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# A Review of the Role of Luther's Small Catechism in the Development of the Continental and the English Reformations

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Thesis

A REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF LUTHER 'S  
SMALL CATECHISM IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE CONTINENTAL AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATIONS

By

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APPROVED

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First Reader

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Christopher B. Brown", written over a horizontal line.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Protest was in the air. The people of German were discontent with the overbearing power wielded by the Vatican into the religious and political affairs of the German people. The civic authorities and princes of Germany were also tired of the medieval Catholic church's power of their lands. Although feudal lords were becoming less of a force in their lives, the people had grown weary of the medieval Catholic church leadership and dominance over their spiritual and temporal lives. Even the Catholic Church's was in the process of discussing reforms during the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517). Shortly after the Fifth Lateran Council concluded its hearings, Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk and professor nailed a critique of the Roman church to a door of the University of Wittenberg.

The initial reaction to the 95 Theses which launched thousands of individual and corporate protests against the medieval Catholic church was quiet. The 95 Theses was part of an ongoing intellectual discussion among theologians at Wittenberg. However, with the

help of the printing press and because of the passion of Martin Luther and others who believed that they had uncovered the hidden gospel, the Reformation moved from a theological discussion into a movement. This movement eventually became various forms of protests, private and corporate, against the Catholic Church. Some of the early protests were exercised in the form of Catholic clerics abandoning their vows and becoming Protestant preachers and prophets. Other protests included pro-Reformation leaders' distributing printed materials to spread their commentary on Luther's new teachings to evolving pro-Reformation communities whose protest on behalf of peasants was inspired by new theology being taught by Luther.

After the Wittenberg protest, the Reformation continued with decades of theological, military and diplomatic conflicts between religious and civic leaders. By the time of the Peace of Augsburg (1555), much had changed in Germany. Feudalism had been replaced with the beginnings of the nation-state, ruled by principalities and civic authorities. The medieval Church remained in power in the Vatican, but its power in Germany, Switzerland and other parts of Europe and England had significantly diminished. In its place as primary educator of morals and humanities rose an alliance between the fledging Protestant church and princes and civic authorities.<sup>1</sup>

In these years, Luther used the alliances with the princes and the civic leaders and

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<sup>1</sup>Ellwood P. Cubberley, *The History Of Education*, (onlinebooks@pobox.upenn.edu: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, June 2004) (URL: <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=7521>) – visited on February 2005, 203.

catechisms (whose printing and wide distribution was made possible because of the printing press) were among the most powerful tools used to spread the new ideas of the Reformation. The catechisms served as guidebooks for preachers and pastors and as a curriculum to teach the young, new converts and new adherents to reformed theology. Of the thousand of catechisms that were used during the Reformation, Luther's Small Catechism (1522 and 1529) was among the first. Luther's catechism became the template for other key reformation era catechisms; Osiander's *Kinderpredigten* (1533) and Cranmer's catechism in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer. Each of these catechisms was also significant for their respective communities. Although all of these catechism used the same template, they were able to adapt the catechism to teach very different variations of the same faith traditions.

This paper is a review of the impact of Luther's Small Catechism on the Reformation between 1522 and 1555. This paper will review the events around the development and use of several catechisms that were based on the template of Luther's Small Catechism (1529)<sup>2</sup>. This is not a critique of Luther, but rather an attempt to define the Luther's catechism as a template for several other catechisms that shaped the beliefs in the Reformation era. The catechisms in question were written by Martin Luther, Andreas

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<sup>2</sup>Martin Luther, "Luther's Little Instruction Book (The Small Catechism of Martin Luther)", in: Robert E. Smith, editor, *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 1-12.

Osiander<sup>3</sup> and Thomas Cranmer<sup>4</sup> and a Latin translation of Osiander's catechism by Justus Jonas<sup>5</sup>. The paper includes a review of the context in which each catechism was written and an analysis, interpretation and comparison of these catechisms. I will also discuss one of the related city ecclesiastical constitutions which was distributed with a copy of Osiander's catechism. In this paper, I will also review what scholars have said about these catechisms and ordinances in light of their impact on the period of the Reformation between 1522 and 1555.

Ian Green, in his book, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England*, raises the question about what could be learned from a study of the Reformation era that does not focus on the familiar events or personalities, nor on the academic publications and treatises, but on what lay and clergy learned from the "less controversial best sellers of the day."<sup>6</sup> Looking at what the people were thinking and believing in relation to what they were being taught would be a worthy research goal. Although this would be valuable research, and require better translation resources than I could offer, I would like to consider such a study that would hinge on the impact of communities that used a

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<sup>3</sup>Andreas Osiander, "Catechismus oder Kinderpredig", in: E. Sehling, editor, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, Volume 11, 1533th edition. (Nuremberg: Tübingen, 1961), 206-286.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Cranmer, *A Short Instruction into Christian Religion bring A Catechism set forth by Archbishop Cranmer*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1829), 1-213.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1-182.

<sup>6</sup>Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

catechism based on the Luther Small Catechism template. This paper is a beginning to such a study, for a thorough analysis would require additional translation resources and access to other related primary text.

There are two filters one could apply when looking at the theology of catechetical texts. One would be to view the catechism as a doctrinal teaching tool that is absent of political and religious polemics. Mark Noll also said that Luther's small catechism was remarkably free of the religious polemics which characterized his other writings.<sup>7</sup> Green agreed with Noll, that catechisms tended to be viewed as "not suitable places for polemic contests." Another lens would be to look at the catechism as a means of disseminating specific ideologies, either religious or political. Ozment, in his book, *Protestants, Birth of a Revolution*, viewed Luther's alliance with the civic authorities and the creation of school ordinances, ecclesiastical constitutions and catechisms as a way of disseminating his dual political and theological agenda of teaching Germans to distinguishing between the temporal and spiritual kingdoms as a means of quelling the uprisings by the peasants.<sup>8</sup> Osiander used the catechism to clarify theology (such as The Ban).

My questions about Luther's sixteenth century catechism came from my larger STM project of examining the historical roots of the decline of the 21st century mainline

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<sup>7</sup>Mark A. Noll, editor, *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 60.

<sup>8</sup>Steven Ozment, *Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution*, (1540 Broadway, New York, NY: Image Books: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1991), 122.

Protestant church. I wrote several papers that examined different parts of this question. Some of the paper topics included scholars attributing Luther's early Reformation material in being the roots of propaganda.<sup>9</sup> In my paper, I reviewed research that defined propaganda in relation to sixteenth century Lutheran catechism. These researchers pointed to the similarities to modern day propaganda's use of pictures and symbolism to spread ideologies and Luther's methods of spreading Reformation theology through Germany, a country with a high illiteracy rate.<sup>10</sup> A combination of rising secularism and damage caused by the Nazi propaganda led Bonhoeffer to question whether or not the church should continue to invest in its future.

Our whole nineteen-hundred-year-old Christian preaching and theology rest on the 'religious a priori' of mankind. 'Christianity' has always been a form perhaps the true form of 'religion'. But if one day it becomes clear that this a priori does not exist at all, but was a historically conditioned and transient form of human expression, and if therefore man becomes radically religionless and I think that (this) is already more or less the case (else how is it, for example, that this war, in contrast to all previous ones, is not calling forth any 'religious' reaction?) what does that mean for Christianity?<sup>11</sup>

Our church, which has been fighting in these years only for its self-preservation, as though that were an end in itself, is incapable of taking the word of reconciliation and redemption to mankind and the world. Our earlier words are therefore bound to lose their force and cease, and our being

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<sup>9</sup>Valerie Bailey, *A reflection on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's ethical guidelines for a post-Holocaust, religionless society*, (Cambridge, MA, March 2008), 1.

<sup>10</sup>R.W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for German Reformation*, Volume 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 3.

<sup>11</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 280.

Christians today will be limited to two things; prayer and righteous action among men.<sup>12</sup>

In this and other essays, Bonhoeffer mused over a religionless Christianity and raised the question of whether or not the church should be “historically conditioning” its adherents, especially the children. Bonhoeffer’s thoughts, published posthumously after he was executed in a concentration camp, were taken to heart by twentieth century US mainline clergy.<sup>13</sup> Bonhoeffer’s writings were instrumental in shaping the US mainline denomination’s post Holocaust theology. This theology inspired mainline clergy to make institutional changes to prevent another Holocaust. Some of these institutional changes involved eliminating anti-Semitic references in the liturgy. Bonhoeffer’s praxis of prayer and righteous action was embraced by mainline denominations, many of whom were trying to find in the midst of a theological crisis a reasonable way of incorporating into their respective Christian traditions a new understanding of evil and suffering, the church’s new awareness of its own anti-Semitism and its lack of action in defense of the Jews in Europe. Prayer and righteous action became the driving force behind how the mainline church interface with society. Prayer and righteous action came to replace efforts of “self-preservation” or investment in insuring that the church would continue into future generations.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 300.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

I suspect, (although most of this is based on observation) that the guilt over the Holocaust may be a contributing factor to mainline church's tendency to no longer teach children using intense catechetical processes. This guilt may be related to catechism and liturgical practice. Or perhaps it is a reaction to modernist historians who have dismissed Luther's sixteenth century catechism and blamed German passivity on Luther's catechisms. Historians have long questioned Luther's sixteenth century catechism enterprise, especially his alliance with civic authorities, as the possible seed of German passivity and receptivity to Nazi propaganda.<sup>14</sup> However, Ozment cautions readers against this kind of interpretation, saying that modernist historians often ignore the personal piety and spiritual practices of reformation era clergy and laypersons, and instead, focus their research on a critique of Luther's methods, especially in relation to catechism.<sup>15</sup>

How would the mainline church look at Luther's sixteenth century catechetical projects without the modernist lens of condemnation? Would they see any merit in the use of Luther's Small Catechism? Is Christianity still learned from the questions posed in Luther's Small Catechism of how do we act (Ten Commandments) what do we believe (The Creed) and how to we pray (The Lord's Prayer)? And is this a methodology worth revisiting as sociologists are saying that the mainline church's future is tied into their ability to teach their children the Christian faith.

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<sup>14</sup>Ozment, 118-119.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 4.

According to Kirk Hadaway, the mainline denominations began to lose participants in the 1970s; about the time liberal mainline churches shifted their focus onto ecumenism, organizational restructuring and social justice as a reaction to post Holocaust Theology. The decline is also defined as an aging church population and a lack of participants of childbearing age. Hadaway said that mainline denominations could experience growth if they focused on growth-related tasks, such as evangelism, new church development and Christian formation programs, especially for children.<sup>16</sup>

However the actions of mainline church leaders still seem to mesh with the critique of the modern historians and the tendency to shy away from question and answer catechism formats or any pedagogical plan to teach the specifics of the faith. As a result, twentieth century mainline clergy adopted other pedagogical methods than ones that resemble the template of Luther's Small Catechism. In some cases, churches stopped teaching children at all, assuming the children would make a choice about their faith in adulthood. These pedagogical choices by mainline churches (to not teach children or to use curriculum that do not teach the faith tradition) have been highlighted in a sociological study about the decline in numbers in the pews of mainline churches.

