

# From Wittenberg to the World

Essays on the Reformation and its Legacy  
in Honor of Robert Kolb



Academic Studies

50



# Refo500 Academic Studies

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Fig. 1: Robert Kolb



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## Abbreviations

- 1521 Loci Philip Melancthon, *Loci communes theologici* of 1521. Lowell J. Sartre, trans., revisions by Wilhelm Pauck, The Library of Christian Classics 19, ed., Wilhelm Pauck. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969.
- 1543 Loci Philip Melancthon, *Loci communes rerum theologicarum* of 1543. English translation: *Loci communes* 1543, trans., J.A.O. Preus. St. Louis: Concordia, 1992.
- 1555 Loci Philip Melancthon, 1555 *Loci Communes*, trans. and ed., Clyde L. Manschreck. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- AC Augsburg Confession.
- Ap Apology of the Augsburg Confession.
- Asm Smalcald Articles.
- BenshH *Bensheimer Hefte*. Göttingen.
- BGLRK *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Lehre der Reformierten Kirche*.
- BSLK *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*. Eleventh edn. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992.
- BSELK *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche*, Vollständige Neu-edition. ed., Irene Dingel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014.
- CR *Corpus Reformatorum*. Vol. 1–28: *Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia*. ed., C.G. Bretschneider and H.E. Bindseil. Halle: C.A. Schwetschke 1834–60. Vol. 29–87: *Ioannis Calvinii Opera quae supersunt omnia*. ed., W. Baum/E. Cunitz/E. Reuss. Braunschweig: C.A. Schwetschke et filius, 1863–1900. Vol. 88–*Huldreich Zwingli's Sämtliche Werke*. ed., Emil Egli et al. Leipzig: Heinsius, 1905–
- DH Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum, verbessert, erweitert, ins Deutsche übertragen [...]*. ed., Peter Hünermann. Freiburg i.Br./Basel/Rom/Wien: Herder, 2017 (1854).
- ESV English Standard Version. Wheaton, IL: Good News Bibles, 2001.
- FC SD Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord.
- FKDG *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte*.
- fol. folio
- HAB *Herzog August Bibliothek. Wolfenbüttel*.
- HAST *Handbuch systematischer Theologie*.
- HZ *Historische Zeitschrift*. 1859–2006. Oldenbourg: Wissenschaftsverlag/Akademie Verlag.

- KiO.M *Kirche im Osten. Monographienreihe.* Stuttgart.
- KuD *Kerygma und Dogma.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- KW Robert Kolb/Timothy J. Wengert, ed. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- LC Luther's Large Catechism.
- LD *Luther Deutsch.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- LH *Luther Handbuch.* ed., Albrecht Beutel. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.
- LI The Leipzig Interim, Robert Kolb, trans., in *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord.* ed., Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001, 183–184.
- LKW *Lutherische Kirche in der Welt. Jahrbuch des Martin-Luther-Bundes.*
- LStRLO *Leucorea Studien zur Geschichte der Reformation und der Lutherischen Orthodoxie.* ed., Matthias Asche/Heiner Lück/Manfred Rudersdorf/Markus Wriedt. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.
- LuThK *Lutherische Theologie und Kirche.* ed., Fakultät der Lutherischen Theologischen Hochschule, Oberursel.
- LthK *Lexikon für theologie und Kirche.* Freiburg i.Br.: Herder.
- LW Luther's Works: American Edition. Vol. 1–30: ed., Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–76. Vol.31–55: ed., Helmut Lehmann. Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress Press, 1957–86; Vol. 56–82: ed., Christopher Boyd Brown. St. Louis: Concordia, 2009–.
- MBW *Melanchthons Briefwechsel.* ed., Heinz Scheible. 10+ vol. Stuttgart: Frommann/Holzboog, 1997–.
- OUH *Oberurseler Hefte.* ed., Fakultät der Lutherischen Theologischen Hochschule, Oberursel.
- NIV Holy Bible: New International Version, International Bible Society, 1973, 1978, 1984.
- QuM *Quellen und Materialien.*
- SC Luther's Small Catechism.
- SVRG *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte.* Marburg: Fachbereich Evangelische Theologie, Philipps-Universität.
- TRE *Theologische Realenzyklopädie.* 36 vol. ed., Gerhard Müller/Horst Balz/Gerhard Krause. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976–2004.
- VD16 *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts.* 25 vol. ed., Irmgard Bezzel. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1983–2000.
- VIEG *Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz.* ed., Irene Dingel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- VLAR *Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg.* Erlangen: Luther-Akademie.
- W<sup>2</sup> *Dr. Martin Luthers sämtliche Schriften.* 25 vol. ed., Johann Georg Walch, Jena, 1740–1753. *Nachdruck der zweiten, überarbeiteten Auflage,* St. Louis, 1880–1910, Groß Oesingen, 1986.
- WA *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe.* 73 vol. in 85. Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–.
- WABr *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel.* 18 vol. Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1930–.
- WADB *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Deutsche Bibel.* 12 vol. in 15. Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1906–
- WATR *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden.* 6 vol. Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1912–21.

