

Reformation Notes

NEWS FOR PARTNERS OF THE RICHARD C. KESSLER REFORMATION COLLECTION • SUMMER 2022 • NUMBER 57

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The title page of Martin Luther's September Testament simply reads "The German New Testament" (*Das Newe Testament Deutsch*) and includes at the bottom of the page the name of the town where it was printed, Wittenberg (1522 BIBL:1)

500 YEARS OF MARTIN LUTHER'S BIBLE

Richard Manly Adams Jr.

*Margaret A. Pitts Assistant Professor in the Practice of Theological Bibliography
and Director of Pitts Theology Library*

"We must ask the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the marketplace. We must be guided by their language, by the way they speak, and do our translating accordingly."—MARTIN LUTHER

This September we celebrate one of the most significant book productions in European history and the most significant work in the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection: Martin Luther's translation of the New Testament into German, known as the September Testament. Acquired in the early 1990s by Director Channing Jeschke, it was a landmark early acquisition that helped define the young Kessler Collection as a serious place of documenting and studying Lutheran reforms.

For much of its history, the church in the West had been reading a Latin Bible. While there were German translations of the Bible before Luther, the great advancement with the September Testament was Luther's use of the Greek New Testament as his base text. Drawing upon the 1519 Greek New Testament edited by Erasmus of Rotterdam, Luther spent 9 months while hiding in the Wartburg Castle to produce a New Testament in a German language accessible for "the mother

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in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the marketplace." This book would immediately change Bible readership and book production, and it became the first of thousands of "Luther Bibles," the German Bible read by Protestant churches to this very day.

To mark the significance of this accomplishment and the privilege that the Kessler Collection has in owning one of these incredibly rare copies, we offer a Fall full of opportunities to see the book, to explore the context in which it was produced, and to study the impact it has had on religion and culture around the world. We hope you will join us for this rare opportunity to see the September Testament and to learn from leading scholars about why it is so significant.

The September Testament on Exhibit

The centerpiece of our "September Testament" semester will be an exhibition in the library's exhibition gallery. Dr. Armin Siedlecki has curated the exhibition, "So That It Pierces and Rings Through the Heart: Martin Luther's September Testament and 500 Years of Bible Translation," featuring the September Testament itself (which we rarely put on display!) as well as some of the major works in the Kessler Collection that provide the context

for and explain the method of Luther's accomplishment. In addition, Dr. Siedlecki will highlight Luther's "first" by tracing its influence on other "firsts." On display will be early English translations, including works of William Tyndale and a first edition of the King James Version, and major "firsts" in other religious traditions, such as Pitts' first edition of the Book of Mormon.

An Evening with the Kessler Collection

Our centerpiece event this Fall will be an evening celebrating and supporting the Kessler Collection on October 26th. The evening will include an interactive cocktail hour, where visitors will get a hands-on experience with the Kessler Collection, a dinner with new and old friends, musical performances, updates on the work of the collection, and an opportunity to learn from a world-renowned scholar! Joining us will be Dr. Timothy J. Wengert, emeritus professor of Church History at the United Lutheran Seminary (Philadelphia), where he taught from 1989–2013. The highlight of the evening will be his address, "Martin Luther's Great Surprise: Translating the New Testament, 1522–2022," where he will show us all why understanding Luther's translation work is so important for communities today.

Registration for the evening is required in advance, so please visit <http://pitts.emory.edu/kessler2022> to secure your spot and invite your friends!

Online Learning Opportunities throughout the Fall

Throughout the Fall, there are opportunities to learn about Luther's work and influence online. We are proud to continue one of our newest traditions, born during the pandemic: The Kessler



Dr. Timothy J. Wengert, who will offer a keynote address, "Martin Luther's Great Surprise: Translating the New Testament, 1522–2022," on October 26th

Conversations. This series of virtual conversations is a way of connecting the reforms of the 16th century to communities in the 21st. This semester, we are hosting 3 conversations to consider the September Testament. Joining us on September 6th will be Dr. Euan Cameron, the Henry Luce III Professor of Reformation Church History at Union Theological Seminary in New York, in Columbia University. Our October 5th conversation will be with Dr. G. Sujin Pak, Dean and Professor of the History of Christianity at Boston University's School of Theology. Our November 2nd conversation will be with someone you may know well—our own Dr. Armin Siedlecki! Dr. Siedlecki has more experience with the Kessler Collection than anyone. He has cataloged the majority of books in the Kessler Collection and has curated seven exhibitions based on the collection.