It is unfortunate that our twenty-first century lens has led historians to dismiss the

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<sup>16</sup>C. Kirk Hadaway and David A. Roozen, *Church and Denominational Growth: What does (and does not) cause growth or decline*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 45, In this paper, I questioned whether or not adopting parts of Bonhoeffer's ethic may have shifted liberal churches theological center. Did the shifting center cause the mainline church to shrink or is mainline religion shifting because religion is no longer relevant.

role of Luther's catechism. Ozment's caution is correct, that the story of sixteenth century catechisms is far more complex than being the primary cause for a tragedy four hundred years later. This paper is an attempt to look beyond the modernist dismissal of the history of Luther's catechism because of the role Luther's catechism has played in the history of propaganda. Instead, this paper is an attempt to create a simple historical panoramic view on the template of Luther's Small Catechism in its historical context. If one were to date the Reformation, the dates would be 1517, from the 95 Theses incident to the Treaty of Westphalia 1648, (when the Thirty Year War ended with the agreement of nation-state sovereignty). However, this paper is focusing on 1522, the year Luther wrote an early version of his 1529 Small Catechism to 1556, the death of Thomas Cranmer, one year after the adoption of the Peace of Augsburg (1555) (the religion of the leader of the land in question determines the religious practice for that community). For the story of this catechism is about the forces that shaped a piety in post-Catholic Europe.

Historians have always pondered the connection between the continental and English Reformation, especially in Nuremberg and in the courts of Henry VIII and Edward VI. This paper will also look at this connection through how both of these reformations were influenced by the template of Luther's Small Catechism, especially in relation to how reformers partnered with civic authorities and monarchies. For Nuremberg, the catechism was used by a lay and clergy alliance with civic authorities. In the end, the template was used as part of a civic document. And the civic document went on to shape the theology of

how Protestants practice confession and absolution. For Canterbury and English, Luther's template was imposed onto the laity by imperial powers for the goal of shaping English post-Catholic theology. However, the template ended up becoming a political landmine, which may have shaped the theology of the English people, but ultimately was used to condemn English reformers, including the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In this panoramic view of Luther's Small Catechism, an interesting narrative emerges within the Reformation story: how the template of Luther's Small Catechism may have similarly influenced the theology of how the English Reformation and the Reformation in Germany, particularly Nuremberg, will focus on Cranmer and his visit to Germany where he met Martin Bucer and Andreas Osiander. A study of the impact of Luther's Small Catechism opens up a review of the different theological perspectives espoused in Luther, Osiander, Jonas and Cranmer's catechisms with each other, to see what was included and what was left out and what was abridged and what was expanded.

And finally, the question of the impact of the Reformation is asked, not in the modernist context, if looking to fix blame for the Holocaust, but by asking questions about how Luther's catechism may have influenced the piety of Protestants in Germany. For even if there is a connection between Luther's catechetical project and twentieth century Nazi propaganda, the question of impact is one that is answered for each generation. While this paper will not answer the question of impact, it will attempt to establish Luther's Small Catechism as a point of reference for examining the question of the impact

of Luther's Small Catechism on Protestant piety.

## CHAPTER TWO

### AFTER WITTENBERG

#### Means of Grace

Martin Luther's legendary protest against the medieval church started out as a passionate theological debate among scholars in an environment of discontent. The German princes and civic leaders were trying to tame the unwieldy structure that was the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup> The German people were dissatisfied with the Catholic Church, but tolerated its sacramental power. The people believed the church held a monopoly on the 'means of grace': absolution, penance, mass<sup>2</sup> and especially indulgences, the issue that led Luther to post his 95 Theses on the door in Wittenberg, a document originally called

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<sup>1</sup>Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation*, 1st edition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 104.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 111.

“*Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences.*”<sup>3</sup> Luther said in his 95 Theses,

Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.<sup>4</sup>

St. Laurence said that the poor of the church were the treasures of the church, but he spoke according to the usage of the word in his own time. Without want to consideration we say that the keys of the church, given by the merits of Christ are that treasure. For it is clear that the pope’s power is of itself sufficient for the remission of penalties and cases reserved by himself. The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.<sup>5</sup>

Luther’s critique of indulgences did not question the pope’s power and authority, not at first. However, his challenge articulated a new perspective that was welcomed by a people who was tired of the church’s monopoly on their spiritual lives. Luther’s new theology cut out the church as the middle man and dislodged the Catholic church from its monopoly on being the sole dispensers of grace.<sup>6</sup> Cameron said,

In the Reformation, the equilibrium was destroyed, because reputable and persuasive figures convinced many people that their souls were really saved without the paraphenaila of the sacramental and penitential system. The Church, then, had no excuse for its deficiencies: indeed, its spiritual ministry,

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<sup>3</sup>Timothy F. Lull, editor, *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*, 2nd edition. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 40. Indulgences were part of the sacrament of penance. Indulgences were sold and “applied” against a loved one’s eternal punishment.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 41. Number 37 of the 95 Theses.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 41. Number 59-62 of the 95 Theses.

<sup>6</sup>Cameron, 111.

which had excused its other faults before, now itself became a blasphemy against Christ.<sup>7</sup>

At first, Luther's theological debate hardly registered outside of the University at Wittenberg. Inside Wittenberg, Luther was arguing not with church authorities, but other scholars, mostly humanists.<sup>8</sup> Other theologians joined Luther, not to debate, but in agreement with his ideas. Some of his early supporters, Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and Philip Melanchthon, became two of the key reformers of this new movement.<sup>9</sup> Luther's ideas did not address the civic issues related to the church, but rather, his debate focused on the question of who had authority to forgive sins.<sup>10</sup> As his writings spread, people, especially in urban areas, began discussing Luther's theology.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 111.

## Preachers and Pamphleteers

Civic preachers began to use Luther's writings in their own sermons.<sup>11</sup> One city that embraced Luther's teachings was Nuremberg.<sup>12</sup> Cameron said that Nuremberg pro-Lutheran residents organized study groups on Luther's writings. As Lutheran's teachings spread throughout Germany, primarily in the cities, the Catholic leadership of Germany ordered Luther to appear before them at the Diet of Worms (1521) to answer to charges of heresy and high treason.<sup>13</sup> After German leaders interrogated Luther, he was charged with high treason.<sup>14</sup> The ruling was basically a death sentence against Luther, and the Edit of Worms called on everyone in Germany to help with his capture. However, most ignored the order. For example, when Edict was posted in Nuremberg, due to Luther's popularity, no one acted on the Edict, due to Luther's popularity.<sup>15</sup> Although most people did not respond to the Edit, Luther was terrified and went into hiding at Wartburg Castle (May 1521–March 1522) where he continued to write.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 30-31.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>15</sup>Cameron, 107.

<sup>16</sup>Gritsch, 31.

Meanwhile, Luther's ideas began to inspire countless preachers and pamphleteers to also issue statements on Luther's views or anti-Catholic perspectives. However, civic authorities tended to remain quiet. Pro-Lutheran civic authorities would exercise their approval in subversive ways. For example, in 1521, the pro-Lutheran Nuremberg city officials gave three of the key preaching posts to pro-Lutheran clergy, including Andreas Osiander at St. Lorenz.<sup>17</sup> The new preachers of Nuremberg were allowed to hold these positions as long as they did not cause any trouble, especially in terms of changing liturgical practice.<sup>18</sup>

### A New Authority

Cameron said that while the movement had yet to become a systemized religious system, the critic by the reformers would “challenge, redefine, rearrange the building blocks of medieval belief: sin, law, faith, justification and the church.” Luther and the emerging group of reformation theologians would base their challenge on the Bible as the new authority to replace the “flawed” authority of the medieval Catholic church.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Cameron, 107.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 111.

As the movement spread, Gritsch said Luther's challenges raised questions how would ecclesiastical authority be exercised under a system where everyone is a priest.<sup>20</sup> Whether or not people or clergy were asking this question, Luther taught that householders, and not clergy, should be the primary teachers of the faith. Even before Luther's protest, priests may have been the primary teachers, but often their sermons were incomprehensible to children and the illiterate Germans. As part of his campaign to dislodge church's power, Martin Luther encouraged the heads of households to become the new teachers of the faith.<sup>21</sup>

To assist these householders, Luther created several teaching materials for "the simple laymen." These materials often were well illustrated for the illiterate and simple explanations that children could understand. In 1522 Luther published *Personal Prayer Book*: exposition of "the medieval catechism" with the Decalogue (what to do) the Creed (what to believe) and the Lord's Prayer (how to pray)<sup>22</sup> The book was instantly popular and many copies were sold. After his *Prayer Book* was published, encouraged teachers to write their own little instruction books for their parishioners. Luther offered his own catechisms as a template.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Gritsch, 36.

<sup>21</sup>Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 4.

<sup>22</sup>Gritsch, 36.

<sup>23</sup>Lull, 317.

## Catechisms

Luther's Larger Catechism, a collection of commentaries in the form of short sermons from Lent 1528, was published 1529.<sup>24</sup> His Small Catechism, a shorter, illustrated concise explanations to the themes from the Larger Catechism in question and answer format, was published May 1529.<sup>25</sup> The Small Catechism, included exposition of the Ten Commandments, The Apostles Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the old medieval catechism structure of what to do, what to believe and what to pray. As part of his revision of the small catechism, Luther another section to the catechism that focused on the Sacraments and an order for household prayers.<sup>26</sup> Luther invested a great amount of work and time writing the Greater and Small catechisms, which had the dual purpose of being doctrine for children (*Kinderlehre*) and teaching guidebooks for pastors and heads of households. Strauss said, "Few of his works received more of his care than these unpretentious compendiums of basic religious knowledge and none was closer to his heart."<sup>27</sup> Luther said of his catechisms,

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<sup>24</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 159.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Lull, 317.

<sup>27</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 159.

Speaking for myself, I am still a child beginning to learn my catechism. Every morning and whenever I have time during the day, I read and recite the Lord's Prayer, Decalogue, Apostles' Creed, psalms, etc., word for word, and in this way I stay forever a child and a disciple of the catechism, and I am very happy in this condition.<sup>28</sup>

Strauss said that catechisms played a central role in the spread of the Reformation.<sup>29</sup>

Reformers believed in their use of catechisms that they were reviving an ancient Christian practice used to prepare catechumens for baptism in the first centuries of the church.<sup>30</sup>

Strauss said that the reformers were optimistic about the success of their revolution primarily because

they had found a way to implant evangelical Christianity in the minds of their fellow men, particularly in the minds of the young, who represented the movement's best hope of survival. Religious instruction would root the principles of faith in the impressionable minds and malleable characters of children and adolescents, with beneficial results inevitably to follow when the new generation came to adulthood.<sup>31</sup>

Luther's catechisms became vehicles for teaching the new reformation theology to a society that had been steeped in medieval Catholicism for centuries. These new ideas of reforming the church captured the imagination of the urban dwellers and others began

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Gerald Strauss, "Success and Failure in the German Reformation", *Past and Present*, 67 [1975], May, Nr. 1 (URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650232>), 33.

espousing similiar ideas. Leaders emerged from among these supporters, who began to imitate Luther and write treatises, sermons and pamphlets. However, in the early 1520s, some preachers, began to spread the new ideas with such an enthusiasm that their teaching and preaching began to challenge the social order and caused social unrest.<sup>32</sup>

### Social Unrest

Eric W. Gritsch said that the uprisings of the 1520s left the reformers very concerned. Luther viewed the uprisings as “pitfalls that snared and confused minds.”<sup>33</sup> Gritsch said, “Luther labeled such minds ‘swarmers’ (*schärmer*), enthusiasts or fanatics: whom he compared to wild swarming bees, and he became very allergic to them.” Strauss said Luther said he sensed a satanic connection between them and the “papist.”

