

# REFORMATION NOTES

News for Partners of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection

Spring 2005, Number 26

## Kessler Collection Update

*M. Patrick Graham*

*The Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection is a repository of rare and valuable documents produced in connection with the Protestant Reformation. The collection now contains more than 2,800 pieces written by Martin Luther, his colleagues, and opponents, and printed during their lifetimes.*

*Supported by the vision and resources of Lutheran laypeople Richard and Martha Kessler and partners throughout the Southeast, the collection is housed in the Pitts Theology Library of Candler School of Theology. It provides a rich resource for scholars of the Reformation and for clergy and laity who seek to understand the history of the Christian faith.*

*For more information about the collection, contact:  
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The Kessler Reformation Collection grew by forty-six pieces since September 1, primarily through auction purchases, and so now stands at 2,852. As for their relative scarcity in America,

- ♦ twenty-two items do not appear to be held by other North American libraries;
- ♦ eleven are held by only one other American library;
- ♦ five are held by two other American libraries.

Among the more impressive of these recent acquisitions are two items. First,

there is the rare, first Basel edition of Martin Luther's German translation of the New Testament. It was printed only three months after the *September Testament* first appeared in 1522. One bibliography was able to find only eight surviving, complete copies of the Basel edition. The striking illustrations for this book were drawn by the renowned Hans Holbein, the Younger, and cut by Hans Lützelburger. The beautiful calfskin binding is signed with the monogram of Nicolas Spierinck, who moved from the

*continued on page 2*



*"LUTHER AND FRIEDRICH, DUKE OF SAXONY, KNEEL BEFORE THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST"  
FROM THE JENA EDITION OF LUTHER'S WORKS*



“SAINT LUKE WRITES  
HIS GOSPEL”  
FROM THE JENA  
EDITION OF LUTHER’S  
WORKS

## The Ten Commandments

The Kessler Collection funded the printing of a poster (ca. 15” x 33”) to commemorate the 475th anniversary of the publication of Luther’s catechisms (1529–2004). These posters are offered gratis, and there is no charge for shipping/handling.

The poster reproduces engravings of ten Old Testament stories that illustrate the breaking of each of the commandments. The illustrations are taken from a 1545 Leipzig printing of the *Small Catechism* and alongside each is an English translation of Luther’s rendering of the commandment and what it means for the Christian.

Requests may be placed at <http://www.pitts.emory.edu/specCOLL/request/xcom.cfm>.

## Kessler Collection Update—

*continued from page 1*

Low Countries to England, settling in Cambridge about 1500 and winning an appointment as the university’s stationer and printer. This acquisition came to the library as an exclusive offer by a Swiss antiquarian dealer, who had visited Pitts and come to appreciate the importance of the Kessler Collection and its programs.

A second notable purchase this year is the Jena edition of Luther’s German works (see the article by Armin Siedlecki on p. 4), acquired through a German auction. These impressive eight folio volumes are bound in magnificent, alum-tawed pigskin over wooden boards and are eloquent testimony to Luther’s stature as the first best-selling German author and to scholarship’s early interest in the reformer.

Much could be said about the other forty-three pieces, but space only permits us to note that the group includes important church orders from Nuremberg and Lüneburg and a total of eleven works by Luther and three each by Karlstadt, Melancthon, and Urbanus Rhegius.

Finally, I want to note that the number of presentations to groups by library staff has increased dramatically this year—more than fifty presentations to almost 1,100 persons since July 1, 2004. In many instances, these presentations to students, visiting faculty, church groups, etc. have made use of Kessler Collection items.

One of the highlights this year was a visit by several faculty from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg—enthusiastic guests with a great ability to explain Luther and his significance!

*M. Patrick Graham is Librarian and Margaret A. Pitts Professor of Theological Bibliography.*

## DIGITAL IMAGE ARCHIVE

More than 10,000 digital images are now available at no charge to scholars, students, and other interested persons at: <http://www.pitts.emory.edu/dia/woodcuts.htm> (or simply “Google” “Pitts Digital Image Archive”)

Among the images you should expect to find there:

- ◆ Illustrations of biblical texts (more than 4,000)
- ◆ Portraits of religious leaders
- ◆ Engravings of church architecture and vestments
- ◆ Printers’ devices from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries
- ◆ Religious and political cartoons
- ◆ Representations of religious ritual

You may access the archive without having a password or needing to log in; search it by Scripture text or keyword; and then download JPEG or PDF images to print out or include in digital presentations. (There is a modest charge for commercial publishers, to whom we provide high-resolution TIFF images, usually within twenty-four hours of the request.)

Would you find it helpful? Judge for yourself:

- ◆ 1,900+ Internet web pages link to the Digital Image Archive.
- ◆ 1,500 pages from the archive are viewed daily.
- ◆ 530 visits daily to the Archive by guests from around the world

# The Meaning of the Reformation

## REFORMATION DAY AT EMORY UNIVERSITY

October 19, 2005

In an effort to attract some of those who will attend the Sixteenth Century Society Conference in Atlanta and to respond to suggestions by those attending earlier Reformation Day at Emory programs, we have made three significant changes to this year's program:

- This year's program will be held on Wednesday rather than Tuesday.
- Program events will begin with the 11:00 a.m. chapel service rather than with an early-morning registration and lecture recital.
- The Kessler Reformation Concert will be held in the Donna and Marvin Schwartz Center for Performing Arts at Emory University. This change of venue will allow University Organist Timothy Albrecht to introduce the new Jaeckel Organ. This fourteen-ton, custom-built instrument was installed in May 2004, and the process of voicing the 3,605 pipes will continue until its fall 2005 inauguration.

We are especially pleased to introduce three new lecturers to the friends of the Kessler Collection this year:

- Scott Hendrix, James Hastings Nichols Professor of Reformation History and Doctrine, Princeton Theological Seminary; author of *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (2004); and ELCA minister.
- Beth A. Lewis, president and CEO of Augsburg Fortress Press; Lewis brings rich experience in the publishing industry (Times Mirror, McGraw Hill) and in information technology.
- Richard Lischer, James T. and Alice Mead Cleland Professor of Preaching, Duke Divinity School; ELCA minister; and author of *The Preacher King: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Word That Moved America*.



“SAINT MATTHEW WRITES HIS GOSPEL” FROM THE JENA EDITION OF LUTHER’S WORKS



### STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE KESSLER REFORMATION COLLECTION

Policy direction for the Reformation Collection is provided by a standing committee composed of representatives of Emory University and the local and national Lutheran community.

Mr. Richard C. Kessler, Chair  
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Dr. Timothy Albrecht  
Ms. Mary Lou Greenwood Boice  
Dr. M. Patrick Graham  
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Lutheran Theological Seminary  
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### PATRONS OF THE KESSLER REFORMATION COLLECTION

Emory University  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Kessler  
The Lutheran Brotherhood

### PARTNERS OF THE KESSLER REFORMATION COLLECTION

Mr. and Mrs. Neil M. Anderson  
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# Collecting Luther

*Armin Siedlecki*

Last October, at an auction in Germany, the Pitts Library bid successfully for the Jena edition of Luther's German works. This bid completed a long effort to acquire the early editions of Luther's collected works. The Kessler Reformation Collection now includes the Basel edition (an early and incomplete effort), the Wittenberg edition, the Jena edition, and the Eisleben supplement.

Martin Luther was by far the most prolific author of the Reformation, producing an average of one publication each month of his career (1517–1546) and thus being more prolific—by a wide margin—than his fellow reformers or his Catholic opponents. A collection of Luther's complete works is therefore an inherently monumental undertaking.

Even before Luther produced most of his works, there were attempts to collect the reformer's writings. As early as 1518, the Basel printer Johann Froben published a collection of Luther's Latin writings, which was reprinted several times in the following years. The Kessler Collection holds a first edition of this early compilation. The first comprehensive collection of Luther's writings was begun in 1539, seven years prior to Luther's death, but was not completed until 1559. This project, which became known as the Wittenberg edition, was published by three different printers in

the city of Wittenberg in twelve German and seven Latin volumes.

The Jena edition of Luther's works, issued in eight German and four Latin volumes between 1554 and 1558, was instigated by Johann Friedrich I of Saxony, who had lost the electorate to Moritz of Saxony in the Schmalkaldic war and whose supporters founded a new university at Jena.

One reason for producing another edition in Jena was theological. The teachers at Jena rejected what they regarded as the compromising positions of Philip Melancthon and his followers, called Philippists. The Jena editors, on the other hand, supported the "Gnesio-" ("genuine," in Greek) Lutheran position and included among their number Georg Römer, who had copied many of Luther's lectures and sermons.\*

Another difference between the two editions is the arrangement. The Wittenberg edition is ordered on the basis of topics; the Jena edition is chronologically arranged. The goal of the Jena edition was to correct errors that were found in the Wittenberg edition. However, since the editors often did not have direct access to the original texts, they frequently found themselves having to rely on the Wittenberg edition itself.

Despite efforts at comprehensiveness, neither the Wittenberg nor the Jena

edition included all Luther's writings. To address this problem, Johann Aurifaber collected those works that had been omitted. His two-volume edition was published in Eisleben in 1564–1565.

Excluded from these early collections were Luther's translation of the Bible, his *Table Talk*, and much of his correspondence—all of which, of course, had been published separately. The Wittenberg and (especially) the Jena edition were reissued numerous times, until several different attempts were made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to create a single complete edition. Nineteenth-century scholars demanded a critical, academic edition of Luther's works, and this need eventually gave rise to the "Weimar edition" (usually cited "WA" [= *Weimarer Ausgabe*]), which included works previously omitted from collections of Luther's writings as well as variant readings for those texts that had been included. This edition, which is still widely used and is currently being reissued, thus continues the work begun at Basel, Wittenberg, Jena, and Eisleben and attests to the enduring interest in the literary output of the great reformer.

*Armin Siedlecki is Catalog Librarian for the Kessler Reformation Collection.*

\*Thanks to Timothy Wengert—of the Lutheran School of Theology in Philadelphia—for his comments on this point.