Our focus has always been not merely on collecting important materials, but ensuring that specialists and the general public has as much access to them as possible. We understand access not only as the ability to see and touch something, but also the opportunity to learn about what one is seeing and touching! I am so thankful that these scholars share our passion for translating expertise into ideas that we can all understand, and I hope you will join us this Fall to learn from them all! ■



Kessler Conversations Guests, Fall 2022

Dr. Euan Cameron, Dr. G. Sujin Pak, Dr. Armin Siedlecki

Registration links and videos of all past Kessler Conversations are available at <http://pitts.emory.edu/kesslerconversations>

Coloring the Kessler Collection

Richard Manly Adams Jr.



You may have noticed one of the trends of the last decade: adult coloring books. Amazon is full of them, and clubs have formed inviting busy adults to

unwind and relax with what was previously thought to be a child's activity. Adult coloring is not, however, a new trend. Adults have been coloring in printed works for over 500 years, and the Kessler Collection has the books to prove it. Many of books in the Kessler Collection are richly illustrated with woodcut images, and while most of these are still the black and white images that were originally produced by the printer, some have been brilliantly colored throughout centuries of anonymous ownership. Some include rather crude colorations, perhaps added as doodles as readers made their way through book's content. Others, though, include colored images that are clearly the work of professionals, tradespeople who were paid to make a given printed book unique for its owner and to bring a work's images to life. The introduction of moveable type into Europe in the 15th century brought uniformity to book production; even the pictures in books were produced by wood blocks that were re-used throughout a print run to make the images the same in each edition of a given book. In the manuscript era before, each book was a unique creation since all work was produced by hand. Clearly owners of early printed books sought to recover many elements of this prior manuscript era, as some owners paid binders to personalize the bindings of their books

and others invited artists to hand-draw initial letters or add decorative elements like family crests to the empty margins of books. Another way to personalize a particular copy of a book was to pay an artist to color in the black and white images, perhaps the dominant image on the book's title page, or perhaps every single woodcut throughout a book. The Kessler Collection includes some beautiful examples of this centuries-old practice, a few of which you can see here. As we like say, please don't color in our books, but we are certainly glad that previous owners did!

Pitts is excited to connect this centuries-old tradition with today's trend by issuing its own coloring book, *Color our Collections!* The Pitts staff has curated a selection of more than 30 woodcuts from Pitts' rare book collections, including many from works in the Kessler Collection. The Pitts coloring book presents these as a blank template for anyone to express creativity or simply to unwind with this relaxing activity. Copies are available for purchase at the Pitts circulation desk (with custom-branded Pitts crayons!), or you can order copies by contacting us at <http://pitts.emory.edu/ask>. Happy coloring! ■

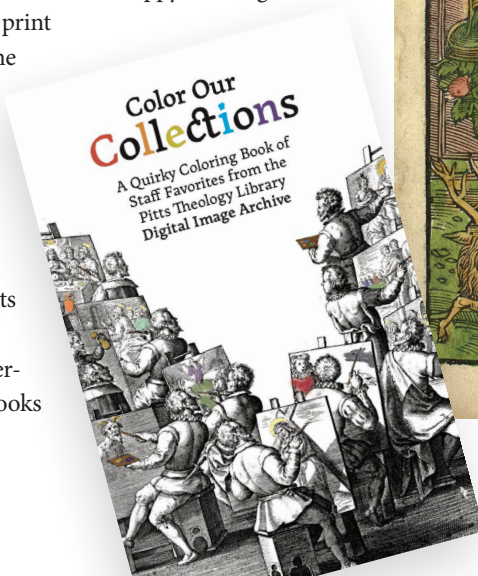


Clockwise from top left: A colored medallion portrait of Martin Luther from a collection of Luther's letters (1549 LUTH E)

A colored image of the baptism of Jesus in the Plantin Polyglot Bible (1569 BIBL V8)

The colored title page from Martin Luther's "On Trade and Usury" (1524 LUTH VV)

The cover of Pitts' new coloring book, *Color our Collections*



Martin Luther's September Testament in the Kessler Collection

Lucas Cranach's woodcut depicting the sword that proceeds from God's mouth, as imagined in Revelation 19:15: "Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations."