The social unrest also disturbed Melanchthon.<sup>34</sup> Melanchthon believed classical studies was the cure for obscurantism among the reformers and the remedy for the fanaticism of the “swarmers”<sup>35</sup> To this end, sometime between 1522 and 1524,

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<sup>32</sup>Cameron, 233-234.

<sup>33</sup>Gritsch, 41.

<sup>34</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 6.

<sup>35</sup>Clyde Leonard Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer*, (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 95.

Melanchthon left theological teaching and focused on teaching languages.<sup>36</sup>

### *Müntzer*

Luther's example of a "swarmer" was Thomas Müntzer, who organized a rebellion in 1523 against feudal landlords, many of whom were princes. It was Müntzer, much to the chagrin of Luther, who linked Luther's proclamation of Christian freedom to the liberation of slaves from feudal landlords. whose community, "the covenant of the elect" organized was Luther's primary example of "swarmers"<sup>37</sup> Müntzer was captured and later beheaded at the battle of Frankenhausen (May 1525), where Catholics and Protestants joined ranks to squash the Peasant uprising. In a rare moment of agreement during the reformation, the forces of Catholic George of Saxony and Protestant Philip of Hesse killed thousands of peasants to uphold the "divinely ordained political order of princes.

Luther supported this "divine order" in his writings. Luther wrote many treatises about the importance of temporal authority, perhaps an attempt to show how Reformation theology was not the cause of the peasant uprisings, or perhaps to respond to the preachers

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 96-97. Because of Melanchthon's absence from Luther's side during this time, many have thought that Melanchthon and Luther had parted ways, but it appears that they remained good friends and theological conversation partners. Manschreck also cites need for money to finance his wife and two children and Melanchthon's own poor health as reasons for leaving theological teaching and focusing on language studies.

<sup>37</sup>Gritsch, 41.

and pamphleteers who used the new Protestant theology of freedom as a rationale for the uprisings. He also said that gospel should never be identified as inspiration for violent rebellion.<sup>38</sup> “Anyone who is killed fighting on the side of the rulers may be a true martyr in the eyes of God. Anyone who perishes on the peasants’ side is an eternal firebrand in hell.”<sup>39</sup>

### *Karlstadt*

Luther also opposed another “swarmer,” Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt filled the void in Wittenberg when Luther went into hiding in Wartburg.<sup>40</sup> Gritsch said that while Luther was away, Karlstadt, who became a leader in the Anabaptist movement, began make changes to the worship service including chalice for the laity, no vestments and clerical marriage.<sup>41</sup> Karlstadt also began teaching that Christ was not present in the bread and the wine of the Lord’s Supper. The unrest over the changes grew to a fever pitch and Luther made a secret visit back to Wittenberg to help bring resolution to the conflicts. In

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Andreas Karlstadt, “Dialogue on the Lord’s Supper”, in: Carter Lindberg, editor, *The European Reformations Sourcebook*, 7th edition. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 116.

<sup>41</sup>Gritsch, 34.

his absence, Luther found that the Reformation went on without him.<sup>42</sup> Karlstadt and Luther agreed on many things, such as, that grace cannot be earned.<sup>43</sup> However, they disagreed on the theology of the Lord's Supper.

In his treatise, "*Dialogue on the Lord's Supper*" (1524) Karlstadt said that "Christ's presence is not in the bread, but the meal is a memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. " And he placed in the middle of his word the origin and manner of his remembrance, namely, that his disciples should remember that he gave his body for them."<sup>44</sup>

Luther saw in Karlstadt and other "swarmers" the potential for a variety of theologies to spread in the vacuum of the medieval church's challenged authority. Strauss said that Luther had hoped the Larger and Small catechisms would equip the clergy to respond to the peasant uprisings by giving them instructions on how to teach in a time of "heretics, sectarians, enthusiasts, false seducers" which Strauss interpreted Luther as using coded language for Zwinglians, Anabaptists, spiritualists and antinomians, emerging reformers in their own right, but probably people Luther had rationally and irrationally blamed for the social unrest.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>43</sup>Karlstadt, 52.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 117.

<sup>45</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 159.

### **The Magisterial Reformation**

McGrath said a distinct shift occurred in Luther's movement around and following the Peasant Uprising. Luther's ideas moved from being an intellectual discussion at a university and into the streets where it was carried on by preachers and pamphleteers who continued to challenge the church's authority.<sup>46</sup> However, uprisings of the mid-1520s led Luther and the other reformers to defend the Reformation against accusations of inciting riot and social unrest.

McGrath identifies the second phase of the reformation as the 'magisterial Reformation.' The magisterial Reformation refers to the alliance of the protesters who followed the teachings of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, with the intentional exclusion of the Anabaptists. The magisterial Reformation was also characterized by civic authorities and princes working with the Lutherans, Calvinist and Zwinglians to institutionalize their theology into civic laws.<sup>47</sup> The event that set the stage for the magisterial Reformation was the Peasant Uprising and the leadership of Anabaptist leaders such as Andreas Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer.

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<sup>46</sup>Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 11th edition. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1988), 5.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

## Leisnig 1523

Luther enlisted the help of civic authorities to institutionalize the role of the householder as chief catechists by defining that role in the city's constitution. For Luther still believed that the catechetical process was to be done in the home and the householder would be the primary teacher of the faith.<sup>48</sup> The householder's duties were written into the 1523 constitution of Leisnig.<sup>49</sup> Although the pro-Lutheran reformers viewed Leisnig as success, it became apparent that in most German homes, householders were not upholding their educational responsibilities. In 1524, Luther wrote, "*To the Councillors of all the Cities in Germany*" a tract where, according to Strauss, he had abandoned the concept of the home being the primary source of teaching of religion and citizenship.<sup>50</sup> Instead, Luther and the reformers advocated an education system controlled by bureaucracies was stronger than the voluntary efforts by parents and communities.<sup>51</sup> According to Strauss, "education was to take place in a setting of fixed institutions governed by bureaucracies whose competence pervaded entire domains from capitals to hamlets."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Lull, 317.

<sup>49</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 4.

<sup>50</sup>Strauss, "Past and Present 67 [1975]", 35.

<sup>51</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 3.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

## After the Uprisings

The Peasants War (1525) and other uprisings in mid 1520s caused Luther to change his mind about internal and spiritual transformation of people's hearts as being a precursor to being taught about the faith.<sup>53</sup> Luther's action revealed a new line of thinking, that true evangelical renewal in individual and society could come only if imposed by temporal authority so that "the gospel may be impressed on them for their betterment."<sup>54</sup> And so began the practice of reformers who worked closely with government officials to draft comprehensive ecclesiastical constitutions (*Kirchenordnungen*) or church orders, which often contained school ordinances (*Schulordnungen*) and catechisms.<sup>55</sup> Luther's Small Catechism became an important part of the process of creating these ordinances and constitutions. Melancthon also supported Luther's premise that the schools should be run by the government rather than the household or church leaders, for the government was perceived as the preservers of the peace and the order of society.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 4-6.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 6.

## Tensions between Catholics and Protestants

In the aftermath of the Peasant Uprising (1525) the tension between Protestants and Catholics only increased. This conflict between Catholic and Protestant civic leaders became a constant, ongoing event in the background of the narrative of the effects of the use of catechisms that used how Luther's Small Catechism as a template.

The Catholic princes were quicker to blame the new Protestant movement for the peasant unrest.<sup>57</sup> Cameron said the pro-Lutheran princes and civic authorities sought ways to direct the energy of unrest toward a non-clerical coup against the papacy. For the people of Germany were not the only ones who wanted reform. Cameron said the pro-Lutheran leaders did this by deflecting any anti-authoritarian sentiment from themselves and onto the papacy.<sup>58</sup> However, Catholics Duke George of Ducal Saxony and Archbishop Albert of Mainz organized to resist the rising tide of Lutheranism. Pro-Lutherans Elector John of Electoral Saxony and Philip of Hesse and other pro-Lutheran princes and leaders of free imperial cities also formed an alliance. Estep described the tensions between emerging Protestants and Catholics as as alarming, menacing and an atmosphere of suspicion.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>William Roscoe Estep, *Renaissance and Reformation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 147.

<sup>58</sup>Cameron, 233-234.

<sup>59</sup>Estep, 147.

According to Gritsch, the existence of these two movements created a tense situation that prompted the Diet of Speyer in 1526.

During the Diet of Speyer, 1526 was called by Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, the leaders decided that until the next General Council, each municipality's authority should be ready to answer to God and to the Emperor, or *cujus regio, ejus religio*.<sup>60</sup> Estep said the Pro-Lutheran princes interpreted this ruling as giving them legal sanction to function as 'acting bishops' in regard to church matters. This gave them the power to enact the church orders that they would write with the reformers. Both Luther and Melanchthon saw the ruling from the Diet of Speyer as an opportunity. For Luther's movement lost ground as a result of the peasant uprising and Melanchthon's scholarship also fell behind during this period.<sup>61</sup> Regardless of the theological and political differences, the civic authorities, princes and the reformers all had one common interest; the goal of educational reform. For the reformers, the goal was about religious instruction and for the political authorities, their concern was replacing the educational infrastructure that was collapsing as the Catholic church and the papacy was losing power within Germany. So the political leaders and the reformers worked together to devise a plan to assess the educational needs of the Saxon countryside.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>61</sup>Gritsch, 39.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

The Edict of Speyer also led many other closeted Protestants to surface, including a significant number in North Germany. Gritsch said this ruling was interpreted as a fusion of religion and territorial politics.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **NUREMBERG**

#### **Saxony (1528)**

The reformers had now broken the medieval Catholic church's monopoly on being the sole dispensers of grace. However, this collapse left a vacuum, for although Luther's theology says that all are able to receive grace, someone had to administer the institutions of education and the church, and most importantly, to teach the foundations of the faith. And for civic authorities, they also needed a means of filling in the gap for church related civic duties such as administration of marriages and funerals and education.

So, now that grace had returned to being a theological issue, the reformers formed an alliance with the civic authorities to address their mutual concerns. In 1528, Luther and Melancthon conducted a church visitation in Saxony. Using the 1523 visitation of Leising as an example, the civic authorities and the reformers planned to survey the entire country in terms of church, education and civic issues.

Shaken by the sheer enormousness of the job of reeducation they were taking on, the reformers came to realize, still with regrets but no longer with any doubts, that they would be able to accomplish their objectives only by employing the legal authority and power of compulsion wielded by the state.<sup>1</sup>

Luther and Melancthon realized that they could work with the civic authorities to achieve their catechetical goals of equipping householders and clergy to teach the faith. Melancthon composed a guidebook for church visitations and educational surveys, based on his analysis of the educational needs of the Saxon countryside, which made suggestions for education reform. The guidebook, *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Priests in Electoral Saxony*, was published in Nuremberg in 1528.<sup>2</sup> This guidebook included articles on the appropriate teachings of the gospel, Christ's atonement for sin, free will, Christian freedom and directions on rituals and moral behavior.<sup>3</sup> The guidebook was used for the 1528 church visitations in other cities, including in Nuremberg.

