

Luther, Theology, and the University

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Now is a good time to be a Luther scholar. The five years since the last Luther Congress have seen extraordinary changes in the international community of Luther scholars and we see their effects in the present Congress. Participants from all academic ranks are welcome at this congress, from undergraduate students excited by Luther studies and graduate students who will open up new areas of scholarship for us to consider to scholars of both genders and from many different ethnic and national backgrounds, each with the gift of a distinct perspective that they bring to this conference. This International Luther Congress claims a few important firsts: it is the first congress to have placed a public »call for papers« on the internet, thereby changing the procedure on how invitations to speak were issued; it is the first congress to have a seminar in feminist theology (hopefully in future congresses, this seminar will also attract more male participants); and this congress has attracted the highest number of attendees in its history. The 12th International Luther Congress has issued a new and clear welcome to study Luther and there is no going back now!

This is as it should be, for the questions emerging for the study of Martin Luther today require the imaginative energies of many scholars whose diverse experiences shape their research and its political consequences. Luther is contextualized very differently today than he was only five years

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ago. The world is more precarious financially now than it was in 2007. An unprecedented economic situation challenges politicians who cannot seem to balance fiscal responsibility with the global reach of multinational corporations. The ever starker discrepancy between rich and poor is the product of a cruel neoliberal economic hegemony that offers no vision of a common life, tolerates no regulation of business, and elevates the unfettered individual as the hero of our times. The real face of the neighbor that obliges a response of ethical care has disappeared into the screen of potentially infinite friends of the web's social network. Human personhood, in turn, has become fragmented by the distraction characterizing modern life, the self's reality is virtual in its self-performance on the screen for any and every viewer, perpetually hammered with sound-bites of information that cannot be integrated into coherent knowledge, its desires projecting infinite possibilities onto the virtual screen.

It is this world that contextualizes our discussion of Luther this year in Helsinki, specifically the topic of Luther and the university. My aim is to talk about Luther, theology, and the university in sight of contemporary reality. My scholarly commitment as a theologian is to orient the intellectual practice of producing theological knowledge to think about the self in the reality of its being in this world as well as the reality of being whole and cared for as is Christ's promise of a redeemed life.

Luther is a powerful resource for this task. As a theologian in the university, he invested energy in changing the curriculum to fit the new emerging fields of textual studies. His vocation as a scholar was practiced in his study, the classroom lecture, and the disputation forum, three locations of academic subjectivity and activity that shaped his thoughts and changed the world. In this talk I will sketch out a few points that I think are helpful in engaging Luther in the university today, in view of the questions pressed upon us by the world's new situation.

I make my points in reference to my own academic situation as a theologian in a religious studies department in a secular U.S. American private university. This is not always the most hospitable context for doing theology! Religious Studies in the United States sees itself as (mostly) freed from its Christian-theological (German) father. Theology's conceptual abstract methods place it at odds, or so it is said, with the empirical-historical and ethnographic methods privileged by the modern study of

religion. Christianity is usually twinned with the eurocentric bias of Western modernity, and both theology and Christianity are the objects of critical deconstruction, with the result that theology's fate is displacement from the university to the denominationally-run seminary. Furthermore, theology is reckoning today with declining administrative support for the humanities – the study of German in particular, which is so crucial to the history of the humanities –, the developing field of religious studies and a new and growing interest in Islam, and the institutional challenges facing the enterprise scholarly thinking from the concrete institutional concern with utility and economics. But lest you despair at the very outset of my talk by this grim accounting, my contention is that the current crisis of the humanities and more broadly of the university offer a unique opportunity for theology to revive its critical voice, to challenge the domination of all inquiry by function and utility, and to help restore a public voice to humane scholarship, just when we need it. But it will take me a while to get there!

I begin with the popular picture of Luther, the hagiography, and show how theologians can address this topic in order to open it to more interesting and creative critical thinking and action.

