁴ in which we celebrate our creative spiritualities. We affirm our mutual strengths and challenge to root out the principalities and powers of oppression and discrimination. We together envision and strive for just, inclusive and participatory communities here and now in our times.⁵⁵

The goal of this conference was to proclaim the need for recovery of the image of God in all the oppressed people by assuring the fullness of life through establishment of a theology of justice, peace, and life from the perspectives of dalit and minjung. Themes such as “Dalit Christians’ Struggle for Justice in the Indian Subcontinent,” “Contextuality and Interculturality of Theology,” and “Looking at Life and Peace Through the Lens of Justice: A Theological Understanding of the Theme of the 10th WCC General Assembly in Busan” were examined throughout the conference. In this way, dalit theology and minjung theology have been advancing in their dialogues.

LUDU THEOLOGY

On February 8, 2017, Pope Francis issued a rebuke against Myanmar sectarian violence that denies the basic rights of the Rohingya minority group, who are the Muslims living in a primarily Buddhist nation.⁵⁶ Christians, also a minority in the same context, are treated with no difference. “The Union of Myanmar, or formerly Burma, is the largest country in Southeast Asia, comprising 261,970 square miles, about the size of Texas.”⁵⁷ The total population of Myanmar is roughly estimated at 54.3 million, 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas, and there are approximately 135 national ethnic groups, with the dominant ethnic group being the *Burman* (or *Bamar*).⁵⁸ In terms of religion, Christianity only makes up 5.0 percent of the population and the dominant group is Buddhism with 89.2 percent.⁵⁹ Islam follows after Christianity with 3.8 percent, Spirituality 1.2 percent, Hinduism 0.5 percent, and others 0.2 percent.⁶⁰ Samuel Ngun Ling, who is the president of the Myanmar Institute of Theology in Yangon, observes that “Myanmar is far behind global market economic competition. [It] is being ranked as one of the ten poorest countries in the world. It is estimated that 75 [percent] of the population live below the poverty line.”⁶¹ One of the major factors that is causing this

⁵⁴ *Madang* is a Korean word that describes a courtyard where everyone and anyone could come together in a traditional Korean home. It is an ecumenical space, a center of life, a playground, and a celebrating ground of fellowship. The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches was held in Busan, Korea, in 2013 with the spirit of *madang*, inviting participants into a common space of discussion and celebration. Cf. “Handbook,” *World Council of Churches*, last modified 2013, https://wcc2013.info/en/resources/documents/Handbook_EN.pdf.

⁵⁵ Kwon and Larbeer, *Towards Theology of Justice*, 315.

⁵⁶ Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, “Pope Francis Rebukes Myanmar Over Treatment of Rohingya,” *New York Times*, last modified February 8, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/08/world/asia/pope-francis-rohingya-muslims.html>.

⁵⁷ K. M. Y. Khawsiamma, *Towards a Ludu Theology: A Critical Evaluation of Minjung Theology and its Implication for a Theological Response to the Dukkha (Suffering) of People in Myanmar (Burma)* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), 115.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 115–16.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Samuel Ngun Ling, “A Burmese Christian’s Response to Social Values of Work, Consumption, and Economic Options in Myanmar,” *Myanmar Journal of Theology* 5, no. 3 (2007): 74.

phenomenon is the continuous exclusion of Myanmar from the international community and global market, causing the overall depression in its social, cultural, educational, economic, and political state.⁶²

In *Myanmar-English Dictionary*, ludu is defined as “the people” or “the masses.”⁶³ It is a strong political term that excludes the elite (the ruling group and those who support them) and refers to the common people who are oppressed, alienated, and marginalized in Myanmar society.⁶⁴ Ludu also has another unique meaning that indicates Myanmar Buddhists who were persecuted by the government for resisting authoritarianism when it became a source of violence, injustice, and dehumanization.⁶⁵

K. M. Y. Khawsiamia undertakes developing ludu theology and embraces ludu. He defines the term *dukkha*, which is a Buddhist term that generally means “suffering.”⁶⁶ In the Myanmar context, where Buddhism, as the predominant religion, determines the people’s lifestyle, theology goes through a Christian-Buddhist hermeneutical process. Theologians adopt concepts from Buddhism to clarify the core concepts of theology, and this is often the most critical and complicated task that they have to face. Khawsiamia performs this task as well:

Jesus is Christ, an Anointed One. For Christians, He is the Son of God who came to save the world. He became the founder of Christianity. Some people who compare the life of Buddha and Jesus believe that Jesus is the reincarnation of Buddha. From theological and spiritual perspectives, we can see some similarities between them. However,... there is no doctrine of reincarnation or rebirth in Christianity.⁶⁷

Khawsiamia states “Jesus prepared the way of salvation to save *dukkha*-ridden human beings,” and that “Jesus Christ began his life with *dukkha* and ended with *dukkha*, but conquered *dukkha* by resurrection.”⁶⁸ He notes that “the significant Christian view of suffering or *dukkha* is self-denial, self-sacrifice or voluntary suffering for other.”⁶⁹ Jesus is pictured as a suffering servant. Khawsiamia points out that:

dukkha is a central teaching of Buddhism, but not in Christianity, which stresses salvation from sin. Buddhism teaches the way of liberation from *dukkha*. In Christianity, faith takes the most important part for salvation from sin. Buddhism critically analyses *dukkha* in a comprehensive way. However, Christianity does not classify the notion of suffering or *dukkha*.⁷⁰

He also asserts that since both Buddhists and Christians in Myanmar can understand the term *dukkha*, it is an applicable term to refer to the suffering of ludu. “Their socio-politico-economic *dukkha* is created by the people who hold power. We can see that

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Khawsiamia, *Towards A Ludu Theology*, 117.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 117–18.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 118.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 149.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 155.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 157.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 162.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 163.

dukkha is the most important issue in the Myanmar context. Thus, it is essential to create a theological response to the suffering of ludu.”⁷¹

LUDU-MINJUNG DIALOGUE

“Christians in Myanmar,” Simon Pau Khan En claims, “have to stop as theological consumers but start to be producers of our homeland theology.”⁷² To prepare a theological answer for their context under oppression, Myanmar theologians are working toward establishing ludu theology. As a developing tool, they have chosen minjung theology because South Korea has gone through a similar phase in its history. There are some notable similarities between ludu theology and minjung theology. Both ludu and minjung can be described as “the people” or “the masses” that are oppressed, poor, marginalized, and alienated.⁷³ They have both suffered or are suffering under political dictatorship. “While minjung are seen as the ‘han-ridden people,’ ludu are considered a ‘dukkha-ridden people.’”⁷⁴ The suffering of ludu is similar to the suffering of minjung during the 1970s, and for this reason, minjung theology can “help to explore a Burmese political theological response to the suffering of ludu’s *dukkha* as a result of the political conflict in Myanmar.”⁷⁵ Moreover, “Minjung theology is a human-centered theology, which focuses on the story of minjung, the sociobiography of oppressed Korean people. Its theological views can give hope and encouragement to the vision of the suffering people.”⁷⁶

Khawsiamia claims that “by highlighting the socio-political issues, [m]injung theology opened the eyes and minds of Korean Christians to see how God is concerned for minjung through Moses, Joshua, and so forth and Jesus Christ in the history of Israel. This God is now also revealed in Korean history.”⁷⁷ He believes that Myanmar Christian scholars can encourage, empower, and challenge ludu through theological reflection and make them the subjects of history in the Myanmar context.⁷⁸ Minjung theologians employed a praxis model and drew attention to the sufferings of minjung by adopting the term *han*.⁷⁹ Ludu theologians adopt this method and use the Buddhist term *dukkha*, which is prevalent and suitable for referring to the suffering of ludu in their context. Additionally, Khawsiamia suggests the storytelling method of minjung theologians in developing ludu theology.⁸⁰ Overall, minjung theology was not a theological-intellectual exercise; it was rather a liberation movement and a theological response to

⁷¹ Ibid., 172.

⁷² Simon Pau Khan En, “The Quest for Authentic Myanmar Contextual Theology,” in *Theology Under the Bo Tree: Contextual Theologies in Myanmar*, ed. Samuel Ngun Ling, vol. 1 of *Contextual Theology Series* (Insein, Yangon, Myanmar: Myanmar Institute of Theology, 2014), 21–22.