According to Gritsch, the plan involved four visitors who toured the region looking at the economic situation and parish life. In addition to a review of the competency of pastors, each team also investigated eighteen topics: doctrine (with a focus on differences between Catholic and Lutheran), decalogue, prayer life, morality (tribulation), baptism, the Lord's Supper, penance, private confession, satisfaction for sin, human order in the

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<sup>1</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 251.

<sup>2</sup>Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience, and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 102.

<sup>3</sup>Cameron, 253.

church, marriage, free will, Christian freedom, the Turks (Christian foreign policy) worship, the ban (refusal to give communion to unworthy communicants), the office of bishop (superintendent) and schools.<sup>4</sup> Cubberly lists Melanchthon's Saxony plan as the beginning of the German state school system.<sup>5</sup>

The Saxon plan of recommended changes to the educational system included three classes for each school.<sup>6</sup> The first class involved beginners' lessons in reading, writing and Latin grammar in the vernacular (German) and in Latin, the Creed, the Lord's prayer, the prayers and hymns of the church. The second class involved language instruction and Latin grammar, readings by Latin authors and continued religious instruction. The third class would be advanced lessons in reading Latin, rhetoric and dialectic.<sup>7</sup> Cubberly said Melanchthon's preferences were shaped by his being a humanist scholar.<sup>8</sup>

These were essentially humanistic schools with but a little preparatory work in the vernacular, and their purpose was to prepare those likely to become the future leaders of the State for entrance to the universities.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Gritsch, 39-40.

<sup>5</sup>Cubberley, 201-203. Cubberly said Melanchthon's influenced the ordinances of and organized primarily Latin secondary school for communities in central and southern Germany, including Luther's home town Eisleben (1525), Nuremberg (1526) Hezeberg (1538), Cologne (1543) and Wittenberg (1545) Saxony (1528), Mecklenberg (1552) and Palatinate (1556).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 201.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 202.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

Manschreck said the Saxony school plan, which was adopted in 1528, was the first public school system since the Roman Empire.<sup>10</sup> Manschreck, who said that by the time of Melanchthon's death in 1560, almost every German city had teachers who had been trained by Melanchthon. As a humanist scholar and an adherent to the faith, education for Melanchthon was "the silver bowl carrying the golden fruit of the gospel."<sup>11</sup>

### Melanchthon

Philip Melanchthon, born Philip Schwartzerd, as born in the small village of Bretten, to a pious family in a village where superstitious beliefs were common.<sup>12</sup>

Melanchthon's great uncle, the famous 16th century German humanist Johann Reuchlin, gave him "Melanchthon" as a name when he was a boy (Melanchthon means "black earth" in Greek, a translation of his German name, Schwarzerd).<sup>13</sup> Melanchthon's education was directed by his grandparents and his great uncle Reuchlin. He was well schooled. Cameron said Melanchthon was classically trained almost from infancy.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Manschreck, 132.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 27-28.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>14</sup>Cameron, 179.

Eventually he was enrolled in a Latin school in Pforzheim near Stuttgart.<sup>15</sup> Melanchthon also studied at Heidelberg (1509-12) and Tübingen (1512-18), and began teaching classics in 1514 at age 17.<sup>16</sup>

Manschreck said Melanchthon's early experience in education was one of mediocre teachers, many of whom had little university training, and knew little of the Ten Commandments, the writings of the Hebrew prophets or the New Testament, even though they had theological training.<sup>17</sup> In Melanchthon's childhood, there were laws on the books of many municipalities ordering teachers to be "God fearing, respectful, upright men."<sup>18</sup> Despite these laws, according to Manschreck, the teachers were perceived as being immoral and many of them supplemented their teaching income by selling alcohol on campus.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the poor teaching staff, Melanchthon continued to learn from one of the better teachers, who tutored him in Greek as well as teach him Latin in classes.<sup>20</sup> As Melanchthon grew to be a great student, his great uncle awarded him the Greek name

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<sup>15</sup>Manschreck, 31-32. Reuchlin was in Stuttgart at the same time as president of the Swabian Court of the Confederates.

<sup>16</sup>Cameron, 179.

<sup>17</sup>Manschreck, 32.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

change as a reward.<sup>21</sup> Melanchthon's education continued at Tübingen where he continued meeting with his great uncle Reuchlin.

After earning his degree, he continued teaching at Tübingen, and gained academic fame for his lectures and teachings. However, his academic success, combined with a very public controversy between Reuchlin and the Dominicans, Melanchthon decided to leave Tübingen in 1518. Reuchlin was asked by the Elector Frederick of Saxony to recommend two new language professors for the growing University of Wittenberg. Reuchlin recommended his nephew Melanchthon as the chair of Greek.<sup>22</sup>

At Wittenberg, Melanchthon became a devotee of Luther. He he continued his studies, and his these for his degree in Divinity was heavily influenced by Luther's teachings. Melanchthon created a commentary from Luther's sermons and by the time he wrote *Loci Communes* in 1521, other scholars were saying that Melanchthon better systematized Luther's theology than Luther himself.<sup>23</sup> Melanchthon's alliance with Luther cost him dearly. He distanced himself from his great uncle Reuchlin<sup>24</sup> and from Erasmus, who had lauded him as a young scholar who would be one of the next great humanists.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>23</sup>Cameron, 180.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Manschreck, 40.

Melanchthon supported Luther during a time when no others would, including during the time when his books were burned at the university and after Luther was demonized by the Edict of Worms (1521). He maintained his support during the chaos and the uprisings in the mid 1520s. Melanchthon was left rattled and concerned with what Manschreck said was an intentional practice on the part of some of the "swarmers" to withhold facts or details within the reformed movement.<sup>26</sup> This kind of "obscurantism" was what the reformers had accused the medieval Catholic church of practicing especially in relation to the gospel. Melanchthon believed that the best way to prepare clergy was to prepare them in language study. "Without Latin, Greek and Hebrew, without a study of the source materials, how could one expect to progress in knowledge? It would be like trying to fly without feathers."<sup>27</sup>

Strauss said the church visits had also convinced Luther of one of his fears, that even the clergy did not know much of the material that was being presented in the catechisms. Strauss said that the Larger and Small Catechisms were written primarily in reaction of bewildered pastors who were interviewed as part of the 1528 church visits. These pastors, who barely knew the information in the catechism were now expected to be responsible for the religious knowledge of their parishioners.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 95.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 159.

In his catechism, Luther advocated the practice of regular Bible reading, prayers, and worship, all which had been part of the monastic life. An order for prayers were also included in the catechism. Luther had also composed a list of hymns that would accompany each part of his Catechism.<sup>29</sup> Some of these hymns were included in Luther's hymnal under the section titles "*Katechismuslieder*" or "*Der Catechismusgesangsweise*"<sup>30</sup> Some printings of the Small Catechism would include the catechism hymns. The catechisms, the hymns, the German Mass (a revised liturgy replacing the Catholic Mass) and Luther's Prayer book were all designed as tools for "public instruction, corporate worship and the basis of private pedagogy and personal devotion."<sup>31</sup> Brown, in his book about the influence of Lutheran hymns to the spread of the Reformation, said that the hymns served as a link between public religion of the church and the private religion of the home.<sup>32</sup> In many ways, Luther has recast the home as the new monastery and the catechisms, along with Luther's the other tools of education and worship, were to become tools to this end.

Gritsch said of Luther's plan of education,

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<sup>29</sup>Christopher Boyd Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 11.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 105.

Worship and education were to Luther the twin pillars of Christian life. That is why he urged everyone, especially pastors, to use the liturgy of the word and sacrament, together with the catechism, as the bridge from false security and vanity to proper conflict with the world's evil.<sup>33</sup>

Strauss said that Luther had a lot of confidence in the catechism as a tool from spreading Reformation thought, or, in Luther's words, in reintroducing the gospel outside of the hierarchy of the church. Luther said,

By the grace of God I have bought about such a change that nowadays a girl or boy of fifteen knows more about Christian doctrine than all the theologians of the great universities used to know in the old days. In short, I have established the right order for all estates in society and have brought them all to a good conscience so that each will know how to live and serve God in his appointed role. And to those who have accepted it, my reformation has brought not a little benefit, peace and virtue.<sup>34</sup>

### State of the Reformation

By 1528, more than 10 years after the 95 Theses incident, Luther's movement was showing signs of slowing down, said G. Strauss in his article, *Success and Failure in the German Reformation*<sup>35</sup> Gritsch also said that despite the release of his Catechism in 1529,

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<sup>33</sup>Gritsch, 40.

<sup>34</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 156.

<sup>35</sup>Strauss, "Past and Present 67 [1975]", 30.

some historians suggest that by 1530, Luther had not found a creative model for "renewed Christian life" in Saxon.<sup>36</sup>

Strauss believed that Luther's movement had reached its height by 1530. Reformers did not see their theology or their way of life adopted widely in Germany, except by a few.<sup>37</sup> Strauss said that by 1547, the year after Luther's death, the reformers realized that Reformation theology had not been adopted by most of German society. Thus, catechism had become the primary means for establishing "the right order and a good conscience" to all German people, regardless of their station in life.<sup>38</sup> Dixon said, citing Aurifaber, "Thirty years later its fortunes had begun to decline. Politicians were taking over, the jurist and courtiers who now control our churches and pulpits."

However, Spitz said in a journal article that Luther's educational reforms and church visitation movement, may have actually been evidence that the reformation was not faltering, but actually doing well.<sup>39</sup> Spitz presented new evidence that challenges the prevailing notion that Lutheranism had stagnated in the late 16th century, and faltered following the Peasants Revolt of 1525. His new evidence focused on the evangelization of

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<sup>36</sup>Gritsch, 40.

<sup>37</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 6. Strauss, citing Aurifaber, p. 50, names 1530 as the height of Luther's movement in German..

<sup>38</sup>Strauss, "Past and Present 67 [1975]", 33.

<sup>39</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, "The Formula of Concord Then and Now", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 8 December (1977):4 (URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539390>), 9.

the countryside after 1530. Any expansion of reformed thought into the countryside, was probably related to the adoption of ordinances that included religious education were probably endorsed by civic and princely authorities.

### **The 1528 German Churches Visitations**

Regardless of the state of Luther's reformation, the Catholic church infrastructure was collapsing in parts of Germany, leaving civic authorities the responsibilities like education, the administration of regulations for marriages and wills as well as guidelines for public morality.<sup>40</sup> Civic authorities worked with reformers to evaluate the state of education in most of the German cities' churches and schools, based on the Saxony church visitations. From these surveys, church orders or ordinances were created to detailed guidelines for things that had been managed by priests, bishops, monastic orders, pastors, poverty relief organizations and schools.

Leising had one of the earliest ordinance (1523) Melanchthon helped with the ordinance of Agricola, Brenz and Bucer with Aepinus and Beugenhagen with Hamberg and Lubeck.<sup>41</sup> In Nuremberg, the preacher Osiander, helped design the 1533 ordinance for this city. Most ordinances, especially in the case of Nuremberg, a catechism was designed and issued along with the ordinance. These catechisms were presented in a question and

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<sup>40</sup>Cameron, 257.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

answer format and designed to teach the very young the reformation ideas and theology.<sup>42</sup>

Osiander wrote the catechism for Nuremberg based on Luther's Small Catechism.