Cranach's woodcut depicting the whore of Babylon discussed in Revelation 17:3-4: "Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stone and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries."

Cranach's woodcut depicting the four horsemen of the apocalypse described in Revelation 6:1-7.



Martin Luther, Lucas Cranach, and Johannes Tauler

Armin Siedlecki PhD • Rare Book
Cataloger, Pitts Theology Library

The 500th anniversary of the September Testament celebrates the publication of Martin Luther's translation of the New Testament into German from the original Greek. The focus on the German text is justified as Luther's translation represents a significant benchmark in the history of Theology, Biblical hermeneutics and the German language. However, an exploration beyond the text into the immediate context may also be of interest, in particular Luther's relationship to Lucas Cranach the Elder, who provided the woodcut illustra-



tions found in the book of Revelation, and Luther's appreciation of Johannes Tauler, which is underscored by the fact that the Kessler copy of the September Testament is physically bound with a publication of the collected sermons of the German mystic.

Lucas Cranach the Elder was one of the leading artists of the German Renaissance, and his name is closely linked to the Lutheran Reformation. He had moved to Wittenberg in 1510 and was to become a close personal friend of Martin Luther, serving as witness at the Reformer's wedding and as godfather to his eldest son, Johannes Luther. One of the leading citizens of Wittenberg, he served as the city's Mayor several times. He also owned a printing press, out of which Melchior Lotter the Younger printed many of Luther's early works—including the September Testament—until Cranach expelled him in 1524 for violently abusing an apprentice, an event which also marked the end of Luther's relationship with Melchior Lotter.



Cranach personally oversaw the printing of the September Testament and provided 21 full page woodcuts to the book of Revelation which contributed to the book's success and had a lasting impact on subsequent Bible illustrators. His images were themselves influenced by Albrecht Dürer's "Apocalypse," a series of 15 woodcuts on Revelation which were first published in 1498, although they are often less populated and complex than Dürer's and highlight the strangeness of the supernatural. This strangeness, according to Timothy Beal (*The Book of Revelation*; Princeton, 2018, 117–137), corresponds to Luther's view of Revelation as an odd book which defies any clear interpretation. Nevertheless, Cranach's apocalyptic illustrations provide their own interpretation, as for example in the association of the Whore of Babylon with the Papacy by depicting her wearing the triple-tiered papal tiara, an association that was so inflammatory at the time that in the second edition of Luther's translations published only three months later (December Testament) the image was changed to show a generic crown. The impact of Cranach's woodcuts

is well demonstrated by the fact that even Luther's critics made use of these images, as, for example, with Johann Dietenberger in his translation of the New Testament, which was intended as a Catholic "antidote" to Luther's version (with the generic crown, of course).

The copy of the September Testament held by the Kessler Collection is unique because of the work with which it is bound. Binding separate publications together (in what is called a *Sammelband*) was a common practice in the first few centuries of the printing press, when the profession of the printer and that of the book binder were two distinct industries. Sometimes collecting different works in one bound volume was done for practical reasons, perhaps because the publications happened to be of similar size. In other cases, works were bound together deliberately in order to group related writings together based on their content or context. This deliberate binding was particularly true for works of great significance. Given the beautifully ornate 17th century vellum binding of the Kessler September Testament, it is hard to imagine that the owner of this copy did not purposefully have the Tauler sermons bound next to it.

Johannes Tauler (ca. 1300–1361) grew up in Strasbourg, where he entered a Dominican monastery at a relatively young age. There he first encountered the great mystic Meister Eckart (c. 1260–c. 1328), who was also in Strasbourg at the same time, and with whom he studied later in Cologne. Tauler and other followers of Eckart became known as the Rhineland Mystics, as much of their activity and preaching took place in Western Germany around the Rhine River. His sermons remained popular beyond his death and were first printed in 1498 and again in 1508. In

1521, Adam Petri was the first to print Tauler's sermons together with sermons by Meister Eckart, a publication that was so successful that he issued a second edition in 1522. It is this second edition that is bound with the Kessler September Testament.