⁷³ Khawsiamia, *Towards A Ludu Theology*, 21.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 86.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 92.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 93.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 96–97.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 105.

the suffering of minjung at a crucial point in history.⁸¹ Khawsiamia considers that the theologians in Myanmar can learn from this and use it as a means of developing ludu theology.⁸²

CONCLUSION

I have summarized some of the key factors of minjung theology and presented a brief introduction to black theology of the United States, dalit theology of India, and ludu theology of Myanmar. When these theologies opened up to dialogue and gave voice to another, minjung-black dialogue found common ground for solidarity, minjung-dalit dialogue created partnership for future development, and minjung-ludu dialogue guided Myanmar theologians into enlightenment and showed a better way of carrying out ludu theology.

These four emerging theologies have some commonalities. Minjung, African-Americans, dalit, and ludu were, and still are, under some forms of oppression. Different forms of oppression around the globe from the past to the present are intertwined. However, sociopolitical oppression is the dominant dimension for minjung and ludu. For African-Americans, racial prejudice is a form of oppression that is dominant, but this is connected to poverty, political disenfranchisement, social marginalization, and gender discrimination as well. As for dalit, the dominant form of oppression is mainly the caste system and poverty. These layers of oppression have created layers of sentiment in them, which could only be expressed with the terms akin to *han*, "black experience," *peeran*, or *dukkha*. In all cases, human beings are treated without dignity, and there is the urgent proclamation that calls out for people as subjects and not as objects. They pursue the exodus paradigm, emphasize the cross and the passion narrative, and identify Jesus as the Liberator and the Suffering Servant who is *among* the oppressed or *is* the oppressed. These theologies are all challenged to bring both their contextual reality and divine revelation through Jesus Christ in history and in Scripture through their theological endeavor. Proceeding comparative research between emerging theologies as well as developing each contextual theology through dialogue is essential in the fields of ecumenics and intercultural studies. It has extensive dimensions due to the enormous amount of data needing deeper research. The focus in this brief paper was to treat each within the framework of dialogue.

Minjung theology is a local theology. Rather than using the dominant and traditional theological methodologies, it embodies a response to minjung's cries. Jesus Christ is perceived through the lenses of minjung's experience and shaped by the context. Though it may have its limits, no one can deny the fact that it gives us a deeper and more varied knowledge of the divine being and the world. "Local theologies," Daniel Migliore affirms, "must be genuinely concerned to speak not only in and to their own context but from that context to the worldwide community of Christian believers."⁸³

⁸¹ Ibid., 75.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 221.

Theology must not be reduced to solving problems that human beings face. One must understand, however, that a theology that does not embrace the dilemmas of human beings is extraneous to God as well as to his beloved people.

In sum, dialogue is a crucial determinant for a Protestant theologian undergoing constant reconstruction of theology firmly rooted in his or her context. All theologies are culturally and contextually conditioned, and there is no neutral or supreme position.⁸⁴ Emerging theologies in different parts of the world have given to us “a richer variety of models with which to understand God and the world, models which grow out of the experiences of others with different genealogies, traditions and contexts.”⁸⁵ The compelling feature of the dialogues between these emerging theologies is that it provokes realities of each context, and in the process of dialogue, they mutually enrich one another. Moreover, it also renews our consciousness in perceiving different forms of oppression around the globe. Jung-Young Lee declares, “Our suffering is eased when shared with others, because it often produces true friendship, which supports a spirit of endurance. Jesus was our true friend, for he suffered for us and gave his life for us (John 15:13). In the shared human support of suffering, true friendship is formed.”⁸⁶ Hence, dialogue between emerging theologies is essential for enrichment and solidarity, and minjung theology has a seat at the table with its distinct voice to offer. It is on this table of dialogue that our theologies should continue on with our reformation.

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⁸⁴ John Parratt, “Postscript,” in *An Introduction to Third World Theologies*, ed. John Parratt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 184.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁸⁶ Jung-Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 161.

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Studying Abroad

Reformation Students Between and Beyond Confessions

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Historians of the sixteenth century have often referred to it as a confessional age. This label emphasizes a contrast. While the religious unity of Europe was splintered by the emergence of robust alternatives to Catholicism, the various religious parties of Europe all consolidated their positions by similar means, producing official creedal documents to define themselves sharply in contrast to each other and invoking the power of states to sustain the dominant religious community and restrain dissenters.² The Protestant reforms were everywhere undertaken in the name of liberty and freedom, but there remains a genuine question of whether the people who lived through them felt themselves freer or even more tightly under the thumb of a resented authority.

Questions such as the above are best answered by specifying a group and focusing on the new opportunities and restrictions it encountered.³ This study looks at participants in higher education, for two reasons. First, universities and academies were critical to the course of the Reformation, and the Reformation in turn spurred their development. The Protestant Reformation began at Wittenberg University, was spread and opposed most effectively by university faculty or individuals with some higher education, and resulted in the creation of many new institutions of higher learning.⁴ Second,

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² I am alluding to the “confessionalization thesis” of Schilling and Reinhard, but only loosely, as I do not intend to defend any particular scheme of periodization or conclusion about the roots of modern nation states. I am interested only in their identification of common mechanisms of social control. For a broader summary, see Ute Lotz-Heumann, “Confessionalization,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, eds. Alexandra Bamji et al. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 33–53.

³ As a model of this approach, see the study of German women in Marjorie Plummer, *From Priest's Whore to Pastor's Wife: Clerical Marriage and the Process of Reform in the Early German Reformation* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁴ Paul Grendler, “The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 14; Lewis Spitz, “The Importance of the Reformation for the Universities: Culture and

institutions of higher education are one of the places where the mechanisms of confessionalization can be seen most directly. Tightened supervision over the opinions and publications of faculty members, forced subscription to statements of faith, and purges of dissenters worked to homogenize faith and render academics harmless to governments that had already decided on a course of religious reform.⁵

More specifically, this essay examines the phenomenon of Swiss students traveling abroad outside territories associated with their religious party. Its subjects are Rudolf Gwalther of Zurich's journey to Oxford and Philippus Bechius of Basel's study of liberal arts at Wittenberg. The goal is to examine the opportunities they had to learn about those outside their faith community, the reactions they faced from those outsiders, the challenges they encountered as minority students, and the effects these experiences had on them. The approach is micro-historical, relying largely on their own narration of these events. I adopt this approach because there is so little scholarship directly on traveling students during the Reformation, especially across confessions.⁶ A fine-grained analysis of two case studies can provide a baseline for comparison and suggest further avenues for research.

Little direct comparison will be made to medieval education, except to emphasize that these students were continuing a venerable tradition. The students of medieval Europe were often eclectic wanderers, studying at several institutions before taking a degree.⁷ Prestigious universities were cosmopolitan, containing administrative structures to house and monitor students from other lands.⁸ The significance of this history is that even during the time of confessionalization, institutional inertia lay on the side of welcoming and accommodating the foreign student.

Rudolf Gwalther (1519–1586) belonged to the first generation to grow up in a Reformed Zurich. As a boy, he was educated at the Kappel monastery outside town under the tutelage of Heinrich Bullinger. Around the time Bullinger became chief pastor of Zurich in 1531, he adopted the recently orphaned Gwalther. Gwalther spent the next several years continuing his education in Zurich, until the arrival of three English students in August 1536 set in motion one of the greatest adventures of his life. John Butler, Nicholas Partridge, and William Woodroffe had come to “learn religion

Confession in the Critical Years,” in *Rebirth, Reform and Resilience: Universities in Transition, 1300–1700*, eds. James Kittelson and Pamela Transue (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984), 46–63.

⁵ On mechanisms of confessionalization generally, see Wolfgang Reinhard, “Pressures Towards Confessionalization? Prolegomena to a Theory of the Confessional Age,” in *The German Reformation: The Essential Readings*, ed. C. Scott Dixon (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1999), 177–83. For a narrative of challenges facing humanists between confessions, see Erika Rummel, *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 75–120.

⁶ Foreign students, mostly Reformed, at the Genevan Academy are treated in Karin Maag, *Seminary or University? The Genevan Academy and Reformed Higher Education, 1560–1620* (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1995), chs. 4–7.

⁷ Jürgen Miethke, “Die Studenten unterwegs,” in *Unterwegssein im Spätmittelalter*, ed. Peter Moraw (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1985), 49–70.

