



# Planning for 2017: Reformation Resources for Your Library

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Readers will already know that in little over a year Lutherans (and others) around the world will be celebrating the five hundredth anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, marked from that day, October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther publically posted (or not!) his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, protesting abuses in the medieval Roman church. Our readers are not the only ones to notice this; authors, scholars, and publishers have taken note, too, and the current river of new books on Luther and Lutheranism can well expect to swell to become a raging torrent by October 2017. Obviously you cannot buy all these new books (unless you have a generous professional account or church library budget!), so this article is something in the way of a survey of these new resources, with some suggestions about what you might want to purchase. Having solicited the opinions of ten Reformation scholars, I want to alert you to the recent and forthcoming works and try to give you a sense of their possible utility. A major focus will be on resources by and about Martin Luther himself, but will also spread to the theology and history of Lutheranism around the world, generally considering books in print but perhaps sprinkling in a few older books to complete our survey.

*This survey of recent and forthcoming books relating to the Reformation seeks to help readers to navigate the deep waters of this literature and to find useful volumes from which to “drink.”*

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

It is always handy to have a single-volume reference available, to help you remember all those names and places and theological ideas that you once read about but now simply cannot find.

Here are some suggestions:

Timothy Wengert, et al., eds., *The Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Tradition* (Baker Academic, forthcoming)

Gunter Gassman, et al., eds., *Historical Dictionary of Lutheranism*, 2nd ed. (Scarecrow, 2011)

Erwin Lueker, ed., *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (Concordia, 1975)

The new *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Tradition* to be released in the next year or so will be the gold standard Lutheran reference book for the foreseeable future, with contributions by hundreds of scholars from around the world. It will, of course, cover Luther and the sixteenth-century Reformation, but also the subsequent history of the Lutheran movement as it spread, with special emphasis on Lutheranism as a global movement. The *Historical Dictionary of Lutheranism* is also focused widely, but with less coverage; it is in places theologically slanted and contains some inaccuracies. The *Lutheran Cyclopedia* is obviously an older work (and probably out of print), but if you can get a copy, you might find it useful, with quite a bit of information packed into a single volume. This author is constantly pulling that volume off the shelf to look up materials that he really should remember (but doesn't).

## REFORMATION HISTORIES

There is no end of good histories of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, with perhaps ten to twelve of them available currently. Here are some of the suggested volumes:

Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009)

Hans Hillerbrand, *The Division of Christendom* (Westminster John Knox, 2007)

Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford, 2012)

Rudolph Heinze, *Reform and Conflict: History of the Church*, vol. 4 (Baker, 2005)

Kenneth Appold, *The Reformation: A Brief History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)

Dale Irwin and Scott Sundquist, *A History of the World Christian Movement*, vol. 2, 1454-1800 (Orbis, 2012)

Tim Dowley, *Atlas of the European Reformations* (Fortress, 2015)

Kirsi Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2008)

The top choice of scholars consulted was Carter Lindberg's *The European Reformations*, which was noted as the best of these histories currently available. One respondent commented, "I was amazed at how much smarter my students got once I started assigning it." The volume of Hans Hillerbrand, *The Division of Christendom*, also received top marks; it does not cover as much of a time frame, but was cited as being both thorough and readable. Euan Cameron's *The European Reformation* is interesting as a general history of the Reformation period written from a British perspective; a different emphasis on a subject usually dominated by Continental scholars. *Reform and Conflict* by Rudolph Heinze is a more compact volume, but it does a great service for general readers and students; this author has had good results assigning this book. A similarly compact book is by Ken Appold, *The Reformation: A Brief History*. The book by Irwin and Sundquist, *A History of the World Christian Movement*, vol. 2, has much less coverage of sixteenth-century Europe, but is wonderful in putting the Reformation into the larger context of the worldwide expansion of Christianity in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. And of course, no history is ever complete without an atlas to accompany it. Timothy Dowley's new atlas is a wonderful way to envision this history. Kirsi Stjerna has written a timely history of women in the Reformation, a subject only now coming to the fore of Reformation studies.