## Introduction – The Editors

With this Festschrift, we pay tribute to a man who has an impact upon the lives and professional careers of many of us as well as the readers of this volume.

Dan, Erik, and I have known Dr. Robert Kolb for varying lengths of time and in different capacities. Dan has known Bob the longest, stretching back to the days when he and Bob were classmates at Concordia College, St. Paul (1960). Erik and I became personally acquainted with Bob when he arrived as a professor at Concordia Seminary twenty-four years ago. By that time, Bob had already established himself as a leading Reformation scholar. Despite his incredibly busy speaking and writing schedule, he took a young colleague (Chuck) and student (Erik) under his wings. In doing so, he has shaped Chuck's reading of the Lutheran Confessions and Erik's study of the history and theology of Luther down to the present day.

To introduce this volume, we share a few thoughts here with which, I suspect, our contributors and many of our readers will readily relate followed by a slightly more formal biography of Bob's life that will provide a context for his work.

### An Appreciation

We cannot do justice the life and work of Robert Kolb without making a few personal reflections about Bob and his significant impact upon us as students, teachers, scholars, pastors, and churchmen as well as his pastoral guidance for many of the people who sit in the pews of our churches every Sunday.

### Collegial Collaborations

When Bob arrived at Concordia Seminary, he brought with him a way of doing theology that he had learned – as he would frequently say – from his sixteenth-century friends (how many of us have not heard Bob remark with a straight face, “I have a friend who says ...” and that friend turns out to be Martin Luther or

Nicholas von Amsdorf or Spannenberg or dozens of other friends who are over 500 years old!). But there was truth to what Bob had said. He has spent much time studying how theologians in Wittenberg worked together to give us what he came to call, “The Wittenberg way of doing theology.” And it is simply this. Theology is not done in isolation; it is a collaborative affair. It is not an individual event; it is a team effort.

Bob has embodied throughout his life what he learned from his sixteenth-century friends and modeled for his students and colleagues. Many of us in this volume have found Bob to be a stimulating conversational partner who is incredibly generous with his time. He has read our drafts, edited our articles, and given us his feedback to our ideas and thoughts. Perhaps most important, he has always encouraged us to pursue a line of research or develop an idea and to publish! And Bob always seemed so positive and agreeable in his comments. But as many of us have perhaps discovered on more than one occasion, Bob would make a comment and it was not until the next day that we realized, “Wait, that wasn’t a compliment ... it was a criticism!”

Bob’s collaborative way of doing theology, not only with his sixteenth-century friends or his Missouri Synod colleagues, has extended across denominations and around the globe. His conversational and collaborative approach to theology has extended to ecumenical discussions with people holding different positions and arguments. As he often reminded us, one must listen, as well as talk. His goal was always to work together so as to sharpen each other’s thinking, the articulation of the faith, and the proclamation the Gospel.

Throughout his work and conversations, Bob has modeled for us all how to be teachers and confessors of the faith. He has shown us how teaching and writing can be scriptural and orthodox to the core – without being stifling or stultifying. For Bob, confessing is not about repristinating the past either in its questions or its formulations. And theology is not a set quantity of data. Instead, confessing the faith is as much about carrying on a conversation (listening and chatting) with people today and translating into their language God’s own words. He would listen to how people described the human experience today and learn from their experiences. Meeting them where they are, Bob would translate the Gospel into language to which they could relate: God giving us in Christ a new identity, eternal security, and meaning for life. Bob’s theology is both down to earth and refreshing as he encourages us to see how Reformation theology continually opens up new possibilities for engaging our culture today with the Word of God.