⁸ Pearl Kibre, *The Nations in the Mediaeval Universities* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1948).

and literature” at Zurich’s new academy, the *Carolinum*.⁹ After just one semester, though, Nicholas Partridge needed to return home to take care of family business. Bullinger seized upon the occasion to tighten relations with Archbishop Cranmer and to provide his son with a valuable opportunity, a trip to England with a two-week stay at Oxford as its centerpiece.¹⁰

Neither Partridge’s visit nor Gwalther’s journey were exceptional. Zurich welcomed a number of foreign students in the sixteenth century and eagerly sent its own best and brightest abroad.¹¹ The city’s tradition of facilitating studies abroad is explained by Ludwig Lavater, future chief pastor of Zurich: “Young men who are a bit older or who have given their instructors reason to have especially high hopes for their diligence are sent to other schools, not only to finish learning the good literature and arts, but also to become acquainted with the rites and customs of other churches and schools, and to acquire general life experience.”¹² Gwalther would later go on to study formally at several other institutions, but this trip was primarily about general life experience. As such, it is representative of the more informal side of student traveling.

Gwalther recorded his trip in his “Journal of the Journey,” a straightforward account of his impressions and observations, devoid of literary aspirations.¹³ Each day received a separate entry, cataloguing the locations visited, distance traveled, and anything else of note. Judging by his records, Gwalther was eager to use this trip to further his education and cultural horizons. Almost all of the activities recorded have some kind of edifying aspect; more mischievous fun, if there was any, was kept strictly off the record.

Basel was their first significant stop. The city possessed the only university among the Swiss cantons, at which most of the first Swiss reformers had studied. It was more cosmopolitan than Zurich, and the Reformers there tended to be more flexible in their confessional commitments.¹⁴ For two days they enjoyed the company of Simon Grynaeus, a humanist and reformer who had spent much of his career trying to broker theological consensus among various Protestant parties. They also visited the monument to Erasmus, who had died in the house of the famous Basel printer Johann

⁹ Heinrich Bullinger, *Diarium (Annales vitae) der Jahre 1504–1574*, ed. Emil Egli (Zurich: Theologische Buchhandlung, 1985), 25. All translations mine. On the *Carolinum*, see Maag, *Seminary*, ch. 5; and Institut für Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte, *Schola Tigurina: Die Zürcher Hohe Schule und ihre Gelehrten um 1550* (Zurich: Pano, 2000).

¹⁰ “In January [1537] Partridge left for England in the company of my own boy, Rudolf Gwalther, carrying a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury and conveying to him my warmest sympathies.” Bullinger, *Diarium*, 25. An account of Gwalther’s journey focusing on its church-political significance is Carrie Euler, *Couriers of the Gospel: England and Zurich, 1531–1558* (Zurich: TVZ, 2006), 59–65.

¹¹ Maag, *Seminary*, 138–40.

¹² Ludwig Lavater, *De ritibus et institutis ecclesiae Tigurinae, opusculum* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1559), ch. 18. All translations mine.

¹³ Gwalther titled his unpublished manuscript *Ephimerides peregrinationis*. I refer to the print edition in Paul Boesch, “Rudolf Gwalthers Reise nach England im Jahr 1537,” *Zwingliana* 8 (1947): 433–71.

¹⁴ On Basel’s cultural influence and avoidance of strict identification with Luther or Zwingli during the mid-century, see Amy Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529–1629* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 29–35; and Hans Guggisberg, *Basel in the Sixteenth Century: Aspects of the City Republic before, during, and after the Reformation* (St. Louis, MO: Center for Reformation Research, 1982), ch. 3.

Froben and whose opposition to the Reformation was ignored as single-mindedly as his scholarship was embraced.¹⁵ The highlight of their stay seems to have been Karlstadt's university lectures on the Psalms. After his flight from Lutheran territories, Karlstadt had worked for a while as a pastor in Zurich before securing his post at Basel's university through a letter of recommendation from Bullinger.¹⁶ He did not disappoint the young Zurich students: "At the end of the lecture the audience raised some very shrewd questions, all of which this distinguished man resolved with his extraordinarily keen judgment."¹⁷

As they traveled through Germany, they passed through both Lutheran and Catholic territories, sometimes brushing up against unfamiliar customs. For Feb. 1, Gwalther recorded a faux pas in the village of Gamsheim: "In that papist village our dear Nicholas asked for meat during the vigil of the Blessed Virgin." Gwalther had lived almost his entire life in Zurich, where communal fasting had been abolished, but one thinks the Englishman would have been more aware. Was he being provocative? In any case, that same night in the village of Offendorf, they had quite a different experience: "Even though they were papists, they served us meat, asserting that their princes had granted that each person should receive with thanksgiving and eat whatever food they had, yet without offending their neighbor."¹⁸ This record of moderate Catholic reform or perhaps co-existence, of life between confessions, is tantalizing. One wonders how it struck Gwalther, since disagreements over the Lenten fast had been the initial public issue leading Zurich to sever ties with Rome.¹⁹

Several times encounters with Catholics served only to confirm common Reformed prejudices. On Feb. 10, while sailing to Cologne, foul weather struck: "For when we had passed Wesseling, suddenly there arose such a storm that the pilot was utterly helpless and senseless, unable to steer the boat. But in the meantime there was constant invocation of Mary and rest of the saints, for there was no shortage of people praying."²⁰ The reformers constantly inveighed against the "superstitious" approach to religion, attempting to wring from intermediaries the protection that comes only from God alone. "Helpless and senseless," the description ascribed directly to the pilot, also fits the Reformed attitude toward saintly invocation.

¹⁵ Christine Christ-von Wedel, "Erasmus und die Zürcher Reformatoren. Huldreich Zwingli, Leo Jud, Konrad Pellikan, Heinrich Bullinger und Theodor Biblander," in *Erasmus in Zürich: Eine verschwiegene Autorität*, eds. Christine Christ-von Wedel and Urs Leu (Zurich: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2007), 162–65.

¹⁶ "Since you're looking for us to send you an educated, prudent, judicious man, let me present to you Herr Andreas Karlstadt, a man extremely educated, pious, and skilled in sacred literature as well as in secular literature and the art of disputation. I have spoken of him often with that student here from your own household [Ulrich Schuler]. Don't evaluate him based on Luther's portrayal of him. He is entirely gentle and humble, well-mannered in every way. Grynaeus knows the man. You just let me know whether you like him and what I should do next." Bullinger to Oswald Myconius, April 24, 1534, in *Heinrich Bullinger Werke Zweite Abteilung Briefwechsel, Band 4: Briefe des Jahres 1534*, eds. Endre Zsindely et al. (Zurich: TVZ, 1989), 143 (n. 363). Translation mine.

¹⁷ Gwalther, *Ephimerides*, 439.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 440–41.

¹⁹ Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2002), 54.

²⁰ Gwalther, *Ephimerides*, 444.

Similarly, on Feb. 17, in Bergen op Zoom they had a remarkable encounter with a street preacher: "In that town was a monk of the Minor Order [Franciscan], captured in his eyes and mind (so I think). In his public preaching he was always going on about all sorts of strange things, that he had been in the Valley of Jehoshaphat and that he'd performed the Mass in a shrine there, where the Blessed Virgin lay buried with her parents. He also propounded astonishing things about hellfire and the last judgment."²¹ Gwalther's skepticism no doubt derived partly from the content. Many Reformers criticized the gullibility of Catholics who accepted what seemed to them like flimsy and contradictory accounts of miraculous phenomena.²² More importantly, they cultivated indignation toward those who would appeal to heavenly intercessors other than Christ.²³ But Gwalther seems also to have been struck by the preacher's mode of address. Gwalther had grown up under the preaching of his stepfather, Heinrich Bullinger. Combining principles of classical rhetoric with a textually-focused, expository format, Bullinger's sermons were dignified orations, delivered in academic robes, stuffed with informational content and sober exhortations.²⁴ By contrast, this begging monk, perhaps in dirty robes, was making a public ruckus, peppering his sermons with extraordinary tales and leaning hard on vivid descriptions of hellfire. He must have struck Gwalther as a huckster substituting gimmicks for content.

But not all Catholics come off so poorly in his account. On Feb. 24 in Bruges, they met the celebrated Catholic humanist Juan Luis Vives. This could have been a tense affair. Vives had been a royal tutor in Henry VIII's court, educating Mary I, and a professor of philosophy at Oxford. He had fallen from favor after supporting Catherine of Aragon in the divorce controversy and had moved to Bruges to continue writing and educating.²⁵ Perhaps Vives's lack of polemical writings and his clear contributions to humanist education encouraged the young men. The encounter was resoundingly positive: "[He] treated us most hospitably and conversed with us like we were old friends. He told us that he had some theological and philosophical works about to be sent to Basel for printing."²⁶ Vives's friendliness is emphasized even more than Grynaeus's. Gwalther seems to have cared more about the possibility of intellectually stimulating conversation than religious confessions. Certainly his complaints about unreliable sailors and stinky soldiers respect no confessional boundaries.²⁷

His tolerance was tested on the return trip, however. When Gwalther's company met Vives a second time in Bruges, he again welcomed them and discussed all sorts of things freely, perhaps too freely for his guests' comfort. Vives made known his

²¹ *Ibid.*, 446.