### Education Reforms

Before the church visits of Saxony in 1528, Melancthon's participation in education reforms began in 1524 by setting up the foundation for the education reforms for the school at Nuremberg.<sup>43</sup>

Nuremberg is believed to be the first imperial city to adopt Protestantism, an adoption process which involved unseating the Catholic church authority and supporting the authority of the civic leaders and the reformed preachers and pastors. This adoption process also included the following new city ordinances which not only govern the civic realities, but also the ecclesiastical concerns such as teaching and preaching the faith. Rittgers said that from its birth, the city of Nuremberg had always lived in the tension between temporal and ecclesiastical authorities. Nuremberg, which means in German Rocky (nuorin) Stronghold (burg) was built in the 11th century by Henry III with the goal

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 253.

<sup>43</sup>Manschreck, 131.

of protecting Franconia from Bohemia and to hold back the forces of the ecclesiastical princes.<sup>44</sup>

In October 1524, the officials in Nuremberg invited Melanchton to come help them set up a school that he would become rector and professor of rhetoric. Melanchton refused and suggested three others who he thought would be more appropriate for the job.

However, the officials in Nurnberg waited a year and eventually Melanchthon came to Nuremberg and laid down the initial plans for a school in the spring of 1526.<sup>45</sup>

Melanchthon stayed for a month in 1524, a time he described as being greeted warmly and with much hospitality.<sup>46</sup> It was during this month that Melanchthon met the preacher Andreas Osiander of St. Lorenz Church. Osiander was to play a key role in the 1528 church survey of the city of Nuremberg. In addition to his work on the Nuremberg church survey, Osiander helped edit the final version of the Nuremberg city ordinance. Osiander also wrote the catechism that accompanied the Nuremberg city ordinance. Osiander's catechism is believed to have used Luther's Small Catechism as a template.

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<sup>44</sup>Rittgers, 9-10.

<sup>45</sup>Manschreck, 133.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 134. He also met Albrecht Dürer, who painted his picture and engraved it into copper.

## Nuremberg Church Visitation 1528-1529

Almost four years after Melanchthon visited Nuremberg to help set up a school, the Nuremberg city council and a civic leader of the neighboring Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, George the Margrave, came to an agreement about conducting a regional church visitation. Nuremberg and Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach had been former enemies in a land dispute, but they now were united over the common faith of their civic authorities. The leaders of these two cities saw the church visits and survey as an opportunity to develop mutual views on confession and other issues being disputed by the church.<sup>47</sup>

The regional church visitation took place in 1528 to 1529.

- Visitations of Brandenburg-Ansbach – August 15-Nov 13, 1528
- Examination of pastors of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach – Jan-July 1529
- Nuremberg towns and villages – Sept 3-Oct 22, 1528
- Nuremberg City – Spring 1529<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Rittgers, 102.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 103.

The visitation's goal was to look at deficiencies in education and the moral code, and to thoroughly examine the population and the clergy and lay leaders on how the officially established doctrine from the reformers was taking root.<sup>49</sup> The visitations were opposed by the Catholic bishops and the Archduke Ferdinand, for they probably saw the potential for the spread in Lutheranism from a combination of data from the survey and an alliance of civic authorities and reformation theologians. However, Luther claimed that the church visitations was reviving an apostolic tradition of bishops visiting churches to inspect, correct and if necessary, punish parishioners and clergy.<sup>50</sup> Rittgers said that the visitations were a chance for the reformation theologians to solidify the theology of the private confession, especially in relation to a practice, called the ban, where clergy can withhold the Eucharist from a communicant deemed unworthy following a pre-communion interview.<sup>51</sup> For question it was an abuse of the Catholic sacrament of confession and absolution in the form of the practice of indulgences that led to the movement that swept mid 16th century Germany.

In 1528, a year before Nuremburg's church visit, the civic authorities and reformed leaders issued a provisional ordinance. Osiander was part of the group that designed this provisional document, which became one of many documents that informed the final 1533

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<sup>49</sup>Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 251.

<sup>50</sup>Rittgers, 250.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 103.

Brandenburg, Ansbach-Kulmbach and Nuremberg ordinance, a document that would be civic law that would set guidelines for church and clergy activity. Most church orders were issued with an accompanying catechism.<sup>52</sup> Osiander, who went on to write the catechism for the Brandenburg–Nuremberg church order part of the group that met in June 14, 1528 in Schwabach to plan the Nuremberg visit. As part of their investigation materials, the examiners used the Ansbacher Forty Questions, which were written by George the Margrave’s theologians, which were questions for clergy and lay people. The answer guide, an explanation of key doctrinal issues, which would be used to measure the answers of the Ansbacher questions, was written by Osiander. Both of these documents were based on Melancthon’s Instructions for Visitors.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Nuremberg Ordinance(1533)**

The development of the Nuremberg ordinance was not without its conflicts. A conflict over a theological practice that had political implications tested the alliance between civic authorities and the reformers.

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

## The Impasse

The conflict nearly stalled the 1533 Nuremberg Ordinance project. When discussing the part of the ordinance dealing with confession, pro-reformation clergy were torn, they did not want to reinstitute a requirement for lay people to confess all their sins private to a priest. However, the pre-communion interview and confession was a means of safeguarding the sacrament and protecting people from divine retribution for dishonoring the sacrament.<sup>54</sup> Magistrates were against the ban for they felt it gave clergy too much authority over lay consciences.<sup>55</sup> Eventually, the civic authorities and the reformers broke through the impasse when the Nuremberg theologians agreed to withhold the ban from the ordinance. However, in the process of the compromise, the theologians created a new Protestant rite of confession.<sup>56</sup>

The impasse developed early when Christoph Scheurl, Nuremberg's leading jurist, blamed the conflict over the belief by the city's laity city's that everyone was a priest. Scheurl, who held to the old Catholic tradition, said that faith alone does not absolve and that priests are needed to grant absolution, ( the forgiveness of sins).<sup>57</sup> Scheurl resisted

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 124.

allowing clergy to practice the ban, for he wanted the magistrates to maintain control over the clerics and the church. Scheurl feared clerics who exercised their authority using the ban would eventually establish their own church apart from the civic authorities.<sup>58</sup>

The ban was part of the theology of the Keys, based on John 20:23, where Jesus gives Peter the authority to forgive and absolve sins. Luther supported the ban and the authority it gives clergy to withhold the sacrament. The primary way clergy exercised their authority with the ban was through pre-communion interview or examination. As a result of this interview, the clergy could withhold communion from a communicant who was deemed unworthy.

Rittgers said that the pro-reformed clergy were probably uncomfortable with some aspects of the ban, especially in its relation to the Catholic tradition of penance as a sacrament.<sup>59</sup> The Catholic tradition of penance involved a person who confessed their sin and was given absolution. The Protestant clergy were torn, they did not want to reinstitute a requirement for lay people to confess all their sins private to a priest to receive absolution. For the new Protestant theology placed the burden of forgiveness of sins on Christ. So when the Protestant clergy forgave sins, the Protestant clergy did so on behalf of Christ. The Catholic priest's theology viewed the authority of the keys as giving the priest the authority to forgive sins. Protestant clergy following the teaching of Luther had

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 125.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 3.

jettison five of the seven Catholic sacraments, including penance (the theology of sacraments will be discussed in chapter three). Protestants recognized only Baptism and the Eucharist as a sacrament.

Although confession and penance were no longer seen as sacraments, the Protestant clergy saw the pre-communion interview (which included confession and absolution) as a means of safe guarding the sacrament of the Eucharist and protecting people from divine retribution for dishonoring the sacrament.<sup>60</sup> Clergy were given an opportunity in the non-sacramental practice of pre-communion interviews the the opportunity to "bar the unworthy from the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Luther supported the ban. A version of the ban was already part of the provisional 1528 Brandenburg-Nuremberg Ordinance and Luther's Instructions for the Visitors. But Luther tried to reassure the magistrates that the ban would not impact the person's worldly dealings, as magistrates should not be concerned.<sup>61</sup> Some theologians argued that the ban, when properly used, could assist the magistrates in maintaining moral order.<sup>62</sup>

However, the magistrates were adamant about keeping the ban out of the ordinance and threatened to stop the process of developing the ordinance until the matter over the

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 129.

ban was resolved.<sup>63</sup> In attempt to resolve the issue, two reports were issued by theologians, one is believed to have been written by Osiander.<sup>64</sup> In one report, theologians said that the ban was established by Christ as a way of keeping the unworthy ones from entering the kingdom. Rittgers said Lazarus Spengler said in his introduction to one of the reports that the ban had been abused in the past (inferring the abuses were by the papacy), however, the ban should not be abolished, just the abuses.<sup>65</sup> The theologians tried to assure the magistrates that the ban would not interfere with their "temporal sword," even if the ban was leveled against a civic authority.<sup>66</sup>

### The Revision of the Ban

The magistrates were still not satisfied and it appeared as if the entire Nuremberg ordinance project would become derailed. To save the project, the conceded and the ban was removed from the draft that was sent to two theologians, Brenz and Osiander in Ansbach for review November 1531.<sup>67</sup> The theologians viewed this removal as an abuse

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 128.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

of Christian freedom, encouragement to reject the discipline of clergy and a validation of private absolution, which leaves no room for the "burdened conscience" to find relief.<sup>68</sup>

The Ansbach theologians, Brenz and Osiander, wanted to keep the ban, however, they too feared that the issue would derail the ordinance project.

In the background of this conflict was a pending imperial diet in Regensburg. In the preceding days before the diet, the magistrates were hoping for support from Charles V. Rittgers said that Charles agreed to put religious issues on the agenda, as a means of gaining needed support from the Protestant leaders for a possible confrontation with the Turks.<sup>69</sup> The magistrates and the theologians were drawn away from their conflict over the keys and back into discussions between Protestants and Catholics in light of the larger international situation. Another event was happening in the background, a visit from an ambassador from England's Henry VIII, Thomas Cranmer, who was visiting Germany on his way to the Vatican to meeting with papal officials to gain favor for Henry's annulment from Catherine of Aragon. Cranmer and Osiander did meet on this visit, and it is possible that this meeting took place during the conflict over the ban. Although the meeting was document, it was not clear whether or not Cranmer was aware of Osiander's role in the conflict over the ban. This conflict was a prelude to an event that historians say that Cranmer was aware of, the development of the Nuremberg catechism by Osiander and

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 130.

Brenz that was based on Luther's Small Catechism.

The background event to the conflict over the ban ended in a peaceful agreement between the Catholics and Protestants In July 1532 when both parties pledged their support of Charles against the Turks.<sup>70</sup> In the midst of these negotiations, the Nuremberg council agreed to support the Ansbach theologians' desire for the ban in the ordinance. A draft of the ordinance with the ban in place was sent to Luther and his colleagues for review. At the end of August 1532, Luther and his group of theologians supported the ordinance of the bans, which they believed was agreement with scripture. However, in terms of the ban, Luther emphasized that the ban was a form of ecclesiastical discipline that excluded open sinners who refused to change from the sacraments.<sup>71</sup> Luther said that theologically, he believed that the secular authorities should respect an ecclesiastical ban, however, in practice, the ban should have nothing anything to do with the excommunicant's temporal relations.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 130.