#### MARTIN LUTHER: WORKS

If one wishes to find volumes of Martin Luther's own writings, it is not difficult; in this category there is an embarrassment of riches to be had:

*The Annotated Luther: 6 volumes* (Fortress, 2015–2017)

Additional volumes to *Luther's Works: The American Edition* (Concordia, 2007–)

Timothy Lull and William Russell, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 3d ed. (Fortress, 2012)

The *Annotated Luther* is a major project to be unrolled from Fortress Press leading up to the 2017 celebration. The work of six general editors, all top Luther scholars, these oversized, hardbound volumes are well researched and translated, with extremely helpful annotations and illustrations; the first two volumes are now available and currently priced at a relatively low price (\$39.00). For a personal or church library this set would be a superb choice and would provide a great overview of Luther's writings. Not to be outdone, Concordia Publishing House is headed in a different, yet equally praiseworthy, direction by producing a twenty-volume addition to the standard fifty-five volumes of the American edition of Luther's writings. When the latter set was produced in the middle of the twentieth century, it represented only a fraction of Luther's German and Latin writings. Many important works were left untranslated, and Concordia is bringing out important additions to this venerable series. Timothy Lull's single-volume anthology

of Luther's writings has long been the standard in this category; the third edition (completed after Lull's untimely death) refreshes this volume and brings in new works and new translation.

#### MARTIN LUTHER: BIOGRAPHY

There is certainly no end of good choices here. It is clear that there is some truth to the idea that Luther is one of the most written-about figures in Western history (depending on the listing, he is usually ranked somewhere in the top five). Each year, dozens of books and hundreds of articles swell the ranks of the Luther bibliography. Here are a few of the recommended new biographies:

Scott Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer* (Yale, 2015)

James Kittleson and Hans Wiersma, *Luther the Reformer*, rev. ed. (Fortress, 2016)

Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (Doubleday, 1989)

Timothy Lull and Derek Nelson, *The Resilient Reformer: The Life and Thought of Martin Luther* (Fortress, 2015)

Berndt Hamm, *The Early Luther: Stages in a Reformation Reorientation* (Eerdmans, 2014)

There are literally dozens of Luther biographies available in English, and hundreds (if not thousands) of biographical monographs on parts of the Reformer's life, and leading up to 2017 there will be a veritable gusher of new works. The new biography of Luther by Hendrix has just been released in the fall of 2015, but already it is being hailed by many as the new standard biography of Luther in English. Oberman's *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* has been out for a while, but is still seen as a fresh and innovative treatment (What can you say about Luther that has not been said before?). Tim Lull's new biography of Luther was unfinished at the time of his death and has recently been completed by Derek Nelson; this appears, too, to be a fine new biography. Jim Kittleson's biography has long been considered the best Luther biography for general readers, and it is in the process of getting an update from Hans Wiersma. Finally, the biographical and theological details of the "young" Luther (leading up to the Diet of Worms in 1521) are a particularly tortuous scholarly "swamp" (When did Luther come to his Reformation discovery?). Berndt Hamm does a fine job of winding his way through these complex questions and provides a sane summary of what we know (and what we do not know).

#### MARTIN LUTHER: THEOLOGY (OVERVIEWS)

Equally as daunting are the various books that would try to explain Luther's theology, the numbers of which would rival or exceed the numbers of biographical treatments. Here are some of the newest and critically recommended volumes:

Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* (Eerdmans, 2008)

Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Fortress, 2012)

Hans Schwartz, *True Faith in the True God* (Fortress, 2015)

Hans-Martin Barth, *The Theology of Martin Luther: A Critical Assessment* (Fortress, 2012)

Robert Kolb and Charles Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology* (Baker Academic, 2008)

It is interesting that this listing of studies on the theology of Luther is dominated by senior German scholars, not always well known in the English-speaking world but who excel in this area of scholarship. These volumes tend to be the distillation of careers spent studying the theology of Martin Luther, and are suitably erudite and well considered (though they generally do not always agree with each other). The choice between them is difficult to make, and you might just have to get your hands on them to see which one seems best to you; the differences may well come clear to you as you compare. The last volume, by Robert Kolb and Charles Arand, two American Luther scholars, comes well recommended by a number of respondents, who find it more accessible and readable than the others.

#### MARTIN LUTHER: THEOLOGY (TOPICS)

As mentioned above, there are literally thousands of these sorts of books, ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime. But there are some newer books that shed light on important areas of Luther's life and thought that ought to be considered:

Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith* (Oxford, 2009)

Timothy Wengert, *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther* (Baker Academic, 2013)

Brooks Schramm and Kirsi Stjerna, *Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader* (Fortress, 2012)

These three books are some of the most recent and notable books in this category and have all been mentioned by our Reformation scholars as important books to give perspective on Luther's work and significance. Robert Kolb's book is a good introduction to Luther's theology and significance, appropriate to general audiences. Tim Wengert tackles an issue of perennial debate, about Luther's use of Scripture; given the contemporary debates about how modern Christians ought to use the Bible in their lives of faith, this would be a very helpful book to read and have available. Of course, another current issue involves Luther and the Jewish people, and similarly the volume by Brooks Schramm and Kirsi Stjerna is very

helpful in dealing honestly (and without stereotypes) about these matters. Any or all three of these would be a useful addition to a personal or congregational library.