I Hagiography

Who is Martin Luther? There needs to be at least two answers to this: Luther in the popular imagination and the Luther of scholars. First the popular Luther: like Paul the Apostle and Aristotle the Philosopher, Luther is identified with a movement that transcends its and his historical particularity. He is the Reformer who comes to us in a story of freedom that has inspired different people struggling to speak truth to power long after his death and way beyond his native Saxony. This Luther has wide public salience. He is identified with the personal, religious, and political breakthrough to freedom; he has become synonymous with a dramatic rupture from the past to be free for the future. »For freedom Christ has set you free,« is the Galatians' motto (Gal 5:1) that has become the global trope for liberation. Whether as the Iranian Luther or as the Buddhist or Muslim »Luther,« or the »Luther« of contemporary Catholic survivors of clerical sexual abuse who see him as the prophet of a church that might

have been, the 16th century Luther is in the popular imagination a legend of fearless commitment to the truth of freedom.

The smaller circle of Luther scholars and Lutheran theologians seem a bit less excited. Five hundred years of footnotes have tamed the man. If footnotes were a climate event, Luther footnotes would be a tsunami. The scholarly obeisance that defers to his authority has flattened him into a one-dimensional hero. Luther has become the imprimatur for authorizing theological positions articulated centuries after his death; his name is invoked to underwrite supposedly pure doctrine (or even the idea of the possibility of pure doctrine). Where the world looks to him as a hope for freedom and truth, Luther scholars have rendered him into an insipid theological cliché.

So here we come to a pass: Would Luther scholars rather see justification as a language game than experience the contagious power of God's grace? Do they prefer to preserve the predictable epistemic trope of law and gospel rather than be open to the unpredictable *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*? – to refer to the term that one Luther scholar applied to Luther's volatile God at the turn of the 20th century.

The only answer to these questions is that Luther must be set free from his parochial domestication and brought up to speed in a changing world that requires more critical, intuitive, and prophetic voices to guide clear thinking and responsible action. The university has historically been the place where thought is set free for innovation that moves history. It was the place where Luther wrestled with scripture using the new critical product of Erasmus' study; it has been the place where theologians have engaged Luther to ask the question of how God is related to the world such as it is. In fact the history of academic Luther scholarship is such a powerful intellectual legacy that it can write the intellectual history of the West. Lutheran Pietists appropriated the mystical Luther in the late 17th century and constructed the dialectic between the inner and outer aspects of modern subjectivity. The Luther who had focused hermeneutical attention on the literal sense of the Bible conveyed a nominalist and humanist preoccupation with language that can be traced through the 20th century's »linguistic turn.« Luther's holy God was used by early 20th century Luther scholar Rudolf Otto as the template for a comparative concept of religion. Each generation of academic reflection on Luther has gener-

ated religious and theological creativity by asking pressing questions from epistemology to piety. And if the university resists promoting provocative intellectual struggle, then theologians should take on this historical leadership role.

Luther's gift to the university is that questions should be asked in a way that causes thinking to take place. When theologians highlight the question of God in the university, they remind their academic conversation partners that there is another perspective, a theological perspective, which situates human reality »under the species of eternity« (*sub specie aeternitatis*). In the next section I will address the problem of the academic disciplinary reduction of questions to historical causality. Suffice to say at this point that contemporary academic discussions tend to mute the question of God, even while the student in the middle row, who has grown up in an entirely secular household, all of a sudden realizes that the concept of God's love gives her a compelling angle on a concept she thought she already knew, or when the literary critic in the German Department analyzes a text by Heine and is not quite sure what to make of the allusion to God. Where God is not given a place, there the academic theologian can gently inspire her colleagues to open the questions that have been closed by the alleged prescriptions of what it means to be a modern academic discipline. In the university where evangelical students sit together with secular kids and non-Christians, it is the theologian's responsibility to invite the voicing of questions and fears about evil and eternity. In the university where reality is studied from its many perspectives, the theologian should keep alive the question about the ultimate reality, the *ens realissimum*, the living God. Luther's hagiography holds open these questions – the talk of God who is dangerous in his wrath and even more dangerous in his love.