*Final Draft*

After all of the input from various and divergent perspectives, especially in relation to the ban, the draft of the Nuremberg ordinance appeared to be patched together and lack continuity. Luther suggested that the final version of the Nuremberg ordinance be reviewed and edited by one or two theologians. The magistrates appointed Osiander and Brenz who created a more uniformed text. In response to the wishes of the magistrates, or, as Rittgers said, because the magistrates would never approve an ordinance with a ban, Osiander and Brenz withheld the ban language from the ordinance. However, they did maintain the pre-communion interview, which included an examination of faith and conduct as well as the "de facto" right of clergy to exercise the ban. In other words, Osiander and Brenz hid the ban theology in the ordinance. Rittgers said that the ban existed in the ordinance, but not in name.<sup>73</sup> To further protect the ban's inclusion in the ordinance, Osiander and Brenz reworked the Catholic sacrament of penance and created a new Protestant rite that was not a sacrament. This new rite was added to the Lord's Supper section of the new city ordinance. The new rite included the pre-communion examination of faith and conduct and private confession. Rittgers said that the pre-communion examination and private confession became the new Lutheran rite of private confession.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

## The Reformation of the Keys

The great church ordinance for Nuremberg and Brandenburg-Ansbach was ratified in 1533. This ordinance was widely received and was imitated by many other cities, especially throughout northern German.<sup>75</sup> In their review of the order, the magistrates removed laying on of hands, because it seemed too much like the Catholic tradition. The order, which Rittgers called a new guide for worship and belief, was put into effect Jan 1533. About 1200 copies were made.

This document included doctrinal articles (*Lehrartikel*) to be used to examine clergy. This section was written by Osiander, who also wrote a catechism based on Luther's small catechism that was included as part of the release of the Nuremberg ordinance. The catechism, called *Kinderpredigten for Nuremberg* became a well respected catechism that was also widely imitated, copied and translated into other languages, including Latin.<sup>76</sup> Osiander's catechism may have become as significant a template as Luther's.

The 1533 Nuremberg ordinance, and consequentially, Osiander's catechism, is an interesting example of how civic law influenced theology, especially in relation to what Rittgers called the theology of the reformation of the keys. The concept of the Keys, according to Rittgers, is related to several scripture text where Jesus bestows on Peter in

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<sup>75</sup>Cameron, 254.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 253.

particular and his disciples in general the power and authority to forgive sins, what Jesus called the keys to the kingdom.<sup>77</sup>

This concept was central to Christianity from its beginning. The western world, prior to the modern era, was significantly shaped by the application of the concept of the Keys of the Kingdom and the church's authority to forgive and retain sins in the name of God to institutions, practices and events, Rittgers said.<sup>78</sup> However, in modern times, it has appeared to lost a great deal of its colloquial meaning. Rittgers says the lack of understanding about this concept has left us with an "improverished" understanding of the German Reformation. The theology of the keys are expressed through an assortment of theological beliefs and related religious rites, that include sin, baptism, confession, absolution and receiving the sacraments. It was generally accepted that everyone sinned and needed the keys. However, absolution was not considered a sacrament for the reforms believed that Christ's atoning death on the cross, not the absolution, is sufficient.<sup>79</sup>

Rittgers says that changes to the theology of the keys, especially during the German reformation, has shaped the beliefs of Christians about sin, guilt, forgiveness.<sup>80</sup> In his book, *The Reformation of the keys*, Rittgers charts the changes to the theology of the keys

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<sup>77</sup>Rittgers, 2. Reference Matthew 16:13-20, John 20:22-23.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 2.

during the reformation era. One of the key shifts in this theology came as a result of the development of the 1533 ordinance for the city of Nuremberg. Debates over how the theology of the Keys of the Kingdom between civic authorities and reformed theologians and clergy led at first heated conflict, and then, a compromise that led to the creation of a reformed version of the private confession.<sup>81</sup>

Rittgers also says in his book that most historians and theologians have discussed the Lutheran rite of private confession only in terms of historical theology, or as part of tracing the development of Protestant dogma.<sup>82</sup> Rittgers claims that scholars have rarely connected the development of the new private confession ritual and the changes to the theology of the keys to the Kingdom to the historical events of the 16th century. Rittgers' study provides a thorough review of the theology in relation to the historical events related to the shift in the theology of the keys to the Kingdom and the development of the Lutheran rite of private confession.

### The Keys in the Catechisms

In his use of Luther's Small Catechism, Osiander excluded Luther's section on the Keys and added his own, which further explained the use of this new rite. Rittgers said

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

that Osiander's lengthy discourse on the rite of private confession found in the order as an attempt to clarify the new rite's difference from the Catholic tradition of private confession, which included mandatory confession.<sup>83</sup> In the order's section on the Lord's Supper, Osiander and Brenz wrote that Christ instituted the keys, not for consolation but for giving sinners a way back to God. Osiander's theology of the keys put more emphasis on discipline and contrition. Rittgers said that in an earlier section, Osiander encouraged pastors to "persist in condemning the sins of their parishioners until the people both recognized their sins and feel them in their consciences and thus learn to fear God's wrath and earnestly seek to flee from it." In the ordinance, it says that when this happens, people are prepared to receive the gospel and better themselves.<sup>84</sup>

Rittgers said for Osiander, the aspect of the keys that involved absolution (or remittance of sins) is means of grace, but the rite of absolution is not what remits the sins (that was centered in Christ, not the action of a priest) As a result, the Protestants no longer saw penance and its related absolution as a sacrament. The new rite also unhinged absolution from its connection with the the pre-communion interview and the examination of faith and conduct. Under the new rite, absolution could be offered any time a communicant asks a pastor to proclaim forgiveness as part of their pastoral authority. And since all sinned, according to 16th century theology, everyone would need the keys,

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 134.

therefore, communicants should be able to freely confess their sins at any time. Although absolution was not a sacrament, Osiander and Brenz said that the keys were the only way to be restored to faith. Osiander and Brenz said that people became Christians through baptism, nourished through the Lord's Supper and after falling into sin, returned to the faith through absolution.<sup>85</sup>

Rittgers said that despite Osiander's language of mercy around absolution, his language in the ordinance included words of discipline and contrition.<sup>86</sup> In the repentance sections of the order, pastors were encouraged to "persist in condemning the sins of their parishioners 'until the people both recognized their sins and feel them in their consciences' and thus learn to 'fear God's wrath and earnestly seek to flee from it.'"<sup>87</sup> Osiander's harsh language in the order and catechism is consistent with his reputation for a being a difficult person.

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

## The Intersection of Two Reformations

### Osiander

Andreas Osiander was born 1498 near Nuremberg. He studied Hebrew at the University of Ingolstadt, was ordained to the priesthood in 1520 and taught Hebrew at a Augustinian monastery. He was only 22 years old. Two years later, he revised the Latin Vulgate Bible and was called to be the pastor of the Church of Saint Lorenz in Nuremberg.<sup>88</sup>

As part of their efforts to gain control over theological and secular matters, the civic authorities began granting preaching posts to pro-Reformation ministers. In 1520, Andreas Osiander was appointed as the new preacher of St. Lorenz Church where he became the city's most prominent preacher and evangelical leader in Nuremberg. Rittgers said this put Osiander at the center of all important decisions in Nuremberg religious life.<sup>89</sup>

Steinmetz describes Osiander as "a gifted but difficult man who had a rare talent for making real enemies out of potential friends."<sup>90</sup> His giftedness won him an opportunity to

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<sup>88</sup>David Curtis Steinmetz, "Andreas Osiander 1498-1552", in: *Reformers in the wings: from Geiler von Kaysersberg to Theodore Beza*, 2nd edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 64-65.

<sup>89</sup>Rittgers, 64.

<sup>90</sup>Steinmetz, 64.

be part of Luther's delegation to the colloquy at Worms. Even then, he was making problems among his allies. Steinmetz said this of Osiander's participation in the colloquy at Worms: "Calvin was offended by his conversation at the dinner table; his Lutheran colleagues by his open and indiscreet criticism of Melanchthon. Though he had planned to take part in the Colloquy of Regensburg after Worms and Hagenau, he was replaced as a delegate and sent indecorously back to Nuremberg by colleagues who had plainly had enough. The incident in Worms was a miniature of his whole career. Wherever Osiander worked, he was sure to leave a legacy of bad feelings behind him."<sup>91</sup>

While the pastor of Saint Lorenz, Osiander began to stir up trouble. Now, a pro-Luther, Osiander worked with other pro-Lutherans such as the prior of the Augustinian monastery and other clergy to encourage the people of the city to demand both the chalice and the bread at communion. By 1523, more than 3,000 people took the chalice and the bread. In a bold act, Osiander offered the chalice to Queen Isabella of Denmark, the sister of Emperor Charles V.<sup>92</sup> Steinmetz said that Osiander married in 1525 (a way of publically denouncing celibacy for clergy). Osiander continued his involvement in the reformation, by engaging in essays attacking different anti-reformers, as well as helping with pro-reformation liturgical and doctrinal reforms.<sup>93</sup> As previous said,

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

Osiander was also part of the group that met in Schwabach to plan the Nuremberg visit. Steinmetz said these actions and his participation in the church visitation project had earned Osiander a place at the table with the other reformers, so he attended the colloquy at Marburg in 1529 where he held a variation of Luther's view on the Eucharist, or at least he opposed the view held by Zwingli and Johannes Oecolampadius.<sup>94</sup> However, by 1530, Osiander was criticizing his allies, including Luther and Melancthon. Some of the reformers began distancing themselves from Osiander.

Between 1530 and 1533, Osiander was focused on the task related to the Nuremberg church visitations and the related development of the Nuremberg ordinance and its companion document, the *Kinderpredigten*, based on Luther's Small Catechism. During this period, Osiander continued being seen as a respected reformer and theologian. While Osiander had begun to cause his allies to step away, he did manage to make one friend during this period, the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer, who was in Germany on a diplomatic mission on behalf of England's King Henry VIII.<sup>95</sup> Cranmer and Osiander met when Cranmer was in Germany on a diplomatic mission in 1532 to gain support among the continental reformers for Henry VIII's divorce of Catherine of Aragon. In July 1532, Cranmer met Johann Friedrich of Saxony and other civic leaders. Among the reformers,

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 65-66.

<sup>95</sup>Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "Andreas Osiander's Probable Influence on Thomas Cranmer's Eucharistic Theology", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 14 Winter (1983):4 (URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2540575>), 411.

Cranmer met and was housed with Andreas Osiander.<sup>96</sup> Right before Cranmer's arrival, Osiander, with Sleupner, had probably been in the process of writing *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig* (1533), which had become known as the Nuremberger Catechismus. This catechism was based on the sermons of two ministers. The author believes that Cranmer became acquainted with the Nuremberg Catechism during his visit with Osiander

After Cranmer returned to England, he and Osiander continued their correspondence.<sup>97</sup> However, by the end of the 1530s, Osiander's behavior became more critical and despite his achievements, he began to lose allies from among the reformers. Although the events of Osiander's life after 1533 appear to have little to do with the catechism and the ordinance, they describe something about his character. In 1537 Osiander openly criticized Luther in a sermon and during the colloquies of Hagenau and Worms. His allies grew tired of him and he was sent home.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Willem Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata: Studies on the Reformation*, 7th edition. (Leiden, Boston: Leiden [u.a.] Brill, 1972), 5. Different historians give different dates for the meeting between Cranmer and Osiander. Nijenhuis says 1532.

