NOW IF A DEADLY EPIDEMIC STRIKES . . .

DISEASE, HEALING, AND PASTORAL CARE IN THE 16TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

Richard Manly Adams Jr.
Margaret A. Pitts Assistant Professor in the Practice of Theological Bibliography
and Director of Pitts Theology Library

“Now if a deadly epidemic strikes, we should stay where we are, make our preparations, and take courage in the fact that we are mutually bound together.”—MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther penned these words in 1527, answering his colleague Pastor Johann Hess in Breslau, where Hess was facing an outbreak of the bubonic plague. Hess had inquired of Luther how the clergy should respond to the disease, asking whether a Christian should flee or stay and help those who were suffering. Luther’s response, in the form of his 1527 open letter “Whether One May Flee From a Deadly Plague” (Ob man für dem Sterben fliehen muge; 1527 LUTH M), reminds us that though the disruptions of the coronavirus may be new challenges for us, disease, healing, and pastoral care have often been at the center of the church’s theological reflection. Luther’s response prompts us to ask the question that stands at the center of all activities surrounding the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection: “What relevance do the events, personalities, and texts of the Protestant Reformation hold for contemporary communities?”

continued on next page
We take this question of relevance as our guide as we plan the 33rd annual Reformation Day at Emory in a time of pandemic and quarantine. Though we cannot gather in person, we are excited to announce a new twist on our annual celebration. We are launching the Kessler Conversations at Pitts Theology Library, a series of online interviews with leading church historians and theologians, asking this question of relevance. Conversations each semester will focus on a single contemporary theme and invite scholars to trace it back to the reformers. These online, 30–45 minute conversations will offer opportunities for the general public to learn about the events in Europe in the 16th century and to consider what they tell us about the issues facing our communities. This Fall, the Kessler Conversations, to be held on the first Wednesday of each month, will focus on disease, healing, and pastoral care.

Our September conversation will be with Professor Anna M. Johnson, Associate Professor of Reformation Church History at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Professor Johnson’s research explores religious practice in the German Reformation. She is the author of Beyond Indulgences: Luther’s Reform of Late Medieval Piety, 1518–1520 (Truman State University Press, 2017), and she recently wrote the introduction and annotations to Luther’s “Whether One Should Hear the Deadly Plague” for the Annotated Luther (Fortress Press, 2016). The Kessler Conversation with Professor Johnson, entitled “Christian Ethics in Times of Plague,” will be livestreamed at noon Eastern on Wednesday, September 2nd.

In October, the Kessler Conversation will be with Professor Erik Heinrichs, Associate Professor of History at Winona State University. Professor Heinrichs is a historian of medieval and early modern Europe, with research interest in medical and cultural responses to plagues, particularly in German-speaking lands. He is the author of Plague, Print, and the Reformation: The German Reform of Healing, 1473–1573 ( Routledge, 2018). The Kessler Conversation with Professor Heinrichs, entitled “Plague in the Reformation Era,” will be livestreamed at noon Eastern on Wednesday, October 7th.

The November Kessler Conversation will be with Professor Ronald Rittgers, the Erich Markel Chair in German Reformation Studies and Professor of History and Theology at Valparaiso University. Professor Rittgers’ research interests are in religious, intellectual, and social history of medieval and Early Modern/Reformation Europe, focusing especially on theology and devotion. He is the author of The Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany (Oxford University Press, 2012). The Kessler Conversation with Professor Rittgers, entitled “The Reformation of Suffering,” will be livestreamed at noon Eastern on Wednesday, November 4th. We are excited about the Kessler Conversations as a way of extending our Reformation Day impact, inviting a broader audience to learn how the 500-year-old works in the Kessler Collection have much to say about the challenges of disease, healing, and pastoral care that we all face today.

In addition to this academic work, worship has long been at the center of the Reformation Day celebration. For the past few years, the Reformation Day at Emory worship service has featured some of the best preachers in the Lutheran church. Though our worship service will be virtual, this year’s service will be no exception. Leading us in worship will be Bishop Leila M. Ortiz, of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod of the ELCA. In her role as Bishop, a position to which she was elected in 2018, Rev. Ortiz works alongside pastors, councils, and church members as they discern their call in the church for the sake of the world. In addition to her multiple past pastoral appointments in Maryland and Virginia, Bishop Ortiz has served as a representative from the United States at the Luther World Federation Global Theological Consultation, in Wittenberg in 2012 and in Geneva in 2016, to assess Lutheran heritage and the Reformation in defining what it means to be Lutheran in a fast-changing world. She will lead us in a live-streamed worship at 11 a.m. Eastern on Thursday, October 29th.