## Theological Contributions

A quick look at his bibliography will reveal Bob's many contributions across a wide array of subjects. But which are his most important and influential works? We will leave that for you to decide. I have a hunch we each will have our favorite candidates. But there are a few consistent threads in his work that are worth highlighting.

One of Bob's greatest and most lasting contributions both to Luther studies and the church lies with his recapturing Luther's distinction of "Two Kinds of Righteousness." As the Reformation marked a turn in some ways toward anthropology with its emphasis on original sin, free will, faith, and good works, Bob's insights into Luther's two kinds of righteousness provided a way to describe and reflect theological anthropology. By considering the human creature within two different relationships (*coram deo* and *coram mundo*), each of which has a fundamentally different foundation, Bob provided a resource to the church, resolving some long-standing conundrums in Lutheran theology. These included, "How do you talk about the Christian life without infringing on justification?" "How can we think about the relationship of justification?"

Closely related to the above, is Bob's emphasis upon the Word of God. Here he moved beyond a simple discussion of different ways in which that expression is used (Christ, Gospel, Scripture) to two emphases. The first is that God is above all a God of conversation. As he expressed it one time, "God is a chatterbox all through the Bible." And this emphasis on conversation (with its mutual hearing and speaking) provided a way for him to speak both about God's relationship to us as well as our relationship to each other. The second lies in his emphasis on the performative character of the Word of God, namely, it does what it says. This provided a further way to see the unity of Scripture from God's work of creating to God's work of making all things new with his justifying word. As God embeds his word in his creatures for temporal life, so he embeds it again in creation as means (water, bread and wine) for eternal life. And with that, he gives us a picture of the church that is not defined by institution and ritual as it is by word and faith.

Perhaps not as readily recognized as a contribution to Reformation studies lies what we might call Bob's theological recovery of the significance of the First Article (creation) for all of theology. Although the topic of creation was often relegated to only being about a question of origins, Bob revived it as presupposition and hence the *cantus firmus* for all the theological *loci* of the Christian faith. Of course, he learned this from his good friend, Martin Luther, whose teaching on justification by faith also marked a turn toward the earthly and the well-being of all who live in God's creation. After all, that's where our works belong – down here on earth – as Bob would quip when contrasting Luther's teaching with that of Aquinas and Biel. And it is this world for which God has created us and redeemed us.

## The Life and Work of Dr. Robert Kolb

Many readers may be less familiar with the biography of Dr. Kolb than they are with his writings. The following offers a little context for reading his work and appreciating his contributions as well getting a sense of both the breadth and depth of his thought.

### Student and Studies

We begin the record of his education, work, and accomplishments with undergraduate studies at Concordia St. Paul (CSP) in 1959, just after his youth and childhood spent in Fort Dodge, Iowa. We will not mention that the Ft. Dodge high school must have been one of the most unusual public high schools in the US in the late 1950s, offering multiple years of Latin instruction. We will have to depend on Bob to fill us in with tales of the beginnings and his Scandinavian and German ancestry or memories of summer jobs in the Hormel factory, working his way through school, and tasting the fresh Spam along with the whole crew at the plant!

After two years at CSP, Robert continued his studies for the ministry at Concordia Sr. College, Ft. Wayne, and received his Bachelor of Arts in 1963. At both St. Paul and Ft. Wayne he prepared for his writing and editing career as editor of the student newspapers. Entering Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he continued to excel in scholarship and writing.

His graduation year at Concordia Seminary, and vicarage at Rochester, Michigan, were enhanced by his marriage to Pauline Ansorge on August 14, 1965. She was a Minnesota pastor's daughter he had met at CSP. With her quiet strength and faithful assistance, Pauline has been "my rib" to Bob throughout his multifaceted career. At Concordia Seminary Kolb received a Master of Divinity in 1967, and the Master of Sacred Theology degree in 1968.

Continuing his graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, Robert Kolb earned a Master's degree in 1969 and his Doctor of Philosophy in the field of history in 1973, studying under the late Robert M. Kingdon, one of the premier Reformation scholars of the twentieth century. He was ordained a pastor of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1972. He returned to St. Louis to continue his research in the Reformation era and serve as the Executive Director of the Center for Reformation Research from 1972–1977.

Recognizing the achievements of Robert Kolb in a variety of fields, the following institutions have granted him honorary Doctor of Letters degrees: Valparaiso University in 2000, Concordia University, St. Paul in 2005, and Concordia University, Irvine in 2008 and Comenius University in Bratislava in 2018. Kolb has also been awarded research grants from European universities for study abroad.

## Teacher and Professor

Dr. Robert Kolb was called to teach at his alma mater, Concordia University, St. Paul, inspiring a generation of students (1977–1993) in the religion and history departments. Students selected him “Professor of the Year” repeatedly to affirm his impact on their lives. Professor Kolb became Chairman of the Religion Department, and from 1990–1991 served as acting president of CSP.

From time to time, he accepted the challenge of serving as guest lecturer or visiting professor at institutions such as Valparaiso, Ohio State, Wisconsin, Luther Seminary, and Concordia Seminary.

Devoted to Christ’s mission mandate to reach out to all the world, Robert Kolb began visiting and teaching in support of the mission of the church in many countries. His first mission trip was in 1980, leading a missionary retreat in Jos, Nigeria, and visiting mission stations there. He grasped new opportunities to teach in Eastern European seminaries in the post-Soviet era. To date he has now lectured at more than forty educational venues on five continents, in countries including Nigeria, India, Latvia, Estonia, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Czech Republic, Canada, Switzerland, the UK, and Germany. Never a stranger in Germany, he has spent a part of every year at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbuettel, and has been a visiting faculty member (*Gastdozent*) at Lutherische Theologische Hochschule in Oberursel, Germany, since 1996. He is probably the only professor at an American seminary whose wristwatch is permanently set to German time.

His role as a visiting missionary connects to his call to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1993 as Director of the Institute for Mission Studies and Missions Professor in systematic theology. He has had an enormous impact on the seminary student body (nearly everyone has a Kolb story) and has directed the research of a steady stream of graduate students. As a member of the Seminary faculty, he spent about half of each year traveling to Lutheran institutions worldwide, often from his German base, to teach, preach, and represent the seminary and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at conferences and meetings.

## Scholar and Author

Robert Kolb is probably best known for his prolific written work. As a foremost authority on the Reformation, and post-Reformation period, on Martin Luther and his colleagues, and on Lutheran theology, Dr. Kolb has written scholarly and practical books, articles, and reviews, as well as recorded presentations on tapes, videos, and other media. Of major importance is *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, also known as Kolb-Wengert (KW), appearing in 2000. Because of the sheer volume of Robert Kolb’s writings, it is risky



to start naming his books in this short biography. *The Christian Faith: A Lutheran Exposition; For All the Saints, Changing Perceptions of Martyrdom and Sainthood; Luther and the Stories of God; Speaking the Gospel Today; Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith; Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, and Hero; Luther's Heirs Define His Legacy*, and *Teaching God's Children His Teaching* are books you will find among the hundreds of works on the bibliographic list of Kolb writings in this volume. Some of his books have been translated into other languages, especially for people in the places where he has taught.

He has been co-author of many books and made contributions in dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other collected works. Beyond writing, he has edited or co-edited numerous scholarly editions. Recently, Dr. Robert Kolb has collaborated on the massive work, a new German critical edition of the Lutheran Confessions. As the editor of the *Katechismen* portion, he is the first non-German to participate so significantly in such a monumental work.

The influence of Kolb in telling the stories of the Reformation and explaining the Christian faith has proliferated through the numerous articles published in journals. Among the prestigious journals where his writings appear are *The Harvard Theological Review*, *The Lutheran Quarterly*, *Church History*, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, *Renaissance Quarterly*, and *Concordia Journal*, and many other journals throughout the world. He was associate editor or co-editor of *The Sixteenth Century Journal* from 1973–1997; and has been a co-editor of *Missio Apostolica* (now known as *Lutheran Mission Matters*) since 1996.