<sup>97</sup>Wilson-Kastner, 411.

<sup>98</sup>Steinmetz, 66.

## Cranmer

While Osiander had begun to cause his allies to step away, he did manage to make one friend during the period he wrote the 1533 catechism for Nuremberg. Before he was consecrated as Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer (1489 - 1556) served as King Henry VIII's ambassador to Germany and the Vatican (1530-1531).

It was during his time as ambassador, Cranmer met Osiander, established the kind of relationship where they discussed theology. It is believed that they maintained a correspondence for many years. And about 15 years after Osiander issued the Nuremberg catechism, Cranmer issued a catechism he claimed he had gotten from Germany. However, Cranmer says that his catechism was a translation of a Latin catechism by Justus Jonas. Jonas' catechism was a translation of Osiander's catechism.

Cranmer was born to what would be considered a middle class family,<sup>99</sup> schooled as a gentleman<sup>100</sup> and eventually attended Jesus College at Cambridge.<sup>101</sup> While there, he led a rather non-descript life as a student. He took longer than most students to finish his

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<sup>99</sup>Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer, A Life*, (New Haven, CT, London: Yale University Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 16.

degrees.<sup>102</sup> He married, ending his chances in a career as clergy, however, after one year, his wife died, and he was restored to his fellowship and his position as clergy.<sup>103</sup>

A chance meeting while traveling to avoid the plague changed the direction of Cranmers life and led to his trip to Germany and his appointment as archbishop.<sup>104</sup> Cranmer had spoke with Edward Foxe and Stephen Gardiner, who worked for Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Archbishop of York. In a conversation about Henrys divorce dilemma, Cranmers suggested that Henry solicit advice from scholars in continental universities, rather than going before papal authorities. The advice was well received by Henry and Cranmer entered into the service of the King.<sup>105</sup> Cranmer would also help craft documents, theology and diplomatic connections that would lead to Henrys separation from the papacy and establishment of his supremacy as head of the Church of England.

Cranmer served as Henry's ambassador to the court of Charles V (1500-1558) from 1530-1531. On this trip, Cranmer served as chaplain to the Boleyn family, and as ambassador from Henry VIII. Cranmer, who was working on theological defenses for Henry's actions in regard to Catherine, was charged with presenting Henry's case to the pope. During this diplomatic mission, Cranmer also spent months in Nuremberg, a city

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 45.

that had converted to Protestant Reform. He may have found this city interesting, since Cranmer, while a lecturer at Cambridge, began to personally review some of the reformation teachings and Pollard said that he may have been privately praying for the end of papal power in England. Although at Cambridge, Cranmer avoided any open expression of his views, although there were people at Cambridge who had been discussing the writings of Martin Luther at a nearby White Horse Tavern as early as 1521.<sup>106</sup>

So when Cranmer went to Germany, he was aware of some of the issues related to the reformation. Cranmer and Osiander met when while he was in Nuremberg.<sup>107</sup> While in Nuremberg, Cranmer also met Osiander's niece Margaret and they were married, although she ended up living in secret for many years, some of that time in Germany.<sup>108</sup> After Cranmer returned to England, it appears that he and Osiander continued their correspondence.<sup>109</sup> By the time Cranmer left Germany, Osiander came to admire Cranmer so much that he dedicated one of his writings to him. Although there is only one undisputed correspondence between Cranmer and Osiander, it appears that Cranmer also admired and respected Osiander. Cranmer also married Osiander's niece Margaret,

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<sup>106</sup>Albert Frederick Pollard, *Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformation 1489-1556*, (New York, London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), 21.

<sup>107</sup>Thomas Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2001), viii.

<sup>108</sup>Wilson-Kastner, 411.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

although she lived apart from Cranmer in seclusion for most of their marriage. Historians have pondered and questioned for years the nature of the connection between Osiander and Cranmer. Since Osiander died in 1552, it is possible that Cranmer and Osiander had been in touch at the time Cranmer was working on the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books, which contained his 1548 translation of a Latin translation of Osiander's catechism translated by Justus Jonas.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### HOC EST CORPUS MEUM

#### Protestant Sacramental Theology

All of the catechisms that used Luther's Small Catechism<sup>1</sup> as a template present Baptism and the Eucharist as sacraments. Each catechist, Cranmer, Osiander and Jonas, changed the catechism to fit the needs of their various constituencies. Most of the changes involved variations to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist. This section will examine some of the variations of the doctrine of the Eucharist and how these variations were expressed in the various catechisms.

In his treatise, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*,<sup>2</sup> Luther railed against the Catholic sacramental theology which he described as an elaborate and highly complicated

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<sup>1</sup>Luther, 1-12.

<sup>2</sup>Lull, 210.

system of sacraments based on scholastic theology.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, Luther's Small Catechism provides a simple explanation of the theology of the Sacrament of the Altar, otherwise known as the Eucharist. Luther's catechism says of the Eucharist:

**Question:** What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

**Answer:** It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

**Question:** What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

**Answer:** The words 'given for you' and 'shed for you for the forgiveness of sins' show us that forgiveness of sin, life, and the salvation are given to us in the sacrament through these words, because where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

**Question:** How can bodily eating and drinking do such a great thing?

**Answer:** Eating and drinking certainly do not do it, but rather the words that are recorded: 'given for you' and 'shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.' These words, when accompanied by the physical eating and drinking, are the essential thing in the sacrament and whoever believes these very words has what they declare and state, namely, 'forgiveness of sins.'"<sup>4</sup>

In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*,<sup>5</sup> Luther endorsed Baptism and the Eucharist as the only two scripturally endorsed and therefore, legitimate of the seven sacraments offered in Catholic Sacramental Theology.<sup>6</sup> Jesus mandated both of these sacraments, Luther argued. And both of these sacraments are 'promises' of salvation with

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<sup>3</sup>McGrath, 175.

<sup>4</sup>Lull, 317.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 210.

<sup>6</sup>Gritsch, 25.

‘signs’ attached.<sup>7</sup> Luther defined sacraments as “promises with signs attached.”<sup>8</sup> Using that definition, Baptism and the Eucharist are external signs of God’s promises.

Melanchthon, who most likely influenced Luther’s catechism, defined sacraments in his treatise, *Propositions on the Mass* (1521) as God’s divine accommodation for human weakness.<sup>9</sup> Quoting from Melanchthon’s *Propositions on the Mass*, (1521) McGrath wrote “signs are the means by which we may be both reminded and reassured of the word of faith.”<sup>10</sup>

A third Catholic sacrament, penance, was not considered a sacrament by Protestants, but still practiced in relation to the Eucharist and the new Lutheran rite of confession and absolution. Luther and Melanchthon’s efforts to redefine the core theology of the church – forgiveness of sins and the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism, were intentional attempts to sever Germans from the medieval Catholic Church who had once held the monopoly.<sup>11</sup> However, it is one thing for theologians to develop the theology, it is another for it to be accepted and practiced by the laity and clergy. Luther and Melanchthon had managed to make their theology part of civic law. The next step was to

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>McGrath, 175.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 169.

create catechisms that would teach the faith to all.

### The Eucharist in Luther and Osiander's Catechism

Luther taught that Catholic theology of transubstantiation was an absurd attempt to rationalize a mystery.<sup>12</sup> The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation is rooted in the Aristotelian dichotomy of 'substance' and 'accident.' The outward appearance of the bread is an accident (color and shape) and remains unchanged at the point of consecration while the substance (changes bread and wine to the body and blood of Christ.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to Catholic doctrine, Luther's catechism reflects a theology that proclaimed that Christ's body and blood is in the Eucharist, not physically or metaphorically, but as a mystery. McGrath said that Luther did not object to Christ being present in the Eucharist but with how Christ's presence was explained. Catholic theology tried to explain a mystery. However, Luther accepted Christ's presence on the basis that there was no other way to interpret Matthew 26:26: *hoc est corpus meum*, 'this is my body.' as meaning Christ's presence.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 178.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

According to an interpretation by Wilson-Kastner, Osiander said this presence of Christ was real and salvific, but not flesh. “To deny that the humanity of Christ who was born to redeem human beings from sin is not present in the Eucharist is a blasphemy to Christian ears.” Osiander wrote in his *Disputation on Justification* (1550) that the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist had the “efficacious” presence of Christ.<sup>15</sup> Osiander stressed what Wilson-Kastner says is an Augustinian theme of the eating of Christ as being “spiritual and by faith and not physical.”<sup>16</sup>

### **Cranmer’s Fragmented Eucharist Theology**

Cranmer’s theology, on the other hand, went from one end of the spectrum to the other, from Catholic transubstantiation to a Swiss Reformed Eucharist which sees the sacrament as a memorial with bread and wine as signifiers. Nijenhuis defines Cranmer’s theology as going through three phases in respect to this theology of the Eucharist: Catholic, Lutheran and Swiss Reformed<sup>17</sup> Wilson-Kastner said that in 1537 Cranmer started out with a orthodox medieval Roman Catholic theology of transubstantiation with a belief in the corporeal presence of Christ. Cranmer’s Lutheran phase was brief where he believed in the real, but mysterious presence in the bread and the wine. For a while,

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<sup>15</sup>Wilson-Kastner, 419-420.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 420.

<sup>17</sup>Nijenhuis, 1.

Cranmer waffled between Lutheran and Swiss Reform perspectives before settling for a view of the Eucharist influenced by Martin Bucer the reformer from Strasbourg, who believed Christ was really present by faith and that the recipient feeds on Christ by faith.<sup>18</sup> So, in other words, if there is not faith or belief, then for that recipient, Christ is not present.

This is different from Luther, who believed that Christ was present regardless of the believe of the recipient.<sup>19</sup> Between his Lutheran and Swiss Reformed phase, Cranmer was accused of being too Lutheran for the theology of his 1548 catechism that was included in the 1549 prayer book. Cranmer's response to these accusations related to the 1549 prayerbook seem to be the expression of yet another phase of Cranmer's Eucharist Theology where he claims at this point that he had once been in error in his former believe about transubstantiation. However, in his defense, he seemed to say that the Eucharist is 'a memory and representation of that very true sacrifice and immolation which before was made upon the cross.'<sup>20</sup>

Cranmer was expressing a theological perspective that was taught by Bucer, who spent time in England. Like Bucer, Jonas and Osiander's text both expressed the actual belief in that what is being received as being Christ's body and blood was important.

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<sup>18</sup>Constantin Hopf, *Martin Bucer and the English Reformation*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946), 44.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>20</sup>Nijenhuis, 19.

However, Bucer and Cranmer make a distinction that the bread and the wine are received as the body and blood of Christ if a belief on the part of the recipient is present at the time of the sacrament. In this text from Cranmer's catechism, 'receiving' is emphasized more than in Jonas's text. Cranmer's text stated that "we believe we receive" the body and blood, a reflection of Bucer's theology on the Eucharist. This is in contrast to Luther who believed that the bread and wine have the real presence of Christ, regardless of the belief of the recipient. Luther's Small Catechism says, "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink."<sup>21</sup>

Cranmer's theology probably ended up being more like the Swiss Reformers, however, he expressed many different views while being interrogated by Queen Mary, the Catholic daughter of King Henry VIII by Catherine of Aragon. Cranmer waffled on his answers, probably because he was under threat of being executed. But before threat of death and while he had the favor of King Henry and Edward, it is believed that Cranmer quietly left his Lutheran phase and moved into his Swiss Reformed phase between 1546–1548 while he translated Jonas' catechism for placement in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer. However, Cranmer met Osiander and learned about Nuremberg church visitations and the various catechetical projects while he was in his Lutheran phase.