II Reductionism

Luther's hagiography has raised one particular issue of perennial interest to academics, namely the relation of the old to the new. The study of Luther over the past one hundred years has been particularly taken with this relation. The interest was inspired by the historicist turn that began

to dominate academic methodologies at the beginning of the 20th century. Karl Holl, who is credited with the original *Lutherrenaissance*, first saw Luther's *Lectures on Romans* as the hermeneutical key to dating the shift in Luther's religious biography from a terrified conscience to grace. Holl raised the historical question concerning the reformation breakthrough, the novelty of dramatic conversion that preoccupied the bulk of Luther studies through the 1980s. There were admittedly ideological reasons why this search for the reformation breakthrough was so intense. Protestant identity was asserted as distinct from Roman Catholic identity (and vice versa); early modernism introduced the values of enlightenment over and against a slavish Middle Ages.

Yet a quick survey of contemporary themes in Luther studies finds that one hundred years after Holl the search for a breakthrough in Luther's religion does not excite scholars. In fact, the interest in Luther seems to be of development rather than discontinuity. In part this has to do with ecumenical interests, which have driven the search for the Catholic Luther over the past twenty years, as I will talk about in the next section. Another reason for the shift in interest from the young to the old Luther, from the date of the reformation breakthrough to the continuity of Luther's thought with his predecessors, is the psychological model of development that has taken hold in the humanities and social sciences. As studies in human development show, change is difficult for humans; grace requires unflinching habituation in order for change to be sustained over time.

Deconstructionist philosophy has also mounted a successful campaign against the conceptuality assumed by discontinuity. The binary opposites of the discontinuity between old and new are no longer viewed as dangerous metaphysical truths. Binaries have been unveiled as fictitious signifiers that gesture infinitely towards a logos, desirous of but never finally attaining it. Infinite movement, rather than one heroic leap to the infinite, characterizes the contemporary scholarly bias. Luther, the master of discontinuous binary thinking, is completely out of touch here. Finally, Luther has fallen victim to new models of human subjectivity (the word that has come to replace »personhood« in academic discourse). As psychologist of religion Jim Jones argues, Luther's thought on justification might no longer be relevant to the modern self because Luther pre-

supposes a strong coherent subjectivity,² contemporary accounts assume multiple epistemologies and argue that porous hybrid identities are constructed by culture and shaped by bodily practices. The discourse on the »technology of the self« has squeezed agency out of consciousness, and into the realm of social and political instruments of power. Luther and his God who creates the self with the radical actuality of a new subjectivity is not welcome in this discussion.

But Luther scholarship need not react to this situation by rigidly holding onto the opposing paradigm of a strong self who makes unwavering assertions based on binary thinking and a dualist conception of ontological principles (God and devil). Nor is a complete surrender to the paradigm an option, thereby eliminating the particular idiosyncrasy that our subject matter offers. Rather, we can use this opportunity to think critically about the academic consensus in psychology and deconstruction, to make fruitful use of our distinct theological perspectives in order to diagnose intellectual blindspots, and make creative use of theological rationality to point out new paths for academic discussion.

Such an opportunity is currently available, and badly needed, in the field of religious studies. The issue has to do with the historiography currently reigning in the academy, including the modern study of religion. The study of religion emerged at the turn of the 20th century from the turn to history as reigning paradigm in the humanities. While history has remained the science (*Wissenschaft*) responsible for explaining events and phenomena in the humanities, its focus has been narrowed – also under the influence of deconstructionism. Historical explanations are articulated as social, cultural, and political causes. Events are viewed as products of historical forces that have shaped them, while persons have lost their agency in an explanatory paradigm that has assigned responsibility for change to technologies of the body and community identity. Determinism rather than freedom has become the metaphysic of history.

2 See J. W. JONES, Luther and Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Living in the Midst of Horrors (in: The Global Luther: A Theologian for Modern Times, ed. by C. HELMER 2009, 67–81).