So, as you can see, we at Pitts view the disruptions of the pandemic as an opportunity not only to continue the traditions of Reformation Day, but to broaden the impact of our important work. I hope you will join us for any and all of these events (and invite your friends!), as we continue to celebrate this collection, learn from its treasures, and consider how the church is continuously reforming.

The Kessler Research Fellowship

The manuscript note written in the hand of Martin Luther, a fragment of a letter written to Philipp Melanchthon (ca. 1509), is set to be published in journals and edited volumes in the coming months. One exciting discovery was his work on one of the Kessler Collection’s two examples of Martin Luther’s handwriting. Bubenheimer writes in a forthcoming publication, “A small Luther manuscript in the Pitts Theology Library in Atlanta that was previously considered an independent note was shown after a close examination to be a fragment of a letter by Luther to [Philipp] Melanchthon. This fragment suggests that the reliability of Luther’s calculations was questioned in Wittenberg, since it made contradictory statements regarding individual biblical dates. We are excited to see Prof. Bubenheimer’s publications, which will advance Reformation scholarship and bring further attention to the treasures of the Kessler Collection.

Through the generosity of our donors, we are able to extend this fellowship into the 2020–2021 academic year, and from a robust applicant pool, we selected three young scholars to constitute our second cohort of Kessler Research Fellows. Alyssa Lehr Evans is a doctoral candidate in History at Princeton Theological Seminary. She has been a recipient of both Fulbright and DAAD Research Fellowships, and she worked as a member of the Andreas Karlstadt Critical Edition team in Germany from 2015–2017. Alyssa plans to work on the Kessler Collection’s many Karlstadt prints, including his Apologetische Conclusions (1518) and De legiæ lœvæ, et carœ, & spiritœ (1524).

Drew Thomas is a Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Researcher in the School of History at University College Dublin. His current research applies machine learning and image recognition software to woodcut illustrations and ornamentation in books from the early modern Holy Roman Empire. His research on the Kessler Collection will consider contemporary printing counterfeits of Luther’s writings and their later reception by libraries and book collectors.

Edmund Wareham is the Cowdrey Early Career Teaching and Research Fellow in History at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford University. He has been a Postdoctoral Research Associate on ‘The Nuremberg Project,’ a project where he is editing a collection of 1,800 letters from the Benedictine convent of Lüne dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. His project on the Kessler collection will be on ‘Making and Breaking Vows in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany.’

Each fellow will produce an essay for publication and digital exhibition aimed at the general public. These two deliverables will reflect well the multiple audiences for the Kessler Collection’s impact. We want to thank our donors for sponsoring these fellows, in particular Dr. Walker and Mrs. Nancy Ray, Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Louise Miller, and Ms. Laura Kesler. We hope to continue and grow this fellowship each year, so please contact me if you want more information about sponsoring a Kessler Research Fellow.
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The Kessler Research Fellowship

A NEW PROGRAM AIMED AT IMPACT

Richard Manly Adams Jr.

“The question once was, ‘What can a library do?’ Today the question is, ‘What can a library do? Formerly, it was a question of resources, of numbers of books, of wealth, of material. Now, it is rather a question of effectiveness, of vitality, of influence.’”

John Cotton Dana (1856-1929), one of the founders of the modern American library, wrote these words in 1899. At Pitts Theology Library, we take Dana’s challenge seriously, as we measure our success not by the size of our collections, but by the impact those collections make on scholarship, the church, and the public. Activities surrounding the Kessler Reformation Collection are prime examples of this drive toward impact.