²² A famous example is John Calvin, *Treatise on Relics* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2008).

²³ Carol Piper Heming, *Protestants and the Cult of the Saints in German-Speaking Europe, 1517–1531* (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2003), 53–74.

²⁴ Descriptions of Bullinger's oratory, though likely somewhat stylized, emphasize his gentle tone, grace, and clarity. See Olivier Millet, "Rhétorique, homilétique et éloquence chez Henri Bullinger," in *Heinrich Bullinger: Life — Thought — Influence*, eds. Emidio Campi and Peter Opitz (Zurich: TVZ, 2007) 1:115–18.

²⁵ Carlos Noreña, *Juan Luis Vives* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970), ch. 5.

²⁶ Gwalther, *Ephemerides*, 446–47.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 440, 442.

displeasure with the reforms in England, the very reforms Partridge represented and Gwalther had made the journey to see. "He especially found fault with the King of England, judging it shameful for him to say he was the supreme head of the church when he couldn't even say a Mass or absolve sins." Unwilling to abandon either his estimation of Vives's scholarship or his distaste for Catholicism, Gwalther let them stand together in his overall evaluation of Vives: "So this otherwise extremely prudent man on this topic raved miserably." Nor was that the only criticism of the Reformation from Vives: "He was also lamenting the disharmony of the churches, saying that any day now we would have as many churches as we did cities, so it would be best for us to have a single head of the church who would bring everyone's faith into agreement," and so on.²⁸

The reference to individual cities struck at the heart of Gwalther's hometown, for Zurich's reformation was based on the principle that an independent city should have the right to determine its own form of religion.²⁹ At that precise time, the charge may have seemed particularly unfair. Although the Swiss churches were formally independent and had drawn up separate confessions and governing documents, they had recently made a significant step toward unity. In 1536 Gwalther's own stepfather, Bullinger, and his recent host in Basel, Grynaeus, had been instrumental in drafting the (First) Helvetic Confession, which won the assent delegates from all the Protestant Swiss cantons and even several South German cities.³⁰ In any case, Vives's outspoken opinions did not ruin the whole meeting. Vives was a personal friend of Grynaeus; Gwalther would not have wanted to create an awkward situation. They agreed to carry a letter from him to Oporinus, his printer at Basel. Oporinus published the treatise Vives mentioned he was preparing, likely *De anima et vita*, and after Vives's death in 1540 laid the groundwork for the collection and diffusion of Vives's *Opera omnia*.³¹

Gwalther's most extended stay across confessional lines occurred in between his two meetings with Vives, in England. London awed him. He stayed first with Lord John Grey, uncle of Lady Jane Grey and future participant in Wyatt's rebellion against Queen Mary. His first, brief meeting with Thomas Cranmer, at which he delivered Bullinger's letter, left him desiring more. (He received an audience and a letter for Bullinger shortly before returning.) He saw King Henry VIII and the Queen (Jane Seymour), and especially noted Mary, Catherine of Aragon's daughter.³² But Gwalther's lasting connections were made at Oxford.

Whereas Cambridge had quickly become a hotbed of reforming sentiment, Oxford's faculty and administrators so far remained overwhelmingly loyal to traditional doctrine.

²⁸ Ibid., 455.

²⁹ On the civic values underlying urban reformations, see Steven Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975).

³⁰ Text and introduction in Arthur Cochrane, ed., *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 97–111.

³¹ Enrique González, "Fame and Oblivion," in *A Companion to Juan Luis Vives*, ed. Charles Fantazzi (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 376–79.

³² Gwalther, *Ephemerides*, 449.

However, pockets of reform sentiment circulated among some students and masters, alarming the leadership. William Tyndale had resided in Magdalen College from 1510 to 1515,³³ and it was Magdalen that gave Gwalther and Partridge an extraordinary welcome.³⁴

Gwalther's memories of Oxford show his awareness of England's fluid position between confessions, but they do not fall strictly along confessional lines. He reserved his most effusive praise for Magdalen's President: "But all these men were surpassed in hospitality by Owen Oglethorpe, the president of the college, a man endowed with singular learning."³⁵ Obviously Oglethorpe did not hold Gwalther's Reformed background against him, but this was not an indication of sympathy for Zwinglian theology. As a bishop he would retain a strong belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and loyalty to traditional liturgy, which would twice lead Queen Elizabeth to walk out of services in which he elevated the Host. This practice eventually led to the loss of his post.³⁶

Outspoken opposition to Luther was common, and Gwalther witnessed some in a lecture: "While at Oxford we heard a lecture. A monk of the Benedictine Order was preaching on an assigned passage: 'Behold, we have left everything behind and followed you' [Matt. 19:27 and parallels]. When he began to stumble in his sermon, Luther 'shores up the faltering of his meter and fills up the holes in his rhythm,'³⁷ for from then on he turned angrily against Luther, attributing justification to works."³⁸ Luther was a wanted man, unable to travel outside friendly territories for fear of death. Yet Gwalther, who shared Luther's key beliefs, sat safely beyond the reach of the instruments of confessionalization.

Whenever Gwalther encountered direct opposition to his religious principles, his response was non-confrontational. Yet he seems never to have wavered in his own position. He kept an emotional distance between himself and figures whom he respected, such as Vives and Oglethorpe. However, the friendships he made at Oxford tested his resolve: "Unwillingly, of course, we departed Oxford. We did not so much leave our friends as were torn from them." The necessity of departure was religious in nature: "For we were forced to head to London, lest we be forced to take communion with them in the feast of Passover."³⁹ Gwalther does not tell us the specifics of how he and Partridge navigated the religious situation at Oxford, but this approaching festival forced his hand. He neither compromised his principles nor lessened his affection for the students who did not follow the same course of action.

³³ John Reynolds, "The Reformation in Oxford: A Tentative Study," *Churchman* 76, no. 4 (1962): 216–26.

³⁴ Gwalther, *Ephimerides*, 452.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 452.

³⁶ Margaret Clark, "Oglethorpe, Owen (1502/3–1559)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed February 4, 2017, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20617>.

³⁷ An allusion to Lucian, *Timon* 1.1, where Lucian complains that Zeus hasn't fixed the problems with his poems.

³⁸ Gwalther, *Ephimerides*, 452–53.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 453.

This recollection shows us the limits of nonconformity then possible at Oxford. It can be inferred that the students with whom they had formed such tight bonds did not share their opposition to these ceremonies or at least were unwilling to jeopardize their position at Oxford. They were not entirely beyond confessional expectations. And over time, as students became graduates, their room to maneuver decreased drastically. John Parkhurst, whom Gwalther mentioned in a list of his Oxford comrades, eventually became a Marian exile. He would come to Zurich and live with Gwalther until Queen Elizabeth's accession, at which point he returned and became Bishop of Norwich.⁴⁰

Gwalther and Partridge returned to Zurich on June 8, but neither stayed long. In November Partridge and the other Englishmen left for Bern and Geneva to acquaint themselves with the other Reformed churches.⁴¹ Gwalther must have acquired a taste for travel, for he spent 1538–1541 studying in Basel, Strasbourg, Lausanne, and Marburg. His time beyond confessional constraints did not inspire him to live between confessions. He became chief pastor of Zurich in 1575, and his publication history shows a fierce and exclusive loyalty to Zurich's theological legacy.⁴²

As Gwalther was finishing his studies in Basel, Philippus Bechius was about to leave there to undertake formal studies abroad in Wittenberg. Wittenberg's attraction for a young scholar is not difficult to understand. Basel had its own university, but it was relatively small and lacking in renowned faculty.⁴³ By contrast, Wittenberg was the model Protestant university. It was home both to Luther, almost universally acknowledged as the preeminent reformer, and to Melanchthon, the pedagogical genius behind many classroom reforms. By 1533, the arts and theology faculties had been completely retooled so that humanist linguistic training and Lutheran theological distinctives were united in a single curriculum, all placed in the service of church reform.⁴⁴ Unsurprisingly, student population boomed, and Wittenberg soon became the largest university in the Empire, by far the favorite destination for Protestants studying abroad.⁴⁵ Luther's classes could draw up to 400 listeners at a time, and Melanchthon's 600.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Boesch, "Gwalthers Reise," 465n49.

⁴¹ Euler, *Couriers*, 62; Bullinger, *Diarium*, 26.