In a recent essay recently, for example, entitled *Thinking about religion, belief, and politics*, Talal Asad proposes that the five bodily senses should be the focus of the study of religion.³ Religion shapes the way in which the body senses, tastes, touches, so that a study of the senses can be referred to interests and forces at stake in their production.⁴ Asad proposes this move to the senses in view of a criticism that he and many other scholars of religion share about the domination of a Protestant notion of faith or belief that has illegitimately determined the definition of religion. Religion is not to be identified with faith, as this term imposes a Western Protestant theological bias in religion. Rather the subject of religion must be defined in ways that are freed from a Protestant Christian theological determination and open to historical and ethnographic investigation. The study of the body's senses eliminates religion's alleged task of interpreting its behaviors in terms of faith or belief, thereby freeing the study of the body from the vestiges of theological meaning imposed on it by a Western conceptuality.⁵ Religion as the study of the senses then is connected directly to politics as its explanation.

This reduction of religion to politics seems to be the result of a direction taken in the study of religion that opposes (and more often than not, naïvely opposes) the Protestant identification of religion to faith and the Western philosophical understanding of the human subject as autonomous and free. But if modern critical scholarship is unable to address the

3 T. ASAD, *Thinking about religion, belief, and politics* (in: *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, ed. by R. A. ORSI, 2012, 36–57).

4 Asad writes, »To explore how religion, belief, and politics are linked to one another, we need to enquire not only into institutional landscapes but also ask a number of questions about the body, its senses, and its attitudes. For this, we need ethnographies of the human body – its attitudes toward pain, physical damage, decay and health, as well as toward bodily integrity, growth and enjoyment, and the conditions that isolate persons and things from or connect them strongly with others. What architecture of the senses – hearing, seeing, smelling, touching and tasting – do particular embodiments and sensibilities depend on?« ASAD (see n. 3), 51.

5 Asad again: »I suggest, therefore, that instead of approaching such behavior in terms of belief [...] one might enquire into how the bodily senses are cultivated or how they take shape in a world that cannot be humanly controlled, and hence in what politics these formations make possible or difficult.« ASAD (see n. 3), 54.

most elementary phenomena of religious nature except by reducing them to politics, then it needs to be criticized, not uncritically followed.

Scholar of religion and American religious historian Robert A. Orsi has recently proposed taking again seriously the concept of the »holy« to study the reality that religion opens up – humans as agents, but also agents in the supernatural realm, the realm of religion: the saints, the gods, the angels and devils.

Holiness describes something real in culture and history, with real, if ambivalent effects [...] I mean something that is more than the sum of its social parts and that comes to have a life of its own independent of the humans out of whose imaginations, inheritances and circumstances it emerged.⁶

In a move that decisively opposes Asad, Orsi asks scholars of religion to consider the terms of religion established at the foundation of the discipline, for example, »the holy,« that in spite of their problematic Western Protestant inheritances, point to something »more« beyond the reductionism by the modern historical study of religion.⁷

It looks as though we have come full circle, back to the origin of the study of religion precipitated in the first place by the historicist turn in Christian theology. Yet there is a difference. We have come to this point chastened by deconstructionist philosophy and historicist reductionism. The influence of theology in the field of religion has been substantially truncated, if not excised altogether. So the fate of Luther in the university is bound up with the fate of religion and theology in contemporary departments of religious studies. If the study of Luther has any aspirations in the university, then Luther scholars must acknowledge this current chastened situation. Yet because there are intimations towards the full circle that might be moving beyond deconstructionism, Luther studies can join in

6 R. A. ORSI, The problem of the holy (in: The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies, ed. by R. A. ORSI, 2012, 84–108), 91.