To that end, we celebrate the launch of the Richard C. Kessler Research Fellowship, a new program that will generate scholarship and draw attention to the learning potential that lies within the collection. The program began in 2019–2020, with the visit of our inaugural Kessler Research Fellow, Professor Ulrich Bubenheimer, Professor Emeritus at the Pädagogische Hochschule in Heidelberg. He spent six weeks at Pitts in the Fall of 2019, meeting with students and faculty, speaking at events, and conducting research on manuscript annotations in Kessler items. His findings have already improved catalog records, and his re

search is set to be published in journals and edited volumes in the coming months. One exciting discovery was his work on one of the Kessler Collection’s two examples of Martin Luther’s handwriting. Bubenheimer writes in a forthcoming publication, “A small manuscript in the Pitts Theology Library in Atlanta that was previously considered an independent note was shown after a close examination to be a fragment of a letter by Luther to [Philipp] Melanchthon. This fragment suggests that the reliability of Luther’s calculations was questioned in Wittenberg, since it made contradictory statements regarding individual biblical dates.” We are excited to see Prof. Bubenheimer’s publications, which will advance Reformation scholarship and bring more attention to the treasures of the Kessler Collection.

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Ulrich Bubenheimer, Alyssa Evans, Drew Thomas, Edmund Wareham

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The manuscript note written in the hand of Martin Luther, a fragment of a letter written to Philipp Melanchthon (MSS 990)

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Clockwise from top left: Bishop Leila M. Ortiz, Professor Anna M. Johnson, Professor Erik Heinrichs, Professor Ronald Rittgers

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Disease, Healing, and Pastoral Care (continued)
The 32nd annual Reformation Day at Emory was an international affair, bringing scholars from around the world together to discuss the production, ownership, and dissemination of books in the 16th century. In addition to the afternoon panel, we were led in worship by the new Bishop of the ELCA Southeastern Synod, Reverend Kevin Strickland. It was a wonderful day of seeing old friends, learning new things, and celebrating this incredible collection and the impact it is having on the church, the academy, and the public. For more information and to watch video of the events from that day, visit pitts.emory.edu/reformationday

The Kessler Collection recently acquired a 1550 Basel printing of the Cosmographia by Sebastian Münster (1488–1552). First published in 1544, the work is a world chronicle with extensive geographic descriptions and hundreds of detailed woodcut illustrations by leading European artists, including Hans Holbein and Urs Graf. The massive work includes two maps of the world, maps of Europe, Africa, Asia, India, and various European countries, as well as numerous cityscapes. Being the first German description of the world, the Cosmographia helped revive a scientific interest in geography and was so popular that it was translated and reprinted numerous times, well into the 17th century. The Kessler 1550 printing is the fourth German edition, the last to be revised and enlarged by Münster himself only two years before he died of plague.

Münster’s significance for the Kessler Collection is primarily due to his prominence as a Christian Hebraist. Ordained as a Franciscan monk, he taught Hebraic at the Universities of Tübingen, Heidelberg, and eventually Basel. He published several Hebrew grammars and dictionaries and edited works by the medieval Jewish scholar David Kimhi, many of them held by the Kessler Collection. He also developed an interest in Luther’s teachings and translated the Reformer’s influential tract on the Ten Commandments, a forerunner to the Small Catechism. After moving to Basel, Münster left the Franciscan order and married Anna Selber, the widow of the printer Adam Petri, which gave him access to one of the city’s main printing presses, then operated by Petri’s stepson Heinrich Petri, who printed the Cosmographia.

Münster’s interest in geography and cartography developed largely after his move to Basel, culminating in the publication of the Cosmographia. Drawing on travel descriptions and notes by various scholars and explorers and working with some of Europe’s foremost woodcut artists, Münster was able to produce a comprehensive and detailed description of various regions along with relatively accurate maps and illustrations, both of which account for the lasting popularity of the work. One of his maps, entitled Tabula novarum insularum, has been credited as the first geographically distinct map of the American continents. Some of his sources, however, included less credible accounts, like that of Marco Polo, or even fictitious works, like the pseudonymous travels of Jean de Mandeville. As a result, the work also includes some rather fantastic descriptions (and images) of exotic humans with dog-heads or blemmyes (headless humans with their faces on their chest), as well as various monsters. These medieval remnants notwithstanding, the Cosmographia set a new standard for geographic descriptions grounded in empirical observation and scientific description. Münster’s legacy is well described in the words inscribed on his tombstone (unfortunately no longer extant), which named him the German Eras (after the biblical figure) for his contribution to the study of Scripture and the Hebrew language, and Strabo (after the ancient Greek historian and geographer) for his contribution to the scientific understanding of the world.