⁴² Kurt Rüetschi, "Gwalther [Walther], Rudolf," *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, accessed February 4, 2017, <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D28298.php>.

⁴³ Even so, about 20% of its students were foreigners from outside German-speaking lands, giving an indication of how diverse universities could be. Guggisberg, *Basel*, 9–11, 38–41; and Burnett, *Teaching*, 22, 77–85.

⁴⁴ Ulrich Köpf, "The Reformation as an Epoch of the History of Theological Education," in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, ed. Magne Saebø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 2:350–56; Timothy Wengert, "Philip Melanchthon and Wittenberg's Reform of the Theological Curriculum," in *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition*, eds. Jordan Ballor et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 17–33.

⁴⁵ For statistics, see Helmar Junghans, *Martin Luther und Wittenberg* (Munich: Koehler & Amelang, 1996), 212–13.

⁴⁶ Junghaus, *Luther und Wittenberg*, 77. Compare that to Basel's total student population of about 150, as per Burnett, *Teaching*, 22.

Like the young men sent abroad from Zurich, Bechius was sent from Basel with a stipend. Basel's financial investment in Bechius implies that he was a promising and well-connected student. It further implies that a patron wanted him to study in Wittenberg. That patron was Basel's chief pastor, Oswald Myconius, a humanist who had formerly also been a professor at the University of Basel and a teacher in Zurich. Like Grynaeus, Myconius was amenable to theological rapprochement with Lutherans and on speaking terms with Luther. He showed no reservations about sending bright scholars off to Wittenberg and even prepared Bechius's way by recommending him to Luther: "There are high hopes for him, if only he finishes as well as he has begun. He has made good progress in languages and literature, as well as in pious habits. And if you were to give him a word of exhortation to keep growing in learning and life, I have no doubt that he would comply."⁴⁷ Bechius later reported that when he delivered Myconius's letter to Luther, Luther merely replied that his resources were at Bechius's disposal for anything he needed. Apart from that friendly but boilerplate welcome, there is no mention of further contact between the two of them.⁴⁸

We know the details of Bechius's studies through two letters he sent back to Myconius in 1542. These give us valuable information about daily life at Wittenberg and how at least one student perceived the faculty and town. He transcribed his morning schedule:

Every morning at 6:00 I hear Herr Philip Melanchthon lecture on Euripides. Soon, God willing, he will begin to explain Thucydides. At 7:00 I visit the lecture of Herr Winsemius, who on alternate days teaches from Homer and from Philip's Greek grammar. At 8:00 I again hear Herr Philip Melanchthon, who is varying the readings among Cicero's *Orator*, his own dialectic [textbook], and his *Common Places* (*Loci communes*). He seems to me, and this is just my opinion, to surpass all the other professors on the faculty, both in his very powerful erudition and in his sheer energy; he proceeds through his lectures with unearthly speed and without pausing.⁴⁹

Bechius's praise of Melanchthon neatly captures both the breadth of Melanchthon's talents and the extent to which he personally dominated the Arts faculty. In one semester, Bechius was hearing Melanchthon lecture on Greek, Latin, dialectic, and theology, and his one morning hour not taught by Melanchthon used his grammar textbook. In this sense, Bechius's education reflected a broader European phenomenon; Melanchthon seemed to be in every classroom. His textbooks on grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric were extremely popular across Europe, becoming standard texts even in Reformed territories.⁵⁰ His *Common Places* was the first Protestant work of systematic theology, written according to a topical method that employed continuous prose rather

⁴⁷ Oswald Myconius to Martin Luther, March 17, 1542, in *Analecta Lutherana: Briefe und Actenstücke zur Geschichte Luthers*, ed. Theodor Kolde (Gotha: F.A. Perthes, 1883), 378–79.

⁴⁸ Philippus Bechius to Oswald Myconius, August 23, 1542, in *Analecta Lutherana*, 383.

⁴⁹ Philippus Bechius to Oswald Myconius, May 27, 1542, in *Analecta Lutherana*, 380.

⁵⁰ Heinrich Bullinger recommended Melanchthon's textbooks throughout his pedagogical treatise *Studiorum ratio*. For Melanchthon in the Basel curriculum, see Amy Nelson Burnett, "Melanchthon's Reception in Basel," in *Melanchthon in Europe: His Work and Influence beyond Wittenberg*, ed. Karin Maag (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 69–85. An even broader perspective is provided by Jürgen Leonhardt, "Melanchthon als Verfasser von Lehrbüchern," in *Melanchthon und das Lehrbuch des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Jürgen Leonhardt (Rostock, Germany: Universitätsdruckerei Rostock, 1997), 13–33.

than the dialectical, analytic format of scholastic theology. It too found favor among Protestants of all stripes. Heinrich Bullinger taught from it in his early years, and John Calvin based his early editions of *Institutes* on its method.⁵¹

Bechius's afternoons also featured exceptional lecturers:

At 9:00 I take breakfast. At 12:00 I work on the foundations of mathematics. At 2:00 I hear Cicero's speeches, lectured on by Holstein, the greatest professor of the faculty of rhetoric. At 3:00 I treasure listening to Martin Luther's Monday and Wednesday lectures on *Genesis*, but on account of his frail health he seldom actually lectures. At 4:00 I hear Herr Cruciger expound the Gospel of John at a good pace, and in the same time period I hear Herr Pomeranus [Johannes Bugenhagen], who has recently returned from Denmark and begun expounding David's Psalms. At 5:00 I go to mealtime. At 6:00 I recover from my studies and strengthen my weary body by taking a little walk. Afterward I again apply myself to study.⁵²

It is unsurprising that Bechius reserved his highest praise for Melancthon and Luther, but interesting that only positive remarks were made about the faculty. The academic environment was exemplary: "As far as studies go, there is no place I would rather spend my time than Wittenberg." Perhaps Bechius thought he needed to reassure Myconius of his hometown pride, for this compliment in fact became a segue into a series of complaints: "But as far as the pleasantness of the locale, the salubrity of the climate, and the quality of food and drink, there is no place I would rather live than Basel." Bechius complained that the water was undrinkable, the beer foul, the food bitter, the lodgings cramped ("2,300 students at Wittenberg"), and everything outrageously expensive: "It's surely impossible to live here without debt; you have to pay triple for everything."⁵³

A postscript to this letter indicates that despite his overall satisfaction with the intellectual environment, Bechius's Swiss background was a source of discomfort. He requested a treatise explaining the doctrine of the Eucharist and reported that the legacy of the Swiss Reformation had come under attack: "They say all the preachers of the word of God in Basel and Zurich are heretics, because they understand the elements of the Lord's Supper spiritually rather than corporeally, as the Lutherans do.... I scarcely have words to describe how abusively Zwingli and Oecolampadius are excoriated here."⁵⁴ Despite the Basel church's strategy of mediating between Wittenberg and Zurich, it seems that at least some people in Wittenberg saw Basel as fully in line with Zurich's theological agenda. Moreover, Bechius himself refers to a party of "Lutherans," from which he excludes himself.

At times Bechius gladly adopted the mantle of spokesperson for the Swiss churches. Three months after his first letter to Myconius, another letter records a conversation with Philip Melancthon, "my most cherished teacher." Melancthon approached Bechius, asking him about rumors that the Swiss Protestants might be preparing for or

⁵¹ Bullinger, *Diarium*, 8; Richard Muller, "Ordo docendi: Melancthon and the Organization of Calvin's *Institutes*, 1536–1539," in *Melancthon in Europe*, 123–40.