7 »But we can acknowledge the problems with it and still recognize that the theoreticians were embarked on an important and necessary project, which we understand more fully now. They wanted to account for the really realness of religion in such a way that complicated and called into question the absolute authority of naturalistic explanations, and they did so in a comparative frame that brought a vast array of events and experiences from around the world and across time to the theoretical table.« ORSI (see n. 6), 99.

these glimpses of construction. The way forward would be to account adequately for human subjectivity beyond determinism by social-political forces. Luther can be called upon as an exciting resource. His thought includes some of the funkiest reflections on the supernatural – the naked God, God’s bottom, the reality of »this is my body.« His cosmology is bursting with angels and devils, and his account of subjectivity veers into the mystical posture of »I, not I, but Christ who lives in me« (cf. Gal 2: 20) that overtly challenges naïve caricatures about the West’s alleged commitment to the autonomous self. Luther’s »vibrant materiality« may just be a timely and welcome conversation partner to the new discussion emerging in religious studies today.

III Ecumenism

Theology has, as Schleiermacher has taught us, a twofold interest.⁸ Theology is committed to the production of theological knowledge in conversation with the intellectual resources available to it in the university. Yet theology has an equal interest in promoting healthy spiritualities as these are formed in the churches. Theologians, as Schleiermacher has also taught us, tend to one or the other interest in their intellectual commitments, although each theologian embodies both interests in a unique proportion.⁹ If Luther studies takes one lead from the university, then its relation to the church invokes other considerations that may or may not dovetail with the former’s concerns. However, the context for studying church interests is academic, so that even ecclesial interests are couched in the terms of intellectual-academic discussion.

8 F. SCHLEIERMACHER, *Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study*, 3rd edn., revised translation of 1811 and 1830 editions by T.N. TICE 2011, § 9 (p. 4): »If one were to conceive religious interest and scientific spirit to be conjoined in the highest degree and with the finest balance for the purpose of theoretical and practical activity alike, that would be the idea of a ›prince of the church‹.«

9 SCHLEIERMACHER (see n. 8), § 13 (p. 7): »Every person who finds oneself called to exercise leadership in the church discovers the primary function one is to perform according to the measure in which one or the other of these two elements is dominant within that person.«

The ecumenical context has provided the ecclesial stimulus for Luther scholarship for the last three decades. Particularly the ecumenical conversations between Lutherans and Roman Catholics have significantly shaped the research trajectory in Luther studies. Ever since German Catholic Luther scholar Peter Manns began publishing his research on the Catholic Luther in the 1980's, scholarly effort has been expended to situate Luther's thought in proximity to the Middle Ages, to late medieval philosophy, and to Catholic doctrine. Debunked is the hagiography that the Protestant Reformation sprang from Luther's head like Minerva from Zeus. Rather, Luther's reformation theology had precursors and forerunners. The resulting consensus is that Luther's thought is deeply Catholic, rooted in late medieval mystical and biblically-based piety, shaped by his education in the *via moderna* at the University of Erfurt, and quite orthodox in its Christological and Trinitarian commitments. Rather than breaking with Rome, Luther regarded his reformation as a temporary exile from mother church. His theology was not constructive, but prophetic, calling for a refocusing on Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of human sin.

Many of the major publications of the last three decades in Luther scholarship reflect an honest ecumenical attempt to conceive Luther in broader continuity with Western Catholicism. Great credit is owed American theologian George A. Lindbeck for the »cultural-linguist« model of religion that facilitated the mutual recognition between Lutherans and Roman Catholics of their respective understandings of justification. Lindbeck's academic context was a university divinity school (Yale), a university location mediating academic and ecclesial interests. Although Lindbeck's cultural-linguist model can be criticized for an inherent Lutheran word-oriented bias, its theological theory concerned the construction of doctrine by intramural systems of meaning that were »not necessarily incompatible« with other systems within the broad fold of Christianity.¹⁰

¹⁰ For example, when discussing the papacy as topic of ecumenical dialogue, Lindbeck writes, »In any case, the purpose of a classificatory scheme such as this is not to settle material questions about the nature or location of particular doctrines, but rather to indicate the formal possibilities and thereby to enhance the changes of meaningful dis-

The application of Lindbeck's theory to church politics put an end to 500 years of animosity between Lutherans and Roman Catholics, and with the mediation of one of the most competent Luther scholars in the world today, Theodor Dieter, the *Joint Declaration on Justification between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church* was signed in Augsburg Germany on October 31, 1999.¹¹

If 1999 was carried by the spirit of Vatican II, the situation today is very different. The contemporary papacy has become entrenched in positions that are oddly similar to the 16th century church that Luther saw it as his duty to reform. Recent decisions, campaigns of repression and self-inflicted crises fly in the face of Protestant ecumenical optimism. These include the return to the Latin mass (and its English translation) that reinstates the Good Friday prayers for the Jews who killed Jesus¹²; the pope's ecclesiological distinction between the true Catholic Church and renegade Protestant »ecclesial communities«¹³; the legacy from Pope John Paul II concerning the non-discussability of women's ordination¹⁴; the Vatican's sad silence on the issue of divorced – meaning excommunicated – Catholics; the church's failure to accept full responsibility for the scandal of the sexual abuse of children and youth by priests and its pernicious cover-up¹⁵; the current assault against women religious in the U.S, which has targeted among others Lindbeck's colleague, emeritus Professor Mar-

cussion and debate.« G. A. LINDBECK, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, 1984, 86.

11 The Lutheran World Federation and The Roman Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, English-language edn., 2000.

12 See J. BURKE, Pope's move on Latin mass a »blow to Jews«, July 8, 2007; online (accessed January 16, 2013) at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jul/08/religion.catholicism>.

13 Pope BENEDICT XVI, *Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine of the Church*, June 29, 2007; online (accessed Dec. 19, 2012) at: www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070629_re-sponsa-quaestiones_en.html.

14 Pope JOHN PAUL II, *Ordinatio sacerdotalis*, May 22, 1994; online (accessed Dec. 19, 2012) at: www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_22051994_ordinatio-sacerdotalis_en.html.

15 See the website devoted to »documenting the abuse crisis in the Roman Catholic Church«: www.bishopaccountability.org.

garet Farley, who has written on sexual ethics¹⁶; the bishops' investigation of the U.S. Girl Scouts,¹⁷ and the threat to apply the office of the keys to withhold the mass from progressive American Catholic politicians, like John Kerry, Illinois governor Pat Quinn, and New York governor Andrew Cuomo. These developments in the Roman Catholic Church are provocations not invitations to ecumenism.

At this point in my talk I admit the political incorrectness in my position as a Protestant theologian pointing to problems I see within the Roman Catholic Church, when my own denomination is rife with its own controversies. But political incorrectness regarding ecumenism is appropriate today given the uncanny similarity of issues prompting Luther to speak 500 years ago. Luther's pastoral concerns for those excommunicated by human traditions, the distinction between church power and divine grace, the criticism of the false piety that leads to abusive actions and theology: in short, Luther's distinction between law that would mete judgment on those that church power makes comfortable and grace distributed to the afflicted, terrified and oppressed. Luther's reformation theology still holds out the possibility of reform pertinent to contemporary Roman Catholicism, while conversely Lutheran theology continues to require the Christ-focused truths of its shared Catholic theological commitments.

We are perhaps entering into a time of vigorous ecclesial differentiation, rather than one of ecclesial unity.¹⁸ Looking around to mainline Protestant Churches, differentiation seems to be playing itself out in for example the split in the ELCA brought about by the progressive consensus

¹⁶ M. A. FARLEY, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*, 2006.

¹⁷ The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are inquiring into the Girl Scouts' association with programs that support »family planning or emergency contraception.« AP, Bishops Group to Investigate Girl Scouts, May 11, 2012; online (accessed Dec. 19, 2012) at: www.nytimes.com/2012/05/11/us/bishops-group-to-investigate-girl-scouts.html?_r=0.

¹⁸ I am grateful to Professor Marilyn McCord Adams for making this distinction in a personal conversation, March 23, 2012; see also her article: M. McCORD ADAMS, *Face to faith*, March 25, 2006; online (accessed Dec. 19, 2012) at: www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/mar/25/religion.uk.

on gays and lesbians in August of 2009¹⁹ to the votes against the global Anglican covenant precipitated by the Episcopal Church in May of 2012.²⁰ The church interests recommending the agenda for Luther studies do not necessarily need to take unity as sole ecumenical mandate. Indeed, we might say the time for this has come to an end for the moment. Now it is time to reassert Luther's insight that God the Spirit creates the church. Perhaps we should recognize difference, not stifle it, and discern how the Spirit is creating the church today.

IV The Public Nature of Theology

Luther once credited his license to dispute in public to his academic doctorate. Early on in his career, Luther wrote to the pope that he had the right as a doctor of theology to dispute theological questions.²¹ Neither the monastic vow nor his ordination, but the doctorate was the medieval license for challenging Rome in public debate. Luther's recourse to his academic title reminds us that the university is a public forum, and as such, the appropriate setting for theology as a form of public engagement, with its unique potential for social, political, and institutional change. To end this talk I want to mention one model of inspiration, a theologian who represents the public transformation of theology from the New World, a German émigré to Canada. He is a model for the sort of scholarship for change that I think can help us reflect together on how Luther, theology, and the university can present new opportunities for creative thinking and action.

The theologian I want to talk about here is Ulrich Siegfried Leupold. Some of you might recognize his name from the cover of volume 53 of the

19 See the ELCA's social statement on human sexuality that was adopted at a Churchwide Assembly meeting on Aug. 19, 2009; online (accessed January 16, 2013) at: <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/JTF-Human-Sexuality.aspx>.

20 See the website providing up-to-date information on all national churches within the worldwide Anglican communion concerning their respective positions vis-à-vis the Anglican covenant online (accessed January 16, 2013) at: <http://noanglicancovenant.org/background.html#tec>.

21 WA I; 528,27–31.

American Edition of Luther's Works.²² Leupold edited and translated this volume dedicated to Luther's hymns and liturgies. But what you might not know is that he held a doctorate from the University of Berlin, earned at the age of 23 in musicology, and his *Staatsexamen* in theology, and that he came to Canada during the Second World War, was dean of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, and helped found the music department of Waterloo Lutheran University (now institutionally distinct from the seminary and renamed Wilfrid Laurier University).

Leupold was educated in Berlin and Zürich during the 1920s and 1930s.²³ He studied with Germany's brightest in both fields of musicology and theology. His doctoral dissertation *Die liturgischen Gesänge der evangelischen Kirche im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Romantik* (*The Liturgical Chants of the Evangelical Church at the Time of the Enlightenment and Romantic Periods*), was a study of the organization of the Prussian musical establishment under King Frederick Wilhelm III, and was snapped up in 1933 by Bärenreiter in Kassel, one of Germany's most prestigious publishers.²⁴ But Leupold's mother was Jewish, and because of the Aryan race laws imposed on Protestant ordinations, Leupold joined the Confessing Church in order to be ordained (although it is not clear which of the Confessing Church seminaries he attended). He left Germany in 1938/39 for England because of his sister who had married an Englishman and then went to the United States, his emigration brokered by a pastor who sponsored Leupold as a church musician at Augsburg Lutheran Church in Toledo, Ohio. On March 29, 1939 Leupold moved to Canada as assistant pastor to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Kitchener (former

22 Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965.

23 Substantive research to date on Ulrich Leupold has been published by Canadian musicologist (and my father) Paul Helmer. My remarks on Leupold are summaries of the following two articles by P. HELMER: Ulrich Siegfried Leupold (1909–70) (Consensus: A Canadian Lutheran Journal of Theology 34, no. 1, 2012); online (accessed December 21, 2012) at: <http://www.consensusjournal.ca/Current%20Issue/Article%2001-Ulrich%20Siegfried%20Leupold.pdf> and Ulrich Siegfried Leupold (in: Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology, ed. by J. R. WATSON/E. HORNBY, 2013); online (accessed January 16, 2013) at: http://hymnology.org.uk/dictionary/Ulrich_Siegfried_Leupold.