Tauler's sermons had a profound influence on the young Luther, and he recommended them in his letters, especially in the early part of his life. He appreciated the mystic's emphasis of personal piety over outward displays of religiosity. Tauler was skeptical of the scholastic philosophy that dominated the latter half of the Middle Ages, and he was critical of wealth and hypocrisy. Luther also found Tauler's humility and self-abnegation exemplary as well as his understanding of the necessity of suffering and trials (*Anfechtungen*, an important term for both Luther and Tauler), through which one finds the mercy of God.

Luther's *sola scriptura* and his emphasis on the centrality of the text notwithstanding, an exploration of the context in which the text is placed, the illustrations that accompany the specific printing of the Reformer's translation in September 1522, or the proximity of Johannes Tauler's sermons bound only with the Kessler copy of the September Testament, may point to interesting and important connections that can enrich our understanding of Martin Luther.



Johannes Tauler (c. 1300–1361), as depicted in a woodcut image in a printing of *Prosopographia* of Heinrich Pantaleon (1565 PANT)

New Acquisitions Highlight

The colorized full-page woodcut image of the crucifixion.



A BEAUTIFUL CATHOLIC MISSAL FROM 1506

Richard Manly Adams Jr.

While Martin Luther and Lutheran reforms form the center of the Kessler Collection, our acquisitions program has always focused also on Catholic works, to document 16th century reforms within Catholicism and responses to Luther, but also to demonstrate the context in which Luther lived and wrote. This latter mission was the

Top right: The Bamberg Missal includes dozens of hand-colored woodcut initial letters, many depicting Biblical scenes. This letter “T” depicts Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac as the angel stops his sword (Genesis 22:10–12).

The half-page colorized woodcut depicting Holy Roman Emperor Henry II (973–1024) and Holy Roman Empress Cunigunde of Luxembourg (c. 975–1040) holding the Bamberg Cathedral

impetus behind one of the most beautiful acquisitions in the Kessler Collection in 2022. Our newest Catholic missal was produced and printed in the German town of Bamberg in 1506. Missals are books that outline the prayers and instructions for the Catholic mass throughout the liturgical year. Prior to the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and the production of a uniform missal, these texts were issued by local church authorities. This particular missal was printed at the request of Bishop Georg Schenk von Limpurg (1470–1522), who was appointed the prince-bishop of Bamberg in 1505. In addition to documenting the practice of mass at the time in Bamberg, the Kessler Collection copy is a work of art in many ways. The book is bound in contemporary South German, blind-stamped pigskin wrapped around boards with fillets and roll-stamp, including still-extant metal clasps and catches. The binding includes

7 additional leaves filled with manuscript liturgical music and Catholic hymn lyrics. The book includes manuscript inscriptions throughout, written in various hands, one identified as the hand of Felix Goetz, canon at St. Jakob in Bamberg, with notes dated November 9, 1584.

Perhaps most stunning are the woodcut illustrations and initial letters throughout the book that have been beautifully hand-colored by an unknown artist. As early as the 13th century, manuscript missals were often illuminated with beautiful images. With the introduction of moveable type printing in Europe, this decorative proclivity was continued by owners in the form of hand-colored woodcut images, and we find many of these in the Kessler Collection's Bamberg Missal. In addition to many beautiful initial letters, the missal includes a full-page woodcut of

the crucifixion and a half-page woodcut of Holy Roman Emperor Henry II (973–1024) and Holy Roman Empress Cunigunde of Luxembourg (c. 975–1040), pictured holding the Bamberg Cathedral alongside the coat of arms of Bishop Georg Schenk von Limpurg. The Kessler Collection's copy of the 1506 Bamberg Missal has been fully digitized since the acquisition and is now available for all to view online (see the link below). We are excited to add this work to the Kessler Collection, and we look forward to sharing it in future exhibitions and presentations about the religious context of Luther's reforms in the early 16th century. ■

The entire Bamberg Missal has been digitized and is available to view online. To do so, either visit <https://qrco.de/bambergmissal> or scan the QR code above with the camera on your mobile device.





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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.

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Together We Have Built a Collection of Over 4,000 Books

Richard Manly Adams Jr.