⁵² Bechius to Myconius, May 27, 1542, in *Analecta Lutherana*, 380–81.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 381.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 381–82.

already in another war. Bechius denied this in the strongest terms, detailing the punishments that would be visited upon anyone who dared violate the ban on warfare or mercenary service. At least in Bechius's retelling, Melanchthon was impressed with Bechius and asked him to have Myconius write to him with an update on the political situation. Bechius clearly thought that he had succeeded in this act of diplomacy; his letter is practically bursting with pride.⁵⁵

That same letter relates another situation in which Bechius was much less happy to play the role of token Basel student. News of Karlstadt's death had reached Wittenberg; rumors spread and old grudges resurfaced. The overall atmosphere was quite negative: "Some are saying that he did not breathe his last in the faith Christ requires for our entry into the kingdom, but that because of the immense error he preached about the Lord's Supper, he died beyond hope." Some rumors even had a mocking edge: "Others report that ghosts had been seen before and after his death, and that his house is uninhabitable because of great [ghostly] commotions." Since Bechius's Basel roots were common knowledge, "many people ... were asking me which of these rumors were true." In contrast to the effusive defense of the Swiss he had offered Melanchthon, Bechius's replies now were tight-lipped: "I answered only that he had died a Christian and that I had no idea why he would want an exorcism."⁵⁶

The issue was an emotional one for Bechius. He bore a grudge against Karlstadt for his role in a church controversy that created deep fissures among the Basel clergy. Karlstadt had argued against Myconius and Grynaeus that ministers ought to be required to possess a university degree. The conflict lasted for several years until after both Grynaeus's and Karlstadt's deaths, no one on Karlstadt's side continued to press the issue.⁵⁷ One wonders how Myconius felt reading Bechius's private evaluation of Karlstadt, almost the exact opposite of the description Bullinger had given him years before:

As far as I can tell, everyone is extremely happy about his death; no one wanted such a pestilence on Christ's church to keep hanging around. And with good reason. For Your Paternity knows quite well how he played the spider among God's ministers, disturbing everything and stirring up commotions. You know how rudely he handled every affair throughout his whole life. And I remember all too well, venerable Father, what a demon he was towards Blessed Simon Grynaeus, his best friend, refusing to visit him as he lay dying in extreme agony.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Bechius to Myconius, August 23, 1542, in *Analecta Lutherana*, 384. However, *pace* Bechius, violations of the ban on mercenary service did occur with some regularity. See Burnett, *Teaching*, 209.

⁵⁶ Philippus Bechius to Oswald Myconius, August 23, 1542, in *Analecta Lutherana*, 383. Bechius used the word *spectra*, which usually refers to ghosts, and may in fact be better translated "demon" here. Karlstadt had reportedly seen demons before his death, even requesting an exorcism as he lay dying. This fed into Lutheran propaganda, which had accused Karlstadt of being infused with a demonic spirit. See Hermann Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt* (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1905), 2:509–15.

⁵⁷ See Amy Nelson Burnett, "'Kilchen ist uff dem Radthus'? Conflicting Views of Magistrate and Ministry in Early Reformation Basel," in *Debatten über Legitimation von Herrschaft: Politische Sprachen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Luise Schorn-Schütte and Sven Tode (Berlin: Akademie, 2006), 49–65.

⁵⁸ Bechius to Myconius, August 23, 1542, in *Analecta Lutherana*, 382.

It is remarkable, then, how unwilling Bechius was to indulge in the Wittenberg gossip. The most likely explanation is that Bechius understood how easily any criticism of Karlstadt could be turned upon the Basel clergy as a whole. He had to maintain unity in front of critical outsiders; only with his trusted mentor could he share his true feelings.

Though confessional tensions sometimes impinged on Bechius, his experience at Wittenberg appears to have been largely positive. All of his recorded interactions with professors were positive, leading to the conclusion that the discomfort came largely from overzealous fellow students. His place at Wittenberg was never questioned, nor did he have to sign any kind of statement of faith to graduate. When he did so, he proceeded to the University of Leipzig, which in the early 1540s underwent a thorough Lutheran and humanist reform.⁵⁹ His willingness to go immediately back into a Lutheran environment indicates his overall satisfaction, but traces of old tensions occasionally resurfaced. A letter from this period reveals frustration with Luther's celebrity status: "They revere Luther beyond measure, like some kind of earthly god, so that no one dares contradict him."⁶⁰ He eventually returned to Basel, where he was a professor until his death in 1560.⁶¹

Bechius never severed all ties with colleagues abroad. The catalogue of his publications reveals collaboration with a number of Lutheran intellectuals. Throughout the 1550s he kept up a correspondence with Joachim Camerarius, chief reformer of the University of Leipzig and an intimate friend of Melancthon's. In 1559, Camerarius edited an edition of Thomas Linacre's *On Correcting Structures of Latin Speech*.⁶² Melancthon contributed a prefatory letter, and Bechius added a modest set of explanatory annotations. Confessional restrictions often circumscribed opportunities for faculty appointment, but they never halted the humanists of the republic of letters from collaborating on projects.

It remains to be seen what can be inferred about Reformation students' cross-confessional encounters from Gwalther's and Bechius's experiences. Some caveats need to be kept in mind. First, both Bechius and Gwalther traveled relatively early in the Reformation. The Augsburg Interim had not yet sharply divided between Lutherans and the Reformed in the Imperial territories, nor was it then apparent what course the English reformation would take. Thus, we should not expect confessional pressures to be as strong then as they would become several decades later. In that sense, the two men had the advantage of being between confessions. Yet from Gwalther's stay at Oxford and even more from Bechius's Wittenberg correspondence it is clear that different reform parties were already being acknowledged. Second, both Gwalther and Bechius were already relatively advanced students and came equipped with

⁵⁹ Friedrich Seifert, *Die Reformation in Leipzig: Zur 400jährigen Geburtsstagsfeier Dr. Martin Luthers* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1883), 205–15.

⁶⁰ Emil Egli, "Studien und Leben in Wittenberg," *Zwingliana* 1 (1899): 99.

⁶¹ Deutsche Biographie, s.v. "Bächi, Philipp," accessed February 3, 2017, <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/gnd124538339.html> identifies him as a Professor of Greek in Basel, whereas *Compendiöses Gelehrten-Lexicon*, s.v. "Bechius (Philippus)" (Gleiditsch, 1726) titles him Professor of Logic and Medicine. He likely fulfilled all these roles.

⁶² *De emendata structura Latini sermonis libri VI* (Leipzig: 1559).

recommendations from influential people. Thus, it may not have been as easy for others to gain access to foreign educational institutions or to have the same kind of stimulating informal encounters. Only further comparisons can determine whether their cases are more typical or more exceptional on this point.

Their narratives suggest that the traveling student in the early decades of the Reformation had a unique opportunity to interact with educated individuals of other confessions from a position of safety. The mechanisms of control employed to secure the confessional adherence of faculty did not extend to students, though of course they were not spared from peer pressure. They were beyond confession in certain respects. Neither man fundamentally altered his previous beliefs as a result of his time away, which raises the question of how common confessional conversions were among students abroad and how the various interested parties reacted to them. For both men the principal gain from their studies was an expanded network of colleagues, some of whom became valuable collaborators throughout their lives.

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Book Reviews

Philip G. Ziegler, ed. *Eternal God, Eternal Life: Theological Investigations into the Concept of Immortality*. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, 215 pp. \$122.00.

How do contemporary Christian theologians approach the perturbing concept of immortality and corollary doctrines such as creation, resurrection, and time? Under the auspices of Professor John Martin Fischer's Immortality Project, ten theologians gathered to address these concerns at the University of Aberdeen during the year 2014–2015. This collection of essays contains the fruits of their labors. They labor at the conceptual level throughout, thus not providing practical, pastoral, or psychological approaches to immortality. There are traces of ethical insight, yet at a methodological rather than normative level. Theological and philosophical approaches bind this piece together. The work displays an intellectually robust dialogue within the Christian community that contributes to modern intrigue in human immortality.

Four of the chapters converse with, or provide a critique of, Karl Barth's doctrinal contribution to the book's theme. A seminal figure, Barth marks a significant break from and improvisation on classical notions of God's eternity and creaturely time (chapter one), the relationship between creation and new creation (chapter five), the quality of resurrection life (chapter six), and whether humans were created originally mortal or immortal (chapter ten). For readers interested in Barth's theology these essays will be of most interest, yielding a noteworthy addition to Barth studies.

The rest of the chapters engage other prominent theologians. The goodness of God and eternal life are connected, compared, and contrasted in the thought of both St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (chapter two). Eternity and time, the original creation and new creation of human bodies is probed with philosophical precision and insights from Luther (chapter three). Aquinas reappears discussing the creational distinctions between angelic and human immortality (chapter four). Some contemporary theologians, Jüngel and Moltmann, arrive with perspectives on eternal life, judgment, and justification (chapter seven). Calvin and Bullinger educate readers on Reformed approaches to how the Eucharist and immortality converge (chapter eight). Lastly, Tillich provides a distinct twist to the tradition's understanding of the eternal living God and human eternal life now (chapter nine). The spread of theologians covers a vast amount of time, save for pre-Augustinian thinkers. These chapters will catch the eye of readers interested in those specific theologians or doctrines as well as demonstrate the versatility of Christian variations on the theme of immortality.