24 This sentence is taken from Helmer's formulation in HELMER (see n. 23), 3 f.

name Berlin). This emigration did not come a moment too soon. In 1940, his name and that of his mother appeared in Theophil Stengel's *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*, equivalent to a death sentence.²⁵

Leupold would give to his new country of Canada his extraordinary gifts as musicologist, organist, pastor, theologian, and university administrator. After a short time as pastor of a parish in Maynooth, Ontario, a small northern Canadian town near Lake Huron, Leupold moved to Waterloo in southern Ontario where he became dean of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, along with appointments as Assistant Professor of Music and Professor of New Testament Studies and Church Music. There he regularly taught Greek and offered the seminary's first course in music, inaugurated a master's degree in sacred music, and through his administrative efforts, was the driving force behind the creation of the music department at Waterloo Lutheran University. His academic publication record in both musicology and theology was phenomenal, and in addition, he edited 200 motets and anthems by American and Canadian composers, served on the task forces for the preparation of two Lutheran worship books, the *Service Book and Hymnal* (»The Red Book«) from 1958, and the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship begun in 1966, which resulted in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (»The Green Book«), published after his early death in 1970 of Lou Gehrig's disease. On the liturgical committee, he »proposed that liturgies be commissioned from the leading American and European composers such as Igor Stravinsky, Roger Sessions, Walter Piston, Benjamin Britten, Luigi Dallapiccola and Hans Werner Henze, among others,« a proposal that unfortunately was not accepted by the general committee.²⁶ He was a pioneer in Lutheran world music, working on projects to collect hymn materials for Spanish-speaking Lutheran congregations in the Americas and putting together the list of global hymns for the 1970 assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

What we see with Leupold is the best of the Lutheran tradition, fine music, a sense to the present needs of the church, and an intellectual legacy that if it had taken place in Germany would be lauded, though in

25 See HELMER (see n. 23), 6, n. 5.

26 Loc. cit., 14f.

Canada forgotten, even to Canadians.²⁷ Although the intellectual agenda opened up by deconstructionism has been remarkably pertinent to global pluralism, its accompanying critical edge has resulted in a naïveté concerning the intellectual legacy that has to a large extent been shaped by the German academy since Schleiermacher. The current situation offers a huge opportunity for Luther studies to reengage with the related fields of theology and religious studies – by reconnecting both with the history of German thought as a source of innovation in many modern disciplines and by reconnecting theology with the broader humanities and sciences of the university. What we can also acknowledge in Leupold is his inspiration to academics to follow new paths of creative vision that would continue to establish the values of academic freedom and research in the modern university.

V Conclusion

Leupold's life and work demonstrate the power of Luther's thought, the intellectual vision it may inspire, and the capacity to contextualize theology in an academic setting so that it can benefit other disciplines beyond theology and the study of religion (like musicology). Leupold was not content to worship Luther from afar, but courageously and resourcefully put Luther's legacy to work on behalf of social, institutional, and intellectual change. This is just one example of many appeals to Luther as a global trope for freedom, innovation, and resistance to the status quo. Luther scholars should pay attention to these representatives of Luther's own commitments to witness to truth in public and to stubbornly insist on grace and the incarnation, on justification and justice, on the capacity for love to change – even beyond death. This is the legacy of Luther today in the global context.

²⁷ Helmer concludes his article on Leupold in *Consensus* with the following desideratum. »A systematic study of the Leupold *fonds* in the Laurier archives is a must. I am augmenting their holdings by donating a transcript of the interview I had with Gertrude Leupold on 5 Oct. 2002. I have only barely scratched the surface here, and that only in the musical realm. What about all the materials in the pastoral-theological area?« HELMER (see n. 23), 18.