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<sup>21</sup>Lull, 327.

### Cranmer's Lutheran Phase

Duffield said that Cranmer began to rethink his view on the sacraments before his visit to Nuremberg in 1532 where he met Osiander. Although he never wrote extensively on justification by faith, Cranmer realized that justification by faith alone redefined the sacraments. Sacraments were the means of grace, according to the magisterial reformation theologians. If grace is received by faith and if grace is the received reality of one's forgiveness, acceptance and adoption in Christ, and if faith is trusting in God's promises, then the sacraments confirm God's promises.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, Cranmer said, the gospel is about the sacraments, since the gospel holds the same promises and the same Christ as the sacraments. The audibly preached gospel calls for an active and accepting faith as a response.<sup>23</sup> Cranmer held onto this theology for most of his Lutheran stage. Duffield said this theology is reflected in the ninth of the 13 Articles from 1538.<sup>24</sup> However, in this same article, Cranmer clarifies that the recipients' faith must be present in order for the sacrament of the altar to confer grace.

For it is not true, as some say, that sacraments confer grace *ex opere operato* without a good movement of heart on the part of their user; for when persons

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<sup>22</sup>G. E. Duffield, editor, *The Works of Thomas Cranmer*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), xv.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

in their reason use the sacraments, the user's faith must be present also, to believe the promises, and receive the things promised, which are conveyed through the sacraments.<sup>25</sup>

Nijenhuis said this Lutheran phase ended in 1546. Nijenhuis said that the end of Cranmer's Lutheran period, which he dates around 1546,<sup>26</sup> may have come about the time he wrote an opinion on the Eucharist called "*Questions put concerning some abuses of the Mass with the Answers*" (1547-1548), about one year after Luther's death in 1546. For example, in this document, one of Cranmer answers is more inline with the theology of the Swiss reformers. In the answer of another question, "what is the oblation and sacrifice of Christ in the mass?" Cranmer answers,

the oblation and sacrifice of Christ in the mass is not so called, because Christ indeed is there offered and sacrificed by the priest and the people (for that was done but once by himself upon the cross), but it is so called, because it is a memory and representation of that very true sacrifice and immolation which before was made upon the cross.<sup>27</sup>

Nijenhuis believes that Cranmer ignored his Lutheran phase in later years, in fact, there is evidence that Cranmer may have denied ever holding Lutheran theology.<sup>28</sup> However, this phase came back to haunt him during the reign of the papacy advocate, Queen Mary, who succeeded her brother to the throne.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Nijenhuis, 2.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 21.

### Cranmer's Theology in defense of 1549 Prayer Book

Duffield said that Cranmer appears to have made another shift in his view of the real presence in 1546 and it is possible that he had abandoned the theology of the real presence by the end of 1548.<sup>29</sup> Nijenhuis said that Cranmer's 1546 shift may have come from his association with Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of Rochester.<sup>30</sup> Cranmer was challenged with using a catechism that taught Lutheran doctrine of the real presence. However, Cranmer insisted that Jonas' catechism did not teach the real presence. Nijenhuis said this shift may be seen in Cranmer's treatise, *Questions put concerning some abuses of the Mass with Answers*, (1547-1548), he espoused a view that appears to have been an abandonment of the Lutheran doctrine of real presence, but not in the flesh. At this time he appears to have adopted a theology of the Eucharist that was closer to the Swiss reformers. In this treatise, Cranmer said,

The answer to the question, what is the oblation and sacrifice of Christ in the mass? is the oblation and sacrifice of Christ in the mass is not so called, because Christ indeed is there offered and sacrificed by the priest and the people (for that was done but once by himself upon the cross), but it is so called, because it is a memory and representation of that very true sacrifice and immolation which before was made upon the cross.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Duffield, xvi.

<sup>30</sup>Nijenhuis, 19.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

Whatever Cranmer's theology may have been, he appears in later writings to admit that he was using the language of the Catechism. However, he claims that the catechism from Jonas did not teach the doctrine of the real presence, rather, Cranmer's use of the language of the catechism is employing language from the early church fathers. In his retort of his critics, Cranmer implies that his critics are simply not familiar with the teachings of the church fathers.

And in a catechism by me translated, and set forth, I used like manner of speech, saying, that with our bodily mouths we receive the body and blood of Christ. Which my saying, divers ignorant persons (not used to read[ing] ancient authors, nor acquainted with their phrase and manner of speech) did carp and reprehend, for lack of good understanding.

It appears that in this statement, Cranmer was defending his use of the language in the catechism the first time against Bishop Stephen Gardiner and Martyr, who accused him of adopting inconsistent doctrines on the Eucharist and at worst, adopting Protestant Theology. This inconsistency between acceptable church doctrine and Cranmer's use of the language from the Catechism continued to cause him trouble. It became a primary offense in charges leveled against in in 1555 at Oxford.<sup>32</sup> Ridley said the catechism that it appeared to have come from a Latin translation of a text by a Lutheran author, but there

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<sup>32</sup>Duffield, 208.

were changes made to accommodate the English Church, especially the second sermon on the first commandment.<sup>33</sup>

Cranmer, in response to his critic, changed this statement to reflect a more neo-Bucerian theology: “not that the body and blood of Christ is contained in the sacrament, being reserved, but that in the ministration thereof we receive the body and blood of Christ; whereunto if it may please you to add or understand this word ‘spiritually,’ then is the doctrine of my catechism sound and good in all men’s ears, which know the true doctrine of the sacraments.”<sup>34</sup>

The question of what did Cranmer mean may never be known, but this is what Cranmer’s 1548 emphasizes not the Real Presence, but the reception of the body and blood by the recipient.

Secondarily Christ saieth of the breade, this is my bodye, and of the cuppe he sayeth, this is my bloud. Wherefore we ought to beleue, that in the sacrament we receyue trewly the bodye and bloud of Christ...Wherefore when Christe taketh breade, and saieth. Take, eate, this is my body we ought not to doute, but we eat his veray bodye. And when he taketh the cuppe, and sayeth. Take, drynke, this is my blod, we ought to thynke assuredly, that we drynke his veray lode. And this wemust beleue, yf we will be counted Christen men.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Thomas Cranmer Thomas Cranmer Thomas Cranmer, *Writings of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Cranmer*, Volume 8, 1st edition. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1842), 102.

<sup>34</sup>Nijenhuis, 9.

<sup>35</sup>Cranmer, *A Short Instruction into Christian Religion bring A Catechism set forth by Archbishop Cranmer*, 208.

### Cranmer's Theology in the defense against Mary's interrogators

Cranmer was in the process of revising the ecclesiastical laws when Edward died and Mary, a Catholic, ascended to the throne.<sup>36</sup> Cranmer was removed to Oxford with Ridley and Latimer in March 1554. Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer were named as reformers and ordered to participate in disputations with Catholic theologians.<sup>37</sup> A month later, Mary's courts condemned all three as heretics and sentenced them to death. Several months passed before Mary's officials carried out Cranmer's sentence. During the period between his sentencing and execution, historians believe that Cranmer may have attempted to claim a Catholic faith, which he later recanted. According to Bromily, Cranmer switched between multiple reformist interpretations of the Eucharist, which swirled around the belief in whether or not the Eucharist was the body and Body of Christ or was merely a symbol. Cranmer's death-row Eucharist Theology focused on a middle way between the two extremes called the Eucharistic Presence. Bromily said Cranmer was not presenting new theology, but only restating the major points of the reformers.<sup>38</sup>

In 1555, when Cranmer was questioned by Queen Mary's interrogator about his

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<sup>36</sup>Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, xi.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Geoffrey William Bromily, *Thomas Cranmer, Theologian*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 70.

theology on the Eucharist on the basis of his use of the 1549 catechism, a Latin translation by Justus Jonas of a 1533 catechism by Andreas Osiander.<sup>39</sup> Although Cranmer's defensive of his Eucharistic theology was sketchy and evasive<sup>40</sup> However, Cranmer's confession to pro-Catholic, anti-Protestant Queen Mary was that he believed in the papist theology of the Eucharist. The interrogator, on the basis of the Jonas catechism, accused Cranmer of being a Lutheran.<sup>41</sup> As a result, he was burned at the stake March 21, 1556.

### **Conclusion**

Hopf, in his book on Martin Bucer described the primary variations of Eucharistic theology that were being debated among the magisterial reformers.

Bucer was neither a Roman Catholic, believing in Transubstantiation, nor a Lutheran, believing in Consubstantiation and in the Presence of Christ apart from the attitude and belief of the receiver, nor Zwinglian, seeing in the Lord's Supper simply a memorial celebration.

Bucer puts the burden of Christ's presence on the recipient's faith in so far as they believe. Hopf, quoting John White, Bishop of Winchester as describing Bucer's

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<sup>39</sup>Nijenhuis, 1.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 3, 9. Nijenhuis implies that Cranmer may not have been flaky as much as he was being characteristically humanist in his displeasure of "coarse polemics".

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 1.

Eucharistic Theology as “a Real Presence,” however, which depends on the partaker’s attitude of faith.<sup>42</sup>

Cranmer and Osiander appear to not be as Lutheran as the other Reformers. Their theology seems more similar to Bucer than Luther. Osiander had a lot of conflict with the magisterial reformers (the followers of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli). Historians have attributed this difficulty to Osiander’s personality. However, he appeared to have no problem with relating with Cranmer. Is it possible that Osiander’s conflict with the magisterial reformers was more theological than personality? Perhaps Osiander’s mistake was being too trusting of the reformers he had been working with at the time of the Marbury Colloquy. And perhaps part of why Cranmer and Osiander were able to remain friends and theological conversation partners for many years is because of their shared neo-Bucerian approach to the Eucharist. The question of the Real Presence of Christ was a divisive issue in the second part of the Reformation. A combination of strong opinions on the wrong side of the Real Presence issue among the wrong crowd could have a devastating effect.

Ironically, the use of the catechism transcended the Eucharist debate. People from various divisions of the reformation were able to use the catechism. While catechism became its own genre of writing, I would say that Luther’s Small Catechism could be categorized in another genre, as a template. Luther’s Small Catechism borrowed from a

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<sup>42</sup>Hopf, 41.

medieval format, what to do, what to believe how to prayer, which seems to be the perfect container for the basics of the Christian faith. It is this container that Cranmer, Osiander and Jonas, who may have been preparing Osiander's catechism for use in the new schools that would now require Latin under the various church orders. Osiander and Cranmer were able to use and adopted for their specific communities. And all of the catechisms could shift their presentation of their view of the Eucharist by shifting one or two words such as believe, receive, "This is my body." Luther's Small Catechism is still used today. Adapted copies may be found on the internet, in various forms, and expressing various views. What may be a useful future study is a review of where the template of Luther's Small Catechism may have been used through history, and what adaptations were made and what theologies were best suited for being taught with this container. Little did Luther know that when he offered his Small Catechism as a template for others to use to teach that this offer would continue into the next millennium.

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