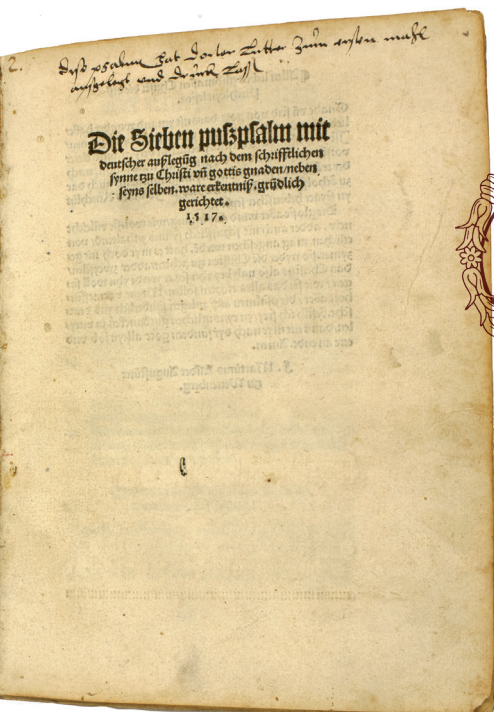
The great success of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection continues to be driven by the generosity of our donors. Over the past 35 years, donations from you have helped us build North America's premier collection of print and manuscript works documenting the reforms of the 16th century. Last year in these pages I was so bold as to ask you to step up once again, to help us do something big, and my goodness did you respond! Last October, we conducted a micro campaign to raise funds to purchase the 4,000th item in the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection within a single month. We were overwhelmed by your support and generosity; we had to increase our fundraising goal 3 times! Thanks to your support, we were able to acquire Martin Luther's very first publication, his com-

mentary on the 7 penitential Psalms. This work was published in Wittenberg 6 months before he nailed the 95 theses to the church door! You can learn more about this incredibly rare work at <http://pitts.emory.edu/kessler4k> and you can see the entire work digitized by visiting the link below.

Thank you for this most recent example of your steadfast support for this world-renowned collection! This was just one of many acquisitions this current year, which have pushed us well beyond the 4,000 mark, and we are now setting our sights on 5,000. This past year we added new indulgences, works of prophecy, Biblical commentaries, and so much more. I would welcome any opportunity to share with you these new works, and I invite you to visit <http://digital.pitts.emory.edu> to see images of many of them online. ■

The title page of Luther's first publication, his commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms reads, "The Seven Penitential Psalms with a German Interpretation according to the Written Sense, Fundamentally Oriented toward Christ's and God's Grace alongside Its Own True Meaning." A manuscript note at the top, written in a sixteenth-century hand, reads, "Doctor Luther interpreted and had these psalms printed for the first time."

Luther's commentary on the 7 penitential Psalms has been digitized and is available to view online. To do so, either visit <https://qrco.de/lutherpsalms> or scan this QR code with the camera on your mobile device.





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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 4,000 pieces written by Martin Luther, his colleagues, and his 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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Collection photography provided by
Ann McShane, Pitts Theology Library

Celebrate and Learn Throughout the Fall

This year we are spreading the celebration of and learning from the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection throughout the Fall. There are a number of ways to join us. All events will stream live and will be archived and available online.

Virtual Kessler Conversations, Fall 2022

Register for each online at <http://pitts.emory.edu/kesslerconversations>

Wednesday, September 6th, Noon Eastern

Dr. Euan Cameron, Henry Luce III Professor of Reformation Church History at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University
“The Distinctiveness of the Luther New Testament of 1522”

Wednesday, October 5th, Noon Eastern

Dr. G. Sujin Pak, Dean and Professor of the History of Christianity, Boston University School of Theology
“Martin Luther as a Reader of Scripture and Insights for Today”

Wednesday, November 2nd, Noon Eastern

Dr. Armin Siedlecki, Head of Cataloging and Rare Book Cataloger, Pitts Theology Library, Emory University
“Let Anyone Who Would Hear God Speak Read Holy Scripture: Luther’s Translation After 500 Years.”

A Night Celebrating and Supporting the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection

Wednesday, October 26th, 6pm–9pm

Convocation Hall, Emory University
Keynote Address: *Dr. Timothy Wengert*
Register at <http://pitts.emory.edu/kesslernight>

A Reformation Day Worship Service

Thursday, October 27th, 11am

Cannon Chapel, Emory University
Preacher: *Rev. Jenny McLellan, Redeemer Lutheran*
Livestream: <https://candler.emory.edu/student-life/candler-worship/live-streaming-worship.html>