This book's highest peak is the internal connection drawn between the doctrine of God (theology proper) and the other doctrines that are engaged. For example, as the

title hints, there is an inherent relationship, sometimes ontological or logical, between the eternity of God and the eternal life of human beings. If eternity is timelessness, as classically held, or if it is the simultaneous movement of past, present, and future, as Barth proffers (chapter one), then eternal life for human beings will be construed accordingly. This connection sets the Christian understanding of immortality apart from other philosophical conceptions. Per Plato's dialogues and Kant's critical project, which are both critiqued, immortality is a necessary constituent of human being. The philosophical captivity of theologians throughout history has complied with this understanding, under the guise of original immortality. These essays release captive theologians from the foreign domain of philosophical immortality, detailing instead the unique Christian take on life unending (quantity) and life to the fullest (quality). This is not to flatten out the differences among them—Barth and Tillich are diametrically opposed—but rather to highlight that the Christian tradition contains its own take on these concepts and need not submit to regnant perspectives. We see this in the following instances where humans were created originally mortal (chapter ten). The assurance of immortal life is testified to during the Eucharist (chapter eight). The final enemy, Death, is destroyed by a judgment that leads to eternal life (chapter seven). God will be the only good in the new creation, a riff on the beatific vision (chapter two). And Katherine Sonderegger tries to paint with words what no eye has seen, "the very color of Heaven is not made vivid before our eyes" (119).

Nevertheless, after completing these essays the reader may leave wanting something more. Given all the various and sometimes contradictory theologies surrounding immortality, how is one to adjudicate between them? A question and response section would only have taken this book longer to publish and added more volume to this slim publication; yet, it could have provided an internal conversation among the theologians. They conversed with everyone but themselves, it seems. Such an internal dialogue would only have continued to delineate the distinctions and material relations between an eternal God and eternal life.

This work succeeds in what it set out to do, providing a vast array of Christian theologies concerning human immortality. The major contribution of Christian thought to this concept is how theologians connect it with their worship of an eternal God. It shows that the Christian concept of immortality is not formless and void; actually, there is much to a Christian vision of eternal life. The book covers seminal theologians, thus providing a good resource for students and scholars investigating this area. This publication ought to provide a foundation for more research into this realm of thought from Christian theologians.

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Stanley Hauerwas. *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified*. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, 276 pp. \$32.99.

Methodical, cleanly categorized, and systematized. This is often what one imagines when thinking of a person's theology. This is not so for Stanley Hauerwas, however, whose work has been accused of being insufficiently theological. Rather, it looks like a "strange mixture of theology, ethics, social criticism, sermonic asides and illustrations, and polemics" carrying a signature Hauerwasian brand (3). In *Sanctify Them in the Truth*, Hauerwas addresses the invitation to do some "real theology" (1). Thus, the book is addressed to those requesting more "real theology" from him and to those who feel that if Hauerwas is pressed, he will provide a more explicitly systematic account of true Christian practice. By this "real theology," Hauerwas supposes something like "theology not-by-example" is meant, which is too often dangerously divorced from Christian practice.

According to Hauerwas, the problem with this divide is that theology has become a discipline divorced from ethics (that is, from Christian practice). Historically, Christians saw no division between their belief and practice; in fact, to demarcate them was unthinkable. Hauerwas traces a historical line from the earliest Christian writings through the present, demonstrating how the Reformation's emphasis on faith (over against works) had the unfortunate side effect of divorcing Christian belief from its lived practice.

In order to resist this dissociation, the remainder of *Sanctify Them in the Truth* is devoted to examinations of the Christian faith's embodiment, focused on those who practice it. He uses lenses including truthful Christian speech, the ramifications of friendship for the Christian life, the experiences of differently-abled persons, the notion of Christian education, and a number of sermons. Each chapter meaningfully meanders through philosophy, homiletics, ethics, and doctrinal reflection to try to sketch out the meaning of the lived Christian life. He undergirds these explorations with rigorous attention to theological detail, creating in the reader a sense of the wonder of God by means of God's presence in ostensibly unrelated scenes of Christian life. This is related to Hauerwas's conception of holiness: rather than the "individualistic and pietistic displays" that often characterize the concept, Hauerwas emphasizes holiness as an aspect of living communally within the body of the church (10).

The reader is greeted by Hauerwas's seemingly radical alternative theological propositions, which most have come to expect from him. His critical targets include the deification of unrestrained personal agency, accounts of sin and salvation that underwrite a Christian life devoid of repentance and forgiveness, and the use of Christianity to validate the political aims of modern societies, even to the detriment of the holy character of the Christian church.

Hauerwas is even more articulate and persuasive in this book than usual. He resists the expectation to provide theology "straight up" insofar as that demand entails abstracting the theological task from the concrete example of the church and the lives of those who constitute it (1). To this end, much of the book's theology is explicated through stories, sermons, letters, and anecdotes intended to specify some facet of

Christian life. These stories and expressions are laden with theological assumptions that Hauerwas then explicates.

One instantiation is his account of the deification of personal agency, or one's ability to make one's life whatever one desires. Much modern theology underwrites the idea that "we should have no story except the story we chose when we had no story" (252). Hauerwas calls this idea "a great terror," because "nothing could be worse for us, at least as Christians, than to have such a fantasy fulfilled" (108). In contrast, he claims that Christians are part of a story they did not choose because they participate in the drama of "many narratives that constitute our lives [which] finally have the *telos* of making us God's friends and, in the process, making us friends with one another and even friends with our own life" (110). To explain such a remark, he points to the Christian practice of marriage and its witness by the church. Would-be spouses are assumed to "know what they are doing" and thus are responsible for maintaining the commitment they make based on this information (109). This is assumed, Hauerwas claims, because Americans in particular are bred into the fantasy that they themselves are free to choose the outcome of their lives, which includes one's decision to participate in the life of the church or to become a Christian in the first place. The difficulty with this assumption (and by extension the "self-made" attitude) is that our lives are constituted by many decisions that are not our own, including circumstances inherited by birth or by the decisions of others that affected us without our input. The Christian story, by contrast, is one wherein a person's narrative is not self-determined but is part of many interconnected narratives aimed at making a faithful believer out of the person in question. Hauerwas's stories and expressions are laden with conceptions of sin, forgiveness, penance, holiness, and truthfulness about one's own life, all of which he consistently unpacks with sublime fervor.

There is much with which to disagree in Hauerwas's account, particularly if one does not accept his premises. It is easy, for example, to think of alternatives to his views on sin, holiness, the moral law, or most of his other contentions. Hauerwas's relentless criticism of American Protestant practice is sure to draw its share of ire, his unwavering commitment to pacifism lends itself to plenty of critique, and his treatment of the church as an alternative *polis* to any worldly state is ever unpopular amongst large swathes of readers. However, the arguments that Hauerwas presents are formidable, his conclusions are compelling, and his criticisms are unforgettably salient. The book excels at providing a fresh look at Christian holiness and the character of a people who wish to follow Christ. I recommend this book to any fellow Christian without reservation for the way it can reshape one's theological outlook and for its vivid presentation of the divine life as embodied in the practices of God's people.

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Gilles Emery, O.P., and Matthew Levering, eds. *Aristotle in Aquinas's Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, 336 pp. \$110.00.

When reading about Thomas Aquinas one must always ask, “Whose Thomas? Which Thomism?” One prevalent view of Thomas is of the great schoolman as essentially a philosopher. This Thomas rediscovers Aristotle, takes him to new heights, and interacts with Scripture primarily as a source of proof texts for his philosophy. This was the prevalent view of the neo-Thomist revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which “Thomas as philosopher” was deployed to buttress Catholic truth against the cultural upheavals of modernity. An alternative view arose in reaction to this by those associated with or influenced by the *Nouvelle Théologie* that informed Vatican II. These Thomists emphasize Thomas as an Augustinian, a Platonist, and—importantly—a biblical theologian. Whereas the first sort of Thomism sees Thomas as a philosopher—and an Aristotelian one at that—the second sees the Angelic Doctor as a theologian first and foremost, perhaps preferring not to address his Aristotelian inheritance.

The essays collected in *Aristotle in Aquinas's Theology*—edited by Gilles Emery, O.P., of the University of Fribourg and Matthew Levering of Mundelein Seminary—attempt to navigate both these viewpoints, showing the role that Aristotle plays in Thomas's *theological* thinking. As such, each chapter reveals the role Aristotle and Aristotelian categories play in Thomas's thought on a specific doctrine. The pattern of the book follows the *Summa Theologica* itself—although by no means covering every topic addressed in the *Summa*.

