

REFORMATION:
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Edited by

Marie-Theres Wacker, Felix Wilfred,
Andrés Torres Queiruga

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Editorial Reformation

The year 1517 marks the beginning of what is known as the Reformation: the German Augustinian monk Martin Luther published 95 theses, with which he aimed to call for disputation on indulgences and the sacrament of repentance. The theses reveal that Luther's theological preoccupations also immediately concerned ecclesiastical power structures. For, just to remain with the conflict on indulgences, how could God's free mercy towards human guilt be proclaimed, if letters of indulgence could be bought, which helped ecclesiastical bearers of office out of financial debts? But also, how could God's word be proclaimed in a church in which the People of God were excluded from the exegesis of the Holy Scripture, the witness of God's word and did not even have access to the Bible in their own mother tongue? Those processes touched on in such questions, did not remain limited in their effects within the church, and made the Reformation an event which changed the world. It gave impulses for the development of national states, for different concepts of the separation of State and Church, for religious tolerance (albeit through bloody religious wars), and for the recognition of the freedom of the individual. Going against a long tradition of Catholic counter-profiling and clear separations regarding Protestantism, the Second Vatican Council signified a turning point in which an ecumenical access came to the foreground and urgent theological and practical questions, which are common to all Christian denominations, were taken up. One can actually receive the impression that central concerns of Luther – the primacy of the Word of God, the accessibility of the Holy Scripture in the many languages of the world, the priesthood of all believers, the understanding of the office as service in the Church, to name just a few – had now finally arrived in the Catholic Churches!

This issue of *Concilium* follows this ecumenical line and aims to continue it in a worldwide and inclusive perspective. The first three contributions deal with the Reformation as historical event and its consequences. Heinz

Schilling (Berlin) places the Wittenberg reformer in the historical context of his epoch, a time the strangeness of which as compared with present late-modern-Western views of the world he strongly emphasizes. As results of the Reformation he describes a confessional antagonizing, but at the same time the development of religious and cultural differentiation. Erik Borgman (Tilburg) reviews historical reconstructions of the Reformation and its results from Anglo-Saxon regions. He uses this route to prepare the field for fundamental theological questions which should today be further worked on. Of special concern for him is to recall the radical revolutionaries, who have massively drawn attention to the problem of a violent and unresolved world. Daniel Jeyaraj (Liverpool) sketches the history of the Protestant Christian mission in India and illustrates as an example the results of the Reformation far beyond Europe. Jeyaraj places particular emphasis on the history of a respectful attitude of European missionaries toward Indian traditions and the manifold forms of inculturation of Christianity in the Indian sub-continent.

A further three contributions concern Martin Luther's theology. Manuel Santos Noya (Tübingen) focuses on some verses from Paul's epistles, in which Luther's German translation differs markedly from the Greek respective Latin copy, and places the new wording in the context of Luther's new certainty on the deeper meaning of scripture, but also points out possible problems of text tradition. Lidija Matosevic (Zagreb) takes up in systematic-theological interest the theme of indulgences. She shows that on Luther's criticism of the handling of indulgences of his time one can newly discover two unrelinquishable views of medieval theology, the idea of the Church as a community of saints and connected with that solidarity with the people who are really living in misery. Ulrich Duchrow (Heidelberg) emphatically supports radicalising the Reformation. If one brings together Luther's radical criticism of early capitalism from his various writings and connects it with the social criticism of the Bible, a foundation can be found for a radical economic criticism from Protestant perspectives, which is also capable of inter-religious connection. Regarding Luther's annihilating judgments of Jews and Muslims, however, a radical criticism of the reformer himself is required.

Lutheran churches worldwide are united in the Lutheran World Federation. The present president of the LWF, Bishop Munib Younan (Jerusalem) describes this church community in its basic structures, indicates present-

day challenges and in particular gives his views on the question of what significance the differentiation of Christianity can come to have in its various denominations also for the future. As a central aspect of the realization of justice which arises from justification by faith, he recalls gender justice and the policy statement paper of the LWF published on this. The contribution of Elaine Neuenfeldt (Geneva) also deals with this. She presents the initial results of an investigation which the LWF carried out in 2015/16 among its member churches which concerns the inclusion of women into the ordained ministry as well as decision-making positions in the particular churches. Encouraging developments in many churches worldwide are also clear as still existing structural obstacles and even regressions in readiness to enable full participation of women in ordained ministry.

The contributions of Dorothea Sattler (Münster) and Jürgen Moltmann (Tübingen) can be regarded as an ecumenical discussion. Dorothea Sattler outlines the developments in Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue since Vatican Council II as a Catholic representative of an ecumenical theology, places together the central results in the dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and calls for the continuation of dialogue at the various levels. Jürgen Moltmann reminds us that Luther did not invite to dialogue but challenged to disputation, and pleads from the Protestant perspective for a courageous continuance of discussion of the great open questions in regard to the Roman Catholic church, but also among the churches resulting from the Reformation themselves.

The forum of this issue contains two contributions that discuss the present-day theme in the Roman Catholic Church of female diaconate and show in this way that the theme of gender justice has ecumenical dimensions. Sarah Röttger's historically based study points out women with episcopal authority; Phyllis Zagano's practical-theological contribution views sacramentally ordained female deacons as an essential pastoral necessity. The conclusion is an obituary of the Archbishop of São Paulo and world-renowned liberation theologian Paolo Evaristo Arns, who died in December 2016.

Thanks are due for various suggestions to Luiz Carlos Susin, Hubert Wolf, Zoran Grozdanov, Simone Sinn and Susan Ross.

Marie-Theres Wacker, Felix Wilfred and Andrés Torres de Queiruga