#### LUTHER AND CONTEMPORARY THEMES

One important area of continued interest is the matter of how the themes in Luther's theology are applicable for use in our contemporary world. The question of the utility of Reformation themes in modern existence is a perennial one, and important, because each new generation seeks to find something in its past, in this case the theology of Martin Luther, that can assist with modern problems. Here are some recent works in this area:

Hans Schwartz, *The Christian Faith: A Creedal Account* (Baker Academic, 2014)

Robert Kolb, *Luther and the Stories of God: Biblical Narratives as a Foundation for Christian Living* (Baker Academic, 2012)

Mark Tranvik, *Martin Luther and the Called Life* (Fortress, 2016)

Paul Hinlicky, *Luther and the Beloved Community* (Eerdmans, 2010)

Steven Paulson, *Lutheran Theology (Doing Theology)* (T&T Clark, 2011)

Gerhard Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Eerdmans, 1997)

All of these books attempt to relate the themes found in Luther's theology to the realities of modern life. The book by Schwartz is a basic systematic theology along the lines of the creeds. With many German theologians the question is always whether they understand the realities of American culture, but Schwartz spent enough of his career living and teaching in the United States to make this not a problem. The book by Kolb is a similar attempt, but more along the lines of Luther's biblical theology and use of Scripture. In *Martin Luther and the Called Life*, Mark Tranvik seeks to examine the Lutheran idea of vocation and its relevance to contemporary life. Hinlicky's book seeks to retrieve Luther's theological legacy for modern Americans; out of a different stance, but in a similar vein is the work by Steven Paulson. The work by Gerhard Forde is a classic example of his own theological thought, based around an examination of Luther's *Heidelberg Disputation* of 1518. Any or all of these works would be a stimulating and generative reading ahead of the Luther anniversary.

#### THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

Although the emphasis leading up to 2017 will be the life and thought of Martin Luther, it is still appropriate in this period of time to consider how Luther's theological legacy was molded and carried down through the centuries in the Lutheran Confessions of the sixteenth century. These classic formulations are the theological foundation of the Lutheran traditions, and it is important to keep their insights in our churches today. If you have not thought much about these confes-

sional documents in a while, it would be good to do so. You might be surprised how relevant to modern religious thought they can be.

Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Fortress, 2000)

Charles Arand, Robert Kolb, and James Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of the Book of Concord* (Fortress, 2012)

Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary* (Augsburg, 1987)

Timothy Wengert, *A Formula for Parish Practice: Using the Formula of Concord in Congregations* (Eerdmans, 2006)

It might be worth your while to crack open the *Book of Concord* and encounter this formidable theological collection anew. The most recent edition is the new translation produced by a team of theologians under the direction of Kolb and Wengert; the freshness of this new translation, along with the explanatory notes, is very helpful. To put the *Book of Concord* into its theological and historical context you should use the companion volume written by Arand, Kolb, and Nestingen, which tames the often arcane theological and historical context of the sixteenth century for modern readers. Leif Grane's commentary on the Augsburg Confession (1530) will help the reader with that key portion of the Lutheran confessions, while the volume by Wengert does an equally admirable job centering the Formula of Concord (1577) into the life of contemporary American Christianity. These books together provide a comprehensive look at the theology of the confessions and their influence on contemporary life.

## THE HISTORY OF LUTHERANISM

Unlike the materials about Luther and the Reformation of the sixteenth century, there is less material on the subsequent centuries of Lutheranism, as if one might easily jump from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first. The historian fairly shivers at the ahistorical audacity of such a move, for it is doomed to fail without a solid understanding of the intervening centuries (seventeenth through twentieth). Here are some works that might help bridge this gap:

Eric Lund and Mark Granquist, eds., *Documents from the History of Lutheranism*, 2 vols. (Fortress, 2016)

Eric Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism*, 2d ed. (Fortress, 2010)

Conrad Bergendoff, *The Church of the Lutheran Reformation* (Concordia, 1967)

Meic Pearse, *The Age of Reason*, vol. 5 of *Baker History of the Church* (Baker, 2005)

David Hempton, *The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Tauris, 2011)

Douglas Shantz, *An Introduction to German Pietism* (Johns Hopkins, 2013)

Uuras Saarnivaara, *They Lived in the Power of God: Lutheran Revival Leaders in Northern Europe* (Minneapolis: Ambassador Publications, 2011)

E. Theodore Bachmann and Mercia Brenne Bachmann, *The Lutheran Churches in the World: A Handbook* (Augsburg, 1989)

Mark Granquist, *Lutherans in America: A New History* (Fortress, 2015)

In 2002, Fortress Press produced the first volume of a documentary reader on Lutheranism, 1517–1750, edited by Eric Lund. The current iteration of this project, due out by 2017, will update the first volume and bring out a second volume to cover Lutheran history from 1750 to the present.

When it comes to a one-volume history of Lutheranism, the choices are not overwhelming. The *History of Lutheranism* by Eric Gritsch is rather uneven in its coverage of events (heavy on the sixteenth century). Perhaps a better solution is an older volume by Conrad Bergendoff, *The Church of the Lutheran Reformation*, which is still a very good book. Although it only brings the history up to the time of the last Lutheran anniversary in 1967, it is very balanced and very readable. The books by Pearse (*The Age of Reason*) and Hempton (*The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century*) cover the history of European Christianity from 1648 to the beginnings of the nineteenth century, and provide admirable coverage of Lutheranism. Pietism is an understudied and underappreciated, yet vital, movement in Lutheran history. *An Introduction to German Pietism* by Shantz does a fine job of introducing this movement in Germany, while *They Lived in the Power of God: Lutheran Revival Leaders in Northern Europe* by Saarnivaara provides a portrait of the nineteenth-century Scandinavian awakening and its leaders (this book is available directly from the publisher but not through other outlets). The most amazing part of Lutheranism in the twentieth century was its dynamic growth in many parts of the global South, especially in parts of Africa and Asia, which is told in the volume by Ted and Mercia Bachmann; this is a book of remarkable coverage. Finally, we must consider the history of Lutheranism in the United States, our own immediate context. My book, *Lutherans in America: A New History*, is the first updated volume of this history since the standard history of American Lutheranism, published in 1975; the author hopes that it will make this history accessible to Lutherans on many different levels.

## LUTHERAN SPIRITUALITY

All the volumes about theology, history, and ethics, as important as they are, cannot give a full picture of the vitality of Lutheranism as a vital religious movement. One also needs a sense of the spiritual life of Lutheran people across the cen-

turies, and how they lived out their faith in daily life. Here are some books that would be helpful in capturing this element of the Lutheran tradition:

Bradley Hanson, *A Graceful Life: Lutheran Spirituality for Today* (Fortress, 2000)

Marshall Johnson, ed., *Day by Day We Magnify You* (Fortress, 2008)

Gracia Grindal, ed., *40-Day Journey with Martin Luther* (Fortress, 2008)

Philip Krey and Peter Krey, *Luther's Spirituality* (Paulist, 2007)

Peter Erb, *Pietists: Selected Writings* (Paulist, 1983)

Peter Erb, *Johan Arndt: True Christianity* (Paulist, 1979)

Eric Lund, *Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Meditations and Hymns* (Paulist, 2011)

Mark Granquist, *Scandinavian Pietism: Spiritual Writings from 19th-Century Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland* (Paulist, 2015)

Bradley Hanson's book on Lutheran spirituality provides a fine introduction to this subject, with a series of thematic chapters at its core. *Day by Day We Magnify You* and *40-Day Journey with Martin Luther* continue a long Lutheran spiritual discipline of daily readings and prayer, organized around the spiritual writings of Martin Luther. The next five books are a part of a wider set, the Classics of Western Spirituality series, with volumes on Luther, the Pietists, Johan Arndt, seventeenth-century Lutherans, and the Scandinavian Pietists; these volumes make classic Lutheran spiritual texts available to English-speaking readers.

Obviously there are many more volumes that might be covered in such a survey; this review has hardly touched topics such as the Lutheran hymn and worship tradition, biographies other than those of Luther, the histories of various Lutheran communities around the world, and other important subjects. There is hardly time or space to cover the wealth of new titles that will be coming our way by October 31, 1517, but hopefully this survey of recent and forthcoming books will help its readers to begin to navigate these waters, and to find useful volumes from which to "drink." ⊕

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