We find contributions from Gilles Emery on Thomas's Trinitarian theology and Serge-Thomas Bonino on angelology—both topics from the *Prima Pars*. Six chapters related to the two volumes of the *Secunda Pars* follow this. From the *Prima Secundae*, Raymond Hain explores Thomas's Aristotelian hylomorphism, Matthew Levering treats the Mosaic Law, and Simon Francis Gain writes on grace. In regard to the *Secunda Secundae*, Guy Mansini focuses on charity, Christopher Franks on justice, and Mary Catherine Sommers writes on the contemplative and active lives. The last two chapters address topics from the *Tertia Pars*, with Corey L. Barnes writing on Christology and John P. Yocum addressing sacramental theology.

An exemplary chapter in the volume is Matthew Levering's contribution on the Mosaic Law. Levering makes the striking claim that “Aquinas's use of Aristotle helps him appreciate the law of Israel *as law* in a way that most modern Christian theologians are unable to do” (71). Levering shows how Aristotelian frameworks help Thomas demonstrate why the Mosaic Law regulates both inner and social life, to argue for the clarity of the Decalogue, and to interpret precepts in light of contextual circumstances. Hence, Thomas uses Aristotle to show that the Mosaic Law is a wise law, and “to argue that a law is wise, and not merely arbitrary, inevitably requires philosophical tools for evaluating the goodness of laws” (92). Levering thinks this is an advantage of Thomas's thought over much contemporary theological thought, which Levering worries often views divine law in terms of voluntarism (i.e., as arbitrary commands) and thus cannot account for the goodness and wisdom of divine laws. Levering's chapter excels in terms of the book's purpose, as he is able to show that Thomas is at once a biblical theologian

and a student of Aristotle. The two sources are not inherently competitive: Thomas's goal is to interpret scripture, and Aristotle helps illumine the text.

Another noteworthy chapter is Christopher A. Franks's essay on Aristotle in Thomas's account of justice. Franks—Associate Professor of Religion at High Point University—argues that the context of the Christian narrative determines Thomas's treatment of justice, resulting in a relational view of justice and rights as informed both by our status as embodied creatures and by God's providential care in the divine law. Justice is neither an internal harmony of the soul as in Plato nor recognition of inherent rights as in modern thought. Rather, Thomas "holds together an Aristotelian attentiveness to the concrete shape of human life and the temporal character of human knowledge with a conviction of the naturalness of God's providential action to assist human beings toward their true end" (165). While humans have knowledge of the divine and natural law, the application of these precepts depends on the discernment of particular contexts and relationships. Justice lies at the intersection of what is "graced" and what is "natural," as Thomas weaves God's providence in directing us toward a *telos* with the reality of embodied relations (139). Like Levering's contribution, Franks excels in showing that Thomas does not subordinate Christian doctrine to Aristotle but rather critically uses Aristotle to better understand divine revelation.

This volume is most suited for advanced students of Thomas's thought rather than those seeking an introduction. Theologians, philosophers, and ethicists who have spent time with Thomas will find the volume a valuable help in interpreting the great doctor, especially since each chapter is significant due to the novelty of the inquiry. That said, new readers of Thomas will find the "Editor's Preface" of much help in navigating the landscape of twentieth- and twenty-first-century interpretation of Thomas. Here, Levering and Emery have provided an insightful and thorough historiographic narrative that will give the reader a foothold in the complex world of Aquinas.

The main criticism is the number of topics left unaddressed in the volume, some of which seem critical for a work on Thomas and Aristotle. Missing, for example, are chapters on creation and the intellect. This is significant given the controversy surrounding "radical Aristotelians" who taught the unity of the intellect and the eternity of the world, a controversy which led to certain positions of Thomas's being included in the Condemnation of 1277. That said, the chapters in this volume each accomplish the goal of showing us how Thomas uses Aristotle to clarify and explicate Scripture and Christian doctrine. It is set to become an important point of reference to theologians and philosophers alike who seek to understand Thomas better.

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Richard B. Hays. *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016, 524 pp. \$47.48.

In this long-awaited sequel to his 1993 book *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Richard Hays again takes up the task of intercanonical criticism with remarkable erudition and clarity. The book's introduction concisely describes its central aim: to examine "the ways in which the four Evangelists reread Israel's Scripture—as well as the ways in which Israel's Scripture prefigures and illuminates the central character in the Gospel stories" (7). Hays does a fine job of establishing the link between this thesis and each of his subsequent points without being unnecessarily hampered by theoretical or cumbersome asides.

The structure of the book—which is helpfully delineated in the introduction (8–9)—mirrors its thesis: each chapter is dedicated to the intercanonical analysis of one of the four Gospel accounts. Though subsections within each chapter are meant to draw special attention to how Scripture informs the evangelists' Christologies and ecclesiologies, Hays's method of analysis remains largely uniform throughout the book. By closely reading certain key passages in the Gospels, Hays makes explicit their "echoes" of Israelite Scripture and highlights the ways that their use enriches the meaning of the Gospel passage. Here, Hays defines an "echo" as a type of reference that is slightly more discreet than a direct quotation. If someone were to mention the quality of mercy, for instance, readers steeped in Shakespeare would understand this "echo" without any explicit mention of the Bard. Hays concedes that the Gospels are largely intelligible without reference to these "echoes," but nonetheless suggests that their recognition will unlock deeper levels of meaning in the texts and in their portrayals of Jesus. In fact, these references may precisely be the means by which those who have ears to hear will hear.

It is apparent that Hays is taking up a gargantuan interpretive task in this book, and his ability to unclutter the convoluted language of New Testament scholarship while maintaining scholarly precision should be lauded. As mentioned above, the book's introduction explicitly outlines what the reader should expect to find in the remainder of the book: it includes a lengthy explanation of what he calls "figural interpretation" (2–6), Hays's thesis (7), an outline of each chapter (8–9), and finally a brief—albeit thoroughly informative—description of Hays's interpretive methodology (10). This section feels less like a merely formal introduction and more like some privileged access to Hays's private notes and outlines. Hays's penchant for lucidity does not end in the introduction, however: Hays incessantly references his thesis after almost every passage he analyzes, as well as in miniature introductions and conclusions in each of his four Gospel chapters. These reminders, which are made so frequently that they almost become counterproductive and distracting, make up in clarity what they lack in subtlety.

Hays calls his reference-conscious form of analysis an exercise in "figural reading," or "the discernment of unexpected patterns of correspondence between earlier and later events or persons within a continuous temporal stream" (347). In other words, Gospel references to past events may uncover hidden meaning in contemporary ones; conversely, contemporary events may highlight an otherwise overlooked detail in past

events. To demonstrate this sort of reading within the Gospels, Hays draws attention to John 12:16: "His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him" (312). Hays repeatedly points out that just as the disciples scrutinized the Scriptures in light of the present resurrection (and vice versa), so should modern readers be just as mindful of the numerous "echoes" buried in the Old Testament and Gospels alike.

Though Hays rarely departs from the meticulous plan laid out in the book's introduction, he occasionally turns from his *sensu stricto* textual analysis to pursue other topics. Sometimes this works out well, and other times this proves to be more distracting. One successful example is Hays's criticism of the low/high Christology duality perpetuated by modern New Testament scholarship. Through his analysis of each Gospel, Hays demonstrates that each text's complexity and distinct narrative style leaves little room for each Gospel to be described as exclusively containing a low or high Christology. Hays dedicates a few paragraphs to this criticism in each of the Gospel chapters and in the book's conclusion, leaving him ample room to make a convincing argument against the use of such restrictive categories. Hays breaks from his plan less successfully whenever he attempts to make a polemic against violence. While describing the Jews' response to Pilate ("his blood be on us and on our children") in Matthew 27:25, Hays interjects by saying that "violence rests on an incomplete and therefore faulty reading of Matthew" (133). Whether this is true or not, this claim is unfounded in the rest of the work.

Despite these brief asides, the book is extremely well-organized and an absolute delight to read. Its tight form displays a self-awareness and humility that is unparalleled in much of New Testament scholarship: Hays puts away scholarly esotericisms in favor of repetition and careful wording. In this way, he does a superb job of expositing the Gospels and providing yet another way for any reader to fall in love with the immense complexity and poetry of the Bible.

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Call for Papers

ART AS A VOICE IN THE CHURCH

Graduate students and early-career scholars are invited to submit papers to the spring 2018 edition of the *Princeton Theological Review*. We welcome papers from various disciplinary perspectives (theology, philosophy, church history, biblical studies, social sciences, etc.) as they relate to the theme of art and the church. How does theology manifest in all different forms of art (painting, poetry, photography, sculpture, music, theater, film, literature, dance, or any other creative endeavors)? How does artistic expression give voice to piety, critique, worship, or spiritual struggle? How has art influenced and been influenced by biblical interpretations, theological movements, historical context, or cultural conditions? Why is art such a powerful medium for human expression?

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