Armin Stadelbek • Rare Book Cataloger

The Kessler Collection performs at the Reformation Day lunch and after his move to Basel, culminating in the publication of the Cosmographia.
The Kessler Collection Adds a Landmark Work in Science and Geography

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Shown here are some of the strangest figures that Münster’s sources claimed to have encountered. Top: This map is one of the earliest depictions of the American continents, known to Europeans for only a few decades when it was printed.
Richard Manly Adams Jr. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of our lives, and the rare book trade is no different. The pandemic has accelerated changes to the industry that were already in the works. One of the biggest changes has been the proliferation of online auctions, even from the niche auction houses from which we often buy. While quarantine creates problems even for these (we participated in an April auction that was most certainly held in the auctioneer's garage!), it has been a welcome relief to see these very traditional auction houses adapt to new challenges and new technologies (though more bidders means higher prices).

Despite many challenges with international shipping, the Kessler Collection has had another bountiful year of acquisitions. In general, we will consider an acquisition for one of several reasons. First, the core focus of the Kessler Collection is the figure Martin Luther, and so we aggressively pursue works connected to Luther. Each year this gets more challenging, as not only have Luther works become more expensive since the 500th anniversary of the 95 theses, but as the Collection adds more works by Luther (now numbering over 1,000), there are fewer out there that we don’t own. This past year we added 2 Luther works, bound into a single volume (called a Sammelband in German) (1523 LUTH HHHHH). The first is a 1523 printing of Luther’s popular sermon on the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deadly Sins. Each commandment is illustrated by a woodcut image attributed to the German artist Urs Graf (ca. 1485–1528). This work is bound together with a 1521 printing of Luther’s translation and exposition of the Magnificat (Lk. 1:46–55). We also added several items written by Luther’s close collaborator Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560). We also acquire items that will grow the research impact of the Kessler Collection. We will consider an acquisition seriously if there are no known holdings in North America. For example, we recently added the only known North American copy of Bishop Konrad of Würzburg’s (ca. 1466–1540) edict for the knights of Franconia regarding restitution for damages incurred during the Peasants’ War of 1524–1525. Acquisitions also hold particular research potential. This year we added a 1532 printing of the report from the Second Council of Pisa (1511–1512), a French initiative to limit the power of Pope Julius II (1512 LIBE). Inscribed on this copy is a Latin poem in a German hand, dated 1519, which is a satirical poem against the papacy. The text of the poem appears to be identical to a manuscript held by the Newberry Library in Chicago. We are excited about a joint research project to determine how the council was received by early reformers. We also acquire items for their images as much as their text. As indicated by our Digital Image Archive (pitts.uchicago.edu/oaia), a collection of over 65,000 images that receives thousands of hits every month, the images of the Kessler Collection are true prizes. This year we added a number of collections of woodcuts from some of the German masters in the early 16th century. One beautiful example is a 1597 first edition of Ulrich Pinder’s Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ Examined, which produced by different German master artists of the early 16th century. The upper is a hallucination of the crucified Jesus by Hans Schaufelein. Schaufelein’s signature logo of crossed shovels with his initials are clear.
Collecting in Quarantine

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For the first time in 33 years, the annual Reformation Day at Emory will be a virtual celebration. We look forward to this opportunity to spread our programming across the Fall semester, offering several opportunities for you to engage with and learn from this collection. This Fall’s program explores the theme “Disease, Healing and Pastoral Care in the 16th Century.” All events are free and open to the public. They will stream live and will be archived and available online afterwards at http://pitts.emory.edu/reformationday.

Kessler Conversations, Fall 2020

Wednesday, September 2, Noon Eastern
“Christian Ethics in Times of Plague”
Professor Anna M. Johnson
Associate Professor of Reformation Church History
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Wednesday, October 7, Noon Eastern
“Plague in the Reformation Era”
Professor Erik Heinrichs
Associate Professor of History
Winona State University

Wednesday, November 4, Noon Eastern
“The Reformation of Suffering”
Professor Ronald Rittgers
Erich Markel Chair in German Reformation Studies, Professor of History and Theology
Valparaiso University

Reformation Day 2020 Worship Service
Thursday, October 29, 11 A.M. Eastern
Bishop Leila M. Ortiz, Preaching
ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod