

Annotated Bibliography for the Lutheran Reformation

Books about the life of Martin Luther

- Bainton, Roland. *Here I Stand*. Abingdon Press, 2013 (Reprint) *First published in the middle of the 20th century, this text has been a classic introduction to Luther for a very long time. Recent scholarship has updated some of this and Bainton's context is not exactly our context, but many continue to find this a very readable and accessible introduction to Martin Luther.*
- Hendrix, Scott H. *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2015. *Hendrix is an important scholar of the Reformation at Princeton. His text is accessible and sound. At times he may be critiqued for ascribing too much to Luther, but this is a very good introduction and biography of Luther.*
- Kittelton, James M. *Luther the Reformer*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. *A very accessible text written for non-scholars, it has been critiqued by many as being too easy on some of Luther's less savory aspects, including his writings on the Jews. This is a good text to give someone who is interested in Luther, but not a very thorough treatment.*
- Kolb, Robert. *Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009. *Kolb's text assumes the reader has some familiarity with Luther and with theological terminology. It is very sound and highlight's Luther's emphasis on a passive justification.*
- Pettegree, Andrew. *Brand Luther: How an Unheralded Monk Turned His Small Town into a Center of Publishing, Made Himself the Most Famous Man in Europe – And Started the Protestant Reformation*. New York: Penguin, 2015. *The title rather says it all about this book. Pettegree is a scholar of the 16th century who has sought to contextualize the Reformation within its economic and cultural context. Well written, this text is a valuable resource for studying Luther.*
- Roper, Lyndal. *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet*. NY: Random House, 2017. *Roper attempts to do something of a psychological account of Luther, embedding him into his relationships and context. While her concentration on the relationship with Karlstadt is enlightening and at times brilliant, her reliance on Freudian constructs (Luther always at war with father figures) and blatant conjectures, sometimes renders her book less than satisfying and at other times simply erroneous.*
- Trueman, Carl R. *Luther on the Christian Life: Cross and Freedom*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2015. *Written by an unapologetic fanboy, Trueman's text is very interesting because he admits that Luther would not consider his views on the sacraments Christian. He is able to ask questions of Luther's theology and the practices and doctrines of American Evangelicals in a way which no Lutheran can do without coming across as a denominational hack. His summary of Luther's life is quite good and his focus on the basic elements of Luther's theology is sound.*

Whitford, David M. *Luther: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: Bloomsbury/T & T Clark, 2011. *Whitford's text is an upper level treatment of Luther's life. He is a good writer and an excellent historian. He tends to ascribe to Luther and the Lutheran movement little in the way of doctrinal motivation, but sees the reformation in a political and cultural context. He sees the events of the Reformation happening for reasons other than theological.*

Books about the Reformation

Lindberg, Carter. *The European Reformations* 2nd Ed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. *This text is the standard introduction to the Reformation for undergraduate students. He takes the position that there are actually multiple reformations happening at the same time. His thought has been very influential in Reformation studies.*

MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *The Reformation: A History*. New York: Penguin, 2003. *This is a massive treatment of the whole reformation, over 700 pages long. MacCulloch's treatment of the Lutheran Reformation is particularly insightful as he is not a believer but he gives the faith and ideas of Luther and the early Lutherans appropriate treatment. His narrative on the magisterial Reformation is particularly helpful. Text has excellent indices.*

McGrath, Alister E. *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2012. *McGrath reads the development of the Reformation through a number of historical and theological lenses, asserting that many of the Reformation controversies are actually continuations of controversies which Christianity had contended with for many years prior to Luther. His text is very good for helping the reader understand the relationship of the Lutheran reformation to other strands of the reformation.*

Whitford, David. *A Reformation Life: The European Reformation through the Eyes of Philipp of Hesse*. Praeger, 2015. *Philip of Hesse was a key player in the Lutheran movement and was present at the presentation of the AC. A very conflicted and interesting character, Whitford's account is useful to show just how nuanced and complicated the reformation really was.*

Books about the Lutheran Confessions

Arand, Charles P., Robert Kolb and James Nestigen. *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of the Book of Concord*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. *This text tries to contextualize and introduce the reader to the books of the Lutheran Confessions through historical and theological readings. A good introduction to the BOC.*

Gassmann, Gunther and Scott Hendrix. *The Lutheran Confessions*. Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1999. *This book endeavors to introduce the reader to the Book of Concord through a more topical approach. It assumes a theological vocabulary.*

Kolb, Robert. *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. *Kolb is important for*

his distinctive reading of Lutheran theology and the doctrine of Justification. He asserts that one cannot read and understand Luther outside of passive justification. In this text he endeavors to unpack one of the most difficult of theological puzzles, the doctrine of election and predestination as it moved from Luther to the more nuanced statements found in the Formula of Concord.

Schlink, Edmund. *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*. Trans.: Paul F. Koehneke and Herbert J. A. Bouman. Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1961. *Somewhat dated and quite traditional its approach, Schlink's text has been a standard approach to the theology of the BOC for a long time. Arranged topically, his treatments of Law and Gospel theology and Sacramental theology are quite good.*

Important Original Source Documents from the Reformation Period. Beware the free editions online. The language is often very stilted and the translations are not very good. Consider the Library and the reserve shelf as a friend in this.

Works by Martin Luther – Luther was a voluminous writer both of academic and popular literature. His works collected in an American edition published by CPH (over 57 volumes – usually cited simply as LW, Vol #, page #) and in German in the Weimar edition (over 100 volumes). There is also a new translation of essential Luther works being published by Fortress Press “The Annotated Luther” which has great promise for fresh and accessible translations. Other translations are also available.

Luther, Martin. *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. 1520. Perhaps the most inflammatory of Luther's famous trio of 1520 treatises, this text outlines Luther's understanding of the sacraments, particularly his critique of the Roman Mass. Important for Lutheran understandings of the Eucharist in the FC.

----- *Commentary on Galatians*, 1535. It is perhaps here that Luther delves deepest into the doctrine of Justification by Faith. Unfortunately Luther's lecture notes are voluminous and it often takes a reader considerable effort to glean the gems from this document.

----- *To The Christian Nobility of the German Nation*. 1520 The title is important here. Luther wrote to the nobles of the German nation but he calls them Christian nobility. He is speaking of their allegiance first to Christ. This work is important because it lays the groundwork for Luther's doctrine of Vocation. It also is the place where some see Luther developing the seeds of his theology which will allow for dissent and righteous rebellion against some authority.

----- *To the Councilmen of all the Cities in Germany*, 1524. Luther develops the theology of Vocation here, urging the cities of Germany to establish, maintain, and even require attendance at schools for boys and girls (quite revolutionary at the time.)

----- *The Freedom of the Christian*. 1520. In this pivotal work Luther outlined the role of good works, faith, and the beginnings of his formulation of Law and Gospel. An important

work, it was and largely remains misunderstood. It was prefaced by a lengthy letter to the Pope which is quite congenial and warm. Was that sarcastically written? Some have suggested as much.

- *Invocavit Sermons*, 1522. After his return from the Wartburg Castle Luther preached a series of sermons against the wild reforms Karlstadt had initiated in Wittenberg. Luther argued that it was wrong to force people to reform too fast. One needed to respect consciences and let God do the reforming.
- *Treatise on Baptism*, 1519. This document is very important because it was written before the Anabaptist controversies started and lets one see what Luther was saying about Baptism before the idea of Infant baptism was challenged. It should be noted that the Large and Small Catechisms were written after that point and so this makes for a very useful comparison point.
- *Concerning Rebaptism*, 1528. By this point, Luther had run into several who were questioning the baptism of infants. He was adamant in his defense of infant baptism. Students will find interesting a comparison between this and the preceding document.
- *The Keys*, 1530. This treatise has a number of intersections with confessional documents – sacraments, ministry, church, penance, and justification by faith. For Luther the sacrament of Penance had by this point be been downgraded from a sacrament to a part of Baptism, still sacramental, but now a perpetual living out of the sacrament of Baptism.
- *Treatise on Good Works*, 1520. Luther had been accused very early on of undermining the motivation for doing good works. Here he argues that he has increased the motives for doing good works and explores the nature of a truly good work. Important because it will inform the AC articles and FC articles which outline this in the confessions.
- *An Admonition to Peace*, 1524. In the lead up to the Peasant War of 1524-25 Luther was called upon to address the growing tensions. Luther takes the side of the peasant's complaint but tells them as well that they have no right to rebel. When the peasants in another part of Germany rebel anyway, he writes a second work whose title rather says it all – “Against the murderous, thieving hordes of Peasants.” But that work was ill-timed as it came out just after the great slaughter at Frankenhausen and Luther was blamed for that event unfairly. The student should also consider reading the 12 articles of the Peasants. These documents are important for understanding Luther's finely nuanced understanding of civil disobedience and the doctrine of Vocation.
- *On Whether Soldiers, too, Can be Saved*, 1526. Luther's doctrine of vocation was revolutionary for the people of Germany and Europe as a whole. It completely upended their understanding of the road to heaven. This little tract explains that even a soldier can be saved. Written both as comfort for the soldier and polemic against some who said otherwise, it is important for understanding Luther's doctrine of vocation.

Other Reformers

Beza, Theodore (1519-1605). *Justification and Faith*. Beza was Calvin's friend and successor in Geneva and assumed the mantle of leadership after his friend died. Beza published a number of important brief tracts which would further refine and articulate Calvin's theology. These are a few.

----- *On Law and Gospel*.

----- *The Rights of Magistrates Over Their Subjects*. This in particular drew heavily on the *Magdeburg Confession* which is described below.

----- *The Table of Predestination*.

Calvin, John. *Institutes*. 1536. This is the great summary of Reformation doctrine which would serve to inform the great numbers of Christians who go by Protestant but not by Lutheran. In four volumes, this work went through multiple editions.

----- *Letters*. Calvin was a voluminous letter writer and we have over 12,000 of his letters. John Dillenberger has collected the important works of Calvin into a single volume which contains some of his important letters on the Sacrament, especially the Eucharist, which will be helpful for anyone studying this.

----- *Treatises*. Calvin also wrote a number of treatises, brief documents which were intended to teach and clarify positions over against a number of positions. Again, for the purposes of this class, a student might do well to consider his treatises on the sacraments and the Church. Again, Dillenberger has several, but more exist and can be found through research.

Magdeburg Confession. 1550. In the period the Interims and before Charles V was finally defeated, the pastors and people of Magdeburg refused to submit to the restoration of Catholicism in their city. Their confession which offers up a theological justification for resistance to the acknowledged authority of Charles will prove integral to the formation of modern political theory and the Lutheran understanding of two kingdoms.

Melanchthon, Philip. *Loci communes*. 1521. Frequently revised and re-edited by Melanchthon himself, this became the chief doctrinal text of Lutheranism in its early decades. A seminal text it was the source of a great deal of Lutheran theology.

----- *Commentary on Romans*, 1532, revised 1540 and 1556. This is probably Melanchthon's clearest exposition of the doctrine of Justification outside of the confessions. He was justifiably famous for this book as it was the first non-scholastic and humanist commentary on a Biblical book in centuries.

Zwingli, Huldreich. *67 Articles*, 1523. Zwingli defended these articles before the city council when the Pope demanded that they expel him. It is a statement of faith from this important reformer and gives the student a good comparison point to compare him to Luther.

----- *A Refutation of Luther's Sermon against Vain Enthusiasm*, 1527. Apparently Zwingli and Luther disagreed on a few things.

----- *An Exposition of the Faith*, 1530

----- *Explanation of the Christian Faith*, 1531. Written shortly before he died, this was forged in the crucible of an impending war in which Zwingli would take to the field as a soldier and die.