For those of us who know Bob well, he is just one of the guys. It is easy to forget or not realize how well regarded he is outside of our Lutheran boundaries and how he has been an admirable witness to the Lutheran faith beyond Lutheran circles. A personal anecdote illustrates this well. When my daughter was going through clinicals in Maryland for her nurse anesthesia program she was working in an operating room with a surgeon who also happened to be on the board for a seminary on the east coast. Knowing that her father was a pastor/professor, he mentioned that he had been reading a wonderful book on the Reformation by a Dr. Robert Kolb. My daughter exclaimed, “Oh, you mean uncle Bob?” She said that his jaw dropped as he uttered in awe, “You know Dr. Kolb?” It is easy to take for granted Bob’s influence not only upon Lutheran scholars, but upon many others who are just interested in the Reformation and its theology—CPA.

## Churchman

Robert Kolb’s distinguished career includes membership on important commissions and scholarly organizations. He served on the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod beginning in

1984 and continuing as chair of CTCR from 1990–1992. He served as president of the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference (1981–1982) and president of the Society for Reformation Research (1994–1996). Since 1993 he has been a member of the Continuation Committee of the International Congress for Luther Research. On multiple committees at Concordia Seminary, even after retiring in 2008, the Rev. Dr. Robert A. Kolb continues to influence and encourage his colleagues. As his instruction and example has impacted another generation of students at the Seminary, Kolb has inspired those with whom he works here and abroad not only to strive for greater service to God but to find the joy of the Lord in daily living.

Whether you know the scholar Dr. Kolb, Professor Kolb, Rev. Kolb, the author and editor Robert A. Kolb, or just Bob Kolb, it is the same amiable and honorable man whom we honor with this festschrift. We thank God for his life and work.

Concordia Seminary,  
St. Louis, MO, USA.

31 October 2017.

Charles P. Arand, Erik H. Herrmann  
and Daniel L. Mattson



## From Wittenberg



L'ubomír Batka

## Luther's Exposition of Psalms 1–25 at Coburg (1530)

For Martin Luther, the Book of Psalms was the *kleine Biblia*,<sup>1</sup> a never-ending source of divine wisdom which he cherished during his entire life. As he believed the psalms to be texts inspired by the Holy Spirit, in Luther's understanding they contain the word of God and theological doctrine applicable to the life of every individual in any era. Luther returned to the exposition of psalms throughout his life. In a later period such exposition can be found in the *Exposition of Psalms 1–25*, which Luther wrote at Coburg in 1530. Even though this exposition, in terms of its length, does not compare to Luther's extensive lectures, such as the first and second lecture on the psalms (*Dictata super Psalterium*, 1513–1516, and *Operationes in Psalmos*, 1519–1521), it still is an authentic theological work of the Reformer. The work dates back to the time of the Diet of Augsburg and offers a valuable textual basis for a more detailed theological analysis, which has not until now been the subject of research. The analysis of Luther's theology will make it possible to compare Luther's theological thought revealed here with other expositions of the first psalms.

The analysis will be divided into three sections based on the doctrine of Trinity<sup>2</sup> as God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit speaking. Although Luther does not specifically address the Trinitarian doctrine in the *Exposition of Psalms 1–25*, which can be explained by the shortness of this piece and its context, we will use the thesis of Oswald Bayer to support such structure in this article: "The divine being communicates itself with final validity as a gift and testamental promise in which he himself gives himself to us fully and completely."<sup>3</sup> Bayer offers an alternative for a theology of the Trinity other than an attempt at specifying the timeless relationship between the Father, Son and the Spirit on the

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1 WADB 10: 99.24–25.

2 Luther's theology of the Trinity has in recent years become the subject of several studies. The most important ones are listed in Hans-Martin Barth, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers. Eine kritische Würdigung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 217, fn. 81.

3 Oswald Bayer, *Gott als Autor: Zu einer poetologischen Theologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 144.

one hand, or an assumption of subsequently following epochs of the Father, Son and the Spirit on the other hand. Oswald Bayer develops the idea of the so-called “poetological theology,” which sees God as the “Poet,” thus capturing “the identity of divine speech and action; in his spoken action and performing speech [God] is a poet.”<sup>4</sup> Thus laid out, a depiction of God’s actions with regard to the actions of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit can be supported by Luther’s comment on Psalm 9:7 in *Operationes*, which states that “in the Holy Scripture one has to pay more attention to the verbs than to the nouns, if one wants to understand the Spirit.”<sup>5</sup>

In the first section, this article will relate the context in which Luther wrote the exposition. The subsequent three sections will then introduce the character of divine action and the final part will focus on the word of God in relation to man and his spiritual life. It will offer a glance at the praxis of living out one’s faith and following Christ in a communicative character based on the word of God. It can be assumed that this procedure will reveal Luther’s theology also in the Coburg exposition of psalms.

## 1. Historical Context

In 1530, Luther was staying at the Coburg fortress, “the southernmost watch point of the Duchy of Saxony,”<sup>6</sup> as he was unable to attend the diet at Augsburg due to the imperial ban. For five months, from Easter until early October, Luther dedicated himself on this personal “Mount Sinai” to theological and exegetical work: the psalms and the prophets.

Short expositions of the first 25 psalms, entitled *Exposition of Psalms 1–25*, also known as the “Coburg Psalms,”<sup>7</sup> were no mere spiritual exercises of the reformer. During his time at Coburg, Luther suffered from health complications

4 Bayer, *Gott als Autor*, 144: “Um das, was im kritischen Bezug zur Metaphysik und Mythologie zu bedenken ist, positiv zu benennen, gebrauche ich den Gottestitel des ‘m das, w, von dem das nizäno-konstantinopolitanische Glaubensbekenntnis redet. Dieser Titel sagt eindrücklich die Identität von Gottes Reden und Handeln; in seinem sprechenden Werk und wirksamen Sprechen ist er ‘konst.’”

5 WA 5: 298.11–13. By “*intelligendo spiritu*” Luther actually means the “meaning of the text.”

6 Hans Schwarz, *Martin Luther. Úvod do života a diela nášho reformátora* (Liptovský Mikuláš: Tranoscius, 1999), 33. Luther’s stay at Coburg is described in Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521–1532, vol. 2* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 372–384. Cf. Walter von Loewenich, *Martin Luther: The Man and His Work* (München: List, 1986), 318–329. In 1530 Luther used new edition of the Book of Psalms from Faber Stapulenzis *Quincuplex Psalterium* (1509).

7 Von Loewenich, *Martin Luther*, 324. We know the exact dates when Luther dictated his comments: May 4–6, 11, 14–17, 31, June 1–3, 13, 26, 27, July 1, 10, 13, 17, 18, 22, September 25. and the Exegesis of Ps. 25,12–22, on January 2. in 1531. They were published in 1559.

(headaches).<sup>8</sup> Additionally, Luther was going through spiritual struggles as he tried to comfort his close collaborator, J. Jonas, whose newborn son had died,<sup>9</sup> and W. Link of Nuremberg whose daughter had passed away.<sup>10</sup> He was also deeply troubled by the news of his own father's passing (June 5). According to the testimony of Luther's secretary, Veit Dietrich, who was staying with Luther at Coburg, Luther overcame the difficulties by praying the psalms.<sup>11</sup>

He also became concerned about the church-political situation. It is, therefore, typical of this exposition to link the meaning of particular psalms with the events of his time:<sup>12</sup> the delivery of the reformational confession of faith at Augsburg on June 25,<sup>13</sup> the August Confutation of the Augsburg Confession and subsequent theological and political negotiations. Luther was also troubled by the news of Turkish invasions in 1530. Here, too, Luther found a wellspring of strength and comfort in the psalms (Ps 23:2, Ps 25:3). Dietrich Korsch portrays the situation as “theological tension within Reformation itself [...] between the subjective authenticity of faith and the teaching office established by church regulations.”<sup>14</sup>

From among the first 25 psalms, Luther was especially moved by Psalms 2, 8<sup>15</sup>, 14<sup>16</sup>, 19<sup>17</sup> and 22.<sup>18</sup> It can be said that interpretation of the psalms as prophecies of events unraveling during Luther's time gained prominence here. This adaptation of the psalms to fit his own context drew on the assumption that the psalms are written using “general” or “universal” language and can, therefore, be applied to diverse situations in any given time.<sup>19</sup>

8 WABr 5: 316.1–317, 20n. (May 12, 1530, No. 1566).

9 WABr 5: 318 (May 15, No.1567); WA 31.1: 287.14–17.

10 WABr 5: 349 (June 5, No. 1583).

11 WABr 5: 377 (19. June 1530, Nr. 1595). Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther in Mid-Career, 1521–1530* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 676, fn. 68. Personal notes in WABr 5:373 (19. June 1530, Nr. 1593) and WATR 6: 369.14–23 (Nr. 7075).

12 WA 31.1: 294.13–17. See for instance WA 31.1: 299.5–8 (Elector George and the Emperor). WA 31.1: 299.11–16 (Luther and Cardinal Cajetan). WA 31.1: 299.19–26 (John Hus). Cf. Ps 17. H. v. Schubert says: “All experience he has gathered up to this point resurface as he meditates on the text and becomes an illustration of God's great deeds as well as deeply ingrained ungodly attitudes of his enemies.” Hans Schubert, “*Luther auf der Koburg*,” in D. Knolle, *Luther-jahrbuch 1930*, 129.

13 WA 31.1: 289.29–34; WA 31.1: 309.32–24; WA 31.1: 311.28–33; WA 31.1: 373.14–16; WA 31.1: 368.21–22; WA 31.1: 354.19–20; WA 31.1: 355.32–33; WA 31.1: 374.16–17; WA 31.1: 378.16–18.

14 Dietrich Korsch, “*Sic sum. Der Theologie Martin Luther auf der Veste Coburg 1530*,” in Dietrich Korsch and Leppin Volker, *Martin Luther – Biographie und Theologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 183.

15 WA 31.1: 288.2–3.

16 It talks about “the article of justification” (WA 31.1: 310.21–22).

17 It says “everything that could only be said of the gospel” (WA 31.1: 345.28–29).

18 Due to prophecies about the suffering of Jesus Christ (WA 31.1: 353.12–13). Luther accepted without any change Stapulensis' view that David is a prophet (WA 31.1: 353.21–23; WA 31.1: 359.28).

19 WA 31.1: 338.13–35.



The parallels between the content of psalms and real-life examples serve as comparisons. Later expositions of psalms reveal that Luther did not yield to the tendency toward a radical contextualization of the psalms, but offered theologically rich – timeless – interpretations.

During the time of *Operationes*, the question of authority in the Church with regard to Rome became of great importance. Luther placed emphasis on the authority of the Scripture. Between 1522 and 1525, the issue of authority regained importance, owing to the so-called “Radical Reformation.”<sup>20</sup> Once again, the issue was which authority was to determine the content of one’s faith. The heterogeneous “movement” of those known as *Schwärmer*,<sup>21</sup> with spokespeople such as A. Karlstadt and H. Denck, leaders like T. Müntzer and L. Hätzer, and followers such as the “Zwickau prophets” were connected by several ideas they held in common. Among them was Augustine’s *De spiritu et litera*, and a work of German mysticism, *Theologia Deutsch*.<sup>22</sup> In addition to legalistic tendencies in terms of spiritual emphasis, and antiauthoritarian, even anarchist, conduct in the sphere of public law and authorities, the “inner word” became the ultimate authority which inspired new prophecies and was seen as free from the things of this world. Not even the authority of the Scripture was spared from this “blowing of the Spirit.” The “mute God” living in “dead Letters”<sup>23</sup> was replaced by an immediate encounter with the Spirit in the exegete, preacher and listener. For T. Müntzer, for instance, “true faith” is based in personal experience of “communicating with God” resting on an “open heart” and it is “the most personal work of a God who reveals himself to one willing to believe.”<sup>24</sup>

These events changed Luther’s views and he stopped publicly praising *Theologia Deutsch*. At the same time, from 1522 when he wrote the *Wartburg Postil*, a

20 Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 97–121.

21 WA 31.1: 315.21–23; WA 31.1: 346.23–24.

22 Karl-Heinz Zur Mühlen, “*Heiliger Geist und Heilige Schrift bei Thomas Müntzer*,” in Johannes Brosseder and Athina Lexutt, *Reformatisches Profil: Studien zum Weg Martin Luthers und der Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 139–150. Zur Mühlen summarizes the difference to Luther’s emphasis on 273–274. Cf. Martin Wernisch, *Mystika a reformace: Theologia Deutsch, text a dejinný kontext* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2007), 99–114; Albrecht Beutel, *Luther Handbuch*, 139–142. Volker Leppin concludes that Karlstadt accepts from Tauler “defining impulses,” especially the reference to the connection between “*Gelassenheit, Kreuz und Leiden*.” Volker Leppin, “*Mystisches Erbe auf getrennten Wegen: Überlegungen zu Karlstadt und Luther*,” 153–169 in Christoph Bultmann, *Luther und das monastische Erbe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 166.

23 Zur Mühlen, “*Heiliger Geist und Heilige Schrift bei Thomas Müntzer*,” 265.

24 Walter Elliger, *Außenseiter der Reformation: Thomas Müntzer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 11. Müntzer leaning towards mysticism is also discussed in Reinhard Schwarz, “*Thomas Müntzer und die Mystik*,” in Siegfried Brauer and Helmar Junghans, *Der Theologe Thomas Müntzer. Untersuchungen zu seiner Entwicklung und Lehre* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 139–142.

strong emphasis on *verbum externum* is felt in a conscious rejection of the Augustinian hermeneutic of *litera* and *spiritus*. The *Exposition of Psalms 1–25* does not provide the opportunity to historically anchor Luther's development. However, research findings are summarized by Albrecht Beutel,<sup>25</sup> who also offers a systematic view of "Divine speech" in the foursome of *verbum aeternum*, the word that God is from time eternal, *verbum creatum*, the word by which the world was created, *verbum scriptum*, in which God reveals himself, and *verbum praedicatum*, through which God comforts and exhorts in sermons and sustains in death.<sup>26</sup> Essentially, this is the relation between *verbum aeternum* and *verbum externum*. How this relation has been understood by Luther in his *Exposition to Psalms 1–25* will be shown in the following lines.

## 2. Father Rules by Righteousness

In the Coburg Psalms (Ps 2), similarly to *Operationes*, Luther emphasizes the creative power of God's word. God "does everything by word."<sup>27</sup> When God speaks, things happen. And this is true despite the fact that God "creates all *ex nihilo*,"<sup>28</sup> as Luther adds when discussing Ps 9.

Although God himself is hidden from human sight, he allows man to know him as a Creator who gives everything by his grace. He "is righteous, makes righteous, rules in righteousness and bestows righteousness."<sup>29</sup> However, this righteousness is not a mere passive character of God, it is communicated in the realm of divine word.

Adam is the first one given the mandate to rule over the creation (Ps 8:8–9), but because of sin this role is passed on to the new Adam, Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup> Similarly to *Operationes*, Luther does not take God's blessings to mean a physical "abundance of possessions." Although in specific instances blessings can be physical, Luther never finds this issue as central to his exegesis. Blessings are present in the life of one who lives by the power of the word of God in faith, love, teaching, delight,

25 Beutel, *Luther Handbuch*, 385–394. Compare this also with note 254 and the bibliography it contains. Beutel adds: "Durchschauf man die nicht zu zählenden Stellen, an denen Luther nach 1525 auf das Verhältnis von Wort und Geist bzw. von *verbum externum* und *verbum internum* zu sprechen kommt, so wird rasch deutlich, dass sich an der soteriologisch begründeten Konzentration auf das äußere, mündliche Wort im Wesentlichen nichts mehr geändert hat." Beutel, *Luther Handbuch*, 397.

26 Beutel, *Luther Handbuch*, 364 (see also 362–371).

27 WA 31.1: 267.4–5.

28 WA 31.1: 291.12–13; WA 31.1: 291.20.

29 WA 31.1: 290.19–22.

30 WA 31.1: 287.34–36.